

In demand: Bold new strategies for a brave new world

 By [Kelly Byrne](#)

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We are all familiar with the term 'disruption' and even more so with the phrase 'digital disruption' but what does this really mean? In the last few years we have either read an article, listened to a podcast or attended a conference where leading trend experts advocated how digital advancement would disrupt various sectors, from the financial industry to real-estate and the hospitality industry.



Photo source: bongkarn thanyakij on [Pexels](#).

As a result, we found ourselves frantically trying to catch-up and innovate practises to future-proof our jobs and businesses from the impacts of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This represented a fundamental change in the way we live, work and relate to one another – so much so that even our own president outlined plans for a new smart city in Gauteng during his State of the Nation address earlier this year.

Never let a crisis go to waste

In hindsight, while we were all focusing on the impacts of digital disruption, we completely ignored the question many in the health and environmental industries posed: When may we experience the next pandemic and is our healthcare system prepared to handle it?

We are currently in the midst of a large-scale population behavioural change. The world is suffering a collective burnout. Because of this, our established societal value concepts became outdated overnight. Take the media and marketing industry: trusted rules of advertising, media consumption and consumer buying behaviour were turned upside down.

Just last week, Caxton Magazines followed Associated Media and announced they too were closing the magazine publishing side of their business. Nothing, as we knew it pre-Covid-19, will ever be the same again.



BREAKING: Caxton's board decides to close its magazine division

5 May 2020



BREAKING: Associated Media Publishing closes its doors permanently after 38 years

30 Apr 2020



Every country in the world is feeling the devastating effects of this pandemic and to say we are living in challenging times is an understatement. But, they also say never let a crisis go to waste and there are, as always, ways to not only survive this crisis but thrive beyond it.

Consider these six tips to help your brand navigate the 'new normal':

Knowledge is Power

This is a time for brands to take responsibility and provide socially beneficial and educational content. This is the opportunity for brands to engage with loyal consumers and build a credible voice in their areas of knowledge and expertise.

Show that you know your customer

Customers value the reassurance of a familiar brand to give them comfort or help them in times of great uncertainty. They are open to more honest authentic engagement as they invite you into their homes. Brands can cultivate brand loyalty by showing understanding and empathy.

Sell very softly

Understanding your consumer's new experience; their frustrations, concerns, needs, and desires shapes your strategy to deliver valuable content and engaging edutainment. Provide content that is fun, informative, kind and that makes them feel good without overt commercial messaging.

Have a digital lifeline

Digital spaces are the only real way to connect with people inside the home. Instagram stories, chat groups, instant messaging, group video calls and online meet-ups are the new social occasions and real-life experiences. Finding a relevant role for your brand to play in these spaces is finding the brand's future.

Grow with the flow

Kantar research shows that 75% of brand growth is delivered through non-paid media touchpoints. This is as true in a crisis as ever before. Now is the time to think creatively about using influencers to amplify messaging on owned and earned touchpoints in a relevant and sensitive way. Influencers understand their audience and are uniquely qualified to create

authentic content on demand. Not only will they help your brand produce authentic media effectively, but they will give you invaluable insight into the concerns and needs of your ideal customer.



Which touchpoints deliver the most brand ROI?

Kantar 19 Nov 2019



Be the inspiration

Consumers are craving inspiration, new ideas, knowledge, and experiences to share. Give people solutions, tools, ways to connect with their family and their online peers. Give them opportunities to enrich themselves and get off their couch to discover themselves and their homes in a new way, and it'll be perceived as great content that adds value.

As people continue to adapt to their new way of life, including the new limits and boundaries imposed upon them, they are looking to brands to see where they either do, or don't, fit into this new form of existence.

The danger for many organisations is that, as the lockdown lengthens, consumers' connection with their old faithful and trusted go-to brands will begin to wane, so now is not the time for brands to shy away – it is time for brands to be bold.

ABOUT KELLY BYRNE

Kelly, is the brand experiential director at Positive Dialogue - an award winning agency at the exciting frontier of new generation PR. Experienced, results driven digital and experiential communication specialist. Kelly has over ten years' experience working across multiple local and global brands in the retail, hospitality, B2B, property and financial industries. Her clients included the likes of Adidas SA, G-Star RAW, Cotton On, and Capitec Bank.

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