



# THE CREATIVE **FIGHT BACK**

**Response & Communication  
during Covid-19 crisis**

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GAME CHANGERS





# CORONAVIRUS MEANS FLUID TIMES

Consumer decision-making and brand selection adapts based on individual and contextual characteristics.



A photograph of two men walking on a city street. Both men are wearing face masks. The man on the left is wearing a dark hoodie, grey sweatpants, and a dark baseball cap with a white logo. The man on the right is wearing a dark jacket, dark pants, and a blue baseball cap. They are walking past a green decorative post. In the background, there are parked cars and a building with a balcony and air conditioning units. A sign on the right side of the image reads "車房門口請勿泊車" (No parking in front of the car room entrance).

# **DOES CREATIVITY** *still* **MATTER NOW?**



# CREATIVITY STILL MATTERS

CREATIVITY drives business growth

**x11**



Market Shares Gains\*

**x3,5**



More Stock Market Performance\*\*

\*(IPA Binet & Field) \*\* (Cannes Creativity Festival & Yahoo)



# GOING DARK IS NOT THE ANSWER



**Keep the brand light burning,**  
because the cost of snuffing it out for  
the rest of 2020 and then trying to  
reignite it next year is gigantic”

**MARK RITSON**

Marketing Week, March 17, 2020



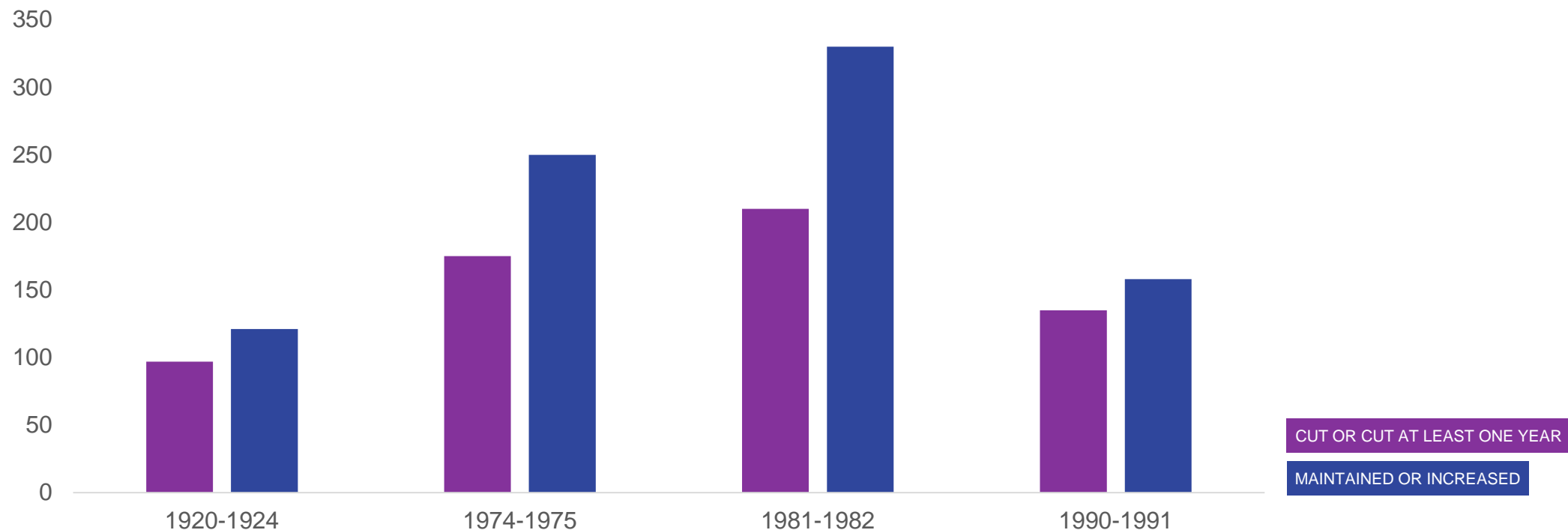
I think it also can [provide] **a sense of  
normalcy for people as their lives  
are anything but normal** in many  
parts of the world. And, so, for us, we  
think we have a responsibility to do  
that – whether it’s delivering our  
products or whether it’s advertising  
Cinnamon Toast Crunch.”

**JEFF HARMENING**

General Mills, March 2020

# COMPANIES THAT MAINTAIN OR INCREASE ADVERTISING SPEND DURING RECESSIONS TEND TO SEE HIGHER SALES

Across all major recessions, advertisers who maintain or **increase their advertising spend see higher sales increases in the last year of the period** than those that do not



Sources: Vaile, Roland S (1929), "The Use of Advertising During Depression." *Harvard Business Review*; Meldrum and Fewsmith (1979), "How Advertising in Recession Periods Affects Sales.", American Business Press; McGraw-Hill Research (1985), Kamber, Thomas (2002), "The Brand Manager's Dilemma: Understanding How Advertising Expenditures Affect Sales Growth During a Recession." *Journal of Brand Management*, London Vol 10 Iss. 2, Nov, pg 106 -121.



# THE 'LAST NEW NORMAL' TEACHES US BRANDS NEED TO **BE PRESENT** & INVEST IN RELATIONSHIPS IN TIMES OF CRISIS

It can be tempting for brands to go into cost containment mode in times of distress, quietly weathering the storm.

.....

But we have a unique window where brands can earn trust by maintaining presence and delivering relevant value in a fluid period of heightened anxiety.

.....

ONE  
CAN  
**INFECT**  
THOUSANDS  
#StayAtHome

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THOUSANDS  
#StayAtHome

# HOW SHOULD BRANDS RESPOND IN CURRENT TIMES?



**CONSUMERS EXPECT BRANDS TO PLAY A ROLE  
DURING THE CRISIS  
...AND GOING DARK IS A POOR STRATEGIC CHOICE**

**72%**

**COMPANIES HAVE A  
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY  
TO OFFER AID DURING  
CORONAVIRUS**

**71%**

**I AM INTERESTED IN  
HEARING FROM BRANDS  
THAT CAN HELP ME  
NAVIGATE THE CRISIS**

**70%**

**I WANT TO CONTINUE TO  
HEAR FROM BRANDS AND  
COMPANIES ON WHAT  
THEY HAVE TO OFFER**

# BRANDS NEED TO BE SURE OF HOW THEY CAN HELP

Many brands out there  
want to help,  
but are unsure  
how they can

“Brands are nervous about **appearing to profit from this crisis**. The conversation is being had in many client and agency organizations, but they have to be absolutely sure they are **helping people not just making money from it**, or being seen to make money from it.”

**Owen Lee**  
Chief Creative Officer  
FCB Inferno (The Drum)



# MANY BRANDS ARE RISING TO THE OCCASION



# TREND IN HONG KONG: STAY HOME

Occasions have changed. People are encouraged to stay at home. Some brands are highlighting the ability to provide support that cater their needs during the stay-home period. #Bankfromhome is a common term.

## DBS



## Standard Chartered



## Pizza Hut



## GIORDANO

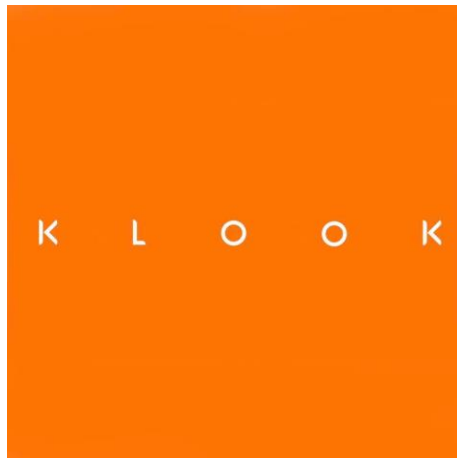




# TREND IN HONG KONG: STAY SAFE

Since Hong Kong did not go into a total lockdown, social distancing is a key thing, and some brands have put a fun twist to it through their logos and ads.

**KLOOK**



**IKEA**



**DBS**



**Pizza Express**



# TREND IN HONG KONG: STAY HEALTHY

With the closure of gyms, many brands encourage people to have training at home and share health tips on how to combat Covid-19

## NIKE



## Watsons



## Sun Life





# TREND IN HONG KONG: STAY OPTIMISTIC

## Sun Life



## Citi Bank



## Watsons



## Fortress



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# WHAT DO PEOPLE WANT FROM ADVERTISING?



# CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS

Centered around: Credibility, Authenticity, Relevancy, Empathy and Contribution

## Credibility



"Don't patronize us or get us to part with our money at this volatile time. Just let us know you're not going anywhere and taking care of your employees. That will build a long term relationship."

## Authenticity



"I think that brands should continue to use their 'regular' voice and not put on the 'thoughts and prayers' voice/tone. This will feel more authentic and less carbon copy."

"Don't cut and paste from other companies on your communications and use your own thoughts."

## Relevancy



"Brands can respond in ways that are most relevant to their product/services. Everyone doesn't have to be the same, because every product/service isn't the same."

## Empathy



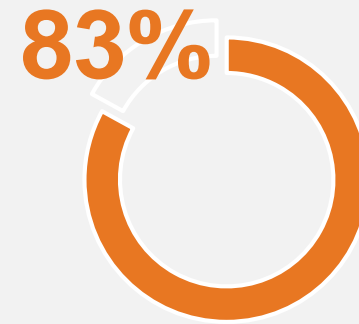
"I want to hear them acting with empathy and being supportive during this crazy time."

## Contribution

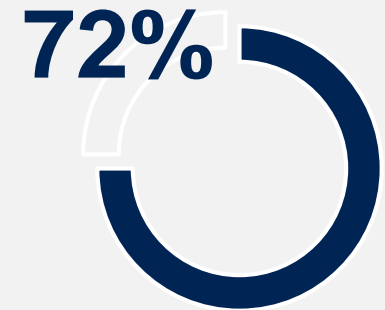


"Any 'help' [offered] should be to their employees to ensure they have an income until the hysteria blows over. I do not think a brand should feel guilty if they have to layoff employees, but if a brand is intent on 'helping' it should be their employees who receive the assistance."

# PEOPLE EXPECT BRANDS TO **HELP PEOPLE** DURING THIS CHALLENGING TIME



Completely/somewhat agree (T2B)  
**I want to hear from  
helpful brands**

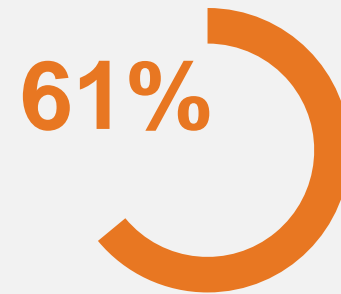


Completely agree  
**Companies have a social  
responsibility to offer aid  
during the Coronavirus**

Source: Ipsos Poll, March 20, amongst 999 Adults



# AND ARE OPEN TO SEE ADVERTISING FROM THEM



Completely/somewhat agree (T2B)

**I am open and  
receptive to advertising  
in today's climate**



Completely agree

**Brands that advertise  
during today's climate  
are tone deaf**

Source: Ipsos Poll, March 20, amongst 999 Adults

# CONSUMERS WANT TO FEEL OPTIMISTIC AND SECURE FROM ADVERTISING



## Security - 37%

People want to feel safe and secure again. They want to be reassured that things will return to normal. There is no need to be afraid or to panic.



## Positivity - 30%

They want to feel good again and improve their well-being. They want to feel calm, comforted, relaxed, hopeful, positive and optimistic.

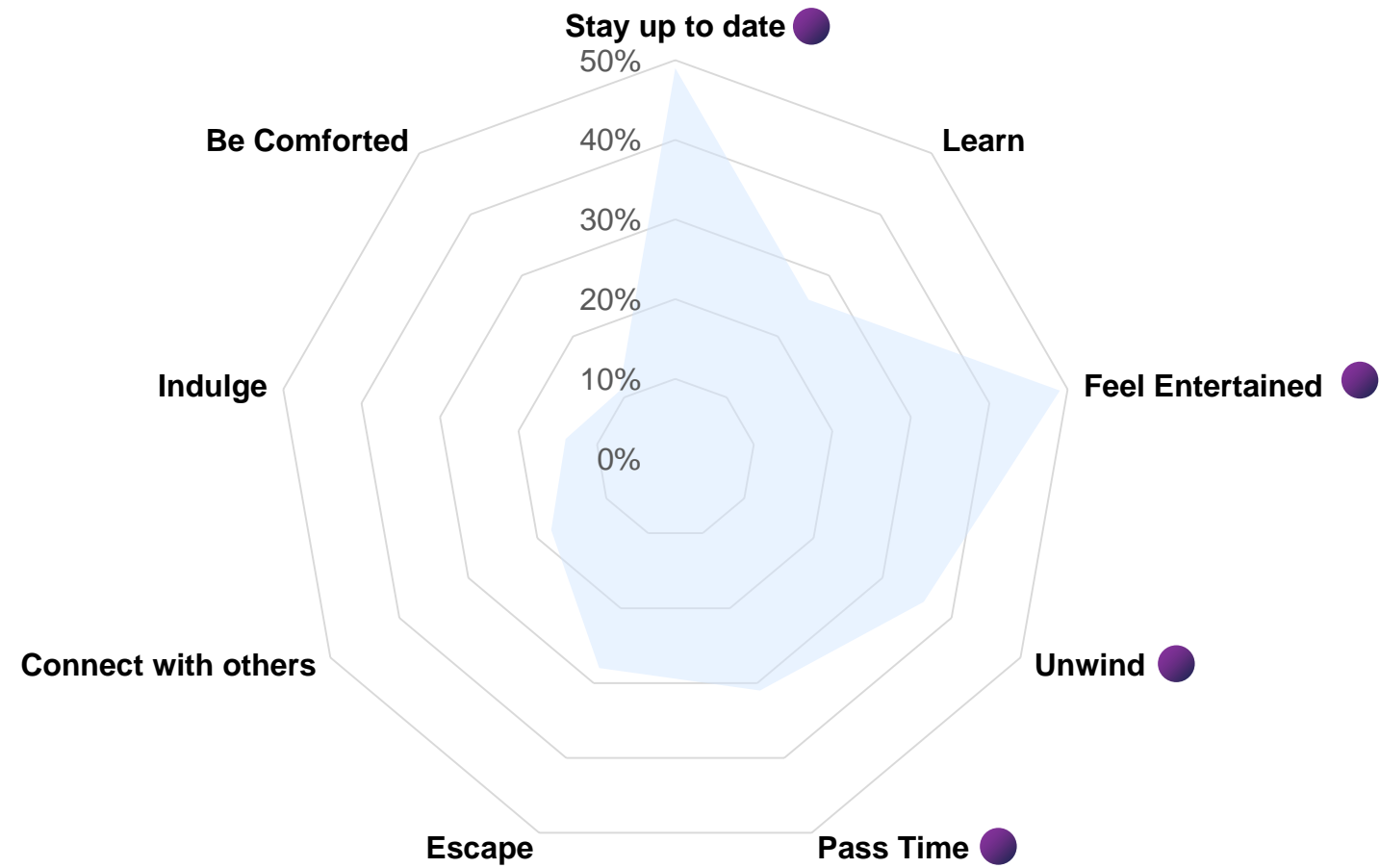


Given the current situation, how would you like advertising to make you feel?  
Ipsos Poll, March 20, amongst 999 Adults



# PEOPLE WANT ENTERTAINMENT AND ESCAPISM DURING THE CRISIS, AS WELL AS UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION

● What people want to fulfil MORE during the outbreak



Base: Total Sample of 3,000 adults 18-65.  
Q: What's your mindset when choosing something to watch, read or consume (whether on TV, social media, streaming, etc.) these days? Please select up to three.

# WE ARE SEEING EXTREMELY MIXED RESULTS

## Is this that surprising?

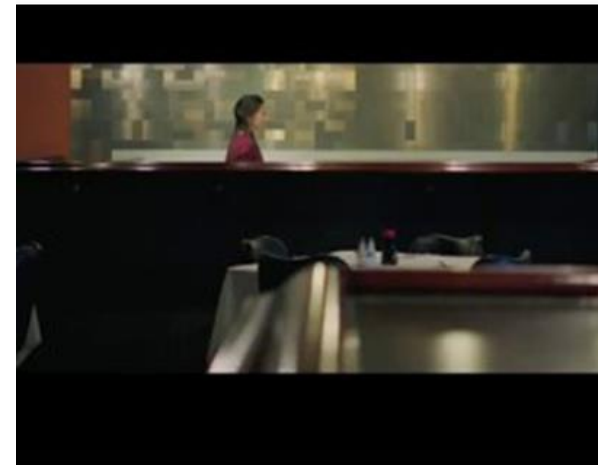
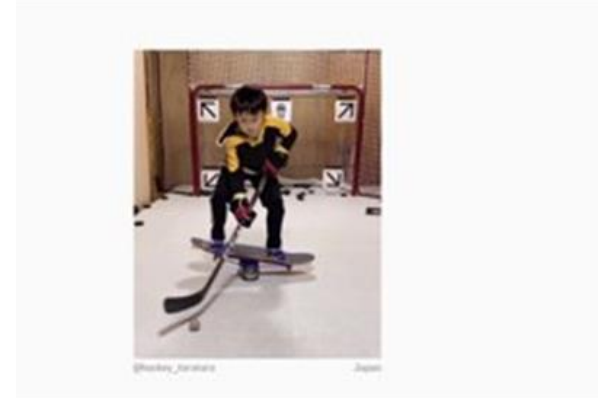
Extraordinary efforts are resulting in ads being developed in days, using existing footage, minimal time for review, breaking all conventions, scrambling to air as soon as possible.

Times have changed for all of us, but

**CREATIVE QUALITY  
STILL MATTERS**

*Ipsos tested 10 newly aired ads during March among broad, representative samples of 'general category users' using the new Creative|Spark methodology.*

*Categories include Automotive, Restaurant, Travel & Leisure, Retail, Finance, Food & Beverage, Telecoms*





# ITS IMPORTANT TO NOT GET CAUGHT IN THE SEA OF SAMENESS



65%

have seen  
Coronavirus  
related  
advertising

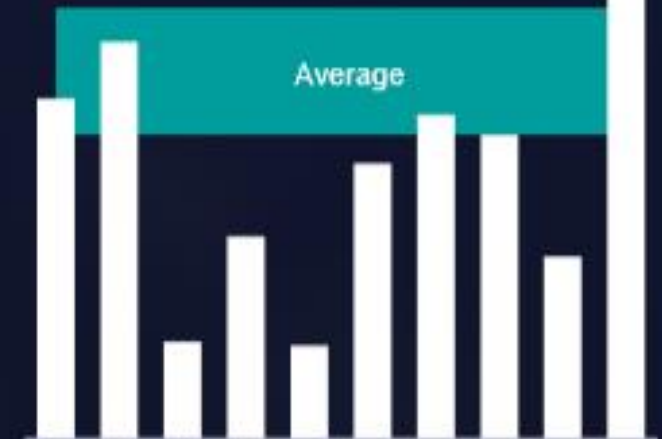
## Sea of Sameness

*"I feel like every advertisement is shoving the **same message** at its audience. I'd like to see ads proceed as normal, and maybe a small highlight of Covid acknowledgement, not the main focus."*

*"I want to hear we are still open for business and we are taking every precaution necessary to protect you from the virus."*

*"I have **seen multiple ads that acknowledge the epidemic** and speaking directly about what they are doing to protect their employees and customers as well as what services they are continuing to offer."*

## Brand Attention



ONE  
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SO HOW  
DO WE  
BRING IT TO LIFE?



# HOW DO WE BRING IT TO LIFE?

1

**WE NEED TO BE AUTHENTIC AND FAITHFUL**  
about what your brand stands for

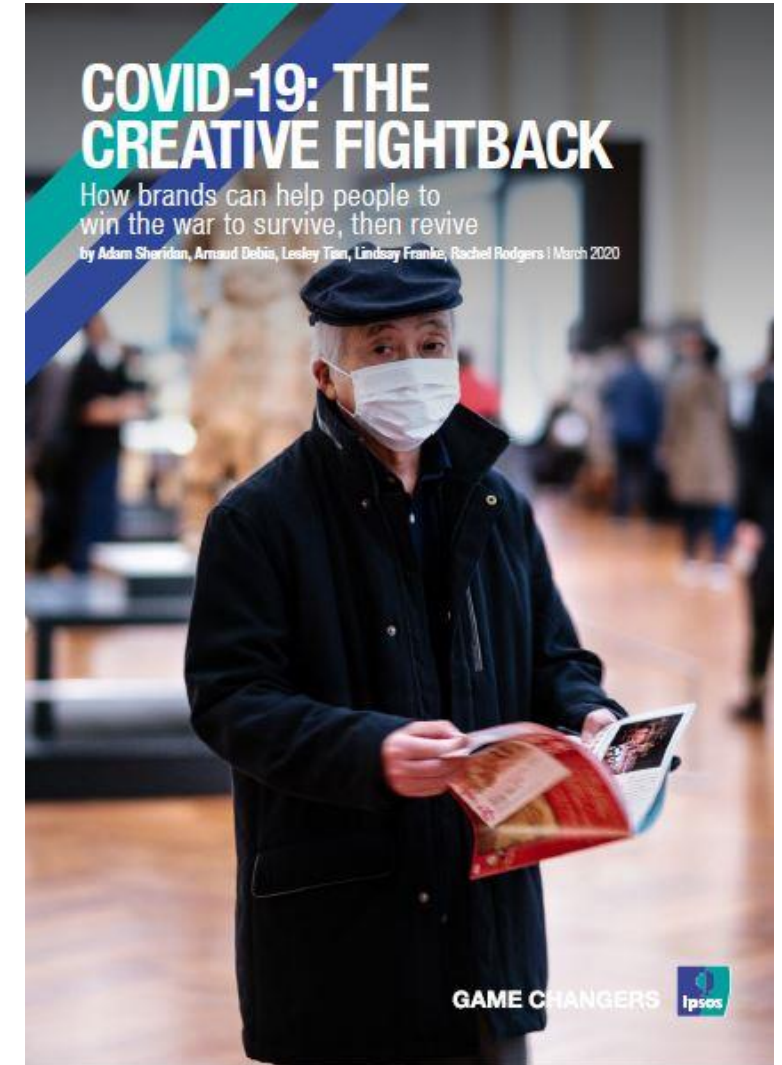
2

**CONSUMERS WANT BRANDS TO TAKE ACTION**  
as much as or before telling

3

**WE NEED TO FIND THE RIGHT STORY  
AND STRIKE THE RIGHT TONE**

<https://www.ipsos.com/en/covid-19-creative-fightback>



# BE AUTHENTIC AND FAITHFUL

1



## Emirates

Do you remember campaign



## Malaysia Airlines

Don't rush challenge

# MAKE SURE YOU ACT AND DO

2

## CONSUMERS WANT BRANDS TO TAKE ACTION

73%

*Donate  
products and  
services to  
those in need*

64%

*Support efforts  
to manage the  
crisis with  
products &  
donations*

60%

*Invest in  
services like  
curbside  
pick-up and  
delivery*

59%

*Showcase  
what they  
are doing to  
support their  
employees*



# WHAT DO CONSUMERS CONSIDER HELPFUL AND SUPPORTIVE FROM ADVERTISERS?

2

## ACTION-ORIENTED, INFORMATIVE HELP

**“Too many emails to show ‘concern’ but nothing useful.** Some emails explain how the companies are going to continue working or not, that's helpful.”

## BEING PART OF THE SOLUTION

“Be honest and real and just do what you can. **We are all in this together.** I know businesses are freaking out but they need to trust that customers will return.”

**“Be HONEST about what you are doing to keep things going** for your products and most important **PROTECT** your employees”

## SPEAKING TO SOCIAL SUPPORT

“I want to hear about brands’ philanthropic effort, especially large brands. **Give back. This is when your loyal customers need you the most.**”

“Want to know they are adapting to the changes and **keeping in mind both customers’ and employees’ safety first.**”

# FIND THE RIGHT STORY & STRIKE THE RIGHT TONE

Several ways to meet the needs of consumers with your advertising

3

## Infuse positivity and optimism



“I would enjoy hearing things that are optimistic or show a brighter future for our community”

:Advertising should make me feel hopeful & put my fears at ease”

## Fight boredom with fun and laughter



“A laugh or two certainly wouldn’t hurt.”

“I still want to laugh and have fun, and do some of my normal activities. I don’t need doom and gloom every moment.”

## Ideas and support for coping



“Fun stuff to do while we’re stuck indoors.”

“Help me figure out where to go from here with everything I now have to juggle – we have no support system anymore.”

## Reassure and calm



“Ads should have a reassuring and calming agenda rather than of opportunistic sales.”

“Keep a positive message to help keep people from panicking”

## Reinforce sense of community



“Encourage community, compassion and coming together.”

“I want to feel like I’m part of the process, part of the solution.”

# BRANDS THAT ARE LEVERAGING THEIR STRENGTH & ACTIONS



**Ford:** Ford reinforced their brand equity and connected with consumers highlighting the journey that have taken and how they are supporting now, also benefited from being first to market



**Domino's:** Launches two ads supporting consumer need states of contactless delivery and "we're hiring" franchise spot to prove to consumers that they are hiring in uncertain times and hitting on consumers current needs



**Patagonia: Covid-19 in US**  
Closes stores and operations to protect staff and customers. "All Patagonia employees will receive their regular pay during the closure."



**Hotels.com:** Developed an ad centered around their historic humorous tone and distinctive campaign assets with captain obvious, bringing light hearted, well received humor to the current situation



# ARE CREATIVE EFFECTIVENESS METRICS AFFECTED DURING THIS TIME?

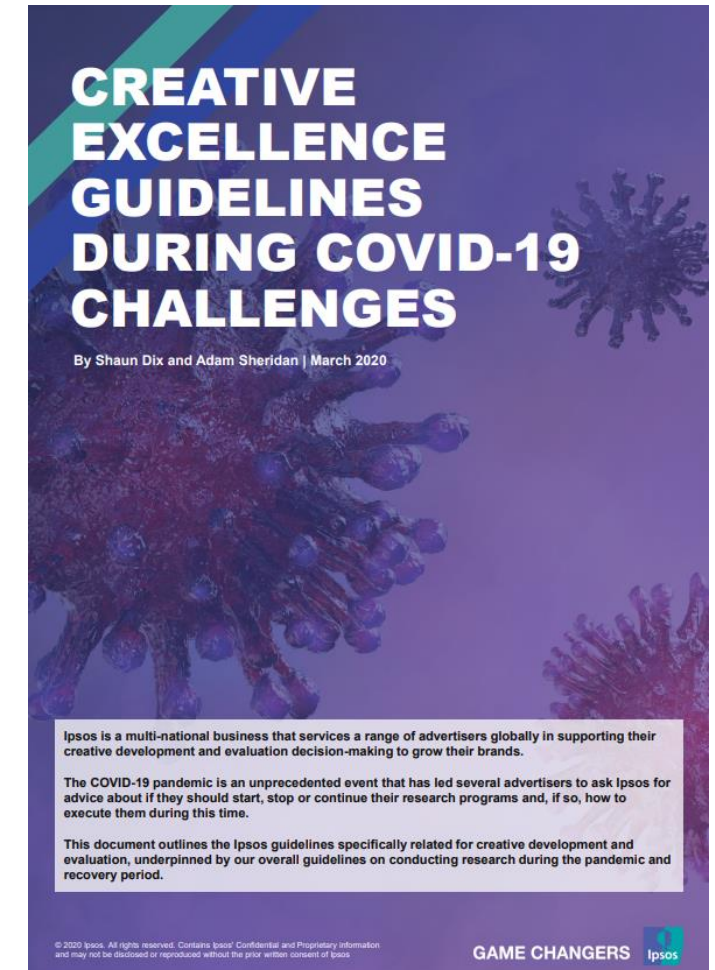


# IPSOS CONSIDERATIONS ON EXECUTING CREATIVE RESEARCH

The need to execute research during this time will depend on the category and the position of your brand, though as a general guideline, the Ipsos perspective is that **if you have the intention to launch a campaign in the next several months**, now, more than ever, **you need to be sure that you are considering the very new context your creative will operate in**, and investment in research is critical

There are also considerations on **how we expose people to creative and ideas and interact with them in a safe environment**, and Ipsos has a **range of solutions to strike the balance of identifying key insights with safety in mind**

If you would like more specific guidelines on how to run creative research during this time, we have written a more detailed set of guidelines





# CRE specific solutions in COVID times

## VIRTUAL CREATIVE | LABS

Explore insights, ideas and early creative executions in 3 days

BE CREATIVE  
BE BOLD  
BE FAST

**The Challenge:**

Does the insight + idea creative resonate and engage consumers?

Is the idea linking a story about the brand that answers challenges and inspires at the same time?

How should we communicate, bring the idea to life, optimize the creative and deliver it with maximum impact?

How can we limit our big ideas & early creative executions within a very short timeline?

**The Solution:** **VIRTUAL CREATIVE|LABS** available in 61 markets

**ACCELERATE**  
Research, learning and action steps – all carried out **ONLINE** in JUST 3 DAYS

**CATALYST**  
Bring total understanding of how people experience your creative, and how hard to purchase your ideas and take them forward through integrated guest and post working

**INSPIRE CONFIDENCE**  
To all stakeholders by meeting them throughout the process and with a recap in a virtual workshop at the end of the trial day

**The Integrated Design:**

**DAY 1-2**  
100 respondents are exposed to each route, to explore and size strengths and opportunities. Also serves to direct the moderation of the subsequent qualitative deep dive

**DAY 3**  
Online mini-groups (8 participants) to explore how our creative resonates and why, and also our how to maximize its potential

**END OF DAY 3**  
Same day debrief and workshop with all stakeholders to capture, collate, synthesise all insights and recommendations for next step

EXPLORE INSIGHTS, IDEAS AND EARLY CREATIVE EXECUTIONS IN 3 DAYS WITH VIRTUAL CREATIVE|LABS

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GAME CHANGERS Ipsos

## ASI:Connect

A creative development testing solution for today's media landscape and creativity challenges

**THE CHALLENGE**

Does my creative resonate and truly connect to my brand?

Is it the right creative for my brand?

Does my creative generate the desired connection?

Does my creative truly connect to my brand?

Does my creative truly connect to my brand?

**THE SOLUTION**

ASI:Connect is an award-winning creative development solution that uniquely measures the potential of your workpiece.

Place the test advertisement

Take validated KPIs

System 1 & System 2

Actionable outcomes

**THE ANSWERS**

ASI:Connect works in 2 service options

**FULL**

Sales validated KPIs + full diagnosis + Facial Coding + full reporting

Customisation of the sample/boost, questionnaire and sub-populations breaks

Full deliverables include business, full report and a how-to-face presentation

Results available from 8 days from ad delivery

**CORE**

Sales validated KPIs + diagnosis + concise reporting

Deliverables include an automated report with KPIs followed by a one-hour phone debrief

Results available in 4 days from ad delivery

GAME CHANGERS Ipsos

## Connect: Digital

THE CHALLENGE

78% of Facebook ads are watched for 3 seconds or less. In this context, how to understand quickly if a digital ad works as is, or needs optimisation?

**THE SOLUTION**

Digital ads are:

- 1 Targeted and evaluated in live digital platforms
- 2 Evaluated on behavioral metrics
- 3 Assessed on brand metrics generated from discussion

Connect:Digital evaluates ads in live digital platforms to understand within days the potential of the ads and where to optimise.

**THE ANSWERS**

- 1 How long my ad must be viewed to deliver my message
- 2 Which of my messages have the greatest brand impact
- 3 Which ad for me best fits my message

GAME CHANGERS Ipsos

34 –



# Standard COVID-19 questions to add to Creative Evaluation Projects

The purpose is to help, at an individual creative level, to diagnose any misstep in the creative related to the environment conditions and impact of COVID-19.

THEY WANT TO FEEL  
OPTIMISTIC AND SECURE  
FROM ADVERTISING



**Security - 37%**

People want to feel better and secure again. They want to be reassured that things will return to normal. There is no need to be afraid or to panic.



**Positivity - 30%**

They want to feel good again and improve their well-being. They want to feel calm, confident, relaxed, hopeful, positive and optimistic.



Over 20 years' experience, we build you something to measure that's yours. We don't just tell you what we think you should do.

15 • 10 years, 2020



**ASI:Connect**

A creative development testing solution for today's media landscape and creativity challenges

## Key questions:

1. perceived appropriateness of the creative
2. claimed personal impact of the crisis

## These questions can apply to the following Products:

- **ASI:Connect:** asked as two of the available custom questions at the end of the survey in the wizard, or as custom questions at the end in manual execution
- **Creative|Spark (L2/L3):** where available, asked as two of the three available custom questions at the end of the survey. Of note, this will require custom deliverables quoted for
- **Connect:Digital:** asked as two of the up to four custom questions available at the end of the survey. Of note, this will require custom deliverables quoted for

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

BE ACTIVE

2

AVOID SEA OF  
SAMENESS

3

BE PREPARED  
FOR FLUIDITY

4

GRAB  
OPPORTUNITY  
FOR  
INNOVATION

# THANK YOU

## Questions?

Any further queries, please contact:

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[gaurava.singh@ipsos.com](mailto:gaurava.singh@ipsos.com)

**GAME CHANGERS**

