

# #2020: 8 SOCIAL INSIGHTS THAT HELPED DEFINE AN EXTRAORDINARY YEAR

An Ipsos Point of View

Atoms  
Everyday  
Face Mask  
atoms

GAME CHANGERS



## #2020: 8 SOCIAL INSIGHTS THAT HELPED DEFINE AN EXTRAORDINARY YEAR

In a chaotic and unpredictable era, eight themes show how people adjusted to multiple crises in 2020 and offer valuable clues about the role brands play in the process. Take a look.





# CELEBRATING THE GREATER GOOD

## 1. Moving From 'Me' to 'We'

Early in the pandemic, people found solace in solidarity with others. By social distancing and taking other safety precautions, they worked to curb the spread of the virus. Top Twitter trends turned to the [increasing need](#) for more medical supplies and the immense burden placed on healthcare systems and essential workers. This mentality was echoed in global community research, as people around the world [moved beyond the "me" to the "we"](#) in order to navigate trying times.

### Top Tweets in Late March



I am supporting @elijahdaniel's #CULTforGOOD Project to bring hundreds of thousands of necessities and FREE coronavirus testing to the homeless population during this COVID-19 outbreak, but they still need support. Please donate if you can: <https://cultforgood.com/>



We stand by Italy during these trying times. Share your Support for our Italian friends. They are our colleagues, friends and family. Cari amici, siamo con voi. #COVID19 #WeStandWithItaly



© Ipsos | Source: Synthesio, 3/23 – 3/29, specific mentions relevant to COVID-19/Coronavirus in U.S., English Only

## 2. Brands as a Bridge to Better

Early on, people also took to social media to support brands contributing to the greater good. Brand trust became linked to safety and innovation, as people [voiced appreciation for companies](#) who were updating their policies to better serve consumers or donating money and supplies to frontline workers. Global community respondents called on brands to go further by [taking action impacting positive change](#) for the future, from healthcare to the economy, politics, social issues and the environment.

### Brands Popular on Social Media for Adapting to Consumer Needs



Various grocery chains such as Costco opened their stores early or reserved specific hours for seniors to do their shopping.



Starbucks gave free coffee to first responders as a show of appreciation and thanks for their continued efforts.



Apple launched a company-wide effort to design, produce, and ship face shields for health workers.



GM and Ventec Life Systems moved urgently to find parts, place orders, and deploy workers to produce critical care ventilators.

© Ipsos | Source: Synthesio, 3/23 – 3/29 and 3/30 – 4/5, specific mentions relevant to COVID-19/Coronavirus in U.S., English Only

## SEEKING COMFORT AND CONNECTION

### 3. Say Cheese!

Food has been a major indicator of the way people have been feeling. From [stockpiling and panic buying to the rise of the home chef](#), COVID-19 affected food preparation and eating habits around the world. In the U.S., this year's emotional rollercoaster led to [various coping mechanisms](#) expressed online, but one topic has been a constant—cheese. As one social media user put it, “Times are rough, depression can be crippling, but at least I’ve got cheese.”

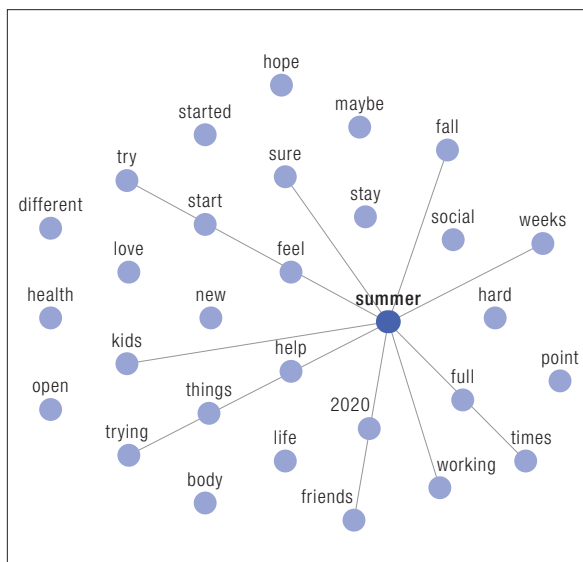


© Ipsos | Source: funniestmemes.com

### 4. A Holistic View of Wellness

As summer approached and Americans grappled with rising case counts, the focus shifted away from indulgences. Top social media words and hashtags trended toward [summertime health and wellness](#). Community conversations reflected the growing importance of self-care. “I [watch what I eat, exercise regularly and make sure I take time for me](#),” said one community member. “Self-care is not selfish,” offered another. “You need to take care of yourself to serve and love others at the highest level.”

#### Top 30 Words: Summer Health and Wellness



© Ipsos | Source: Synthesio, 5/11–5/24/20, specific mentions relevant summer within the Health & Wellness category in U.S., English only

## 5. Staying Connected

[Video games quickly gained popularity](#) and joined streaming services, like Disney+ and Netflix, as primary sources of entertainment. This trend was reinforced through [entertainment social conversation volume](#) as topics morphed from baking and cooking in April to gaming in June and July. By October, [one-in-three](#) online community respondents said free-time activities involved TV, games, streaming services, social media or online shopping.



© Ipsos | Source: Ipsos US Syndicated Online Community, October 5–12, 2020, (n = 659)

## CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

### 6. Life Hacks

Creativity in the form of various life hacks and brand innovations reigned in 2020 as Americans adapted to COVID-19 disruptions. From viral [TikTok snacks and food hacks](#) (pancake cereal and whipped coffee, anyone?) to [creating workspaces at home](#) and [reimagining holiday traditions](#), people's resilience in the face of adversity led to opportunities for brands to identify and act on needs and tensions, fueling innovations that will better serve consumers.



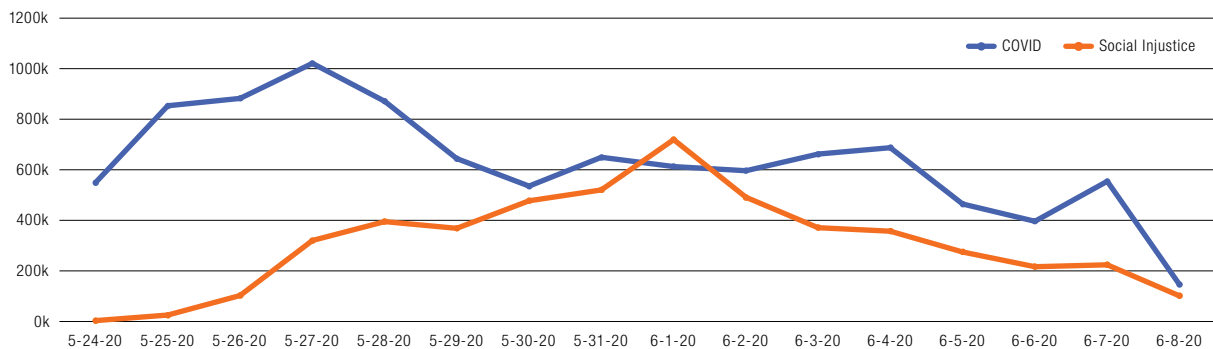
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# TAKING A STAND

## 7. Positive Momentum for Change

After the death of George Floyd on May 25, social justice and protest conversation amassed [five million mentions](#) in two weeks, with a peak on June 1 overtaking conversation volume about COVID-19 and largely linked to support of the Black Lives Matter movement. While anger and sadness were present in the discussion, other emotions that came up were support and generosity—signaling hope, positivity and a path for meaningful change. [Reuters/Ipsos polling](#) reinforced this sentiment when it found that 73 percent of Americans—including 59 percent of Republicans—approved of the peaceful protests.

### Daily Conversation Volume



© Ipsos | Source: Synthesio 5/25 – 6/8/20, specific mentions of Black Lives Matter, George Floyd, or protests in U.S., English only

## 8. Actions Speak Louder Than Words

The twin crises of coronavirus and racial injustice in 2020 prompted [many brands to weigh in](#) on the heavy issues affecting America. While consumers see messages of brand solidarity as important, [Ipsos research shows](#) they are rarely effective without concrete actions. Authenticity emerged as a key attribute driving positive response in social media. When Patagonia launched an election-infused clothing line with the tagline “Vote the A\*holes Out,” the move was largely seen as aligned with the company’s commitment to environmental activism. Support for brand activism is [polarized along age, ethnicity and political affiliation](#), making it important for brands to stay close to key audience sensibilities to take actions that resonate.



“Netflix added a Black Lives Matter section with movie/documentaries that discuss Black peoples’ experiences. Wow.”

© Ipsos | Source: Synthesio 5/25 – 6/8/20, specific mentions of Black Lives Matter, George Floyd, or protests in U.S., English only

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR 2021?

Despite highs and lows, extreme disruptions and a rollercoaster of emotions, the 2020 social conversation produced a current of positivity and hope. But the U.S. is still being ravaged by coronavirus and Americans are polarized over many issues, including [the new vaccine](#).

In a recent Ipsos Fresh Lab Syndicated U.S. Online Community survey, 91 percent of respondents felt that listening to what consumers want or need from a brand is important to being a great brand. Customers in 2021 will see the world being reshaped; brands should stay close to human experiences that can guide actions and innovations that consumers expect from brands they trust.

### A Note on Methodology

In conjunction with social intelligence technology partner [Synthesio](#) (an Ipsos company), Ipsos set up custom COVID-related dashboards and queries to pull relevant data from key social media channels across the U.S. and applied frameworks (such as the [Ipsos Pandemic Adaptability Continuum \(IPAC\)](#)) and AI-driven analytics to help craft actionable insights and stories for our clients and partners. We connected the dots with other data sources across Ipsos, including syndicated online community data, public opinion polling, global trends and the [Ipsos Coronavirus Consumer Tracker](#), to provide a holistic, up-to-the-minute look at the key emotions, drivers and behavioral shifts resulting from the pandemic and other significant 2020 cultural impacts.

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**GAME CHANGERS**



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