



The Return:

How Resuming Sports Can Learn From Tourism

SAMPLE



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RETURN

INTRODUCTION

The scale of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic shook the sports industry to its core. Teams and leagues have lost millions in revenue, staffers have been furloughed, and fans look to the NFL and other fall sports on how they will proceed into the winter and the new year.

North Americans have waited nearly six months for the return of live sports and are now getting their wish. Unfortunately for them, they'll have to settle for watching from the comfort of home until the situation surrounding the pandemic improves. Meanwhile, theme parks, resorts, and other popular tourist attractions are opening their doors to guests once again while finding ways to implement proper safety and social distancing measures.

Fortunately for the sports industry, there are several lessons that can be learned from these attractions as they prepare to eventually welcome fans back. Front Office Sports teamed up with Satisfi Labs, The Interactive Search company that creates custom and conversational search engines for destinations and experiences, to examine the tourism sector and provide insights into how they have been able to reopen safely.

This data was gathered from conversational input data across roughly 150 Satisfi Labs' sports and tourism clients.

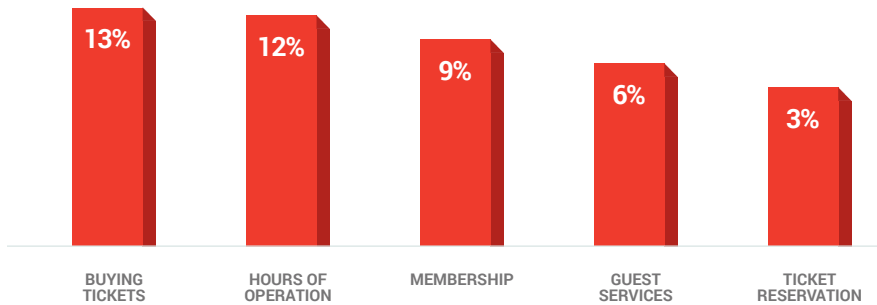
What You Will Learn

- **What the main concerns of fans/tourists are while visiting events and attractions.**
- **How a switch in focus to digital engagement has impacted fan interest.**
- **What measures can be taken to keep fans and visitors safe.**
- **What lessons resuming sports can learn from attractions that are already open to the public.**

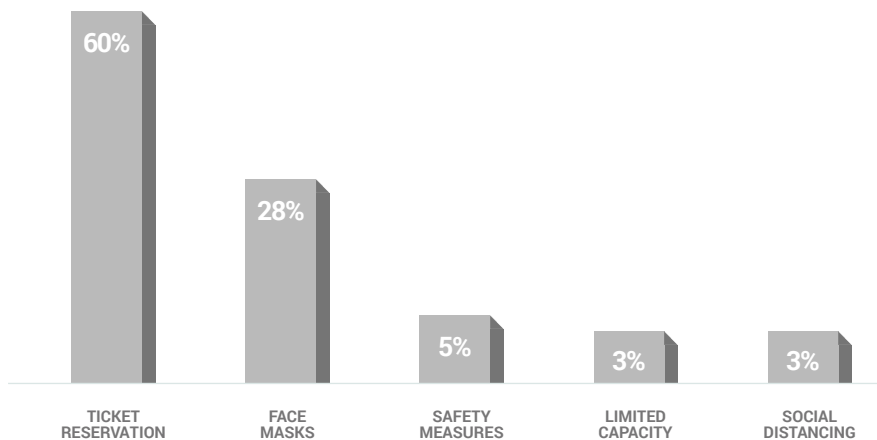
WHAT VISITORS ARE ASKING

Each U.S. state has been operating under different guidelines since the initial outbreak. Naturally, this has created a lot of questions for people looking to get back to their favorite attractions. According to data provided by tourism industry partners of Satisfi Labs, the top five most-asked question categories for guests for the month of June were as follows:

Top 5 most asked question categories*:



Top 5 most asked Healthy & Safety categories:



(Note: Percentages are for within the Health & Safety Category. Temperature checks, hand sanitizer, and contactless payment made up the last 1%.)

Out of the **500 unique intent concepts** asked in June across all Satisfi tourism partners, the ticket purchasing intent accounted for **13%** of all questions. This tells us that despite the risks, customers are still interested in visiting their favorite attractions.



*These five categories account for 43% of all questions asked by visitors.



A DAY AT THE THEME PARK

North American theme parks like Walt Disney World and Universal Studios attract tens of millions of visitors every year. In 2019 alone, Walt Disney World attracted nearly 21 million visitors while Universal Studios Orlando brought in close to 11 million.

While this number will most likely be lower in 2020 due to lost time, it hasn't stopped tourists from interacting with their favorite attractions in a digital capacity. Looking at web chat traffic across Satisfi's tourism partners, the number of daily active users has doubled compared to last year.

For one major theme park specifically, daily active users for the month of June **increased by 520%** compared to June 2019. This can at least be attributed to adding interactive search to their mobile app, but even compared to traffic on Facebook from last year, daily active users **increased 29%**.

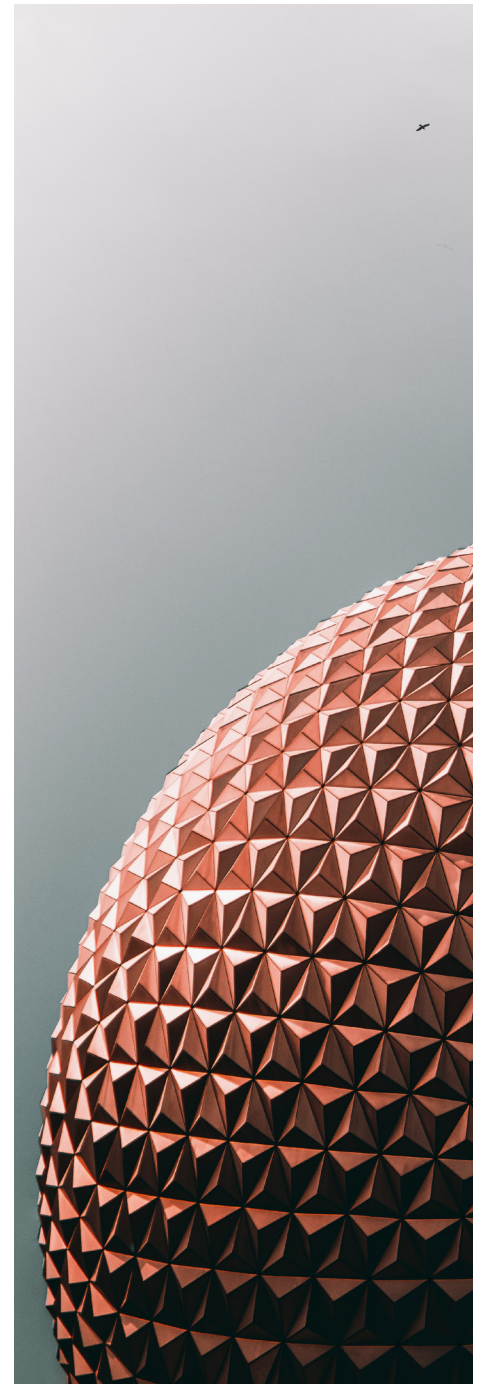
Even as traffic has increased, Satisfi has seen messages per daily active user **decrease 26%** compared to 2019. This is due to the optimization of the welcome message. Upfront communication of key reopening topics around health & safety is making it easy for visitors to get answers quickly, eliminating the need for certain questions to be asked or searched for on a website.

Key Insights of Theme Park Conversations

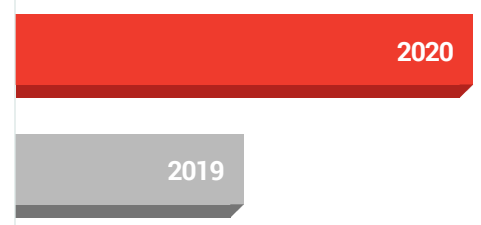
- Average DAU asks 4 questions
- **18%** of all questions are Ticket related (Annual Pass, Ticket Buying)

Annual Pass is the #1 question intent, but only **10%** of those intents have a negative sentiment detected which indicates most are interested in attending, buying, maintaining their passes.

- Single highest week of questions was first week of June
 - There was a **1,200% increase** in questions from the time reopening was announced to the time reopening took place.
 - Saw **2X increase in questions on Facebook** alone, even though traffic is only slightly higher compared to 2019.



FACEBOOK



BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY

To prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases, many facilities where groups of people typically gather are encouraging patrons to wear masks or face coverings. In fact, **71%** of customers are more likely to spend money with businesses that require face masks. Tourist locations and theme parks have been no different.

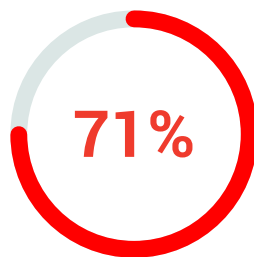
According to Satisfi's conversational data, face mask questions account for **28% of all Health & Safety** related questions across all of their tourism clients.

Based on the learnings received from one major theme park's virtual assistant, Satisfi has been able to identify and train the system to listen for **four subsets of questions around masks** based on: location type, age restrictions, where to purchase, and guidelines around designated mask-free zones.

Specific questions regarding social distancing were not particularly prevalent, but there were plenty of questions regarding ticket reservation and timed entry, which indirectly relate. The tourism industry has timed entry, pre-purchase of tickets, and installed guided paths to manage crowds. In a similar capacity, collegiate and professional sports teams will need to manage the flow of entry, and gathering across concourses. NFL teams have already announced limits for reduced capacity. The Jacksonville Jaguars, for example, will allow for **25%** of TIAA Bank Field's capacity. Furthermore, sports partners such as Ticketmaster have already introduced [new features](#) to help teams manage reduced seating. Sports teams will need to look to communication and venue technology to not only inform, but manage fan gatherings before, during, and after events.



Health & Safety related questions regarding face masks



Customers more likely to spend money with businesses that require face masks

INSIGHTS FOR SPORTS

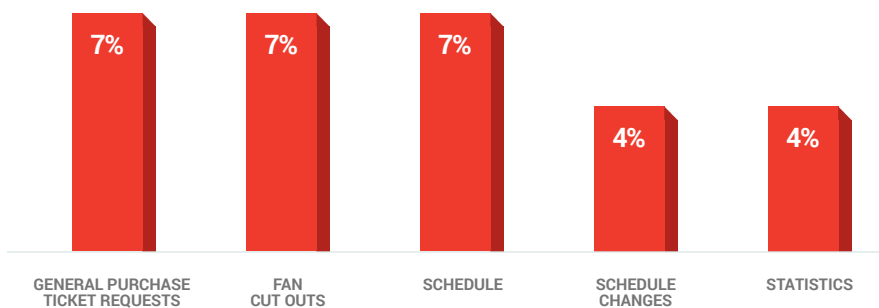
With the NFL season fast approaching, teams are wondering how they can best prepare for the return of fans in some capacity. Fans are in a similar mindset as they continue to ask questions about when they will get their favorite teams back. Even though sports teams that have Satisfi Labs' Interactive Search Engines installed saw both traffic and DAU **decreased by 43% and 48%** respectively in the month of June compared to the same time last year, the teams were quickly hit with an influx of questions as start of season announcements came out.

The highest week of traffic since the announcement that competition would pause came **July 6 through July 12**. This was the week that both MLB and the NHL announced their schedules for return to play. Traffic for that particular week was almost comparable to pre-coronavirus traffic numbers.

More importantly are the questions being asked that weren't topics of consideration before the pandemic. Sports teams now have to handle all the same pre-game and game-day questions from before, but are also handling questions around player safety, new rules, and even fan cut outs and piped in music questions.

(Note: The vast majority of these hits came from button presses rather than free text inputs. These button presses were roughly 10x as often in early/mid July as they are now.)

Top 5 Question Topics For Sports Fans since July*

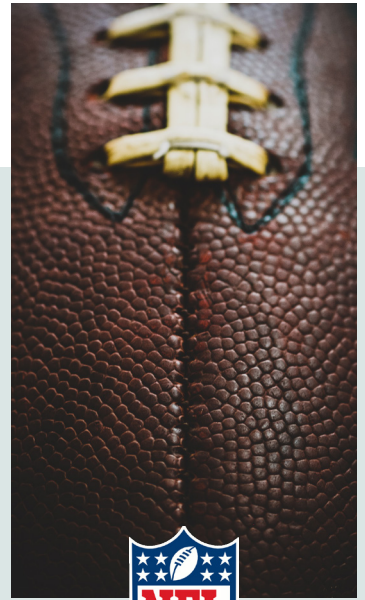
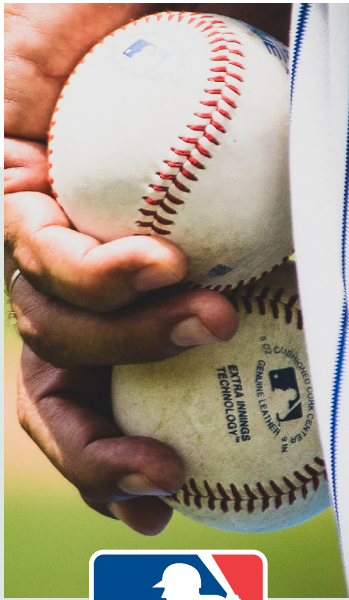


*Data pulled from 7/6-8/12



INSIGHTS FOR SPORTS

Top 5 Question Topics By League Since July*



FAN CUT OUTS
12%

GENERAL PURCHASE
TICKET REQUESTS
11%

GENERAL STM
INFORMATION
30%

SCHEDULE CHANGES
10%

SCHEDULE
9%

GENERAL FOOD
8%

GENERAL PURCHASE
TICKET REQUESTS
11%

COVID-19 REFUNDS
9%

GENERAL PURCHASE
TICKET REQUESTS
8%

ROSTER
7%

ROSTER
10%

VENUE MUSIC
5%

STATISTICS
6%

SCHEDULE CHANGES
6%

SCHEDULE
5%

ROSTER
5%

GAME SCORES
6%

VENUE MAP
6%

SCHEDULE CHANGES
4%

PARK HISTORY
4%

*Data pulled from 7/6-8/12

CONCLUSIONS

After reading through the data, you're likely wondering how it all pieces together. Here are some key takeaways that you can look to while preparing for football, fall sports, and the eventual return of fans to your venue or your favorite team's venue.

▷ FAN QUESTION INSIGHTS

Insight: The two things fans ask about the most are buying tickets and ticket reservations.

Your Opportunity:

- Nail down a ticketing strategy as soon as humanly possible. Many teams are turning to all-digital ticketing systems as a way to avoid unnecessary physical contact between fans and venue staff.
- To avoid extra strain on your staff, take every opportunity to educate fans on new ingress and egress procedures and any recommendations for making those processes easier (allowing for extra travel time, physical distancing, etc.).

▷ THEME PARK INSIGHTS

Insight: Fans are incredibly eager to interact with locations/properties digitally and want to know about annual passes.

Your Opportunity:

- Be ready to answer any questions about season ticket membership programs from fans.
- Make sure your mobile app and other hardware are able to handle an influx of traffic and can hand off easily to your sales team. While capacity within your venue may be limited by law, fan demand is only going up.

▷ SAFETY INSIGHTS

Insight: Face mask questions account for 28% of all Health & Safety related questions for fans.

Your Opportunity:

- Optimize communication to help fans understand your venue's policy regarding face masks.
- Offer fans the opportunity to purchase face masks with your branding and make purchase available throughout the venue.

▷ SPORTS INSIGHTS

Insight: Now that sports are coming, web and mobile traffic are beginning to return to pre-coronavirus numbers. Ticket Requests and Schedule Information are the most common questions asked by fans across all major leagues.

Your Opportunity:

- Release updated schedule via digital channels.
- Make pre and post-ticket sale questions easily accessible and automated where possible.
- Be prepared to answer all the new categories of questions on-demand and direct fans to the right information.

What we've learned from tourism is that visitors/fans WANT to return, and now it's up to destinations, including sports teams and venues, to make them feel safe and informed.

The Return:

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