

Tourism and Tourism Surety in the Post-Covid Period: The Battle between Personalization and Depersonalization in Tourism

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Abstract

There is little doubt that the Covid years were not easy for those working in tourism security. In the United States, and multiple other nations police suffered not only from fear of their, or their loved ones, becoming sick but also from the George Floyd syndrome. These were the years when leftwing politicians declared war on law enforcement and demanded the defunding of police and even its abolishment. The Covid-19 pandemic officially last three years. During these years the tourism industry claims to have learned much about the importance of tourism surety². The question that needs to be asked is: did the industry learn these lessons or has the tourism and travel industry returned to its pre-Covid assumptions and errors? Looking back at those years, however, industry leaders need to ask themselves exactly which lessons they learned. The present essay review not only brings a critical reflection on the long-lasting effects of COVID-19 in the tourism industry but also its futures and challenges in the years to come.

Key Words: Tourism, Security, Safety, COVID-19

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² For purposes of this paper surety is the point where safety, security, health and reputation meet

Introduction

When tourism leaders and scholars look back on the Covid-19 years and the immediate post-Covid period the words of Charles Dickens' opening lines in a *Tale of Two Cities* (1859) might come to mind: *"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way - in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only"*.³ If the Covid-19 period was the worst of times, the tourism boom that followed for many in the tourism industry has been the best of times. Perhaps due to the Covid lockdowns or simply a desire to travel again, after the Covid-19 pandemic the tourism flourished as never before. Now in the post-Covid-19 world the tourism industry faced new issues such as over-tourism and the replacement of human beings with robotics. Packed airplanes and roads, along with crowded beaches, restaurants and hotels have produced new challenges and threats to the travel and tourism industry's long-term health and sustainability. The industry in just a few short years went from bust to boom, and empty airlines seats became overbooked flights. The pandemic years for the world tourism industry were dreadful. For example in 2022, the Chinese tourism scholar Xiufang Jiang and his colleagues wrote; "Perhaps no event in modern tourism has had (and continues to have) a more significant impact on travel desire, perceived travel risk, and the hospitality industry at large than the 2020 outbreak and global spread of COVID-19."⁴

Despite the full airplanes and hotels in many ways the tourism industry is still feeling the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Now in this post-Covid-19 world the questions that industry's leaders need to ask is not how Covid-19 impacted tourism but what lessons the travel and tourism industry(ies) learned from the Covid-19 pandemic? How can tourism assure a safe and secure environment in a constantly changing world? During the Covid-19 period tourism leaders and scholars had the time to do serious academic work? The question is, not what did they study

³ See Dickens, https://www.dickens-online.info/a-tale-of-two-cities.html#google_vignette, accessed November 24, 2024>

⁴ Xiufang J, et al. "How Tourists' Perception Affect travel Intention: Mechanism Pathway and Conditions, June 15, 2022, <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.821364/full> <accessed November 23, 2024>

but rather what did they learn and did the lessons of this dark period become guidelines for the future? For example, the Covid-19 worldwide pandemic demonstrated that when there is a lack of security, or a perceived lack of security, the tourism industries suffers and in extreme cases parts of it can die. Due to fear of illnesses in many cases people stopped traveling. During the Covid years hotels, airlines and restaurants took special precautions to assure a healthy travel experience. The same was true of tourism security agencies, such as public safety officers (police) and private security firms.

There is little doubt that the Covid years were not easy for those working in tourism security. In the United States, and multiple other nations police suffered not only from fear of their, or their loved ones, becoming sick but also from the George Floyd syndrome. These were the years when leftwing politicians declared war on law enforcement and demanded the defunding of police and even its abolishment.

The end result was an increase of crime, especially in poor neighborhoods and a police bunker mentality. Today police departments around the world suffer from man/woman-power shortages, much of which can be traced back to the leftwing political rhetoric of those pandemic years.

The worldwide pandemic starting in 2020 and continued into 2023.⁵ The pandemic demonstrated the importance of all aspects of tourism surety, from the physical aspects of safety and security to its medical and health aspects. The pandemic also reenforced just how important perceptions are. The industry learned once again that visitors often base their travel decisions not only on hard facts but also from their perceived and emotional understanding of those facts.

The Covid-19 pandemic officially last three years. During these years the tourism industry claims to have learned much about the importance of tourism surety⁶. The question that needs to be asked is: did the industry learn these lessons or has the tourism and travel industry returned to its pre-Covid assumptions and errors? Looking back at those years, however, industry leaders need to ask themselves exactly which lessons they learned.

Despite the fact that the tourism industry's leaders have long claimed that visitor safety and security are their number one priority too often these claims have been nothing more than empty words. A review of convention and visitor bureau's or tourism ministries' budgets reveals that

⁵ The World Health Organization declared the pandemic over on May 5, 2023.

⁶ For purposes of this paper surety is the point where safety, security, health and reputation meet

tourism surety receives far less financial support than do other parts of the tourism industry such as marketing campaigns. Many tourism professionals take the position that a good marketing campaign can compensate for security glitches or failures, and all too often it is assumed that the industry will deal with crises on a case-by-case basis.

During the pandemic years the tourism and visitor industry emphasized the importance of all aspects of tourism surety, in many cases, however, the industry's commitment proved to be more illusionary than real. To a great extent much of the tourism industry still suffers from the supposition that good marketing not only changes perceptions of reality but also reality itself. IMS Technology emphasizes this notion when we read on its website: "Each individual has his or her own perception of reality. The implication is that because each of us perceives the world through our own eyes, reality itself changes from person to person. While it's true that everyone perceives reality differently, reality could care less about our perceptions. Reality does not change to adapt to our viewpoints; reality is what it is."⁷

Tourism Surety

As noted, the post-pandemic world learned the importance of the concept of tourism surety as differentiated from tourism security or safety. We can define tourism surety as the point where safety, security, public health, economics and reputation meet. From the tourism industry's perspective there is no (or little) difference between issues of safety and issues of security. Well-publicized acts that harm or destroy lives are social cancers that eat away at the economic foundation and reputation of a location. The travel & visitor industry is not vulnerable to both covert and overt forms of crime and of terrorism, but also to issues of biosecurity (health). Biosecurity covers a wide range of topics from illnesses on cruise ships to clean water, from contagious illnesses to biological attacks and doctors being trained to handle a biochemical attack. As the tourism and travel industry continues to grow, these biosecurity issues will take on an ever more important role.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic it was considered to be a mistake in confusing crime with terrorism. Classical tourism criminals such as pickpockets need the tourism industry to attract visitors so as to have ready victims. Classical terrorists wanted to destroy economies and create

⁷ IMS Technology Services, <https://www.imsts.com/perception-vs-reality>. <accessed November 24, 2024>

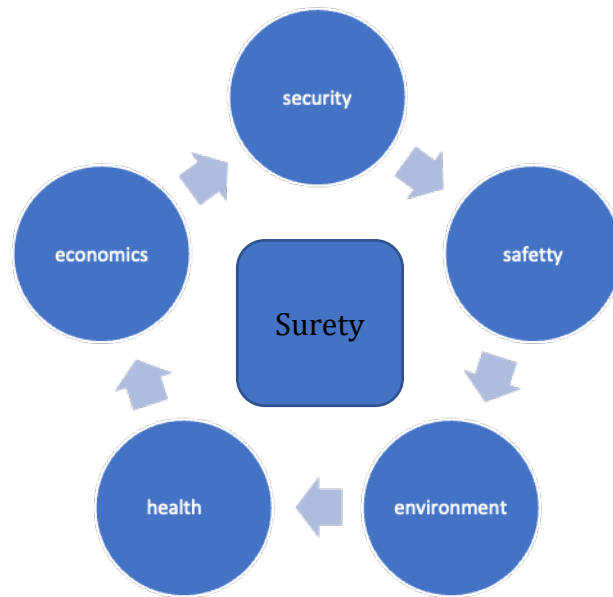
poverty and as such saw the tourism industry as their enemy. Thus, traditionally the “crime” industry, such as pickpockets and scammers, want the tourism industry to succeed. These criminal elements have a parasitic relationship with tourism. The visitor industry provides the “raw material” that allows criminals to “earn” their living. Terrorists do not seek a parasitic relationship with the tourism industry but rather seek to destroy the principals upon which tourism exists. It is their goal to destroy a nation’s tourism industry and thus continue on the road to international impoverishment. From the industry's perspective food poisoning and bombings, safety and surety (S&S) issues are intertwined and capable of turning a dream vacation into a nightmare. In the post Covid-19 world with the rise of the sale of such illegal drugs such as fentanyl and the interactions between human and sex trafficking and tourism the division between crime and terrorism has become an overlap.

Additionally, the Covid-19 pandemic introduced not only a new element of uncertainty into the world of tourism but also a new vocabulary including such terms as biosecurity. Furthermore, although the organizations such as the World Health Organization and the United States’ Center for Disease had declared in 2023 that the official end to the pandemic had come, the virus still exists and the threat for the return of the Covid pandemic, or another pandemic, has not been eradicated. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, and now in the post Covid-19 period, we see the importance of understanding tourism surety (as differentiated from tourism security) and the development of TOPPs (Tourism-Oriented Policing and Protection Services) units. The term surety, borrowed from the insurance industry, is the point at which safety, surety, reputation and economic viability meet.

Tourism surety is based on two underlying principles. These are:

- 1) In most cases travel are voluntary and can be curtailed or cancelled at a moment’s notice.
- 2) Travelers will not go to locations that are unsafe or they perceive to be unsafe.

It is these two basic principles that provide the basis for tourism surety and its interactions are illustrated in the graph below.



Tourism surety traditionally has sought to protect seven distinct areas of the tourism industry. These distinct areas are:

- Visitors to the locale:** The protection of visitors is much more complicated than might at first appear. Not all visitors are good. Some people visit for nefarious reasons and seek to harm others. Additionally, in a world of human and sex trafficking some visitors are not in a locale on their own accord. Assuming the visitor is there on his or her own accord and for the right reasons, visitor differ from locals in that they often do things that they might not do at home or act in ways that lack common sense. As such tourism surety seeks to protect the visitor/tourist from a diverse set of people including locals, other visitors, dishonest workers or con artists within the industry, and threat to a visitor's or traveler's health. Tourism surety professionals understand that not all visitors are good. Unfortunately, there are also people who travel to other places specifically to prey on the innocent. Examples of the criminally minded visitor include pickpockets who travel from event to event or from one location to another. Such roving criminals act like tourists but they come to a destination specifically to prey on other tourists. In a like manner there is a need to protect the visitor/traveler from unscrupulous people who work in the industry itself. Covid-19 has shown the industry how important is cleanliness and precautions against illnesses and infection. Travel providers who cannot provide clean, safe, secure and efficient service not only put their business at risk but also the entire industry.

- Employees employed in the tourism industry:** Tourism surety programs work at making sure

that the staff members who work in hotels, restaurants, on ships and airplanes etc. are safe and trained in what to do, whom to watch out for, and how to protect themselves. This statement does not mean that each staff member needs to be an expert in personal self-defense, but it does mean that a tourism protection plan needs to be in place whenever people are working. Tourism surety programs work at making sure that the staff members who work in hotels, restaurants, on ships and airplanes etc. are safe and trained in what to do, whom to watch out for, and how to protect themselves. Additionally, tourism industry employees are also the front line in identifying or protecting the human trafficked or in identifying a potential criminal or terroristic act.

- ***The location's physical environment and cultural assets:*** This category includes everything from the local ecology to the assurances that we give our visitors that the water they consume or the food they eat will not make them sick. The tourism industry dare not forget that a visitor's travel experience can be just as easily ruined by contaminated food as it can be ruined by a criminal act. Tourism surety agents must also work with local cultural groupings so as to protect these cultures groups or institutions. They must help create the balance between accessibility and unique flavor or local cultures. For example, Ecuador's Galapagos islands can become so overrun with visitors that the reason for visiting these islands no longer exists. Tourism surety professionals must work to assure that their locales remain clean and do not suffer from overtourism leading to the locale's becoming rundown or destroyed.
- ***The location's site/physical plant:*** Visitors often abuse local sites, whether these sites are attractions, museums or hotels. A good tourism surety program examines the physical environment and matches it with the type of visitor who uses the site. Site protection needs may change during different periods of the year. For example, a beach community may attract many young college students during spring-break, but also switch to family-oriented vacations during other seasons in the year.
- ***Protecting a destination from risk and from possible litigation.*** A good tourism surety program involves not only surety and safety issues, but also seeks to manage risk. In the tourism industry, risk management is an important aspect of tourism safety and surety. Preventing a negative incident is more important than recovering from an incident and can avoid expensive litigation and lawyers' fees. Tourism surety managers must also train employees so that they do not get accused of inappropriate actions or activities that might reflect poorly on the tourism business or locale.

- ***The location's reputation:*** Closely related to the legal side of a threat is reputational surety. It can take years and millions of dollars to regain the public confidence after a major crime spell, health disaster or environment crisis. Yet all too often the tourism and visitor industry professional gives nothing more than lip service to a good tourism surety program. Good tourism risk management teaches that it is a lot less expensive to prevent a mishap than it is to recover a person's, a businesses or location's reputation.

Visitor surety in the new post-Covid world of tourism

In the post-Covid world the protection of tourists must also be centered around not only physical threats such as robberies or acts of terrorism but also health risks. Employees in such tourism business as hotels and restaurants are also vulnerable human beings who must work in an environment in which illnesses are a ubiquitous threat. The same is true of tourism surety agents. Furthermore, these people not only face their own health issues but also the possibility that they will transfer these issues to members of their own family or bring a family illness to work.

These challenges impact every aspect of the tourism and travel industry from: the airline cruise industry to the hotel and restaurant industry, from tourism attractions to the convention and meeting industries. The post-Covid world demonstrates the importance of the tourism industry learning to work with the medical and health industries and how intertwined these two seemingly separate industries are. For example, the Maine Tourism Association notes how much the health care industry can learn from tourism when it states: "The principles of hospitality, such as attentiveness, empathy, and responsiveness, can be applied in healthcare settings to enhance the patient experience and promote healing. In fact, many healthcare organizations are adopting hospitality-inspired practices to create a more patient-centered approach to care."⁸ Greece's Malvasia Health Care System notes that "The United Nations World Tourism Organization (2015) recognizes that tourism can contribute to health and well-being in a variety of indirect ways including via the strategic reinvestment of tourism generated income into health-related services. This entry focuses on the direct benefits that tourism experiences can have upon

⁸ Ference, K, March 13, 2023, "At its core, both hospitality and healthcare are service-oriented industries that prioritize the well-being and comfort of customers or patients."

<https://www.mainetourism.com/articles/post/the-healthcare-tourism-connection/> <accessed Nov. 23, 2024>

tourists' health and well-being and discusses the different ways in which health relates to tourism and society in this light.”⁹

The similarities between medicine and tourism also are relevant with regard to tourism surety. There are other similarities between medicine and tourism security. Just as in medicine tourism surety specialists must first make a diagnosis and just as in the case of medicine, any form of tourism security and especially tourism surety is as much an art as it is a science. Each aspect of tourism surety can be seen on a continuum ranging based not only on the individual practitioner's knowledge and skills but also instinct and sense or feel. These similarities are prevalent across the security field but are especially true of tourism surety where security must be mixed with customer service and attention to the visitor's feelings. As differentiated from other forms of security the tourism surety professional, be s/he public or private must face additional challenges. Among these are:

1. The perception of surety must be maintained in an industry that sells magic and enchantment. The tourism industry cannot ill afford any act of violence that destroys a place's image. This means that tourism surety must be packaged in a manner as to assure the public that it is safe but at the same time does not cause public fear.
2. Tourism surety can be a major aid in marketing a tourism product but must be done so as to become part of the overall marketing campaign rather than undercutting that campaign.
3. Tourism surety requires a cooperative effort. In the world of tourism surety there is no room for interagency rivalries or refusal to cooperate. Visitors have the right to expect a safe and secure vacation experience.
4. Tourism surety require credibility. Saying a location is safe or playing with numbers in the long destroys the locale's credibility and visitors simply cease to believe what they are told. Tourism officials need to tell the truth and have the data to support their assertions. If the truth hurts then the solution is to invest in fixing the problem rather than hiding the problem.

⁹ Malvasia Health Care System Blog, <https://malvasiahealthcare.gr/2021/06/16/tourism-and-health-understanding-the-relationship/> <accessed November 23, 2024> ß

5. Tourism officials need to fight this year's battles and not last year's battles. All too often tourism officials are so fixated by a crisis from previous years that they fail to note a new crisis that is brewing. Tourism surety experts need to be aware of the past but not prisoners to it. For example, if in a certain location the agents find that identity-theft crimes have replaced crimes of distraction, then officials need to be aware of the new situation and take measures to protect the traveling public.

6. Tourism industries that chose to ignore tourism surety are opening themselves up to not only financial loss but to major lawsuits and liability issues.

7. Well trained tourism surety professionals add to the bottom line rather than subtracting from it, and with proper training can add a new marketing dimension to a tourism product.

The post-Covid world of tourism also raises the question of quantitative analysis and as symbolic of the replacing of human interactions with human to robot or artificial intelligence interactions. Should we view the industry through the macro level of statistical analysis or is tourism more centered on the personal and micro level of analysis? Did the emphasis on health and tourism lead to greater depersonalization? For example, the tourism industry in the years 2020 and 2021 were defined by the number of Covid cases or deaths and the amounts of money the industry lost. Now in the post-Covid period the tourism industry will have to decide if it places its emphasis on the individual and customer service, or on the less personal analysis by numbers. To add to this quandary, the Covid-19 pandemic and its inflationary period caused the tourism industry to move away in all too many cases from human interactions and replacing the humans with robotic or AI driven machine substitutes. If travel and tourism are about the personal experience, the search for memory then how much does this new age of robotics, artificial intelligence and quantitative planning dehumanize the tourism industry? Former United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon warned of the "numbers dilemma" (symbolizing non-human interactions) when he stated in 2016: "We all understand that people can never be reduced to mere numbers. At the same time, statistics are essential for tracking progress. When people are not counted, they are excluded."¹⁰ Ban Ki-moon recognized, however, that humans are more than quantifiable numerical symbols. What was a potential threat to tourism in 2016 has become a reality in post-Covid tourism of the mid third decade of the twenty-first century.

¹⁰ Speech at the Commission on population and development: April 11, 2016: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sgsm17661.doc.htm> <accessed on June 19, 2021>

It behooves travel & tourism industry leader to be mindful of the fact that their industry is both an abstract and composite product. As such we can measure the results of tourism, how many room nights we sell, how many airline seats are empty. Travel & tourism, however, also has its non-measurable aspects. Kahn & Narawane writing about both e-products and hard products noted: “Customer satisfaction (Zeithaml et al., 2009) is measurable, but it is dynamic and may evolve over time and it is influenced by a verity of factors. Basically, these factors can be divided into two broad categories, and these are vendor behavior & vendor’s product and service performance.”¹¹

The question that we need to ask is: Has the travel and tourism industry’s academic and applied sides become so complex that the industry has forgotten that each of its clients is an individual and that travel, especially leisure travel, is a unique reality for each of its customers? In a post-Covid world many leisure travelers shy away from, and even resent being, reduced to a mere number. Without a certain “je ne sais quoi” based on individual actions and experiences travel and tourism becomes nothing more than the reduction of human beings to a quantitative formulas.

As we learned during the Covid-19 pandemic, numbers tell only a partial story. Too often politicians, businesses leaders, and academics manipulated these numbers to support predisposed political positions or even academic hypotheses. If they are manipulated, then we need to question if quantifiable data provide true unbiased explanations of reality, or do they merely produce illusions of reality? Are these forms of measurement providing the clear picture of reality that we have often come to believe or are they missing the essence of the human soul and therefore might lead to false conclusions?

The problem is that no matter how much data we have, or might need, both tourism academics and applied professionals instinctively know that tourism is the celebration of the individual. The visitor, tourist, or traveler does not want to be part of a cohort, or a trend but rather a unique customer. To transform the visitor into a dehumanized widget is to lose the essence of tourism’s *raison d’être*. The search for authenticity is often part of this individualization. It is also an example of how pure numerical analysis often do not describe the tourist reality. For example,

¹¹ Khan, R & Ganesh Narawane, “Examining Factors Affecting Customer Satisfaction” p. 9 (2011) <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:477165/FULLTEXT01.pdf> <accessed July 15, 2021>

in an article published in “The Conversation” we read: “Authenticity is becoming an increasingly valuable commodity in the tourism industry, as more and more tourists seek to immerse themselves in local cultures and environments. What makes for an authentic experience will differ from one person to the next – from eating at a local restaurant, to visiting war-torn conflict zones”¹²

From Depersonalization To Re-personalization

The post-Covid world of tourism has become a world of surveys. New software has allowed face-to-face interactions to be reduced to mere numbers. Anna Karpf, writing in the *Guardian* has noted that: “Welcome to the world of metrics. Software has now facilitated the bureaucratisation of emotion, and has automated concern. Or if it takes place at the end of a phone inquiry, it’s read from a script by some poor, benighted zero-hours worker. Feedback has now been professionalised, placed into the hands of specialist companies.”¹³ Travelers have come to resent what seems to be a never-ending series of almost invasive questionnaires. Karpf reacts to this overabundance of surveys when she states: “So many organisations now want our feedback that if we acceded to them all, it would turn into a full-time job – unpaid, of course, so that we could no longer afford to buy anything or go anywhere (maybe it’s all a clever green ploy). The result is that I’m suffering from feedback fatigue and have decided to go on a feedback strike.”¹⁴ Today it is almost impossible not to feel “over-surveyed”. It often seems that whenever we contact an airline, car rental company, eat in a restaurant, visit an attraction and not be harassed by the company asking for a “brief” survey of the consumer’s opinion. To make matters even more frustration the questionnaire’s producers seem to have designed their survey in such a way as to almost force the desired answer. Thus, for marketers the survey becomes not a research tool meant to aid the enterprise in bettering its product or customer

¹² <https://theconversation.com/why-tourists-thirst-for-authenticity-and-how-they-can-find-it-68108> accessed on July 19, 2021>

¹³ Karpf, A, The Guardian, “I am fed up of being asked for feedback-when did companies get so needy” <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/mar/07/feedback-companies-shopping-online-theatre> <accessed November 24, 2024>

¹⁴ Karpf, A, The Guardian, “I am fed up of being asked for feedback-when did companies get so needy” <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/mar/07/feedback-companies-shopping-online-theatre> <accessed November 24, 2024>

service but a mere marketing tool in which the customer is coerced into becoming part of the product's marketing campaign.

The Depersonalization of Tourism and Tourism Security.

The move away from personalization has also impacted the tourism surety. All too often crimes against tourists have become a numbers game in which the individual's victimization is reduced to a quantity.

Future historians, looking back at the immediate post-Covid tourism era, might be tempted to call this new *fin de siècle* period a time of deep divides. The last century's final decades, and this century's early decades, have been filled with international wars and domestic turbulence. The year 2024 appears to be ending with the world on the brink of nuclear war. Additionally, much of Asia and Europe suffers from racial and ethnic divides with a constant increase in violence. One way the tourism industry has begun to fight back is through the development of more personalized protection services called TOPPs (Tourism-Oriented Policing and Protection Services). The development of security agencies dedicated to the tourism industry has not been easy. Although TOPPs units have had their proponents they have also had their detractors. Although Covid-19 has shown the tourism industry that it cannot survive without a secure, safe, and healthy environment, for many years the tourism industry has had a love-hate relationship with law enforcement. For example, at the 4th Annual Tourism Security Conference held in November of 2024 in Bogota, Colombia, there were almost no representatives from the tourism industry present. The Bogota conference, one of many held throughout the world, demonstrated the vastness of the subject and touched upon issues such as illegal drugs, human and sex trafficking, crime prevention, new counter terrorism measures, and air and seaport security.

This love-hate relationship has been exacerbated by depersonalization trends within tourism. To fight this depersonalization TOPPs programs in the post Covid world have become ever more necessary. Despite the diversity of tourism products and the fact that TOPPs agents, be they sworn police officers or private security, despite the fact that they must deal first and foremost with local issues also share certain similarities. Among the similarities are:

-TOPPs officers never forget that tourism security begins with a sense of hospitality and caring. These extraordinary men and women demonstrate that a sense of caring and understand that caring is the first step toward good guest safety and security procedures.

TOPPs officers understand that a depersonalized tourism industry is bound to fail in the end. In a world of robots and telephone trees they personalized the depersonalized and provide individual attention to the industry's visitors and employees alike.

-TOPPs professionals tend to become involved in their communities and understand that a tourism community is an ecological system in and of itself. Because TOPPs is not just a job for them but a form of community service they understand that what happens outside of a community impacts what occurs within it. These men and women volunteer in their religious centers, help youth centers and participate in numerous non-law enforcement community activities.

-TOPPs professionals understand that their visitors make judgments about their community very little data and often base their opinions on mere perceptions. For that reason, smiles are essential. Reno (Nevada's) smile squad is a good example of how a smile can change not only someone's mood but their entire perception about a location.

-TOPPs officers from around the world know that both safety issues such as food hygiene and security issues such as pick-pocketing can both impact the reputation of their tourism community and its economic bottom line. They also understand that a dirty city, or one filled with garbage on the streets or walls with uncontrolled graffiti destroys a community's reputation. For this reason, these officers participate in multiple community-wide beautification projects.

TOPPs officers are the backbone of good tourism security. These highly professional men and women combine the best of love and caring with strength and dignity. They work to do everything from protecting iconic sites to protecting visitors and their community's reputation.

After Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic lasted for three years and impacted every aspect of the tourism industry. During those years the travel and tourism industry vowed that it understood all aspects of

tourism security and surety, from crime prevention to health care. Soon after the end of the pandemic, however, its attention turned to questions of over-tourism, of marketing, and inflation. The travel and tourism industry, however, cannot count on the public's moving passed the crisis. Instead, it must question if it will be prepared for future crises. If the industry uses this lull, then it will be better prepared for the next crisis. If, however, the industry proves that it has learned little, if it chooses to ignore potential new crises that are already manifesting on the horizon then it shall have only itself to blame when the next crisis occurs. The TOPPs program was developed as a paradigm not only to face current crises but to face future and as yet unknown crises. Will the industry take the challenge or once again choose to flee from greatness?