



**Guest Lecture by
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UTECH Marketing
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[GO TO WELCOME SLIDE #1]

Happy Monday everyone! It is a pleasure to be here at the University of Technology amongst such promising talent. It is always exciting to meet with the bright future of our industry. You will no doubt shape a vibrant and better future for Jamaica and the world.

As marketers, we are all storytellers. Storytelling is undeniably the very core of marketing. We work to understand what makes people think, feel and behave the way they do so that we can craft the right stories to connect with them. In this unprecedented COVID landscape, we are faced with new challenges. One thing that sets smart marketers apart is their mindset and approach when things don't go as planned, and the current situation in our industry presents us with opportunities to be more innovative, creative and more impactful than ever before.

My goal for today is to share insights and more important, inspiration, as you continue on your educational and professional journeys to bring positive contributions to our industry. We'll use our time together to discuss how the Jamaica Tourist Board has continued to uniquely and effectively tell the story of Jamaica to audiences around the world, maintaining and even strengthening our position as a leading destination during a global crisis.

As a destination, our Jamaica story is and has always been this: we are larger than life. Our culture, our music, our food, our attractions and our people are the pulses of the Heartbeat of the World. It is these passion points that visitors desire most when they

come to our shores. But these elements look different as we live and travel with COVID, and it is crucial that as marketers, we find creative ways to preserve and market these experiences while we are faced with disruptions like a global pandemic.

[GO TO SLIDE #2]

Over the past six months, the JTB has challenged itself to think differently about how we market Jamaica beyond traditional means, and this approach has strengthened our position at the forefront of tourism recovery. We achieved this primarily through the innovative use of online marketing to maintain consumer connections *and* expanding our digital marketing initiatives to provide consumers with exclusive access to the destination like never before.

While our borders were closed, we worked to understand what our audiences needed at that time. At the heart of it? A desire to be uplifted, for their wanderlust to be fueled, to remain connected with the destination, and to be assured that Jamaica was eagerly waiting for them when the time was right to travel.

During those first two months, [internet usage spiked between 50-70%](#) with our tolerance for screen time higher than ever before. [People spent 20% more time in apps during this pandemic](#) than they did during the same time period last year. And while no one was necessarily spending significantly more dollars on products and travel, they were still engaging with brands.

[GO TO SLIDE #3]

Companies such as Heineken creatively addressed the increased use of technology – and the difficulty of staying connected with loved ones and friends in an amusing ad we can all probably relate to:

[VIDEO] <https://youtu.be/WZnHkv5-z4k>

This new landscape led us to reimagine and transform in-person experiences into digital activations to generate consumer anticipation, desire, excitement and ultimately the confidence to drive travellers to visit Jamaica again.

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Knowing that we have a record number of consumers now online, we set out to leverage the power of technology in our own way. We rolled out our own virtual activations such as Escape to Jamaica, which was a digital activation aimed to uplift and inspire our followers around the world during a time of physical distancing. The campaign garnered nearly 350 million impressions.

We also held the World's Largest Virtual Wedding with couples and viewers from all around the world celebrating love in the time of COVID, drawing in over 17,000 viewers. And we've created Virtual Tours of the destination highlighting our brand pillars of culinary, adventure, romance, music, and above all, our people. It was clear from the engagement and feedback we received from these digital marketing initiatives that we were able to maintain a strong demand for the destination, despite our closed borders. Our total reach was a record breaking 450 million impressions.

We have also adjusted the way we market and conduct events that are traditionally held in person. From a business standpoint, we will soon be gathering for JAPEX, which is our most important business sales event of the year, and which will be virtual for the first time. We have seen a number of other industry events use virtual platforms over the past six months, from ILTM, to CruiseWorld, to WTM. In that short time span, the technology has evolved considerably, creating opportunities for real-time and scheduled interaction truly reflective of an in-person event. We are looking forward to putting these enhancements to use for our own programme in our own trade show next week!

These highly advanced digital platforms are changing the way we meet and do business, and also the way we experience places and large-scale events like concerts and festivals. Enhanced digital integrations lay the groundwork for a hybrid future,

extending the reach of in-person programming and connecting those on the ground with those tuning in from afar.

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Comparing real life events to their virtual counterparts, let's look at the popular Reggae Sumfest festival. In a given year, the multiple day event could clock in at 30,000 attendees. Last year, we had 10,000 people travel just to partake in the Greatest Show on Earth! This year, since the festival was virtual, we had the opportunity to reach a greater audience and we did! We had an overwhelming 450,000 viewers on Facebook, YouTube and Instagram.

Across the industry, we're seeing similar transformations and out-of-the-box approaches to turn challenges into opportunities as brands race to tap into consumers' changing lifestyles and shifting priorities. I want to share and discuss with you some important trends we're seeing at the cross section of marketing and technology that are ushering in a brand new era of storytelling.

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From Competition to Collaboration: Brands Working Together

By this time, you have probably seen messaging across a variety of businesses touting that we are "in this together". And that's no surprise as in moments of suffering, we've come to learn that we are stronger and more effective in solidarity and unity.

We've witnessed brand wars and rivalries take a backseat to unexpected collaborations to signal a message of positivity and maturity to its consumers, showing they can put their differences aside to address the more pressing and serious concerns of the global community.

At the start of the pandemic, tech giants Apple and Google came together to partner on COVID-19 contact tracing technology, a strategic alliance signaling the seriousness and gravity of the situation, and an "all hands on deck" approach.

On a larger scale, entire industries are even working together to redefine their purpose and unite in an effort to assist governments, healthcare professionals and the public. Luxury fashion player LVMH was one of the first to repurpose perfume factories to manufacture hand sanitizer instead. Competitors Chanel and Burberry then joined Louis Vuitton by converting their factories to deliver face masks.

This approach is no different in the tourist industry. As a destination, we know we are part of a greater global community and acknowledge the important role we must play in the recovery of the overall economy. In a recent report published by the World Travel & Tourism Council, almost three quarters (73%) of consumers state they are taking note of brands that are making a difference during COVID-19.

Jamaica's establishment of a Resilient Corridor model was a game-changing approach to re-opening and was an industry first. Establishing COVID-compliant tourism regions allows us to prioritize safety while mitigating the spread of COVID-19, even as we continue to provide authentic, enjoyable and seamless Jamaican getaway experiences to travellers.

As a destination, it is our priority to remain transparent in our efforts, allowing for other governments and tourism entities to learn from our examples and best practices, paving the way for their own respective recoveries. This model has now become an industry standard and many destinations around the world are following in our footsteps. We have seen similar areas established in places from Thailand to Kauai, Hawaii.

We'll continue to see this trend play out as the world is reinvigorated to tackle other universal issues including social, environmental and institutional stability.

[GO TO SLIDE #7]

A Small Step Back to Move Forward

Building emotionally-resonant marketing campaigns was a challenge before the pandemic, but now, the right message is even harder to craft. What do people want to

hear during a crisis? What might be interpreted as a trigger with our collective fragile sensibilities? How, as marketers, can we speak to our target audience when that audience may not be in the mood to be marketed to right now?

One of my favorite examples:

Uber has done an exceptional job prioritizing their audience, with an approach more focused on tugging at the heart strings. One of their early pandemic campaigns actually thanks their users for not riding with them during lockdowns around the world, promoting safety and responsibility with “Thank you for not riding”.

[PLAY VIDEO ON SLIDE #7] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8XLnMiCOE>

It may seem counter-intuitive for brands to ask people not to buy or use their product or service, or not to travel. As marketers, our job is to drive timely sales for a product or experience, whatever it may be. COVID has turned this ideal on its head, prioritizing emotional connections that drive brand affinity for future purchase.

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Destination marketers took a similar path in tapping into their audience’s current concerns. The Portuguese National Tourist Board launched their “It’s time to stop” marketing campaign, with the hashtag #CantSkipHope. The Swiss National Tourism Board created the “Dream now – travel later” campaign as a reminder that booking trips for future travel is one way to satisfy our current wanderlust.

[GO TO SLIDE #9]

We have used this approach ourselves. We created the “Soon Come Jamaica” video, urging people near and far to observe the many calls for social distancing and reminding travelers that Jamaica will be waiting for them when the time is right.

[PLAY VIDEO ON SLIDE #9]

[VIDEO]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VsBOjEVHd1A>

As a destination, we knew from the start that while this marketing play may initially seem contradictory to our tourism goals, it would craft even stronger brand equity, loyalty and affinity from consumers who realize that our brand not only understands, but genuinely cares about our potential visitors and their families, and our own residents and tourism workers.

Through our marketing efforts, on the surface, we advised our audiences to wait, while our carefully selected language and imagery kept our audience's travel dreams alive, further strengthening our brand and setting us up for a strong and responsible recovery.

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INTERACTIVE MARKETING EXERCISE

Before we move on to other trends, I want to take a moment to test your knowledge. As marketers, we need to constantly pay attention to what is going on around us – even beyond our own niche of hospitality and tourism – so that we can find inspiration in all forms.

I want you to show you some brands and some recent marketing campaigns that have captured the attention of media and the imaginations of consumers worldwide.

Writing them down, match up the brand to their activation or campaign and we'll see who can get the most pairings correct. (3 minutes)

[GO THROUGH SLIDES #11-16]

(CORRECT ANSWERS)

1. *GETTY MUSEUM, LOS ANGELES: Asked audiences to recreate artwork using random objects found in their homes*
2. *LEGO: Created animated video urging kids to be "superheroes" during this time by practicing safety and proper hygiene*

3. *COTTONELLE: Launched the #SquareAShare campaign to discourage panic buying at stores and urged people to “Stock up on generosity” instead*
4. *AIRBNB: Converted a segment of their business titled “Experiences” into live, virtual offerings from a wine class in Italy and magic show in Japan to a tour of a coral reef in Hawaii*
5. *HERSHEY’S: Launched remote-controlled door to safely pass out candy this Halloween*
6. *ANHEUSER-BUSCH: Launched a “Flight to Nowhere” with TVs, gaming systems, snacks and unlimited beer only to land right back where they started at their local airport.*

Did anyone get all of them correct?

It’s important to remember that a smart marketer is always on the lookout for smart marketing. We know to observe the behaviour and habits of consumers, but we must apply that same attentiveness when monitoring other brands whether in tourism or otherwise.

In turning back to marketing trends, I want to showcase three more important ways in which digital agility and creativity are shaping our future.

[GO TO SLIDE #17]

Cultural Popularity of Tech Brands

As our reliance on technology deepens, so does the cultural popularity and relevance of tech brands themselves with platforms such as Zoom, Google Hangouts and Skype becoming an increasingly integral, daily part of our personal and professional lives.

Pre-COVID, it might be hard to imagine buying a fashion item with the logo of tech company emblazoned on it. But, just this month, high-end footwear brand Cole Haan partnered with popular messenger app Slack to release a limited-edition collection of shoes, targeting the 12 million plus workers who use Slack every day around the world.

Media touted this collaboration as a way for Cole Haan to reach younger audiences, and to create a product relevant to our digitally-reliant communications.

From Apple Watch releasing their Hermès band and Google working with Levi's to create a “smart” jacket that answers calls and plays music right from your sleeve, lifestyle brands will only continue to collide with technology.

[GO TO SLIDE #18]

New Travel Technology & AI

Virtual platforms and new technologies that were novelties just a few months ago are now necessities in our foreseeable future, and are all a part of our consideration set as we explore how to make our travel experiences even more seamless for travellers. Contactless experiences and artificial intelligence in tourism are taking a massive leap forward and transforming the industry.

COVID-19 Pass Cards, similar to virtual passports, are being developed in Israel to deliver updated testing requirements to travellers based on departure and arrival cities as a solution to quickly changing travel policies. They will also hold critical information such as personal medical profiles and immunization records in cases of emergencies.

A prototype of temperature-reading glasses is in the works by researchers in Beijing and San Francisco. In Tokyo, multilingual "chat bots" or virtual tour guides are helping to pair travelers with local operators at the destination. Wouldn't it be great to launch a chat bot for Patois?

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Next-Level Augmented Reality to Boost Consumer Experience

The boundaries between the physical and digital worlds are becoming blurred as marketers explore ways to deliver experience-forward content directly and immediately to consumers.

This year, more and more brands are leveraging augmented reality to remain competitive. Swedish furniture company Ikea, pioneered AR in their industry allowing users to visualize what a piece of furniture actually looked like in their home. The Australian-based eyewear company Quay and French multinational retailer Sephora, offering personal care and beauty products, all allow their users to try on products through uploading photos of their own faces.

[On the medical front](#), the Sheba Medical Center in Israel is now using Microsoft HoloLens wearable technology to help teach health-care workers how to operate ventilators – medical workers wearing the headset can see a hologram-like rendering of a ventilator superimposed on their real-world view. Doctors in other parts of the hospital can provide remote assistance without needing to be physically present but still being able to see what is happening in a patient's room. In this physically distant era, brands must re-conceptualize the future of their experiences and services where customers are less willing to be in close contact.

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Closing

As you can see, despite challenges, we as people have the extraordinary ability to adapt and transform time and time again. While navigating one of the hardest hit industries globally, the Jamaica Tourist Board's robust programming and integrated marketing continued to showcase the Heartbeat of the World. We enticed would-be-visitors with a taste of what is waiting for them, ultimately driving and inspiring the travel and tourism business we are seeing now in recovery.

From reimagining events to virtual experiences and amplifying our social channels as a means of storytelling and soft selling, we have the utmost confidence that Jamaica will exceed the tourism growth we know we are capable of as the most innovative and resilient Caribbean destination.

The landscape of our tourist industry and marketing as a whole has been forever altered. But as you continue your journey here at UTECH and beyond, you have all the tools to adapt, remain nimble and grow. As Jamaicans, we are a nation of strength, optimism and resilience, and know better than anyone else that with crisis comes a golden opportunity for innovation and a recovery that makes us stronger than ever. Despite any challenge thrown at us, we have always had the power within us to imagine better and do better.

Thank you again for having me today. It was a pleasure and I can't wait to see the exciting contributions you will all make to our industry.

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