

The Marketing Practice

# Marketing through a crisis

How to keep on keeping on



# Be brave, think long term

There is a well known and well established correlation between share of voice and share of market. Building share of voice takes time and relies on sustained marketing activity which has a cumulative impact. But because of this gradual effect, there's a time lag and the real effects of anything you do now will only become apparent later. Meaning the impact of turning off the marketing tap now will become apparent in the months and years ahead.



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Cutting marketing expenditure results in less ROCE (Return on Capital Employed) recovery and reduced market share post-downturn.<sup>1</sup>

FROM 'ADVERTISING IN A DOWNTURN' BY THE IPA



# Look to the evidence

In times of financial downturn, leading organisations refocus spend towards areas such as R&D, advertising and sales in order to flourish in years to come.<sup>1</sup>

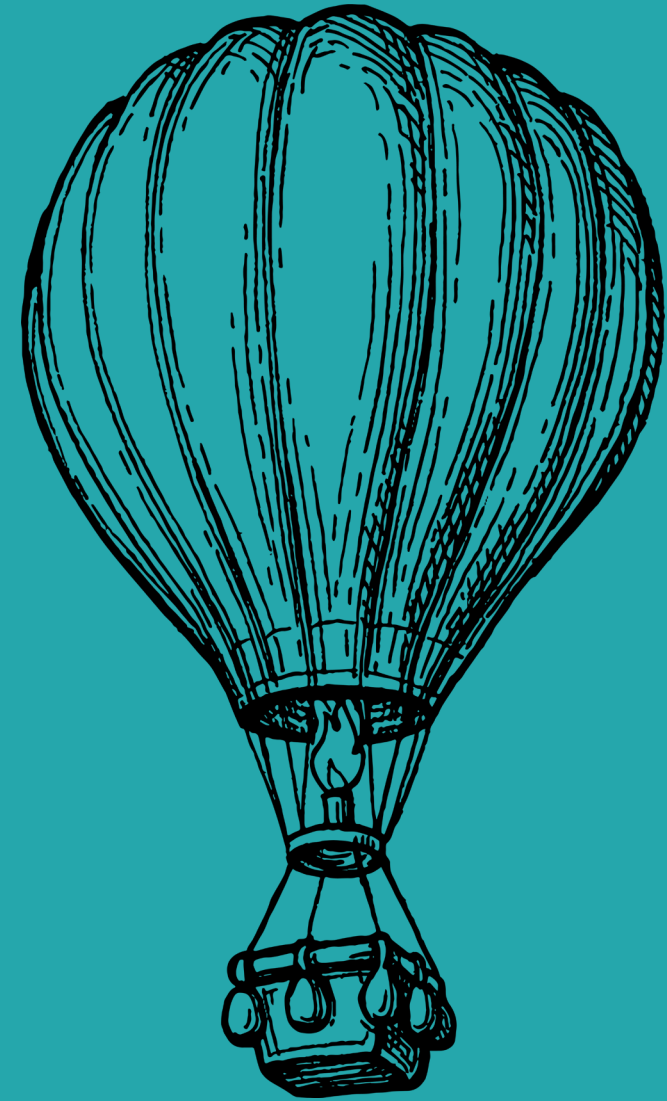
# 3

Number of years taken for sales to recover after a year of 50% marketing budget cuts.<sup>2</sup>



# Lose the **guilt**

We all know there are bigger things than marketing to worry about now. Like public health and the economy, for starters. But good marketing has always been aimed at answering a need and in a world struggling to cope, matching up people who need services with people who can provide them is crucial.



# Your first question: “How can we help?”

ServiceNow have made their dedicated emergency response apps free to public and private sectors<sup>1</sup> and Cisco are offering their Webex tool free for 90 days<sup>2</sup>. What could your organisation do? Work with your colleagues in product, service delivery, vertical teams and so on to understand what your company can offer that would be helpful.



# It's more than marcomms

However many Ps you believe in, consider the full range in your response to the current situation. Can you offer vital services for a lower price or for free? Can you redesign processes to provide access to something that used to be a physical experience, online? Which of your products should you be focusing your efforts on and which should be mothballed? How can your back office teams adapt to make life easier for your clients?

Product

Place

Price

Promotion

People

Process

Physical Evidence



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Marketing has a lot more levers to pull than just advertising and better-run brands are currently pulling them, while ignoring the big, stupid, red ‘Covid-19 campaign’ button that is flashing over in the corner.<sup>1</sup>

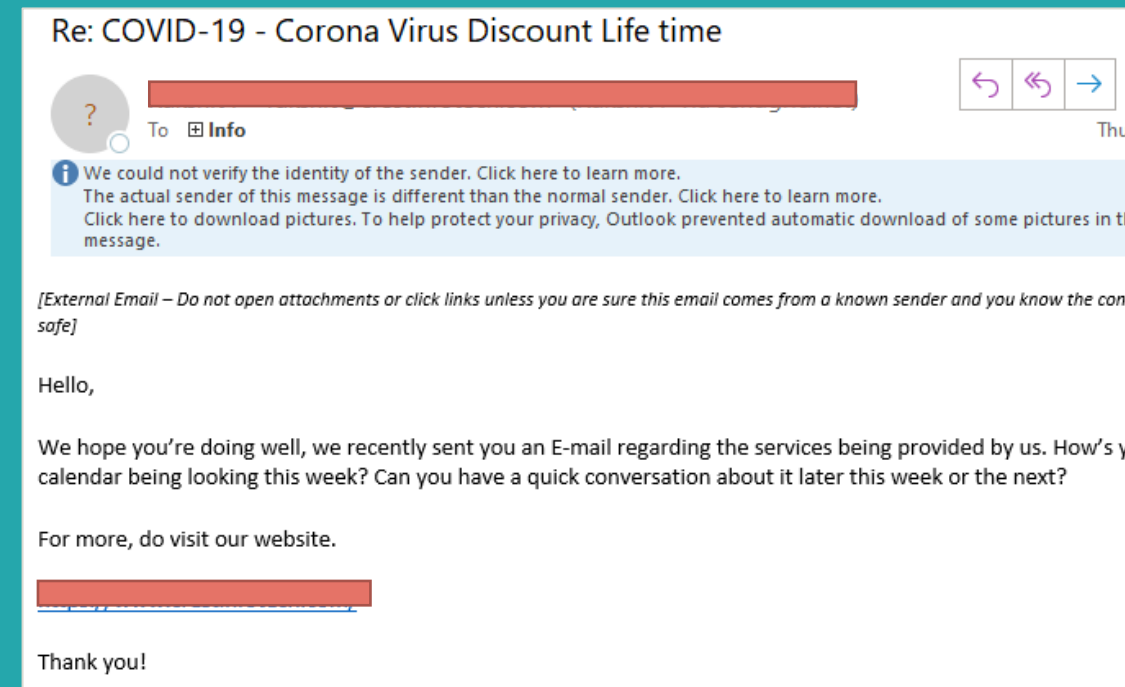
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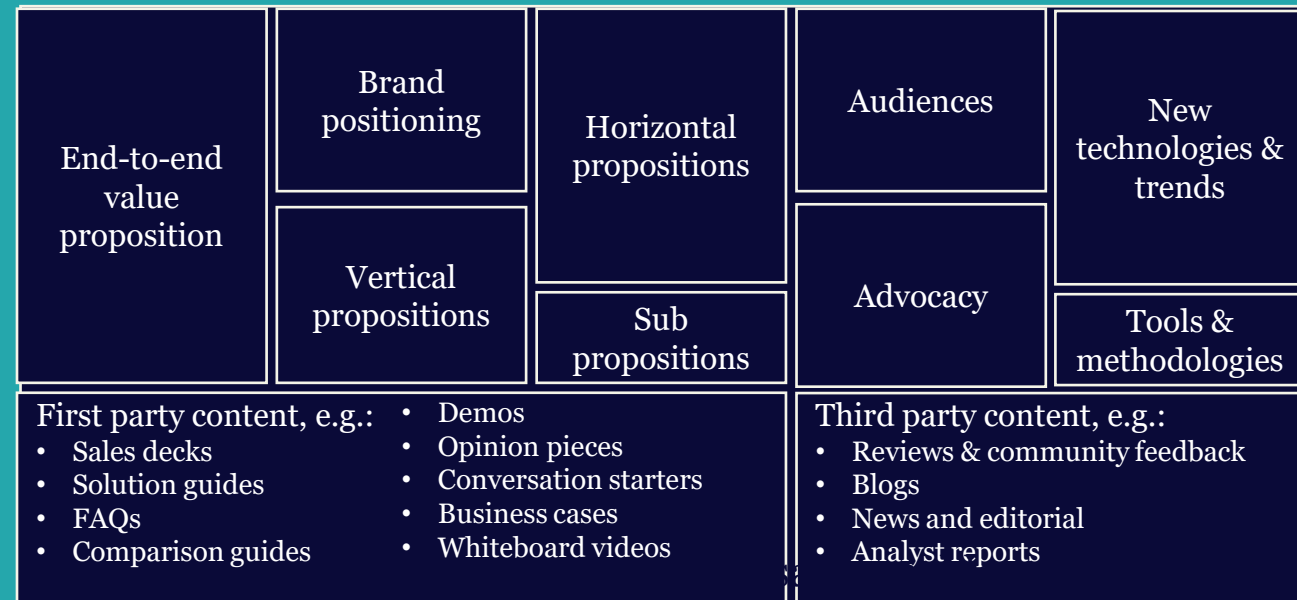
# Don't be 'that guy'

There are marketers out there who will jump on the back of everything from the Olympics to International Talk Like a Pirate Day to try to sell stuff. Covid-19 is a global pandemic, not a marketing ploy. Using it as an irrelevant intro to your services will not only be a waste of time, it will ruin your reputation with that prospect.



# Who'd be a salesperson in the **no-handshake** era?

Marketers need more than ever to support sales as they move to a virtual selling environment, equipping them with the data, evidence, content and tools they need to generate and close opportunities.



The sales enablement canvas



# Stick to what you know

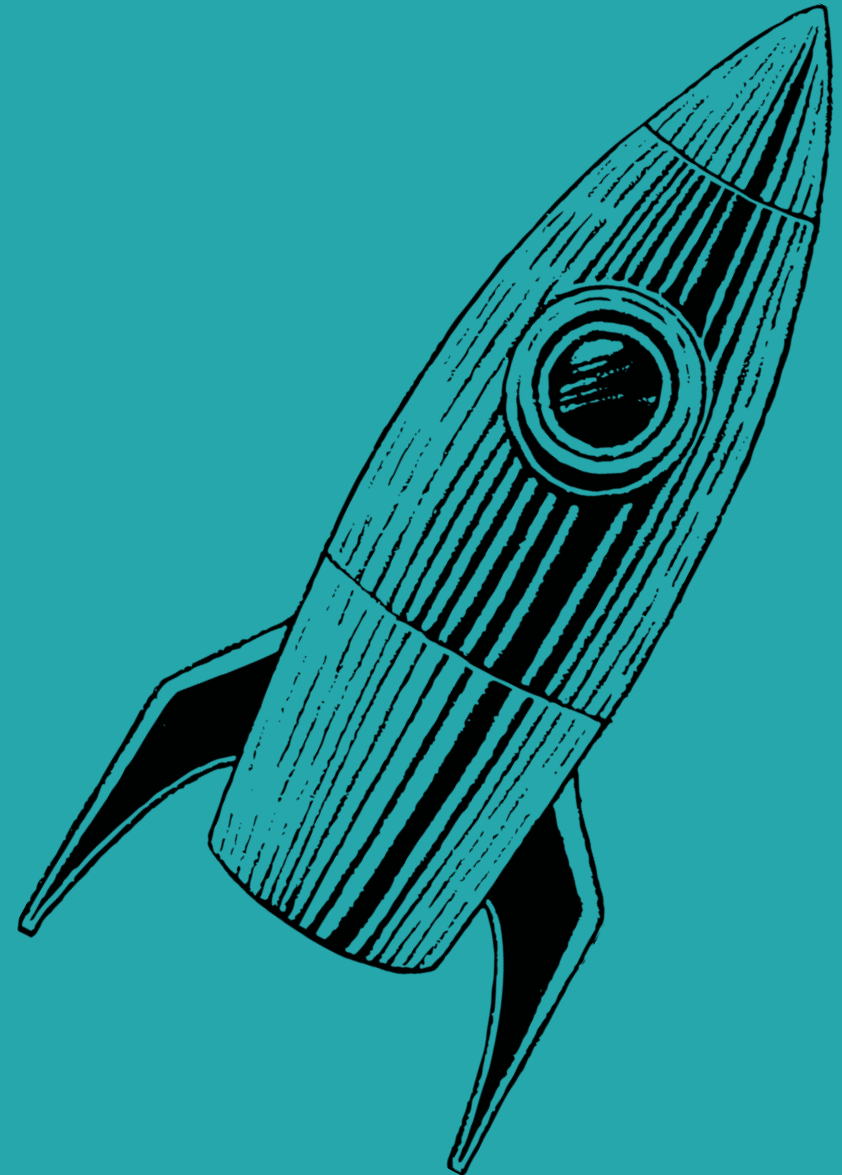
Messaging and tone couldn't be more important now. We're marketers, not doctors, mental health specialists, yoga experts, workstation set-up gurus or physical trainers. Social media is crammed with marketers and others offering tips on dealing with coronavirus. Unless your organisation has specialist expertise, leave the advice to the experts and make your communications stand out by providing helpful content in your own area of specialism.



# No F2F event = webinar, right?

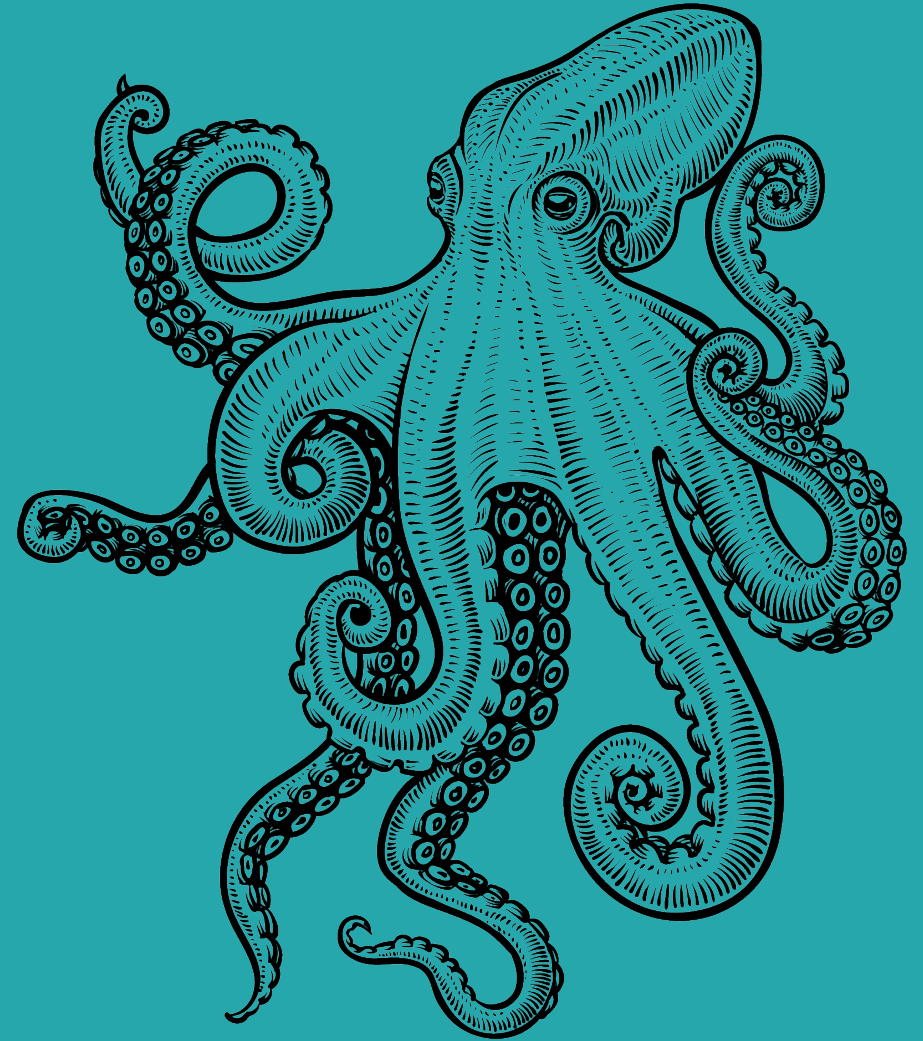
## Wrong

What was your original objective? If it was about brand awareness and credibility then consider switching resource to other tactics such as audio or video content, paid digital, award entries and SEM. If your objective was lead generation then a webinar might be the right option. Equally you could upweight other tactics within your demand generation and ABM programmes if you're concerned the world's gone webinar-mad.



# We're spelling marketing with 2 'd's

Yes, differentiation is important but don't forget distinctiveness as you rethink your approach. Most B2B marketers focus so much on the differentiation they forget the first job is to get noticed. This can be achieved in many ways, from doing the unexpected to simply being relevant and timely, or listening when others are preaching.



# Did we mention being helpful?

No one wants a hard sell right now. But when we return to (the new) normal, if clients remember the positive impact your company had during this situation you'll be well positioned when we emerge.

Some people may have more time available to learn, with no commute and different working patterns. Can you help your clients to navigate this crisis by providing online training sessions? Do you have internal content that could be repackaged and made available externally?

## Home-schooling for B2B marketers

### *Free skills sessions*

At TMP we've set up a hub of on-demand B2B content from specific updates on marketing through a crisis, to more general bite-size sessions on marketing strategy, demand generation tips, ABM techniques and more. [Check it out.](#)



# Prepare for the new normal

When we emerge from the Covid-19 period, what will the world look like for businesses and the marketers within them? Impossible to know – but it is possible to make some preparations. If you're doing less proactive marketing than usual take this time to do some auditing. How usable and complete is your prospecting data? Where could you be building stronger relationships across your business to set you up for the future? What's Plan B to replace events into Q4 if the events calendar is too crammed? Measure the new tactics you're employing in this period so you can judge which to keep and which to shelve when we're through it.



# 5 Ts to takeaway

## Tone

*Keep it real*

## Tailor

*...the message to suit the  
moment*

## Teach

*Help sales adjust to the new  
way of working*

## Tactics

*Shift to digital*

## PivoT

*Focus on the right  
propositions & products*

...and whatever you do, keep  
communicating.





