

MARKETING THROUGH CRISIS:  
**THREE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION**



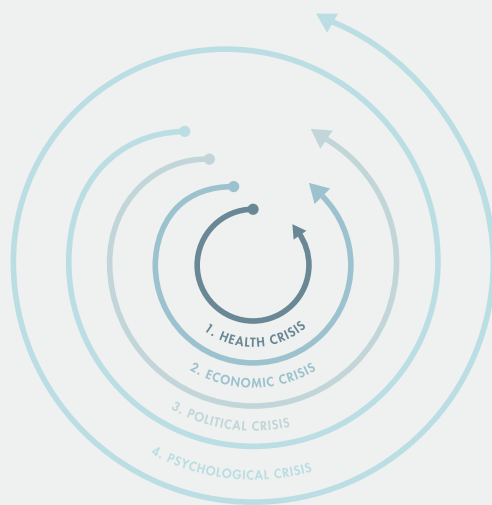
# INTRODUCTION

McCann Worldgroup Truth Central partnered with the ANA to illuminate the socio-cultural changes that are happening in the face of the current crises and to understand how marketers are responding to the consequent shifts they're seeing in their businesses. MW Truth Central is uniquely poised to help brands understand the current climate as they have interviewed 75,000+ consumers since the crisis began to track the changes happening in 18 markets around the world.

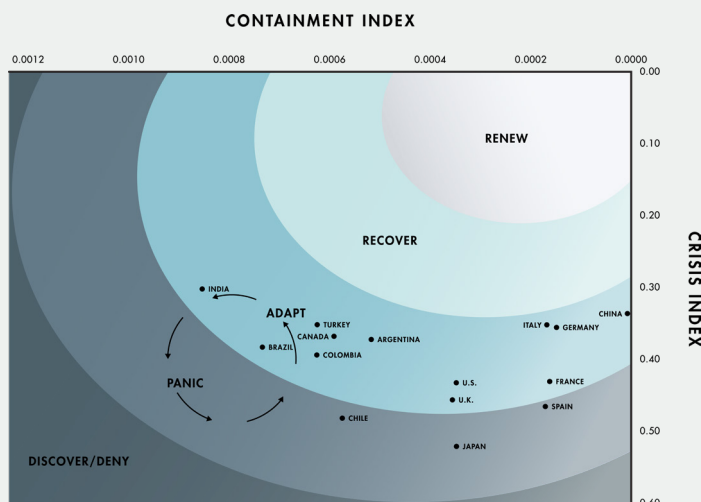
Beyond this study, they have conducted research all over the globe for almost a decade with representation in over 100 countries resulting in over 25 million unique data points. They cover wide-ranging topics; from categories such as retail, wellness, and diversity to consumer deep-dives such as Gen Z, affluents, and moms. The breadth and depth of their research enables them to contextualize and understand what is happening today and, crucially, recommend how brands can best act.

# COMPOUND CRISES

This is a uniquely complex crisis. What started as a health crisis quickly became an economic crisis as well. Furthermore, as crises often shed light on deep-seated inequalities, we are seeing social and political unrest across the globe. Due to the impact of these compound crises, we expect a psychological layer to emerge as people start to grapple with the extraordinary change they have witnessed in such a short space of time.



Of course, these crises also manifest differently by market. Everything from health infrastructure to government trust to economic inequalities influences the cultural nuances we see at play within our data. We are tracking the varied and non-linear paths to recovery and renewal for each country within our Global Pandemic Journey Map.



# HOW TO MOVE FORWARD IN THIS CONTEXT

This is complicated. This is changing rapidly. And the impacts will be permanent. Yet, while the data tells us where we are *today*, businesses are eager to understand how to make decisions for *tomorrow*.

In order to create a long-term plan, it is critical to understand the human imperative at a global and market level, as well as the imperative for your business and category.

## THE TIME FOR ACTION IS NOW



**HUMAN IMPERATIVE**  
DEMAND FOR  
A GREAT RESET



**BUSINESS IMPERATIVE**  
CRISES ARE  
CATALYSTS THAT  
DEMAND REACTION

However, seeing change is one thing, but creating change is another. We asked marketers how they are taking action—for today and tomorrow—and three key opportunities emerged.

## THE LONGER-TERM OPPORTUNITY

Marketers are being forced to think and act for the short-term, revealing an opportunity in capitalizing on long-term gains and innovation.

The short-term focus is clear to see, with 65% of marketers saying they're planning for the short term (up from 49% pre-Covid), which aligns with the fact that 82% of marketers believe their consumers'/customers' needs have changed in the short-term.

The opportunity is then starkly defined in the data with 66% of marketers agreeing their consumers' needs will change in the long-term, yet only 18% of marketers say they're planning for it.

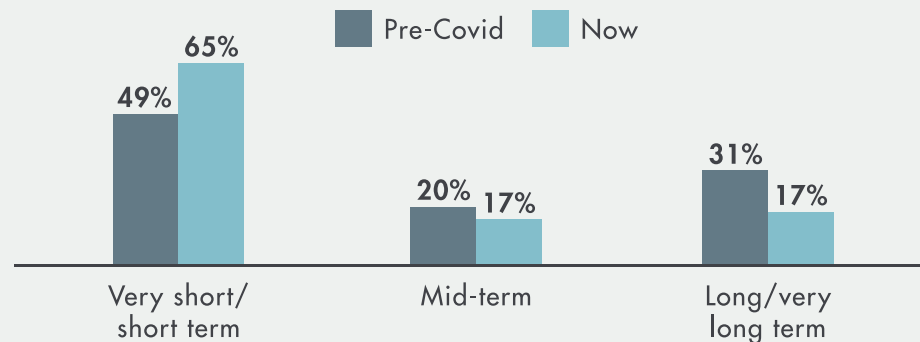


**The Challenge:** A continually evolving crises forces many to act short-term.



**The Opportunity:** Brands that can find the space to focus on long-term plans will have a competitive advantage.

How far in advance was your company planning *before* the pandemic?  
How far in advance is your company planning *right now during* the pandemic?



# THE ACCELERATION OPPORTUNITY

When asked their predictions for the impact that COVID-19 will have on their companies, the top word in marketers' responses was "accelerate." Many of the existing shifts we have seen in the industry are being turbo-charged because of the crisis. The acceleration of existing strategies over emergence of "net-new" opportunities is marketers' main prediction for how COVID-19 will impact their companies.



**The Challenge:** In the face of so much change, it is difficult to know where to focus marketing efforts.



**The Opportunity:** The playbook hasn't changed. Home in and accelerate select existing strategies that give you a stronger voice with consumers.

## WHAT IS YOUR ONE PREDICTION FOR HOW COVID-19 WILL CHANGE YOUR INDUSTRY IN THE FUTURE?



### LESS

IN-PERSON EVENTS  
PHYSICAL  
SPENDING  
BRICK & MORTAR  
TRAVEL & COMMUTING  
DEMAND



### MORE

VIRTUAL EVENTS  
ONLINE ORDERING/DELIVERY  
E-COMMERCE  
INNOVATION  
WFH/REMOTE LIFESTYLES  
TRANSPARENCY

## THE PEOPLE OPPORTUNITY

When asked how COVID-19 has impacted existing marketing strategies, hearteningly, marketers have shown their commitment to people-driven initiatives such as diversity, data privacy, and sustainability with each of these initiatives remaining at the same levels of focus. Focusing on what matters most to both your consumers and talent is a centre of gravity for many brands today when it comes to the meaningful role they can earn in people's lives.



**The Challenge:** As the context is constantly changing, it is difficult to find a voice and know what to say.



**The Opportunity:** Marketers remain the voice of the consumer in their organizations and must champion the values and causes that people truly care about.

*/// Stay connected— with consumers, with partners, with suppliers, with employees. This may look different for businesses/brands.*

***Stay true to who you are, be truthful and empathetic and connected. ///***

## WHAT NEXT?

Our ongoing research has shown us that 81% of people believe that global brands have the power to make the world better. And yet, we have found that consumers are skeptical about the role of a brand in the crisis, with just 1/4 of consumers agreeing that brands can play a positive role.

What’s driving this gap? What we see now more than ever is the importance of actions over statements. Brands need to commit to acting across all areas of their business in an ongoing way to be seen as true allies in times of a crisis.

In the earlier days of the crisis, marketers pointed to brands that took direct action as best practice examples - from altering manufacturing lines to make ventilators and equipment (Ford & GM) to donating products and recognizing front-line workers (Dove).


We also know that creativity is recognized as a tool for driving action. 55% of marketers are inspired by the creativity they have seen. The brands that have blended direct action with creative expressions of their values have been able to connect deeply with consumers.

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AT HOME WITH EVA LONGORIA

**Payitforward** LIVE

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Matthews**

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this Thursday  
5pm PST/8pm EST

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As the fight for racial equality has come to the forefront, brands that have taken action that is consistent with historical commitments while being transparent about efforts to learn and do more have been critical for gaining consumer trust.

While the conditions have changed, there are evergreen truths on best marketing practice that remain as true today as they always have:

## A PARTING THOUGHT



### WHILE THE CONDITIONS HAVE CHANGED, IT IS NOT A NEW MARKETING PLAYBOOK:

1. Do what you say.
2. Focus on where you can have the most impact.
3. Accelerate what/where you know.
4. Be the voice of the consumer.
5. Be the brand's guardian—build for the future!

If marketers can remain true to these principles and the meaningful role that their brand plays in the lives of their consumers, they will be well positioned to come out of the crises as strong as possible.



While there are clear opportunities for brands to play a more meaningful role than ever before in people's lives, today's environment, rife with ever-changing and increased short and long-term demands, may make activating on them sound a bit overwhelming. We're here to tell you it's not as daunting you think. As Effie's Network of the Year three years running, Adweek Global Agency of the Year, Cannes Network of the Year, etc., we're uniquely adept at creating and strengthening our clients' relationships with their audiences. Let us help you translate the "Truths" contained in this presentation (as well as many others we've uncovered about the world through McCann Worldgroup Truth Central, our global intelligence unit) into action for your brand.

Please contact Toby Southgate at [Toby.Southgate@mccann.com](mailto:Toby.Southgate@mccann.com) to find out more.



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