



A Marketer's Guide to Navigating a Rapidly Changing World



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Connecting With Consumers Through Advertising

Making advertising a connected experience is more important than ever before. Keeping teams and partners connected while new operating models are created is critical, as is making sure marketers connect with customers in effective ways. As we move from a first-stage COVID-19 to a post-first-stage COVID-19 reality, understanding where, when and how consumers will engage with advertising will be key to secure support and engagement. Determining the right direction for a brand requires much more than just on the short-term financial impact benefits that curtailing ad spend will provide.

In order to provide actionable insights to help marketers create advertising strategies that will resonate now and into a more economically challenged future, Adobe commissioned a survey of over 1,000 consumers in the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom through Advanis, the leading independent social research firm. The survey addressed ways in which consumers are now embracing or avoiding different messaging, content, and platform choices and how they will do the same in a potentially different future. Additionally, over 500 brand marketers in the same countries were also surveyed in order to compare their choices and strategies with consumer responses to determine where perception gaps are affecting decisions being made by brands and agencies around the world.

Choosing where, how and when to spend advertising dollars can't be based on guesswork. Data-driven advertising has always prided itself on being measurable and based on intelligent input and targeting methods. That's what makes it effective and efficient. By interpreting the survey responses and devising solutions based on the data, Adobe Advertising Cloud is simply doing what it has always prided itself on – using verified, third-party intelligence to drive results. Adobe is taking the guesswork out of COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 advertising by helping brand marketers build real adaptation strategies far beyond the simple "keep the lights on" message that has been inundating consumers since state-by-state shutdowns commenced earlier this year.

This evolving guide shares learnings and strategies for how businesses can keep moving forward. Most brands and agencies are undergoing rapid change and are confronted daily with questions of strategy that will have long-lasting effects on business. A choice that secures financial gain but is seen as tone-deaf may provide short-term cash flow but will surely harm the brand in the long run. Simultaneously, turning off advertising due to fear or insecurity could result in brands being lost in the shuffle, unable to win back customer loyalty. Finding balance is what will ensure success.

This report aims to help marketers evaluate the short-term versus long-term impacts of advertising in this landscape and provide actionable steps on how brands might choose to adapt their messaging and strategy in light of COVID-19 and the accompanying impact on the economy. Adapting through vigilant testing and measurement will be vital to achieving goals now and into the future.



Who: Consumer Segmenting and Targeting Is Critical

Unemployment and Health Matters Are Impacting the Potential Customer Base for All Brands

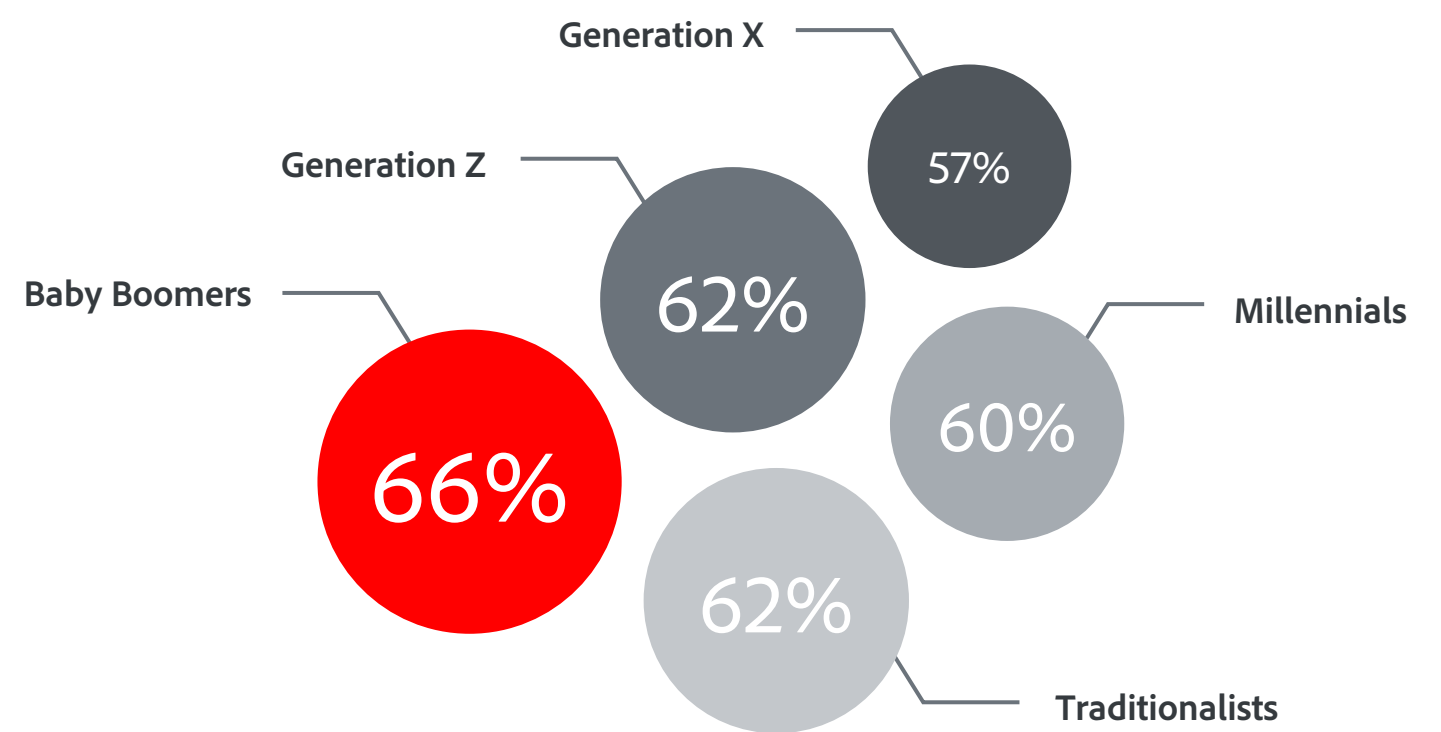
All good marketing should start with the customer – who they are, what their needs are, and how they can best be helped. In times of crisis, this customer attunement is not just a best practice, it's a must-have. Specificity in who a brand targets and how they're being communicated with is crucial in order to have a positive and lasting brand impact. Now is the time to ensure marketers reach customers with the best message for them, rather than focusing on volume of exposures and blind reach.

COVID-19 has not just affected the ability for people to be socially active, it has also impacted their pocketbooks, purchasing patterns, mindset towards advertising messages and much more. The individual profile in a brand's database that demonstrated regular purchases of premium household items and luxury travel opportunities may have been impacted by job loss or health issues, meaning that they are no longer a potential for marketers to target or engage with in the same way. Brands will need to know that information and learn it fast.

Brands that leverage a customer experience platform will have a distinct advantage adjusting to the new normal. Real-time purchasing patterns can be updated to profiles on a granular basis, keeping marketers up-to-date when choosing advertising campaign targets. By using data to understand individuals and the challenges they are facing, brands will be able to know what ads to issue and the sites on which to reach them. They will be able to manage assets, create site experiences and deliver ads that are completely connected from ideation through to execution and beyond. This will be vital if brands are to continue providing the kinds of brand engagements that consumers crave.

According to a 1,000 respondent consumer survey conducted by Adobe Advertising Cloud in partnership

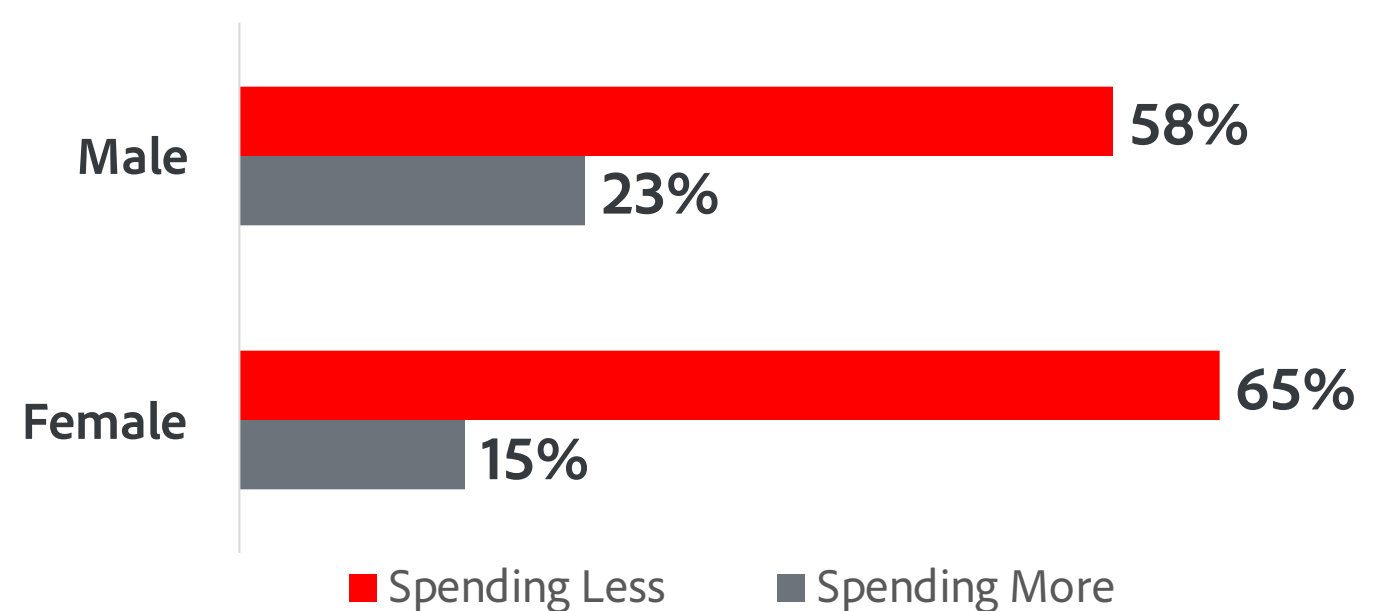
LIKELIHOOD OF SPENDING LESS BY GENERATION



How has the current health crisis affected your overall spending?

with Advanis from April 23-27, 2020, two thirds of respondents experienced a negative financial impact due to COVID-19. Younger people and those working part-time before the crisis have been affected most acutely, while the majority (61%) of national households have had to cut back spending to make ends meet. One-quarter of American households have cut back spending by a significant margin.

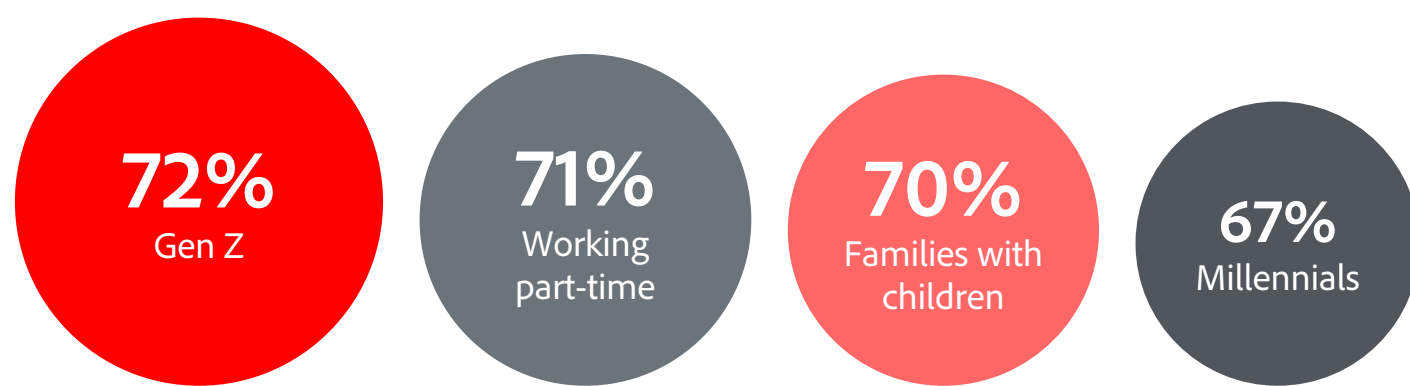
WOMEN MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO BE SPENDING LESS



How has the current health crisis affected your overall spending?

Financial challenge does not mean that consumers don't want to see ads. It just means that brands need to pivot creative and targeting to stay relevant. For example, previous advertisements or retargeting messages that pushed gift-with-purchase offers should change to discount offers. A struggling household will be more inclined to look at the bottom line when making decisions rather than appreciating add-ons that they don't immediately need.

MOST NEGATIVELY FINANCIALLY IMPACTED GROUPS



How has COVID-19 impacted you financially?

Despite the changes to household finances, there are windows of opportunity. Millennial men are one demographic continuing to spend – in fact, the Adobe/Advanis survey detailed that this group is spending more than they did pre-COVID-19. This opens up this demographic as a potential consumer group that are still ready and eager for brand messaging. Online spending has also increased, particularly among full-time workers and Millennials. Over 25% of Millennials are spending more than they did before the crisis, with that spend significantly shifting to online retail sites. Shifts in advertising that direct consumers to e-tail sites rather than offers in brick-and-mortar locations provide real benefit and value for brand marketers.

SPENDING MORE ONLINE THAN BEFORE



How has your online purchase behavior (compared to shopping in person) changed over the past month?

New Opportunities and New Challenges

Consumers don't want advertising to stop, they just want it to be adjusted to their new realities. If shipping is being delayed, BOPIS (buy online, pickup in store) offers will be valued. In fact, Adobe's Digital Economic Index analysis of BOPIS trends released in May 2020 showed that this delivery option hit a new record with an increase of 208% YoY in April.

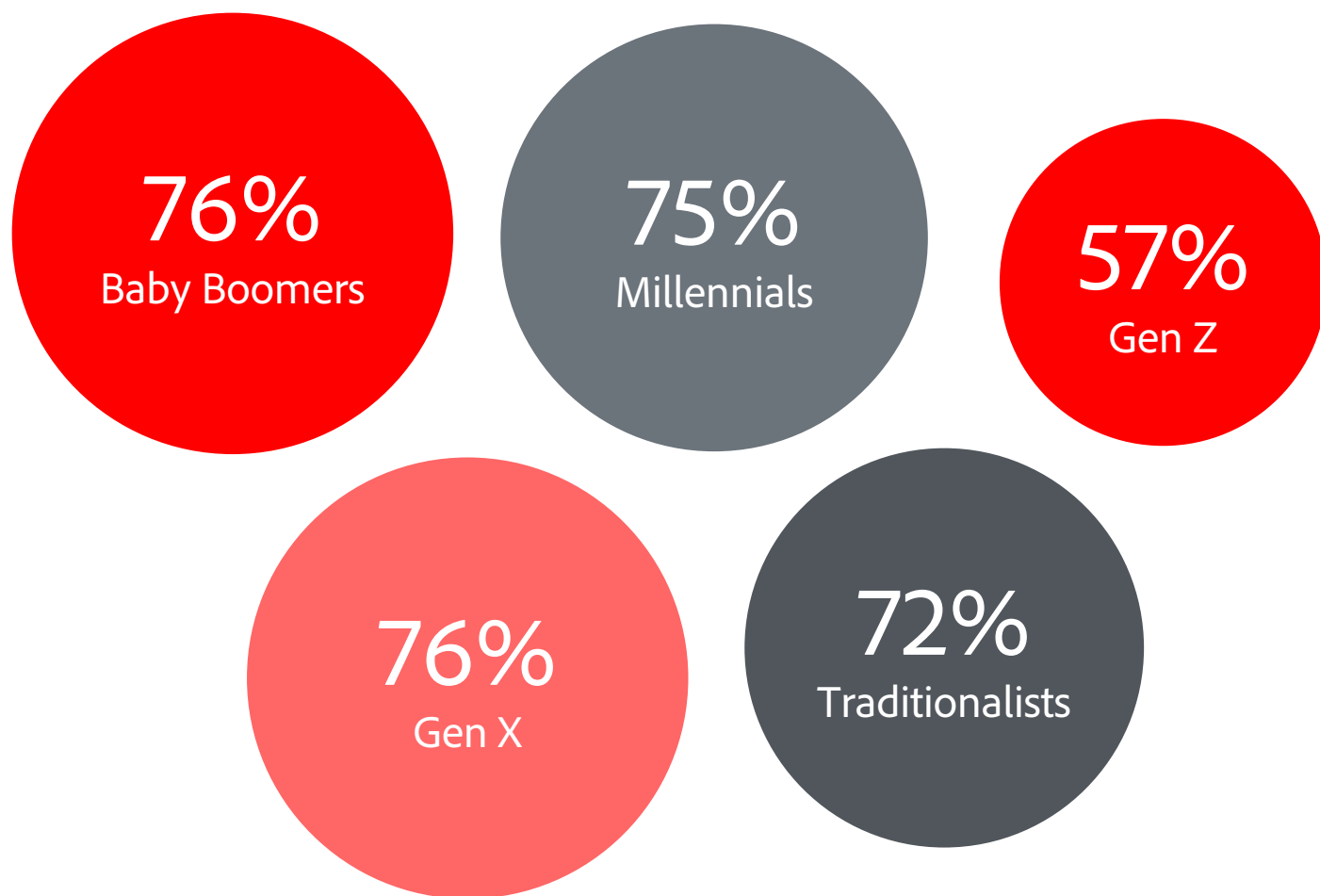
Most people are avoiding 'non-essential' or 'luxury' spending. If luxury brands want to continue advertising, they will need to be aware of changes to customer profiles in order to drive purchasing. Buying a luxury good will increasingly be seen as a 'nice to have' rather than a want, so brands targeting this sector will have to create strong sentiment through hyper-personalization and strict control of advertising inventory placements in order to ensure success.

First-party data is now critical for luxury marketers as understanding of the financial situation of the end customer is vital. Over 40% of Generation Z respondents aren't hesitating when considering luxury good purchases, despite 67% of luxury good or service marketers pulling back on advertising. Meanwhile, 1 in 5 consumers would develop a negative opinion of a luxury brand if advertised to during this new, more financially-constrained normal. This may seem like a mixed message, but the data is actually saying that while 20% of consumers really don't want to see luxury ads, Gen Z demand is growing. By shifting away from mass luxury advertising and focusing on the demographics that continue to embrace messages, possibilities open up for conversion. Get the targeting right and luxury brands have the opportunity to develop engaged relationships with a new generation of consumer. Get it wrong and they could potentially turn off 20% of their potential customer base now and into the future. As a result, real-time data and intelligence on individual customer profiles becomes more important than ever before.

67% of marketers say their company has pulled back on advertising luxury or unessential products

- Adobe/Advanis

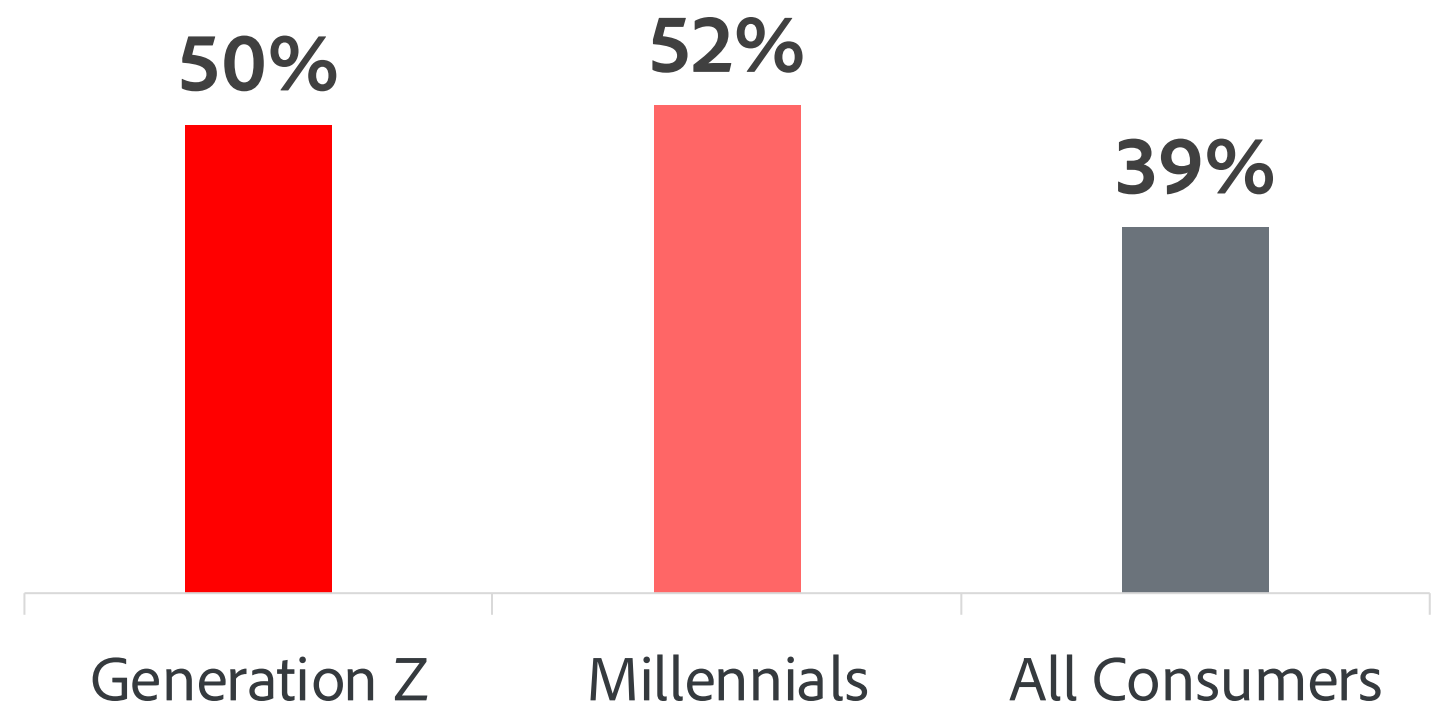
LUXURY GOOD PURCHASE HESITATION



I am more hesitant to buy luxury or unessential products at this time given the uncertainty of the world.

Many people are open to trying new brands at this time because of necessity, boredom, or the impact of advertising. Younger consumers (and those with children) are most likely to be willing to try a new brand, so all is not doom and gloom for new brands just entering the market. If a consumer sees that a product is answering a need, they will be persuaded to try it out – and may even be more receptive now as they search for brands to engage with. According to Adobe’s Digital Economy Index (May 2020) there has been an increase in products that make consumers more comfortable at home, such as a 143% increase in pajamas. We’ve also noticed a 459% surge in at-home creative audio recording equipment, (such as audio mixers, microphones and microphone cables, etc.).

CONSUMERS HAVE SOUGHT OUT NEW BRANDS



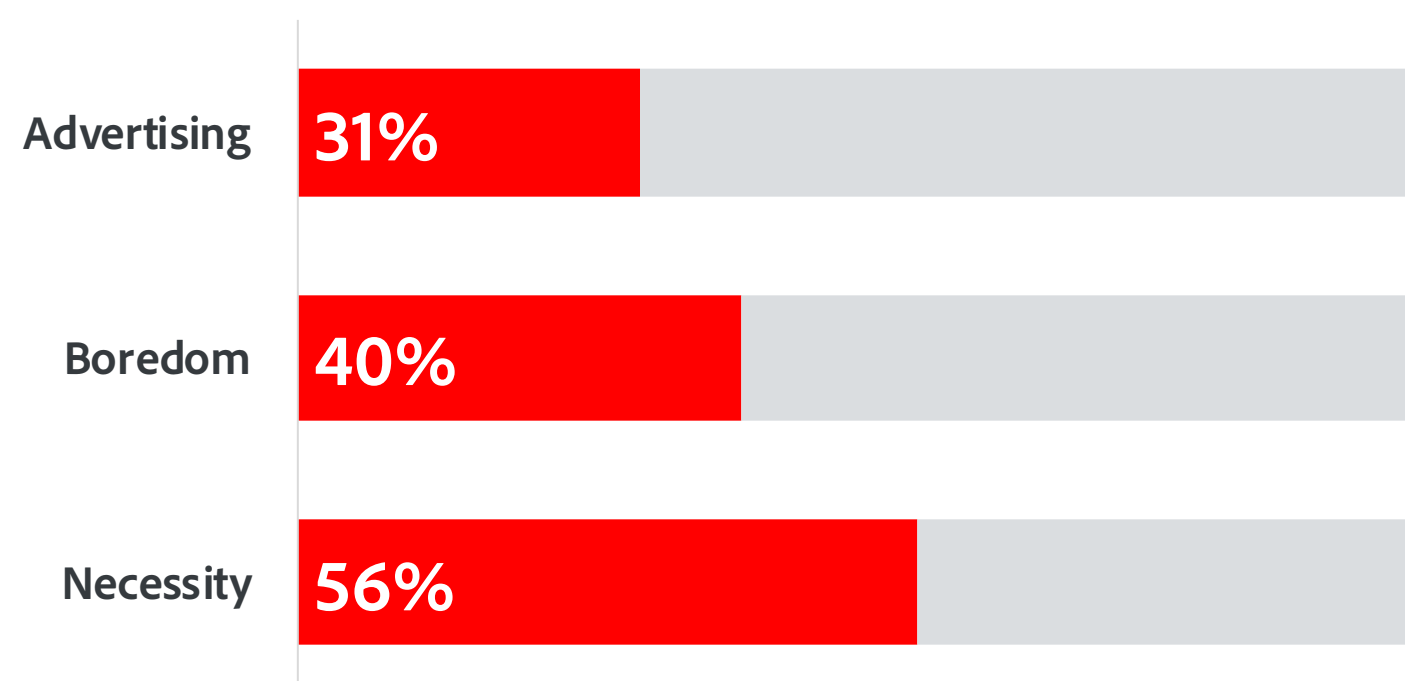
Since the COVID-19 pandemic started, have you sought out new brands or products that you would not have previously used?

20% of marketers are putting more focus on acquiring new customers.

- Adobe/Advanis

Younger families will be especially open to messaging that showcases clear benefit. In addition to the propensity to try new products, staying in front of customers through advertising is leading to more engagement and higher customer satisfaction as reported by many marketers.

WHY CONSUMERS WOULD PURCHASE FROM NEW BRANDS



If you have sought out or tried new brands since the COVID-19 pandemic affected you, what prompted you to do so?

Those who have had their finances impacted either very positively or very negatively, are most likely to seek out new brands.

56% of marketers have promoted new brands or products since the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Adobe/Advanis

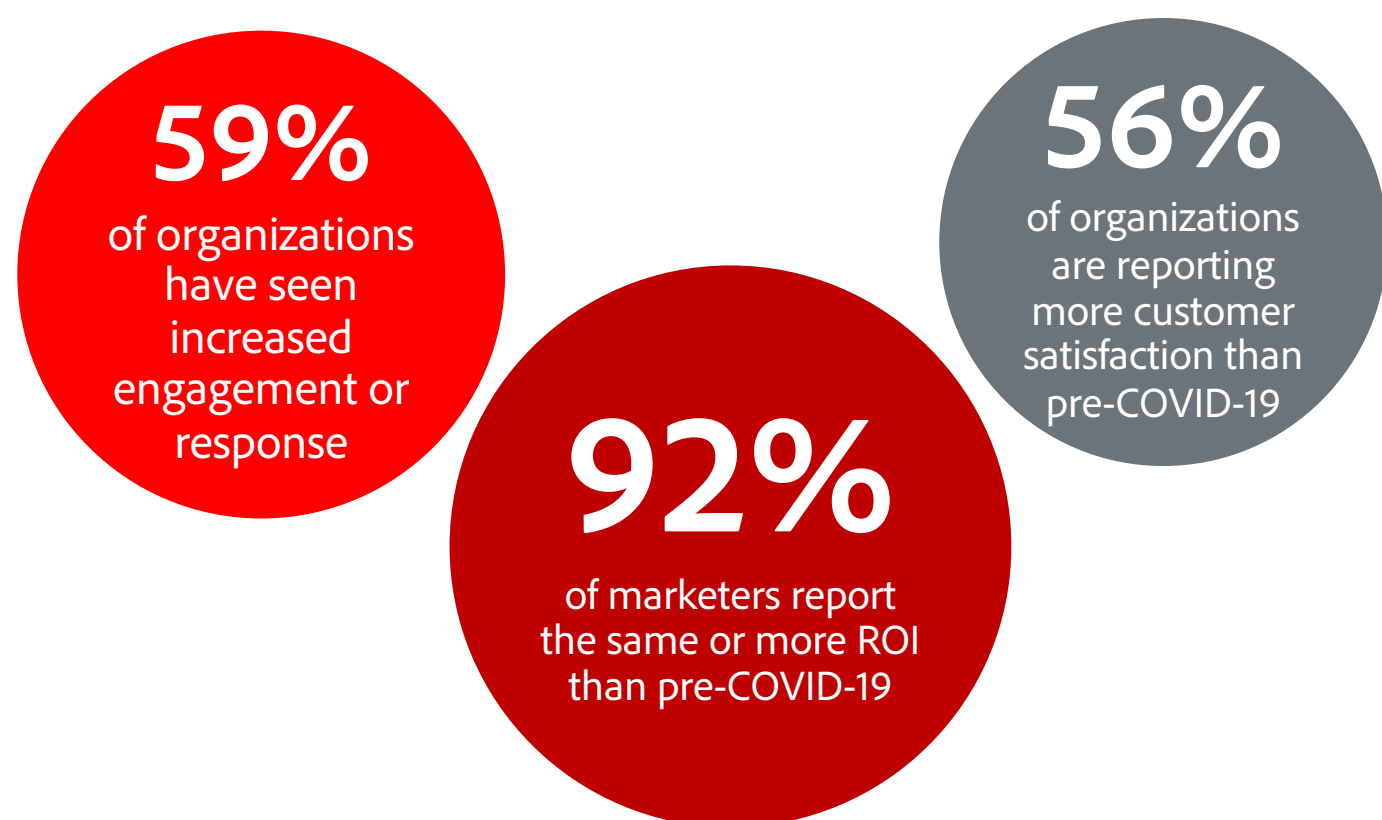
85% say that the positive experiences they have with brands at this time will make them long-term customers
- Adobe/Advanis

More Engagement

Six in ten organizations are reporting more engagement to advertising that responds to the recent health crisis. Only 4% of organizations are reporting less engagement than pre-COVID-19.

This engagement is resulting in higher satisfaction, and response to advertising, with same or better ROI.

MARKETERS REPORTING HIGHER ENGAGEMENT THAN PRE-COVID-19



How does the engagement or response to these ads compare to pre-COVID-19?

How does the ROI of these ads compare to pre-COVID-19?

How does customer satisfaction compare pre-COVID-19?

Customer Data Analysis and Segmentation

For many brands, site paths are changing with consumer behaviors, and real-world activities are moving online. As brick and mortar retail brands close shops temporarily (or even permanently in some cases), they are launching digital experiences to replace face-to-face consultations.

Successful marketers need to closely monitor site analytics and take note of what customer behavior is telling them. For some companies, customers might be looking for answers and support rather than typical conversion pages. Brands need to take note of these shifts, segment users accordingly, and adapt advertising strategy, messaging, and landing pages to provide a better customer experience.

Data types are not an either-or decision; third-party data can be a great way to augment first- and second-party data segments. Using different data sources can help enrich understanding of customers and the ability to create more meaningful, helpful experiences during a time when it matters more than ever.

What: The Messages and Models That Will Secure Success

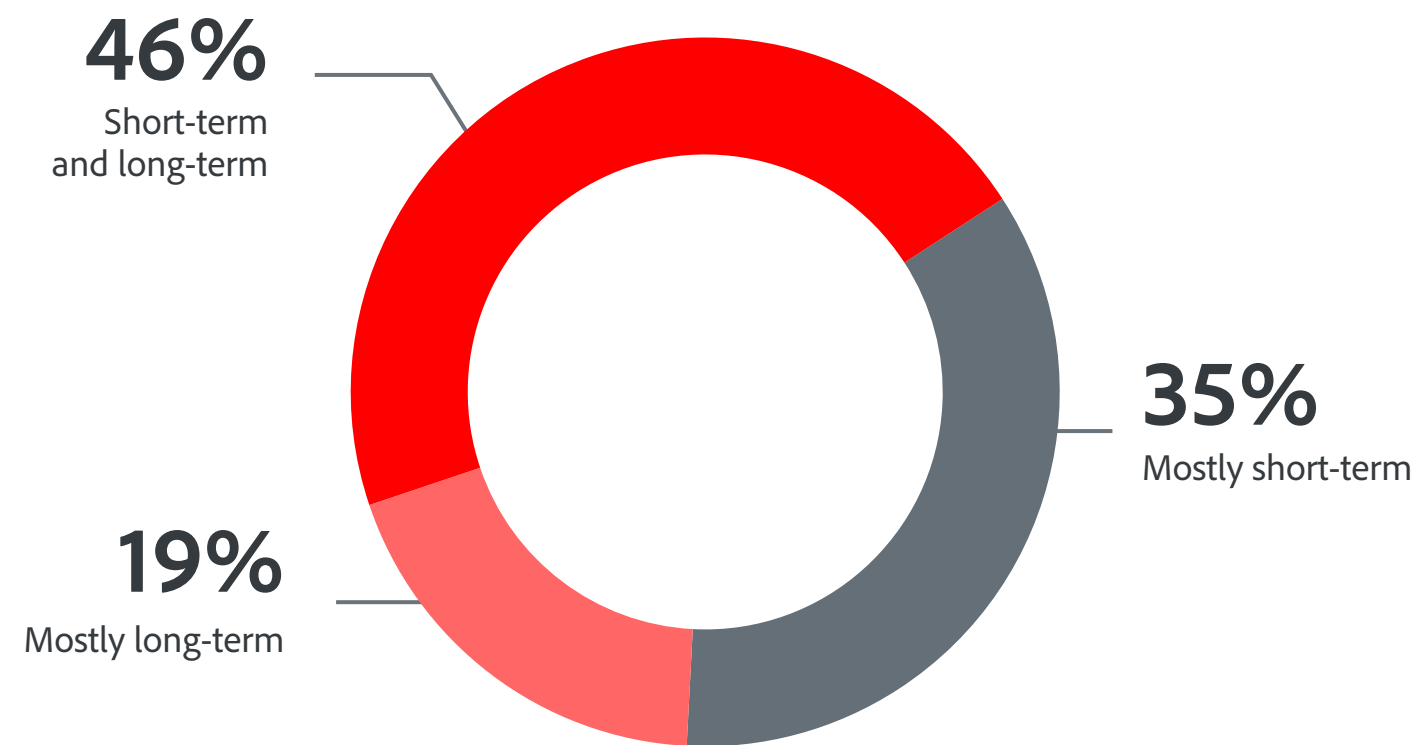
When Advertising Now, Think About What Will Work Today, Tomorrow, Next Month and Next Year

Cutting short-term costs might seem like an appealing option, but long-term success will be contingent upon staying in front of customers – even through these tough times. If done correctly, this is a period when brands can drive awareness and perception with long-term benefits that will outweigh the temporary impact to metrics Cost-Per-Acquisition (CPA) and Return On Ad Spend (ROAS).

Brands can be confident that they can continue advertising. According to the Adobe/Advanis survey, advertising that includes relevant product and service information is still valued, although most consumers appreciate a change in advertising tone and content. Agencies and brands that prioritize short-term planning

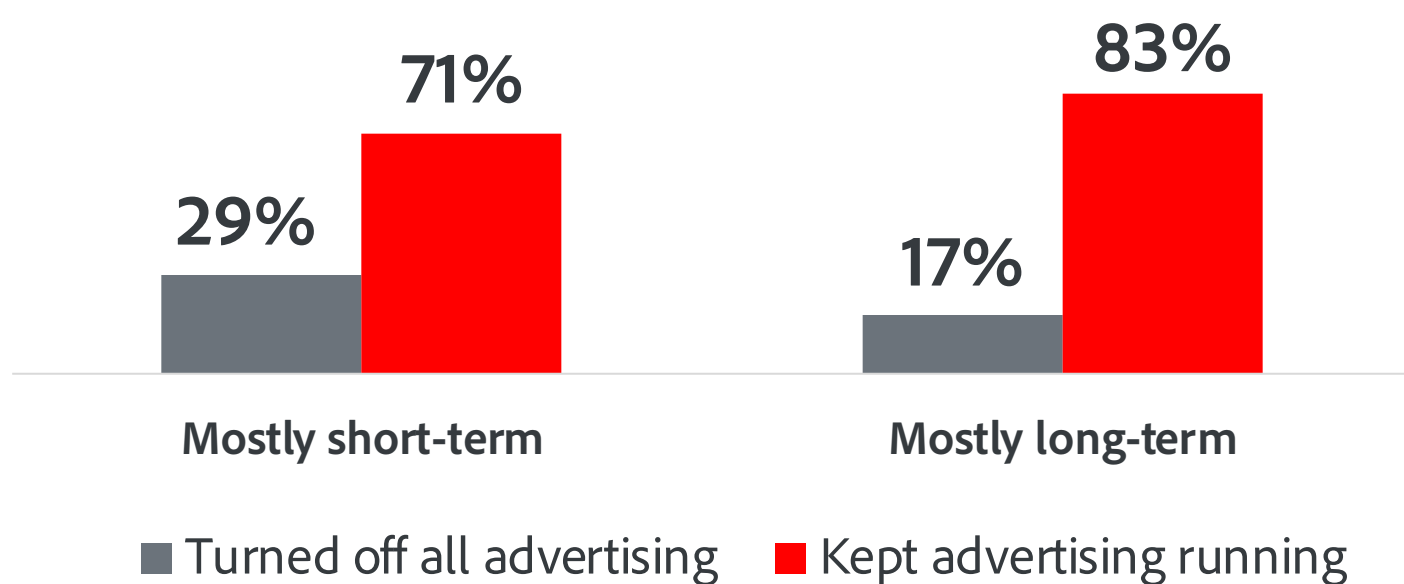
may be tempted to switch off advertising altogether, but that decision is ill-advised as consumers are still eager for relevant brand messaging.

HOW MARKETERS BALANCE SHORT AND LONG-TERM PRIORITIES



How are you balancing short-term (3-6 months) vs long-term (6+ months) priorities?

BALANCE OF PRIORITIES AND AFFECT ON ADVERTISING



How are you balancing short-term (3-6 months) vs long-term (6+ months) priorities?

How is your brand or agency responding to COVID-19 with advertising?

Marketers that continue to see the relevance and importance of advertising have responded to consumer demand, continuing to run ads, albeit with changes to content and creative. Of the brands that are still advertising, over 80% of organizations have changed creative as a result of COVID-19.

There is demand for another shift starting to emerge. Just over half of Generation Z respondents no longer appreciate brand advertising that expresses consumer support in light of COVID-19 and are ready for ads that

more directly offer messaging that outlines product use, value and benefit. This is despite almost 60% of marketers believing that consumers will be supportive of ads that acknowledge the COVID-19 and/or financial crisis in the content. Adobe believes that this is a reflection of the fact that Gen Z members are in an age group least likely to be affected by health concerns and therefore most eager to move forward with a post-COVID-19 reality.

Millennials, despite being just a few years older than their Gen Z counterparts are showcasing wildly different views, with over 60% taking into account a brand's COVID-19 response when making purchase decisions. This generation, which encompasses everyone from those just a few years out of college to preteens, are most affected by financial impact and are therefore most concerned by and interested in brand response as it relates to financial security rather than health and well-being. Moving from a period of brand understanding to one of offering brand benefit is advisable as consumers are starting to look for answers rather than emotional support. These answers could be in the form of new pricing, added value, brand benefit, or more.

The divergence in response shows that marketers have to know their target. If going after a younger clientele, continued focus on COVID-19 response will not reap benefits. Older consumers will, however, embrace advertising that addresses financial impact and offers solutions. One size fits all across generations simply will not work. According to the Adobe/Advanis survey:

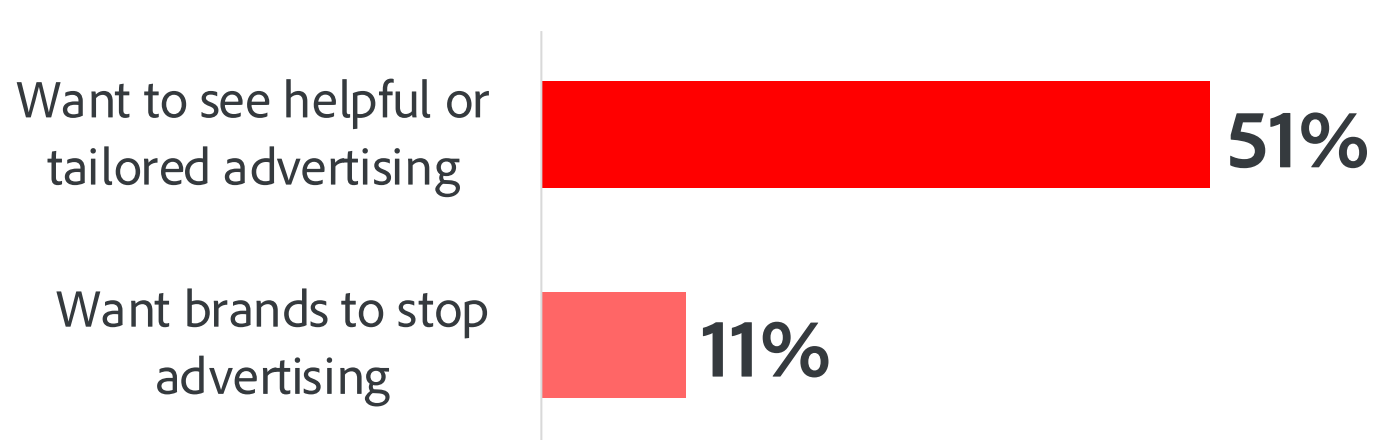
- 8 in 10 (84%) organizations have changed their creatives as a result of COVID-19.
- Half of consumers take a company's COVID-19 response into account when deciding to make a purchase. Millennials (63%) are the most likely to take this into account and Baby Boomers (42%) the least likely.

One additional disconnect that has been noticed is a belief among over 40% of marketers that consumers appreciate brand advertising to them at this time, regardless of the message. Advertisers that follow this credo may find themselves disappointed. While almost 90% of consumer survey respondents want advertising to continue, over half want those ads to be helpful or better tailored, with men specifically demanding this kind of information within any ads they engage with.

What consumers want to see in terms of advertising isn't always what brands and agencies have in mind. By focusing on the core benefits of a brand, marketers will be better positioned to succeed.

Only 11% want brands to stop advertising, although 51% want to see helpful or tailored advertising.

CONSUMERS WANT TO SEE ADVERTISING, WITH THE RIGHT MESSAGE



How should a brand respond to COVID-19 with their advertising?

Do you appreciate brands advertising to you at this time?

Additional insights from the Adobe/Advanis study included:

- Families with children are less likely to mind advertising.
- 1 in 5 (21%) marketers have turned off all advertising in response to COVID-19. 13% have turned off advertising due to brand safety concerns.
- 41% of marketers think consumers appreciate brands advertising to them at this time, no matter the message.

Since so much demand is shifting online, it seems to be to be a missed opportunity to not connect with customers, assuming brands can get the message right.

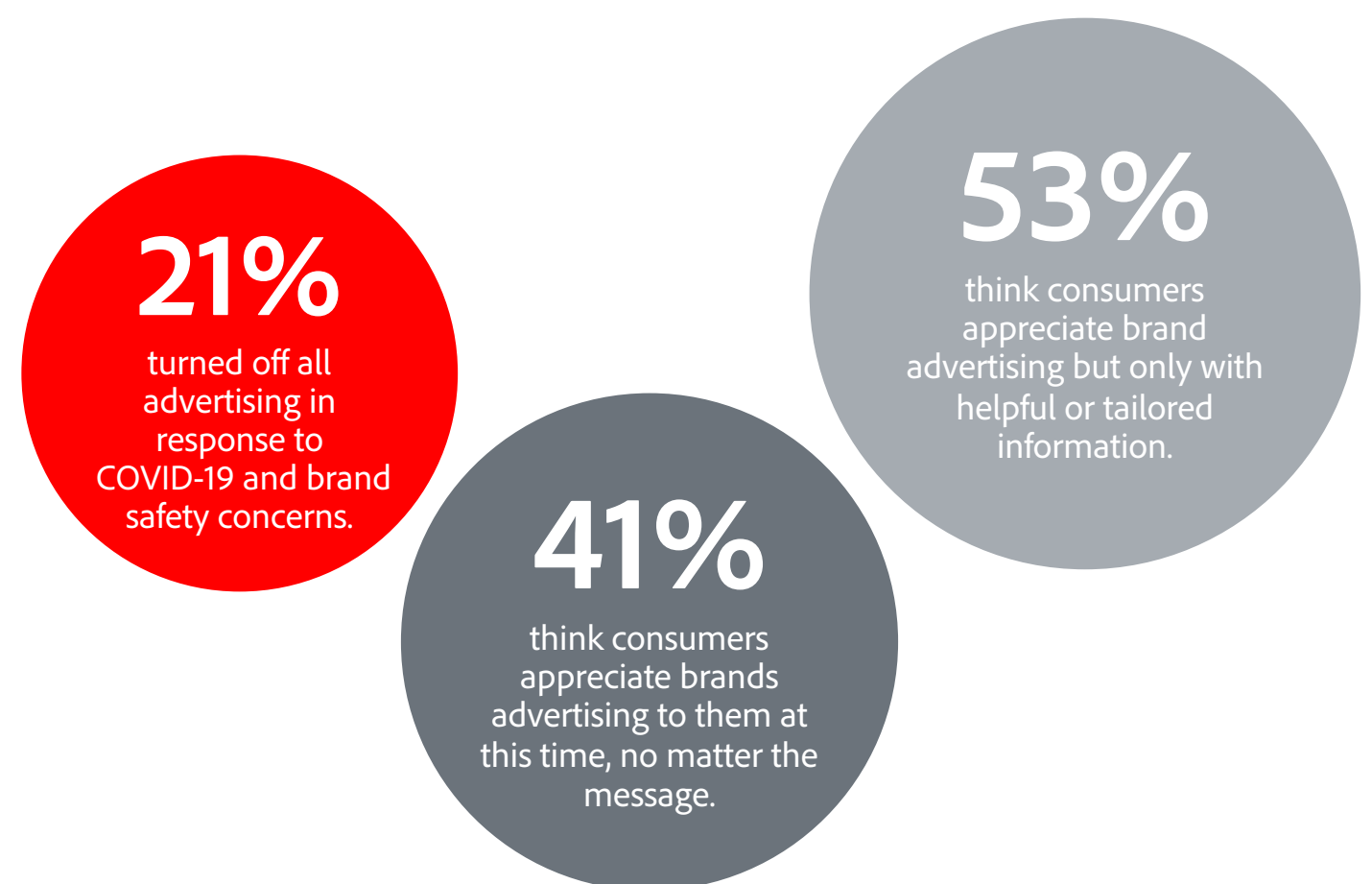
77%

of people want brands to provide information about products/services.

- Adobe/Advanis

- Men are more likely than women to say this. Generation Z are the least likely to say this (60%).
- 53% of marketers think consumers appreciate brand advertising but only with helpful or tailored information.

MARKETER REACTIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF ADVERTISING

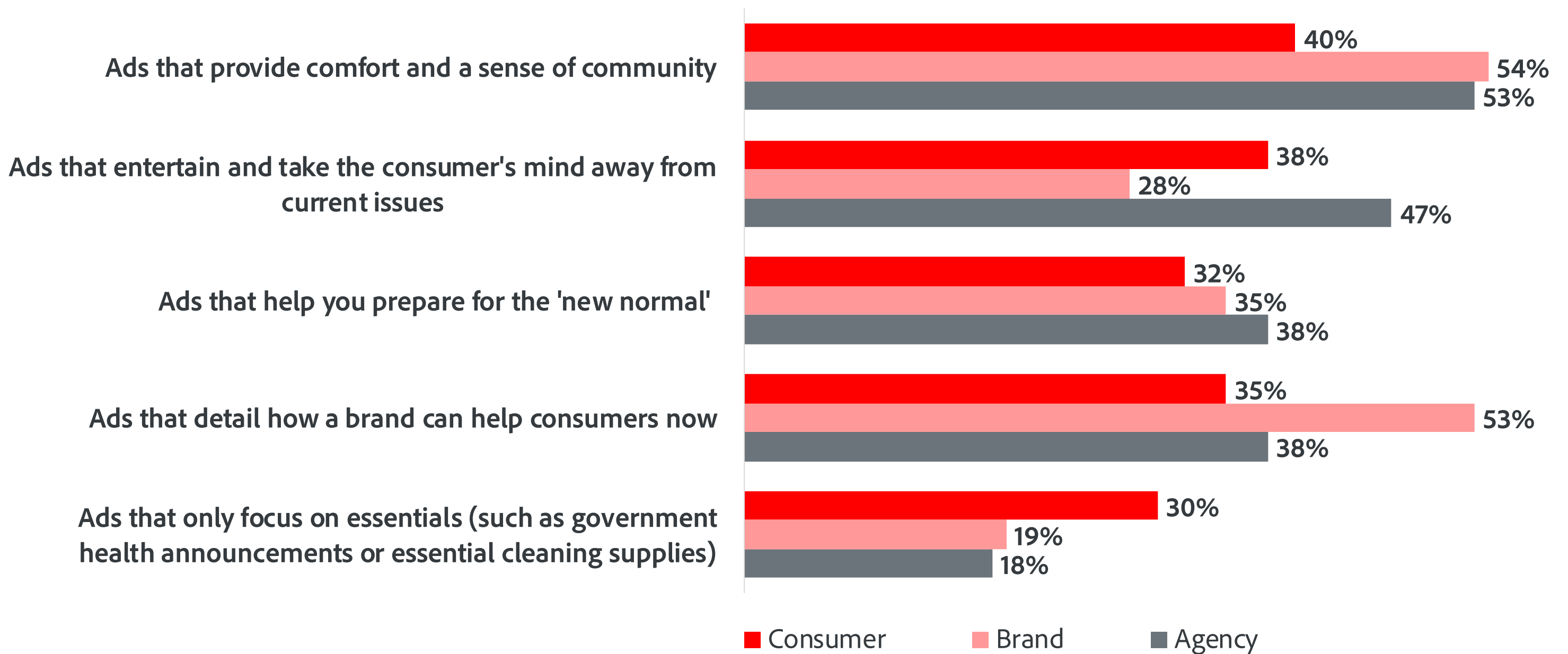


How is your brand or agency responding to COVID-19 with advertising?

Do you think consumers appreciate brands advertising to them at this time?

What consumers want to see in terms of advertising isn't always what brands and agencies have in mind. In the study, we asked consumers and marketers to rank types of ads according to their preference or their perception. Agencies are more likely to believe that consumers want distraction, while brands are more likely to believe in "helpful" ads. The top ranked type of ads by consumers were those that provide comfort and a sense of community. By focusing on the core benefits of a brand, marketers will be better positioned to succeed.

PREFERRED AD TYPES - WHAT CONSUMERS WANT VS. WHAT MARKETERS THINK



What types of ads do you think consumers are most receptive to right now? vs. What types of ads are you most receptive to right now?

Adobe's Digital Economy Index (May 2020) demonstrated that COVID-19 has driven a burst in online shopping. Overall US ecommerce sales were up 49% in April, while daily online grocery sales increased 110% between March and April. Electronic sales also experienced a surge, up 58%, and daily book sales have doubled.

The Adobe Digital Economy Index offers the most comprehensive set of insights of its kind, based on the analysis of over one trillion visits to sites and over 100 million SKUs. Adobe Analytics measures transactions from 80 of the top 100 U.S. online retailers—more than any other company.

"As online is absorbing the offline retail economy, some inflation is being observed for the first time in years, especially in categories that have consistently experience online deflation, such as electronics. Americans are used to things getting cheaper online, but that trend may be ending, and online commerce may never be the same. It appears that COVID-19 has accelerated that process." – Taylor Schreiner, Director, Adobe Digital Insights.

Other statistics to note, when determining potential target consumers include:

- **Record Month for Apparel Prices:** Prices for apparel decreased 12% between March and April, a rate 4x higher than what's 'normal' for this month. Apparel has seen 34% increase in sales as prices have dropped significantly. Consumers have shifted apparel purchases towards comfort: pajama sales have increased 143%, with pants sales dropping 13%, jackets dropping 33% and bras decreasing by 12%.
- **Digital Purchasing Power Rises:** Consumers continue to get more for the dollars they spend online. The digital purchasing power of consumers is up 4.1% YoY; which means consumers can now purchase goods for \$1.00 that would have cost \$1.04 in April 2019.
- **Wine and Spirit Sales Surge:** In the U.S., online wine, beer, spirits and accompanying accessories sales saw an increase of 74% between March 11 and April 21.

Be Agile With Creative and Messaging, Focus on the Positive

Messaging strategy and how brands approach creative should ideally change during this time. Watch, learn, and listen to continually update creative and messaging to meet the demands of the changing market. For example, have an internal standup every day to discuss if creative ads are still relevant. What's important today may be irrelevant tomorrow, and creative will need to adjust rapidly to reflect this.

Failing to closely monitor messaging in a time of crisis can be detrimental. Additionally, creative that follows a standard tone involving mournful piano music and messages about 'being there for consumers during this unprecedented time' ring hollow when repeated again and again or when they aren't backed up by actual deeds being done to support community efforts. If a brand promises consumer or employee support and then is found to terminate employees trying to strive for better working conditions, it will face trial in the court of consumer opinion.

Here's a checklist to ensure creative maintains relevance:

If creating COVID-19-specific messaging:

- Does the copy answer what the brand is doing to look out for your customers during this time? Or how the brand is helping or thinking about the larger communities that are affected?
- Does this ad provide useful information for safety, prevention, health, or services?
- Can the brand back up claims and statements with actual deeds?
- Can the brand provide concrete examples of how support is being given, rather than vague promises of support or desire to be helpful to consumers?
- Will consumers perceive proactive activity being done by a brand to be sincere or bandwagon-jumping to take advantage of these 'unprecedented times'?
- Does the creative differ enough from messages and

- creative being delivered by other brands – is it just more noise or is it adding value? And is that value being added to the customer experience or just to the goals that the brand is trying to achieve?

Generally :

- Is the ad well designed, and professionally created?
- Is it insensitive? (E.g. is it an ad for cleaning products that are hard to come by or is it a luxury item being targeted to a community experiencing high layoffs)
- Does this ad induce panic/fear in users? (If it potentially could, think again)

No New Creatives Possible? No Problem

Some marketers may not be able to swiftly produce new creatives right at this moment. This should not be a stumbling block. Brands can revisit past creatives to see if any will be a good fit. Creatives that have a proven track record of emotionally connecting with customer segments and sharing brand promises are ones to think about and prioritize. Not every brand message needs to be an explicit response to COVID-19; this is about reminding customers that brands are there for them in the ways they need today. In fact, if the brand has no overt relationship to COVID-19 -related challenges, shoehorning COVID-19 -messaging into the creative may be perceived as in bad taste. Only address COVID-19 if it makes sense to do so.

Where: Inventory Options That Work

Consumers are very emotionally connected to media right now – from reading articles for the latest updates, to connecting with friends and family, to watching shows and movies to pass the time. With this level of increased focus on media, brands should be thinking about how they meet their customers where they are. To successfully do this requires the right channel and inventory approach, the right frequency management, and the right context. While 'at-home' channels such as Connected TV (CTV) are seeing increased activity, it is important to ensure that different channel messages are coordinated and managed appropriately so as not to fatigue or annoy customers.

More Volume, Reach, and Trust Across Formats

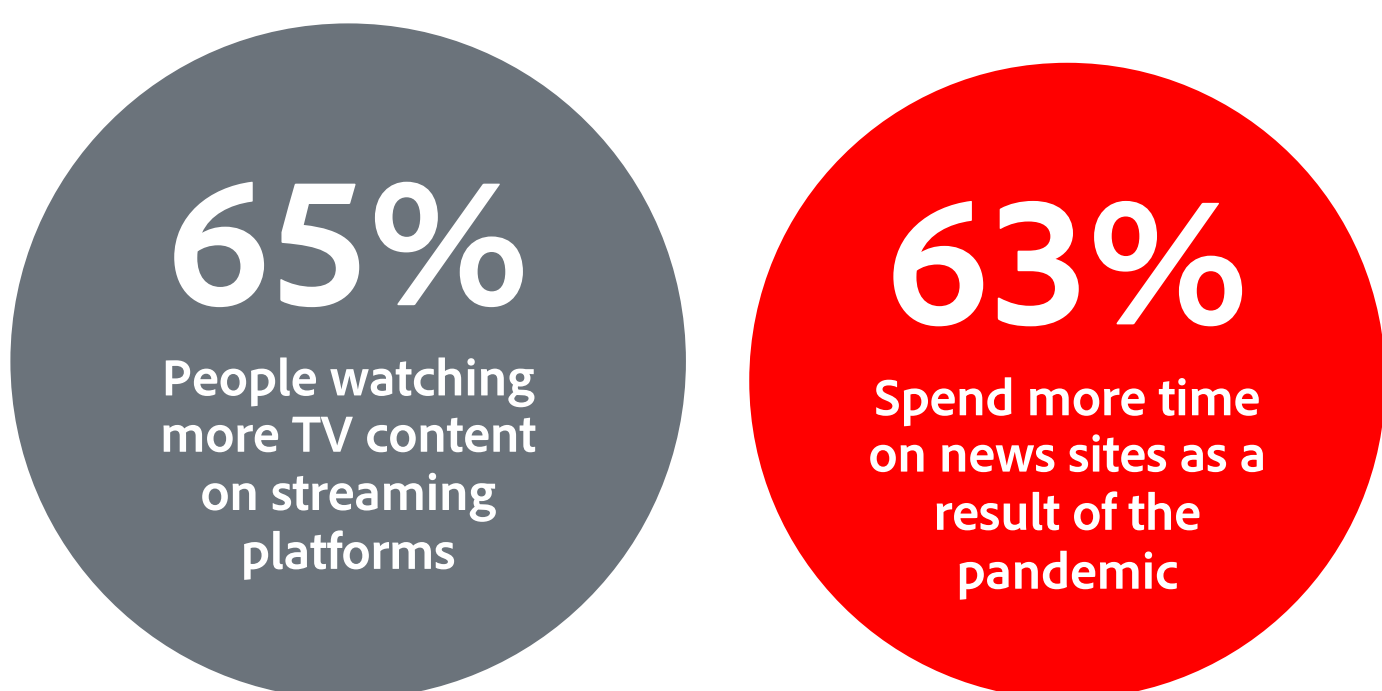
Increased time spent on media gives advertisers more economies of scale with regards to the inventory available, meaning more efficient buys. According to Adobe Advertising Cloud's auction data, digital channel impressions are up across the board, while also seeing CPMs decline, as much as 5-10% for advertisers when comparing February to March CPM trends for video and display.

Specifically, here's how auction volume is increasing:

CTV	Up 23.2% overall, with new peaks for TV during the daytime, during the week. Volume is up 32.8% from 11am-3pm, and 36.8% from 5-9pm.
Desktop video and display	Volume is up 11.4% in total with spikes of 28.3% from 5-8am and 11.1% from 6-9pm.
Mobile video	1.1% lift in mobile video, with a massive 16.7% increase from 3-6pm and much more activity in the gaming category.

* Data was compiled from two weekday snapshots, comparing auction volume on April 27 – May 1, 2020.

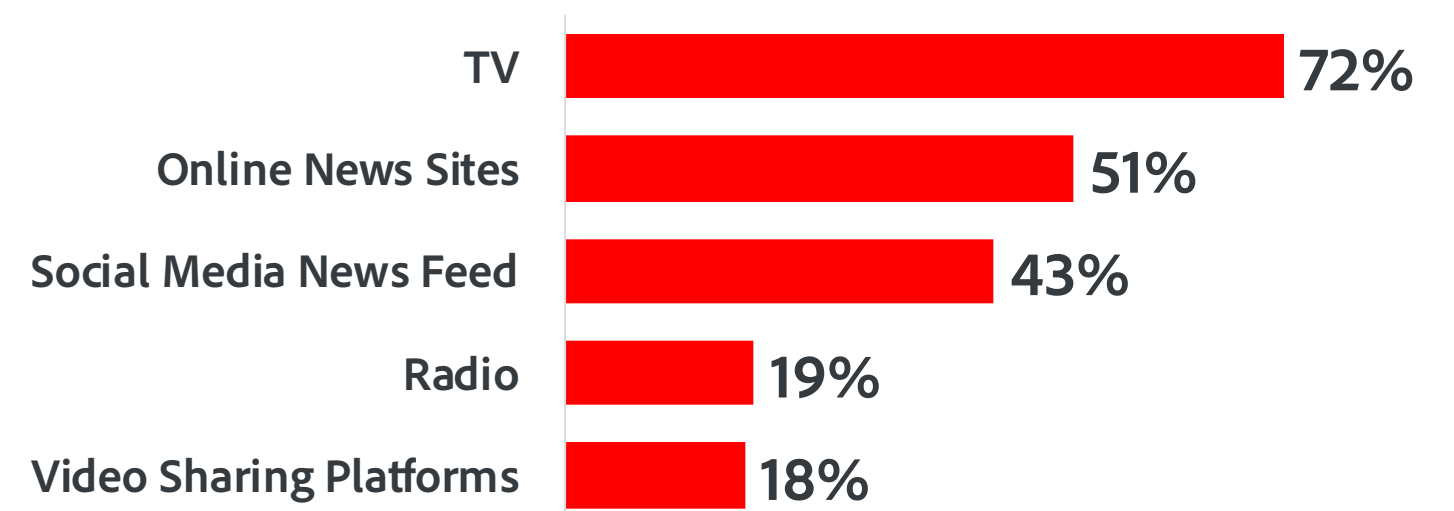
MOST PEOPLE REPORT INCREASED TIME SPENT ON MEDIA



Are you now watching more television content on streaming platforms as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

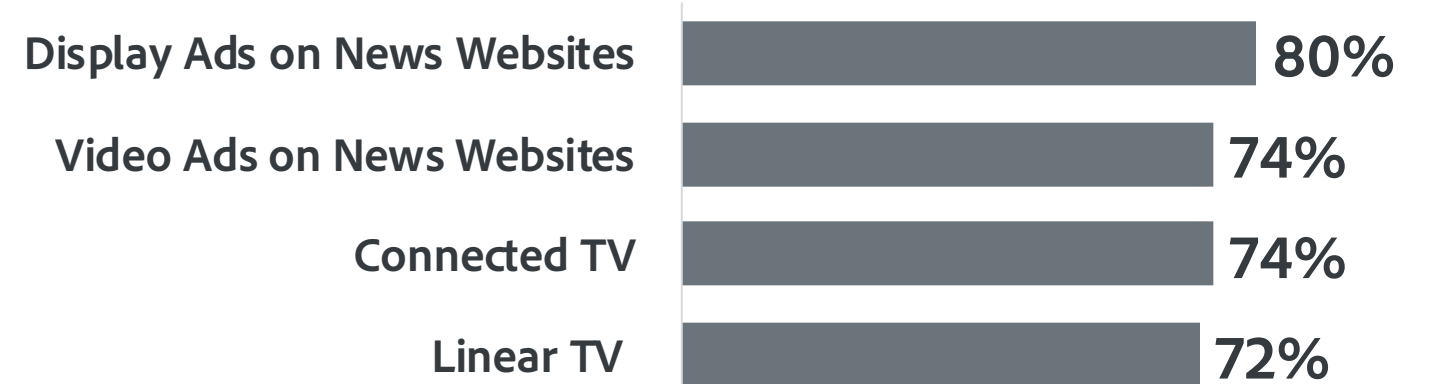
Are you currently spending more time on news sites as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

MOST COMMON NEWS SOURCES FOR COVID-19



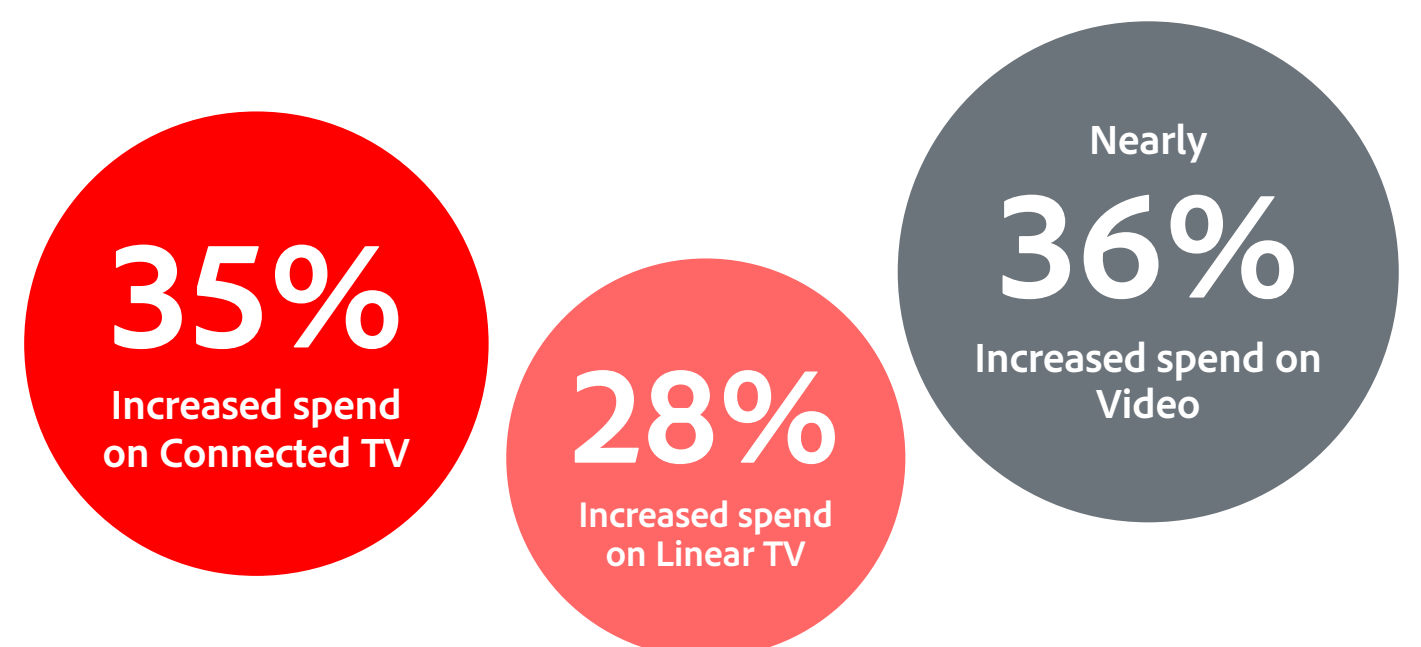
What type of media have you used most to learn more about the COVID-19 pandemic?

WHERE MARKETERS ARE ADVERTISING



We display ads on the following channels, potentially next to COVID-19 content.

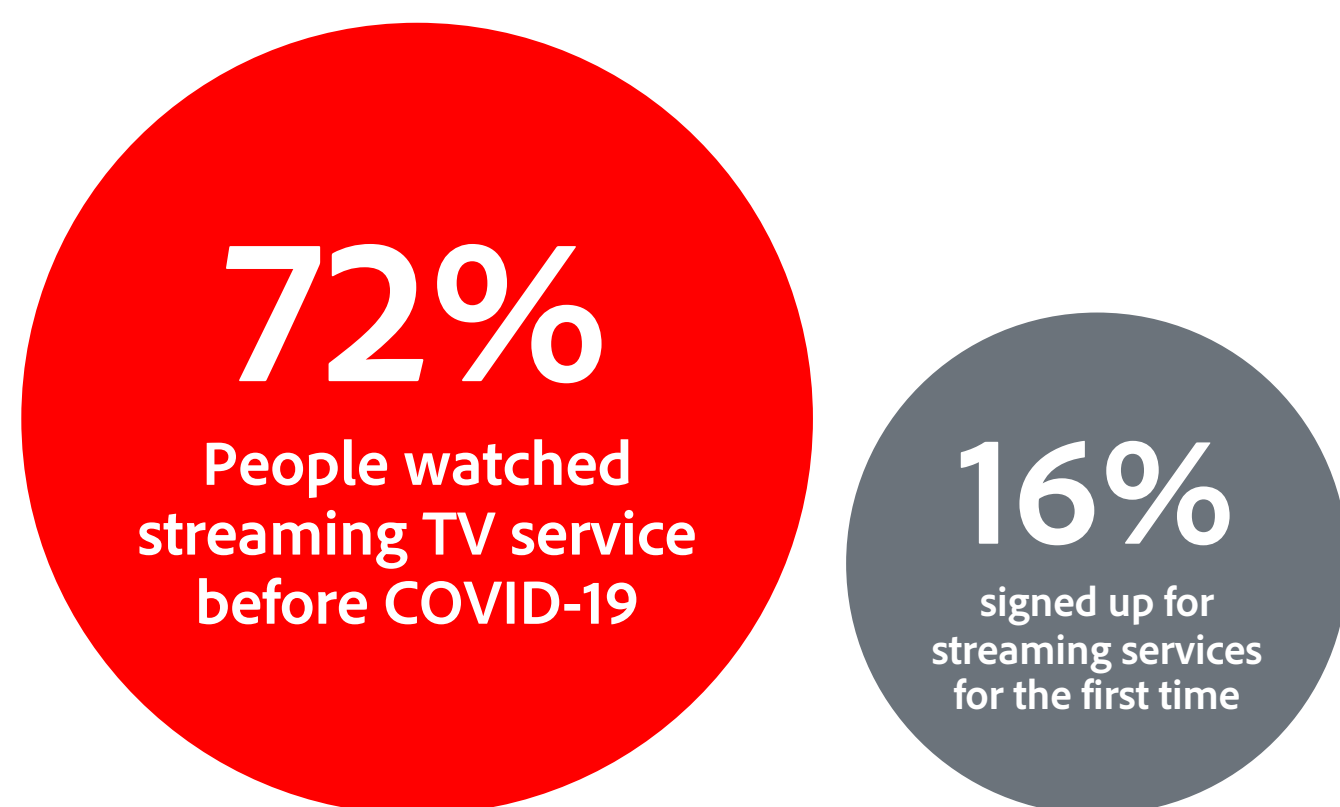
PERCENTAGE OF MARKETERS THAT HAVE INCREASED SPEND BY ADVERTISING CHANNEL



How has your advertising spend changed for the following channels since before COVID-19 (February)?

Consumers are turning to TV content to get through the time spent at home. Current streaming service users have added additional accounts, while new streamers have come online. According to the Adobe/Advanis survey, most people say they are watching more TV content, and spend more time on news sites, with TV and online news websites being the most common sources of TV news.

STREAMING TV SERVICES SIGN-UPS HAVE INCREASED



Did you watch content on your television or mobile devices using streaming platforms (such as Disney+, Netflix, Amazon Prime or Hulu) prior to COVID-19?

Since COVID-19, have you created new accounts to use streaming platforms?

TV partners are responding well to the shifts. Streaming services like Sling TV are stepping up by offering consumers free content, and Roku announced a dedicated COVID-19 channel for viewers to keep up to date with developing news. As wallets get tightened, these offerings become highly valued as consumers may need to cut back on subscriptions to balance household budgets. Services that support struggling households now will be first in line for support later when the economy bounces back. Advertisers who may have shied away from TV in the past due to budget concerns, may also find the format advantageous as TV rate card reductions currently range from 2-10%.

In times like this, consumers want content they can trust, and this trust is often placed in credible, premium publishers. In a study Adobe commissioned with YouGov and published earlier this year, broadcast OTT premium channels overwhelmingly shone through as the most trustworthy option on which to see an ad. In the survey of over 3,500 American consumers, Adobe found that consumers are more likely to purchase goods and services via ads on premium content channels rather than non-premium content like social feeds and user-generated content (UGC). The study looked at an assessment of seven KPIs (appealing, believable, credible, trustworthy, relevant to me, makes me want to learn more, and makes me want to purchase). Within this construct, video ads ranked 20%-50% higher in the context of premium channel properties compared to non-premium channels.

CTV is a high-volume way to reach audiences on multiple devices including tablets, phones, and desktop computers. CTV has advanced targeting capabilities, audience reach, and measurement so marketers can be efficient about buys while ensuring a positive customer experience. Marketers can leverage their DMP to reach target audiences, then measure reach and frequency to understand which apps drive the most efficient unique reach. Optimization decisions can then be made based on which apps are driving the most households to convert on-site and at the highest rate.

Display Traffic is Increasing with Premium Content Having the Highest Trust

Sites are seeing enormous traffic increases, in some cases as high as 60%. This means there's more inventory available at decreased rates. However, advertisers need to be strategic about where they're placing ad buys and, as with TV, premium content conveys a sense of trustworthiness.

61% of brands and agencies are more focused on premium inventory than before COVID-19

- Adobe/Advanis

In the Adobe/YouGov study unveiled earlier this year, Adobe compared the overlap of advertisers who placed ads on both UGC and premium sites and concluded that ads on premium sites offer better engagement. Ads placed on premium content channels were found to deliver CTRs of 4.5x and 2.3x higher than non-premium on desktop and mobile, respectively.

The data also revealed that the ceiling for engagement performance is significantly higher for premium.

- 1.58x viewable completion rates for desktop video and a 1.05x for mobile video
- 1.5x higher CTRs on desktop video and 3.8x for desktop display
- 1.18x viewability for desktop display and 1.31x for desktop video

Contextual and Geo Targeting

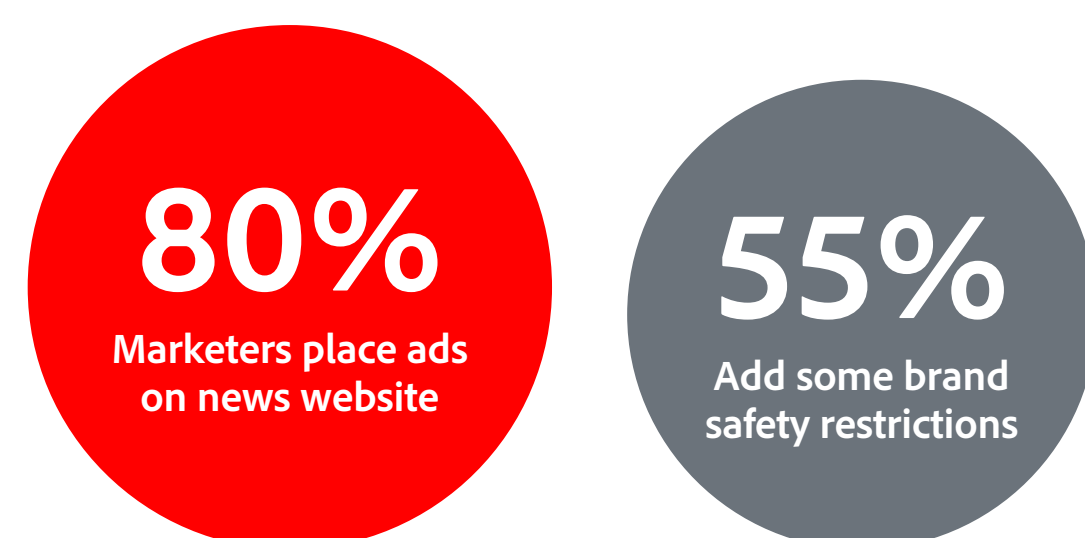
When it comes to ad placement, some brands are more comfortable than others when it comes to running alongside COVID-19 related content. While some younger people associate an advertisement with the content around it, few judge a company for choosing this ad placement. There is a strong perception that companies are "doing the right thing" for their customers and staff by continuing to advertise.

Advertisers that are concerned about brand safety may be misplaced with their concerns. It is always understandable that a brand's first move is to restrict ads from appearing against challenging content when sensitive issues arise. However, COVID-19 has been an anomaly in that arguably no other incident since 9/11 has dominated the news cycle as extensively. Unprecedented volumes of coverage have been dedicated to the crisis making it extremely challenging to source inventory that doesn't have at least a few negative keywords on the page. This, in turn, leads to a strong likelihood that connecting with customers becomes almost impossible.

This huge mismatch between ad blocking and the content that consumers want to see is causing issues not just by blocking large volumes of high-value, premium inventory from the strategies of many major advertisers, it's also having a major impact on the entire media industry and the ability for publishers to continue putting out quality content. Consumers want content that addresses COVID-19 and consumption rates of this content are soaring. But, if these pages can't be monetized it may result in publishers having to cut back on the kind of content consumers actually crave.

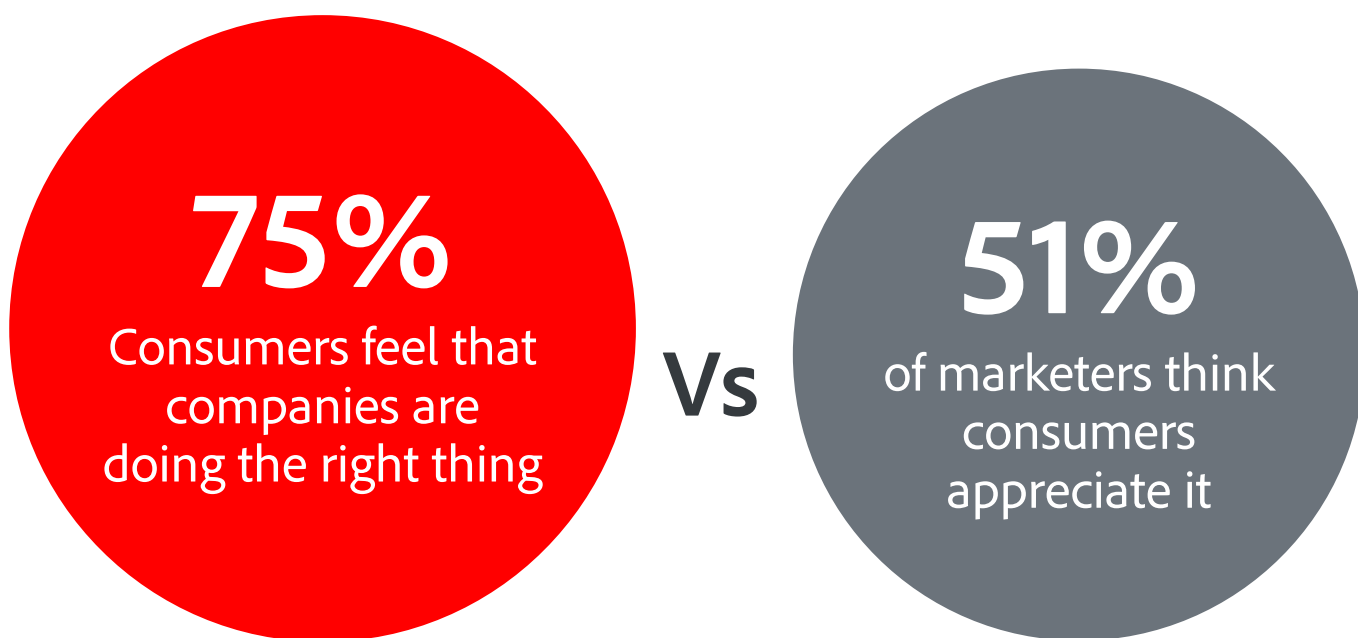
If an advertisement is placed on a news website, equal numbers say they do OR do not associate the brand with the news content. According to the Adobe/Advanis survey, Baby Boomers (36%) and Traditionalists (23%) are the least likely to associate a brand with the news on the site.

MARKETERS ARE ADVERTISING ON COVID-RELATED CONTENT WITH SOME BRAND SAFETY RESTRICTIONS



We display ads on news websites, potentially next to COVID-19 content.

PERCEPTION OF ADS PLACED NEAR COVID-19 CONTENT



How do you think consumers feel about other brands and agencies placing advertisements next to COVID-19 content?

When I see an advertisement next to COVID-19, I feel the brand is..

The choice is ultimately up to the brand and their understanding of how your customers may respond. Luxury brands may need to be especially cautious with brand placement due to sensitivities around having a big-ticket, non-essential product or brand placed alongside challenging or difficult messaging. There is a strong risk that the brand will be perceived as tone deaf and impact could be strongly negative. Everyday or 'essential' brands will, however, be given the benefit of the doubt according to survey respondents and may want to take advantage of the opportunities that premium inventory placements offer, considering the lower costs involved at present.

How: Ways to Continue Advertising Effectively

Be Authentic and Nimble

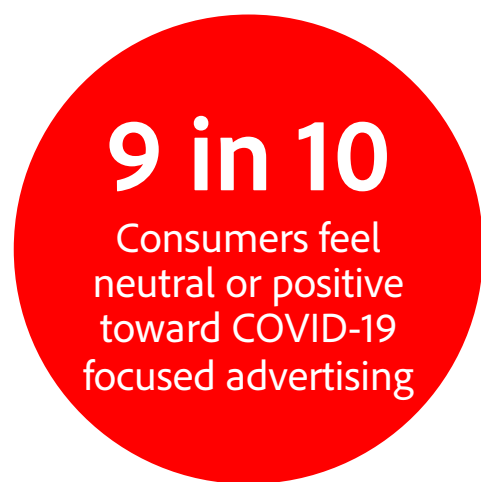
COVID-19 is causing minute-by-minute change, making it hard to predict what tomorrow will look like, let alone next week. The advertisers who excel during this time are the ones who will remain true to their brand and values while also being nimble in making necessary changes to their creative and messaging.

In the IDC's recent commentary*, they recommend three specific actions to bring authenticity, and empathy into communications:

- **Keep it simple** – Now is not the time for complicated messages. Be very clear about what is being said.
- **Be proactive** – Don't wait for the customer to ask what a brand is doing about the crisis or how they are being supported. If there are concerns about joining a COVID-19 bandwagon in terms of messaging, then proactivity can be in the form of maintaining engagement through special offers or thank you's to customers as they try and adjust to new realities. If a customer has consistently supported a brand, now is the time for a brand to proactively support them through a free item or special voucher.
- **Communicate what the brand is doing** – The worst thing is for a customer to be surprised, so keep them in the loop with how things are evolving. This can be evolution of staff levels, inventory availability, shipping delays or anything else that keeps them involved and engaged. Put a face to the brand by highlighting the people delivering goods and services to them. Now, more than ever, consumers will want to know that their purchasing power is supporting real people who care about what they provide and the consumers they are servicing.

** IDC Report: Responding to COVID-19: An Evolving Playbook for Customer Experience, March 2020*

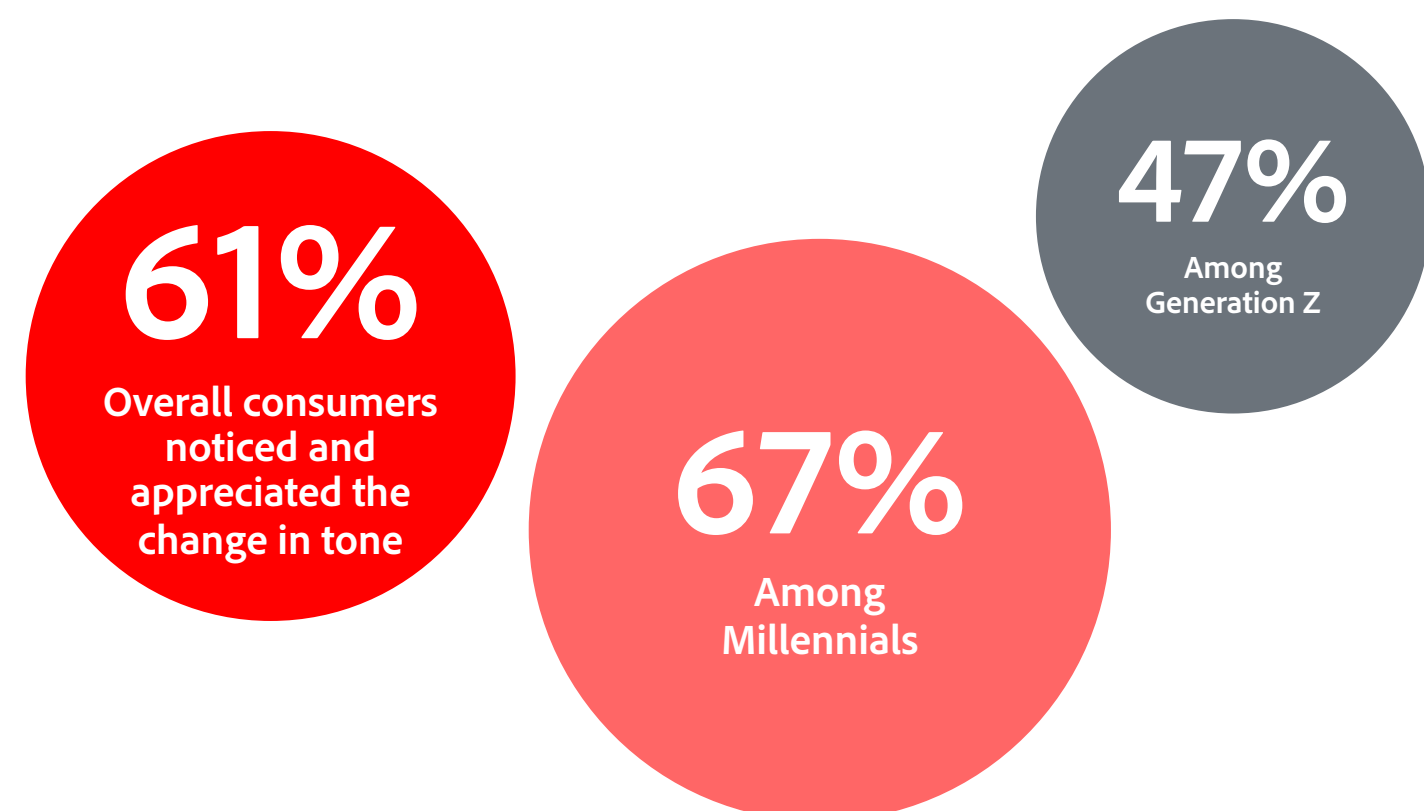
There are some great examples of how brands are responding. In recent weeks, Ford replaced their planned advertisements with creatives that highlighted a payment relief program and reminded customers how they have responded to past disasters. And Anheuser-Busch InBev (ABI) also announced that it is donating \$5 million to the Red Cross to support pandemic efforts.



Brands can be confident that they can continue advertising. Advertising that includes relevant product and service information is still valued, although most consumers still appreciate a change in the tone of advertising. Negative reactions to “as normal” advertising are small, but higher among those experiencing negative financial consequences of the COVID-19 crisis.

Advertising to older consumers in particular can be more “business as usual”, but there may be nuances in advertising to Gen Z, who don’t appreciate a change in tone of advertising as much as Millennials do.

HOW CHANGE IN TONE IS NOTICED BY CONSUMERS



Have you noticed a change in the tone of advertisements (e.g. more empathetic) since the outbreak of COVID-19? If so, do you appreciate it?

Paid Search Provides Answers

Consumers are now faced with new situations, new challenges, and new information. Advertisers are all, quite literally, searching for solutions and answers. Paid search still accounts for 39% of digital advertising budgets on average, and it often delivers one of the strongest investment returns of any digital channel. At a time when consumers are rapidly searching for solutions, marketers have an opportunity to provide answers.

First, successful brands will need to assess how traffic is already changing. Activities that can be performed to inform strategy include:

- Monitoring of stable brand and generic keywords vs. historic baseline
- Checking volumes, CPCs, and conversion rates as user behavior shifts week-by-week
- Detecting new or unintentional search terms

Marketers will then want to make sure they’re accounting for brick and mortar closures, inventory, and policy changes in ad copy:

- Make changes to location extensions and hourly strategies
- Monitor and address out of stock products
- Abide to all search engine policies such as Google disallowing certain advertising for face masks, hand sanitizer, and COVID-19 related terms

Finally, think through a COVID-19-specific response and a subsequent response once stay at home orders are rescinded and the country moves into a period of trying to establish economic stability. Think through resources/pages that brands might want to direct traffic towards.

Driving Business Forward

As mentioned at the beginning of this guide, Adobe’s mission is to make advertising a connected experience. Now more than ever, this is critical to help marketers navigate these uncertain times.

This is an unusual time for us all, offering both challenge and opportunity. Success will only come when brands take their eye away from how they can take advantage of opportunities and ask instead how they can provide advantage for customers. Personalization, understanding and engagement are key – both to navigate health-related challenges and the ensuing economic fallout. By putting the customer at the heart of every choice, brands will be able to navigate their way through the storm in order to reach safe harbor on the other side.

To sum it up, here are the Dos and Don'ts of Advertising during COVID-19:

- DO** Be authentic
- DO** Revisit your creative often
- DO** Look closely at segmentation to inform new strategies
- DO** Assess the media channels where consumers spend their time
- DO** Choose the premium, trust options
- DON'T** Blindly restrict ad placements
- DON'T** Share anything insensitive or that could induce panic
- DON'T** Assume audience content consumption is the same



Strategy Q&A with Ryan Sheppard, Head of Content & Development, Refinitiv

We sat down with Refinitiv, a global provider of financial market data and infrastructure, to understand the many shifts they've taken to keep connected to their customers during this time.

How has Refinitiv adapted your overall marketing strategy because of COVID?

With huge shifts impacting financial markets by the second, we recognized that now more than ever Refinitiv played an essential role throughout the crisis – our customers needed our trusted data, content, insight and domain expertise to help them navigate rapidly changing market dynamics. We therefore quickly adapted our marketing strategy to help our customers and financial professionals globally overcome market challenges and identify market opportunity.

We quickly reached out to our existing customers to deliver a clear message of the investment and resilience measures we have in place to ensure business continuity and we directed them to real-time, curated insights about the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on the financial markets. We developed a content machine – connected to the analysts and experts within Refinitiv – solely focused on COVID-19 in order to deliver valuable thought leadership, timely data insights, and webinar sessions to deep dive on the most important topics.

Our marketing mix evolved drastically as the evidence of the pandemic became clear. We cancelled all physical event engagements, both proprietary and sponsored, out of an abundance of caution for the health and safety of our employees, customers and partners. Given the uncertainty about when the COVID-19 lock downs would lift and when event gatherings would be safe and welcomed again, we felt that decision was the right one to take. Therefore with our customers in lockdown, we put in place a pivot program to rapidly accelerate our move to digital. We shifted our entire strategy to a virtual and digital activity mix, including webinars, email lead nurture, organic and paid social, digital advertising, media content partnerships and ramped up our data PR efforts with media globally.

Have you made any changes to the allocation of your marketing budget?

Out of Home (OOH) was removed from our marketing mix early on as it became clear that our target audience would be working remotely for the foreseeable future. We invested strongly in video to become a financial video powerhouse. We created a new daily video series called 'Corona Correction' featuring Refinitiv experts from across the world delivering updates on what's happening, and what might come next. Every day we analyse everything from consumer outlook to commodities markets. The show has received tremendous support from our financial audience as it helps to keep them fully informed and on top of the latest data and market insight. The new Corona Correction series sits alongside our regular weekly video series, The Big Conversation, that naturally has a focus on COVID-19 related market developments, plus a new series of explainer videos and mini documentaries. With this high quality, constantly updated content, we were able to shift more of our media investment to high performing pre-roll video as well as CTV. We were able to be flexible and pivot as needed because we were buying the majority of our media through Ad Cloud rather than direct buys, so we didn't need to navigate contracts and cancellations. Once we had pivoted to the new messaging and channels, we were able to optimize our mix based on performance data with Ad Cloud.

Have you changed or updated your customer segmentation strategy?

We haven't altered our customer segmentation strategy, but have focused our marketing and communications planning and execution efforts around COVID-19 to serve five key communities - Asset Managers, Investment Bankers, Wealth Managers, Risk & Compliance professionals and Traders. These communities receive a continuous selection of thought leadership, blog posts, videos, and webinars to meet their specific needs – organised and made available across a broad channel mix for ease of discoverability and consumption.

How have you updated your creative messages during this time?

We did not drastically change our messaging but rather adapted it in order to resonate with the urgency of the current climate. Refinitiv has an unrivaled breadth of data, content, insight and domain expertise that the financial markets need to navigate this global challenge. We therefore focused on bringing our brand purpose to life – Powering financial communities to advance at the speed of change – through each messaging execution. We emphasized the fact that we were a vital partner to help navigate rapid shifts in market dynamics with expert data-driven insights and news. We often debate what 'The Speed of Change' really means. The COVID-19 global pandemic and resulting upheaval of life as we once knew it defined it.

Have you done anything else to support your customers during this time?

In addition to curating expert insights to help guide our customers through this uncertain time, we also launched two new apps within our flagship Refinitiv Eikon desktop product – Coronavirus and Macro Vitals – to help customers retrieve all relevant information on the virus and the macro economic impact in one single place. The Coronavirus app includes news updates from trusted sources like Reuters and contagion spread by country published by the World Health Organization – whereas the Macro Vitals app includes the economic impact by industry, market conditions, and government and central bank response to the crisis.