



COVID-19: TRENDS, COMMUNICATIONS & INSIGHTS

A Nielsen Communications Insight Report: April 2020

INTRODUCTION

The pace of COVID-19, only officially named [in February 2020](#), has had everyone from heads of state to [Webster's Dictionary](#) scrambling to keep pace in Q1 2020. Inevitable comparisons to the Spanish Flu, and even The Plague, have come thick and fast, as commentators globally struggle to make sense of the pandemic.

In advertising terms, lessons from history must begin more recently, with the most natural comparison being with the financial crisis of 2008. Certain parallels are clear; as advertisers face uncertainty over the future, overall volumes of creative are dropping. In Europe, Italy shows a 5% decline in unique TV creatives (Jan-Mar 2020 vs Jan-Mar 2019), with total volumes of TV events in France dropping nearly -15% in the same period. However, the very nature of social distancing is dictating that consumers' media consumption is increasing – [Nielsen research across Asia](#) shows that total media consumption could rise up to 60% during the crisis, while research from [Nielsen and BARC](#) highlights similar trends in TV consumption globally. The challenge for advertisers is to balance cutbacks with a consistent voice, more vital in a recession than at any other time.

Although total ad volumes are falling, it's not surprising to see advertisers increase their COVID-19 messages in the activity they do run. In measuring ads with a specific COVID-19 reference, monitored volumes of activity globally increased exponentially in Mar 2020 vs Feb 2020. Although due to a lack of activity in Feb 2020, advertisers are now supporting their global customer base in a variety of ways.

At a unique time of unity and partnership, donations to COVID-19 relief efforts are a huge part of CSR in 2020 – major global players such as Coca-Cola, Unilever and Anheuser-Busch have offered financial support to charities fighting the disease. Similarly, the need for advertisers and consumers to support health workers on the front-line is critical, and brands have played their part by offering free goods and services, or even by completely repurposing their manufacturing facilities to make face masks, ventilators and sanitizers for overstretched services.

That said, brand support does not always require expensive gestures and changes to business practices – many brands are showing their support in smaller, though still meaningful, ways. Reinforcement of governmental social distancing messaging has been seen across the board, either through specific campaigns or more immediate changes to visual cues, while brands have offered a range of services for free to help consumers stay entertained at home.

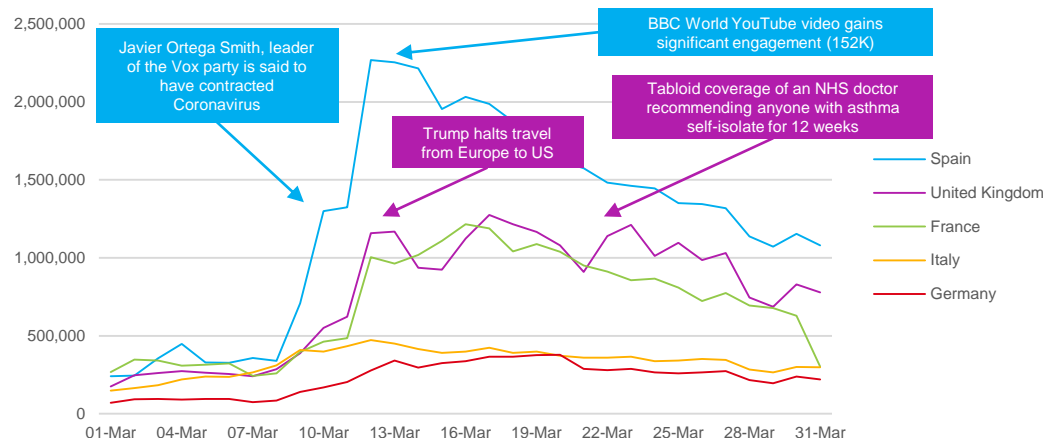
It's also interesting to note the response from different sectors, some of which have a 'natural advantage' in the new age of social distancing. Telecoms brands, who have long promoted their ability to connect consumers via technology, have found renewed vigour during COVID-19, while companies such as food delivery services are also at an advantage. On the other side of the coin are brands which have come under fire for their COVID-19 responses, often at their own hand through unfortunate PR moves. Our report includes a breakdown of the overarching COVID-19 responses across key global categories, including supermarkets, finance, personal care and automotive.

The future, both short- and long-term, remains uncharted territory. What's clear though is that COVID-19 and the corresponding change in behaviours it has brought about will have long-lasting effects. The world will look to China, the epicentre of the disease, for the first indicators of what a new 'normal' looks like, and what is already emerging is that brands are adapting to behaviours that are moving from enforced to engrained. E-commerce, digitised experiences and virtual communication have all found renewed focus in the immediate COVID-19 aftermath – brands around the world will have to adapt, invent, reposition and evolve to stay ahead.

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DISEASE MATURITY IS REFLECTED IN EU BUZZ, WITH STAYING SAFE AT HOME THE MAIN CONCERN

Online Buzz Posts Referencing COVID-19, EU5, Mar 2020



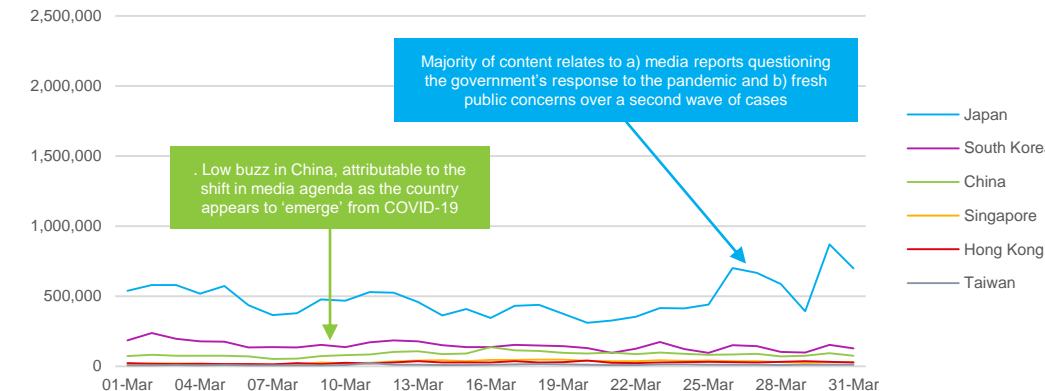
Spain United Kingdom France Italy Germany

- The focus of top hashtags across the monitored markets was a call to stay at home and save lives
- Solidarity for public healthcare was an emerging theme in the UK
- The efforts of national leaders featured as key talking points in France, Italy and Germany only
- France's sanctioning of the use of chloroquine for some COVID-19 patients made an impact late in March

	MEDIA BUZZ	SOV
SPAIN	38.2M	37%
UK	24M	23%
FRANCE	22M	23%
ITALY	10.3M	10%
GERMANY	7M	7%

IN ASIA, FEARS OF SPREAD DRIVE JAPANESE RESULTS, WHILE HOPE / UNITY ARE KEY THEMES

Online Buzz Posts Referencing COVID-19, Key Asian Markets, Mar 2020



	MEDIA BUZZ	SOV
JAPAN	14.9m	62%
SOUTH KOREA	4.5M	19%
CHINA	2.6m	11%
SINGAPORE	947K	4%
HONG KONG	783K	3%
TAIWAN	303K	1%

#StayConnected
 #TaiwanJapanFriends
 #StayStrong_ARMY #LockdownNow
 #StayAtHome #Wuhan #China #CCP #CCPVirus
 #PleaseCheerUpAndSupport #China #Italy #WuhanVirus #Hubei
 #Spreadthehope #NewCorona #Taiwan #WuhanPneumonia
 #NewCoronavirus #CheerUp_Army #9YearsOnFromTōhoku
 #EpidemicPrevention
 #StaySafe #KenShimura #TaiwanCanHelp
 #SGUnited #AmabieChallenge #BTSLoveMyself
 #HongKongProtests #FistSalute

Japan South Korea China Singapore Hong Kong Taiwan

- South Korean public displayed a sense of unity through sharing boyband BTS' messages of hope and togetherness
- While offering support to all nations, Taiwan's public expressed strong solidarity with Japan in particular
- The rapid spread of new Coronavirus cases were key buzz drivers in Japan
- Chinese hashtags have developed little beyond the recognition that Wuhan in Hubei province was the source of the outbreak

IN ADVERTISING, MARKETS SHOW INDIVIDUAL TRENDS BUT TOTAL VOLUMES HAVE FALLEN



Italy, the worst-hit market in Europe, has seen a 5% decline in the volume of unique TV ads (Jan-Mar 2020 vs Jan-Mar 2019 - Entertainment (-42%) and Transport & Tourism (-67%) took a large hit.



The U.K., only two or three weeks behind Italy in virus-contamination terms, is beginning to follow suit, with a 3% reduction in TV ad volumes over the same period.



Data from France shows a similar downturn of activity during the crisis – volumes of total TV events have fallen -14.5% in Jan-Mar 2020 vs Jan-Mar 2019.



Germany shows that trends in advertising also differ by media. In WK 13 2020, TV decreased -6.7% vs WK 13 2019, while radio was down -41.6% over the same period.



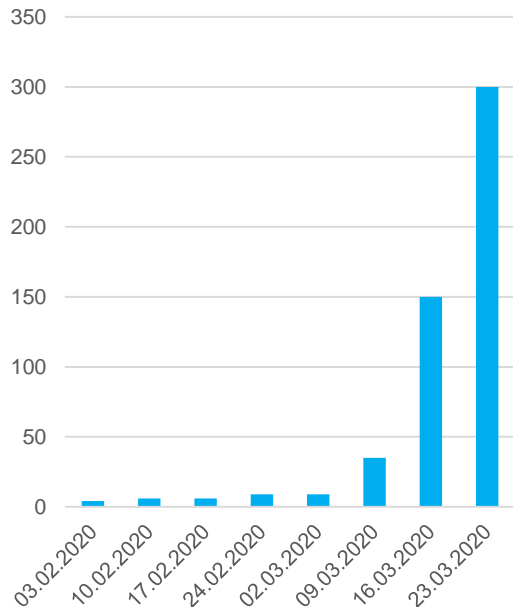
However, not all markets are showing signs of slowdown – TV ad volumes in Belgium and The Netherlands have increased, by 4.2% and 4.5%. COVID-19 has taken longer to reach these markets, and we expect future trends to show more pronounced downturns in Q2 2020.



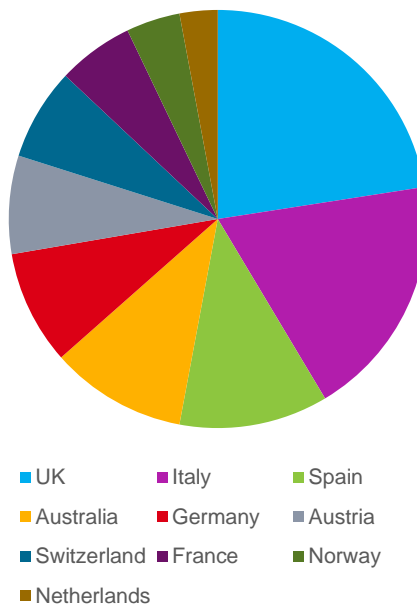
India is similarly an outlier, where ad volumes increased 13% (01-14 Mar 2020 vs 11-31 Jan 2020), although this increase did not lead to a corresponding increase in ad revenue.

DESPITE THIS, CREATIVE SPECIFICALLY REFERENCING COVID-19 IS ON THE RISE ACROSS MULTIPLE SECTORS

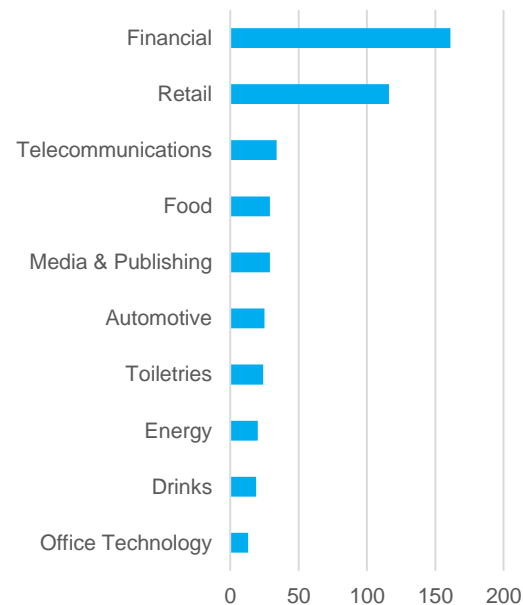
Total COVID-Specific Ads by Media,
Feb-Mar 2020, All Markets and Categories
(excl. Social Affairs and Government)



Top 10 Markets for COVID-Specific Ads,
Feb-Mar 2020, All Markets and Categories
(excl. Social Affairs and Government)



Top 10 Categories for COVID-Specific Ads,
Feb-Mar 2020, All Markets and Categories
(excl. Social Affairs and Government)



Source: [Nielsen Ad Intel](#)

Data collated via a mixture of keyword monitoring (ads containing "COVID", "COVID19", "COVID-19", "coronavirus" or "corona virus") and manual tagging
Ad volumes are taken from our international capture services, with various methodologies in place regarding categorisation and capture of ads – please contact us for more information on this

THE MOST IMMEDIATE RESPONSE IS CHARITABLE DONATION TO SUPPORT COVID-19 RELIEF



"It's going to take action from everyone in society to overcome this challenge, and we are ready to play our part"

Alan Jope, Unilever CEO

Unilever has committed to providing free soap, sanitizer, bleach and food to the value of €100M - around half of which will go to the COVID Action Platform of the World Economic Forum supporting global health organisations and agencies in their response to the emergency.

For its customers and suppliers, the brand has offered €500M of cash flow relief to support livelihoods across its extended value chain. Finally, it will also be supporting its workforces, protecting them from sudden drops in pay for up to 3 months.



Budweiser / AB InBev has pledged to donate \$5M of its sport spending towards partnerships with the Red Cross, including the repurposing of stadiums as blood donation centres. Brand released TV spot in US focused on unity as everyone comes together during this crisis.



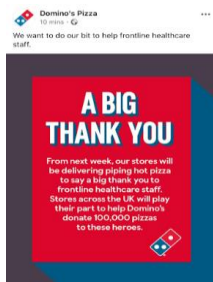
The UK division of HSBC donated £1M to the National Emergencies Trust Coronavirus Appeal and British Red Cross to help support vulnerable people affected by COVID-19.



Coca-Cola has suspended its commercial advertising from April onwards in reaction to the COVID-19 outbreak, donating \$120M worldwide to help combat the pandemic in markets such as Italy and the UK.

SUPPORT OF HEALTH INSTITUTIONS AND WORKERS IS ALSO SEEN ACROSS MULTIPLE SECTORS

Free Products for Employees



To our NHS heroes

For those supporting our community on the frontline, Gett drivers are offering £10 fixed fares on your rides, anywhere within London Zones 1-3.

We're here if you need us.
Thank you for all you're doing.

From everyone at Gett



Multiple brands in the UK have demonstrated their support of the NHS, offering health workers free products and services ranging from food (McDonald's, Domino's Pizza, Burger King) to transportation (Uber, Gett, Europcar).

Creating Much-Needed Products



UK – Beer manufacturer Brewdog announced plans to produce a range of hand sanitizer to help tackle nationwide shortages.



FR – Similarly, Louis Vuitton has updated its production lines to help manufacture hand sanitizer rather than luxury products, in a bid to help ease the strain put on the sector.



CH – Chinese electric car manufacturer BYD has focused its recent efforts into making face masks for doctors and healthcare professionals.

ELSEWHERE, BRANDS ARE PLAYING THEIR PART TO REINFORCE AND SUPPORT SOCIAL DISTANCING

Often these moves are via relatively simplistic changes to logos or taglines, but brands are also offering unique services to consumers (particularly consumers with families) to ease their difficulties during extended periods of isolation.

Ad Messages and Logo Changes

**IF YOU EVER DREAMED OF PLAYING
FOR MILLIONS AROUND THE WORLD,
NOW IS YOUR CHANCE.**

Play inside, play for the world.



Nike, USA

Timely and relevant message from our @CocaCola client that just appeared in Times Square. Thanks for Mercado McCann Argentina for helping Coca-Cola get this message out in the world.



3:31 PM - Mar 22, 2020 - Twitter Web App

Coca-Cola, USA



Audi. Keep distance.

Audi, Global



Mercado Libre, Argentina



Burger King, Belgium



McDonald's, Brazil

Helping Consumers in Difficult Times

PLAY THROUGH. PLAY ON.

With everything happening in the world, music has the power to connect us. We want to do our part to see you through - the way we know how. To start, we're offering 3 months of free online guitar, bass and ukulele lessons to the first 100,000 who sign up for Fender Play.

We're all going to be spending more time inside - so we might as well make some noise.

Fender

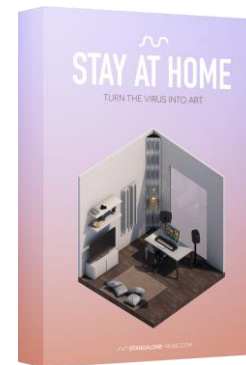
Fender – free guitar lessons



Minecraft – in-game lessons



Barclays – digital coding for children



Standalone – free at-home music-making pack

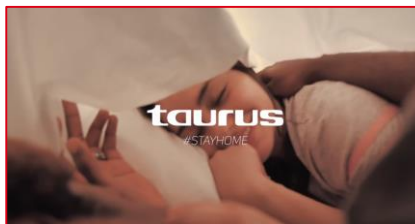
PARTICULAR SECTORS WITH NATURAL BENEFITS ARE ABLE TO MAKE THE MOST OF A BAD SITUATION

Delivering Essentials



The very nature of self-isolation has seen an influx of consumers using food delivery services. Brands like Pick n Pay in South Africa used consumer-fronted comms to share a philanthropic note on the importance of not over-ordering, while DoorDash in the US used a similar strategy to remind consumers to support local businesses.

In the Home



Using self-isolation as a means to promote the beneficial attributes of the home, and the products they sell, campaigns from Ikea and Taurus in Spain and Behr in the US use the downtime provided by COVID-19 as an opportunity for consumers to reevaluate, and appreciate, their settings.

Path to Connection



If you can't be there,
feel there.



Telecoms companies like Vodafone Italy have been able to leverage the strength of their networks to enable 'face-to-face' communication, while for newer technology manufacturer brands like Facebook Portal, activity focuses on the specific capabilities of devices to enable the same benefit.

REINVENTION HAS SOMETIMES BEEN DICTATED; SPORT TRANSITIONS FROM PHYSICAL TO VIRTUAL



With the Italian Moto GP at Mugello cancelled due to the coronavirus outbreak, the organisation instead invited drivers to race in a virtual setting using the official MotoGP19 videogame. Replicating the originally-planned race in a digital rendering of Autodromo del Mugello, the event was broadcast on 29 March on a range of media channels such as MotoGP.com, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and selected TV channels across Europe.

Promoted as the #StayAtHomeGP, the organisation leveraged advances in technology to help reduce the impact of the coronavirus self-isolation.



On 22 March, NASCAR held the first ever eNASCAR iRacing Pro Invitational Series race, which saw NASCAR drivers take to special simulators for a virtual competition that aired on Fox Sports 1. The event itself consisted of a 100-lap race around a virtualised Homestead Miami Speedway, which attracted an average of 638,000 homes and 903,000 viewers (P2+) on the Fox Sports 1 broadcast*, making it the most watched linear eSports broadcast in history.

Subsequently, the event was shown on social media (Twitter) generating 217,300 interactions and 912,500 video views*.



With Premier League games on a prolonged hiatus whilst the UK is in lockdown, the organisation encourages fans to test their general knowledge with a Pub Quiz livestream.

Hosted on YouTube every Sunday, the competition offers a distraction from self-isolation and allows players to connect over their love for the game.

CONVERSELY, CERTAIN BRANDS HAVE COME UNDER FIRE FOR QUESTIONABLE COVID-19 RESPONSES

Tone-Deaf Announcements



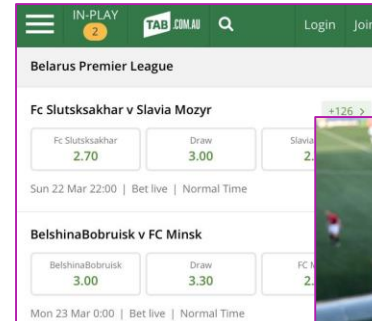
**SPORTS
DIRECT.COM**

virgin
atlantic

Virgin Atlantic, led by billionaire Sir Richard Branson, has been criticised for forcing all airline personnel to take eight weeks unpaid leave during the crisis, long before any government announcement regarding worker entitlement to 80% pay. Meanwhile, Sports Direct and JD Wetherspoon have also received negative attention, through either classifying their retail operations as 'essential services' or claiming that lockdown measures are 'over the top'.

It is interesting to note that these particular businesses are led by individuals who are consistently in the public eye, and whose actions can affect the reputation of their companies.

'Irresponsible' Behaviour

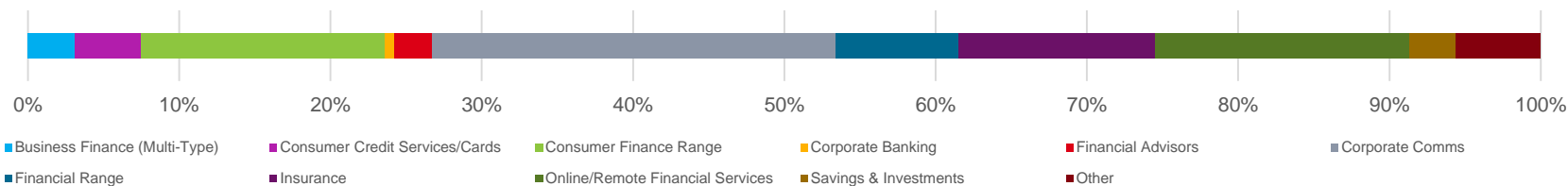


Although they are not strictly breaking any rules, gambling companies have been criticised for their lack of action in implementing daily caps on bets. Due to the cancellation of most of the world's sports events, gamblers are migrating to riskier areas such as online casinos and games, which could fuel betting addiction.

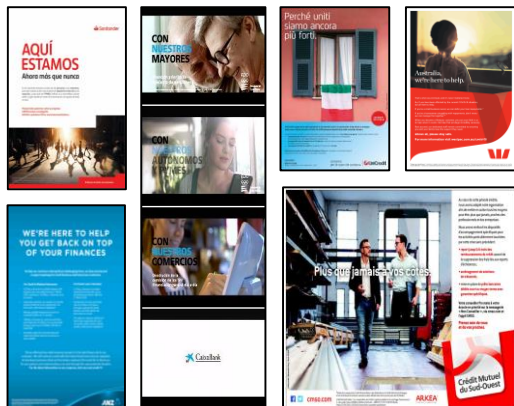
Gambling companies have also shifted their focuses to the few remaining sports avenues in the world. Multiple companies are offering bets on the football league in Belarus, one of the few leagues in the world to continue with normal operations during the pandemic. Again, this is not strictly illegal, but shows a certain ruthlessness which has been criticised.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS OFFER CONSUMERS SECURITY THROUGH FLEXIBILITY AND ADVICE

COVID-Specific Ads by Financial Category, Feb-Mar 2020

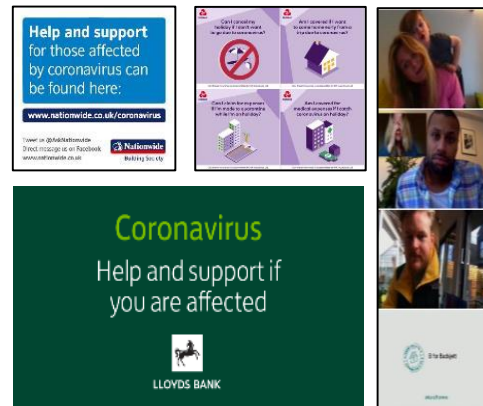


Flexibility with Payments / Charges



In an effort to provide customers with some financial stability during the COVID-19 crisis, financial institutions have introduced greater flexibility when it comes to repayments and borrowing. Initiatives to support business and personal banking customers include an interest-free “buffer” overdraft, mortgage payment holidays, higher contactless limits and lower interest-rates on business loans.

Advice, Reassurance and Support



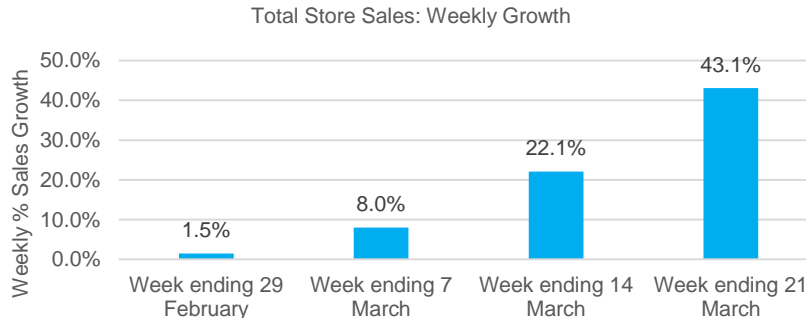
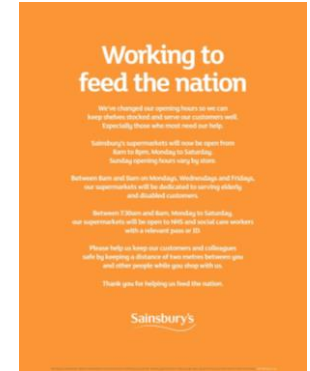
Taking control of an uncertain situation, financial institutions offered consumers advice and reassurance relating to their finances. Social media redirected consumers to websites with FAQ information, addressing travel insurance claims, fraudsters and other issues. By ensuring client questions were addressed and answered, brands could be a beacon of calm in difficult times.

SUPERMARKETS, UNDER INCREASED DEMAND, HAVE INTRODUCED NEW COPING MECHANISMS

79 million more shopping trips than the same time last year; total of an extra £1.9 billion spent on groceries (31st March 2020, last four weeks vs same period in 2019)

Sales increase was particularly pronounced in the week ending 21st March, which saw a massive 43% weekly growth in sales

In the week ending 21st March, government announcements regarding a full lockdown led to increased sales in frozen foods (84%) and alcohol (67%) vs same period in 2019



**9-10am
Time to help
the most
vulnerable.**

We want to help everyone through these uncertain times, especially those who need extra help.

So from today, all our stores (except Express stores) will be prioritising the elderly and most vulnerable for one hour between 9am and 10am every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Because now, more than ever, every little helps.

TESCO
Every little helps.

CONSISTENT PROMOTION ON SOCIAL AND BTL CHANNELS IS USED TO BACK UP KEY PLEDGES

Support for Vulnerable



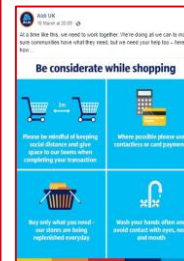
Lidl, UK



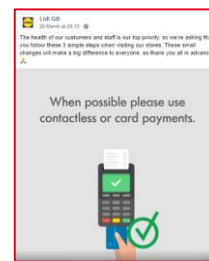
Asda, UK

- Early opening hours for elderly and immune-suppressed customers
- Monetary donations for food banks and charities
- Community initiatives such as food delivery schemes

Behaviour Change



Aldi, UK



Lidl, UK

- Encouraging contactless / digital payment
- Repetition of official government messages (washing your hands / social distancing)

In-Store Measures



Waitrose, UK



Mercadona, ES

- Filtered customer numbers to enforce social distancing
- Additional barriers placed at checkouts
- Limits on number of items purchasable

Thanks to Staff



M&S, UK



Carrefour, FR

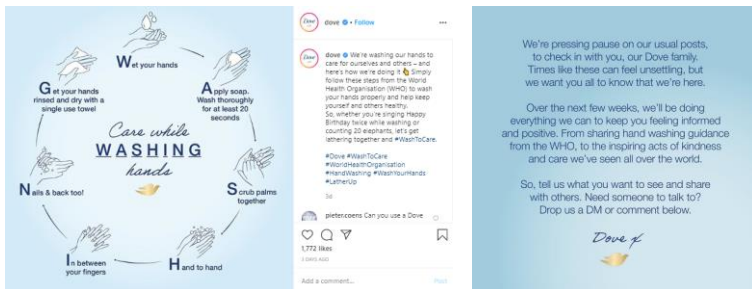
- More of a general appreciation practice than any specific initiative, but consistent communication seen highlighting the efforts of staff

Activity promotes the importance of washing hands, containing advice and tips on the best way to eliminate germs. Lifebuoy is a consistently active brand in this area.



BRANDS USE SOCIAL TO BACK UP CLEANLINESS COMMS, WITH OTHER MESSAGES ALONGSIDE

Dove, UK, Facebook – General Reassurance and Hand Washing Tips



Carex / Zoflora, UK, Facebook – Reassurance Around Supplies and Medical Advice



Lifebuoy, India, YouTube – Educational Content Around Hand Washing



Coty, Instagram, UK – Announcement of Produce of Hand Sanitizers



AUTO FIGHTS AGAINST SHUTDOWN WITH MANUFACTURING AND COMMS REALIGNMENT

For the automotive industry, COVID-19 has essentially initiated a full-scale shutdown of manufacturing operations globally. However, manufacturers are fighting back with an intelligent realignment of their business to during these troubled times.

Repurposing Manufacturing Plants

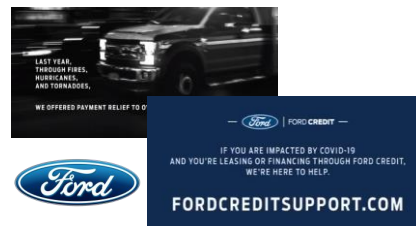


March 23rd saw the automaker announce a plan to manufacture one million face masks per month to emergency medical technicians, police officers, firefighters, first responders, health care clinics and hospitals across Canada, Mexico and the USA.

General Motors' 'Project V' initiative sees GM set to provide ventilator firm Ventec with 95% of the parts required to build its products, with the end goal to build up to 200,000 units in Indiana.

Ford is set to help address shortages for healthcare workers' fight against coronavirus, by producing respirators, masks and ventilators. The brand will work with 3M to produce a new kind of respirator for healthcare workers made from parts from Ford's F-150's ventilated seats.

Change in Marketing Direction

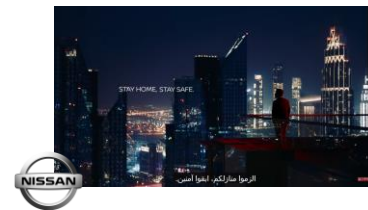


As well as the change to its manufacturing structure, Ford is pulling all ads marketing its vehicles in the US, and replacing them with spots that stress how the company is responding to the coronavirus.

Two new spots have been released, "Built to Lend a Hand" and "Built for Right Now", both of which use the brand's US-tagline "Built Ford Proud", leveraging the brand's philanthropy.



Jeep



Nissan Middle East has launched an emotive campaign entitled "Ode to Empty Roads", reinforcing its 'together we can' tagline but from a new angle. Adopting a tone of reflection and positivity, the voiceover states "We are inseparable you and us and nothing, not even this, can tear us apart", whilst referencing the importance of staying home ("it's a sacrifice we are going to have to take today, if we are to be together tomorrow").

Simple print creative from Jeep in Peru encourages people to keep their cars in the garage and stay home, featuring an image of the inside of a household through the grille of one of its cars.

SIMILARLY, FASHION BRANDS ARE SWITCHING PRODUCTION AND SUPPORTING HEALTH WORKERS

Gucci, Italy



Donated €1M to the Italian Civil Protection Department and the UN Foundation's COVID-19 Solidarity Response fund. Has committed to producing over 1 million face masks.

Zara, Spain



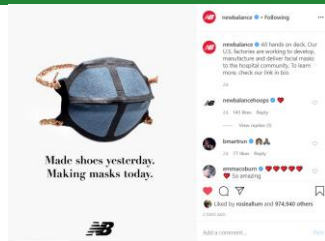
Zara is switching production in Spain to produce face masks, already shipping over 300,000.

Prada, Italy



Prada has announced it will manufacture 80,000 medical overalls and 110,000 masks at its factory in Perugia. Seeking to allocate all products by April 6th.

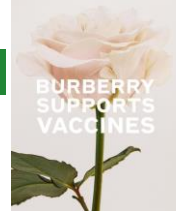
New Balance, USA



New Balance announced it is to start producing face masks at its factory in Boston, USA.

Burberry, UK

Burberry is contributing to the fight against COVID-19 in a three-pronged approach across hospitals, vaccines and the community.



Burberry is using its global supply chain network to deliver 100,000 face masks to NHS facilities across the UK. The initiative will also see the brand repurpose its Castleford factory, where the iconic trench coat is made, in order to make non-surgical gowns and masks for patients.

Research into a single-dose vaccine developed by Oxford University is currently being funded.

Brand is donating to charities that are dedicated to tackling food poverty across the UK, including FareShare and The Felix Project.

TRAVEL AND TOURISM SEES AIRLINES AND HOTELS REACH OUT TO THOSE IN TIME OF NEED

The Travel and Tourism industry is arguably one of the most affected by the coronavirus pandemic, as airlines, hotels and cruise liners are directly impacted by the suspension of all but essential travel, with up to 50 million jobs at risk globally (Global Web Index). However, in the wake of such unprecedented events, brands are switching resources and helping those most in need.

Airlines Chartering Medical Supplies



Virgin Atlantic operated its first cargo flight on March 25th, carrying medical supplies from London Heathrow to the USA. The aircraft was filled with 12,490 kilograms of medical supplies and equipment.



Ethiopian Airlines has delivered medical supplies from China to 39 African countries. The supplies have been donated from Jack Ma, the founder of China's e-commerce giant Alibaba.



On March 28th, Portugal's TAP Airlines transported more than 15 tons of medical material including 1 million masks and 200,000 COVID-19 screening tests to Portugal. The flight's 14-hour duration is the longest ever undertaken by the airline.

Hotels & Cruise Ships Into Hospitals

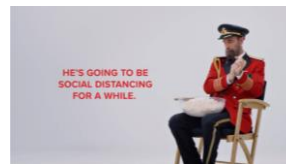


Best Western is set to turn its first hotel into a hospital support site in South London in the next week. The hotel group (the UK's largest with 270 properties) is willing to take unprecedented steps to help take the pressure off the NHS, with every bedroom in the support hospital housing low risk patients and NHS staff.



The Saga Group, the British owners of both the Spirit of Discovery and Saga Sapphire Cruise Ships, has offered both ships to the government to use as temporary hospitals. Both are currently docked at Tilbury docks, Essex and have the capacity to assist the NHS should they be needed.

Reinforcing "Stay Home" Messages



Hotels.com has launched a TV spot across the USA and Canada featuring its brand mascot 'Captain Obvious', encouraging people to maintain social distancing and "Stay Home".

The brand mascot is usually seen encouraging people to switch off their social media and take a trip, yet this creative light-heartedly subverts that idea in response to the global crisis.

LOOKING BEYOND COVID-19, ALL SECTORS CAN LEARN LESSONS FROM CHINA

As the epicentre for COVID-19, China has had restrictions in place for longer than other parts of the world. Amid reports that these restrictions will be [gradually lifted](#) in certain areas, brands will look to China first for indicators of what a new sense of 'normal' looks like. Early signs show that digital behaviours, already a mainstay of life in the 21st Century, will move from 'enforced' to 'engrained' – and brands will need to reposition or reinvent themselves to stay ahead.

New Consumer Habits



Media consumption during COVID-19 has [unsurprisingly increased](#) in Asia, and new behaviours will have a significant longtail effect once the pandemic has passed. Research from [ASAP+](#) shows an increased consumer use of multiple apps and digital services, from communication services to shopping and even virtual gyms.

Digitised Experiences

上海时装周
SHANGHAI
FASHION
WEEK



Shanghai Fashion Week began in late March, although with a country only just beginning to reevaluate its lockdown position, the event was forced to turn to digital interactions. In partnership with Alibaba's T-Mall and Taobao services, Shanghai Fashion Week was livestreamed for the first time ever, with digital replacing the previous 'in-person' route-to-market.

The (Continued) Rise of E-Commerce



Amidst increased online shopping from consumers, e-commerce has seen significant gains and major firms are putting measures in place to ensure this continues throughout 2020. JD.com has announced its ['Spring Raindrop Plan'](#), providing RMB1.5bn to brands affected by COVID-19, including flash sales and content marketing. An additional RMB1.5bn of coupons will also be supplied to consumers.

LOOKING AHEAD – KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Social listening shows that we can draw a correlation between the spread and veracity of the disease with the corresponding levels of media activity and social buzz, clearly evident when analysing European markets. Key media posts that gain high consumer engagement often revolve around official notifications on staying safe

Brands should, if possible, offer certain services or benefits for free during the outbreak, particularly to health workers on the front-line. Not only does this generate positive sentiment amongst users, but it also maintains engagement between company and customer, keeping the dialogue open during this period of isolation

A contradiction is seen in ad levels, with total volumes falling internationally while specific COVID-19 activity is increasing. Advertisers must balance the pulling back of ATL investments with showing overt support during COVID-19

Supportive COVID-19 activation does not require a seven-figure marketing budget; support for consumers during the difficult times of social distancing can take many forms, and will be both appreciated and remembered

Certain messages – community / partnership / teamwork – are key, and are evident across multiple categories. At the risk of creating an echo chamber, brands that neglect these message clusters run the risk of being perceived as outlandish at best, and tone-deaf at worst

Even those most under-fire can help – Automotive and Travel have been two of the worse-hit sectors, but a combination of lateral thinking and the ability for short-term reinvention show the same 'can-do' attitude as large donations to charity – again, these will be the things that consumers remember once the dust has settled

Attempts to secure short-term profits and gains may be detrimental in the longer run: as exemplified by Sports Direct and others, brands that seek to exploit and outmanoeuvre imposed restrictions can alienate the general public

Although reinvention will be dictated to a certain extent, those that are agile enough to ingest the necessary technologies early and evolve into the 'new normal' will reap the benefits

THANK YOU FOR READING OUR SPECIAL REPORT, COVID-19: TRENDS, COMMUNICATIONS & INSIGHTS

At Nielsen Ad Intel Insight, we specialise in helping brands navigate the complicated world of marketing communications.

We provide strategic insights and guidance on competitor activity, globally and across multiple sectors, looking at the full range of Paid, Owned and Earned communications.

If you would like any more information on our services or would like to discuss anything you have seen in this report, please get in touch and I'd be happy to help.

Thank you,

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The background of the entire image consists of a series of flowing, wavy lines in various shades of blue, creating a sense of movement and depth.

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THE SCIENCE BEHIND WHAT'S NEXT™

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