

# 2021 the year of empathetic actions



TOP 10 MARKETING TRENDS

# 2021 the year of empathetic actions



In 2021, empathy is critical given the upheaval of life last year. Brands need to continue to lead with emotion and with actions that put people first.

We have a new consumer who's not looking backwards. Time in isolation has forced introspection, and less socialising has meant more time to connect with what really matters. They have new values and hobbies, and a growth mindset focused on personal betterment.

They've created new digital habits and super-wired their homes for work, exercise, education and leisure. They care about their local neighbourhood more than ever and have a newfound gratitude for health that goes beyond aesthetics to emotional, mental and physical wellbeing.

Neutral impact is no longer enough. Brands are expected to make a positive impact on communities, society and the environment.

So this year, put your brand's EQ on display and engage people with empathetic actions that demonstrate you understand their new priorities, needs and expectations..

This is our 8th Trend Report and, as always, our trends are at the leading edge of adoption and are designed as inspiration to help you create market firsts and put you ahead of your competition.

# 2021 trends

1

## unreal real

Unrestrained from physical spaces, technology enabled experiences will seem better than real with new, exciting and next level VIP experiences.

2

## the new consumer

At home consumption is set to rise as today's consumer has rewired routines, new digital habits and super-wired homes

3

## humanised ecommerce

The humanization of online experiences will insert people back into e-commerce to add personal connection, higher levels of service & fun.

4

## reset to better

The bar has been lifted and brands need to make a positive impact on communities, society and the environment. Resetting for better requires a path to purpose that starts in the boardroom.

5

## love local

Freedom given to us by our high tech digital lives means physical freedom. We are more focused on our local neighbourhood than ever before

6

## resist the boost

Rise of social as a tool for intel not interruption. Let things unfold. Listen to the conversations under the surface to gain insight into what's going on in culture.

7

## all brands for well being

We'll see the rise of a new health economy. In the post cookie world, all brands will have the opportunity to be holistic wellness providers.

8

## gaming repurposed

Gaming is becoming the new 3rd space where we socialise, collaborate and shop. It has shifted from an activation tool to a legitimate destination for connection.

9

## hybrid brand experiences

Provide dynamic, emotionally charged customer experiences that replicate what we love about real life experiences, whether the customer is shopping online or in store.

10

## transformation economy

The rise of the 'growth mindset' is fuelling the demand for transformative experiences and products where the value exchange is time for personal growth



THE  
MET

# Unframed

An immersive art experience  
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## the unreal real

Unrestrained from physical spaces, technology enabled experiences will seem real but be new and exciting. Entertainment using AR built with 5G will give people VIP experiences and next level personalisation. Concerts and sports will be seen from different angles and shopping will move from functional to fun with virtual try-ons, live chat and companion shopping .

### IMPLICATION FOR BRANDS

With changing habits becoming the new norm post lockdown, people will be more accepting of virtual experiences and products, so be creative and use AI tools to deliver personalization and differentiated customer experiences.

### TREND IN ACTION - THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK

They launched The Met Unframed in January this year. It's an immersive virtual art and gaming experience, featuring digitally rendered galleries and nearly 50 works of art. Online visitors can explore digital galleries, play games that unlock AR versions of the art, watch the objects come alive and even display them virtually at home for free.



# the new consumer



Consumers are not stepping backwards after the experiences of the last year. They created new digital habits and have a new concept of time which is more fluid and flexible. Their homes have become super-wired hubs for work, exercise, education and leisure which is a pivot from the trend towards a sharing economy and working from cafes and common spaces in 2019/20. Deloitte APAC estimates that 'at home consumption' is set to rise twofold to \$3 trillion by 2025.

## IMPLICATION FOR BRANDS

Get to know your new consumer – their priorities, their needs and expectations. How can you provide products and services that allow your brand to be embedded into the life of consumers at home and meet their 24 hr service mentality.

## TREND IN ACTION - MIRROR BY LULULEMON

Lululemon bought Mirror June 2020 betting on the future of fitness at home. Mirror is an almost invisible interactive home gym that lets users tune into live and on demand fitness classes from home. They can see on-screen metrics and receive personalised training with instructors.



# humanised ecommerce

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In 2020 stores were reworked to minimise dwell time and interaction, with social distancing and QR codes becoming part of the shopping experience. Digital became the point of discovery.

The trend towards humanisation of online experiences will insert people back into e-commerce to add personal connection, a higher level of service and fun. BCG estimates that this trend can increase sales by 10-15%.

## IMPLICATION FOR BRANDS

Inserting people back into ecommerce gives brands the opportunity to provide higher levels of service @ scale using augmented and virtual reality, computer vision to recognise emotions and faces, virtual assistants and live chat.

## TREND IN ACTION - NEIMAN MARCUS, US

Neiman Marcus, the chain of luxury department stores in the US have implemented a live chat and messaging solution that allows them to provide an engaging, personalized experience that's like a face-to-face experience with the online customer.







# **BUD LIGHT.** THURSDAY NIGHT SHOUTOUT

4

## reset to better

Neutral impact is no longer enough. The bar has been lifted and expectations for brand action to make a positive impact on communities, society and the environment is being led by the under 40s Millennials & Gen Z. Millward Brown's Brandz report states that 'acting responsibly' is the number one influence on brand reputation at 49%.

### IMPLICATION FOR BRANDS

Resetting for better requires brands to plan and move beyond issues in the news cycle. The path to purpose starts in the boardroom and needs to be carried into all levels of business.

### TREND IN ACTION - BUD LIGHT, US

Bud Light created the "Thursday Night Shoutout" ad series. The series promoted black-owned restaurants that faced financial hardship because of the pandemic during the NFL's Thursday Night Football game. Each commercial featured a Black-owned business in the home team's city, and was promoted on national broadcast and digital channels.





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# love local

Freedom afforded to us by our high tech digital lives means physical freedom and according to Forbes, a 'hollowing of the hubs' & 'filling of the spokes' as people move to be where they can be most productive.

Local focus has shifted from country/state loyalty to our local neighbourhood, as we live and shop locally to support our local business.

## IMPLICATION FOR BRANDS

Find what people need locally and create new products and services to connect with them. There will be more appreciation for hyper-local brand actions that are tangible and specific.

## TREND IN ACTION - SKINNY MOBILE, NZ

Skinny Mobile's Friend-vertising campaign aimed to reach everyone in New Zealand with an ad fronted by a person they know. The campaign included 46 TV ads and OOH featuring recognisable faces from the community, geo-located to reach those who are most likely to recognise them.



# resist the boost

The power of social in transmitting the voice of the people keeps brands moving forward and gives cultural momentum. Conversations are critical cultural building blocks. Tiktok has given people the tools to create and new ways to monetize their expression.

## IMPLICATION FOR BRANDS

Listen to the conversations under the surface and let things unfold . Think about social as a tool for intel not interruption and look for opportunities to speak through the audience not just to them.

## TREND IN ACTION - OCEAN SPRAY, US

Nathan Apodaca's ode to Fleetwood Mac while gliding down the highway drinking a bottle of Ocean Spray Cran-Raspberry went viral with 26 mill views on TikTok. While people, including Mick Fleetwood, joined in the fun, Ocean Spray decided to sit back and allow the meme to unfold organically. Over a week after the video went viral, Ocean Spray delivered him a new ute, full of his Cran-Raspberry fix.







# all brands for wellbeing

Our new gratitude for health goes beyond aesthetics to emotional, mental and physical wellbeing as well as immunity, fitness and sleep. According to Trendwatching we'll see the rise of the new health economy. Research by Bain & Co indicates 83% of people in APAC have an interest in health maintenance & lifestyle changes.

## IMPLICATION FOR BRANDS

As marketers move to a post cookie world, all brands will be data owners and have the opportunity to provide holistic wellness to their employees and customers.

## TREND IN ACTION - ICELAND TOURIST BOARD

The tourism board thought we could all benefit from letting out a big cathartic scream during 2020. People could record a scream on their "Let It Out" site and choose one of seven locations across the island, for their scream to be released in real time on speakers, in calming landscapes.





# gaming

## repurposed



Gaming is now more than play, it's shopping, social, commerce and entertainment. It has become the new third space where people socialise and social screen for collective viewing experiences.. There is a legitimacy in virtual goods and skins that have real world value.

### IMPLICATION FOR BRANDS

Gaming has gone from a place for activations to a legitimate destination that lends itself to connection & intimacy. Create events that people will fit their offline plans around

### TREND IN ACTION - DBS BANK, SINGAPORE

DBS Bank in Singapore recreated the iconic Zouk nightclub that closed in 2016, on Fortnite as it targeted clubbers and gamers to promote their credit card. Players visit the nightclub — renamed 'Live Fresh Club' — as their favourite Fortnite character, where they can collect coins, or just socialise and dance



# hybrid brand experiences

Provide dynamic, emotionally charged customer experiences that replicate what we love about real life experiences, whether the customer is shopping online or in store.

## IMPLICATION FOR BRANDS

Be creative, look beyond transactional omnichannel experiences and create sensory physical spaces that are digitally explorable and broadcast-worthy destinations.

## TREND IN ACTION - BURBERRY, CHINA

Burberry opened its first “social retail” store in Shenzhen, China. They created a bespoke digital companion that brings the store to life through exclusive content and personalised experiences. The space integrates social media and gaming with shopping. Customers accrue “social currency” and each has a Bambi-like avatar that evolves as they engage in store and on social channels.





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# transformation

economy

Time in isolation and less socialising has meant more time to connect with ourselves and figure out what matters. New values and a 'growth mindset' is fuelling the demand for transformative experiences and products

## IMPLICATION FOR BRANDS

Everyone is on a personal transformation journey. Instead of asking 'who are they?' ask 'who are they becoming?' or 'what transformation are they going through?' and then 'how can we help them get there?'

## TREND IN ACTION - MASTER CLASS

Masterclass is a streaming platform where anyone can learn from the world's best. The curriculum for each Master Class is designed by the world class instructors. The company has a 100 year plan to capture the knowledge of the world's greatest, crystallise and disseminate it.

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Our staff have extensive category experience across Automotive, Banking, Consumer Electronics, Charities, Education, Financial Services, Government, Energy, Telecommunications, Retail and more.

We seek to raise the bar for our clients, becoming trusted partners to achieve their business goals through our independent thinking, our agile processes and our sophisticated suite of tools.

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