

We're facing a new way of connecting with consumers

By  Victor Koaho

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The world is currently experiencing the worst pandemic and economic downturn seen in the past 75 years. The Covid-19 pandemic has caused serious economic ramifications not only for South Africa but for the world at large. This has been exacerbated by the fact that governments around the world have encouraged their citizens to socially distance themselves in order to ensure that the rate of infections is reduced, and to avoid more people contracting it.



Photo by LinkedIn Sales Navigator from [Pexels](#).

This measure, however, has led to most non-essential businesses and products from not being available in the community, causing most of their suppliers to also close for a long period of time. This means some of the employees of these institutions are now unable to draw salaries and thus unable to participate and contribute toward our ailing economy.

Re-looking business models

All industries have been dealt a blow and have had to re-look their business models for new ways of doing things. The media industry has been dealt a blow as well, with some epic media institutions having to close down. One of the largest publishers of magazines, some as old as 100 years, are shutting down, and will not be able to print going forward. This means that advertisers will no longer use these platforms to connect with ardent and loyal readers.



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The Outdoor or Out of Home industry has experienced the same with clients questioning whether or not to continue advertising on billboards, because the audiences they were trying to reach are no longer moving around outside their homes.

On the flip side, some mediums have seen an upsurge and an influx of audiences. These have largely been digital and social media platforms. This influx has been attributed to crowd-sourcing engagement in the form of DJ's hosting social distancing live parties where audiences can party without leaving the comfort of their own homes.

Similarly, a lot of consumers who like to keep fit, have gone as far as sharing their exercise routines on social media and encouraging those in their circles to participate online. This phenomenon also has people sharing new ways of preparing food and recipes with online audiences and the social media community at large.

'Out of sight, out of mind'

However, in every good situation, there will also be some bad apples. There are those who have shared recipes of making their own home-brewed alcohol as is it no longer available for sale during this social distancing period. The number of unqualified journalists and political commentators has also been on the rise, with some of them sharing fake news largely based on unverified information.

So how do clients look at these phenomena and still connect with their consumers? They need to understand what makes their audiences tick and try and connect with them on the social platforms where they're most likely to be. But brands also need to be careful to not only try and make a sale but to be comforting and giving back to the consumer in one way or another.



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Whether its brands giving advice or sharing recipes and even sometimes just talking about mental health to try and empower the consumers they serve. But staying dark and invisible in these trying times is not an option, because this tactic allows competitors to occupy the headspace of consumers and make them the preferred brand or product once their categories are once more made available. The old adage, 'out of sight, out of mind' rings true – so stay visible.

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