

# 6

## The future of travel

### Case study: Vietnam paving the way to the future



**Figure 6.1:** Ninh Binh, Vietnam (courtesy of Vietnam Travel, photo by Aaron Joel Santos)

In the spring of 2020, as countries around the world debated how quickly they could reopen their economies amid the pandemic, Vietnam was ahead of the curve. A national social distancing campaign that shut down non-essential businesses ended on April 22, and life in the country returned to almost normalcy. Restaurants, bars, cinemas, barbers and other shops reopened, and sporting events and festivals were allowed to resume. Almost immediately, the Ministry of Transport started to increase domestic flights and operate trains to major destinations albeit with limited passenger capacity.

All of this was possible thanks to a number of proactive, aggressive steps that Vietnam's government took shortly after the coronavirus emerged in Wuhan, China. On January 23,

## Introduction

Most experts would agree that recovery from the COVID-19 crisis will be slow (see Figure 6.2), in large part due to the impact that the crisis has had on the global travel and tourism industry (Romei, 2020). Until there is vaccine, the virus will influence nearly every sector of travel from transportation, destination and resorts, to the accommodations, attractions, events and restaurants. The first section of this chapter looks at the future for these different sectors, a future heavily influenced by technology and a heightened emphasis on health and safety. The second part of the chapter focuses on a theme that has been prevalent in this book – the need for adaptability or ‘COVID-aptability’. Consumer demands and behavior will be permanently altered by the pandemic, and all stakeholders in the travel industry will need to adapt. One part of adaptability is redesigning servicescapes – a necessity for many after the lockdown, and this is the subject of the penultimate section of the chapter. The conclusion looks at lessons learned from this crisis.

### Most experts agree we're in for a long, slow, bumpy recovery.

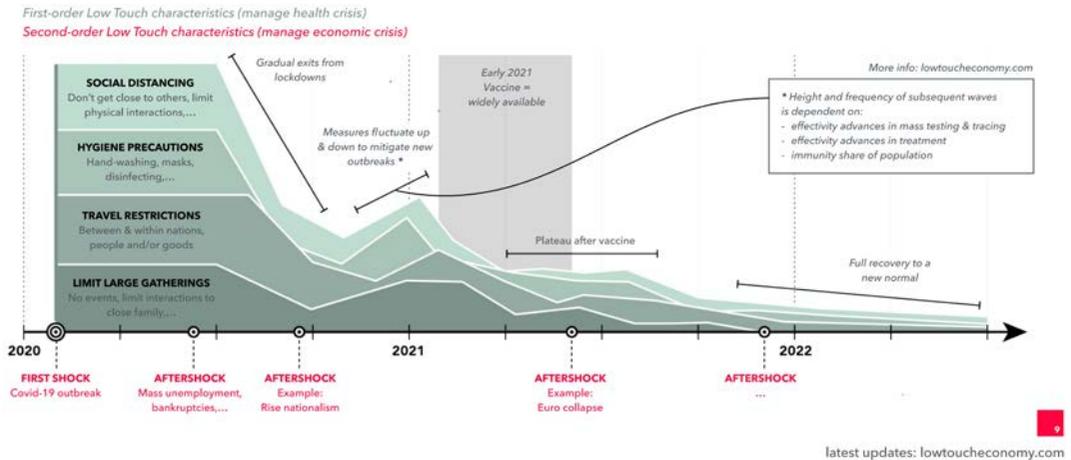


Figure 6.2: Recovery from the COVID-19 crisis will be slow (courtesy of Board of Innovation, 2020: 9).