

BBDO KNOWS

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SMART**

2 Years On

2 Years On

Even though the impacts of Coronavirus are being felt less by the minute, we find ourselves in yet another period of flux, another moment of global uncertainty. Just as we saw the potential to re-emerge, we are thrown again into confusion and concern, and it seems that as soon as one crisis leaves the news cycle, another begins to dominate. The knock on impact of the overriding context is adding to the existing economic and supply challenges for the global economy.¹ With the world's financial system in a fragile state after two years of pandemic,² consumers continue to look to brands for support in these trying times.

It feels as if we've been running a marathon, only to have the finish line moved farther ahead.

- *Lyz Lenz, The Washington Post*³

In the midst of such disruption, we once again return to our five emotional drivers of spend: in 2022 consumers will continue to seek partners to help manage risk, stay optimistic, live their values, find resilience, and maintain their rituals. Businesses and brands that provide these as a compass in uncertainty, will be best placed to succeed.

HELP MANAGE AND EVALUATE RISK

In a fraught global situation, where the news cycle reminds us of ongoing conflict, strife and negativity; managing risk and staying safe are foremost in consumers' minds. While lockdowns may have ceased, we continue to see risk everywhere: even our basic everyday behaviors such as going shopping, visiting friends etc., now carry risk. Consumers are looking to brands to offer them support. With consumer prices spiking to 7.2% higher than they were a year ago,⁴ an ever-growing portion of the population is feeling concerned, ready to tighten their belts with an aim of reducing spend.

Amidst this hardship, brands can try to give consumers control by providing them clear and transparent information to assist their decision-making process, ultimately encouraging loyalty. Further, they must respect concerns, understand diverse situations, and value individual journeys to tackle their consumer's international worries in this interconnected world.

¹ The New York Times, 2022, [Link](#)

² The New York Times, 2022, [Link](#)

³ The Washington Post, 2022, [Link](#)

⁴ OECD, 2022, [Link](#)

HELP STAY OPTIMISTIC AND FIND JOY

The last two years have made us value our personal joy, collective optimism, and positive outlook even more highly. As we navigate the new normal with uncertainty and relentless bad news, we crave now, more than ever, to be surprised and delighted, savoring moments of joy, and celebrating micro-wins. After 2 years of 'languishing' (experiencing neither sadness nor joy but instead a general lack of emotion), consumers are looking to be more positive. Brands and businesses that can offer optimism and joy through products, their communications, through their ideas or through services will be best placed to succeed.

Consumers now need a break from all the uncertainty that lies ahead. They want permission to feel joy, balanced against a growing acceptance that the pandemic will remain endemic within our society as we learn to live with it.

- *Emma Ramsay, Head of Research & Insight, OMD EMEA⁵*

By encouraging consumers to embrace their inner child and tapping into mental wellness to encourage more balance, brands can turn their attention to the magic of every day, encouraging a consumer's desire to spend.

HELP REFLECT AND SUPPORT VALUES

During coronavirus, we re-prioritized and re-focused our values in relation to our local communities and the people that supported us and society. This focus is here to stay. Now, internalizing the true value of our families, finances and future, we want our brands to mirror our life choices.

Different groups have different needs - but there is a consistent thread: they all care about similar spaces.

- *The Drum, Feb 2022⁶*

⁵ The Drum, 2022, [Link](#)

⁶ The Drum, 2022, [Link](#)

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Consumers are increasingly questioning what matters most to them, how they want to invest their time, and ultimately, where they want to spend their money. Consumer values have taken center stage over the past 2 years, to an extent that we see more and more consumers demanding change from their brands, and of themselves, where 82% of consumers are willing to pay more for a value-aligned brand.⁷

By encouraging a proportionate share of voice, making sure the brand's initiatives are long lasting, and demonstrating empathy catering to the needs of the consumers, brands and businesses that continue to reflect values through the support of society will be best placed to succeed.

HELP STAY RESILIENT AND THRIVE

For some, Coronavirus not only threatened our health but significantly impacted our mental wellbeing. Many used the time spent in lockdown to focus on self-care and upskilling, and many will continue to seek support and opportunities to thrive. The pandemic reset how we navigate in our online and offline worlds, motivating us to look for ways to be more equipped to deal with the ups, downs and uncertainties ahead.

While, we have a newfound ability to respond to uncertainty and we better understand how to navigate continual shifts, we are adjusting at different rates, coming to terms with different levels of anxiety. Despite 85% of brands (or clients) being more compassionate and thoughtful in their marketing approaches during and coming out of the pandemic,⁸ mental health remains one the most prominent effects of the pandemic. Fortunately, we are seeking solutions - social and personal wellness continue to gather pace as we rebuild, repair, and regrow. Consumers want brands to demonstrate that they understand the ever-changing situation and they're responding to deliver what's best at that time. Agility, flexibility and comfort are all key.

HELP MAINTAIN OR DEVELOP NEW HABITS AND RITUALS

Long held habits and rituals were forced to adapt during coronavirus. As we move out of lockdowns, these rituals will either endure or revert to previous behaviors. Regardless, these rituals provide enormous comfort. When we have rituals in our lives, our cortisol or stress levels go down, making us feel better, safer, and more connected. While being a powerful source of comfort, our rituals also act as our anchors. In fact, after a period of reassessment, we are placing new meaning on our actions and forming new and lasting rituals, looking to brands to enhance this connection and collaborative purpose.

⁷ Futurity, 2021, [Link](#)

⁸ DMA, 2021, [Link](#)

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Brands can offer 'rituals as portal,' helping consumers reach a step towards attaining positive transformation, 'rituals as comfort,' enhancing moments that matter, 'rituals as a sense of belonging,' sharing experiences with others, or 'rituals as pleasure,' looking after a consumer's wellbeing.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR BRANDS

As the crisis develops and our foundations are once again being shaken, we look at what we've learnt over the past 2 years: we look at who has supported us, who has been there alongside us, who has brought us joy, and who has played an active part in our conversations. The brands that have stepped into these roles and continue doing so, are likely to succeed as uncertainty prevails.

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 Knows** bbdo@bbdoknows.com

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