

COVID 19

AMV BBDO



YOU DON'T NEED US TO READ YOU THE NEWS

We are all hitting refresh on our news app of choice every few minutes.

Never before in human history have so many people been looking at graphs.

Everything there is to know about the virus is available in your palm.

You probably have a view on whether the death rate is likely to end up 1% or 0.1% and if a vaccine is 6, 12 or 18 months away.

We're a creative company. We don't have epidemiologists, or virologists.

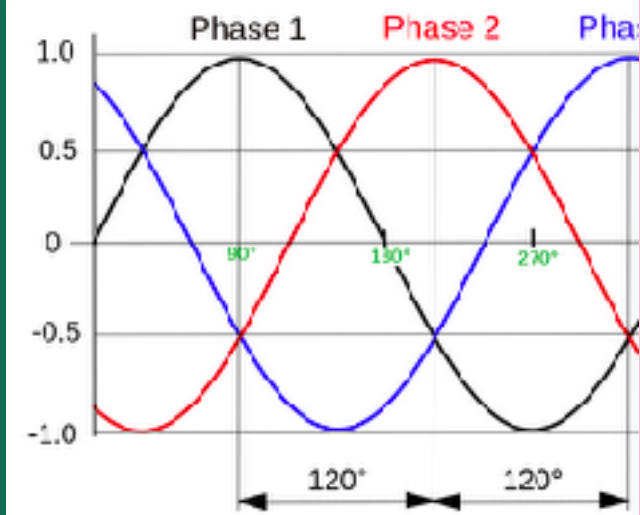
So this document is about our thoughts on what we believe is important right now, in brands, marketing and culture.

NOTHING LIKE THIS HAS EVER HAPPENED BEFORE

The first thing to note is that this event is totally unprecedented in human history. Never has something happened to everyone in the world, at the same time, with everyone aware that it's happening to everyone at the same time. It's a truly global reference point, that will shape everything from here on in. This means it's totally different to any previous recession, or global news event, so we need to think very differently about it.



THIS WILL HAPPEN IN PHASES



PHASE 1 - SHOCK

- Hunger for information.
- Constant news cycle.
- Underestimation of effects.
- Public disobedience.
- Confusion with govt advice.
- Panic buying.
- Supply chains malfunction.

Brands show empathy and help.

PHASE 2 - ACCEPTANCE

- New routines established.
- New forms of entertainment.
- Community adjusts.
- Consumption habits stabilise.
- Taking stock and planning.
- News events can move everyone back into phase 1 for a time.

Brands entertain and assist.

PHASE 3 - RELEASE

- Phased return to work.
- Sports events come back.
- Pubs, bars, restaurants, cafes and cinemas reopen.
- Household finances rebuild.
- Economic damage.
- Caution around relapse.

Brands celebrate and innovate.

IT'S A SUPPLY AND DEMAND SIDE PROBLEM

There has been some conversation in marketing circles about how we weathered the great recession in 2008. Brands that continued investing during the downturn came out of the recession much stronger. But that is not relevant to what is happening now. At that point, there was a dramatic weakening of consumer demand. Only that. This time, there is a dramatic weakening of demand. And social and legislative barriers to demand (people are not allowed to leave home). And social and legislative barriers to supply (most shops and businesses are closed). And supply chain problems (borders are closed and workers are sick). And marketing supply problems (many adverts can't be made). And extraordinary uncertainty about the future (nobody knows when this will end). There is simply no precedent for this. The only smart thing to do is to make strategic and creative preparations for the end of the crisis.



V U or L?

There's a lot of conversation about the shift to working from home. How we're all adapting to Zoom, Teams, Webex and the rest. Plenty of tips on setting up your home office. But that's not the main issue.

The issue for most people is that they will have no job.

And their job can't be done from home.

Government support will not be indefinite, and will be clawed back through taxation over time.

The recovery from this might be a V - a short sharp dip and then everyone returns to normal, unleashing a wave of demand. It could be a U - a sharp contraction, followed by a prolonged slump and then a recovery.

But there is also the possibility of an L - we never fully regain the heights of 2019.

Our clients at The Economist have the best view of this. Their analysis showed that many economies never fully recover from events like this.

Prepare for a U shaped world.

Think about how can your brand help people with little money. Planning for that is as important as dealing with the crisis.



BRANDS ARE IN ONE OF 3 SITUATIONS



RESTRICTED DEMAND

If you're an airline, a restaurant chain, or a non essential shop, you have just been closed down by the government. There's nothing you can do but bid for government help and try to restructure your finances (one of the few positive things about this crash versus the last is that banks go into it with a lot of money on hand). Some may be able to compensate with home delivery, but this is a fraction of previous volumes. Brand and marketing can only help mitigate the damage, apart from optimistically preparing for the emergence from the shutdown.

COLLAPSED DEMAND

This can be direct, or indirect. If you're selling alcoholic drinks and the pubs are closed, your sales will drop. This will be partly compensated by the off trade, as people switch to drinking at home, but only partly. If you're selling cars, not only are people not coming to your showrooms (which may be closed by now anyway), but fear of job losses means that people will just stop making these big optimistic financial commitments. If you're an electrical retailer, then home delivery compensates for store closures, but this has natural capacity constraints and any small bump from people needing home appliances to work, is offset by people putting off upgrades to their homes. Brand and marketing can help ensure you get more than your fair share of what demand remains.

SURGED DEMAND

Food and household essentials are all reporting record spikes in sales. Supermarkets are managing excess demand with socially distanced queues. Home broadband supply is booming as people ensure they have reliable connections in lockdown. Home streaming is in such demand that bandwidth is being restricted. Amazon is recruiting thousands to help with deliveries. In this case, marketing can help brands ride the wave, but must ensure the right tone of voice in any communications (no sense of profiteering or encouraging panic buying). Many of these products will see a crash following the boom, once people realise they have bought enough toilet rolls and pasta to last them for the rest of the year.



THIS ISN'T A CHANCE FOR CULTURAL CONNECTION

It's not hugely surprising when you think about it, but many topical events yield a marketing response. We've been conditioned to respond to culture over recent years.

It's become the hallmark of a great brand. Many of us have been impressed at the speed and savvy of some of the responses. But then the real world kicks in.

Everyone's watching, many are scared and thousands have died.

If you're not being selfless or useful, then your cultural connection can look a lot like a cheap marketing stunt.

NO, YOU CAN'T HAVE A CANNES LION

If, for example, you put up a poster in Times Square, when the city is in lockdown, is it really a sincere attempt to provide public information? Or perhaps an attempt to do something topical and worthy, so beloved of creative awards juries? Brands can sponsor useful public health information. But people can spot when it's useful and sincere and when it's just a stunt. This needs to be avoided.

A red poster with white text and the Coca-Cola logo. The logo is at the top, slanted upwards to the right. Below it, the text "Staying apart is the best way to stay united." is written in a clean, sans-serif font, also slanted upwards to the right. On the far right edge, the word "AMVÉDO" is written vertically in a small, white, sans-serif font.

Coca-Cola

Staying apart
is the best way to
stay united.

AMVÉDO



DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA?

The brands that have proper purpose and a clear sense of who they are, really shine through. Because putting their message in the context of the crisis feels genuine and helpful.

The brands who don't really have an idea are paralysed with indecision.

If you're talking to a crisis marketing agency about how to communicate, then it might be a sign that you don't have an intuitive and genuine brand purpose.

ITV have shown how this can be done, taking their focus on encouraging people to talk with one another to new times, effortlessly and helpfully.

SELFLESS & SELFISH

We're learning that people are extraordinarily selfless.
750,000 people volunteering for the NHS, donating to food banks,
making sure their neighbours are OK (at a safe distance).
People are amazing.

We're learning that people can be selfish.
Panic buying and hoarding are common (and rational), NHS
workers have been mugged for their IDs, ambulances vandalised.
People are not amazing.
These good and bad things are happening in every country in the
world. Whilst we like to imagine that all the good things are an
expression of our uniquely valuable national psyche, they're not.
People are good. People are bad. And now even more so.
Brands and marketing should celebrate and fuel the good.





HELP, SOMETIMES WITH FUN



Lots of brands are helping.
And getting credit for acting fast.
That help doesn't need to be worthy.
Sometimes it can be fun.
It's better when it actually has something
to do with what you're good at.
In the US, Jack Daniel's have shown how
fun can be purposeful, celebrating
socialising at the right social distance.

JUST DO THE RIGHT THING

In some ways, this situation is really not that complicated.

Are you acting as an empathetic human being?

Many brands have for some time said that they care about their customers, sometimes even passionately, or obsessively.

Where are they now?

What would a human being do for someone they care about passionately, in times of trouble?

They would offer some help.

Maybe even give them some of their money.

Or is this the point where you and they realise that some brands are much, much more concerned with their own prosperity?

It's simple. Think about what the right thing to do is. Then do it. If telling many people helps them get the help you're offering, then tell people. But only if it's necessary.

EVEN APART, WE STAND TOGETHER.

GUINNESS IRELAND IS PLEDGING
€1.5 MILLION TO SUPPORT
IRISH BAR STAFF AND
OUR ELDERLY CITIZENS.



GUINNESS



LEON

@leonrestaurants



In line with government advice and support, LEON remains open to customers where NHS teams and other essential workers need us.

In the last week we have served 11,841 takeaway and delivery meals to NHS workers alone. All meals served to the NHS were at a 50% discount. We have to do the right thing and continue to serve them.

We have this morning once again explained to our team members that no LEON person should work if they do not wish to do so.

Whatever each team member decides, we support them in their choice of whether to work or not. If they choose to remain at home, we are assisting them in accessing the government furlough scheme.

This decision isn't financial. In fact, it is costing our business more to stay open. We have been inundated with requests from NHS hospitals and also with many messages of thanks for what we have done so far. Meals for the NHS and homeless are set to be the vast majority of our work.

During this crisis, if we do by some strange accident make a profit all of it will be spent directly on feeding hospital teams.

We continue to thank all of our team members during this time.

LEON

10.8K 12:58 - 24 Mar 2020



2,245 people are talking about this



BE HUMAN, TALK LIKE A PERSON

A lot of the most successful marketing right now heeds the lessons of The Cluetrain Manifesto (Google it, it will help you). The first three theses of the manifesto are what you need:

1. Markets are conversations.
2. Markets consist of human beings, not demographic sectors.
3. Conversations among human beings sound human. They are conducted in a human voice,

Leon is a good example of this. Founder and CEO John Vincent said "right now you have struggling restaurants and their staff ready to provide food to customers on the one hand and on the other supermarkets with empty shelves. The balance isn't right. Not for customers. Not for people facing job losses and not for businesses.

So they turned their stores into mini supermarkets and meal delivery centres.

ANDRÀ TUTTO BENE

Italy has given the world a logo and a motto to get through this.

Sure it's a little hokey and utopian, but these are not the times for arch irony.

These are times for rainbows.

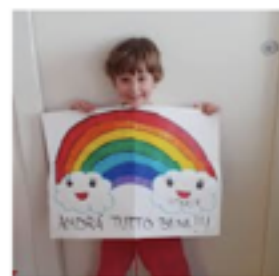
We can all learn from this.

Everyone's brand character needs to flex to kindness right now.



4 days ago

Italian Phrase o' the Week: Andrà tutto ...
dailyitalianwords.com



message of hope spreads in...
theguardian.com

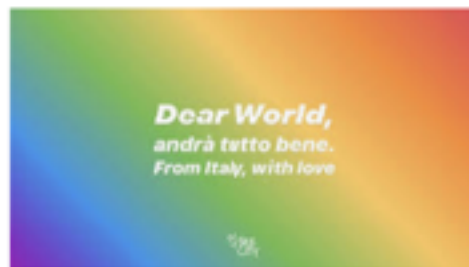


tutto bene ...
thelocal.it



4 days ago

Italian Phrase o' the Week: And...
dailyitalianwords.com



Dear World, andrà tutto bene. From ...
cct-seecity.com



CORONAVIRUS | #IORESTOCASA | AN...
youtube.com



6 days ago

Young Italians Under Coronavirus ...
teenvogue.com



message of hope spreads in Italy ...
theguardian.com



My Coronavirus Diary - Daily...
rossiwrites.com



NHS NHS NHS

More collective tears will have been shed at 20:00 on March 26th 2020 than at almost any moment in British history.

This was an astonishingly moving moment we will all remember forever as the entire nation applauded our NHS.

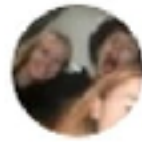
The defining gesture of the outbreak so far, imported from Spain and the Netherlands.

It's just one manifestation of the best tactic for any brand right now - help NHS workers.

But this is about more than marketing. It is about national unity and community. We have never been more together. This could be the national spirit that emerges. Or not. It's fragile. But it's there if we want it.

EXPERTS ARE BACK

After many years of social media and citizens voices and opinion seeming to be much more important than experts, the tables have turned. Chris Whitty is the face of the response in the UK, Anthony Fauci in the US. Turns out there is value in genuine expertise. People might appreciate that in future.



Sarah

@ESD4Tea

Replying to @BBCPolitics and @bbclaurak

This Chris Whitty guy rocks





CELEBRITY JUST CHANGED

Social media began to break down the barriers between us and our heroes when it first emerged, but then the age of the curated Instagram account appeared and their lives became alien and unattainable all over again.

That's suddenly all changed back.

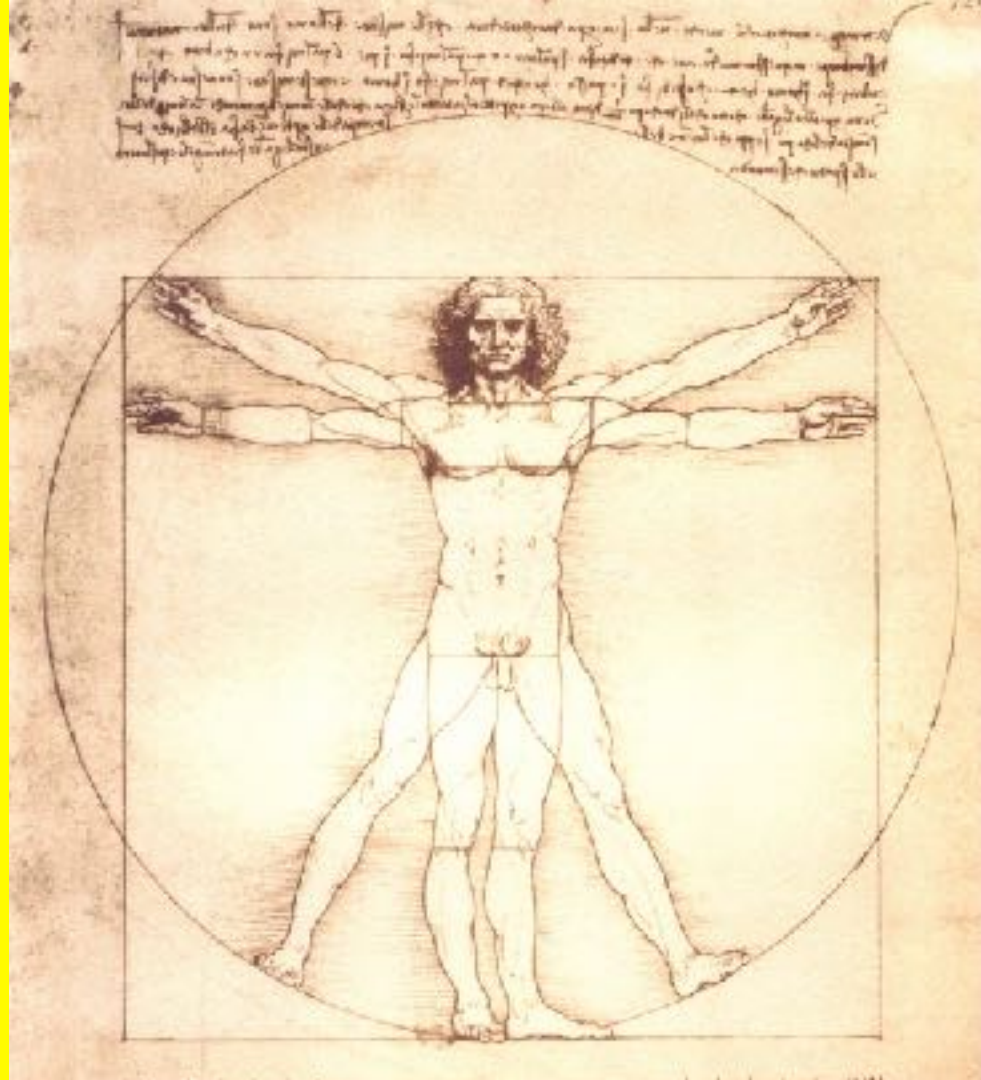
Chris Martin and John Legend hosting impromptu concerts at their piano at home; football players doing kickarounds in their (surprisingly modest, suburban) gardens.

They feel like real people again.

How will this change the role they play with brands and advertising once this is over?

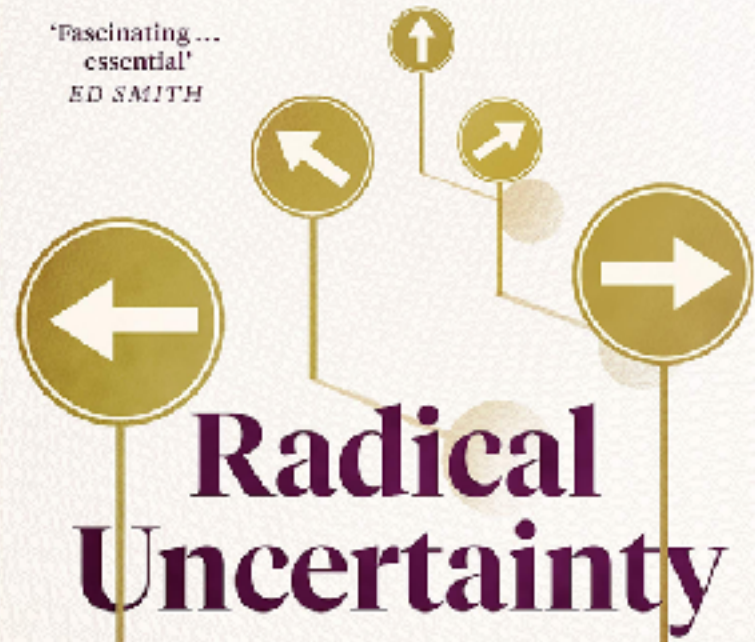
EVERYTHING WILL CHANGE NOTHING WILL CHANGE

The way we look at one another, healthcare, business, government, community has changed forever. This is the biggest event of all our lifetimes and it will reverberate for many years. But of course there are many enduring things about humanity that will never change. Understanding the balance of a radically shifted context combined with unchanging humanity will be vital to brand success going forward.



John Kay Mervyn King

'Fascinating ...
essential'
ED SMITH



Radical Uncertainty

NOBODY KNOWS WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

AMVBEBO

This is an age of radical uncertainty.
You could do worse than read this book.
It draws the distinction between puzzles
and mysteries.

Puzzles are difficult problems that can
be solved.

Mysteries are unknowable and unsolvable,
because we don't have any data or theories.
The world after the crisis is a mystery.
Our counsel would be to gather data, not
make predictions.

IT'S IN OUR
HANDS

Will the world that comes next be more caring or more suspicious?

Will brands be more helpful or more mercenary?

Will we help business prosper, or get stuck in the short term?

We can't change the tough context.

But we can use our creativity to build the world we want next.

It's not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters.

AMVBE DO

Epicurus



“Whatever comes out of these gates, we’ve got a better chance of survival if we work together. If we stay together, we survive.”