

Keep Calm & Brand On

Marketing in the Age of COVID-19

For many Americans, the new coronavirus calls to mind 9/11 or the 2008 financial crisis – events that reshaped consumer behavior in lasting ways, from how we travel to how we buy homes.

The current situation is already showing similar effects. Despite the uncertainty, many savvy brands are doubling down to support their customers and protect their long-term business success. Here's how.

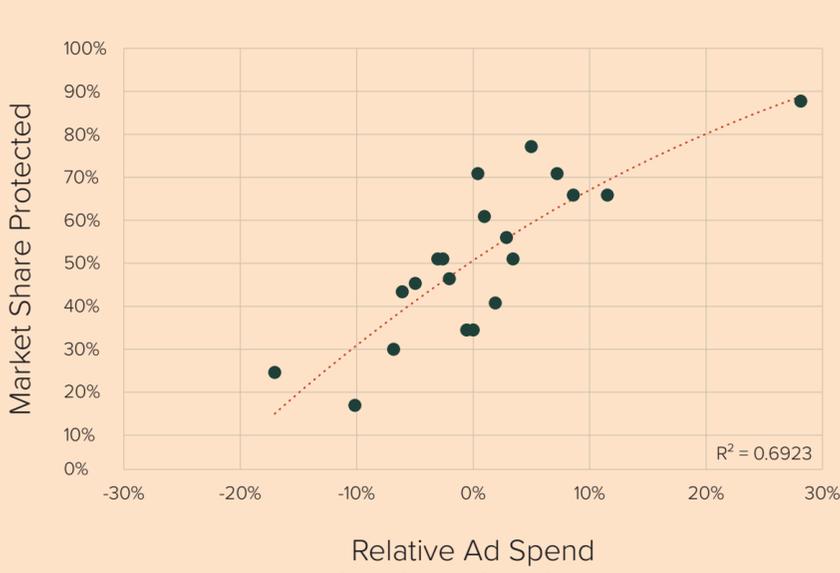
Maintain marketing investment to maximize long-term profits

It may seem counterintuitive, but history has shown long-term profits gained from maintaining brand investment outweigh any short-term savings from budget cuts. The long-term effects will be even greater if competitors are cutting budgets.

Advertisers who throttle back spending on average lose 63% of market share.

Source: "Advertising in a Downturn," Institute of Practitioners in Advertising.

ADVERTISING INVESTMENT PROTECTS MARKET SHARE



Source: Millward Brown

Appeal to strained human needs

Social distancing makes it harder to connect. Indefinite lockdowns challenge our sense of certainty and security. Toilet paper hoarding...well, you get the point.

Brands can resolve the present strains in four different ways.

Information

Some marketing is simply focused on updating consumers about the present situation and new/modified purchase options. But for brands with serious followings, this information can help stoke a sense of accessibility rather than desolation.

EXAMPLE:



Starbucks was quick to push messaging that it was going to a drive-thru-only model in the U.S. for two weeks.

Entertainment

Many brands are simply tapping into consumer need for entertainment. With restaurants, bars, movie theaters, museums and even some parks closed around the country, home isolation can be boring.

EXAMPLE:



Bud Light sponsored its first "Bud Light Dive Bar Tour: Home Edition," featuring country music star Jake Owen.

Help

Many brands are actually stepping in to help those most affected by COVID-19, but not without reminding consumers of their own brand benefit.

EXAMPLE:



DoorDash, the food delivery app, offered free deliveries on any size order as long as it came from a locally owned business.

Connection

Brands that can help people feel connected rather than isolated during the COVID-19 crisis are helping consumers connect with each other – and with the brand.

EXAMPLE:



Chipotle spent the week holding virtual hangouts for 3,000 people every day on Zoom.

Source: Insights obtained via NetBase Social Listening Service: Data includes all Covid-19 conversations mentioning brand advertising or marketing.

Reach consumers where they are now: at home

Media behavior has undergone sudden and significant shifts. In simplest terms, these **shifts have followed consumers from out-of-home to in-home.**

A FEW KEY TAKEAWAYS:

A surge in offline and online video consumption.

+ 63% TV Viewing

+ 37% Connected TV/Streaming

Huge uptick in time spent online through laptops and phones.

+ 70% Web Browsing

+ 61% Social Media

Expect out-of-home media impressions to fall.

With fewer people on the road and most movie theaters closed, **out-of-home and in-theater ads will not achieve intended impression levels.**

Radio stays relevant, despite less time in cars.

83% of American adults report spending the same or more time with radio as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Sources:

Kantar March 2020: Compared to normal usage rates.

Comscore: March 16–March 20, 2020 vs same period in 2019.

Nielsen Survey March 20–22, 2020.