

Should your brand self-isolate during a pandemic?

 By Paula Sartini

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At this uncertain time when businesses are cost-cutting and marketers are being tasked with reassessing their marketing campaigns, many marketing departments are questioning whether they should continue with the planned advertising campaigns and risk being seen as insensitive to the current situation or go dark when customers are looking for familiarity and stability?



Photo by [Kai Filger](#) on [Unsplash](#).

History shows us that companies typically opt to go dark during times of crisis to avoid positioning the brand negatively. However, this approach does more damage than good. Rather those companies that continue with their marketing campaigns are viewed more positively and survive a crisis better than those that don't.

People have a personal connection with the brands they use regularly. During uncertain times they rely on these brands to continue with their marketing campaigns and keep communication channels open to maintain a relationship of trust. This is supported by a [Warc study](#) which found that during the Covid-19 pandemic, only 8% of consumers expected brands to stop advertising.

The relationship that customers have with brands is about more than a [transaction](#) and during a crisis or pandemic, customers are looking for an indication that the brands they support will continue to exist beyond the current challenges. Engagement with customers at this time should go back to three fundamentals: brand, strategy and customer.

Your brand purpose matters

Branding at its core is about connecting with people and this remains true during a time of crisis or pandemic. At this time it is most important for companies to live their brand purpose and for their customers to see this. The brand purpose reinforces the brand's reason for being and is the reason why customers connect with the brand on an emotional level.



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It is also important that companies remain true to their brand values and use this time to add value to their customer's lives. According to research findings from [Opinium](#)[3] during the coronavirus pandemic, people are looking for brands to keep communicating about topics other than the pandemic and provide escapism through topics that are relevant to the brand. For example, [Opinium](#) found that customers want business updates, advice on dealing with the crisis and products and services that may be useful.

However, beyond this, customers want to know that the brands that they trust are making a difference to the lives of the broader community including their employees.

Share your strategy

Your strategy is important to your company and your customers. This is particularly true when they are surrounded by uncertainty. At this time customers are worried about job security, illness and poverty and are looking at brands to share insight into how they are dealing with the pandemic and what they are doing to get through the crisis.

People are looking for good news stories amid the worry and want to know that companies have plans in place to protect the organisation, its employees and its brands. Customers want stories about new innovations, are looking for inspiring ideas from your brand and want to know how companies are making a difference in their communities and within the organisation.



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According to [Opinium](#) during at this time, customers want to hear from the CEO (30%) and frontline staff (37%) as they seek information about company strategy and want to know that the employees are being taken care of. This is supported by [Fabrik Brands](#) stating that customers want to see that you care about their needs as well as their employees and they are looking for evidence that leaders of companies are putting the needs of their employees first too.

Customers want to connect

Branding is about connecting with people and building a relationship of trust. While the way we currently do business has changed how we connect with people, the connection still remains key for customers. With budgets being cut and customers being inundated with information about Covid-19, companies need to find cost-effective ways to connect with their customers through the clutter.

Customers are looking for sincere, authentic brand communications from the brands they trust. While budgets might be tight at this time, connecting with customers doesn't need to be expensive. Simplicity and consistency in communications

are sufficient to keep connected with customers, providing certainty and making customers feel secure during these uncertain times.



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With many customers moving to email and online platforms to engage with companies, it is important that branding and messaging are delivered consistently at every customer touchpoint, from the email signatures and banners to the attachments included in email communications.

While marketing departments strive to keep brands connected with their audiences, automation technologies can ease the process and deliver consistent, on-brand communications in every customer interaction to help build a relationship of trust with customers are looking to maintain a connection with their go-to brands.

ABOUT PAULA SARTINI

With over 20 years' experience helping leading organisations overcome various business challenges, Paula understands the challenges that companies face in delivering a consistent brand experience and the impact this has on their bottom line. An analytical thinker that strives to solve business problems with innovative solutions, Paula believes that technology plays a major role in solving critical business and branding challenges. As such, she established BrandQuantum to help businesses overcome their branding challenges in the digital age.

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