

## Media Planning: Post COVID-19

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In the wake of the Novel Coronavirus media planners and marketers are struggling to understand and cope up with the drastic shifts in the marketing landscape. This is the time when marketers need to think and act flexibly while taking advantage of the available resources. Challenging times can make or break the system; thus, marketers must look for opportunities that are brewing on the horizon and use them to their advantage.

Marketing and media planners should look for better plans for resilience during difficult times, like shifting and rebuilding the media plans, keeping in mind an upcoming recession and times of volatility. This is the time when marketers can pivot and protect client's businesses along with their own. Since the rules of the media game have changed, strategies to win also need to be refreshed.

**Maintaining brand equity through efficient media continuity:** It is important to maintain a minimum to moderate level of media continuity during these difficult times to gain a share of voice and market share. Keeping this in mind, brands can also act fast and outperform the competition over the following one to two years. It is seen that an increase in the share of voice often leads to category leadership and growth in revenue and profits in the recovery period. Important enabling factors include optimizing the marketing budget to achieve a balance between branded media vs. promotions, including identifying minimum weekly thresholds by media channel. Brands that significantly cut brand media investments pay a price, sacrificing brand equity in the long term while raising the cost of doing business through an increased consumer reliance on promotions and discounting. This tends to affect long-term brand health. Thus, sacrificing brand-building equity marketing can skyrocket promotion budgets while market share and brand health go down.

**Use the shift in media engagement and viewership as an advantage:** While the world stays under lockdown, there have been significant shifts in viewership across the globe. Due to the ongoing situation, it can be observed that there has been a drastic shift from mobile viewership to TV and desktop as people are grounded and working at home. In light of the shift to TV, there are opportunities for advertisers to re-think their contextual advertising strategy and closely manage and optimize this strategy every week as the situation evolves. Also, people are spending more time online reading about health issues, forecasts, travel alerts, news reports, and global markets. This information can be used by advertisers to build relevant content and perfect a contextual approach during uncertain times. This information can also be used to chalk out plans on how the ads can be more relevant to the situation, what works, what doesn't, and the current trend that prevails.

**Rapid re-optimization of marketing and media investments:** A need to balance cost management while looking for new opportunities during a disruptive and uncertain time is proving to be overwhelming for advertisers. The constant juggling between decisions that need to be made with new and varying options that are changing daily. With sponsorships and national and local event investments being called off, ad rates are set to drop resulting in a "buyers-market". However, taking advantage of this "buyers-market" requires agility as there are many obstacles and challenges across the media landscape as well as a significant shift in the consumption of media. Therefore, to build a successful media plan, planners need a combination of holistic marketing mix models, integrated digital data, and cross-industry media benchmarks. Advertisers and their agencies need to have a unified approach combined with collaboration among them. These teams need to work on factors such as pricing, distribution, products/services, economic factors, and competition to be successful.

**Shift in consumer behaviour:** These are difficult times for both marketers and consumers. There has been a significant change in consumer behaviour during this time. Necessity has taken precedence over luxury. Thus, planning a strategy that would address the current needs and feelings of the consumers is on high priority. Looking out for sentiments, spending habits, content interests, and expectations can change the game altogether even during times of uncertainty.

Media agencies in Delhi are putting all hands-on desks to combat the current disruption. Challenging times can be tedious and scary, but with the right perspective and a strategic plan, one can get out of a paralysing situation and recover faster and better, navigating out of these turbulent waters.

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