

# MARKETING IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

COVID-19 has had a far-reaching effect, and brands and marketing approaches have not been immune. In the past several weeks we have taken note of a number of insights that can help leaders play stronger offense in this defensive world:

- Done well and purposefully, brands can deepen and reinforce their values and commitment to their consumers. The chart below provides an illustrative graphic of brands taking action in the areas of altruism, product /service re-alignment, small business support and workforce support.
- Marketers are taking extra precaution, as consumers are anxious and uncertain - particularly in an age where social media can amplify backlash to botched communication, but over-correction can be a mistake. Turning off the tape and leaving consumers with a vacuum about what the brand believes misses the chance to share more purpose-based messages.
- Brands must take steps to demonstrate empathy toward the challenges consumers are facing now. This is being seen with mixed success in the travel industry and surprisingly more success with banks and credit card companies—particularly when compared to the 2008/2009 financial crisis.
- Coronavirus is taking up all the oxygen in the room, and it's nearly impossible to introduce new campaigns or launch new products. Consequently, marketers are dialing back spending and waiting for the pivot to re-engage their growth strategies.
- Even though many companies are in triage mode, brands still need to connect with consumers on a pragmatic and emotional level to inspire trust and assurance while delivering on product requirements. Companies are increasingly being called upon to be agile, flexible and willing to make decisions outside normal conventions.

Altruism   public service	Product   service re-alignment
 <p>Giving away millions of dollars in product to insecure and healthcare &amp; grocery workers</p>  <p>Creating DIY thank-you signs for healthcare workers</p> <p>Promoting gift cards and positive reviews for restaurant &amp; hotels</p> <p>Dedicating hotels &amp; beds near hospitals for healthcare workers</p>  <p>Virtual "tip jars" for unemployed bartenders</p>	 <p>Shifting manufacturing lines for ventilators and PPE equipment</p>  <p>Shifting manufacturing lines for hand sanitizers</p>  <p>Creating Mattel <i>Playroom</i> - community for parenting and activity tips</p>  <p>Touch-free pizza from oven to door with seal on box</p>  <p>Offering free online learning K-12</p>
Small business support	Workforce support
 <p>\$100s of millions in ads and business support for small and medium support</p>  <p>Free Quickbooks product support</p>  <p>Accelerating payment and support to small business vendors</p>  <p>Free service for small business eyeing e-commerce solutions</p>	 <p>Increasing hiring and offering increase bonuses and hourly rates</p>  <p>Hiring 100,000 new employees to service demand</p>  <p>Hiring tens of thousands of frontline workers to start same day</p>  <p>Hiring 50,000 to meet demand</p>