

AGILITY, ADJUSTMENT, AND ANSWERING THE CALL: How Brands are Finding Their Voices and Searching for Meaningful Messages

It's crowded out there. Not in the physical sense, but in the evolving world of ad spend, it's a time of adjustment as brands seek to find and position their voices and jostle for space in the traditional, digital, and evolving arenas. If you've ever thought about investing in brand awareness and crafting a truly meaningful message, this could be your moment.



Media Ad Spend

Digital ad spend is down as brands navigate how to position their voices during this time.

- Paid search will see the smallest decreases (IAB).
- Despite digital ad spend being down, OTT/CTV spend is up 35% (IAB).
 - In particular, our partner MediaMath is seeing a 20% increase in OTT/CTV inventory availability, and cost per impression has decreased 10% as of this week (MediaMath).
- Facebook and Google are seeing the biggest impact (Nasdaq).
 - Self-serve platforms are easiest to rein in (Nasdaq).
 - Digital is nimble and spend will return faster (Nasdaq).
 - Additional spend could shift to digital from traditional (Pathmatics).

Traditional ad spend is down (even further) (IAB).

- OOH is seeing the greatest decline/impact (IAB).

Implication and opportunity: Digital allows for greater agility and aligns with current stay-at-home and social distancing cues, but it's also a great time to test and learn new approaches based on user behaviors. We can learn from brands' unique reactions as well as changes in media consumption and adjust channel mix based on that. Additionally, given the lower "cost of entry" and increased inventory opportunity in CTV, it's a great time for brands to test this channel.



Brands are Moving Quickly to Make Decisions

70% of brands have made adjustments to ad spend for March through June (paused or reflighted) (IAB).

Implication and opportunity: We don't know what we don't know, and we have to take this new reality one day at a time. Agencies can provide guidance and direction as they're at the forefront of trends and understand the unique nuances and values of each media channel.

"Agencies are trying to... be more consultative during this time by tracking consumer media shifts, performing predictive analyses on possible economic scenarios, and helping clients understand the long-term effects of pausing their ad spend." - Ad Exchanger



Advertisers are Adjusting Messaging

Attempting to sound empathetic vs. tone deaf to what's happening across communities.

- Ford pulled national ads and replaced them with Coronavirus response positive messaging of "Built to Lend a Hand" and "Built for America" (*AdAge*).
- Nike continues to encourage athleticism, albeit indoors: "If you ever dreamed of playing for millions around the world, now is your chance. Play inside, play for the world" (*Fast Company*).

Shifting toward mission-based and cause-based, how their brand is reacting, doing good in the world, and staying relevant (*Forrester*).

- Brands donating their goods and services to communities and employees.
 - *Consumers are reacting to this by seeking out these brands who show they care.*
- LVMH was one of the first large brand operations to adapt its production line to make hand sanitizer for local hospitals and communities (*Fast Company*).
- Lyft is donating tens of thousands of rides to frontline medical personnel, families with children, and low-income seniors (*Fast Company*).

Implication and opportunity: Many brands are acutely aware of how they are—and want to be—perceived. Opportunities abound to connect with consumers as one community. Invest in your brand's look, feel, and values and offer utility in a time when your customers need it most. Look beyond the standard industry definition of a "campaign" and instead seek the answer to a nobler question: What can your brand do now to support your community?

Stay healthy and stay safe. #btdoingourpart