The 48-Hour List Readiness Check

A structured response for destinations named on a major travel list. Or destinations next door to one that was.

Destination:

_____

Date list dropped: _____

Publication / List:

_____

Audit lead:

_____

A list hangover is what happens when a destination gets named without the readiness to deliver what the list promised. This checklist closes that distance. Name it. Assign it. Run it before the visitors arrive.

HOUR 1-8
Know what was promised

☐ Read the full list entry. Not the headline. The actual description.
What did they say? What photos did they use? What season do the images suggest? What did they name?

☐ Print the entry. This is the promise your visitors are carrying.

☐ Identify whether the entry names specific places or sells a vibe.
"A food scene on the rise." "An outdoor paradise worth the detour." Which real places absorb that vibe?

☐ Where will someone who read this entry try to eat? Try to park? Try to take a photo?

If you are the destination next door:

> *Read the entry for the destination near you. Know what those visitors came for.*

> *Your job: recognize them when they end up with you instead.*

HOUR 8-24
Walk the promise

☐ Visit every place the list mentioned or implied. As a first-time visitor would. On a weekday.

☐ Is it open? Do the hours match Google? Does it look like the photo?
Can someone who does not know the area find it without calling anyone?

☐ Check what visitors will need that the list did not mention:

☐ Closest bathroom to the featured attraction. Parking. Restaurants within walking distance.
Are their listings accurate across Google, their website, and any OTA?

☐ Photograph anything that does not match the list description.

If you are the destination next door:

> *Drive the route a frustrated visitor would take from the listed destination to your town.*

> *What do they find first? A closed visitor center? A gas station? A downtown they don't know exists?*

Brief your operators

- ☐ Tell your top 20-25 businesses a list dropped. Share the entry.
- ☐ The people visitors meet first need to know what story brought them.
  The front desk. The coffee shop. The gas station.
- ☐ If the list mentioned specific businesses, call them.
  Ask if their hours, menus, and availability match what the list implies.
- ☐ If a restaurant is seasonal or a trail is closed, get that information out before someone drives three hours to find out.

If you are the destination next door:

- > *Brief yours too. "The town 30 minutes east just made a major travel list."*
- > *Share what those visitors were looking for. Share what you offer.*

HOUR 36-48

Close what you can close

- ☐ Update your website if the list drives visitors to outdated pages.
- ☐ Add a "Featured in [publication]" page. Not a press release. An arrival guide.
  What is open. What is seasonal. What to know before you visit.
- ☐ Fix the Google listings you can fix. Flag the ones you cannot.
- ☐ One-page handout for businesses: "We were featured in [list]. Here is what visitors will expect. Here is how to check your listings in 10 minutes."

If you are the destination next door:

- > *Make yourself findable on purpose. Update your listings.*
- > *Make sure your website says what you are, not just what you are near.*
- > *If you have capacity when the listed destination does not, say so. As hospitality, not competition.*

AFTER 48 HOURS

Assign the ongoing work

- ☐ Assign one person to own monitoring.
- ☐ Track what visitors ask about.
- ☐ Watch for reviews where expectation and experience do not match.
- ☐ Note which businesses get the most list-driven traffic.
- ☐ Report back in 30 days.
  This data shapes your next board conversation about readiness investment.

NOTES

That window is your only shot at closing the distance between the story and the reality.