

**BBDO KNOWS**

**GET CONSUMER  
SMART**

*How The World Is  
Feeling*

*How the world is feeling*

The coronavirus pandemic sees us all on an emotional rollercoaster. Prolonged and intermittent lockdowns, glimpses of small freedoms, vast change and uncertainty are all having a significant impact on the way we feel.

The prolonged impacts of covid have undoubtedly taken their toll, with around 40% of people around the globe reporting a decrease in mental health<sup>1</sup>. It is clear that the conditions of the pandemic have created a complex emotional balance for consumers; constantly changing circumstances have left us in a precarious state of apprehensive optimism. The pandemic's drawn-out nature has allowed some behaviours and emotions to become deeply imprinted in our psyche, meaning it is likely they will persist as we continue to transition out of restrictions.

Throughout the pandemic we consumed numbers daily. Three statistics determined how we lived our lives on a weekly, if not daily, basis: cases, deaths, and vaccines. The weekly variability in the outlook of the pandemic no doubt affected our mental wellbeing. Despite the steady rise in vaccination rates since the beginning of the year<sup>2</sup>, our built-up hopes for freedom have been hampered by the spread of new variants. Understandably the world has mixed feelings right now.

## **HOW KEY DRIVERS IMPACT OUR FEELINGS**

It can be difficult to understand emotions without context. Analysing how the pandemic has shifted consumers needs and expectations through the lens of the BBDO Knows 5 drivers of behaviour and spend provides this context and helps brands better understand their consumers. In this article we explore three of our five drivers.

### **RISK**

The dangers present during the pandemic saw us re-evaluate our perception of risk. Everyday activities like shopping and exercising required more thoughtful planning as lockdowns limited travel and caused us to be more mindful of the people we surround ourselves with. As we start emerge, these risks have not magically disappeared; over 70% of consumers globally still agree that coronavirus concerns them 'hugely'<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> FF, March 2021, [LINK](#)

<sup>2</sup> Our World in Data, July 2021, [LINK](#)

<sup>3</sup> Kantar, May 2021, [LINK](#)

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During this difficult transition period, brands can help their consumers navigate the new world of vaccine-reduced social distancing and deal with the emotional risks associated with our 'new normal'.

Information helps us feel in control and reassured. The opportunity is for brand to consider any perceived risk associated with how, where, when their product is consumed and help consumers navigate and manage that risk.

The Philippines Tourism Promotion Board illustrated how to navigate risk and fear by creating a series of ads that demonstrated the strict health and safety protocols they have implemented to address lingering concerns over the coronavirus and reassure visitors<sup>4</sup>.

## **RESILIENCE**

It goes without saying that the lockdown presented us with unfamiliar circumstances; many of us went months without seeing colleagues and loved ones in the way we were used to. It is in this manner that the pandemic not only threatened our health but significantly impacted our wellbeing. The pandemic has given us a chance to hone our resilience and develop a growing awareness around mental health moving forward, with 23% of consumers planning to increase their spending on wellness products and 37% planning to spend more on wellness services<sup>5</sup>.

Consumers want to invest in, as well as democratise, resilience. As we transition out of the pandemic, brands must act as an ally and help consumers build their resilience across the broadening definition of mindfulness and wellness. Take, for example, the Maltesers spot with AMV BBDO which creates an open dialogue around mother's mental health by depicting humorous conversations between women who are grappling with the unexpected challenges of motherhood<sup>6</sup>. Brands and businesses that recognize the struggles we go through and can continue to support our desires to thrive and our need to remain resilient through empathy, will be best placed to succeed.

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<sup>4</sup> BBDO Guerrero, [LINK](#)

<sup>5</sup> McKinsey, April 2021, [LINK](#)

<sup>6</sup> Campaign, [LINK](#)

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## **RITUALS**

Long held habits and rituals were forced to adapt during coronavirus. As we move out of lockdown these rituals will either endure or revert back to previous behaviours.

Regardless, these rituals provide enormous comfort. Even with vaccination rates on the rise, mask wearing or social distancing is commonplace.

By understanding the mechanics of key rituals and the needs driving them, brands can find a space in rituals both old and new. During covid BBDO Belgium and Jupiler encouraged all Belgians to post-pone their lockdown birthdays: Belgians born in March and April were able to sign up and choose a new birthday post lockdown in order to receive 10 free pints of Jupiler to drink at their favourite bar post lockdown<sup>7</sup>. Brands and businesses on the inside of our rituals and the comfort they provide, will be best placed to succeed.

## **WHAT THIS MEANS FOR BRANDS**

The pandemic endures and for many of us, we remain on an emotional rollercoaster. The continued perception of risk breeds fear and worry, and the loss of freedom breeds longing. The 5 emotional drivers will continue to dictate behaviour because they are rooted in how we are feeling and how we want to feel. Brands that can understand these drivers and continue to help us feel reassured, optimistic, and comforted will be best placed to succeed, now and in the future.

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<sup>7</sup> BBDO, [LINK](#)

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## **ABOUT BBDO KNOWS**

BBDO KNOWS is a planning resource for the BBDO network.

BBDO KNOWS offers thinking, strategy, insights and inspiration on key categories, key themes and consumer segments.

If you are interested in learning more about the way BBDO thinks please contact [bbdo@bbdoknows.com](mailto:bbdo@bbdoknows.com)

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