

NAVIGATING THE NEW NORMAL

A marketing toolkit for the COVID-19 Pandemic



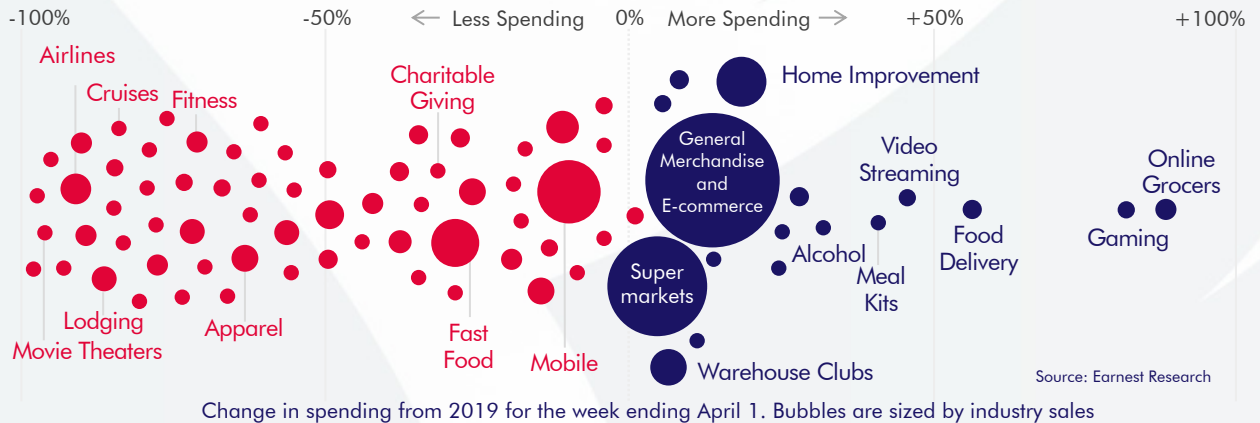
PHOENIX
LIFESTYLE MARKETING GROUP

Reimagining Boundaries. Redefining Convention

This is an unprecedented time. COVID-19 is sweeping the globe at a scale and pace unlike anything most of us have ever seen or experienced within our lifetimes. The growing reality is that the virus' impact on our way of life and will be far reaching and potentially long-lasting.

It is no secret that many businesses are facing new and developing challenges on a daily basis as a result of the pandemic. Although they are trying to survive the current landscape, thought also must be given to how they will face the uncertainty and recovery in a post-COVID world.

WHERE CONSUMERS ARE SPENDING DURING THE PANDEMIC



Just as we are all making changes to the way we live, as consumers our behaviors and buying habits are dramatically changing as well. As you might assume from your own purchasing patterns, e-commerce, click-and-collect and home delivery are experiencing major upswings.

GROCERY SALES ARE WAY UP, AS PEOPLE COOK AT HOME



Social media is becoming even more important, not only as a method to keep us all connected as we ride out self-quarantines and practice social distancing, but also as a primary tool for businesses to communicate with their customers.

More than ever businesses need to adapt. Now is the time to step outside of our comfort zones and embrace change with new ideas that are rooted in actionable insight.



REPOSITIONING YOUR BRAND

“Adaptability enforces creativity, and creativity is adaptability.”
– Pearl Zhu

Creatives will continue to do what they do best... You guessed it: **create**. It’s likely that the most successful brands during this pandemic will be the ones that embrace their entrepreneurial spirit and focus their creative muscle to innovate and inspire.

THE CREATIVE PROCESS

1

PREPARATION

Choose a topic you would like to study and reason(s) why you would like to study it.

2

INCUBATION

Write down all of the questions. Narrow your focus. Edit. Revise. Add more questions.

3

ILLUMINATION

Keep asking questions about your original topic that you would like to explore.

4

EVALUATION

Take a good look and determine if this the one you want to spend your time and energy on.

5

IMPLEMENTATION

Conduct your research and learning based on the questions that you chose.

Source: James Webb Young

Redefining boundaries and challenging conventional thinking may seem daunting, but for agencies like THE PHOENIX, it is our focus, not just today but everyday. Just as consumers are evolving the ways in which they access and consume branded content, brands/businesses too must proactively explore new methods and channels to deliver their messaging.

It is important to understand that 2020 is not lost. Although you may not be able to attend events or otherwise connect in the live space to conduct normal business for the foreseeable future, you can still effectively reach customers – and THE PHOENIX is here to support in this challenging time.

As we all attempt to navigate this “new normal”, we wanted to share some insights and perspectives to help you build out your playbook as you experiment with new ways to connect with consumers and market your goods and services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

THE CHANGING WORKPLACE

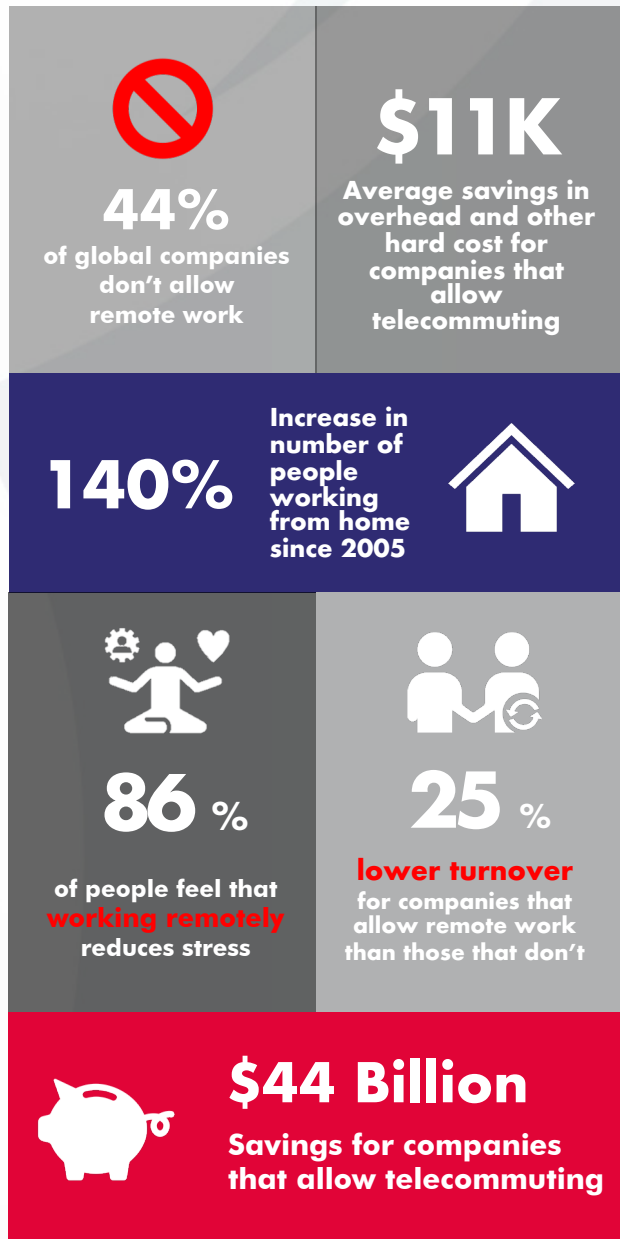
With shelter-in-place in effect across the country, your workforce and how you do business has likely changed completely. While the number of people working from home has increased over 140% since 2005, globally, over 44% of companies hadn't allowed remote work at all (OWL Labs), until now.

THE PHOENIX has leveraged an effective remote model since its inception. This has allowed our agency to recruit the best talent from around the globe and to enjoy the increased productivity that results from team members trusted to balance their work with their lives. While the idea may be daunting and challenging at first, the model can be highly effective, if implemented and managed appropriately.

After our current reality of shelter-in-place has ended, moving back to the office will be an adjustment and the newfound ability to consistently work from home will be in your employees' minds. As an employer, considering a flex schedule with guidelines will keep morale up. Eighty-six percent (86%) of people feel that working remotely reduces stress (FlexJobs) and minimizes the employee turnover rate. Companies that allow remote work have a 25% lower turnover than those that don't (Owl Labs). If that is not enough to sway the powers that be, telecommuting has also saved employers \$44 billion, an average of \$11,000 per remote employee a year from overhead and other hard costs (Workflexibility 2017).

Companies that make sound decisions to evolve to more productive, more efficient models, will thrive. Companies that resort to archaic models, rooted in a stubborn

sense of nostalgia for the past coupled with a lack of trust for their most valuable resource and an unwillingness to learn new strategies, will find it very difficult to compete.



SHIFTING COMMUNICATIONS

With uncertainty and anxiety riding high, people are looking for positivity, reassurance and a degree of normalcy anywhere they can get it. Brands play a critical role at shaping culture and trends through their communications and actions; and this situation is no different. How your brand communicates during this time, both internally and externally, will have a lasting impact on how consumers, partners and employees view your company or brand.

Internal

Your personnel are likely anxious about what may happen with their jobs and their lives. As an employer, empathy and transparency are absolutely vital. Tough decisions may have to be made, but how you communicate those decisions to them will make all the difference. Transparency is the number 1 factor contributing to employee happiness (TinyPulse). Your brand or company should consider evaluating every communication sent to your internal employees.



TO NE

EMPATHY IS PARAMOUNT. HOW YOU DELIVER A MESSAGE IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS THE MESSAGE



TEMPO

SHARE INFORMATION AS FREQUENTLY AS POSSIBLE TO KEEP YOUR TEAM UP TO DATE AND IN THE LOOP



TRANSPARENCY

OVERCOMMUNICATE, IF NECESSARY, ESPECIALLY IF YOUR DECISIONS AFFECT YOUR STAFF

External

Marketing communications geared toward consumers should follow the same guidelines as your internal communications, but the approach should vary slightly due to their public nature. People are anxious, scared and are easily influenced by information they receive. Many organizations are shifting campaigns from what planned and sometimes already deployed, due to concerns that pre-COVID19 tone and content would be viewed as insensitive or, much worse, encourage behaviors that are incongruent with social distancing.



ROLE

EXAMINE YOUR BRAND AND DETERMINE YOUR ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS.



REVISIT

CHECK THE TONE OF SCHEDULED SOCIAL POSTS AND CAMPAIGNS TO ENSURE MESSAGING IS APPROPRIATE.



REDEPLOY

MOVE QUICKLY TO PIVOT TO PROVIDE CONTENT THAT REFLECTS YOUR COMPANY'S CRISIS POSITIONING.

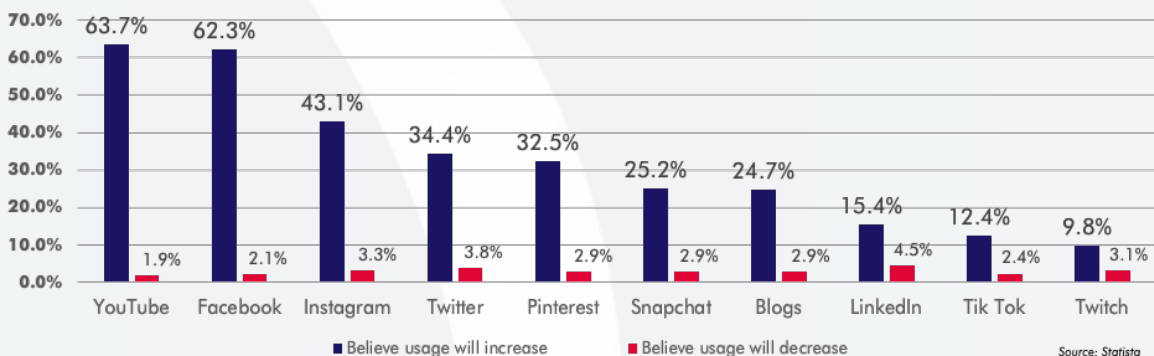
THE EVOLVING DIGITAL LANDSCAPE

While the current COVID-19 landscape doesn't allow you to be active in the traditional live space or effectively execute traditional out of home (OOH) advertising, you still have options. We are fortunate enough to live in an age where technology allows us to be digitally connected in almost every way. Determining what technology to use and what content to showcase on digital platforms is the next challenge. While THE PHOENIX is here to help you develop strategies and execute in case your brand needs help, there are several options available for you to use to get your brand started:

Social Media

Your brand likely has a Social Media Strategy in place, but what modifications are needed? Engagement is key to any Social Media program; and continuing that engagement is important, especially for Gen Z and Millennials who value brands with a relevant voice.

Share of social media users in the U.S. who believe they will use select social media if confined at home due to the COVID-19 as of March 2020



Get Involved With Virtual Communities That Really Matter To Your Consumers

Become involved with the passions of your consumers. Online communities, forums and groups have become a mainstay in the digital world. Having a voice and engaging in this space demonstrates that your brand wants to have two-way conversations with consumers rather than simply telling them what they should buy, especially Gen Z and Millennial audiences (INC.com). It also expresses more authenticity, which consumers are craving from brands.

Showcase What Your Brand Is Doing to Make an Impact in The Local Community

Whether you are employing local residents, doing charitable work or donating your products or services, your brand is contributing positively to the local community comprised of your consumer base. This is the time to demonstrate how much the community means to your company/brand. Whether it is a simple message or something more grandiose, just make certain that it is authentic and not self-serving.

CONTENT CREATION

Streaming

Right now, providing relevant content to followers and fans by streaming is a natural pivot to meaningfully connecting with your consumers. Use of Instagram Live has increased significantly as Brands, Influencers, Musicians and other creatives are trying to reach their audiences during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Prior to the pandemic, a study found that 80 percent of users would rather watch live videos compared to social media posts (LiveStream.com). Most notable is DJ D-Nice, whose simple DJ set blossomed in “Club Quarantine” garnering over 100 thousand views and the attention of celebrity personalities across all industries including Michelle Obama. Just as she brilliantly leveraged an influencer strategy to use D-Nice’s platform to drive voter registration, you can also identify influencers who are “brand fans” that embody your brand values for potential partnerships to promote your brand or products. Club Quarantine has garnered valuable content-delivery partnerships, including one with MTV that uses music to bring people together across social and traditional media consumption platforms.



Digital Content

With traditional television and movie production ceasing for the foreseeable future, people are craving new, original content. Three out of four consumers prefer informative content over an advertisement to learn about a product or brand (HubSpot). The lack of new movie releases and at-home produced TV shows offer a great opportunity to develop unique content. With the advanced mobile and digital technology, content can be created remotely.

Explore how your brand values, purpose and products/services can align with an influencer or industry for creating content remotely. Perhaps an on-going online series with a musician or artist to showcase their work? With fresh content that also demonstrates how to use your product or service, your brand will continue to be relevant with audiences and build upon your brand equity. Four out of five consumers end up with a positive view of a brand after learning about it via helpful content (HubSpot).

TAKING RISKS

As your teams are trying to determine what the next steps are for this year, it's important to consider all options. Many of those approaches will need to be unconventional. Although risk is often a word that tends to scare brands, thinking of new concepts as experimental programs for test execution allows for strategic implementation with ease. Testing new ideas at the appropriate scale allows for the ability to tweak before intentional, measured expansion.

What is certain is that the outcome of this pandemic will introduce a new way of connecting with consumers. By testing new models, your brand will be able to expand its toolkit to effectively reach consumers.

Whether starting a TikTok account, an app that had over 1.5 billion downloads prior to the pandemic (SensorTower), or partnering with an edgy influencer, it is important to dive in, explore and utilize your full marketing arsenal.

THE ROAD AHEAD

At THE PHOENIX, we are strategists by trade. We have been testing and tweaking new technologies and emerging media for years. We do this as a means to continuously evolve and improve how we effectively connect and emotionally engage with our clients' consumers. Challenging the status quo to create meaningful and relevant relationships between our clients and their target audiences is what we love to do. **It's our passion.**

The innovative strategies catalyzed by the current crisis that are created and implemented today, will shape the landscape of how brands interact with audiences in the future. At THE PHOENIX, we are proud to be your partner in harnessing the power of the emerging trends to customize solutions for your brand— not just for the current landscape but for years to come. Change can be scary, but it can also be exciting. This is not the time for fear, but the time for bravery in the face of the uncertain.

“Change can be beautiful when we are brave enough to evolve with it, and change can be brutal when we fearfully resist.”
- Bryant McGill

While these are certainly unprecedented and trying times, we will get through this **together.**





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