

Marketing to the post-lockdown consumer

By  Michael Baretta

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We're experiencing a global phenomenon unlike anything before. Individuals, governments and brands are navigating uncharted territories as, together, we face a 'new world'. While healthcare takes primary focus, the economic and political stabilities of countries are in grave danger of tumbling over.



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The imminent restructuring of the global economic order means an ultimate change in the way we do things. How will people consume products and services, and how can businesses adapt to these changes in the consumer market?

There's no doubt that things will change. They already have. We've seen trends like increased e-commerce activities, e-learning and WFH (working from home) take off across the globe. We're not going to hop right back into 'business as usual'. Business is very unusual at the moment and companies that can adapt and scale their operations accordingly will be the ones to survive the economic downturn our country is set to face.

To help businesses navigate this uncertain time, I've highlighted three key marketing strategies that need to be employed at this time, namely:

- a change in behaviour, planning for a sustainable future and no longer solving problems of the past;
- affiliate marketing, aligning with the right activists and influencers;
- and purpose and cause marketing, ensuring an organisation has a clear and marketable purpose for operating.

Change in behaviour

During the crisis, and well after it, I believe we will see greater collaboration between brands, organisations and governments. With many businesses likely being held more accountable for their actions, the scrutiny will, however, become intense.

Affiliate marketers – brand influencers, bloggers and social media gurus – often already have an audience that they engage with and promote to. A relationship is established through the marketer interacting with their followers daily. The marketer learns what the followers respond well to, and in turn, the followers trust the marketer to promote appropriate products.

Their scope of influence and social media following may be far more tailored and useful than any paid advertising. Through these platforms, organisations can spread brand visibility with a high likelihood of obtaining new customers.

Purpose and for-good cause marketing

To gain new customers and build deeper connections with current consumers, a business needs a clear purpose for operating.

So, what does this entail? Does this mean investing in employees, supporting communities and dealing ethically with suppliers, for example?

In order to truly be a key differentiator from competitors, an organisation's purpose needs to be deeply embedded in the brand culture and experienced at every touchpoint, both internally and externally. It's important to communicate purpose in such a way that all stakeholders are aware of what the business stands for and its authentic, impactful role in society.



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This influential role allows an organisation to grow its business and positively impact the world simultaneously, particularly as consumers now seek out brands with a deeper purpose. Consumers don't want to feel that they are simply buying a product, but that they are buying into an idea. They want to feel that by supporting a particular brand or company, they are making a difference and helping to improve the lives of their fellow South Africans.

As we consider the scale of change that the coronavirus has caused – and will continue to cause in the months and years ahead – an imminent restructuring of the global economic order is on the horizon. In essence, this crisis will not just reveal threats to a business and its operations, but opportunities to improve the performance and impact of companies and organisations.

ABOUT MICHAEL BARETTA

Michael Baretta is an experienced creative thinker who is deeply committed to changing the world for the better through innovative marketing and communications. Baretta is the founder of [dot]GOOD, South Africa's first and foremost for-good marketing agency.

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