

**BBDO KNOWS**

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RITUALS

THE ENDURING IMPORTANCE OF RITUALS:  
**RITUALS IN THE TIME OF COVID-19**

*2021*

BBDO has long advocated the power and potential of rituals:

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both as a **support mechanism** for consumers, and as a **growth driver** for brands.

In the time of COVID-19 we have **never needed rituals more.**

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The uncertainty and disruption we face daily, coupled with the blurring boundaries of various aspects of our lives, threatens our emotional wellbeing.

Rituals have the potential **to help punctuate the day** in the absence of the physical daily commute, the school drop off, the evening meet up.

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**Rituals reassure us,** they anchor us, they provide certainty, and even joy, in the face of relentless uncertainty.

In this paper we consider:

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- how ritual behaviours have both **endured and evolved** over the years
- what this **means for brands** amidst the pandemic
- and the **importance of rituals as we look ahead.**

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## RITUALS 2007

*A recap*

**B  
B  
D  
O** **THE  
RITUAL  
MASTERS**



## RITUALS 2007

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BBDO first researched the subject of rituals in 2007, conducting a major global study to better understand the importance of rituals in people's lives, and the importance of rituals to brands in helping secure that all too elusive loyalty with consumers.

Please request the full, original study from the BBDO Knows team: [bbdo@bbdoknows.com](mailto:bbdo@bbdoknows.com)

In 2007 our hypothesis was that **understanding people's rituals** was **key to business building ideas**.

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“ Our **rituals are the foundation to everyday life.**  
These are not just habits – they are a complex  
series of tasks, driven by our emotions, not by  
our reptilian minds. Rituals are sequences that  
we develop over time and are governed by the  
subconscious. **They make us feel good.**”

— BBDO, *The Ritual Masters*, 2007

*Five rituals that were performed most often by most people throughout the world*

RITUALS



### PREPARING FOR BATTLE

From the moment we wake to the moment we get to work or to the place we spend our day.



### FEASTING

The rituals that surround sharing food and meals with others.



### SEXING UP

The ritual that prepares us for an evening out.



### RETURNING TO CAMP

The exhalation at the end of the day: the ritual that returns us to our private worlds.



### LOCKING UP

Locking up doors and windows, shutting down everything with a plug, preparing for the night.

EMOTIONAL  
TRANSFORMATION

Neutral and  
Cocooned



Ready To Take On  
The Day

Feeling Alone



Feeling Connected

My Everyday Self



My Most  
Confident Self

Tense



Relaxed

Relaxed



Reassured

In 2007 we also discovered that **brands were important props in rituals** - often signifying the start, middle or end.

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“ Our rituals become **fortresses that protect our  
favoured brands** and keep strangers out.”

— *BBDO, The Ritual Masters 2007*

## BBDO KNOWS BRANDS INSIDE THE FORTRESS

BBDO 2007



6am

*Preparing for battle*

Specific brands were very important to us - 82% globally told us they chose the same brands at this moment of the day and 75% were irritated if their chosen brands were unavailable (this was only in relation to the morning ritual).

Familiarity is key during the preparing for battle part of the day.

11pm



*Locking Up*

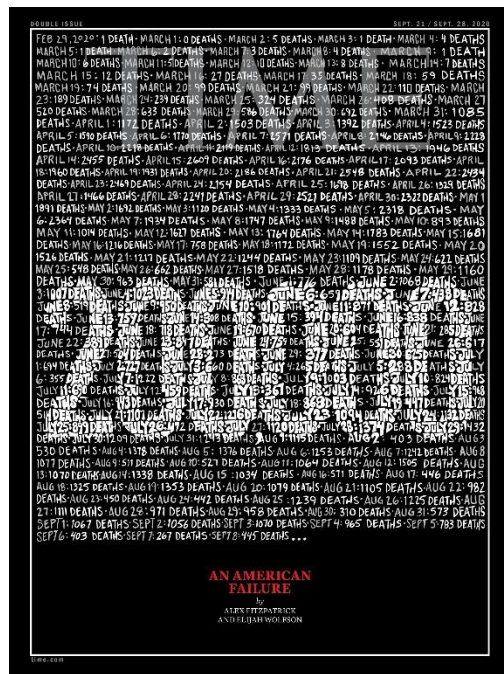
Based on our rituals research Bayer were able to explore their position within the locking up evening ritual, a more emotional, less fraught part of the day compared to the busy morning, where they had traditionally played. A move from the bathroom cabinet to the bedside cabinet would encourage and elevate usage.

An **embedded brand can stay in a ritual, and therefore the basket, indefinitely.**

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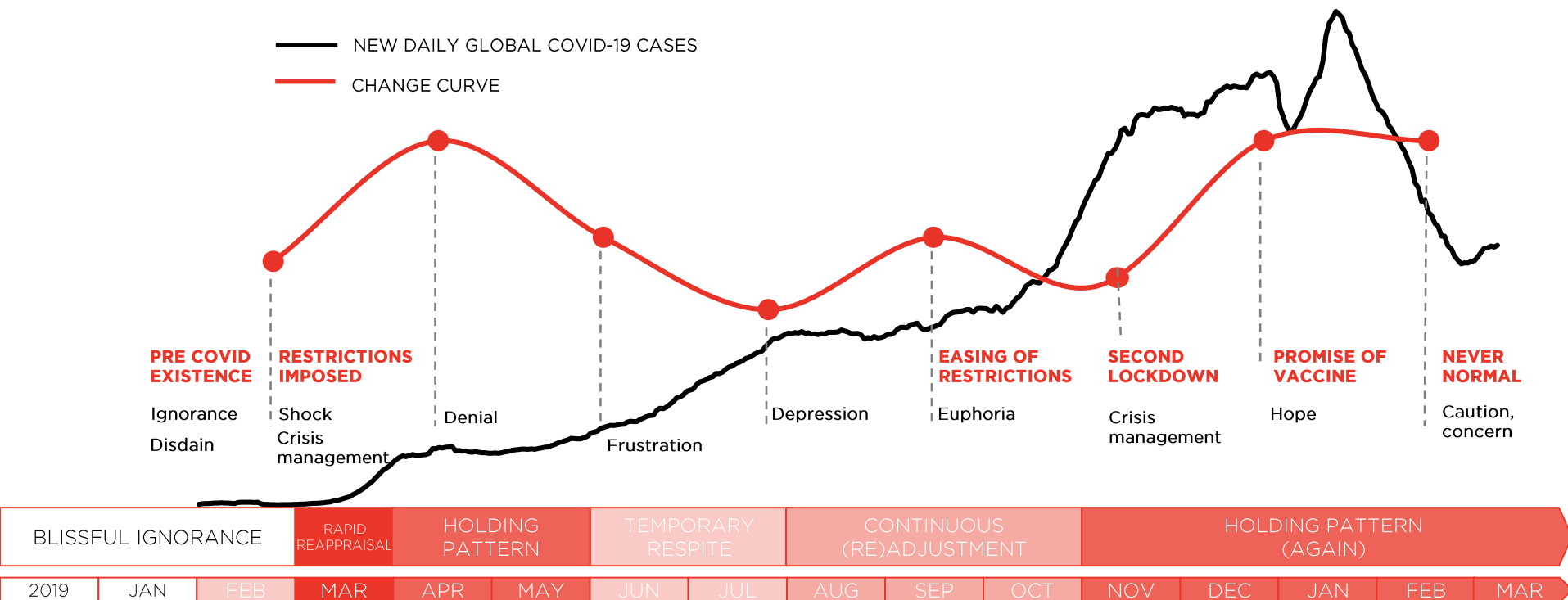
This hasn't changed, but a lot has...

# BBDO KNOWS WE LIVE IN TERRIFYING TIMES



# WE ARE ON THE ULTIMATE PSYCHOLOGICAL ROLLERCOASTER

*And it has taken its toll*





## WE ARE MORE CONNECTED THAN EVER

*And while it is absolutely vital in the current context, it is also exhausting*

We are predicted to spend a collective 12 trillion hours on the internet this year: connectivity is ever-present throughout people's days and facilitates most activities – even when they sleep. Our reliance on technology grew as we were separated from the outside world.



# 13%

Growth in social media users Jan 2019 – Jan 2020.

# 1.3m

New users joined social media **every** day in 2020.

# 4h10m

Average amount of time we spend on mobile devices every day. (Android Users)

# 7h

Average amount of time we spend on the internet every day. This is 4% growth between Q3 2019 and Q3 2020.

**BBDO KNOWS**

**BEING ALWAYS ON AND LIVING IN THE NEVER NORMAL**

*Is having a profound impact on our emotional wellbeing*

**As a result our emotional needs have been heightened & we often feel deficient in them:**



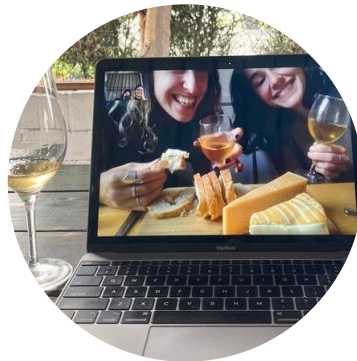
**CONTROL**



**SECURITY**



**CONFIDENCE**



**CONNECTION**



**JOY**

Ultimately, we are all united by a **desire to feel better...**

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Rituals, and the **brands on the inside of our rituals** can play an important role in helping us achieve this.

*Acting as grounding forces in the face of fluctuating routines and emotions*

Business  
VIEW

Managing Yourself | The Restorative Power of Ritual


Managing Yourself

## The Restorative Power of Ritual

by Scott Berinato

April 02, 2020

"rituals in the face of loss can help us feel less grief, rituals with families can make us feel closer, and rituals with our partners can reinforce our commitment to each other. And by rituals we don't mean "elaborate religious ceremonies" — in our research, we often find that the majority of people's rituals are private and idiosyncratic to them."



Stas Knez/Pexels

**Summary.** Many people are seeking ways to deal with their anxiety and grief during the current pandemic. One way that helps is to institute rituals in your day. Harvard Business School Professor Mike Norton has studied rituals and found that those who use them feel

HBR, [LINK](#)

me going on a stupid little daily walk  
just to feel something



WORKLIFE

Home

By Cristine H Legare, University of Texas 5th February 2021

From The Conversation

THE CONVERSATION

Even during Covid-19, rituals are crucial, helping us meet important physical, social and psychological needs.

*Annual rituals adapted in the face of restrictions*

You know we're gonna be quarantined  
for Mother's Day and get out just in  
time for Father's Day, right?

#TYPICAL



**Not the Nanny**  
@not\_thenanny

Me: What are we doing for Valentine's Day?

My Husband: Raising three kids

7:55 AM · Feb 3, 2021



453



70



Copy link to Tweet



Christmas 2020



We all hoped to avoid this.



**Mia Galuppo**  
@miagaluppo

this Super Bowl could have been an  
email

8:56 PM · Feb 7, 2021 · Twitter Web App

When BBDO coined the term Fortress Rituals, we never could have imagined how significant it would become...

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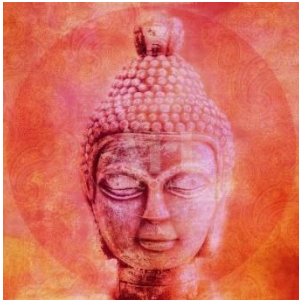
In 2007 we talked about the fortress protecting the brand, today the **fortress protects the individual**. In fact they always have in times of crisis...

*In times of crisis*



“Ritual actions do not produce a practical result on the external world... But to make this statement is not to say that ritual has no function ... **it gives members of the society confidence, it dispels their anxieties, and it disciplines their social organizations.**”

*- George C. Homans, Anxiety and Ritual, 1941*



Rituals serve to emotionally transform us **not just at points in the day, but all day, every day...**

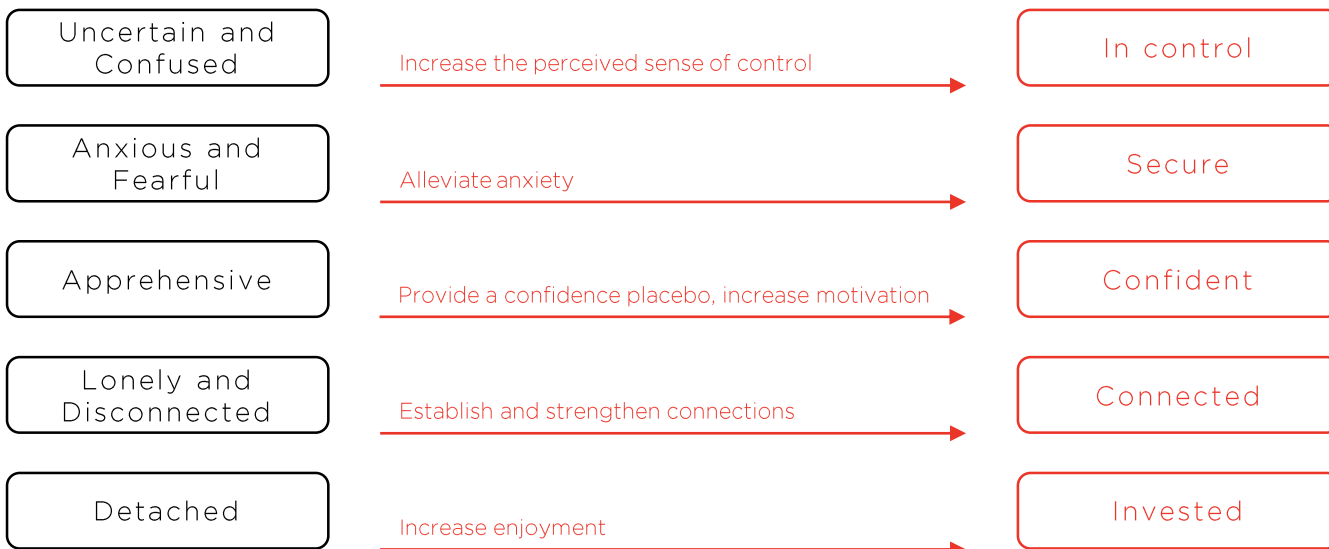
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by helping achieve much needed feelings of control, confidence, reassurance, connection and joy (through enhancing our consumption moments) – all with significant implications for brands.



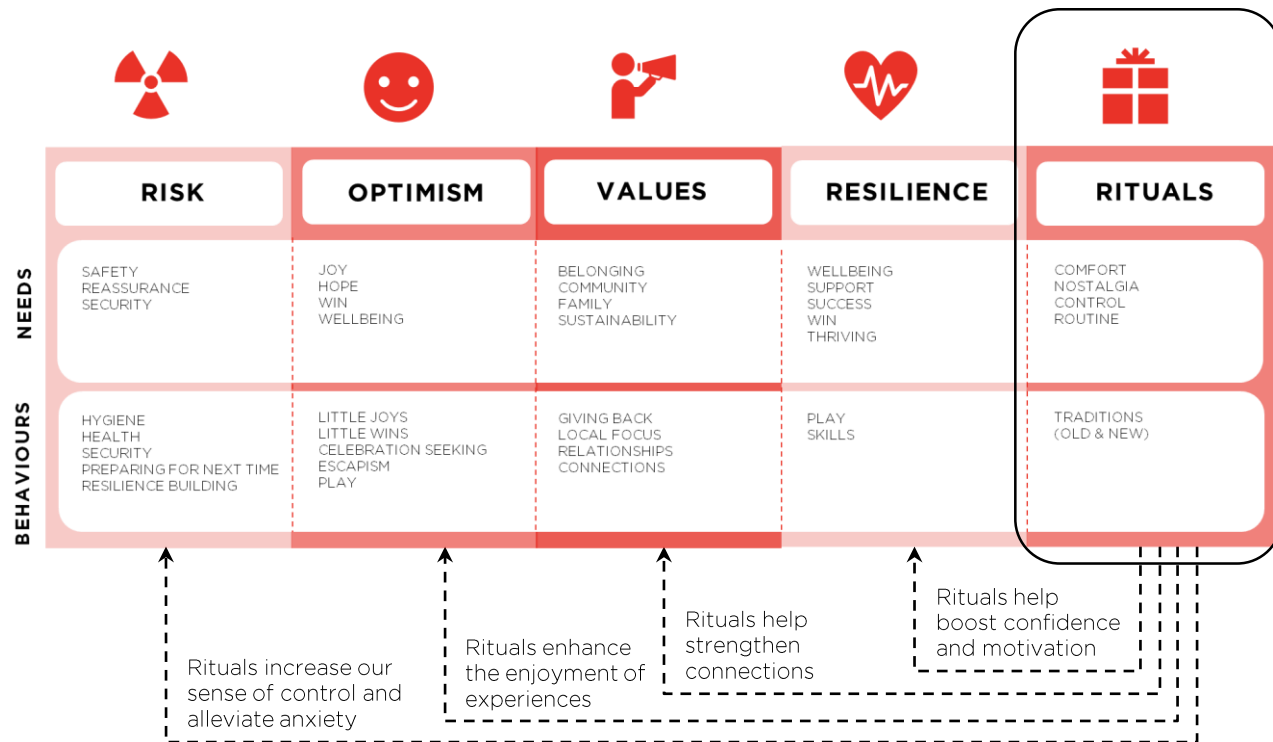
*Scientific evidence shows that all rituals can deliver these emotional transformations*

### THE ROLE OF RITUALS



# RITUALS ARE MORE THAN A DRIVER OF SPEND

*Rituals can also serve as a “tool” and a vehicle for achieving our emotional needs*



\* Please [reach out to the team](#) to request the BBDO 5 Emotional Drivers of Spend framework

In 2021 we believe rituals act as a **fortress for people**  
– protecting them from external instability and  
offering predictability and meaning in uncertain times.

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When life as we knew it was rendered unrecognisable,  
**we held on to our rituals** and showed creativity in  
preserving and evolving them.

In 2021 being on the inside of a ritual has never been more important for a brand.

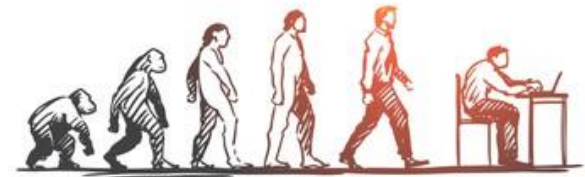
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**But as the world around us has changed, so have our rituals.**

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# RITUALS ENDURE, RITUALS EVOLVE

*Help us adapt and evolve*



*These five Rituals remain intact*



PREPARING FOR  
BATTLE



FEASTING



SEXING UP



RETURNING TO  
CAMP



LOCKING UP

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The ability of these rituals to withstand external change and turmoil is testament to the **fundamental and universal nature of the rituals** identified in 2007.

*Have had to flex and evolve significantly given the context*



## PREPARING FOR BATTLE

Homes have become our battleground, with home-schooling and space sharing key areas for negotiation. The rise of loungewear is indicative of a change in how we prepare for the day.



## FEASTING

Cooking is the new commute: with more time on our hands, we've cooked more and from scratch, and eaten more with our housemates and families. Food and feasting have become even more central to daily life and our sense of wellbeing.



## SEXING UP

Self-care has never been sexier: we've stopped going "out out" and had to stay "in in". Beauty sales have declined, and many have used this time to adhere to more natural standards of beauty, spending money on other feel-good products.



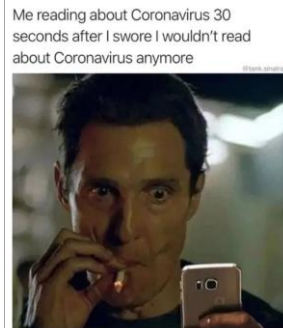
## RETURNING TO CAMP

The boundaries have blurred between home and work and we've become more attached to rituals which end the day, such as packing up shared working spaces. Short walks throughout the day have also come commonplace.



## LOCKING UP

We've measured safety by numbers. The pandemic has been charted day-by-day with infection rates and death tolls. Checking the news has become the way we feel informed and as a result, secure.



*Reflecting changing behaviours and values*



### SEXING UP IS NOW SEXING UP FOR THE CAMERA

*"But, as the saying goes, love endures—in wars, disasters, and even pandemics. And so do the attempts to find it. ...*

*People are embracing the fact that, okay, I can't date in person. The closest thing I can do is talk to someone over video'."*

Elise Taylor, Vogue [Link](#)



### RETURNING TO CAMP IS NOW LEAVING CAMP FOR SOME

Walks were our second favourite way to keep fit in the first lockdown, with 33% of global consumers incorporating them into their routines [Link](#).

*"The results of this survey come at a time when many of us are appreciating being able to get out for a walk. It remains incredibly important to keep active, both for our own wellbeing and to avoid storing up massive health problems for ourselves"*

Jenni Wiggle, Living Streets Charity [Link](#)





*As boundaries are blurred and transitions shorten*



## FEASTING THEN

1. PREPARING
2. COMING TOGETHER - PHYSICALLY
3. BRINGING SOMETHING TO THE TABLE

In 2007 Feasting was made up of a series of sequential actions.

## FEASTING NOW

COMING TOGETHER - REMOTELY, DIGITALLY  
FEASTING ON CONTENT - NOT NECESSARILY FOOD

While the physical, “traditional” feasting ritual seems more fragile than ever due to the pervasive use of technology, digital channels allow people to “feast” on shared content and foster the connection with various groups of people throughout the day, without having to be in the same room. The digital connection is often spread out as micro-interactions throughout the day.

### Brits can't wait to see their family and friends after lockdown

What do you look forward to doing the most when lockdown is over and coronavirus is less of a threat? % of answers to open-ended question



Source: Yougov

## 2021: CERTAIN RITUAL STEPS ARE MORE IMPORTANT

*As our priorities evolve*

Gathering intelligence, usually via our phones, is the first thing we do in the morning...



### PREPARING FOR BATTLE THEN

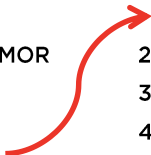
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1. CLEANSING
2. FUELLING
3. PUTTING ON ARMOR
4. WAR-PAINTING
5. **GATHERING  
INTELLIGENCE**
6. CLEARING OUR HEADS

### PREPARING FOR BATTLE NOW

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1. **GATHERING  
INTELLIGENCE**
2. CLEANSING
3. FUELLING
4. PUTTING ON ARMOR
5. WAR-PAINTING
6. CLEARING OUR HEADS



...and the last thing we do at night



### LOCKING UP THEN

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1. PREPARING FOR THE  
NEXT DAY
2. LOCKING
3. CLOSING DOWN

### LOCKING UP NOW

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1. PREPARING FOR THE  
NEXT DAY
2. LOCKING
3. CLOSING DOWN
4. **GATHERING  
INTELLIGENCE**

## Rituals endure, rituals evolve...

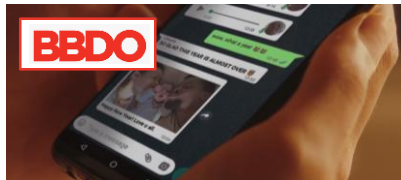
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### **SUMMARY:**

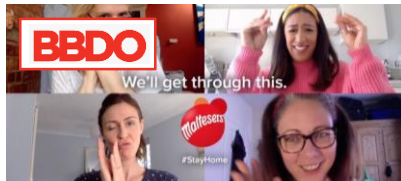
- We still feast, but we can do this all day long
- We still sex up, but it is done for the camera lens
- We still need to unwind and 'return to camp', but it's not confined to the end of the day and doesn't need to be at home

*Endure, Resolve & Evolve***DUNKIN' - REINFORCES COFFEE MORNING RITUALS**

Dunkin' launched a welcome back ad for America's coffee morning lovers, urging people to get back into their routine of visiting their neighbourhood Dunkin'. Created by BBDO New York, "the spot highlights the specialness of the daily coffee ritual and the connection among real Dunkin' team members and fans." The story unfolds to the lyrics "Don't stay away for too long". [LINK](#)

**WHATSAPP - KEEPS EVERYDAY CONNECTIONS ALIVE**

AlmapBBDO produced two very powerful ad campaigns during the pandemic. The first, '[Rays of Sunshine](#)', is a quarantine video depicting how a mother and daughter sustain their bond while quarantining. The second, '[Family Diary](#)', was created in collaboration with BBDO Berlin and is an emotional film showing us the various ways we used WhatsApp to nurture and create deep connections and relationships throughout 2020.

**MALTESERS - FACILITATES THE EVERYDAY IN A NEW WAY**

AMV BBDO's 'Isolation Life' campaign for Maltesers became one of the more iconic UK lockdown ads. The humorous six-part short-form ads tell the story of how four women were able to evolve their catch-up ritual, from in person to on the screen - while being interrupted by their parents or kids. [LINK](#)

## Rituals endure, rituals evolve...

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### **ACTION POINTS:**

- Consider your role in facilitating the essential emotional transitions
- Consider your use of technology in making our rituals more adaptable
- Identify key ritual elements that can become micro-rituals delivering the required emotional transformation and tie products to these

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## RITUALS CAN REASSURE US

*Help alleviate anxiety and face  
uncertainty*



*By alleviating negative emotions like anxiety and stress*

Academic research suggests that rituals can have a positive effect on people's wellbeing in the face of stressful experiences and negative feelings resulting from an uncertain context.

### A BUFFER AGAINST NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

"Multiple bodies of literature suggest that rituals can act as **a buffer against the deleterious effects of strong negative emotions**. Ritualized behaviors seem particularly likely to emerge under circumstances characterized by negative emotions such as high anxiety, uncertainty, and stress."

*The psychology of rituals: An integrative review and process-based framework 2017, [LINK](#)*

### RESTORING OUR SENSE OF CONTROL

"... **common is this instinct to devise rituals in the face of negative events**... Despite the variance in the form that rituals take, we propose that a common psychological mechanism underlies their effectiveness: **a restoration of feelings of control** that losses impair... rituals serve as a compensatory mechanism designed to restore feelings of control after losses..."

*Michael I. Norton and Francesca Gino, Harvard Business School Rituals Alleviate Grieving for Loved Ones, Lovers, and Lotteries, [LINK](#)*

## 2021: THE PANDEMIC THREW OUR MORNING RITUALS INTO FLUX

*So, we adapted our behaviour in order to find reassurance in routine*

**“Starting your day off the right way, every day—no matter what’s going on—can help to create a sense of calm control.”**

- Thomson Reuters [Link](#)

### WE REPLACED



### COMMUTING

A decrease of 41 minutes in the US. [Link](#).

### WITH



### RUNNING OR WALKING

34% increase in outdoor miles logged in the US. [Link](#).

### WE REPLACED



### SCHOOL DROP-OFF

99% of secondary school pupils in the UK didn't go to school (May 2020) [Link](#).

### WITH



### HOME SCHOOL SET-UP

In the UK 77% of parents home schooled their children (April-May) [Link](#).

### WE REPLACED



### MAKE-UP

Global makeup sales fell by a massive 14.2% by Q3 2020. [Link](#).

### WITH



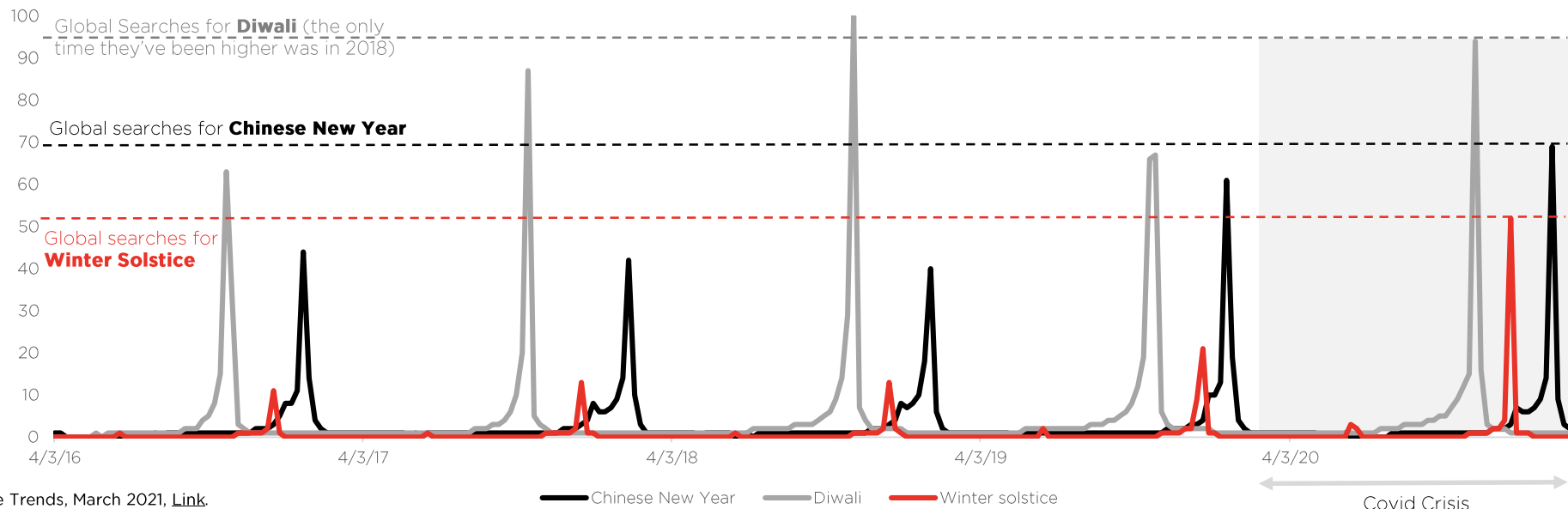
### SKIN CARE

Skin moisturising sales fell by a comparatively negligible 1.3% in the same time period. [Link](#).



*In troubling times we look for things to celebrate*

We've been living in the various stages of the pandemic for nearly a year now, and whilst money is tight and life is restricted it seems we are all looking for an excuse to celebrate. The chart below shows the growth in searches for celebrations and festivities:



## As the world grows more uncertain, rituals reassure us

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### **SUMMARY:**

We live in the never normal, we don't know what is coming next and we can't possibly predict.

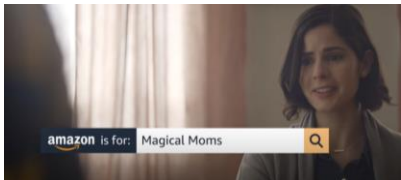
- We seek certainty wherever we can find it
- We seek predictability, particularly at certain points in the day
- We seek to minimise the negative impact of events...
- And enhance the positive

*Reassure and add a sense of stability and comfort*



#### BAYER - HELPS MINIMISE THE NEGATIVE

The Bayer Aspirin brand sought to ritualize not just the taking of aspirin daily but the carrying of aspirin too. This innovative campaign dialled up the life-saving role of Aspirin and in doing so embedded the brand within the most powerful of rituals. [LINK](#)



#### AMAZON - HELPS MINIMISE RISK

Amazon became “the default retailer and an essential service for many consumers at the height of the pandemic,” by being predictable and reliable. Amazon is single-mindedly customer-centric, and aims to deliver on this promise across touchpoints. By being predictably good, they are inviting themselves into people’s rituals. [LINK](#), [LINK](#)



#### COLGATE PALMOLIVE - HELPS KEEP US SAFE

Colgate Supported the World Health Organization (WHO) #SafeHands Effort by donating 25 million bars of soap as part of the Safe Hands programme. They produced a new soap, which was specially packaged with instructions on proper handwashing. [LINK](#)

## Rituals reassure us

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### **ACTION POINTS:**

- The opportunity is for brands to help their consumers navigate uncertainty by being predictably good - so good they are the default choice
- The opportunity is for brands to consider how they can facilitate the little lifts and moments of joy consumers seek
- Brands can consider the role they can play in fulfilling the need for reassurance, are there opportunities to enhance trust at key touchpoints?

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## **RITUALS HELP US PAUSE AND PROGRESS**

*Help us slow down and move forward*



*Increasing our focus and motivation*

Rituals can boost confidence, help hone in attention and consequently improve performance by creating a sense of higher level of involvement.

### RITUALS HELP US TRANSCEND THE EVERYDAY

“Ritualistic sequences, by virtue of being perceived as special, are more than the arbitrary physical movements that comprise them. Instead, **the actions are interpreted as a practice that is meaningful, providing context and connecting a person to something that is bigger than themselves**—their ancestry, familial traditions, cultural and religious groups, nature, immortality, and more.”

*The psychology of rituals: An integrative review and process-based framework 2017, [LINK](#)*

### RITUALS INCREASE OUR MOTIVATION

“Rituals **energize and stimulate a person’s actions**, motivating them towards current and future goals by bringing attention to the regulatory context and **heightening feelings of personal involvement...**”

“Rituals can **help to prepare a person for a context that is motivationally relevant**, such as when students attempt to psychologically prepare themselves before an important exam, or when people ceremoniously complete a morning tea ritual to prepare for the workday.”

*The psychology of rituals: An integrative review and process-based framework 2017, [LINK](#)*

## BBDO KNOWS 2021: WE NEED TO PAUSE

*We need to recharge and pause meaningfully*

### WE ARE MORE STRESSED

84% of Americans reported feeling stressed in January 2021.

The most common emotions in the same timeframe were:

- Anxiety
- Sadness
- Anger



### WE WANT TO LOOK AFTER OUR MENTAL HEALTH

69% of global consumers have said that the pandemic has made them more focussed on managing their mental health and well-being. We can see that reflected in our activities last year:

**30%**

Of global millennials wanted to improve their mental health.

**68.7%**

Of global consumers have either tried or are interested in trying mindfulness.

**28m**

The number of installs of the Calm app in the first 11 months of 2020.

*We seek self-improvement and organisation in times of low confidence*



## The Coronavirus-Fueled Trend For Learning New Skills Is More Than Fleeting



**Fitness apps grew by nearly 50% during the first half of 2020, study finds**

# 51%

Of global consumers agree that “I like to plan / be organised”

**WE LIKE TO  
PLAN**





## Rituals help us pause meaningfully, and plan accordingly

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### **SUMMARY:**

We have been placed on pause for long periods of time, yet we are also 'always on'

- We seek permission and the opportunity to slowdown, meaningfully
- We want to feel like we are making progress against our goals
- We want to invest in our self-improvement

*Help us pause, progress, and plan*



#### DOLMIO - HELPS FOSTER POSITIVE RITUALS

Dolmio's Pepper Hacker (Clemenger BBDO) helped return meal times to a ritual of pause and connection by tackling the biggest distracter: WiFi. The pepper shaker disconnected all of the household tech so that kids could reconnect with their parents at dinnertime. [LINK](#)



#### SKIPPY- HELPS PROVIDE ESCAPE

In Skippy's 'Skippy Place' every iteration is about pausing properly and facilitating escapism. Through an Animal Crossing activation, consumers could take part in a virtual pause that allowed them to briefly escape from everyday life. [LINK](#)



#### SHAKE SHACK- HELPS EXTENSIVELY PLAN

Shake Shack launched the Shack Camp Box for summer 2020 so that families could recreate the ritual of going to a summer camp at home. The box contained 6 weeks' worth of interactive activities to keep kids entertained and learning new skills, from campaign posters for "shacktivism", to a lemon reamer for setting up a lemonade stand. [LINK](#)

## **Rituals help us pause meaningfully, and plan accordingly**

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### **ACTION POINTS:**

- There is the opportunity for brands to help consumers plan
- The opportunity is for a brand to consider how they can help justify a pause
- The opportunity is for a brand to stay on the inside of a ritual by helping people stay on track and reach their goals, thus reaping emotional engagement

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## RITUALS CAN ELEVATE OUR EXPERIENCE

*Increase our sense of enjoyment and  
connection*



*Due to heightened involvement in the experience*

Experimental evidence shows that rituals make food taste better and increase our overall perceived enjoyment of it, be it chocolate or carrots.

#### RITUALS MAKE CONSUMPTION MORE ENJOYABLE

“...**rituals heighten both anticipated and experienced enjoyment.** [...] participants who first performed systematic, repetitive movements enjoyed consuming more than participants who performed non-systematic, random movements. [...] we note that these results were obtained with carrots, which are not universally held in high regard in terms of taste.”

*Rituals Enhance Consumption, Vohs, J., Y. Wang, F. Gino, and M. I. Norton, Psychological Science, [LINK](#)*

#### RITUALS HEIGHTEN OUR SENSE OF INVOLVEMENT

“With consumption, rituals seem to work because they **increase your involvement in the experience.**

[...]

Another experiment showed that **observing a ritual is not nearly as powerful as performing a ritual.** Participants who prepared a glass of powdered lemonade in a ritualistic manner (stir for 30 seconds, wait for 30 seconds, and so on) enjoyed consuming it much more than those who merely watched someone else prepare the lemonade.”

*The Power of Rituals in Life, Death, and Business, Harvard Business School, 2013, [LINK](#)*

*Aiding our enjoyment, and heightening our engagement with brands*

In tests that paired rituals with specific foods, study participants reported that “the flavour tasted more pungent, and people took longer to eat the foods, a sign of savouring... They rated the experience as better, and were willing to pay more to do it again.”

- Professor Kathleen Vohs, [Link](#)



The rituals of Oreos and Hula Hoops work on multiple levels:

1. Rituals increase the enjoyment of the product
2. The ritual is often related to childhood

Consumers therefore have both an increased enjoyment of the product, and also a stronger, more nostalgic connection to the brands.



## BBDO KNOWS 2021: WE'RE DESPERATELY SEEKING JOY

*Especially small moments at-home*

### WE'RE LOOKING FOR JOY

With life on pause we've turned to the small things:

**75%** Of global consumers "want to experience luxury and pleasurable moments at home" [Link](#).

**40%** Of American consumers are more likely engage with a brand or purchase a product if an advert included joy [Link](#).

"The events of recent weeks and months have taken a toll on our mental health, but as our individual worlds suddenly shrunk, a renewed appreciation seemed to collectively establish: for **the simple things in life.**"

-The News Letter, May 2020, [Link](#)

### THIS IS EVIDENT IN OUR PURCHASING HABITS

We turned to our comfort items:

**13%** Growth predicted in the global confectionary and snack market 2020, as a direct consequence of the pandemic. [Link](#).

And those that provide small luxuries:

**56%** Of US consumers, in the first lockdown, brought 'special treats' for themselves or their families. [Link](#).

"It's a **ritual**... It's a very minimal and **justifiable luxury.**"

*Interview with a consumer on buying premium coffee  
- Bloomberg, August 2020, [Link](#)*

## **As our choices overwhelm us, rituals can elevate our experience**

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### **SUMMARY:**

- We seek joy and enjoyment in consumption
- We seek elevated experiences, including the experiences we have with brands
- We want to be reminded of the joy, the fun, the nostalgia



*Can help elevate our experiences*



#### DR. OETKER - HELPS ELEVATE THE EVERYDAY

Pudding. Most of us remember it from our childhood days as one of the most soul warming treats on a big day out, after having played a lot, for getting homework done. This ritual symbolised caring and a great childhood day coming to an end, this is what Dr. Oetker brings back to all of us. In one cup. And turns a simple pudding into a soul-warming taste once more. [LINK](#)



#### AIRBNB - HELPS ELEVATE THE EVERDAY

Whilst our adventures have mainly been limited to our homes, Airbnb sought to help elevate both our travel and at-home rituals, by launching Airbnb experiences. These immersive experiences connect people around the globe hoping to inspire their everyday, such as cooking with Grannies in Italy or Harry Potter's London Virtual tour. [LINK](#)



#### GUINNESS - HELPS ELEVATE THE EXPERIENCE

Guinness's iconic 'campaign 'Surfer' elevated the ritual of waiting for your pint to something to be proud of, a status symbol. "The expectation of the Guinness during the pour [is] core to the Guinness experience". [LINK](#)

## **As our choices overwhelm us, rituals can elevate our experience**

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### **ACTION POINTS:**

- Rituals present the opportunity to elevate the moment of consumption and the brand in question
- Rituals present an opportunity for brands to elevate mundane touchpoints and transform them into positive engagement opportunities
- Rituals can remind us of the relationships we have with brands
- Rituals can also heighten the experience we have with brands

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# **RITUALS CAN HELP US FEEL PART OF SOMETHING**

*Help us connect and belong*



*Connected to each other and part of something*

Many rituals are collective by design – performing rituals together strengthens our social groups by heightening the sense of individual belonging and aligning group members with each other.

## SHARED RITUALS STRENGTHEN OUR SOCIAL BONDS

“...ritual allows people to navigate the complex social world, and that **[this] serves to regulate and maintain their connection with others.** [...]”

a host of empirical studies have provided **evidence linking group rituals to positive social outcomes**, such as cooperation, social cohesion, and perceived social support.”

*The psychology of rituals: An integrative review and process-based framework 2017, [LINK](#)*

## COLLECTIVE RITUALS MAKE US FEEL MORE ALIGNED AND CONNECTED

“There is evidence to suggest that collective rituals bring about **an alignment of the practitioners’ emotional and attentional experiences**, and that these experiences lead to **increased affiliation.**”

*The Power of Rituals in Life, Death, and Business, Harvard Business School, 2013, [LINK](#)*

*Fans are missing the community aspect of sport*

## PRE-COVID



Fans loved live sports for the shared experience

Motivations for attending live football in the UK:

**84%** 'I love the atmosphere in the stadium and amongst fans'

**71%** 'To show loyalty to my club'

**71%** 'I enjoy everything about the match day experience'

59% of football-watchers place 'feeling a sense of belonging to my town or city's football club' above the importance of winning.

## DURING COVID



Fans were left bereft without live sports

The pause of sports had an impact on fans:

**76%**

Of American self-identified sports fans said the absence of sports had affected them somewhat or very much. [Link](#).

But it hasn't dampened their passion:

**82%**

Of American self-identified sports fans expect to be equally (46%) or more engaged (36%) in following sports when they return. [Link](#).

*We created community-centred rituals*

"Whilst 2020 witnessed the world disintegrate into distancing and dread... the weekly Clap for Carers soon emerged as the **epitome of community spirit**. From 26<sup>th</sup> March, the nation's salute for the NHS saw my street at home unite with a cacophony of pots and pans... **At a time when Britain is dismally divided on most topics, remaining unanimously united in one is worth its weight in gold.**"

- The Palatinate, [Link](#)



In fight against coronavirus, the world gives medical heroes a standing ovation



## Rituals help us feel part of something

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### **SUMMARY:**

- We increasingly seek meaning, and to be part of something meaningful
- We want our values to be reflected back at us
- We seek status through shared experiences

*Help us feel part of something bigger*



#### NIKE - HELPS BRING OUTDOOR RITUALS INSIDE

Off the Back of Nike's notorious lockdown campaign, 'Play inside', Nike launched *The Living Room Cup*, a digital workout series encouraging people to continue their exercise rituals at home. Each week a new challenge was introduced by a professional athlete like Cristiano Ronaldo and participants were invited to compete with the target they set. [LINK](#)



#### BACARDI - HELPS ELEVATE COMMUNITY SPIRIT

In November Bacardi [called on fans](#) to star in its 'Conga' experiential campaign; "BACARDÍ is a brand that thrives off bringing people together... we wanted to create an opportunity to connect them in resurrecting this global hit" said Ned Duggan, SVP. The [Conga feat you](#) features crowdsourced dance moves, and the campaign is extended with a global [snapchat](#) lens to encourage rum fans to keep on dancing.



#### WECHAT - HELPS REINFORCE CULTURAL RITUALS

The moon festival is an important holiday in Chinese culture, which encourages celebration and being together with family and friends. WeChat sought to keep this ritual alive with 'Moon Moments', a mixed reality campaign. Users were able to connect with each other despite travel restrictions, by searching for the moon in the sky and then were transported to one of the Great Wall Passes. Within 12 hours, over 20 million WeChat users gathered on the Great Wall from across the world. [LINK](#)



## Rituals help us feel part of something

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### **ACTION POINTS:**

- Brands are presented with an opportunity to unite their consumer through rituals and shared experiences
- Brands have the opportunity to facilitate group rituals to enhance the relationships they have with those participating

## FIVE SHIFTS FOR RITUALS & OPPORTUNITIES FOR BRANDS

*Facilitated by our external context and technology*



### EVOLVE

Rituals give us a sense of control, on demand. But today that means rituals need to flex.



### REASSURE

Rituals make the uncertain feel more certain. They minimise the negative and accentuate the positive.



### SLOW

Rituals help us pause. Rituals motivate us and help us achieve goals.



### ENHANCE

Rituals enhance brand interactions and enjoyment of consumption.



### CONNECT

Rituals help us feel a part of something and strengthen our connections.

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## WHAT NEXT?

*Assessing your opportunities*



Brands need to **work harder than ever** to earn a place on the shopping list as contemporary shoppers are more rational and fickle than ever.

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**A continued understanding of rituals, and the part they play in our everyday, is critical to business building ideas.**

In 2007, we discovered that Rituals were far more powerful than simple habits – they were a defined series of actions that helped us **transform from one emotional state to another.**

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They were **critical to our sense of wellbeing throughout the day.**

Today, **rituals have never been more important** in helping meet our heightened needs and fulfilling emotional transformations, but they have evolved.

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Brands that understand how to ritualize around  
important prevalent needs

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and how to position themselves on the inside of a  
ritual **can earn a more meaningful and sustainable  
role** in people's complex lives.

*2021*

## UNDERSTAND

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Better understand the rituals within your category or adjacent categories.

Consider how these rituals may evolve based on the evolving context.

Work out the transformation that is taking place in the ritual and the step(s) that are taken.

Better understand your role, or lack of role, in customers' rituals.

## ASSESS

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Consider how to add your brand to a ritual or micro ritual – by accentuating your role or creating a new behaviour within a ritual.

Consider how you can encourage, facilitate or create new rituals that help people meet their needs in the evolving context.

Consider how you can facilitate or encourage maintaining rituals that have been disrupted or made difficult by the current context?

## CREATE

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Create products/packaging or utilise technology to facilitate your role within rituals today.

Encourage behaviours around your product that elevate it and encourage ritual consumption.

Create communication in order to accentuate the emotional role within your product or service.



If you would like to learn more, please contact us on:

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