Title of the Story: Norderneys Corona-recovery

Destination Name: Norderney, east-frisian island

Country: lower Saxony, germany

Submitter name: Wolfgang Lübben

Email address: luebben@norderney.de

Position: 2nd head of marketing and distribution

Nomination Category: (Please check the boxes that indicate the focus of your story)

☐ Culture & Communities
☐ Environment & Climate
☐ Nature & Ecotourism
☐ Islands & Seaside
☐ Immediate responses in dealing with the COVID-19
☒ Post COVID-19 recovery
☐ One of the 17 SDGs* (if yes, which one) Click or tap to choose

*The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. The 17 SDGs are integrated—that is, they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability. What are the Sustainable Development Goals?

https://www.unsd.org/sdgs/ens/home/sustainable-development-goals.html

For further information on Tourism for SDGs: http://tourism4sdgs.org/

Find detailed instructions for submitting good practices here
DESCRIBE YOUR GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.

Issues faced
Norderney is an island that is economically addicted to tourism as it is the only business-branch. The Corona-Lockdown in March 2020 was a great threat for the whole island. Many business-people have invested in their products throughout the winter, regarding the first customers at Easter, so they can pay their bills. But with the lockdown, no customers could show up. In the attendance-branch, e. g. hotels, shops and wellness, the capacity costs and the personnel costs are extremely high. So the existence of many businesses were highly-endangered, as well as the existence of the local DMO. Many inhabitants lost their work or became short-time-workers. Schools closed and it became prohibited to leave the island. So many private lives turned upside-down and the professional and financial future of many became insecure. No one knew how long this period of stagnancy would last.
So we started to support our local partners in an unknown way and for free. It’s been existential for many of our partners to react “just-in-time” on the new developments as a touristic enterprise is always not as flexible as e. g. a start-up or a one-man-business.

Methods, steps and tools applied
Norderney has no office for promotion of trade and industry. The DMO immediately started to fulfill this urgent need in many ways. The DMO, even though itself in a very uncomfortable situation, raised its efforts in those key success factors, that are of high interests of the local business-partners.

The main goals were closer contacts and immediate information. Within many talks and meetings, with local partners as well as with politicians, doctors, union-agents, other DMOs, the county and others, we kept each other and all our partners always up-to-date with the latest news. Our tools were video-conferences (Zoom, gotomeeting and so on), telephone-conferences, B2B-newsletters, press releases and personal talks. We informed about the latest regulations, financial supports and recommended what’s next to do. As a serious partner who helped to receive the right information (and separate them from all the rumours) and to comply with the new rules, we helped partner to keep their business running till now.
Just one example: How does a hotel has to behave when all rooms are booked but no guest is allowed to visit the island? Or just a few guests aren’t allowed to come to Norderney because they come from a risky county? Is it a free cancellation, if the next guest can’t show up because he is covid-19-positive? How does a hotel stay solvent, when all the guests want their money back?
We were able to help in many cases.

Key success factors
As our actions took place on almost all levels – from the little local hirer to the prime minister of lower-saxony, we became the instance of information on Norderney concerning the corona-updates. We knew all the rules first, followed and published them. The business-contacts grew on as the quality of our support became more attention. The image of the DMO improved in many ways, as well as the interconnection on the island. Just one example: Our normally monthly B2B-newsletter turned into a regular information-tool with weekly and more issues a month, with rising click-rates of 64% and a rising number of recipients, even of hirers who have their holiday-flat in the mainland – now more than 600 recipients. Another example: With the start of the corona-effects in Germany, we opened our website for local businesses. Instead of paying thousands of Euros for an advertising on one of the most attractive websites in german tourism, local businesses are now on the starting page for free: An offer that still lasts and will be online until probably April 2021. And another one: supportyourlocals_norderney has been (and still is) a social-media-campaign where local performers can use a platform to make marketing for free, a platform that is spread via our B-2-C-newsletter (about 60.000 recipients), our website, other social-media-channels and much more.

Lessons learned
We faced some challenges during this time. As one of the main information-center for Norderney, we needed to learn some lessons. One fact has been, that most regulations and laws were released at week-ends, but started counting from next monday on. Other facts have been, that the regulations from lower-saxony could have been overruled by the county and / or the township. Always being up-to-date when most offices are closed and getting informed, what regulations is counting for only the mainland and / or the island has been tricky sometimes, but it worked quite well and better during the time of the crisis. Another result is, that we received extra respect and esteem for what we are doing. Little hirers showed up and told us that we essentially helped them saving their businesses, as we informed about financial help-fonds and new credit-offers. As the Staatsbad is sometimes distinguished as a local DMO with a distance to the local needs, the Staatsbad detected the advantages of closer contacts to the local partners.

Results, achievements and recognitions
One of the results that we are really proud of is, that not one business on Norderney had to shut down due to the corona-crisis, till now. We know that there is still a hard time to come (when winter comes and the number of visitors decreases), but we are focused on minizing the negative effects of the crisis. Another achievement is the approved relationship of the DMO with the local stakeholders. It’s probably never been so good and close than now. The image of the DMO has improved on the island. New partners as well as remigrated partners of the DMO may contribute to a closer relationship of the island’s stakeholders in the future.

Our aspirations as a DMO now is to stay that trusty partner for the island’s entrepreneurs. When Corona broke out, the island was in the middle of a process called „Lebensraum-Konzept“ – a process that should integrate the will and needs of the inhabitants to plan the next years of the island. With the Corona-experience we haven’t finish this Konzept till now, but we include the effects of corona into it. This will automatically increase the sustainable part of the process. The number of daily-guests, the number of vehicles on the island are now
higher on the board and will be intensively discussed. Those who always defended the unlimited tourism are now in a much more uncomfortable position. It is most likely that the tourism will have a change on Norderney, with a traffic management system and a limitation of daily-guests. Also the reasons to travel to Norderney are in new discussion. If you take a look at the attached JPG „Partyzug verboten“ you see that the mayor and DMO-CEO just stopped a party-train to come to Norderney as this would be the wrongest signal you can send to our guests, inhabitants and partners. Also attached: our b2b-newsletters from march til june.

Additional references
Provide links to further information. Pictures and videos should be available for download either from Youtube, Vimeo or other Cloud-based (Google/ One Drive) download URL

Some URLs:  
www.norderney.de  
https://www.instagram.com/supportyourlocals_norderney/  
https://www.facebook.com/supportyourlocalsnorderney  
https://www.norderney.de/partnerbereich.html  
Benutzer: partner  
Passwort: nY4cgX  
https://www.norderney.de/wir-ueber-uns/corona-norderney.html  