



05.20.20

Brand Voice During COVID

SECO



THE SITUATION

The unknown is bearing down on all of us, for the foreseeable future. The best we can do is look back before we look forward and gather some collective insights and begin to plot our way forward.

We know this: People are holding their breath. They are looking to leaders, both political and business, to give some semblance of normalcy. The unsaid is as unsettling as the positive spin. ***But, people do look to people, brands and organizations they trust when their back is up against the wall. This is no time to rely on hearsay or conjecture - people want action.***

If we look to the stages of grief, we are done with the shock; we've collectively worked through denial; nobody really knows who to be angry with; and the bargaining became a state by state mandated decision. Dealing with a wide range of depression had become a national pastime as we move into testing our boundaries for workplaces, eating out, and generally getting out of the house. Acceptance is still a way off, but brands can do much to keep their audiences engaged and give them a sense of leadership to navigate what we are facing, collectively.

It's a confusing
time.

We can react,
or respond.

The COVID crisis caught us all off guard, and put brand's in a precarious place. The common response is "stop talking" and shut down until we see how this shakes out. But, people are home and listening - more than ever before. **The risk being faced is that the wrong turn of phrase could turn the public against your brand, alternatively a lack of communication or action from you could be perceived as a lack of concern.**

We've gathered some strategies for the near future.

A response "guide" for the foreseeable future. A step back to look at our collective voice.

We're all still talking. A look at media, the market and the message in this environment.

What's next. An outline for action.



A Guide

THE BASICS

IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU

YOU HAVE A CHOICE

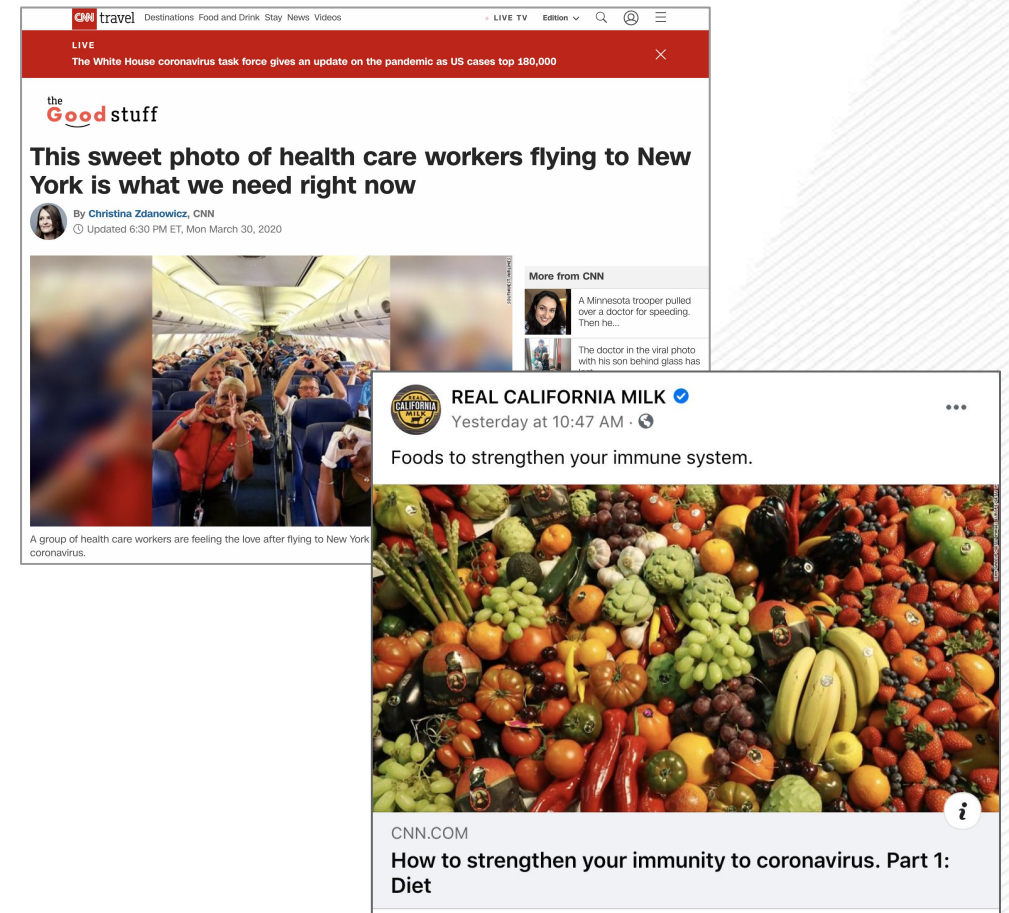
EVERYTHING IS LOCAL

ALLOW INVENTION

THE BASICS

This situation strips bare our character,
so too with brands.

What can you and your brand do, if
anything? **Look to the heart of your
brand's essence**, what is your core purpose
and how can that serve humanity? It's as
simple as that and should be represented as
such, one line that drives your vision.



IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU

It's not about promoting your brand, or your organization - it's just not. This, more than anything, should be your brand's mantra for the foreseeable future. The way in which you communicate right *now* will further define your good standing with your audience, or destroy it. Self serving, lead-gen type messaging will only come across as arrogant and tone deaf.

This should be the filter of every piece of communication: How does this serve the community, help the cause, or lower the stress level of those who rely on us?

"The uncertainty among citizens and consumers will put pressure on businesses across the U.S. and around the globe...A larger portion of advertising investment will need to be focused on building and maintaining a meaningful relationship with consumers rather than driving near term sales."
- Jason Kanefsky, chief investment officer at Havas Media



**IF YOU EVER
DREAMED OF
PLAYING FOR
MILLIONS AROUND
THE WORLD,**

**NOW IS
YOUR CHANCE.**

Play inside, play for the world.



YOU HAVE A CHOICE

You can lead, or you can listen. If your brand is not clear on its core purpose, if it isn't able to communicate selflessly thanks to the layers of approval or lack of shared vision - then simmer down and take a break. Listen to your community, your competition, and most importantly your clients chatter.

"And overwhelmed, stressed-out consumers may have a long memory for how those companies make them feel in this moment."

-Time, 04/08/20

SIGN OF THE TIMES

OOH — What an incredible role these three letters have played in our creative and media journey as we posted displays and messaging around the globe for a host of multinational brands.

Now in this unanticipated and unprecedented time, we applaud those who are staying at home for the health and well-being of us all.

We have an industry-wide offer to make. We'll prepare the production-ready mechanicals gratis for any outdoor company willing to post this message of love and kindness, in static or digital:

To all of you working in Out-of-Home.
Don't you worry. We'll all be Out-of-the-Home soon.



NEWS

GOODYEAR COMMERCIAL CENTERS OPEN, OFFER FREE DOT INSPECTIONS

By **Tire Review Staff**
on March 26, 2020

In response to the economic impact from COVID-19 and to help keep fleets on the road, Goodyear Commercial Tire & Service Truck Care Centers are offering free Department of Transportation (DOT) inspections, a value up to \$120.

These government-mandated inspections include a full review of the tractor and trailer, including brake systems, tires and wheels, exhaust systems, lighting and more.

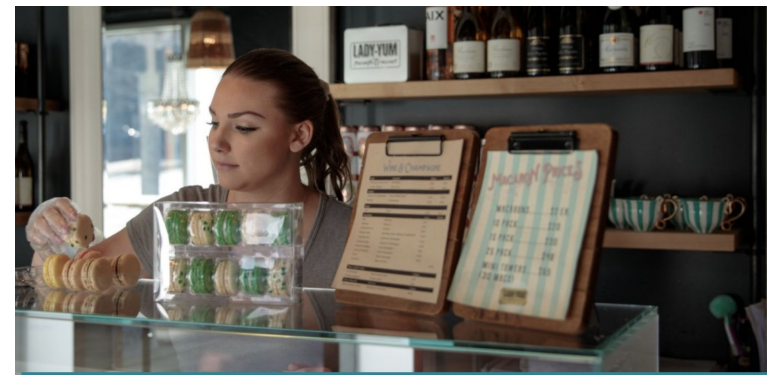
Additionally, in states that have issued "stay-at-home" or similar non-essential business closure orders in response to the pandemic, Goodyear Commercial Tire & Service Centers (CTSC) locations nationwide are expected to remain open to meet critical tire and service needs.

"Goodyear is dedicated to meeting tire and service needs for the many hardworking professional drivers, first responders and other essential workers who are making countless sacrifices to protect public health and safety and deliver needed goods during these difficult

EVERYTHING IS LOCAL

Brands want to make a huge impact, they want to shift seas - this isn't the right place to start. Start next door. Your actions might catch on, but they might just make a small difference - and that's ok.

The intent needs to be pure. The world doesn't need another uplifting quote from a brand - the world needs action, no matter how small it should be meaningful.



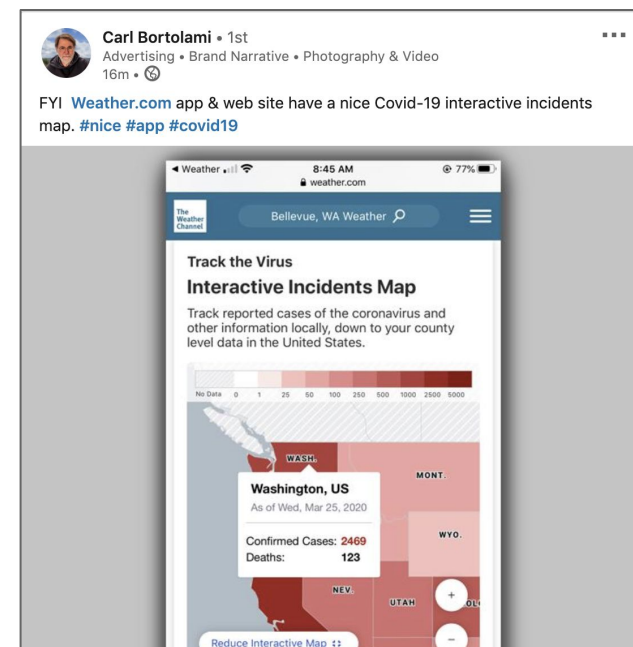
Job creation and investment

Amazon provides first batch of grants to neighbors losing business due to COVID-19

Small businesses near our headquarters invited to apply for help from \$5 million Neighborhood Small Business Relief Fund.

ALLOW INVENTION

This environment is when and where invention blossoms. Allow that. Ask everyone in your organization from top to bottom to rally around your purpose and consider how your brand can serve your local interests quickly.





We're all still talking.

THE MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

THE WORLD'S AT HOME

THE SPACE WILL BE FILLED

THE MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

The market needs strong brands lifting it up with their dollars - but more importantly their purposeful intentions.

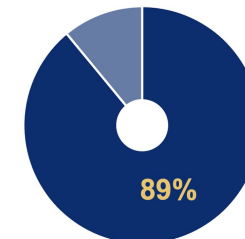
"In the aftermath of the last recession in 2008, ad spending in the U.S. dropped by 13%. Broken out by medium, newspaper ad spending dropped the most at 27%, radio spending dropped by 22%, followed by magazines with a decline of 18%, out-of-home by 11%, television by 5% and online by 2%." [Forbes Article](#)

1. **Right now, news is king**
2. **Radio is taking a hit with a lack of commuters**
3. **Streaming audio will rise with workers from home**
4. **Streaming video will grow as the news becomes exhausting**
5. **Online, brands are scared, and pulling inventory**

IN JUST THE FIRST FEW WEEKS OF THE COVID-10 CRISIS WE SAW:

- 30% decrease** in cost for digital media
- 25% increase** in week-over-week web traffic
- 250K new** Netflix subscribers in one weekend
- 12% uptick** in video streams
- Pay walls** came down, content was offered for free
- Connected TV** inventory increased
- Video steaming** subscriptions and usage surged

NEARLY 9-IN-10 ADVERTISERS TOOK ACTION WITH THEIR AD BUDGETS



Coronavirus has impacted advertising efforts

HOW has Coronavirus has impacted advertising efforts?

Held back a campaign from launching until later in the year	49%
Adjusted media type usage or shifted budget among media types	48%
Stopped or pulled a campaign mid-flight	45%
Paused all new advertising efforts until later in the year	38%
Cancelled a campaign completely (pre-launch)	34%

THE WORLD'S AT HOME

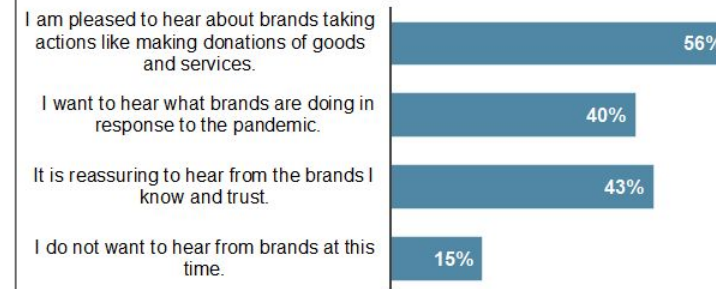
Isolation, limited engagement, anxiety - it's a terrible combination. But, understandable. How, as a brand, can you reach out, give them a window or a new way to engage? How can you help? How can media help?

As time ticks on consumers will be looking to build a stronger virtual community. A call for masks to be sewed at home, sites listing local restaurant delivery, nightly porch cheers and howls, recipe shares...every day there's a new virtual gathering. This is today's traffic online, these are the shares.

And, with your unique tools, what does your organization have that can enhance the lives and livelihoods of your employees, customers, partners and communities?



Consumer sentiment on brand communications during the COVID-19 pandemic



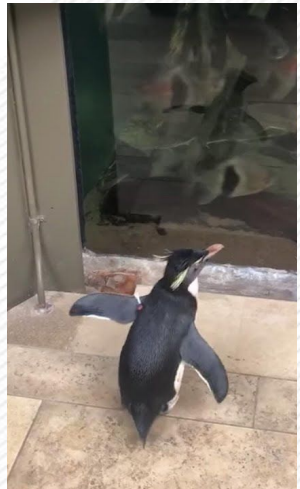
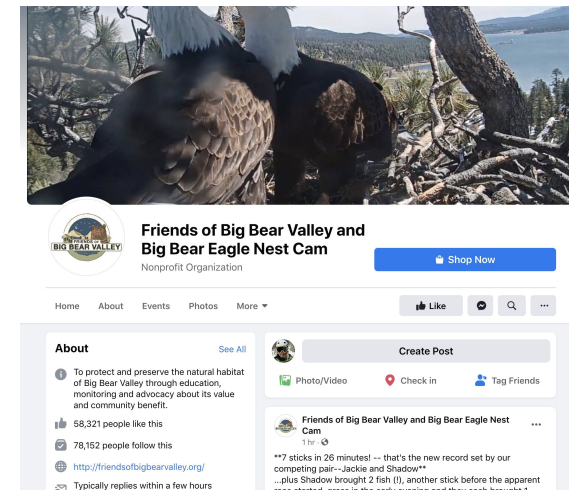
"Fifty-six percent of consumers are happy to hear how brands are helping out communities in response to the coronavirus pandemic, according to a [survey](#) of 1,000 consumers conducted on March 18 by the American Association of Advertising Agencies (4A's) and real-time market research platform, Suzy."

THE SPACE WILL BE FILLED

This environment creates a vacuum. That space can be filled with optimism and invention. It can also be taken over with Spammers and scammers who thrive in a vacuum.

We believe in the former. We can do this.

The stories that lift us up can fill the empty spaces and engage the optimistic voyeur in all of us. What's happening out there? Can I get a look into the outside world? Share zoo creatures running loose, watch eagles in Big Bear, and of course take in every single story about the heroism of our incredible health care workers.





What's next?

GUARDRAILS

BRAINSTORM, FORGIVE

NIMBLE, RAPID PROTOTYPING



What's next?

GUARDRAILS

The Plan

THE BASICS

Identify, and agree - what is your brand essence. What is at the core of your brand that serves the moment?

IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU

Make it company wide - lead through example

YOU HAVE A CHOICE

If you aren't quite ready - actively listen to your community. Gather concerns for them - things you can potentially affect. This list needs to be limited - help your team focus.

EVERYTHING IS LOCAL

Shoot small, identify the communities that most directly affect your clients.

ALLOW INVENTION

Encourage mistakes.

BRAINSTORM, FORGIVE

Everyone's a Problem Solver

PROMPT

Once you've gathered your focus, then communicate with purpose to serve your community at large.

Share these simple prompts with your team

1. Your essence/truth
2. Concerns - the short list
3. A list of resources available (what do you make, what expertise do you have, what access does your company have?)
4. Remind to think local
5. Encourage mistakes
6. Give them a time limit - a very short time limit

RAPID PROTOTYPING

Be Nimble

GO DO

"Perfect" is relative in this environment. Take your best ideas - pressure test them rapidly and look for efficiencies in implementation.

Look for partners-even if they're atypical or unusual for your normal business

Use your media channels - any and all of them

Celebrate collaboration