

Cutting Edge: Our weekly analysis of marketing news

13 January 2021

Welcome to our weekly analysis of the most useful marketing news for CIM members.

Quick [links](#) to sections

Marketing trends and issues

Advertising

ASA reviews gender stereotyping rules

In 2018 the UK's Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) and Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice (BCAP) banned the depiction of harmful gender stereotypes in advertising. Now the ASA has published a 12-month review which concludes that, while the rules and guidance are meeting their objectives, there is still some confusion over the scope of the rule. It has clarified that the rule applies to sexualisation, objectification and body image that fall within the scope of harmful or offensive gender stereotypes. It has also included additional guidance and will continue to monitor the situation, given that some of the CAP guidance remains untested in ASA rulings.

[lexology.com, 29 December 2020 \(McLean\);
<https://www.asa.org.uk/resource/advertising-guidance-on-depicting-gender-stereotypes.html>](https://www.asa.org.uk/resource/advertising-guidance-on-depicting-gender-stereotypes.html)

The British embrace sentimental ads

Around a decade ago British ads appeared funny, noisy and even slightly, "embarrassed about appearing in your living room". By contrast, American ads seemed more sincere and heart-warming. Then, in 2011, John Lewis launched a Christmas ad about a small boy giving his parents a gift. It caught the British imagination and within days it had exceeded one million views on YouTube. The following year, John Lewis's ad led to store sales rising by 44%. Other brands realised that tugging on the heartstrings equated to greater spending and the last decade has seen an outpouring of sentimentality, including Sainsbury's famous 2014 WW1 ad. The pressure is on John Lewis to continue to deliver, while other brands try to emulate it. But it is not enough simply to be sentimental or nostalgic: you need to be able to link

this emotion back to the experience of your brand...
[fastcompany.com](https://www.fastcompany.com), 24 December 2020 (Millar)

Agencies

What does this year hold for ad agencies?

Four agency heads look at what agencies could or should be doing in 2021. Sheryl Marjoram, CEO of McCann London, believes that: "Creativity is the only way to survive" and sets out some key elements that should be included. Karen Martin, CEO of Bartle Bogle Hegarty London, says this is a "people industry" and we should be protecting "our most critical assets". Larissa Vince CEO of Now, focuses on dealing with those "curve balls" and the importance of being flexible. James Murphy, founding partner at New Commercial Arts, warns about long-term changes and not trying to return to, "agency life as we knew it". If you want to change the way you work, 2021 is the time to do it!

[campaignlive.co.uk](https://www.campaignlive.co.uk), 29 December 2020

Why don't clients read agency reports?

SEO agencies often fail to highlight their achievements, which get overlooked in the automated reports generated. Since the agency is an important part of building the client relationship, how can it ensure that the client recognises the ROI it has delivered? Reporting is an important activity, but it sometimes fails to produce a response from the client. This article examines the reasons why clients don't read agency reports, such as: client expectations; confusing or unbalanced reports; too much data; and inconsistent reporting frequency. Advice is offered on how to optimise the reporting process.

[searchengineland.com](https://www.searchengineland.com), January 2021

Brands and branding

Corporate branding – role in B2B relationships

This study examines the effect of corporate brand relationships on brand value through a series of B2B case studies. The research looks at three aspects: the main elements of a corporate brand; how a corporate brand generates value for their business customer; and how the tangible and intangible brand benefits influence relationship initiation and management practices. It reveals that corporate business culture, brand relationships, products, and corporate identity and personality are the main parts of a corporate brand in a B2B context. In addition, a corporate brand can generate intangible and tangible brand value benefits for business customers. Brand value is also found to play an important role in relationship initiation.

Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal, Vol 23(4), 2020, pp627-661 (Ozdemir et al)

Discovering the story of the brand

This episode of the Duct Tape Marketing Podcast, entitled *How to Discover the Story of Your Brand*, consists of an interview with Park Howell, an advertising veteran and author of several publications on brand storytelling. He answers questions on what storytelling means for small business marketers; how to use the story idea to help the business; how the idea of story affects internal audiences; and defining the Story Cycle System. (See also Marketing)

ducttapemarketing.com, January 2021 (Jantsch)

Conferences and events

Four trends for 2021

It is hard to know what will happen this year but some of the trends which appeared in 2020, aimed at tackling safety and preventing the spread of Covid, are likely to continue into 2021. Four trends for the events industry this year are expected to be: catering (off-premise events for restaurants); micro-events (a small guest count); venue flexibility; and virtual and hybrid events. The advice is to start planning now!

eventindustrynews.com, 4 January 2021

Consumer behaviour

Popularity signs and consumer choice

Popularity signs, such as “best seller” and “top rated”, are often used by marketers to encourage consumers to buy. Much research has focused on the positive aspects of this strategy but here the researchers show that it can have negative consequences. Popularity signs can make decision-making harder for consumers by increasing their feelings of uncertainty. Seven studies suggest that popularity signs can have a negative effect on consumers if they are prevention-focused (responsibilities, staying safe), rather than being

promotion-focused (gain, achievement). They conclude that popularity signs tend to increase choice uncertainty and reduce choice commitment among prevention-focused consumers.

International Journal of Research in Marketing, Vol 37(4), December 2020, pp805-820 (Ghiassaleh et al)

Customer relations

Favourite brands but a lack of loyalty

The DMA's *How to win Trust and Loyalty* study asked consumers which brands were their favourites and which they were most loyal to. Amazon came out ahead (15%), but has gained little ground since the last survey in 2018 (14%). Consumer loyalty tends to be based on convenience (54%) rather than a real connection (46%). It was followed by John Lewis and Sainsbury's (both 4%) and Tesco (3%). Some 25% of people mentioned brands outside the top ten, demonstrating that the big brands do not attract as much loyalty as one might expect; while 35% of consumers said they didn't feel loyal enough to any brand to regard it as a favourite. Top reasons for this were: not feeling rewarded enough (38%); switching to get a deal or discount (33%); and not feeling strongly enough (29%). This suggests that there could be an opportunity for brands to engage with consumers who haven't yet decided on their loyalties.

dma.org.uk, 6 January 2021

Direct marketing

Direct mail marketing for ecommerce

When companies are focusing entirely on a digital environment, traditional marketing strategies seem less relevant. Yet some “real-world” marketing can offer solutions that can't be achieved online. For example, direct mail is one way in which an e-commerce business can use traditional methods to generate leads, convert customers and create brand ambassadors. This article looks at the value of direct mail marketing in the digital era and offers advice on how to use it for e-commerce.

dma.org.uk, 6 January 2021 (Sumner)

Law

Trademark genericide

If “Zoom” were to become a general word for online video meetings, it would lose its distinctiveness and become a generic trademark. Previous trademarks that have become generic include Aspirin, Escalator and Thermos. They have turned into simple descriptors to define a class of goods or services rather than referring to a particular trader. This is the process of “trademark genericide”. This article looks at what a trademark should be, how genericide occurs and what brand owners should do to retain the value and strength of their brand.

internationallawoffice.com, 21 December 2020 (Coetzer)

Information governance in instant messaging

Today's electronic business communication tools, including chat and instant messaging, have the potential to create a "recordkeeping compliance gap". As regulators continually increase requirements, and guidance for instant messaging and remote working grows due to the pandemic, the importance of legal compliance and information governance is growing. This article examines the barriers to compliance with retention obligations in instant messaging, and how compliance relies on IT solutions and business retention policies.

lexology.com, 7 January 2021 (Douglas and Norwich)

Data rules kept for six months

The UK and EU have agreed to keep data transfer rules in place until 1 July 2021 while transfer arrangements are negotiated. The Market Research Society and Advertising Association have advised their members to take precautions in the event of a data adequacy agreement not being reached. Data adequacy determines whether a country or territory has adequate data protection in place.

research-live.com, 5 January 2021 (Kay)

Marketing

B2B brand building – the long view

Most B2B marketers focus on the bottom of the funnel, with LinkedIn research suggesting that 96% don't measure the impact of brand beyond six months. Yet B2B brands that invest at least 50% of their budget in long-term brand building, produce the best returns in market share growth, profitability and revenue. Although lead generation increases short-term sales, brand building creates more value. Brand building takes time and involves repeatable, distinctive creative concepts, such as DeBeers' "A Diamond Is Forever" campaign which has been around for nearly 90 years. Over the next few years, we should see B2B marketing budgets move to the top of the funnel. The author sets out five benefits for building a famous B2B brand.

marketingweek.com, 5 January 2021 (Weinberg and Lombardo)

Storytelling – myths and guidance

There has been endless hype about great storytelling, but every brand has a founding story and values which need to be communicated effectively to customers. Yet storytelling can cause complications and confusion if it is not geared specifically to business goals and purpose, and can lead to audiences becoming disengaged. It is essential to have a good understanding of how storytelling works. Based on conversations with "those who do it best", the author uncovers some common myths about storytelling and offers guidance on achieving effective storytelling. (See also Brands and branding)

clearvoice.com, 29 December 2020 (Tigar)

Utility-based marketing

The way in which consumers spend their money is constantly changing. Companies need to find ways of understanding and communicating the value of their product or service to attract consumers and convince them to convert. This is where utility-based marketing can be useful. Its goal is, "to offer consumers functional and useful products or services that provide a specific benefit or can be repurposed to serve multiple functions". Here the author looks at five common types of utility in marketing: time, place, possession, form and information.

blog.hubspot.com, 30 December 2020 (Bonderud)

Market research

Geodemographics now and in the future

Geodemographics, or the analysis of people according to where they live, has been around for many years and became an industry in its own right back in the 1980s; but little is heard about it these days. Geodemographic systems tend to be embedded in survey operations and business applications such as site location and customer marketing. This article looks at where geodemographics is now, how it has changed and where its future lies. It also discusses the forthcoming census in England and Wales, which is due to be conducted this March.

research-live.com, 7 January 2021 (Leventhal)

Measuring global market research

This article is based on data in the *2020 Global Market Research* report from ESOMAR. It points out that, while the industry's aim is to "analyse data in order to deliver insights and support/assist decision-making", this does not define the boundaries of this constantly-evolving sector. For years ESOMAR has been mapping the "technology-enabled" research industry and concludes that it should now be summarised in terms of seven segments. Some of the statistics are included in this article, such as global turnover by region and the largest segments.

researchworld.com, 11 January 2021 (Palacio)

Public relations

Apologies – the good, bad and non-existent

PR Week looks at some of the most high-profile apologies (or lack of) of the year which have had varied repercussions. The MS Society apologised for its attempts to "turn the streets of Belfast orange", which could have led to sectarian tension, calling the initiative an "honest mistake". Often the apologies came as a result of an online backlash. For example, Mike Ashley, owner of Sports Direct, was "deeply apologetic" after keeping his stores open during lockdown, having seriously misjudged the public mood at the time. This was not the case with Dominic Cummings, who failed to apologise following his 260-mile trip to Durham and

subsequent drive to Barnard Castle. Not only did it send Boris Johnson's approval ratings into negative figures, but it called into question the Government's "moral authority on public health messaging".

prweek.com, 21 December 2020 (Griggs)

Holding statements – buying time

When responding to a crisis, it may be necessary to issue a bulletin, which is useful if you don't have access to all the facts. The timeframe for responding is short, with some experts believing that organisations have just 15 minutes in which to do so. One answer is to prepare holding statements which can be modified according to events. This will give you more time to understand what is really happening as well as helping to reduce rumour and speculation. In this re-run of a previous article, the author sets out the six essential elements of an effective holding statement.

prdaily.com, 30 December 2020 (Fisher)

Sponsorship

In-Game sponsorship activation effectiveness

The author investigates the effect of "In-Game Sponsorship Activation Experience" (SAE) in promoting sponsorship awareness and share of wallet gains for a sponsoring brand of a college basketball team. In-Game SAE is defined as "entertainment featuring the sponsoring brand that occurs during a game" and which allows fans to participate. The study also looks at three other sponsors of the same team that do not use In-Game SAE. The results suggest that In-Game SAE raises awareness and share of wallet among attendees when compared to the TV audience. This picture is not reflected in the sponsors that don't use an In-Game SAE. The indications are that an In-Game SAE creates memorability with attendees which results in purchase intentions. Interestingly, however, general purchase intentions and team identification are not necessarily associated with sponsorship awareness.

Sport Marketing Quarterly, Vol 29(4), December 2020, pp243-255 (Hickman)

Agriculture, fishing and forestry

Gene editing – if the UK departs from EU rules

Following Brexit, the UK has decided to consider the deregulation of gene editing for food and farming as one of the areas in which it will depart from EU law. This is unsurprising given that the UK has for some time been calling for a liberalisation of EU rules. It believes that gene editing could benefit farmers, lead to healthier food, an improved environment and better animal welfare. However, a key question is the impact any changes would have on agrifood trade with the EU. It could be costly for UK business in terms of more audits and inspections and even

the possibility of setting up different production lines aimed at the UK and EU markets.

thegrocer.co.uk, 8 January 2021 (Holmes)

Smart potato bags

A seed potato supplier is trialling smart delivery bags incorporating an NFC chip so that customers can download information about the potatoes. HZPC of the Netherlands is rolling out 1,000 of its "smart bigbags" to customers in seven countries who will be able to tap their smartphone on the bag for details of potato varieties and cultivation advice. The NFC chips also contain microsensors which can monitor the temperature at which the potatoes have been kept during transportation.

nfcw.com, 5 January 2021 (Phillips)

Aquaculture innovation and patenting

Aquaculture is an important and growing industry in Scotland. Salmon farming and processing was worth nearly £885m to the country's economy in 2018 while shellfish and finfish production accounted for £13m, according to a Marine Scotland report. The aquaculture industry must continue to innovate to become more sustainable, according to Scottish Green MSP John Finnie, but companies and researchers will need to protect their innovations to maintain their competitive advantage. Patent protection is regarded as most suitable for protecting aquaculture inventions. Patent attorney Marks & Clerk, discusses two aquaculture companies that are using patents to protect their innovations.

mondaq.com, 5 January 2021 (Chapman)

Building industry

Tiny homes build momentum

Small homes are part of the solution for providing affordable homes and tackling homelessness. In the US, 2020 saw some interesting developments. For example, in Austin, Texas, huge 3D printers have been building the walls of tiny homes for homeless people. Icon, the company behind the technology, is also working with a charity to build a 3D printed neighbourhood for the poor in Mexico. Some big cities in the US are allowing people to build tiny homes on wheels which can fit easily into existing spaces as a way of providing more housing. Other designers and entrepreneurs are working on converting units, such as garages, into dwellings. Connect Homes builds small modular shelters in factories and then delivers them on the back of a truck.

fastcompany.com, 1 January 2021 (Peters)

Extreme buildings

"Extreme buildings" are increasingly being erected in unusual locations as scientists and researchers attempt to tackle problems such as climate change and rising sea levels. As well as providing insights

into the natural world, the trend is providing opportunities for innovative architects. Examples include: the forthcoming Proteus, a 371 square metre underwater research station which will include pod apartments for visitors and will be powered by renewable energy; the refurbished Henry Arctowski Antarctic Research Station which will include a greenhouse to grow food for its residents; and the Experimental Bioregenerative Station in the Mojave Desert, a carbon-neutral village made from glass domes as part of an experiment for living on other planets. You can rent rooms for \$6,000 a week!

wired.co.uk, 8 January 2021 (Varghese)

Businesses and strategy

Failing to adapt – “eight deadly sins”

The authors examine why large organisations are unable to embrace change and risk. In this excerpt from their book, *From Incremental to Exponential*, they set out what they call the: “Eight Deadly Sins of Stasis”. Individually they may not mean that a company will not be able to innovate and change, but collectively they indicate that a company is failing to maintain its relevance and survive. One failure is the “unwillingness to listen”: British retailer HMV failed to adapt when it was threatened by online competition.

fastcompany.com, 2 January 2021 (Wadhwa et al)

Trends for 2021

With vaccinations in sight, businesses, individuals and society can start looking to the future. In this article, McKinsey analysts look at some of the trends that will shape the “next” normal, the direction of the global economy, how businesses will adjust and how society could be changed forever. As confidence returns, we will see the rise of so-called consumer “revenge shopping” which has been observed after previous economic downturns. The difference this time is that services have been badly affected and the rebound is likely to be seen in areas such as restaurants and entertainment venues. Other topics covered in this article include: business travel, which may take longer to bounce back; innovation and a new generation of entrepreneurs; the Fourth Industrial Revolution; rebalancing supply chains; the future of work; the “Bio Revolution” (vaccines, etc); environmental sustainability; healthcare systems; and rising debt.

mckinsey.com, 4 January 2021 (Sneider and Singhal)

Making a case for the four-day week

Target Publishing, which was forced to reduce staff pay during the first lockdown, compensated by introducing a four-day week. It has produced such “huge” benefits that the company has retained the shorter week even though employee pay has been reinstated. Thinktank the New Economics Foundation and other organisations around Europe

have been championing the four-day week for some time. In November Unilever moved all its New Zealand staff to a four-day week while on the same pay. It is introducing new project management software to cut out unnecessary tasks and create faster decision-making before rolling out a shorter week to all its employees worldwide. Toyota and Microsoft have adopted similar initiatives. Economist Aidan Harper, co-author of a new book, *The Case for a Four-Day Week*, wants the UK Government to get in line with other European countries, most of whom have shorter working weeks.

theguardian.com, 5 January 2021 (Inman)

Remote selling best practices

Virtual selling was on the rise even before the current crisis but once the pandemic hit, many businesses were forced to give up field sales completely. By May 2020, remote selling, which was the only way forward for some businesses, saw a 163% rise. Virtual selling is almost certainly here to stay which means that businesses have to be good at it. This article covers the meaning of virtual sales; the biggest challenges; and what buyers think about it. It also offers ten virtual sales tips for avoiding the biggest mistakes and includes some results from a global study of buyers and sellers conducted last year.

clickfunnels.com, 28 December 2020 (Parkes)

Open hiring encourages diversity

Businesses are expected to promote inclusion and diversity in their workforces, but hiring processes generally require resumes, background checks and degrees that can exclude low-skilled, entry level people. Yet many industries, such as manufacturing, retail and food services, depend on front-line employees where people can be trained on the job. Open hiring, which focuses on a person’s potential, can lead to more diverse talent in the workforce and can help to reduce the cost of recruitment. There are four essential keys for successful open hiring: link it to the company’s mission; get internal buy-in; reinforce accountability for those who are hired; and create an ecosystem for supporting the “whole employee”.

hbr.org, 5 January 2021 (DeLong and Marcus)

FTSE 100 chief executive pay

Leaders of FTSE 100 companies earned more in the first three days of last week than the average worker earns all year, according to research from the High Pay Centre, a think tank. FTSE chief executives work just 34 hours to exceed the median annual worker’s pay of £31,461, up from 33 hours in 2020. Chief executive pay is now around 120 times that of an average UK worker, up from 50 times at the turn of the millennium. Median FTSE 100 chief executive pay was £3.61m in 2019. Critics have dismissed the research as “the politics of envy”, with

Daniel Pryor of the Adam Smith Institute arguing that: "Small differences in top talent make a big impact on a business' bottom line".

[bbc.co.uk/news](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news), 7 January 2021

Charities and NGOs

Three Ps of digital

In the third of a three-part series on the "three Ps" of digital strategy, the author looks at why charities should choose the right platforms for their strategy and offers a simple guide to making the right decisions. The article covers bringing in new systems and technologies; the advantages of new platforms; and digital platforms as an investment. The first two articles examine planning and people instalment.

charitydigital.org.uk, 30 December 2020 (Chiu)

Durable consumer goods

Samsonite looks to the future

The travel industry has suffered hugely during the pandemic and much of its marketing has been put on hold. However, luggage brand Samsonite has decided that it is worth reminding consumers about the pleasure of travelling, with its recent "Travel is a Gift" campaign. It aims to produce feelings of nostalgia for the travel experience as well as optimism and hope for what the coming year could bring. This year marks Samsonite's 110th anniversary. Here eMarketer talks to David Oksman, head of marketing and e-commerce about the latest campaign.

emarketer.com, 17 December 2020 (Kats)

Robot mowers cut grass without being asked

Robotic lawnmowers were recently reported heading out to mow their owners' grass without being instructed to do so. The Automowers were made by Swedish company Husqvarna, which says that a problem on the smart network IFTT platform could have been responsible. Owners are able to use the platforms to create commands and actions telling the mowers when to operate. Domestic robots are becoming more common in homes but there have been glitches: Amazon's Echo smart speakers have been known to laugh out loud unprompted; while researchers have recently proved that robot vacuum cleaners could eavesdrop on their owners.

inews.co.uk, 2 January 2021 (Williams)

Economy

Economist warns of another recession

There are warnings that England's third lockdown could lead to a double-dip recession, with GDP falling in both the last quarter of 2020 and the first three months of 2021. Allan Monks, an economist at JP Morgan, predicts a fall in GDP of 2.5% for Q1 and believes that the latest lockdown will harm the

economy more than November's lockdown. Although the downturn may not be as severe as that in the spring, output still has a lot of recovering to do. Monks claims that the economy was, "already running 11% below normal" even before this lockdown.

business-live.co.uk, 5 January 2021 (Williams and Finch)

Manufacturing output data

Manufacturing output for the three months to October 2020 rose by 10% compared with the three months to July 2020. However, manufacturing in the three months to October fell by 7.8% compared with the same period in the previous year. Manufacturing output in October 2020 was also 6.6% below the pre-pandemic levels of February 2020. In contrast, the manufacturing PMI for December 2020 was 57.5, up from 55.6 in November and representing a three-year high, according to the Markit/CIPS Purchasing Managers' Index. However, despite new orders rising at their fastest rate since August, the sector has continued to lose jobs. This House of Commons Library bulletin contains links to the original data sources.

commonslibrary.parliament.uk, 4 January 2021 (Hutton)

A quarter of a million businesses could close

The pandemic could lead to the demise of 250,000 out of the UK's 5.9m small businesses over the next 12 months, according to a survey from the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB). It found that 5% of those surveyed expect to close this year due to the Government's business support failing to keep up with coronavirus restrictions. The FSB is proposing a support scheme for self-employed workers who aren't covered by the Government's scheme.

marketingweek.com, 11 January 2021

The Brexit financial settlement

This House of Commons Library research briefing summarises the Brexit financial settlement, otherwise known as the "exit bill" or "divorce bill". It explains how the UK and EU are settling their outstanding financial commitments to each other. The net cost to the UK could be £33bn, according to Office for Budget Responsibility estimates.

commonslibrary.parliament.uk, 30 December 2020

(Keep); <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8822/>

The Brexit trade deal

The UK and EU agreed a trade deal on 24 December, just days before the end of the Brexit transition period. This House of Commons Library briefing sets out the main features, including the controversial issue of UK fishing waters where the EU agrees to give up just 25% of its fisheries quota over a period of five years. The agreement also allows both parties to take counter-measures should they believe that competition is being distorted. The

full report can be downloaded and there are links to relevant sources.

commonslibrary.parliament.uk, 24 December 2020 (Fella); <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9101/>

Education

Tackling data fees for disadvantaged children

The closure of schools in England during the lockdown is a problem for low-income families who can't afford data packages for their children to learn remotely. Internet providers are being called upon to help disadvantaged pupils who are dependent on pay-as-you-go mobiles or a small data allowance. Tech for UK is a coalition of technologists and business leaders proposing that edtech apps and websites should be zero rated. One of the challenges will be to choose which platforms to support so as not to create an unfair advantage for some.

[bbc.co.uk/news](https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-56484444), 5 January 2021 (Kelion)

Essay mills and monitoring: the cheat industry

Universities around the world have reported a rise in cheating during the pandemic, mainly because of the shift to virtual teaching environments, student stress levels and the opportunities for answering test questions using online help. In the UK, the Quality Assurance Agency has reported a rise in the use of "contract cheating", with 904 essay mills known to be in operation around the country. In response, universities are turning to companies selling online monitoring tools to check for cheating. Students sometimes do not even know that they cheating since they have been brought up to rely on the internet for information. Many students feel uncomfortable with online learning, as do their professors. This could be a time for universities to reflect on their approach to learning...

[timeshighereducation.com](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/essay-mills-cheating-2020), 23 December 2020 (Basken)

Energy and utilities

IEA plan for net zero by 2050

The energy that powers everyday living accounts for three-quarters of global emissions which makes the goal of becoming carbon-neutral by 2050 a "Herculean undertaking", says Fatih Birol, executive director of the International Energy Agency (IEA). Long-term targets alone will not be enough to reduce emissions fast enough to reach the target. Instead, it requires worldwide action on an "unprecedented speed and scale". In May the IEA is due to publish the first comprehensive roadmap for the global energy sector to reach net zero by 2050.

[ft.com](https://www.ft.com/content/2021/01/10/iea-net-zero-2050), 10 January 2021 (Birol)

Urine – alternative heating

In the past, urine has been a very useful ingredient: Roman laundries used it to remove grease and it

was a source of potassium nitrate in gunpowder. Now Wei-Shan Chen of Wageningen University in the Netherlands believes that it could be used to create heat from waste wood without fire. Researchers have been looking at ways of releasing the heat created by wood by composting rather than combustion. Dr Chen found that wood fed with urine can sustain temperatures of 40°C to 50°C which would be high enough to heat buildings. Commercialising this finding would involve a suitable reactor and heat exchanger as well as collecting urine in bulk...

[economist.com](https://www.economist.com/technology-and-science/2021/01/02/urine-heating), 2 January 2021

Octopus put energy into brand building

This article describes how Octopus Energy differentiated itself from its competitors with its "Portraits from the Precipice" campaign launched in November 2019. It recruited a global roster of artists to create works in response to the question "What does climate change mean to you?" The result was the biggest DOOH art exhibition in the world and an additional 37,000 customers who switched to 100% renewable energy. Octopus also received the 2020 *Marketing Week* award for utilities thanks to its decision to move its entire marketing budget from acquisition marketing to brand building.

[marketingweek.com](https://www.marketingweek.com/octopus-energy-brand-building), 11 January 2021

Environment

Ikea promoting thrift

Ikea has launched an international campaign espousing the virtues of frugality. The "Fortune favours the frugal" TV and cinema ad depicts a giant ball of rubbish rushing towards Earth. A family is seen taking active steps towards reducing waste and energy which results in the ball of rubbish decreasing in size until just a single plastic bottle lands in their garden. The campaign promotes Ikea products that are made from recycled materials as well as the energy-efficiency of its flatpack distribution. A radio ad talks about the word "frugal", which usually has negative connotations.

[campaignlive.co.uk](https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/news/2021/01/01/ikea-frugal), 1 January 2021 (Gwynn)

Masking cow burps – reducing methane

Methane expelled by cows is one of the biggest contributors to global warming. Now Zelp, a UK-based company, has developed a burp-catching face mask for cows which claims to reduce emissions by 60%. The mask, which enables cows to digest their food without interference, is placed close to the nostrils and mouth where 95% of cattle methane emissions come from. The technology oxidises the methane as it is exhaled, reducing the global warming potential of the gas to less than 1.5% of what it was previously. The mask can also monitor animal welfare and help to reduce costs.

[wired.co.uk](https://www.wired.co.uk/news/story/cow-mask-reduces-methane), 1 January 2021 (Marks)

Fashion

Fashioning a sustainable future

H&M, the fashion chain, is banking on the fact that people will change the way they choose and buy clothes. With its 5,000 stores in over 70 countries, it hopes to be able to change consumer behaviour. The company's sustainability goals include only using sustainable materials by 2030 and having a "climate positive" value chain by 2040. In this interview, Vanessa Rothschild, global sustainability steering and development manager at H&M Group, speaks about the future of sustainable fashion. She argues that companies which, "embrace circularity and digitization at the same time" will come to dominate the fashion industry.

mckinsey.com, 14 December 2020

Patagonia encourages other brands to upcycle

In 2019 Patagonia launched ReCrafted, an experimental collection made from waste fabric. Since then, it has sold thousands of products made from upcycles clothing. Alex Kremer, head of Patagonia's used gear business, is arguing the case for all fashion brands to upcycle products as part of their business, enabling them to create new revenue streams in the process. Upcycling, once a cottage industry for environmentalists, has gone mainstream. The downside is that some brands are adopting the trend without actually changing their practices. This article looks at the challenges of upcycling and the work that Patagonia is doing.

fastcompany.com, 11 January 2021 (Segran)

Financial services

Digital trends for adapting to post-Covid

Digital channels have become significant marketing and PR tools for financial institutions, with the pandemic raising the importance of digital banking trends. It has also changed customers' behaviours and expectations, forcing financial institutions to do things differently. According to McKinsey, three quarters of consumers have tried different brands since the pandemic, with 60% expecting to adopt new brands in the future. Loyalty, empathy and emotional connection are vital aspects of creating bonds between financial institutions and their customers. The author sets out ten digital banking user experience trends that will help financial brands adapt in a post-Covid world.

thefinancialbrand.com, 21 December 2020 (Kreger)

Biometric payment cards set to take off

Some 2.5m biometric payment cards could be issued this year, according to a forecast from ABI Research which says that they are, "the next-generation evolutionary card form factor" for contactless authentication. It also points out that higher contactless transaction limits are likely to remain as

contactless becomes the, "de facto digital payment type of the future". Over 20 biometric payment card pilots are currently taking place around the world. Biometric payment cards will also help to tackle the growing problem of contactless fraud and improve privacy.

nfcw.com, 18 December 2020 (Phillips)

FMCG

Beverages

Supermarket alcohol shifts to own-brand

Retailers are evolving their alcohol products from own-label to own-brand. Amazon has created its own range of spirits while The Bottle Club.com has developed its own Apple Pie Gin. Retailers aren't simply producing own-label products: they are building brands that can compete with well-established names on flavour, quality, positioning and provenance. Amazon's Tovess Gin already has its own brand story about being distilled in one of the oldest copper pots in the UK. The combination of premium quality and low price is appealing to consumers while giving retailers the advantage that they are the only supplier. However, they should cut out the middleman in the supply chain, argues the author.

thegrocer.co.uk, 6 January 2021 (Gibson)

Food

Crème Egg's "golden goobilee" – 50 years

Cadbury is celebrating 50 years of the Crème Egg with a new campaign featuring different ways of eating the egg. "The Crème Egg "golden goobilee" features "lickers", "bakers", "dippers" and "eggsperts" enjoying the eggs in their own way. Cadbury has produced 200 hidden golden eggs, giving people a chance to win £5,000 up until Easter. Cadbury produces over 500m Crème Eggs a year. First sold in 1963 as Fry's Crème Egg, they were rebranded as Cadbury in 1971.

campaignlive.co.uk, 4 January 2021 (McGonagle)

Peace Pop supports peace and recycling

Ben & Jerry's is expanding its Cookie Dough range with a "Peace Pop" ice cream on a stick. The company launched Peace Pops back in 1988 to support peace initiatives but this new product launch will, "continue to raise a stick for justice and equality today". The new packaging, a "first of its kind" tie-dye wrap, supports Unilever's global packaging pledge to halve its use of virgin plastic so that all its packaging is reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025. The ice cream brand is well-known for its activism following a string of initiatives.

thegrocer.co.uk, 8 January 2021 (Dawson)

Heinz launches chilled protein pot

Heinz has launched its first ever chilled product in the form of Protein Pots. They contain a mix of beans, sausage and scrambled egg and are being made for Heinz by Nature's Way Foods. They are aimed at people who are in a hurry but want a high protein breakfast or lunch. This follows consumer testing which revealed that 98% of shoppers agreed that it was, "a new and different concept compared to other breakfast products currently on the market".

thegrocer.co.uk, 2 January 2021 (Woolfson)

Household

Unilever develops self-cleaning technology

Unilever says it can create self-cleaning surfaces using Lactam, a substance made from seaweed. Rather than destroying bacteria, Lactam prevents micro-organisms from forming biofilms on surfaces. The company is to begin consumer trials for its use in cleaning products. Unilever VP of science and technology Jonathan Hague says the technology will also target the B2B market which is much bigger than the consumer market. Bacteria are a problem in many areas such as pumping oil and gas, medical applications and veterinary care.

marketingweek.com, 5 January 2021

Tobacco

Yoo fails to respond to ASA

The ASA has told Surrey-based delivery service, Yoo Delivery, that its Facebook post promoting "McDonald's and cigarette" was in breach of the UK's Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act 2002 which prohibits the advertising of tobacco. Facebook said it removed the post once it had been made aware of it. The ASA, which has not received a response from Yoo, has now referred the matter to CAP's Compliance Team. Cigarette delivery is also featured in Yoo's app which also comes within the ASA's remit.

campaignlive.co.uk, 6 January 2021 (Gwynn)

Government and public sector

Army – don't be afraid of failure

The British Army's latest campaign tells potential recruits they can "Fail. Learn. Win", by showing them that failure can lead to positive outcomes and that they needn't quit. This follows research by the Army which revealed that 82% of young people don't achieve their goals because they are afraid of failing and 76% are held back by this. Nick Terry, CMO of the recruiting group, says it wants the Army to be perceived as a supportive place. Last year's campaign achieved a record for the highest number of applications in a single day.

marketingweek.com, 7 January 2021

Health and pharmaceuticals

Better Health Government campaign

Public Health England (PHE) and the NHS have launched a new campaign aimed at getting people to adopt a healthier lifestyle. It forms part of the "Better Health" campaign launched in July 2020 to combat obesity during the pandemic. The new initiative targets 40- to 60-year-olds and groups that have been most affected by the virus. The TV, radio and social media ad shows people starting their day with meditation, exercise or healthy eating and directs people to the Better Health website. The initiative follows research by PHE which found that seven in ten people are motivated to make changes to their lifestyles because of the pandemic.

campaignlive.co.uk, 4 January 2021 (Degun)

Amazon broadens healthcare aspirations

In November Amazon Pharmacy launched in the US, enabling consumers to make pharmacy transactions and receive free, two-day deliveries if they have Amazon Prime. As a result, big pharmacy chains, such as Walgreens and CVS, have seen falling share prices. Chemists in the UK are already preparing for Amazon's entry to the market despite it not having announced plans for other countries. The likes of Lloyds Pharmacy and Boots don't have the logistics to compete with Amazon's short delivery times, except on a local level, and Amazon will also have the clout to offer better deals to consumers than other pharmacies. On a wider scale, Amazon has been preparing itself for a wider healthcare rollout, such as building healthcare apps and using Alexa for healthcare skills. It is already advertising for clinicians for Amazon Pharmacy and other areas of healthcare.

bbc.co.uk/news, 5 January 2021 (Shah)

Pfizer completes rebrand with change of logo

Pfizer has unveiled a new logo in its most radical brand revamp in 70 years. The logo changes from a blue pill shape to a "ribbon helix", a double-helix-type mark which reflects the science behind its Covid-19 vaccine. The logo marks the end of an initiative begun in 2019, when the company shifted from a range of diverse consumer brands to a focus on creating drugs and vaccines. Pfizer has been divesting itself of its consumer health and off-patent drugs for the past two years to create a "smaller, science-based company".

fastcompany.com, 6 January 2021 (Beer)

IT and telecoms

Samsung competes against TSMC

Intel has been in talks with Samsung and Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co (TSMC) about outsourcing production of some of its processor chips. Samsung, which is the largest producer of

memory chips in the world, has been on the lookout for some large contracts but it is also a fierce competitor of TSMC. Analysts believe that TSMC will get a major share of Intel's business because its technology is ahead of Samsung's. It has also been the preferred manufacturer of CPU chips for consumer electronics groups including Apple and Huawei, which compete with Samsung in markets such as smartphones.

ft.com, 11 January 2021

The moon will have 4G while Britain still lags

NASA has awarded Nokia a \$14.1m contract to place a 4G network on the moon. This means that the moon could soon have better 4G coverage than some places on earth! Parts of the UK still don't enjoy full coverage from the UK's Big Four operators: EE, O2, Three and Vodafone. A data analysis has found that out of 650 areas, only 24% have full access to 4G on all four networks. The author lists the ten worst places for 4G coverage by the four operators. Parts of Scotland, Wales and the islands fare the worst.

zdnet.com, 6 January 2021 (Kingsley-Hughes)

Leisure and tourism

WTTC calls for rapid testing system

The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) has stressed that it supports "the testing on departure of all travellers" to make sure they are free of Covid-19, but that people who have not had the vaccine should not be discriminated against. It argues that it will take a long time to vaccinate the global population and that a "blanket vaccination" requirement for travelling would mean that groups such as Gen X, Z and Millennials would be unable to travel. WTTC is calling for an internationally recognised rapid and cost-effective testing regime at departure points around the world to help boost international travel.

wttc.org, 12 January 2021

First VR booking platform

VResorts, a Singapore based booking platform, has announced the launch of a VR-enabled platform which allows users to book hotels using just VR devices. Hotels using the platform have the choice of using VR videos, 360-degree photography or conventional images. VResorts is adamant that the service will be as competitive as other booking platforms such as Expedia or Booking.com.

lexology.com, 24 December 2020 (Duff)

Materials and mining

Tackling Scope 3 emissions

Glencore, the biggest exporter of thermal coal, has set new targets that would make it the first miner to fully align with Paris climate agreement goals. Its aim is to carbon-neutral by 2050, which would

include the CO₂ generated by customers processing its raw materials. The latter, known as "Scope 3" emissions, are an enormous challenge for the mining industry, especially those producing commodities for industries such as steelmaking, which accounts for around 7% of global greenhouse gas emissions. A clear strategy for tackling Scope 3 emissions will be essential for the sector if it wants to attract investment. This article examines the challenges posed by Scope 3 emissions.

ft.com, 7 January 2021 (Hume)

Media

Film

UK sees growth in new film studios

Despite the closure of cinemas, the UK entertainment sector is growing. Now the University of Reading has agreed to build a £200m film studio at its science campus in Berkshire. Commonwealth Real Estate, an LA film studio investor, is to develop the site which will be known as Shinfield Studios. The studio-development sector is expanding: in November, Barking and Dagenham Council agreed a deal with Hackman Capital Partners to build Eastbrook Studios London. Shinfield Studios MD Nick Smith says that the UK is strong on filmmaking talent but lacks the high-quality studio facilities to cope with new and emerging technologies.

constructionnews.co.uk, 18 December 2020 (Weinfaß)

Games

KFConsole keeps chicken hot

KFC launched a teaser campaign last summer in which it talked about developing a gaming device with a built-in chamber for keeping chicken hot. The social media stunt, which generated 11m Twitter impressions worldwide, coincided with people spending more time indoors playing video games. Now KFC plans to build on the buzz by launching a real games console, the KFConsole, in collaboration with Cooler Master, a hardware manufacturer although details of how one can obtain a console are vague. Other marketers have sought to benefit from the surge in gaming: in November Bud Light released the BL6, a gaming device shaped like a six-pack of beer.

marketingdive.com, 5 January 2021 (Williams)

Internet

Moving away from ad-funding

Free online content and services usually involve exposure to ads, some of which are so similar to the content that it is difficult to distinguish between the editorial and the marketing. Companies are tracking everything the consumer does online so that they can serve up even more ads. This year will see the growth of new types of services that are paid for, have no ads and so have no reason to follow

consumers around the web. They will enable companies to create products based on a simple business model that focuses on the customer, who pays a fee and receives value for money. The likes of Netflix and Spotify already use this model but now others are beginning to adopt it. It means that companies will be able to focus on the customer rather than on pleasing advertisers. The shift will also help with concerns over data privacy because there will be no advertisers with whom to share customer data.

wired.co.uk, 4 January 2021 (Ramaswamy)

Newspapers

Brands sign up to Sun "Jabs" campaign

The Sun newspaper's "Jabs Army" campaign to aid the vaccine rollout aims to recruit volunteers to help in support roles. So far, *The Sun* has recruited 28,000 readers to help with patient guidance, transport and other roles. Now a number of brands have offered to support the campaign by providing everything from car parking spaces (Greene King and Morrisons) to vaccination venues (Paddy Power). BA has said it would help recruit volunteers from its furloughed staff.

marketingweek.com, 11 January 2021

Podcasts

Podcasts – the future is audio

Spotify, Amazon and others have been moving into podcasting. Amazon has acquired Wonderly, a producer of podcasts while Spotify has signalled its intention to move into audio "not just music". Podcasting gets most of its revenue from advertising but last year ads made just £1.3 billion, which is small compared with other media. Yet there are good reasons for this growing interest in the medium: global podcasting is on the rise with listeners expected to exceed the 2 billion mark by 2025 while ad sales could treble to \$3.5 billion. As tech giants spend on podcasting, advertisers will be able to buy more ad spots from one source. Podcasts also enable audio-streamers to own content, which they can't do with music, and this gives them a chance to differentiate themselves

economist.com, 2 January 2021

Social media

Social platforms looking very alike

The four major social media platforms have never looked so similar, with many of their new features emulating TikTok, last year's rising star of social media. This marks a shift from previous years when social media platforms have tried to differentiate themselves. They have also been taking ideas from each other: in 2016 Instagram "stole" Stories from Snapchat. The pandemic has led to a rise in the use of social media at a time when ad spending has slowed and Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and

Twitter have been busy launching new services to retain user interest and add more revenue streams. This will be a year in which they start streamlining their offerings as they decide what works for them.

emarketer.com, 5 January 2021 (Enberg)

Television

Disney full stream ahead

This year Disney will be the greatest beneficiary of streaming in the US. There is clearly room in the marketplace for multiple services but none has had an entrance like Disney+. eMarketer estimates that by 2024 over a third of the US population will be using it. In contrast, other streaming entrants have suffered from distribution problems, confused branding or not enough quality programming. Streaming, one of the few success stories during the pandemic, is important to Disney whose theme parks and theatres have been languishing. Streaming affects marketers because it relies on subscriptions rather than advertising. Digital video ad spending is on the rise and there is room for both monetisation strategies, but the share of user time spent with ad-supported streaming services is expected to decline and marketers will need to factor this into their campaigns...

emarketer.com, 24 December 2020 (Benes)

Brands call for TV flexibility

Brands want TV broadcasters to make the flexibility, which they have offered for advertising during the pandemic, into a permanent feature. Speaking at a *Campaign* Breakfast Briefing recently, marketers called for continued flexibility in a fast-changing environment. Carlsberg's director of marketing, Emma Sherwood-Smith, talked about the difficulties involved in the "Welcome back to the pub" campaign in July and the need for agility and responsiveness on the part of media owners. Dan Rubel, brand and marketing director at Dixons Carphone, said that marketers should not be "enabling" a way of marketing that goes back 20 years and that traditional media should, "grow some of the flexibility that they've created during lockdown".

campaignlive.co.uk, 7 January 2021

Packaging

Unconventional lettering on packaging

Packaging is a communication tool that can influence marketing success. The authors investigate a particular visual cue – the use of unconventional lettering such as Arabic – on product packaging whose main language is English. They conclude that, if the unconventional lettering is congruent with the product, it is likely to be regarded as favourable, provided it is perceived as a quality cue. Familiarity with the product category will also influence this relationship. The paper includes

studies in both a developed and developing economy.

Journal of International Consumer Marketing, Vol 33(1), January-February 2021, pp1-18 (Wagner and Charinsarn)

"Fabulous" packaging rather than TV ads

In this interview with David Milner, previously CEO of Tyrell's crisps and head of premium pet food brand Lily's Kitchen, talks about building up a small business. Rather than TV advertising, he advocates a non-traditional approach which uses "fabulous packaging which really speaks to the consumer", as well as PR and social media. "That is far less onerous in terms of cost and it's easier to measure the impact". It is also more appropriate for a new brand than TV, he argues.

managementtoday.co.uk, 5 January 2021 (Brown)

Coke aims to inspire with new messages

Coca Cola has created some limited-edition cans bearing inspirational messages as part of its "Open to Better" campaign. The cans carry phrases such as "I will never take my friends for granted" and "What better time for us to be brave than now". The sayings were provided by celebrities such as Marcus Rashford and Alex Scott.

thegrocer.co.uk, 8 January 2021 (Woolfson)

Retailing

Achieve a strong online brand to stand out

As ecommerce takes over from physical shopping, it must reproduce some of the "joy of shopping" but this can be difficult. Retailers need to get the practical elements right, such as product discovery, conversion, ease of purchase and fulfilment. To compete with the likes of Amazon, they also need to build the brand. Using recommendation engines and dynamic merchandising, Gymshark and Kylie Cosmetics have been able to scale rapidly on Shopify while Next is using its Total Platform to enable clients to grow their businesses. Direct-to-consumer (DTC) brands, which are good at differentiating their online journey, often open physical pop-up shops to widen the consumer experience. The challenge for physical stores is to do the reverse, by standing out online, but doing this requires a strong brand.

marketingweek.com, 4 January 2021 (Davis)

Frictionless retail as stores embrace digital

As the so-called "retail apocalypse" reaches a peak, and legacy retailers reduce their presence, the retail landscape will be replaced by "frictionless, digitally enabled retail experiences". Andrew Lipsman, eMarketer principal analyst and author of the *Future of Retail 2021* report, believes that today's impatient shopper is no longer prepared to wait in line at checkout. Instead, everything should be as frictionless as possible. Amazon, for example has

cashierless Amazon Go convenience stores while its Amazon Fresh stores have "Dash carts" that scan and charge for items as they are placed in the cart. McKinsey research suggests that consumers are embracing new ways of buying, with mobile app orders up from 16% to 28% between March and June 2020. Digital store signage is also expected to be on the rise over the next decade; they represent "the last mile of advertising" and a "highly dynamic marketing vehicle" at the point-of-sale.

emarketer.com, 29 December 2020

Record sales for supermarkets...

Supermarkets saw the biggest sales on record in December, with people spending £11.7 billion, the highest amount ever spent on grocery sales. Supermarkets have benefited from the additional £4bn that would normally have been spent eating and drinking outside the home, according to Kantar. Nevertheless, sales of whole turkeys fell by 5% and Christmas pudding sales remained flat as families cut back on their celebrations. However, alcohol sales rose by £310m as pub and bar closures led to increased drinking at home. Morrisons gained market share, the only one of the Big Four to do so. Local independent stores, Lidl, Iceland and Ocado all outperformed the big players.

theguardian.com, 5 January 2021 (Butler)

...with gains for Morrisons and Aldi

Morrisons has reported an overall rise in sales of 9.3% for the three weeks to 3 January compared with the previous year. The supermarket has benefited from changing shopping patterns with customers shopping earlier for Christmas than in previous years. Champagne sales rose by 64%, and sales of whole salmon by 40%, over the period. Morrisons has also done well out of the rise in online sales where it has been lagging behind the other supermarkets. Aldi has reported record Christmas sales, which were up by 10.6% in the four weeks to 24 December, thanks to premium products and champagne. The pandemic has prompted Aldi to increase its home delivery efforts. However, unlike other supermarkets, it continues to open physical stores with a target of 1,200 by 2025.

bbc.co.uk/news, 5 January 2021; theguardian.com, 4 January 2021

Brexit VAT discourages internet retailers

Tax changes taking places on 1 January due to Brexit have meant that some EU online retailers will no longer deliver to the UK. Dutch Bike Bits, a bicycle part business, says it will ship anywhere in the world except the UK; while Beer On Web, a Belgian company, is not shipping to the UK "due to Brexit measures". Companies facing higher costs and greater bureaucracy have simply given up on the UK. Mail and freight company TNT is imposing a charge of £4.31 on all shipments between the EU

and UK. This follows changes in VAT rules which say that VAT has to be collected at the point of sale rather than when the goods are imported. Which?, the consumer group, says the Government should "make it clear to consumers as well as traders what the changes as a result of Brexit mean for them and how they shop".

[bbc.co.uk/news](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news), 4 January 2021 (Plummer)

Brexit disruption to Percy Pigs?

The UK's export trade is threatened by a "baffling array of post-Brexit rules and regulations", with some food producers, retailers and courier firms suspending or reducing deliveries to the EU. As a temporary measure, M&S has stopped selling some items to its Northern Ireland stores due to complications caused by Brexit. This has even threatened the supply of Percy Pigs to Irish stores because of import taxes!

[thegrocer.co.uk](https://www.thegrocer.co.uk), 11 January 2021 (Mattinson)

Services

Dining sector in crisis

Last year saw 29,684 job losses in the restaurant and casual dining sector, up by 163% on the year before, according to data from the Centre for Retail Research (CRR). Many businesses have gone into administration or entered into restructuring deals. Hospitality firms have seen branch closures rise by 75.8% year-on-year to 1,621. Closures and redundancies have been seen at companies including Pizza Express, Casual Dining Group and Mitchells & Butlers. Joshua Banfield, director of the CRR, points to the rapid expansion of outlets from 2014 to 2017 which led to problems of over-expansion, rising competition and weak consumer demand even before the pandemic hit.

[business-live.co.uk](https://www.business-live.co.uk), 4 January 2021 (Saker-Clark and Houghton)

Burger King's first major rebrand in 20 years

Burger King has created a new brand identity, its first redesign in 20 years. It covers everything from logo, packaging, merchandise and uniforms to social media and marketing assets. The new colours include retro mustard and burnt orange to reflect the shapes and colours of the brand's menu items. This comes at a time when brands are simplifying their appearance to become "functional and legible" in a digital environment. It also seeks to emphasise the use of fresh ingredients in the fast-food industry that is traditionally associated with unhealthy foods.

[fastcompany.com](https://www.fastcompany.com), 7 January 2021 (Smith)

Post Office enjoys strong Christmas

A surge in online Christmas shopping driven by the coronavirus led to a 17% rise in total sales for the Post Office for 30 November to 27 December 2020, when it logged 51.3m customer transactions. Mail

and parcel services expanded in December reflecting the overall growth in e-commerce, while Drop & Go, the Post Office's fast-track service for sending parcels, saw sales rise in value by 87%.

[thegrocer.co.uk](https://www.thegrocer.co.uk), 11 January 2021 (Devlin)

Smart manicure with NFC chip

A beauty salon in Dubai is to enable customers to have an NFC chip attached to their fingernail as part of their manicure. The Lanour Beauty Lounge places the chip on to the nail before covering it in nail polish. The chip allows people to store personal data and share contact details or a social media profile "with a tap on your nail". The aim is for people eventually to be able to pay for bills and circulate information by tapping their finger. The smart manicure costs \$68 and lasts three weeks.

[nfcw.com](https://www.nfcw.com), 22 December 2020 (Phillips)

Transport and travel

China – can Tesla maintain its lead

Tesla has completed its first year of selling cars its cars (made in Shanghai) in China, the biggest EV market in the world. Although it sells more EV vehicles than any other manufacturer, three local Chinese makers have emerged as serious competitors. China is Tesla's biggest market after the US, with sales of over 120,000 units last year. The China Passenger Car Association (PCA) forecasts that Tesla could sell up to 280,000 vehicles in China in 2021, but that still leaves 80% of the market open for others, with PCA predicting sales of 1.7m "new energy" vehicles this year. Both Tesla and its Chinese competitors will face serious competition from conventional carmakers, such as VW and Daimler. Meanwhile, China wants new energy vehicles to account for 20% of the market by 2025.

[energyvoice.com](https://www.energyvoice.com), 29 December 2020

Bike maker emerges in Triumph

Triumph, the British motorbike maker, recorded pre-tax losses of \$40m in the year to June 2020 compared with £9.5m profit the year before. The good news is that its global sales returned to pre-pandemic levels in the second half of the year. The company has also announced a partnership with Bajaj Group, India's biggest motorbike exporter, to develop a range of cheaper bikes starting at about £2,000. CCO Paul Stroud says the motorcycle industry has "bounced back" around the world since the first lockdown and that the new range of bikes will give Triumph a new entry point in high-volume, emerging markets.

[business-live.co.uk](https://www.business-live.co.uk), 6 January 2021 (Pegden)

The Fiat Chrysler-PSA merger

The new "mega-merger" of PSA Group (owner of Citroën and Peugeot) and Fiat Chrysler will create the fifth-largest carmaker by sales, known as

Stellantis. This should put it in a good position to deal with the effects of the pandemic and other problems facing the automotive business. The pandemic led to a 15% fall in sales in 2020, according to IHS Markit, but sales are expected to recover somewhat this year and some areas are already seeing improvement. In particular, electric cars are doing so well that Tesla was able to meet its forecast of delivering 500,000 cars last year. However, the industry is unlikely to recover to 2019 levels until 2023. Stellantis, meanwhile, could benefit from economies of scale with its chances in the EV field looking brighter. Challenges include reducing the number of its brands and overcoming clashes of culture that have harmed other car-industry mergers.

economist.com, 7 January 2021

Car sales plummet in 2020 but EVs thrive

New car sales fell by 29% last year, the biggest year-on-year decline since 1943. Registrations were down to just over 1.6m, their lowest level since 1992, according to the SMMT. In contrast, battery and plug-in hybrid electric cars had a good year, accounting for one in ten registrations, up from around one in 30 in 2019. SMMT chief executive Mike Hawes says that the Brexit trade deal was a “massive relief” for the automotive industry although it would still have to deal with red tape. Des Quinn, Unite national officer for the automotive industries, says there are strong signs of hope for 2021 but that the sector, “desperately needs a joined-up and coherent industrial strategy to ensure that a ‘green industrial revolution’ is in place for the next decade and beyond.”

business-live.co.uk, 6 January 2021 (Whitfield)

Written by CIM’s Knowledge Services Team

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