

Three timeless advertising tactics to guide a new digital world

By [Wayne Flemming](#)

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As brands continue to grapple with the disruptive impacts of Covid-19, strategies are being redeveloped at a rapid pace. While short-term goals are easily interchangeable, they must still feed into the overall brand and business objective. According to Kantar, during the 2008 fiscal crisis, brands that continued with active communication that spoke to objectives after the market collapse recovered the quickest post-recession and with the strongest brand resonance.



Photo by [Mateusz Dach](#) from [Pexels](#).

As the landscape of Covid-19 in South Africa changes daily; here are three timeless tactics that any brand can use to survive both in the current advertising climate, as well as afterwards.

1. The power of partnerships

There is a lot of pressure on businesses to quickly formulate new measures to remain viable as the world navigates this new normal. Partnerships provide a unique solution in opening up additional collaborative channels while leveraging shared resources. A partnership can mitigate the loss of function by providing alternate methods to continue business operations. Uber in South Africa has successfully partnered with the Western Cape Health Department and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to provide essential medication to vulnerable people unable to access it due to restricted movement. The partnership has seen up to 25,000 successful deliveries in just its first two weeks of operation.



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Globally, Apple and Google are combining the best of their engineering minds and in mid-May will release software allowing apps from public health authorities to do contact tracing for the coronavirus.

2. Show unity and community

Priorities have shifted and as a result, the core principles of a brand have had to be readjusted to include human elements that speak to a community. Many companies are increasingly adopting an approach of solidarity and shared commitment to communities, limiting their push on sales and redirecting efforts to helping the most vulnerable in society.

Brands are focused on either finding opportunities for those in need or easing the impact of a lack of resources. An important shift has occurred in that the target base for organisations are no longer customers, but a community. The audience which a brand would normally speak to now includes everyone within reach, given the unique circumstances that unite all South Africans under the lockdown regulations. It's loyalty redefined and understanding that the ecosystem of the brand is far more than just a niche of customers.



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SA Breweries have exemplified solidarity locally, with the campaign #TogetherAtADistance. Using short videos showing empty socialising venues, they reiterate their message of unity with the words "Look outside. You'll see a whole nation staying indoors to protect one another. This is what we call togetherness". While globally, Facebook has created a 90-second film aiming to honour the commitment and resilience of people coming together under the banner of 'we've never lost if we can find each other'.

“ *When we stay home, we stay safe.*

Protecting our future, together. #TogetherAtADistance #FlattenTheCurve #SABForSA pic.twitter.com/a5iID9oSS9— SABreweries (@SABreweries) [April 11, 2020](https://twitter.com/SABreweries/status/1251111111111111111) ”

3. It's a brave new world

The strongest brands are being brave right now. They are thinking big and understand that shying away isn't an option. While caution about your brand messages is warranted, it should never be an excuse for lack of imagination. The world is in desperate need of relief, and that comes in many forms.

Brands must adapt their strategy by showing empathy to the current context and educate, highlight, and effectively embrace the changes that are happening by creating an understanding that speaks to the world after this crisis. Show that in efforts made today, tomorrow will be better and use all their channels to offer assistance or to connect the audience to relevant resources for more information.

While most brands can not offer their facilities for the production of medical equipment (like perfumer Puig which halted production on scents instead using resources to produce hand sanitisers), small changes can often also provide great

relief.



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Consider changing an Instagram bio to links on relief programmes or using other social pages to promote channels of available essentials needed during the outbreak. A simple retweet can connect a brand's following to access important life-saving information.

Being brave enough to understand the needs of your community and not only financial objectives, will grow your brand identity positively. Locally Pick n Pay released a video featuring a song at the start of SA's lockdown, encouraging consumers to shop responsibly, while globally Dove's 'Courage Is Beautiful' campaign features emotional images of frontline staff's scarred faces after continuous use of protective wear to serve their respective countries.

What a post-pandemic world might look like is still unclear, but it is certain that businesses are seen as the leaders with a responsibility to step in and ensure their next steps recognise the new human needs brought on by this crisis.

ABOUT WAYNE FLEMMING

With solid experience in the industry, Wayne Fleming is a business visionary and IMC content creator who describes himself as a "marketing fanatic". His bold thinking is supported by his strong strategy and leadership skills, and he is also a storyteller at heart. As a changemaker, he thrives on disrupting the marketplace which is why he started BrandTruth in 2016 with co-founder Zubeida Goolam - crafting digital and content campaigns that both inspire and drive critical engagement.

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