

How brands can engage during The Great Pause

April 2020

Image Source: The Irish Times

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INTRODUCTION

COVID culture is global.

The whole planet is being affected by the Coronavirus — arguably the first truly global event of modern history.

Marketers are asking, do something? Or do nothing?

- 65% of CMOs are preparing for budget cuts
- 81% of people are consciously reducing their spending
- A 6-month absence will result in a 39% reduction in brand awareness
- Consumers expect brands to advertise and look to brands to engage

SOURCE: ANA Global CMO Leadership Coalition on COVID-19

INTRODUCTION

The answer is clear. We can't do nothing.

COVID-19 is having a profound effect on the human condition.

America needs leadership, comfort and reassurance. Across industries, companies and brands, there will be opportunities to provide critical partnership that forms lasting connections.

Five ways brands can serve.

1
Solving problems

2
Actions > words

3
Normalcy of
entertainment

4
Promoting social
connections

5
Adapting to
emerging realities

1 Solving problems

People’s lives are upended and there are real problems. Lack of control is a big problem to help solve. We’re trying to be more mindful of our personal and mental health thru this, but its tough. We’ve seen an uptick in free health and meditation apps.

Source: Suzy Insights Webinar, *Brand Building in Uncertain Times*, March 30

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Consumers are turning to brands to solve problems

60%

Value the actions of brands over institutions



Peloton is offering a free 90-day subscription to its workouts, including treadmill, biking, yoga, HIIT and more.

84%

Want brands to give coping tips



Yale is offering one of its most popular classes, the “Science of Wellness” for free online.

56%

Appreciate online fitness and skills-based classes



MASTERCLASS

MasterClass is launching free, live Q/A sessions with big shots in their respective industries.

SOURCE: Harris Poll

2 Actions > words

Brands must act thoughtfully, not selfishly. Brands must be philanthropic, not opportunistic. Be a fountain, not a drain.

Source: Edelman Trust Barometer, Special Report on COVID-19, March 2020 and Campaignlive. UK, March 31, 2020

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Consumers today value actions over words

65%

Say a brand's response hugely impacts likely to buy



ANHEUSER-BUSCH

Distilleries, including Anheuser-Busch and Woodford Reserve, converted production to hand sanitizer.

SOURCE: Harris Poll

71%

Will lose trust with perception of profit over people



Costco continues to adapt their policies and has adjusted their hours, set limits on high-demand items, and limited the number of shoppers in store at a time.

90%

Respect companies that give discounted or free products to health workers or those in need



Fiat Chrysler has committed to manufacturing one million face masks a month and distributing them to the United States emergency services to fight against the pandemic.

3 Normalcy of entertainment

Calm is more important than ever. As tension and fear rise, we're looking for joy and camaraderie. We're devoid of live events and craving normalcy.

Source: Suzy Insights Webinar, Brand Building in Uncertain Times, March 30 and Harris Research

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Entertainment makes us feel normal

65%

Participated in a digital experience



Esports and the Nevada Gaming Control Board is allowing bets to be placed on eSports events and games.

50%

Watched a livestream performance



FOX presents the iHeart Living Room Concert for America with one-hour events to support relief of people on the front line.

50%

Attended virtual parties



Netflix created a Google Chrome extension, Netflix Party, which allows users to watch Netflix remotely with friends.

SOURCE: Harris Poll

4 Promoting social connections

Everyday rituals have been stripped away. We're all facing social challenges. Isolation fuels creativity, focuses the mind. We're uniting around shared passions.

Source: Suzy Insights Webinar, Brand Building in Uncertain Times, March 30 and Harris Research

We're finding connection through distance

44%

Checked in with past friends



JanSport launches the #UnpackThatChallenge on TikTok to send hopeful messages and 10,000 backpacks to the World Central Kitchen.

40%

Picked up old hobbies



HQ Trivia is an app-based trivia show where people around the world compete for cash.

31%

Learned a new skill



Master Chef Massimo Bottura hosts a livestream cooking show on Instagram every night from his own kitchen.

SOURCE: Harris Poll

5 Adapting to emerging realities

“This global crisis will fundamentally change how we think, behave, and consume. There is no rapid return to normal.”

– Richard Edelman, CEO, Edelman Global Communications

Responding to the new normal

The longer companies sit out of the conversation, the more the discussion will continue without them. How we choose to step up and meet this challenge is what will determine our course in history.

Two questions for brands to ask:

1. *What can we do today to be present and stay relevant?*
2. *How do we spark dialogue and create awareness around the need for us all to adapt to these new realities?*

Let us know how we can help.

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