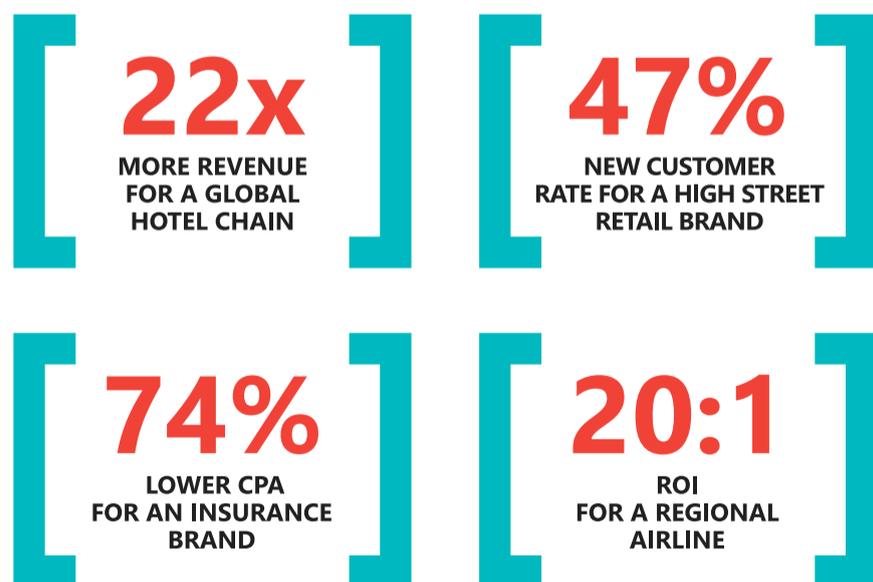


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INTELLIGENT LIFECYCLE MARKETING

THE FUTURE CMO

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STRATEGY

Short-term pain, long-term brand-building

In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, brands must adapt rapidly to changes in customer behaviour, but keep sight of long-term strategies and campaigns for life after lockdown

Anna Hamill

Chief marketing officers, or CMOs, have long understood the importance of working towards long-term marketing goals and building resilient brands, which consumers turn to in good times and bad. But few could have predicted such a shocking turn of events in 2020.

With the coronavirus pandemic and an increasingly gloomy economic outlook now testing even the most resilient brands, CMOs need to make smart decisions to ensure their brands are well prepared not only for immediate challenges, but to capitalise on the new customer buying behaviours. This will position them for recovery and long-term growth.

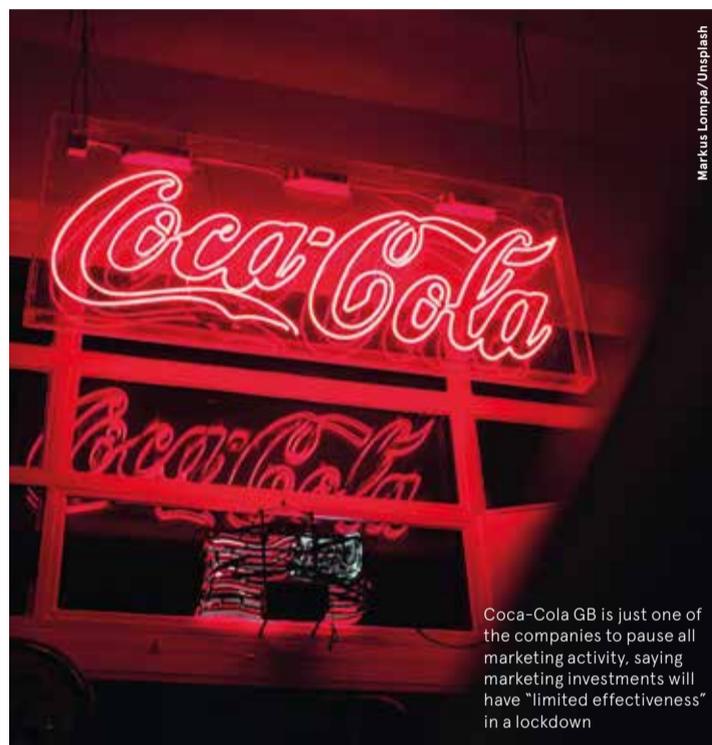
All signs had pointed to 2020 being the year marketers refocused on long-term marketing goals, moving away from the damaging short-term strategies that have undermined brand-building in recent years. The WARC *Marketer's Toolkit 2020* reveals that 40 per cent of marketers surveyed intended to pivot back to long-term brand-building in 2020, with adtech and sustainability also top of mind.

How things change. Now, as revenues slump in the wake of COVID-19, many CMOs are being forced to update their marketing plan in real time. Often, at the heart of those conversations, is one important question: should the brand reduce advertising spend to cut costs or stay the course?

Brands including Coca-Cola, adidas and Google have already cut back marketing spend as a result of the COVID-19 crunch. These brands are far from alone. The most recent *Advertising Association/WARC Expenditure Report*, released at the end of April, forecast a £4.23-billion drop in advertising expenditure this year in the UK alone, a huge 16.7 per cent fall from 2019's record year, with double-digit declines across both traditional and digital channels (see more on the page ten infographic).

According to Peter Field, a leading researcher on marketing effectiveness, going dark and cutting advertising entirely is the "very worst" decision a brand could make if they want to thrive in the post-COVID-19 recovery.

"Going dark is very dangerous; do whatever you can to avoid it," he warns, adding that brands taking this path should "expect market share loss and a reduction of pricing power in recovery".



Coca-Cola GB is just one of the companies to pause all marketing activity, saying marketing investments will have "limited effectiveness" in a lockdown

Field advises that, where possible, CMOs should maintain long-term brand-building activity through these challenging times. "Do not go dark unless survival depends on it. Do not allow share of voice to fall below share of market. Do not go short in marketing terms," he says.

By making well-considered decisions now, marketers can prioritise maintaining market share through the downturn and ensure the brand is well positioned for growth when consumers start spending again.

"Smart brands will take advantage of the falling cost of buying share of voice to maintain or even build

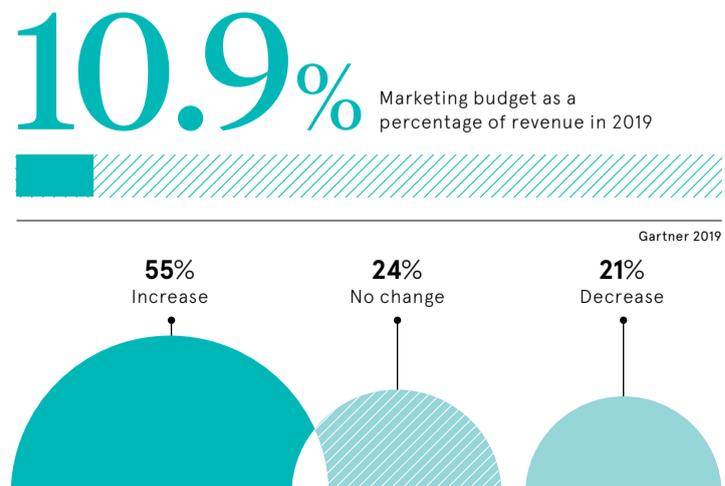
their brand-building presence during recession for less money. They will enjoy long-term returns on their investment that they simply could not achieve during normal times, but will need to shoulder a short-term hit to profitability. It will be well worth it, however," says Field.

"Marketers must ensure the brand is primed and ready to benefit. It will be too late if you wait for recovery to act. Buying in a sellers' media marketplace is not a good plan."

Marketers are already finding hope in new consumer purchase behaviour. A sizeable uptick in ecommerce transactions is one emerging opportunity.

MARKETERS HAD EXPECTED TO RAMP UP BUDGETS THIS YEAR

A survey of CMOs in September 2019 showed that significant increases in budget had been expected in 2020; the following is the average across B2B and B2C



Unilever's chief executive Alan Jope notes in a recent earnings call that Unilever's ecommerce sales had increased 36 per cent in the first quarter of the year. These are exciting green shoots for brands able to pivot into online retailing or dial up their existing investment in ecommerce.

P&G, one of the world's largest advertisers, has elected to double down on marketing investment as demand for its products has soared in recent weeks. The company boosted its third-quarter marketing spend by 1.9 per cent year on year, with a focus on the healthcare, beauty and baby care categories.

"We need to work hard to ensure we maintain mental and physical availability to the greatest extent possible, so that those consumers return to their beloved and trusted brands, which are ours, as they're more fully available," says Jon Moeller, chief financial officer of P&G, on the company's recent quarterly earnings call at the end of April.

"There's big upside here in terms of reminding consumers of the benefits that they've experienced from our brands and how they've served them and their families' needs, which is why this is not a time to go off air," says Moeller.

Even those dealing with a reduced media budget need to find ways to remain visible. This means looking to connect with consumers outside just advertising and executing on the core promise of the brand.

According to Raja Rajamannar, CMO at Mastercard, marketing fundamentals are more important than ever in this time, especially brand trust and customer centricity.

"The most important foundational element is trust. This is a time of need and if you are not friends with consumers, they are not going to talk to you later. It's very important that brands build trust at this point in time. You are trusted, validated or invalidated during the time of crisis," says Rajamannar.

Field advises marketers struggling with budget cuts to look beyond just advertising to pursue their long-term marketing goals during COVID-19. "Look for other ways to keep a presence at relatively low cost: communications to existing customers, product innovation already in the pipeline, public relations initiatives, high-visibility behaviours and commitments that are consistent with the mood of the nation," he concludes.



Image courtesy of Seine Kongruangkit and Matithorn Prachuabmoh

OUT OF HOME

When billboards go viral

In a world where brands are fighting for eyeballs online, what can marketers learn from a pair of ad school students about advertising stunts and making creative out-of-home campaigns that go viral?

Rebecca Stewart

Would you stay at home if you knew your street was going to be lined with a series of posters spoiling the must-see Netflix show you had spent hours, or days, binge-watching? That was the question two international Miami Ad School students in Hamburg asked themselves in March while trying to dream up a campaign to encourage people to take social distancing seriously.

When Seine Kongruangkit and Matithorn Prachuabmoh Chaimoungkalo, known as Brave, returned to their native Thailand, the coronavirus outbreak was reaching its peak in their country.

Dismayed by how poorly their government was enforcing lockdown rules, like all good creatives they took matters into their own hands.

The result was a speculative out-of-home (OOH) advertising campaign for Netflix that ended up delivering against the odds.

In late-March, the internet blew up with people sharing mock-ups featuring posters in situ at bus stops, tube stations and which ruined pivotal plot twists from *Narcos*, *Love Is Blind* and *Stranger Things*, alongside a simple piece of copy: "You should've #StayedTheF***Home".

Publishers the world over covered the viral marketing stunt, some

believing it to have been devised by Netflix itself. It was also widely lauded on Twitter, with one reviewer asserting: "Netflix flashing spoilers to keep people inside is the most millennial thing I've seen so far."

Unfortunately for Kongruangkit and Brave, Netflix failed to give their brainchild the greenlight, but the pair say the success of the hoax should be a lesson for marketers that creative risks can pay off big time. Especially when OOH advertising is the medium.

"It's really important for brands to own these spaces," says Brave. "I can think of so many ways advertisers can amplify OOH in a digital way. People are online all the time, they're flooded with content on their phones, but if brands can sell a solid idea somewhere outside, it can really touch people in a way they might not expect."

Kongruangkit agrees that outdoor still has a huge role to play, even in empty cities, if marketers can cleverly build it into an omnichannel strategy: "OOH isn't just OOH anymore, there are so many places for it to be seen."

Early in 2020, a report from GroupM predicted OOH advertising would surpass newspaper ad spend, with the global market forecast to hit \$40.6 billion within the next calendar year.

OOH's boom has been buoyed by a growing network of digital billboards, which allow brands to reach more targeted audiences and measure the medium's impact more thoroughly than static sites previously allowed.

And yet old-fashioned print posters have been having a moment too, acting as a bridge between the physical and digital. Notable campaigns have included the BBC's *Public Displays of Obsession*, designed to promote series

A fake Netflix ad campaign created to encourage people to stay home during lockdown by revealing spoilers of major shows

three of *Killing Eve* in 2019 by driving viewers to a dedicated #Crazy4Eve hashtag on social media.

Burger King's *Mouldy Whopper* posters, which drew both reverence and revulsion online after crudely highlighting the brand's aversion to preservatives, also launched via a series of billboards in global cities.

The response to these creative executions showcases the power of traditional OOH as a channel that can be seamlessly transferred to digital marketing and public relations.

Ian Henderson, creative and chief executive of ad consultancy AML Group, concurs: "When I was learning to write ads, posters were always the test of a good campaign idea. Creating a viral marketing stunt is a really hard thing to do, especially when there's no one out there to see."

Henderson believes CMOs should draw inspiration from politics if they want their OOH work to leave a digital footprint, pointing to the success of anti-Brexit activists Led By Donkeys in this area. The trio of artists, armed with a ladder, roller brush and a treasure trove of damning contradictory statements from senior Westminster figures, have found fame online after erecting 40m x 20m banners across the UK.

"The lesson for CMOs here is clear: it's still all about ideas and if the idea works on a poster, it'll work anywhere. If it's good enough and brave enough, and you have the right amplification channels in place, the return on investment can be enormous," he says.

However, though lockdown is easing in certain markets, the reverberations of COVID-19 threaten to derail OOH's moment in the sun. Clear Channel Outdoor, Ströer and JCDecaux have all outlined cost-cutting measures, with more than 2.6 billion people, or a third of the world's population, in confinement by late-March.

Meanwhile, CMOs are already tightening their belts, with the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising estimating UK marketing budgets have declined at their fastest rate since the 2008 global financial crash.

Jamie Williams, managing partner at independent creative agency Isobel, says while outdoor might seem pointless for brands right now, the sense of occasion that comes with leaving the house means OOH ads have an opportunity to be more relevant than ever.

"If brands can tap into the right insight and be smart with their creative, engaged and suitably entertained consumers who are exposed to it might just share it," he argues.



It might not get many drive-by viewings, but get the creative right and it could still make you famous

"A single piece of OOH can be seen like a one-off airing of a showcase TV ad, used to drive PR and fame on social media, rather than just TV reach. OOH is obviously so easy to photograph and share that it's a huge opportunity for brands to create fame with a relatively small media investment.

"It might not get many drive-by viewings, but get the creative right and it could still make you famous."

Indeed, ghostly OOH advertising epicentres, such as London's Piccadilly Circus and New York's Times Square, have become focal points in the pandemic, even in the absence of pedestrians. The Queen's image and message of hope lit up the former in April, while the Big Apple's most famous screens have been used to display thanks to key workers.

For freelance creative lead Nathalie Gordon, while lockdown has shown OOH still to be a valuable investment, marketers need to ensure they aren't getting complacent about how they use it.

"What was, a month ago, a flurry of organic – no brief, often no brand – reminders of the power of OOH and its format, has become tired again," she says, arguing creatives have become a little lazy.

"More and more people have seen the impact – online fame – it can have and are trying to use OOH to say the same things, but in different ways to little or no effect. There's only so many times you can see a 'stay home' poster."

There's no question that the current climate opens the door to a range of brands willing to be brave, provocative and engaging. A decrease in ad budgets is driving down the price of big-ticket media buys, which presents a huge opportunity for brands to go viral for a relatively small sum.

However, if they aren't smart about the creative material they plaster on the outside world, then advertisers will soon find themselves out in the cold. ●

CONSUMER ACTIONS

Actions that consumers have taken after seeing a billboard or other out-of-home advertising in the past 12 months	
Used an online search engine to look up information about the advertiser	33%
Visited an advertiser's website	23%
Talking about the ad or product with others	23%
Visited an advertiser's social media page	15%
Recommended the advertised product or brand to others	8%
Posted about the ad or product on a blog or social media network	5%

OPINION

‘Be brave, be bold, be unafraid to take risks and try even the craziest of ideas’

As I write this article for the last time in my current role (I am the outgoing chief executive of The Marketing Society), we’re entering yet another week in lockdown.

While no one would deny it’s been both challenging and indeed surreal for us all both personally and professionally, through the dark times we are seeing the shining lights of new opportunities and hope throughout our global community and beyond.

Like many of us, we have been focusing on a ‘new kind of normal’ with particular emphasis on the wellbeing of our teams, which is ever-more crucial right now. And through that lens we are recognising the humanity in everything we do.

Through pivoting and reframing we’ve found new ways of working that have led us to become more connected as a global community than ever before. We are sharing and learning from our friends and colleagues all over the world and it’s been an uplifting and positive experience.

Never have we had to be so agile. Many of us transitioned from an office-based business to working from home overnight. I am a self-confessed digital Luddite, but yet now feel strangely empowered by embracing new technology and accepting a little person may join virtual meetings. And it’s OK.

So, to mark Earth Day in April we decided to host our first truly global conversation featuring marketing leaders from seven of our hubs in Hong Kong, Singapore, India, Dubai, New York, Scotland and London. As I spoke to our participants one thing became abundantly clear, they were all incredibly optimistic about the future of our industry and each other.

There were so many fascinating insights so I thought I would share three themes that emerged.

Innovation

There’s always been a question in our industry about the relevance of marketing in the C-suite so it’s time to think less like a marketer and more like an owner. Now is the time to encourage brand loyalty so we need to innovate at pace and listen to our customers. To make

things happen we need to seize every opportunity – be brave, be bold, be unafraid to take risks and try even the craziest of ideas.

Purpose

Purpose has been a buzzword in our industry for some time, but now its role couldn’t be more important. Now, more than ever, marketing is being put on the spot, we need to focus on what best serves our customers, not what’s the easiest thing to do or the most lucrative. Customers will not forget how brands treated them and made them feel in these difficult times – we have to show kindness and do the right thing.

Look forward

We all need something to strive for and the most important role for us as leaders is to give our teams the dream. We’ve already learned so much from this crisis – it’s time to use our learnings to our advantage, to rethink and reinvent, and we will come out stronger.

I am a big believer that when we all act together, we can vastly improve the wellbeing of each other and of our planet. Towards the end of last year, we decided our theme for 2020 would be ‘Braver Together’. Who knew then that this would be so relevant just a few short months later.

It’s time to visualise our world after COVID-19. What do you want your story to be? I know what I want mine to be and I plan to make it happen, and together, have a bigger impact. ●



Gemma Greaves
Outgoing chief executive of The Marketing Society, founder of Cabal and co-founder of Nurture

Why brands must own the truth

Wendi Sturgis, European chief executive of search experience cloud company Yext, explains why chief marketing officers have a responsibility to invest in search, now more than ever

The need for accurate, trustworthy information is of huge importance in the digital age when we are saturated with content. At a time of crisis, its role is heightened. COVID-19 is a chilling example of this. As the virus wreaks devastation around the world, people crave urgent answers about everything from health issues to funding, education and supplies.

Take government loans for small businesses. The processes around these are often extraordinarily confusing. At my bank, call waiting times are currently five hours. Many of these callers will have common questions about how to access these loans, yet our retail banking organisations are ill-equipped to provide this information at scale across numerous digital channels.

And consider the statistic that 82 per cent of common questions about Fortune 500 companies are answered by sources other than the brand. Inaccurate information, or even misinformation, can also harm a brand’s reputation.

But it’s not just being present in search. Many people will go directly to a brand’s website to search for the information they need, yet too many companies either don’t have a search function, or rely on outdated technology which indexes on keyword searches, bringing up “blue links” (organic search results) which lack relevance or contain obsolete information.

Not only are many brands failing to deliver accurate, timely information to customers at a heightened time of need, they are negating costly customer acquisition campaigns, undermining the customer experience and risking customer loyalty. In addition, consumers who use site search account for 45 per cent of ecommerce revenue, making them some of the most valuable customers. Brands that don’t act fast risk losing out.

There are tangible cost-savings to be made by providing accurate information too. One of our UK clients is Three,

USERS WHO SEARCH ON YOUR WEBSITE ARE 1.8X MORE LIKELY TO CONVERT THAN THOSE WHO DON’T



82%
of common questions about Fortune 500 companies are answered by sources other than the brand



57%
of consumers say they trust brands based on how that brand treats them when they need help

Edelman Trust Study 2019



45%
of ecommerce revenue is attributed to consumers who use site search, making them some of your most valuable customers



25-95%
increase in profits from raising customer retention rates by just 5 per cent

Bain & Company 2018

whose call centre was recently being overwhelmed by queries about 5G. We worked with the company to ensure its site answered all the common questions, in many cases removing the need to contact the call centre. This enhanced the customer experience and reduced costs.

Ultimately, brands must learn from Google. Its search capability centres on a knowledge graph which gathers information from numerous sources and uses this to drive search results. Google has transformed search engine optimisation in the last five years. Now, instead of returning blue links, more than 50 per cent of Google searches deliver direct answers.

Every company needs its own knowledge graph. Numerous brands build their own, feeding in multiple pieces of relevant data to inform highly accurate search results, both in search and on their own websites.

Knowledge graphs must be underpinned by a clear data strategy. People often search on unbranded, subjective terms based on intent not keywords, for example “best insurance brand”. Companies need a well-defined process to harness and not haemorrhage this search traffic.

In a time of crisis, it is even more imperative chief marketing officers understand the customer journey. Brands need to tailor their tactics to each touchpoint, delivering the information needed on their own site as

well as via third parties such as Google, chatbots and voice.

Again, a data strategy is key, particularly with the growing role of artificial intelligence. Take voice search. Brands can’t control the algorithms used by Alexa, for example, or the customer interface, but they can control the data they supply.

As part of its mission to help businesses tackle inaccurate information, Yext has built a custom website, NoWrongAnswers.com, offering businesses or organisations a free assessment of how well their website answers the most common questions about their brand.

The site is proving very popular and shows there is a pressing need, indeed a responsibility, for brands to deliver factual and up-to-date information to audiences.

We are offering our site search product Answers for free on a 90-day trial to UK organisations. Please visit www.nowronganswers.com.

Remember, the truth is out there, but it is up to brands to deliver it.

“**In a time of crisis, it is even more imperative chief marketing officers understand the customer journey**”



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SOPA Images/Getty

LISTICLE

The post-lockdown customer mindset

Once lockdown is lifted and social-distancing restrictions ease, will business quickly get back to normal? Or will we see a profound shift in buying patterns and customer preferences? Here are six changes in consumer behaviour as a result of the coronavirus pandemic that marketing professionals should be aware of

Rob Gray

Being a better you

Without question, lockdown has impacted the customer mindset. Whether clapping for the NHS and supporting it in other ways, setting ambitious fitness goals or taking up home baking, changing circumstances have inspired millions to take varying forms of positive action.

Marketing and insights consultancy Rare has used qualitative and quantitative research to monitor consumer behaviour during the pandemic. According to chief executive Ben

1 Paske, all households that filled in a research diary mentioned watching free online tutorials and learning software skills as ways of being productive.

Social distancing has unleashed a wave of self-improvement and skill-building has become a form of entertainment in its own right. "We're seeing people trying to use their time in lockdown to become the best possible versions of themselves, whether that's through learning a new skill, exercising more, trying meditation and so on," says TUI UK and Ireland CMO Katie McAlister.

She also makes the point that celebrity stories feel a bit "too light hearted and frivolous" for the circumstances and that guilt around luxury purchases may outweigh their joy. However, consumers still crave quality and it may be a case of quality over frivolity in an era conditioned by what really matters, such as the contribution of key workers to society.

In it together, but differently

Although we've all gone through lockdown together, people have been affected in significantly different ways. Some are saving money they can't spend on holidays or restaurants, whereas others have lost their entire livelihoods, yet are having to pay more on groceries and utilities.

As MediaCom Europe, Middle East and Africa chief strategy officer Steve Gladdis explains, lockdown experience depends on your financial situation, home environment, whether you have outside space, whether you live alone and, if not, how you feel about the people you share your home with.

Market research agency BuzzBack has used findings from online qualitative research to group people into four different consumer segments: new normal, people who've taken the situation in their stride and aren't overly emotional about having to adjust; bittersweet, whose lives have become more challenging, but who can see a bright side and acknowledge the positive changes in their new routine; struggling, who have found it hard to adjust, are anxious and not coping well; and nothing new, where things haven't changed that much.

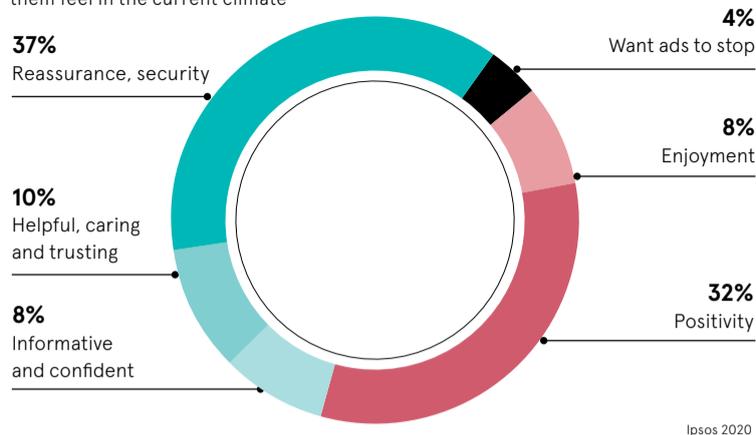
CMOs need to think about these different segments and address them accordingly. Empathy is critical. All

2 brands should come across as supportive towards customer mindset at various stages while remembering it may shift quickly.



WHAT CONSUMERS WANT FROM ADVERTISING DURING COVID-19

US consumers were asked what they want from ads, or how they want ads to make them feel in the current climate



Ipsos 2020

Purpose with teeth

Brand purpose has been a hot topic for years, but the COVID-19 lockdown has undoubtedly pushed down the accelerator.

Day to day, values must correlate with customer experience. That's particularly true in the business-to-business (B2B) sector where, in addition to offering fantastic products with real value, service excellence and deep customer relationships, businesses will need to demonstrate an understanding of their

3 wider role in society as we rebuild in the wake of lockdown.

"Brand leaders and marketers have an important role to play in ensuring this is

not just about warm words, but concrete actions," says Claire Gosnell, global head of brand, communications and marketing at international law firm Clifford Chance. "Navigating this uncertain and nuanced landscape will be complex. Customers, regulators, employees and the public will hold organisations to a different standard. B2B brands that overclaim and under-deliver will soon be found out."

CMOs should seek to create new points of connection that are authentic and human. That doesn't necessarily mean a rush back, for example, to face-to-face events as some of the ground gained by digital won't be lost. What matters is tone, content and a more personalised customer and client approach, allied with purpose that stands up to scrutiny.

New normal versus old routines

Whether we'll see a new normal with significant changes to consumer behaviour or people will be anxious to return to previous routines and habits as quickly as possible is up for debate. Most likely, the truth will lie somewhere in-between.

"There is a strong possibility that the increased feeling of community and wanting to take care of the vulnerable is maintained. But consumers' tendency to

maintain their core beliefs and to return to what they know best should not be underestimated," says Philip Almond, executive director of fundraising and marketing for Cancer Research UK.

All brands should review their tone and approach ready for the post-lockdown era. In terms of tapping into the customer mindset, TSB CMO Peter Markey believes there must be a "clear balance" between reminding consumers of the current situation and showing a future, more aspirational view of the world.

But fear is also a factor. Research in China shows some differences from pre-virus behaviour; taxis and food delivery for home consumption have increased in popularity and, according to Ipsos, two thirds of Chinese consumers who don't have a car would like to buy one in the next six months. Maybe COVID-19 won't prove good for the environment after all.

4

Social distancing amplifies bucket-list ticks

Inevitably, the pandemic has led us all to consider our mortality. A growing sense of the passing sands of time has

5 infiltrated psyches during lockdown and this, coupled with thwarted desires to get out and achieve things, has a bearing on the customer mindset.

"I expect a rise in people seeking experiences over possessions as we are freed from lockdown," says Raj Kumar, Aviva Group brand and reputation director. "People want to tick off bucket-list items, even if they are more wary of travel and infections."

In the meantime, as Ipsos outlines in its report on COVID-19 and behaviour change, brands can look to help people make good use of the time they spend at home and to drive internalisation of new habits by helping

them feel positive about the way time is spent. Campaigns aimed at the individual, their personal growth, wellbeing, passions and hobbies are likely to resonate well with post-pandemic consumers.

During lockdown, people have been valuing what they miss, such as physical contact with friends and family, and dreaming about what they haven't yet been able to do. More than ever, there's awareness that life is short and we should focus on what matters.

TV, video and social media boost

Lockdown has been a nightmare for the out-of-home advertising sector, in contrast, the captive eyeballs of the housebound have focused on TV, video-streaming and social media.

According to the Kantar *Global COVID-19 Barometer*, at-home media consumption has grown significantly in lockdown, particularly among younger audiences. The greatest increase is for online video on platforms

such as YouTube. Some 72 per cent of Generation Z and 69 per cent of millennials say they use it more, compared with 52 per cent overall.

Meanwhile, Broadcasters' Audience Research Board figures point to a 24 per cent rise in TV viewing volume since lockdown began. Nick Hirst, executive strategy director at ad agency adam&eveDDB, believes the emotional power and reassuring effect of TV advertising will provide great opportunities for brands in the coming months, particularly those tapping into the altered

customer mindset by showing how they help society and look after their people.

"Going dark damages brands and market share slowly but surely, like switching off the engines of a 747 at 30,000 feet," says Hirst. "But it's heartening to know, if you do advertise, consumers won't hate you for it. The trick is going to be to keep a very close eye on shifting attitudes, to 'read the room' and act appropriately." ●

6

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PURPOSE

Ensuring your purpose survives a crisis

The last few years of rhetoric in the marketing community about the importance of building purpose have led to this point. Now, at the height of a crisis, companies have the opportunity to show they can “walk the talk” with purpose

Josh McLoughlin

What is your brand for? Why does it exist, apart from making money? For the past few years, communication professionals have been soul-searching. Brand purpose is the genetic code that defines your organisation's character and outlook on social, political, economic and environmental issues; the moral DNA that makes your company tick.

The buzz around brand purpose came to a head in August 2019, when the Business Roundtable of 181 chief executives signed a statement on the purpose of corporation. Radically departing from the traditional corporate *raison d'être*, the new purpose of stakeholder capitalism puts ethical governance, environmental responsibility and treating people fairly ahead of profits.

Now, COVID-19 has changed everything. Having an admirable vision is no longer enough. The time for buzzwords, commitments and declarations has passed. To survive the crisis, chief marketing officers (CMOs) need to turn brand purpose into action.

Christian Sarkar and Philip Kotler's 2018 book *Brand Activism* laid the blueprint for actioning purpose, declaring: “You are now a brand activist, whether you like it or not”. They urged corporate “efforts to promote, impede or direct social, political, economic and/or environmental reform”.

In a global crisis, brand purpose is being tested like never before. Brands face not only an opportunity for activism, but a humanitarian obligation to keep their promises. Lone Thomsen, former head of media at Coca-Cola, says: “The current situation clearly shows how important it is for CMOs to pivot and adapt to changes in the environment and the importance of authenticity and purpose. Consumers buy into brands that show empathy and walk the talk.”

LEGO's brand purpose is to “build a sustainable future by having a positive impact on society and the environment”. It responded quickly to the crisis, modifying its factories to produce 13,000 face visors every day for Denmark's healthcare workers. It is no surprise LEGO was ranked the world's most reputable company in the 2020 *Global RepTrak*.

Nordstrom collaborated with upholstery manufacturer Kaas Tailored and Providence Health to produce and distribute 100,000 surgical masks, thus keeping its promise of “doing our best to support the many people and communities we serve”.

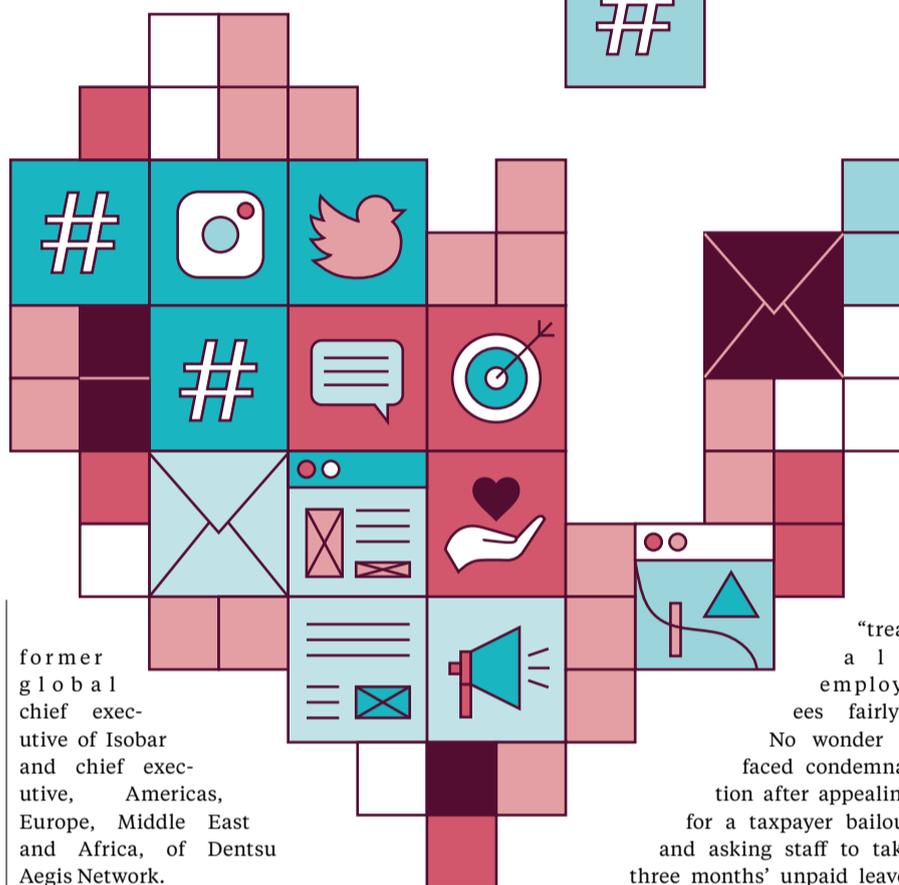
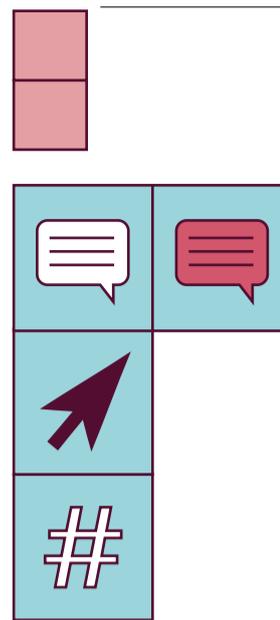
“If there is a valuable role the brand can play right now that is coherent with the brand's values, it should be central to current messaging,” says Nigel Morris, founder and

former global chief executive of Isobar and chief executive, Americas, Europe, Middle East and Africa, of Dentsu Aegis Network.

Focusing on purpose-led campaigns that aim to help rather than sell, CMOs can adapt brand messaging in real time both during the crisis and out the other side. Given the lockdown, social media will be essential to connect with customers in a brand's target audience, maintain online reputation and champion response to the pandemic.

CMOs should remain alert to risk and plan crisis and reputation management. According to Edelman, 33 per cent of consumers have already convinced other buyers to stop using a brand they felt was not acting appropriately during the COVID-19 outbreak.

In 2019 easyJet said it was “in it together” with workers and would



“treat all employees fairly”.

No wonder it faced condemnation after appealing for a taxpayer bailout and asking staff to take three months' unpaid leave, while issuing a £174-million dividend payout.

Even worse than an ill-timed display of wealth is attempting to profit from the crisis. “The last thing you should be doing is trying to capitalise on the current cultural context,” warns Aaron Hanaphy, semiotics and cultural analytics manager at McCann Central.

Sports Direct did just that. Refusing to close stores and claiming to provide an essential service to “help keep the UK as fit as healthy as possible during this crisis”, owner Mike Ashley only relented after outrage from the government, public and media. The crisis team leapt into action, but neither a grovelling apology nor offering up the company's lorries to the NHS could reverse the reputational damage.

“Difficult times are when brands reveal whether their values are true or mush,” says Barnaby Benson, copywriting agency managing director, who advises on brand language.

Hopefully you will not need to rely on your crisis team. To minimise the need for crisis and reputation management, CMOs should have top-level oversight, working closely with chief executives and chief operating officers to keep action in step with brand purpose.

Mishandling response risks huge reputational losses. But for those

with the conscience and the agility, COVID-19 presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to turn brand purpose into action.

The long-term effects of this crisis will be profound. Brands that keep their promises and fulfil brand purpose will survive with consumer loyalty intact and a corporate reputation for integrity and authenticity. How will your brand be remembered? ●

Leading by example

On February 6, **BrewDog** announced a wholesale rebrand, with a renewed purpose focused on actions not promises, declaring: “We believe in the power of independence, community and the positive power of a people-based business being a force for good in the world.”

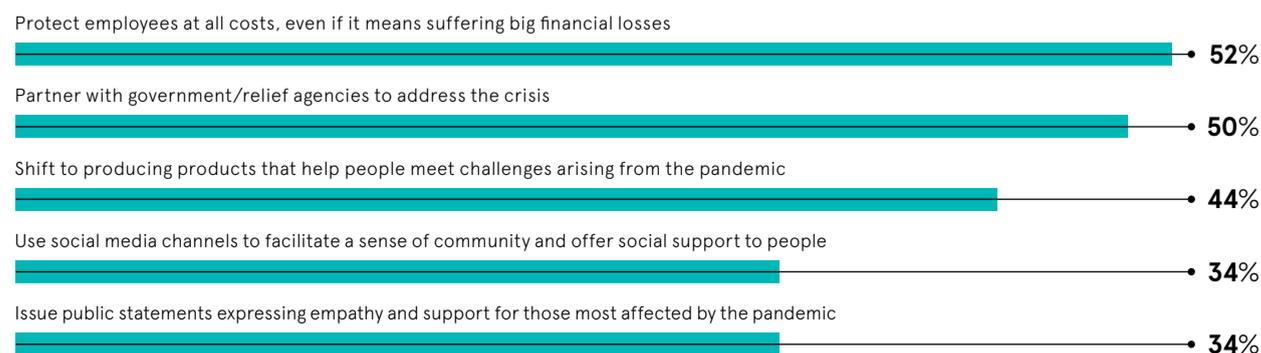
Less than a month later, as COVID-19 swept the UK and panic buying exhausted stocks of hand sanitiser, they had a chance to prove it. Working with Aberdeen Royal Infirmary to perfect the recipe, BrewDog converted its Aberdeen distillery to produce Punk Sanitiser and has so far donated 50,000 units to the NHS and local charities.

Meanwhile, those at the top can lead by personal example. **Leon Restaurants** chief executive John Vincent helped set up FeedNHS, a not-for-profit campaign raising money to provide meals for NHS teams on the frontline. **BT** chief executive Philip Jansen has also voluntarily sacrificed his salary for the next six months, promised workers they will not be furloughed or laid off and rewarded them with a 1.5 per cent pay rise from July.

CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS IN A CRISIS

Edelman 2020

Global survey of consumers in conducted in mid-March; percentage who think brands must take the following actions to earn or keep their trust



Navigating through the point of diminishing returns

Marketers are famous for piling on to high-performing channels. But when they become saturated and competition increases, a channel's performance declines and diminishing returns are inevitable

Economics aside, dependency on search engine and social media advertising represents a challenge for chief marketing officers (CMOs). Should they chase the declining performance curve or drive spending to other less-saturated, yet less predictable, channels? Our advice: don't be the marketing organisation that chases the declining curve.

Lest the decline in post-COVID digital ad spending seems like a reprieve from sky-high cost-per-click (CPC) prices, spending is likely to rebound and with a vengeance. If your returns were struggling before, it means they'll be flatlining in the near future as dollars, euros and pounds flood back into Facebook, Google and LinkedIn.

"I think we can all agree the COVID-driven decline is likely to be a very temporary one," says Doug Bell, CMO of the enterprise search and content marketing platform Searchmetrics. "The rebound has a high likelihood; the time to value for digital marketing is rapid compared with other channels, especially traditional advertising. This will only increase competition and further accelerate the point of diminishing returns for marketers, especially those in the most intensely competitive segments."

Evidence of the decline began well before the pandemic with CAGRs (compound annual growth rates) for paid search on the retreat, having gone from more than 20 to 7 per cent, a result of steadily increasing CPC costs and weaker conversion rates.

It's a situation that has been worsened by the introduction of the European Union General Data Protection Regulation directive in 2018, eliminating the very data sources CMOs need to manage through this change.

"I think we took for granted how much information we were collecting about people without really worrying too much about the consequences," says Lillian Haase, Searchmetrics' marketing director for Europe, the Middle East and Africa. "Now we're able to see much less information automatically so the old ways of doing things are no longer working."

Shaking up the marketing mix

While the outlook might look bleak for digital marketers, especially as budgets and teams get slashed in the wake of COVID-19, Matt Colebourne, chief executive at Searchmetrics, sees the crisis as an opportunity for CMOs.

By seizing the chance to rebalance their digital marketing mix, through including more organic search, marketing leaders can not only weather the immediate storm, but also lay the foundations for long-term success.

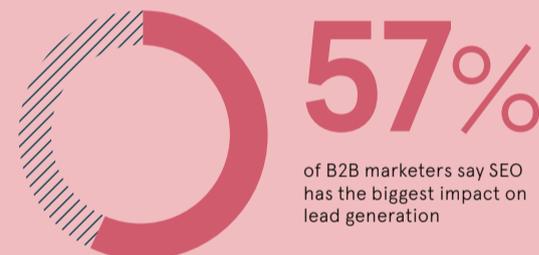
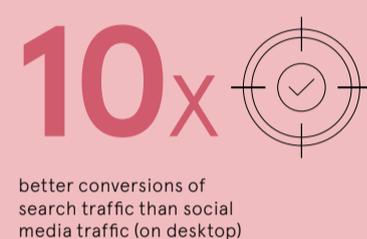
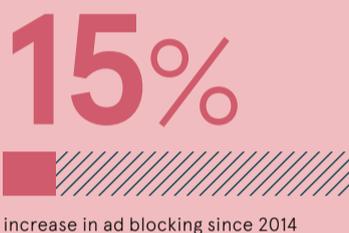
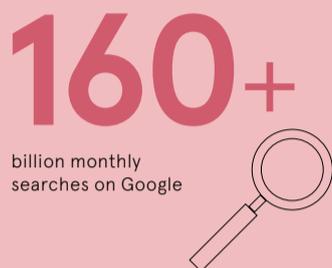
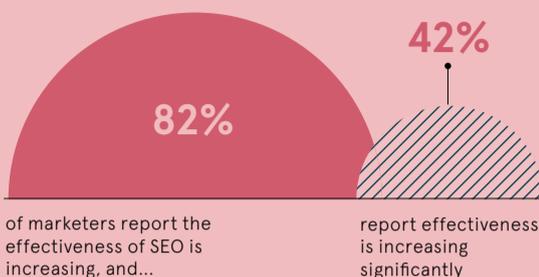
"Search engines are seeing significant volume increases, however much of that traffic is not intentioned; it's not people actually looking to buy, but rather to cyber surf. Much of this increased traffic will convert to sales at a far worse rate, which could see you spending the same amount, but delivering less in sales," Colebourne explains.

On the other hand, organic search costs are not volume dependent, so increased traffic is an opportunity to build awareness and consideration without it posing a threat to your budget.

"That awareness and consideration will act to increase conversion to sale for later-stage, intentioned traffic," he says.

Being present in the earlier stages of customers' purchase journey will also be a distinct advantage for companies that can no longer afford to compete when digital ad spending rebounds.

10 REASONS TO BALANCE SEO AND PAID ADS



Leveraging non-traditional data sources

While data privacy has put many data sources off limits to marketers, Searchmetrics is helping them find new, non-traditional sources to tap into. Keyword data is combined with metrics such as search volume, intent and seasonality to deliver invaluable insights, while data sources like Google trends, hashtag data and Amazon best-sellers can be layered on top.

In addition to optimising your marketing efforts, says Björn Darko, director of the Digital Strategies Group at Searchmetrics, these insights help you to better meet user needs.

"If you assemble this data to fulfil the search intent, this ultimately gives you a nice tool with which you can target your users," he says.

By understanding if keywords are transaction or information driven,

marketers can tailor content and offers to suit. Darko gives an example of the keyword 'ski helmet'.

"People searching for a ski helmet really want to make a purchase, so they don't want to read a lot of copy about ski helmets. What they want is a 50 per cent discount on ski helmets or a buy-one-get-one-free offer, and so on," he says.

"On the other hand, 'ski mask' is a rather informational keyword. People are more likely to be looking for specifications, like which one is better at reflecting the sun. To help these users make a better decision you can serve them how-to articles."

When it pays to use paid

Organic search will deliver you greater returns for a lower cost, but it's not a silver bullet. It works best in combination with paid ads, with the ideal ratio of paid to organic on a sliding scale depending on your goals. As Bell notes, marketers should "surge with paid, trail with organic search".

"If I'm trying to grab share, I'm going to be at a 60:40 organic to paid ratio. From there, I'm trying to get back to the health ratio of 80:20 or reach best in class, which is 95:5," he says.

Darko adds that paying for ads on your poorly ranking transactional keywords, where you can actually acquire traffic is a sensible strategy. As is directing

spend towards capturing specific user groups. He says: "Sometimes organic is not really the answer, especially if you think about acquiring new users, like the younger demographic. These users are on other platforms, such as TikTok and Instagram, so it makes sense to advertise there."

Don't chase the declining curve

Taking advantage of the retreat from paid is a six-month window at best, so now is the time to look to mid and bottom-of-funnel content. With content development costs declining as rapidly as paid costs, search engine optimisation can deliver as much as ten times return on investment.

Colebourne concludes: "In straightened budgetary times, organic search and content can deliver more traffic for less. A key value proposition for organic is that you can measure the whole journey, from research through to intent to purchase. Getting it right can yield five to ten-fold increases in organic traffic to your site."

“ In straightened budgetary times, organic search and content can deliver more traffic for less

For more information please visit www.searchmetrics.com



AD-VERSITY

After years of impressive growth, projections for UK advertising have been dramatically scaled back for 2020 as the coronavirus pandemic continues to ravage consumer spending patterns and disrupt marketing strategies the world over. While expectations are for a sharp rebound in 2021, how this year will play out remains to be seen, as different industries – and whole countries – emerge from lockdown at different rates and ad executives begin to spend again.

-16.7%

estimated change in UK ad expenditure in 2020, compared with the 5.2 per cent growth projection made before the COVID-19 outbreak

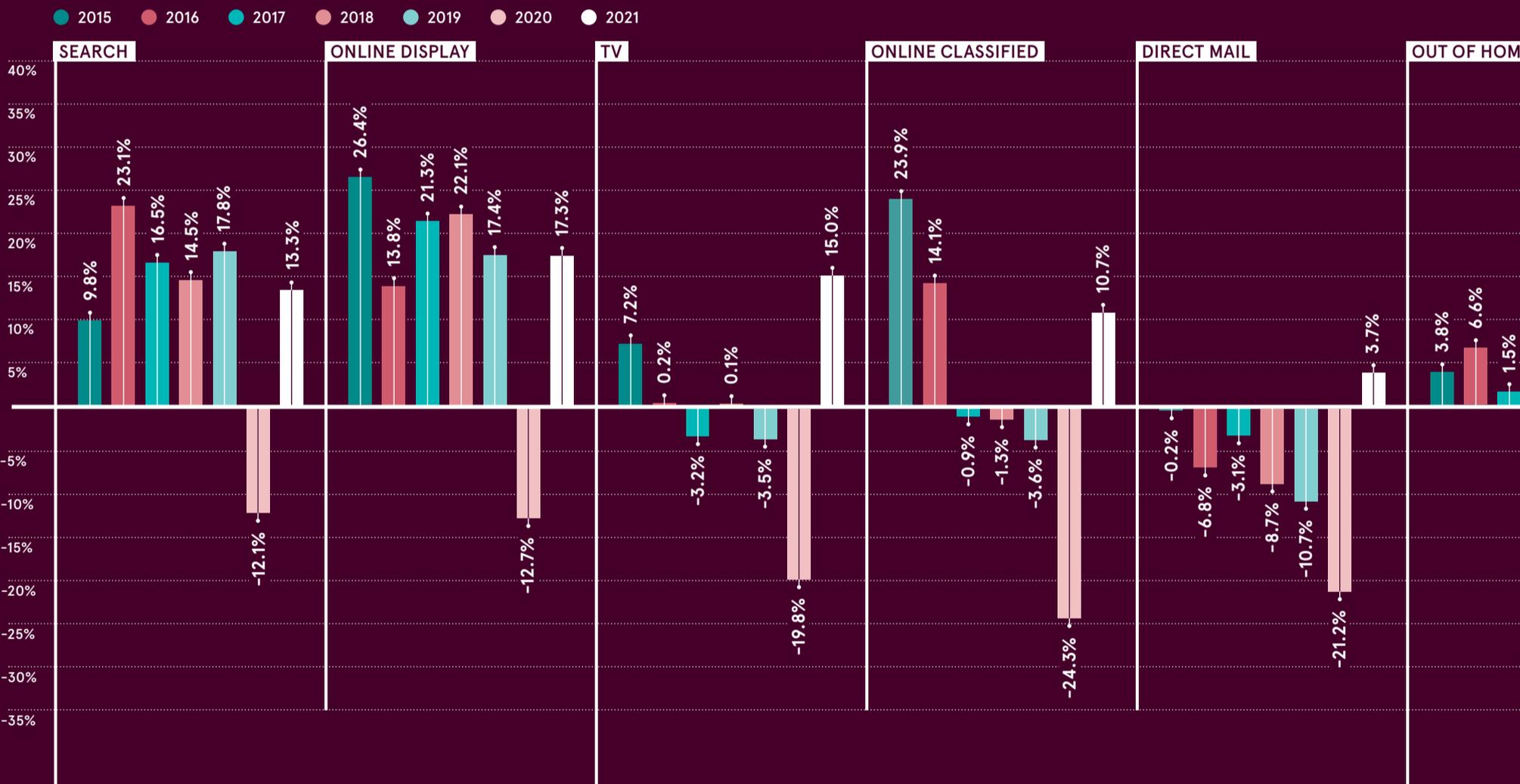
£21.1bn

total ad expenditure now forecast for 2020, reflecting a reduction of £4.2bn from 2019

Advertising Association/WARC 2020

YEARLY CHANGE IN UK AD EXPENDITURE BY MEDIUM

Annual percentage change in spending and forecasted growth for 2020-21; sectors are in order of highest to lowest spend



SEARCH – Ad spend in 2019: £8.0bn

Online mediums are expected to fare a little better than traditional advertising this year, though search and social media ad spending is still forecast to record their first ever annual declines in expenditure.

76%

rise in the number of daily accumulated likes on #ad posts on Instagram during the middle two weeks in March, according to an analysis of 7.5m Instagram posts

Obviously 2020

TV – Ad spend in 2019: £4.9bn

16m

increase in the number of paying users subscribed to Netflix in the first three months of 2020

Netflix 2020

Despite all non-essential workers being ordered to stay in their homes for the past couple of months, TV ad expenditure is still expected to drop by a fifth this year, as the surge of online streaming continues to gather momentum. However, ad spending for TV broadcaster's video-on-demand platforms is estimated to drop only marginally.

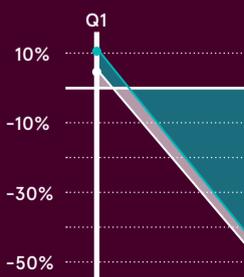
OUT OF HOME – Ad spend in 2019: £1.3bn

Quarterly projections for OOH ad expenditure show steep losses in the second quarter of 2020, though digital OOH specifically is one of just two sectors that are expected to offset this year's struggles with growth in 2021. Digital OOH accounted for 53 per cent of total OOH ad budgets in 2019.

UK OOH AD SPEND

Estimated year-on-year

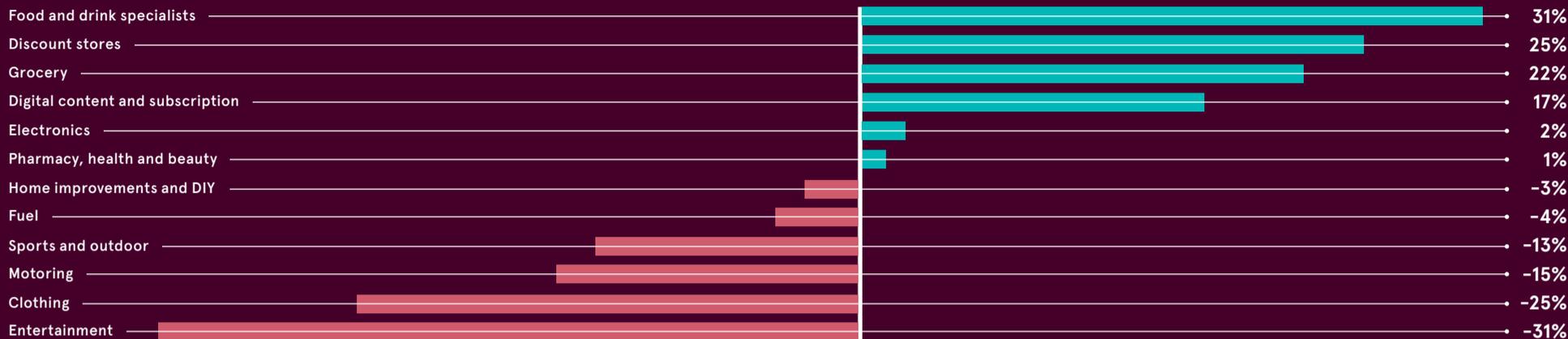
● OOH ● Digital OOH



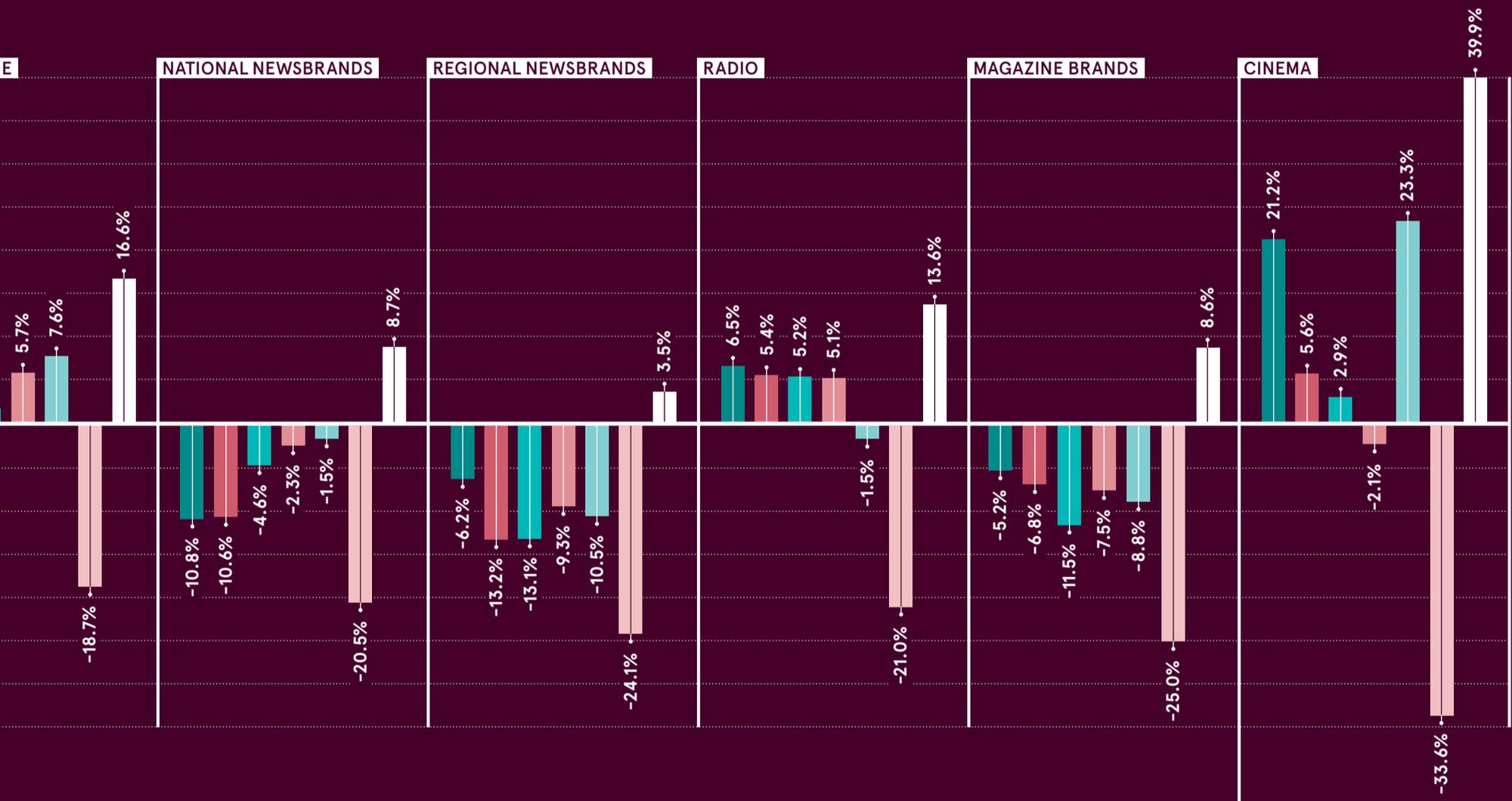
CONSUMER SPENDING IN MARCH

Barclaycard 2020

Year-on-year change in UK consumer spending in selected sectors as measures to tackle coronavirus were introduced



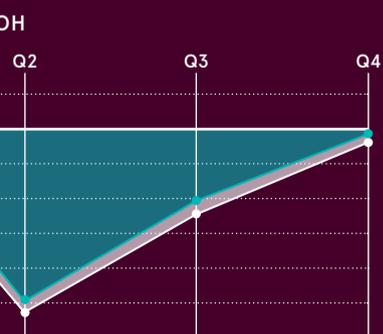
Advertising Association/WARC 2020



Advertising Association/WARC 2020

AD SPENDING IN 2020 AND 2021

Estimated year-on-year change in quarterly ad spending



OOH overall 2020 decline	18.7%
OOH predicted 2021 growth	16.6%
Digital OOH overall 2020 decline	14.7%
Digital OOH predicted 2021 growth	21.4%

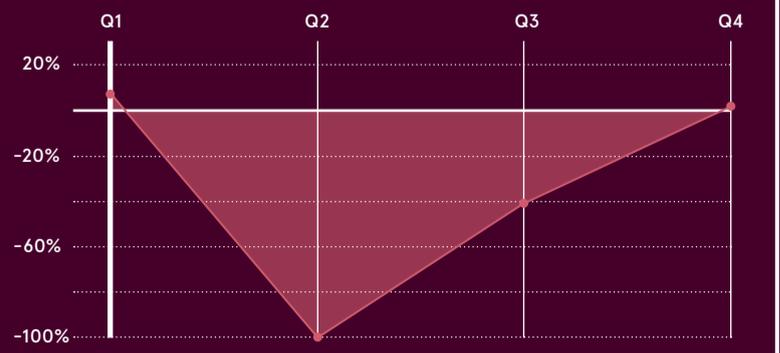
CINEMA – Ad spend in 2019: £0.3bn

Advertising Association/WARC 2020

It won't come as a surprise to see cinema taking the biggest hit in 2020, with spending grinding to a halt completely in the second quarter as theatres closed their doors to the general public. Budgets are predicted to recover quickly, however, and rebound significantly in 2021.

UK CINEMA AD SPENDING IN 2020

Estimated year-on-year change in quarterly ad spending





INFLUENCER MARKETING

Debating the future for virtual influencers

Presenter Laura Whitmore interviews celebrities at the BAFTAs in February by EE, which partnered with virtual influencer Shudu (left) on the red carpet

Computer-generated virtual influencers are rapidly gaining followers on social platforms and taking the wider marketing industry by storm. And while their rise has been impressive, not everyone agrees they are a positive development for marketing and wider society

Katie Deighton

For

When Robyn Frost was handed the brief for EE's 2019 Bafta activation, the agency creative knew she needed someone to connect the worlds of high fashion and technology.

With her team at advertising and marketing agency Poke, she was looking to hire an influencer to interact with consumers via mobile and capture looks on the red carpet. But they also needed the talent to scan outfits for cut, shape, fabric and colour, and use artificial intelligence to recommend more affordable alternatives. A regular human couldn't do it all. So Shudu, the world's first digital supermodel, was booked instead.

"We got to be really creative with Shudu, from creating her tone of voice to working with Swarovski to design a digital dress for her," Frost recalls. "A real benefit was being able to guarantee the photos we were after; we defined how she posed and did trial after trial making sure everything was as seamless as possible."

For the handful of brands that have "hired" a virtual influencer, this has

been the biggest benefit: control. Shudu came to EE with a personality and a following, but the rest – outfit, script, demeanor – was up to them to decide. This is in contrast to working on a paid-for campaign with a human influencer, who can spell your brand name wrong, post a product in an unflattering light, forget to badge a post as #ad and make all the mistakes a regular human is prone to.

The creative possibilities are almost limitless when it comes to the virtual form of influencer marketing. Brands spend millions of dollars a year flying groups of social creators to far-flung destinations to position their products in the best possible light; with virtual influencers, all costs bar a computer-graphics designer are negated.

"The main difference is you have more flexibility in the situations they can be in since anything can be designed," says Shann Biglione, head of strategy at Zenith USA. "Want to take them to Mars? No problem!" In a lockdown, this is nothing but a gift to marketers.

Working with a virtual influencer puts a brand in the same league as the most cutting-edge brands, such as Samsung, Balmain, Gucci. It displays a sense of fun and futurism, and a connection to the tastes of younger consumers following the virtual likes of Lil Miquela, Shudu and Yoox. As ODD London-based founder and executive creative director Nick Stickland puts it: "If there's a semblance of playfulness, energy and fun baked into the brand principles, and everyone is aware this is fiction, then interesting things can happen."



They are essentially created as per institutionalised beauty norms. Brands should be very aware of adding to that noise

Against

If the key to success with virtual influencers is demonstrating an awareness of their unreality, the downside is they may be perceived less as a new wave of marketing entertainment and more as a product of fake news.

Deepfakes, fake videos and audio recordings that look and sound uncannily real, are now counted as a political weapon; brands seen to be producing "fake" content with computer-generated influencers run the risk of being hit by similar outrage.

While virtual influencers currently look like high-quality video game characters, the website ThisPersonDoesNotExist.com shows just how far the tech might be able to go one day. The platform serves up incredibly realistic, but entirely fabricated, faces of everyday people. If it eventually becomes impossible to tell the difference between a real and a virtual influencer, brands will need to decide if their use really matches their values, such as authenticity and honesty.

But this is a question brands need to be already asking. If a marketer does not need to reach young, online consumers, then hiring a virtual influencer would be ill-advised given they only reside on Instagram and YouTube, for now anyway. And brands that purport to elevate women should be aware of virtual influencers' creation story, notes VMLY&R's emerging technology director Gracie Page.

"These models are overwhelmingly created by men, which means the design has a bias," she says. "Although the digital influencers in existence today have a range of skin tones, they are all young with a stunningly classical bone structure and on the skinny end of the body-shape spectrum. They are essentially created through the male gaze as per institutionalised beauty norms. Brands should be very aware of adding to that noise."

As the coronavirus pares social media users back to their most basic domesticated selves, it is clear consumers are appreciating authenticity more than ever. Celebrities locked down in their mansions aren't eliciting sympathy, while amateur creators on TikTok are lauded for their unedited talents.

Meanwhile, influencers who are usually styled by brands in unobtainable exotic destinations are finding they're having to do their jobs at home without outside help. "That locked-down form of influencing is actually far more attainable, far more believable and far more natural," says ODD's Stickland. "I think this is probably the most powerful form of influencer marketing we've seen for a firm for a long time."

If this is the kind of content that consumers continue to crave post-COVID-19, then virtual influencers may remain an interesting experiment, but not one that will alter the course of influencer marketing. ●

All-weather marketing: How advertising can help weather the storm

As many marketers take the hard decision to cut advertising spending, research from previous downturns shows this is a time when they can grow their brand for the future, says **Tom Pepper**, head of LinkedIn Marketing Solutions, UK, Ireland and Israel



Business-to-business (B2B) brands are going through an extraordinarily difficult time during the coronavirus pandemic, but can benefit from studying successful strategies implemented in previous downturns. Though the immediate temptation may be to cut advertising spend, a more measured approach may in fact be to hold or increase budgets to grow long-term market share.

Capitalising on recovery versus profit-ing in recession

In a survey by *Marketing Week*, 86 per cent of marketers said they are delaying

70%

of marketers are making short-term ad spend changes

IAB Proprietary research

83%

are changing their messaging strategy as a result of COVID-19

IAB Proprietary research

4.5x

However, marketers who increase media spend in downturns grow 4.5 times faster

IPA Cases Covering 2008 Recession

or reviewing campaigns in light of the COVID-19 outbreak. But research from the B2B Institute, a think tank funded by LinkedIn, which examined different approaches from advertisers during the 2008-9 recession, suggests cutting advertising budgets is riskier than it may appear. Although cutting advertising may provide short-term relief to profitability, the subsequent loss of market share is costly to recover and thus puts long-term profitability in doubt.

"If you can afford to advertise, you should advertise," says Jon Lombardo, global lead of the B2B Institute. "A lot of people don't realise it's cheaper and more effective to advertise right now. You can get a lot more media for the same price you were willing to pay six months ago. So assuming you can still meet demand, you get more bang for your buck."

"Typically, with an advertising campaign, you can hope to gain one or one-and-a-half points of market share per

year. In times like this, you may be able to win up to four-and-a-half points of market share. In fact, both sales and market share responsiveness to advertising can be even stronger during a downturn than in normal times. Partly that's because competitors often cut advertising spend, creating a unique window to increase relative share of voice and win market share."

Driving emotional connections

It's not just about the cost of media, marketers are also concerned about audience response to creative. Worst still, they fear consumers will react angrily to the mere existence of an advertising campaign, offended by what they deem to be profiteering and opportunism.

Recent data from System1, which measures consumer responses to new ads on a daily basis, shows no change in how consumers are responding to ads during the pandemic. The market



Ashling Kearns, vice president, corporate marketing, Europe, Middle East and Africa, at Salesforce

What top CMOs say

"We are faced with the increasing challenge of maintaining connected customer experiences across all touch points in this time of change. Marketers will lead through this crisis by listening to their customers, focusing on being humble and taking a community-first lens. Being empathetic to our customers while keeping them engaged is of the utmost importance. The most powerful stories

inspire and bring communities together. As events are unfolding fast, how do you ensure you offer a personalised and authentic experience for customers, whilst engaging with them as close as possible to real-time? Re-imagining campaigns by taking a data driven approach will help make crucial decisions and create compelling content that reaches both head and heart."



B2B brand associations created now are likely to bring the greatest sales benefit during the recovery period, precisely when the rewards are biggest

research firm has seen no signs of ads alienating consumers, in part because the economic damage has been driven by an enforced, not elective, decline in consumption.

To the contrary, research from System1 for the B2B Institute found there is still opportunity for brands to connect with audiences. The impending recession is unusual in that a common enemy – COVID-19 – is generating a global community spirit unseen in previous downturns. Given the rise in community spirit, companies that demonstrate humanity, generosity and warmth in their advertising are more likely to build stronger customer and community relationships.

In addition, brands that incorporate established characters, such as Compare the Market's meerkats, are performing particularly well, as people take comfort in familiarity during the hugely unfamiliar experience of crisis lockdown. B2B firms less able to leverage characters have instead seen success in campaigns celebrating human connections.

"The human connection ads may be a little less fun than character ads, but they have a warmth and a connection to real places, which resonate with audiences, and is really valuable in these times," says Lombardo. "Humans are starved of connection at the moment, so they like to see people coming together."

Restoring the balance

COVID-19 has given B2B organisations the rare opportunity to stop and reflect on their business and strategy. The trend for a long time now has been to invest more in short-term sales activation, which can often hurt companies. But the pandemic may lead to a greater number of brands, outside of the familiar names in sectors such as fast-moving consumer goods, retail and travel, realising the business value of increasing their focus on brand advertising.

"Because the sales funnel in B2B purchasing is generally longer than in brand to consumer (B2C), the arguments in favour of supporting long-term growth through brand building are likely to be even stronger in B2B than B2C," says advertising strategy guru Peter Field, who worked with the B2B Institute on its research. "B2B brand associations created now are likely to bring the greatest sales benefit during the recovery period, precisely when the rewards are biggest."

Restoring the balance between long-term brand building and short-term sales activation during this downturn, by investing more heavily in brand advertising, will serve companies well in supporting future cash flows. While many marketing and finance leaders may not have the power or capacity to advertise right now, B2B organisations can leverage these learnings from the past to grow their brands in the future.



Laurent Ezekiel, chief marketing and growth officer at WPP

What top CMOs say

"We do know that companies that can invest now are putting themselves in a good position for the recovery. Our goal is to help brands build a bridge to the future – we want to partner with people and companies to help create that new future. This feels more relevant than ever. When we emerge from the crisis, we are likely to find ourselves in a world that is

significantly different from the pre-COVID-19 way of life. What we know is our strategy of creativity, powered by technology, will be even more important. It's about taking what we've built on in these past months – even greater collaboration, accelerated adoption of innovative ways of working – and applying it to help our clients and WPP grow in the future".

For more information please visit B2Binstitute.com/allweather





OPINION

Future-fit marketing in a changing climate

Simon Cook, managing director of Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, explains why brands must act decisively and double down on creativity if they want to thrive during a crisis

Simon Cook

Moving from response to forecasting and future-gazing is difficult at the best of times. As we know, economic downturns are cyclical, predictable in many ways, and we can lean on history to give us a reliable steer.

But a looming recession in combination with the current crisis? Well, let's just say we're going to need more than history books and a crystal ball.

During a time when traditional business models are being upturned and everyday routines are being dismantled, more than ever we're looking for reliable, constant forces. A north star to help us navigate these choppy waters.

It's unusual then that we're not seeing more organisations double down on creativity when, dusting off the history books, we know brands that invested heavily in creativity and brand-building activity during the last recession recovered nine times faster than the competition. At a time when creativity is needed, arguably more than ever, we are seeing marketing budgets being slashed and advertising spend cut.

The latest Institute of Practitioners in Advertising *Bellwether Report* confirms what will have already seemed obvious that the coronavirus pandemic is having a detrimental impact on marketing budgets in the immediate term.

Meanwhile, according to a recent Ebiquty survey of global brands, 81 per cent have cut their advertising investment this year and 73 per cent expect to see no sales growth this year. Those are big numbers. Add to that, we've seen Coca-Cola announce it has paused all marketing spend over an apparent lack of return on investment.

The forecast looks even gloomier when you hear that a 2019 McKinsey study found "some 23 per cent of chief executives do not feel marketing is delivering on the growth agenda and 40 per cent of chief financial officers don't think marketing investments should be protected during a downturn".

So it would seem marketers are suffering from a lack of faith in their ability to drive business. And to add to their problems, 86 per cent of consumers have changed their behaviour as a result of COVID-19, according to YouGov research recently published by WARC (World Advertising Research Center). So with tumbling budgets, a lack of support and a changing consumer market, it's fair to say the global marketing community is staring adversity in the face.

At Cannes Lions, one of our most coveted awards is the Creative Marketer of the Year, the recipients of which consistently produce brave, creative and innovative

marketing solutions. The common thread between them, brands like Apple and Burger King, is they have all invested heavily in creativity as a driver for growth and seen net higher returns as a result.

Recent research by Forrester, *The Cost of Losing Creativity*, suggests investing in creativity will help companies achieve significantly higher returns over a six-year period. In the current climate though, it has become clear creativity is not just a lever for driving growth, but for driving progress: significant industry, societal and organisational change.

It's reassuring then that as we shift from response to forecast, small shoots of hope are emerging and we're hearing more from brands playing the long game. Over the past few weeks, we've spoken to many members of the global community who have shared fascinating stories of invention, collaboration, renewal and compassion. Individuals, communities and corporations who are achieving new levels of innovation every day to build brands and reimagine entire business models.

If you're after an example of genuine, change-driving innovation, then you need look no further than AB InBev Brazil that in the face of the pandemic have shifted their production from beer to hand sanitiser.



As we shift from response to forecast, small shoots of hope are emerging and we're hearing more from brands playing the long game

I recently spoke to the company's vice president of marketing Ricardo Dias for the Cannes Lions podcast *Progress Through Creativity* and he told me: "A brand that's not doing something right now is making a mistake. It's almost like you have no choice, you either do or die."

He lists collaboration, speed and creative problem-solving as key drivers in a brand's current survival and believes that once we come out of this, consumers will look to the brands that are actually doing something, leaning in rather than pulling back.

If people are looking for forces for good, consistency and stability at a time when governments are floundering and being criticised for not showing decisive leadership, look to those who are using creativity as a tool to take a position and stand

for something solid that stands out and cuts through among the double-speak and uncertainty.

In our recent *Let's Get Back to Brand* report, Bruno Bertelli, global chief creative officer of Publicis, says: "People believe in brands. Where politicians and governments fail, brands provide products that people love and rely on. But with this comes a responsibility to be transparent and act responsibly, and act consistently."

It's not just the "good" brigade either. Brands and their agencies are beginning to look ahead and are getting comfortable with embracing the opportunities to be had as new categories, channels and approaches emerge and come into focus.

When I caught up with Titanium Lions Jury president Susan Credle, global chief creative officer at FCB, she told me clear-thinking marketers have a chance to expand and accelerate the growth of their brands and businesses over the next few months. She points out that if you follow a sensitively developed strategy, this is a time for investment, not retrenchment.

Opportunity, it would seem, is no longer a dirty word, and Susan believes creativity should sit at the core of this approach, rather than be commonly viewed as a nice to have.

She says: "This is a unique time for the creative community. For the last 20 years, we have been thought of as executors of briefs. Today we have the chance to prove we are business problem-solvers. In a crisis, marketing and creativity become critical. In many cases, they are the difference between a business failing or thriving. It's time to prove advertising, in the broadest sense of the word, is not a spend, it's an investment, and creativity is not an optional extra, it's an economic multiplier." ●

81%

of brands have cut their advertising investment this year

Ebiquty 2020

73%

of brands expect to see no sales growth this year

23%

of chief executives do not feel that marketing is delivering on the growth agenda

McKinsey 2019

86%

of consumers have changed their behaviour as a result of COVID-19

YouGov 2020



CMOs shift to social first for post-pandemic era

The coronavirus outbreak has led companies to operate in a very different, advanced digital world. Prioritisation and smart use of social media will be essential in the aftermath of the pandemic

Digital channels have long been reshaping our human connections, but the coronavirus crisis means businesses are suddenly faced with a new reality: a near-total reliance on online communications and a need for a social-first approach. During March 2020, as much of the world went into lockdown, Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp calls doubled in frequency. More than a million people in the UK alone joined COVID-19 Facebook groups and numerous doctors shared health information on TikTok and Twitter. Reddit, the social news aggregator, saw almost a 50 per cent surge in traffic at times during the month.

The ways in which social media is being used during the lockdown, for many forms of interaction with customers, partners and staff, are quickly becoming the norm. They may remain long after this uncertain period has ended, according to Stéphanie Genin, vice president of global enterprise marketing at social media management firm Hootsuite, which is used by more than 80 per cent of the Fortune 1000.

"After weeks of adapting to Zoom parties, video appointments with doctors, online schooling, social distancing

and tapping into social media for virtually everything, will people be happy to go back to their old ways of working and engaging with each other?" she asks. "In many cases, the answer will be no. Social media has been holding communities together and organisations will need to assess how to manage the new normal."

For chief marketing officers (CMOs), preparing for the post-pandemic world means lining up advanced digital engagement. A social-first approach is key, given that customers have used social media as a primary channel for several months. In addition, more than half the world population will be actively using social media by the middle of the year, according to Hootsuite's *Digital 2020* report, with daily usage time now averaging 2 hours and 24 minutes.

"Social media has already been critical for customers in their buying journey, but many business leaders have not yet grasped its full importance as a necessary business tool to meet all these human-connection expectations," says Genin. "It should be digital first, with social media at the heart."

Social channels are also critical to

other key areas of business, including sales and human resources, presenting an opportunity for marketing's increased usage to set the tone for multiple business departments.

The maturity of social media starts with marketing teams, which then provide links between all other departments. As Forrester analyst Jessica Liu explains in *The Social Marketing Playbook*: "Marketers drive social media progress as other teams start exploring." From there it is important to facilitate a unified social approach rooted in measurable objectives.

CMOs are increasingly creating a social-first, transparent culture that

permeates the entire organisation's communications from marketing and public relations to sales support, legal teams and talent recruitment. Genin explains: "Social should not be led by one department, but by everyone connected to your organisation."

In the changing environment brought about by the COVID-19 crisis, marketing organisations will increasingly harness social media for faster, leaner, more intelligent ways of collaborating with other departments. By harnessing social intelligence with the rest of their business's core information, internally and externally, companies can respond better to the numerous challenges presented by current conditions. A well-planned approach drives omnichannel integration and can show the bottom-line value of social media against clear performance indicators.

As Genin notes: "The new digital reality we are all operating in means it is marketing's time to shine, with social media truly coming to the fore".

There are numerous examples of these dynamics appearing in practice, such as at the food service and facilities management company Sodexo where an employee advocacy programme built trust effectively. Some 230 of the company's executives are participating in the programme, which has doubled their monthly average new follower numbers and significantly boosted the number of C-suite followers engaging with their content.

"The employee experience and trust positively impacts the customer experience because it builds confidence with them, their confidence in our brand, and therefore hopefully better business results," explains Kim Beddard-Fontaine, senior vice president of digital and employee communications at Sodexo.

With consumer confidence severely dampened by the prevailing uncertainty, businesses' focus in the medium

term will inevitably shift from sales to brand loyalty. The capacity to engender loyalty, enthusiasm and interest through social media will be a major battleground for competitive advantage, both now and in the long-term economic aftermath.

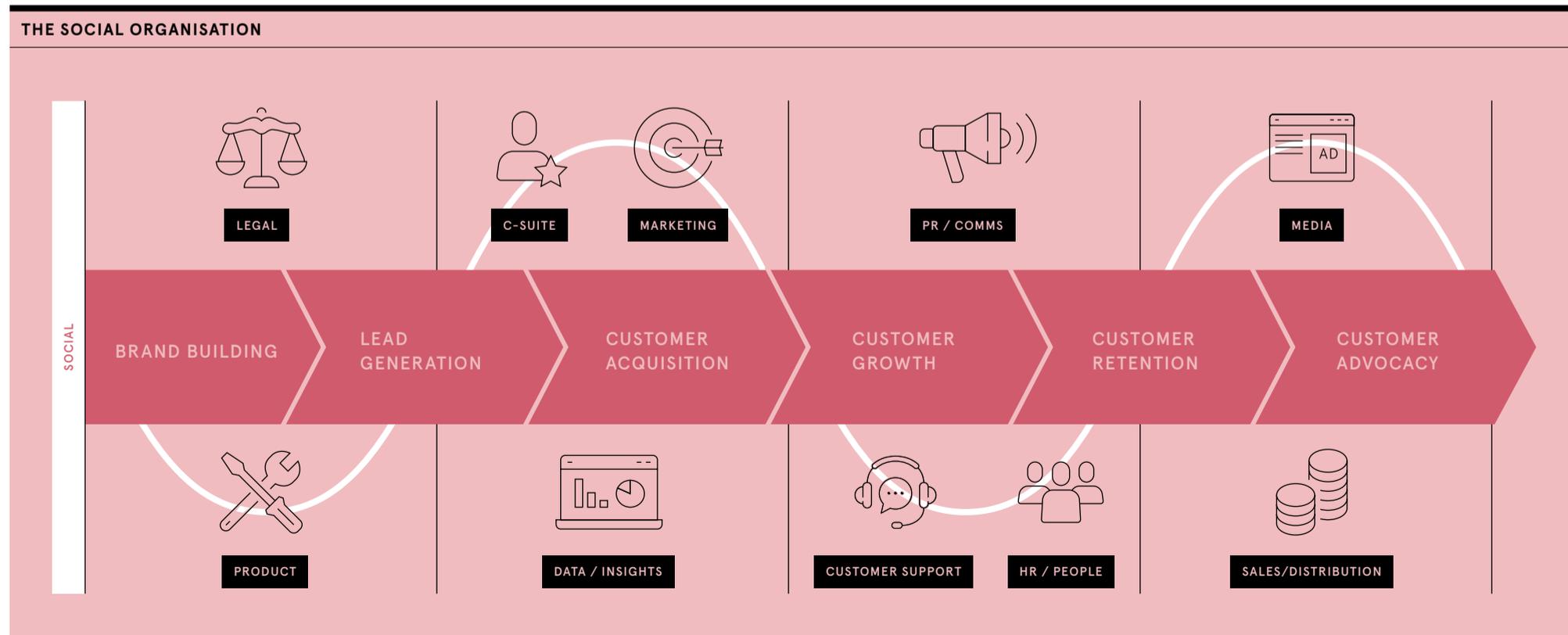
"The next generation of business innovation will be driven through understanding human connection, not channels. Companies will need to know as much as possible about their customers' pain points, expectations, reactions to different types of content and what platforms they prefer to use and when," says Genin.

"Whereas certain types of customer might previously have been considered non-tech savvy or non-users of digital platforms, nearly everyone will now have online expectations and businesses need to respond to these."

Marketing has long been digitally powered, but with a near-global lockdown and the arrival of huge economic pressures, now is undoubtedly the opportunity for marketers to drive an advanced digital, social-first approach for deep success.

“Social media has been holding communities together and organisations will need to assess how to manage the new normal

Register your interest for Hootsuite's upcoming C-suite roundtable to discuss how being a social leader can transform your organisation. The online event is hosted by Flavia Brown, head of Raconteur's new amp programme for business leaders, and Damian Corbet, renowned social leadership consultant and author of *The Social CEO: How Social Media Can Make You A Stronger Leader*. Email ukevents@hootsuite.com for details



Building deeper connections

People increasingly want to interact with brands that are meaningful to them.

Paul Campillo, director of brand and communications at Typeform, explores how companies can build and deliver deeper relationships with their customers

About a minute into hedge fund investor Ray Dalio's brilliant YouTube video *How The Economic Machine Works*, he says something intriguing: "An economy is simply the sum of the transactions that make it up."

Economies, and micro-economies, exist everywhere in states, cities, countries, businesses and even down to an individual person. And those economies, too, are the sum of the transactions that make them up.

So, if you want a strong business economy, just increase the number of transactions. Simple enough. But what makes up a single transaction? Interactions.

The interactions between buyers and sellers, at the most basic level, are what power every economy. And every transaction that occurs is simply the sum total of every interaction that makes it up. Those interactions can be positive or negative experiences, but they exist.

In *The Power of Moments*, the authors tell how Southwest Airlines stumbled on to a hidden profit goldmine: jokes. Some flight attendants tell quippy jokes during the flight safety check, like this one: "Put the oxygen mask on yourself first, then on your child. If you're traveling with more than one child, start with the one who has more potential or who is less likely to put you in a home."

Southwest's data and analytics team concluded that every person exposed to a funny flight attendant flew an extra 0.5 times a year. They figured that if they simply doubled the number of jokes told, they could add \$140 million in revenue to their bottom line.

Think about that: a ten-second joke, during a routine flight safety check, could add an additional \$140 million in revenue.

DoubleTree by Hilton provides another example of a key interaction. The hotel chain gives guests a warm chocolate chip cookie upon arrival. And yes, people talk about it. In 2020, it finally revealed its famous chocolate chip cookie recipe to the public.

The Cheesecake Factory gets people tweeting about its biblically epic food menu. Some people even put it on their bucket list of "books" to read in their lifetime.

Remarkable experiences like these get people talking and sharing. As far as acquisition channels go, word of mouth is still undefeated. People talking on their own volition about your brand continues to crush paid search, search engine optimisation and every marketing hack companies can muster.

But are remarkable interactions enough? They're a great start, but there's more to it than a singular moment in time. In the end, the success of any business lays with its people.

Brands are built on relationships, not just remarkable interactions. One transaction from one person will not sustain you. We need those buyers and sellers to continue to exchange value, over and over again. Acquiring customers keeps your business running, but keeping them coming back for more is where great brands play.

Relationships go beyond your customers. They include your team and key stakeholders. In a 1998 letter to his shareholders, Amazon's Jeff Bezos said: "I constantly remind our employees to be afraid, to wake up every morning terrified. Not of our competition, but of our customers."

Your employees belong on that list too. Culture matters. They have a deep understanding of your business, they have institutional knowledge and they serve the very people who keep your economy going. If they're not making every interaction with a customer count, then expect a competitor to figure out how to do it better.

The point? The competition are not just coming for your customers. They want your talent, too. Again, be "terrified" of your customers and employees, not your competition.

So, how are you developing these key relationships? When I think about the key relationships in my life, I think of how we grew together and supported one another. I think of the struggles and conflicts, and coming out of it. Of course, they didn't always work out, but they leave a lasting impression. But we grew. We evolved. In most cases, we got better.

For businesses, the same principles apply. Businesses and institutions exist to help people make progress

“The interactions between buyers and sellers, at the most basic level, are what power every economy

in their lives. And that's an important word. As the late great Harvard Business School professor Clayton Christensen once said: "It's about progress, not products."

Progress makes journeys more meaningful. When someone senses they're making progress, they gain confidence, feel more secure and trust increases.

According to research from the Havas Group, a meaningful brand includes the functional, personal and collective

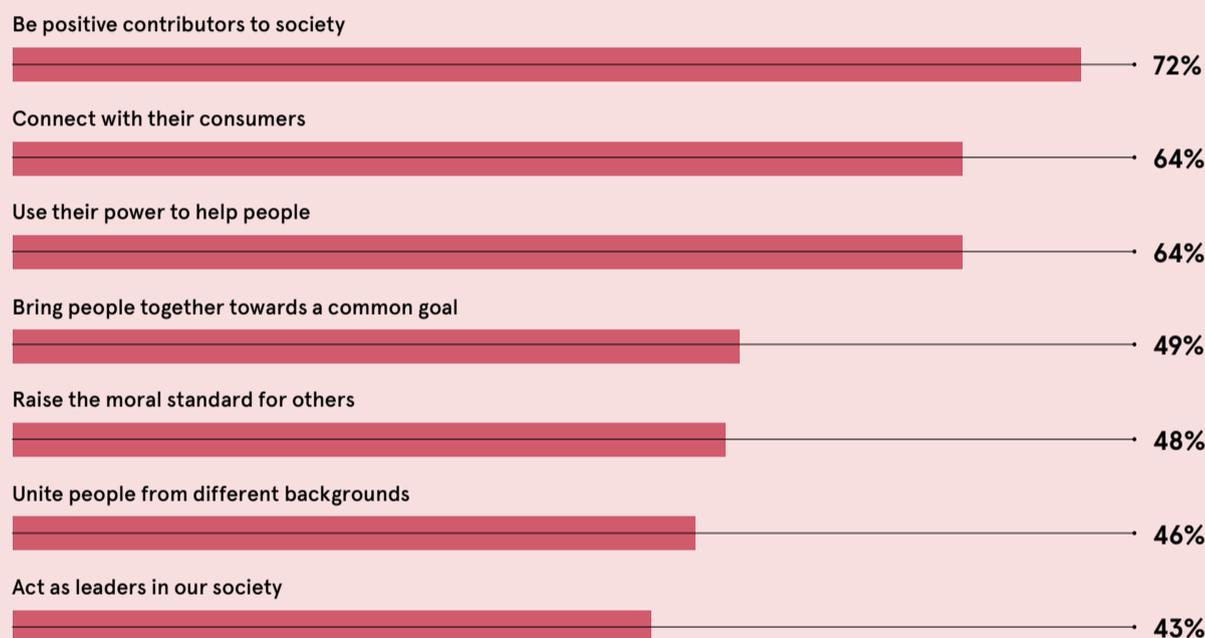
THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STAKES HAVE NEVER BEEN HIGHER

Consumers Business buyers



Salesforce

HIGH EXPECTATIONS: WHAT TODAY'S CONSUMERS WANT FROM BRANDS



Sprout Social

benefits it brings. "Functional" is your progress with the product. "Personal" is your progress as a person. And "collective" is the progress of your community. And when you deliver at all three levels, their experience of your brand will be more meaningful.

And the business value over time is immense. Three in four consumers prefer to buy from companies that share their values and more than half think businesses now have a more important role to play than governments in creating a better future. Meaningful brands enjoy higher purchasing and repurchasing intent, much stronger customer advocacy and they outperform the stock market by 134 percent.

So what can you do today to build a deeper, more meaningful brand? Firstly, start by caring about your people and their progress. Humans are at their best when they're learning, growing and becoming better. The question is what are your customers and employees aspiring to be? Start by helping them get there.

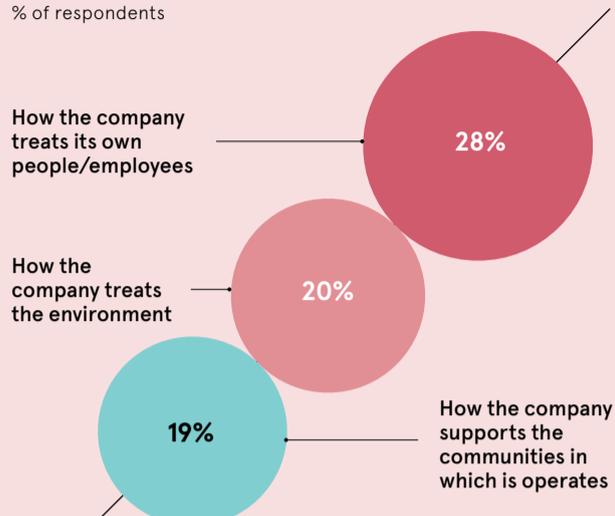
However, this can become even more powerful if you ask yourself: "Who do I want our customers to become?" You can replace the word "customer" with "employee", but it works the same. Put another way, you have a company vision, and perhaps a product vision, but do you have a customer vision? What's the best version of them that you see, within the context of your product or business?

Secondly, collaborate more with your community. Communities will be the next competitive advantage for brands, so make them a part of your product development and even involve them in your marketing campaigns.

At Typeform, we took this approach with Big Red's Equipment, a farm equipment dealership in Texas. When building a native integration with Drip, an ecommerce customer relationship management software, we involved the chief executive with the development and marketing of the product. This included a 90-minute interview to get to know him, exchanging texts and emails that contributed to a video

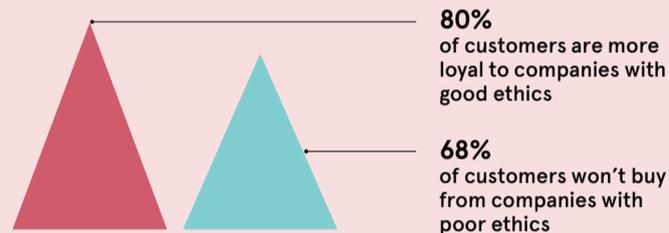
TOP ISSUES CONSUMERS IDENTIFY WITH WHILE MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT BRANDS

% of respondents

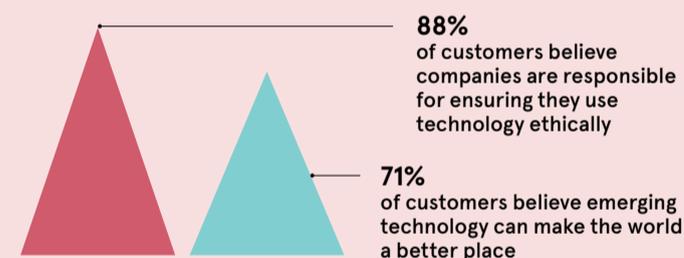


Deloitte

VALUES CAN MAKE OR BREAK CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS



IT'S UP TO COMPANIES TO USE TECHNOLOGY FOR GOOD



Salesforce

script, and eventually capturing his voice for the promotion.

We launched the campaign in just four days and it has allowed us to not only build a deeper connection with the customer, but the end result is generally much better than anything we could have done on our own.

Finally, leverage technology to build a connected strategy. Before Disney World launched its MagicBands, powered by radio-frequency identification, for visitors to wear, cast members knew nothing about the children they saw. Now they know their name and the last time they visited one of the park's locations.

This increases not only the quality of meaningful interactions, but operational efficiencies too. They can schedule rides more easily, build itineraries and keep people flowing without a hitch. Great brands go beyond remarkable interactions, they enable connected experiences that relationships are built on.

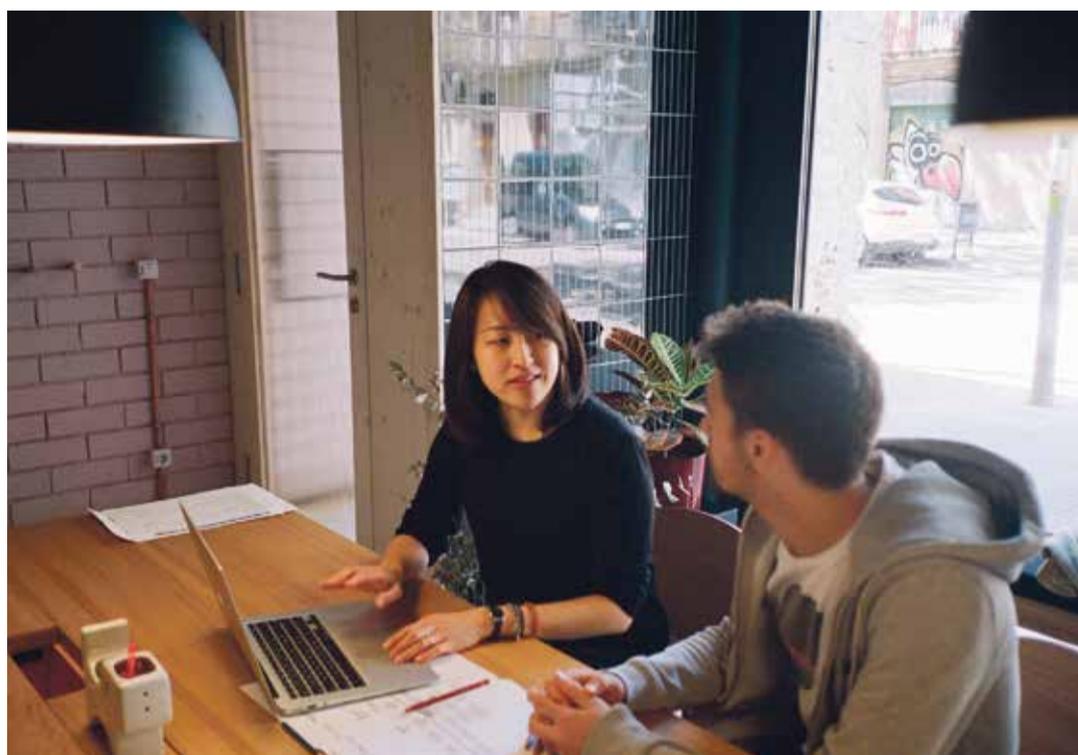
Building a memorable brand is no easy feat. You need a strong product,

sure. But today, products and features are being copied faster than ever. Getting to product-market fit used to be enough, particularly in the business-to-business sector, but not anymore. Today, you have to get to brand-market fit.

In the end, we know interactions lead to transactions and those transactions give you a business. Simple. But what if those interactions were more meaningful over time? And what if those meaningful interactions lead to more quality transactions? You wouldn't just have a business. You'd have a brand you can feel proud of.

For more information please visit typeform.com

Typeform



Leading the journey to meaningful conversations

Starting in 2012 with two designers in Barcelona, who felt forms were too impersonal, Typeform has grown to more than 200 employees with millions of users and tens of thousands of paying customers.

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, so it didn't take long for competitors to begin copying Typeform's unique, conversational style of data collection. This left the company facing a dilemma: how can it continue to differentiate itself when other businesses are copying its features and design?

It realised that while products can be emulated, brands can't. This triggered an important moment of self-reflection for the business. It already knew the end result it constantly strived for, which is for its users, whether they're solo freelancers or large enterprises, to have a more personal business relationship with their audience.

But to continue to achieve that mission, Typeform needed to identify what it truly wanted to stand for, besides selling product.

"It's about understanding the collective value that we bring as a company," says Joaquim Lechà, chief executive at Typeform. "We thought 'What do people really care about?' Ultimately, they want meaningful conversations that build trust and a more personal business relationship over time.

"Once we made that decision, it became our mission to inspire brands to have meaningful conversations at scale. For us a meaningful means beautiful, personal, relevant and contextual."

"Beautiful" is about visual and experiential design and has five dimensions: layout, media, motion, typography and colour. Typeform allows novices to look like experienced coders and designers.

"Personal" uses data people already shared to add a personal touch to every interaction. That also means pulling data from other sources, such as customer relationship management for example, to enhance the experience further.

"Relevant" keeps the conversation on topic. Typeform customers can use conditional logic to make sure to talk about dogs to dog people and cats to cat people.

And finally, with "contextual", it's about understanding the circumstance or environment a user is in. That could be a channel (LinkedIn or Facebook), physical location (Boston or London) or device (desktop or smartphone). All this information feeds into the overall experience and allows brands to connect better with their customers and employees.

These core dimensions will be central to Typeform's products and features going forward. But building an identity around the idea of "meaningful" has required an outlook beyond marketing strategy or technology solutions and

instead totally embedding a new mindset around it. That means not just enabling people to do amazing things with Typeform's tools, but helping them come from the right place when they're using it.

"We want to be defined by this, as a company," says Lechà. "When you really care about people, as it relates to their problem and your solution, you can make the biggest difference. Once we realised businesses were using Typeform not to build pretty forms, but to have conversations with the people who matter most to them – their customers and employees – we knew it was the right way to go.

"By giving people the tools to have meaningful conversations at scale and helping them bring their best to every interaction, they will connect better with their customers and employees, really get to know each other and bond through the best interactive experiences, at scale."



Joaquim Lechà
Chief executive

“People want meaningful conversations that build trust and a more personal business relationship over time”



CAREERS

There's no single path to the top

As top marketers' responsibilities have transitioned to be more data-led, strategic and commercial, career paths to the CMO position are not as straightforward as they once were

Morag Cuddeford-Jones

Ask any senior marketer what the chief marketing officer's role involves and you are unlikely to get a straight answer. This is not because of any uncertainty around what the job entails. Instead, it's recognition that this particular role, in different companies and at a particular time, can be as unique and changeable as the customers they serve.

Indeed, there is not currently a great deal of agreement that for a new CMO, "chief marketing officer" is even the right job title. Alternatives are regularly posited, including chief customer officer, chief customer experience officer, chief commercial officer or chief growth officer.

The more scientifically minded organisations may do away with any allusion to marketing altogether. Back in 2018, easyJet ditched its chief commercial officer role in favour of a chief data officer, only to then bring back the CMO role in a later management shake-up. In April of this year, however, the airline announced it would be getting rid of the CMO position altogether so that marketing, customer, digital and insight now report to the reinstated chief commercial officer position.

"Such changes in titles can be a way of giving the industry more credibility, but I don't think we should apologise for being marketers. Those skills are incredibly useful and are needed," says Sarah Ellis,

former head of marketing strategy at Sainsbury's, co-founder of Amazing If careers consultancy and co-author of *The Squiggly Career*.

Whether the changing monikers are down to lack of marketer confidence or something else, what this title tennis does prove is that the new CMO role is very different to ten or even twenty years ago.

Zaid Al-Qassab initially took what some might consider to be the conventional route to the CMO role at Channel 4, starting out at Procter & Gamble. Of joining P&G's graduate scheme he says: "Like most people finishing university, I hadn't a clue what I wanted to do so I took the view that something everyone was saying was a great place to start was as good a bet as any."

There he stayed for more than 20 years. But those two decades encompassed operations, commercial and managing director roles in three different countries before finally disembarking for pastures new.

Prior to landing at Channel 4 as CMO in September 2019, he has led marketing at a travel startup and been managing director of blue-chip telecoms at BT. On paper, Al-Qassab has worked for four organisations, but this belies a hugely varied career.

On the other hand, top marketer Tracy Abrahams' career seems much more fragmented. She has garnered a diverse clutch of marketing and non-marketing expe-

riences on her path to the CMO role. She emerged from a start as assistant at the Edinburgh International Television Festival to group managing director at the AA, one of the UK's best-known breakdown and insurance organisations, via a brief spell as chief executive of *The Jewish Chronicle*.

"I've always felt you need a plan, but then you need the flexibility to adapt to different opportunities," she says. "Some people look at my CV and go 'she's jumpy, not for me', but others see it as an opportunity. Those are the businesses I want to work for; places that celebrate that diversity of background."

Ellis adds: "This is the point around *Squiggly*. As you get more senior, with each choice do you think 'What am I going to add and what am I going to learn?' Certain organisations are naturally more open to bringing different people in from different places.



As I see organisations adopting more growth mindsets, it becomes less about the exact experiences and more about demonstrating you can be resilient and adaptable

"But, as I see organisations adopting more growth mindsets, it becomes less about the exact experiences and more about demonstrating you can be resilient and adaptable. That, more than ever, is what companies want in senior leaders."

The new CMO needs a portfolio career simply because they wear so many hats while all in the service of a single master: the customer. Hostelworld CMO Yale Varty started out as a systems analyst with a couple of top consulting firms before landing at the accommodation startup, via travel giant Expedia and online fashion retailer ASOS. If anything, it was these industries' disruptive growth in established markets, rather than any marketing-specific skill, that was the common thread.

"There are basic concepts that are pretty sector agnostic, which will enable anyone in marketing to ask questions and make decisions. Starting with understanding who your target customer is and what value you can credibly add to their lives. You have to be prepared to tell the brand story. But then you have to be able to immediately pivot and tell the top and bottom line implications in the same conversation," he says.

"This requires switching modes often and combining various roles from customer obsessive creative and commercial accountant to e-commerce manager and channel expert."

World Rugby CMO Marissa Pace adds: "As CMO we bring the voice of the audience to the table. The professionalisation of marketing in sport has obviously helped it diversify in different niches and sectors. But I tell my hires it's not necessarily important you understand the sport; it's important you have an inherent passion for it."

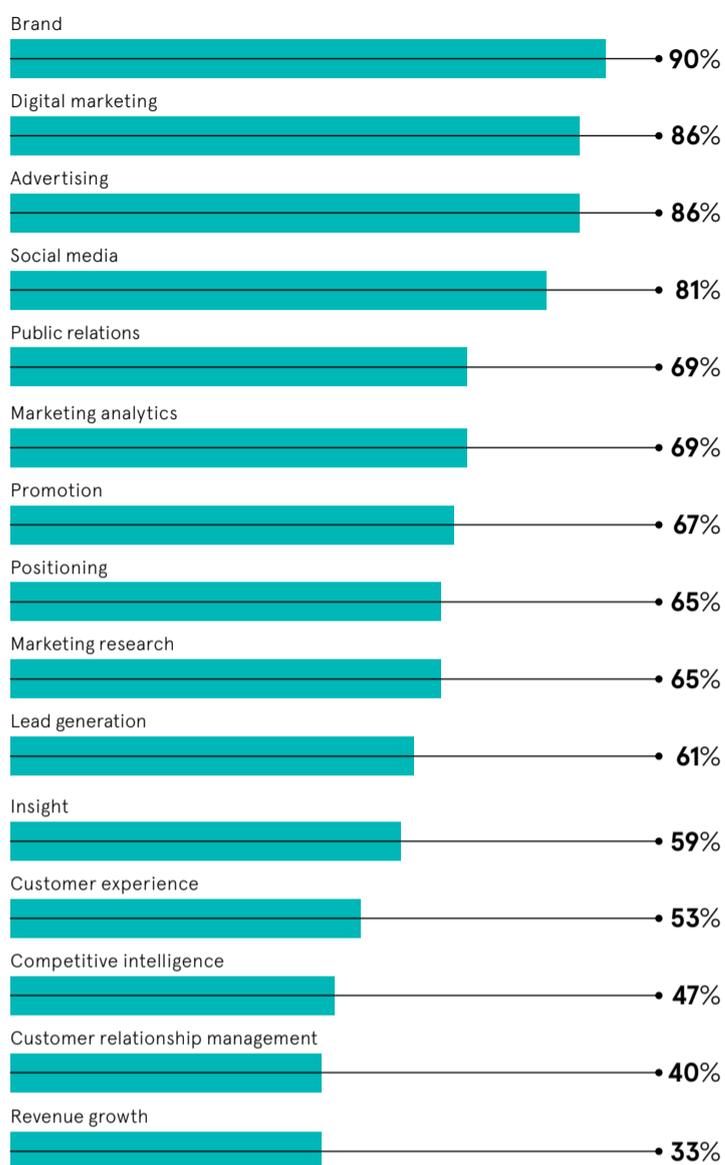
Pace has been involved in sport from every angle, event management to production, emerging TV technologies to spearheading Formula 1's digital strategy. She says: "It's always fan focused. As a marketer, my experience lends itself to understanding the audience. We may be navigating a shift to the strategic and the commercial, but even more we're being asked to ensure we're authentic."

The marketing profession has worked hard to elevate its perception as the colouring-in department and the CMO role is staking its claim as an engine of growth. To maintain this credibility, it's important, whatever their experience, the new CMO keeps their eye on the prize.

"As a CMO, if you don't have that commercial business background, you'll struggle. Creativity may be innate, but business is not and, especially at a time like this, we're all having to make some big decisions," Pace concludes. ●

MARKETING PRIORITIES IN 2020

Percentage of CMOs who say marketing is responsible for the following functions in their organisation



The CMO Survey 2020



Leaving to learn

With a philosophy seemingly drawn from 2008 film *Yes Man*, Channel 4 chief marketing officer Zaid Al-Qassab, admits that his career trajectory is largely governed by an overwhelming urge to agree to things.

"I said yes to every opportunity that came along. Not knowing why, just that I would enjoy it," he admits.

But agreeing to move to Geneva, then to Greece and then away from a 20-year career at P&G into a completely untested startup wasn't just an exercise in chasing the fun, it was also about expanding his capabilities.

"I wasn't learning as fast anymore. I had lots of job offers for very similar things, including the CEO role of really well-known businesses. I plumped for a totally unknown business because everything I learnt there was something I had not learnt before," he says.

Al-Qassab drives home the need for continual development in even the most experienced of life-long marketers: "Is there a career in your 40s all the way into your 60s today if you're not digital? No way. It was an investment I had to make."

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