



COVID-19 BRAND NAVIGATOR

Real-time insights into the rapidly evolving landscape.

How do Australians want brands to respond to COVID-19?

April 2020

The 4 stages of COVID-19



Human impact



Brand impact

There is an expectation that brands will continue to advertise during the coronavirus outbreak.

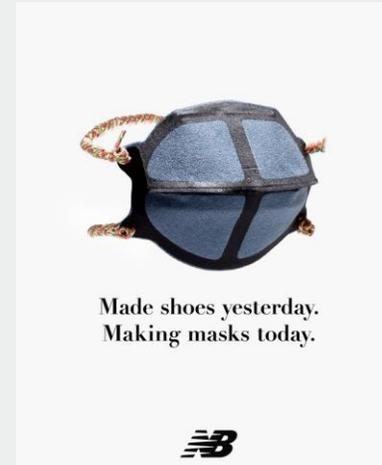
However, Australians want brands to acknowledge the current situation and adjust their communication and actions accordingly.

Brands need to be flexible and evolve to adapt to the new landscape. **Agility is key.**

“I don’t want to see brands marketing and selling as if nothing was different” - Consumer

52%

of survey respondents agree that they feel frustrated when seeing advertising that doesn’t acknowledge the current situation we’re all living in



New Balance pivot to PPE campaign



Nike – play for the world, stay inside campaign

Understandably, brands are wary of striking the wrong tone and being seen as profiteering from coronavirus.

We looked at how consumers want brands to communicate with them during this time, providing insight into how brands can navigate the current situation.

Australians mentioned a number of themes for what they would like to see from brands at this time

Take action,
don't be silent

Talk to me, but
only if it makes
sense for me to
hear from you

Be empathetic,
understand the
situation from my
point of view



**Looking at these themes
in more detail...**

Action



Australians want to see brands take action

This is about brands not just talking but *doing*, being meaningfully helpful and using brand resources for the greater good.

In these times it's more important than ever for brands to act with moral integrity.

1

People Before Profits

2

Being Helpful

3

Adapting to the New Normal

People Before Profits:

What it is:

Taking responsibility for staff and public safety.

Using brand voice or resources for the benefit of society.

Aligning with and augmenting the Government's response either to support messaging, or deliver tangible resource.

How people talk about it:

"Ensuring people that their needs and safety come first"

IF YOU EVER
DREAMED OF
PLAYING FOR
MILLIONS AROUND
THE WORLD,

NOW IS
YOUR CHANCE.

Play inside, play for the world.



Nike encouraging people to play inside.

BHP to hire 1500 to support operations and the economy

BHP committing to hiring 1,500 new workers injecting money into the economy.



Netflix encouraging people to stay at home with their spoiler campaign

Hello Friends! (A COVID-19 Special)

Join Emma and Matt with the whole family for this special episode as they help explain some of the big questions around coronavirus, from staying at home to washing your hands.

Watch the full Hello Friends! (A COVID-19 Special) on the ABC Kids app right now.

Song: Wash Your Hands



Playschool providing educational sessions

Being Helpful:

What it is:

Going above & beyond to help, opening up additional access to products/services or creating new resources to help people through.

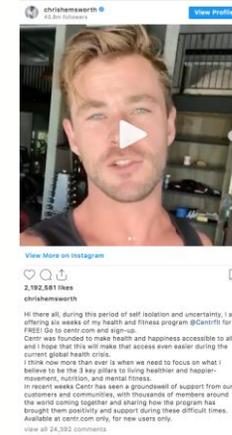
Offering mental, physical or practical support.

How people talk about it:

“Helping to make masks and anything the health system requires”



Disney releasing Frozen 2 three months early



Chris Hemsworth & Centr offering his exercise classes free for 6 weeks



Local distilleries such as Archie Rose making hand sanitiser



Supermarket Community Hours to support the most vulnerable

Adapting to the New Normal:

What it is:

Creatively pivoting business models providing new services to counter the impact of the coronavirus & benefit those living in lockdown.

How people talk about it:

“Adapting to the new situation like the restaurants who have changed to delivery services”



13 Cabs launches goods and parcel delivery service



Australian Ballet streaming performances to people at home



Fila Indiana app shows the waiting time at the supermarkets in the area where you live



Businesses offering contactless delivery

Empathy



Acting with empathy is paramount

Without demonstrating empathy to the situation or what people are going through, any initiative or communication can come off as insensitive, or profiteering from coronavirus.

As Mark Ritson puts it, it's not about '*inane advertising*'; it's about purposeful initiatives and meaningful messages. Brands that empathise with people are the ones that will deeply connect.



Care



Come Together



**Lift People's
Spirits**



**Inspire Social
Connections**

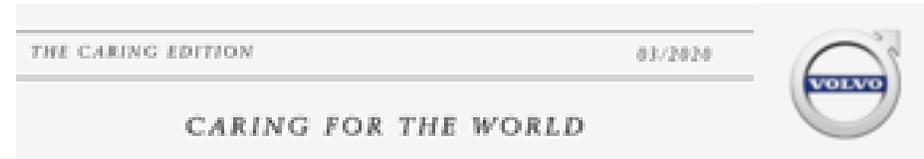
Care:

What it is:

Showing an understanding of the impact of the crisis and genuine care.

How people talk about it:

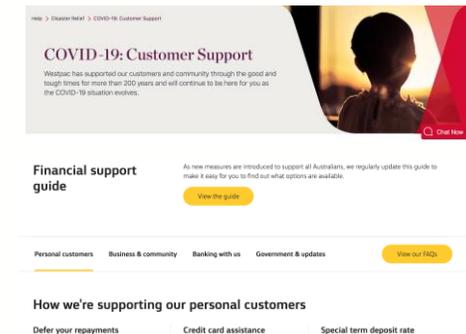
“I want to see a sense of humanity that they are empathising that we are going through”



Volvo calling out its key M.O. and promoting care and safety of customers and employees



Ikea's new catalogue featuring games and activities for families



Payment deferrals and relief packages across a wide range of industries/brands

Come Together:

What it is:

Promoting a sense of solidarity and coming together for the common good, putting aside self-interest and competition

How people talk about it:

“It’s about coming together to resolve the problems. and setting aside differences with other brands”



Supermarkets’ joint messaging approach at the height of panic-buying

TECH COMPANIES COMBINE FORCES TO FIGHT COVID 1

By Computer Daily News | 24 Mar 2020



Global technology firms are aligning resources to support the US Government’s battle against COVID-19

Lift People's Spirits:

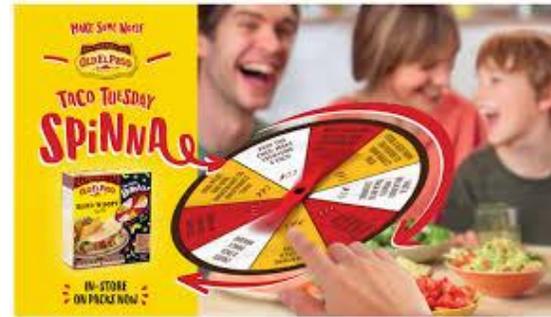
What it is:

Leaving a positive impression

Recognising that providing a mental lift or a smile makes a difference

How people talk about it:

“Reframing the way I look at the situation changes how I feel about it, making me feel better”



Old El Paso adds a spinner to its packaging to facilitate family fun & connection at meal times.



Oreos' message that we need to stay playful now more than ever



A new brand launch from **Emily's snacks** takes a tongue in cheek look at marketing now

Inspire Social Connection:

What it is:

Bringing people together in these times of self isolation and physical distancing

Keeping up and growing a sense of community and belonging

How people talk about it:

“While we are required to be physically distant brands are coming o the rescue to ensure we can stay socially connected”



Optus ‘GDay a Day’ Campaign encouraging Australians to make sure they say ‘Gday’ at least once a day

Community Carries On

Welcome to #thesweatlife online community, your hub for sweat sessions and mindfulness practices—wherever you are. Here you'll find some of our best content from some of our favourite people to help you stay connected, harness collective energy, and maybe even make new friends along the way.



LuluLemon is supporting its brand via free yoga classes online, community content and humorous posts to maintain a sense of community

More than 2 in 3 people (63%) agree that we are more likely to look out for one another now.

Relevance



Australians are looking for brands to act with empathy and only speak to them if it's relevant to do so.

It's important for brands to adapt to meeting changing consumer needs and help them navigate the current situation.

What it is:

Building connection through purposeful conversations

Going beyond what consumers expect brands to do and communicating in a relevant meaningful way

Communications that are irrelevant, lacking in empathy or unhelpful end up being white noise

How it's being expressed:

"Refraining from sending lots of useless emails"

"Putting in place measures to help us observe social distancing and to deter panic buying and keeping the public informed of what is available and in what way they can access those things they need is good"

"Less emails and communications about what they are doing in this crisis. I could not care what my car insurance company is doing. Or every other company who has my email"

Brand examples:



Australian Unity communicating it won't be increasing fees this year

Nine using its Pedestrian channel to speak to a younger audience in a relevant way

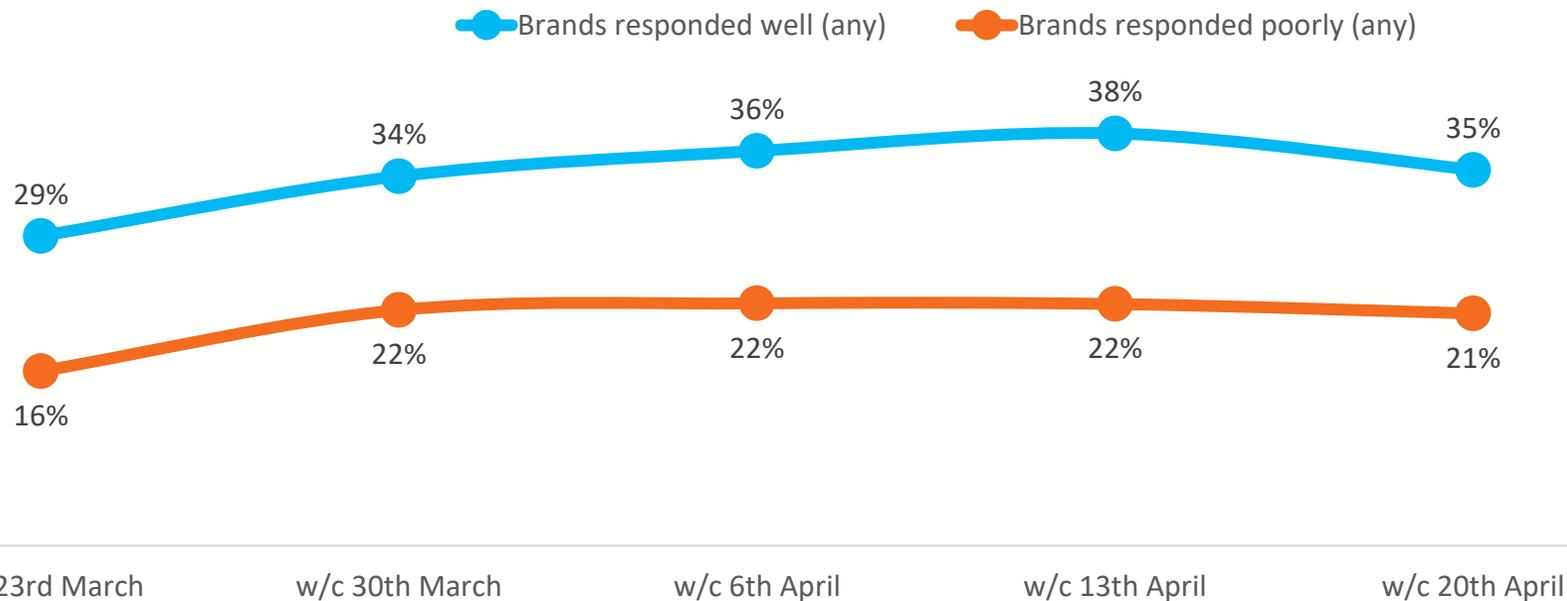


**Australians are taking notice of brands that
respond to the new environment**

More Australians are starting to see brands respond positively, but some aren't striking the right tone

The later a brand waits to act the more it may seem they're jumping on a bandwagon

EXPECTATIONS OF THE PANDEMIC



In summary

It's important for brands to adapt to meeting changing consumer needs and help them navigate the current situation.

Australians don't want brands to remain silent – now is not the time to go dark.

Brands that land the right message and engage people in the right way will emerge from this crisis stronger, more trusted and more connected.

Three Themes Emerged

Take action, don't
be silent

Talk to me, but only
if it makes sense
for me to hear from
you

Be empathetic,
understand the
situation from my
point of view

In a survey conducted last month, 7 in 10 respondents (70%) could not think of a brand that has responded to this crisis.

In a poll last week this reduced to almost 2 in 3 (57%).

NOW is the time to do something.

COVID-19 BRAND NAVIGATOR



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