

Cutting Edge: Our weekly analysis of marketing news

10 March 2021

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

Quick links to sections

Marketing trends and issues

Advertising

Why don't more brands use cliff-hangers?

Writers have long capitalised on the "Zeigarnik" effect (the idea that an unfinished task is more memorable) through the use of cliff-hangers. The uncertainty created by a cliff-hanger means that it stays in the audience's mind and they tune in to the next episode. The effect has also been used in TV ads, notably by Nescafe Gold Blend. In the 1980s and 1990s a series of 12 ads charted a couple's developing relationship, with each ad ending on a cliff-hanger. Some 30m viewers tuned in to see the last ad and Nescafe sales had risen by 70% by the end of the campaign. The question is, why hasn't this tactic been used more often by brands? It is certainly a good way to increase memorability...

thinkbox.tv, 22 February 2021

Liminoid advertising

Many advertising and marketing communications convey the impression that the brand can act as a "doorway into a new identity" and a better life, but this concept has never been fully researched. The researchers propose a new category of advertising and brand marketing appeal, namely the "liminoid appeal". A liminoid experience is one in which personal and social identity constraints are temporarily suspended, allowing a person's identity to have transformational possibilities. However, the researchers warn that, while the liminoid appeal can have a powerful attraction for consumers, it could lead to "social disharmony or psychological distress".

Journal of Marketing Communications, Vol 27(3), April 2021, pp269-283 (Hackley et al)

Agencies

What makes an agency a good workplace?

The Drum has been surveying employees at some of the UK's top agencies, and looking at the awards they've received, to provide insights into why these agencies are so successful and well respected. This article focuses on four main factors: staff satisfaction and great company culture; a company "powered by people"; a flexible, self-governing framework; and a more flexible model. Agencies mentioned in these contexts are: Somo Global, Kyan and TwentySIX.

thedrum.com, 26 February 2021

Brands and branding

B2B branding

Despite B2B marketing becoming more targeted and data-driven, branding should remain an essential part of it. A strong brand helps to nurture long-term awareness with a large audience while account-based marketing (ABM) allows B2B companies to reach targets based on a particular customer profile. By focusing on targeted marketing, B2B marketers are ignoring potential future buyers. However, the B2B buyer's journey is long (up to 18 months) and research suggests it is getting longer. "A well-defined and marketed brand helps B2B companies stay in front of buyers", argues Adryanna Sutherland of B2B agency gyro. According to Warc, 87% of B2B marketers agree that they need to be focused on building strong brands and 51% are trying to find new ways to tell their brand story. Yet many marketers find it challenging to integrate brand identity across channels. eMarketer's Insider Intelligence has created a B2B branding blueprint for evolving a strong brand.

emarketer.com, 3 March 2021 (Ryan)



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www.cim.co.uk/membership/cpd/

Conferences and events

Event trends for 2021

A new survey of corporate event buyers gives a flavour of what they are thinking about the return of live events, hybrid events and the Christmas party season. The research, conducted by Story and Venue Search London after the Government had announced a route out of lockdown, has come up with three key findings: that the return to live events will be slow but steady; virtual and hybrid events are here to stay; and, unsurprisingly, Christmas plans for 2021 are on hold until there is more clarity. However, the survey suggests that very few have decided to cancel their seasonal parties.

eventindustrynews.com, 5 March 2021 (Parry)

Brand experiences post-lockdown

As lockdown lifts, in-person events will return and brands will be able to engage with consumers who may have a new enthusiasm for live experiences. Following the setting out of a roadmap out of lockdown, UK ticket sales have surged, according to Live Nation UK; it says that 64% of fans are planning to attend even more live music events than before the pandemic. Live events are an opportunity for greater brand connectivity with fans. Through digital events, brands have already had the opportunity to attract new audiences on a global scale and this new-found knowledge will help in the delivery of hybrid events. It is no longer enough to hire a space and showcase a brand; now is the time for brands to be thinking about the cultural impact of their activity on the community. Brand experiences that show an affinity with music or art could play an important role.

campaignlive.co.uk, 5 March 2021 (Douglas)

Consumer behaviour

Pandemic drinking trends

The pandemic has changed people's drinking habits, with some drinking more and experimenting with new brands. Countries with the strictest lockdowns, such as the UK and New Zealand, have seen some of the largest rises in alcohol consumption, although this doesn't apply everywhere. Throughout last year online purchases of alcohol grew and some of the most successful brands of 2020 were those that dominated the online delivery space. Another key trend was consumer experimentation with new brands, as consumers became markedly less brand loyal. Meanwhile, in-home drinking has become the norm and many drinkers are still concerned about returning to drinking venues. Brands may need to focus on digital channels to hold on to their customer base in the face of declining loyalty...

blog.globalwebindex.com, 2 March 2021 (Gorman);
<https://blog.globalwebindex.com/trends/drinking-habits-2020/>

Customer relations

Using customer feedback for growth

If you want to grow your business while building a stronger connection with your target audience, you should think about using customer feedback to develop your brand. By using all your marketing channels, including email, social media and on-site interactions, you can glean information from users about their goals, expectations and experiences. You could even increase user engagement through sending requests to email and social media subscribers or having an on-site questionnaire. Having gathered the data, there are various ways in which it can be used to enhance sales and customer satisfaction, as the author explains.

business2community.com, 3 March 2021 (Atchison)

Unifying customer engagement channels

Half of companies will still not have unified customer engagement channels by the end of 2022, according to Gartner, which warns that this could lead to "disjointed and siloed" customer experiences. Matt Moorut, a principal analyst at Gartner, emphasises the need for "Frictionless omnichannel commerce" which should extend to selling, serving, fulfilling and delivering. Gartner identifies some areas that marketing leaders should focus on when collaborating with other organisational leaders. It also notes that digital commerce has expanded over the past year but that there is still a perceived benefit to in-person shopping which means that organisations with physical stores are well-positioned for frictionless omnichannel experiences.

CRM Magazine, Vol 25(2), March 2021, p15 (Klie)

Direct marketing

Beware soft opt-ins

The ICO has recently fined a food company for using a "soft opt-in" for email and SMS marketing, which does not meet the requirements of PECR. The three major requirements are: that businesses must have obtained relevant contact details of the person during a sale of a product or service; they must only be marketing their own similar products or services; and they must have given the recipient a chance to refuse or opt out of marketing, both when the original details were collected and in every subsequent message. If any of these conditions are not met, GDPR-compliant consent will be needed before sending electronic marketing material. The ICO keeps statistics and information on nuisance calls and messages, which can be accessed on its website.

lexology.com, 3 March 2021 (Campbell);
<https://ico.org.uk/action-weve-taken/>

Retailers offer opt-outs for Mother's Day

Many big companies are offering consumers the chance to opt out of receiving marketing emails in the lead-up to Mother's Day. Some retailers have

attributed the initiative to the pandemic, since people may have lost a parent over the past year. However, some consumers say that receiving a message offering an opt-out could be more upsetting than the original message. The Very Group, Waitrose and Sainsbury's are among those that have introduced opt-outs. Some companies are planning to do the same for Father's Day.

[theguardian.com, 8 March 2021 \(Osborne\)](https://www.theguardian.com/8 March 2021 (Osborne))

Law

Avoiding genericide – Mad Dogg vs Peloton

Mad Dogg Athletics, which owns the trade marks SPIN and SPINNING, has brought a patent infringement case against Peloton in the US. Peloton has responded by trying to have the trade marks revoked by the US Patent and Trade Mark Office. It argues that the terms should not be protected because they have become generic expressions relating to indoor bike exercise. Mad Dogg, which has won previous cases, has been careful to defend its trade marks. This is why other gyms usually refer to their classes as "cycle" rather than "SPIN". Genericide, where trademarks start to be used generically, are a problem for brand holders, notable examples being Sellotape and Aspirin. Uniqueness and distinctiveness are requirements for a valid trade mark. If this starts to diminish, genericide occurs and this can be devastating for the brand. Here is some advice on avoiding genericide.

[lexology.com, 1 March 2021 \(Thomas\)](https://lexology.com, 1 March 2021 (Thomas))

Ofcom is the new online harms regulator

The Government has confirmed Ofcom as the regulator with oversight of the new online harms regime. This paper looks at the new powers Ofcom will have to bring companies into line, such as establishing a transparency, trust and accountability framework. It discusses how Ofcom will set out codes of practice so that companies can fulfil their "duty of care". It also covers enforcement, information gathering powers, senior management responsibility and enforcement in an international context.

[internationallawoffice.com, 5 March 2021 \(Wortley\)](https://internationallawoffice.com, 5 March 2021 (Wortley))

Virginia privacy law passes – others follow

On 2 March 2021 the US state of Virginia passed the Virginia Consumer Data Protection Act (VCDPA), making it the third state (after California and Nevada) to adopt a European-style consumer privacy law. Other states have similar bills pending. Companies will have to consider carefully their compliance strategies and the business impacts, especially when taking into account the differences between the states. This article provides a summary of the key provisions of the VCDPA, which takes effect on 1 January 2023.

dechert.com, March 2021

Marketing

Realising the DTC opportunity

Shifting from B2B to DTC (direct-to-consumer) isn't an easy option for manufacturers but, as physical stores continue to close, this could be the time to make the move. Consumers are increasingly going straight to brand websites to try to buy the product: with 67% of Millennial shoppers reporting that they use brand websites and stores to buy CPGs, while 70% expect to do this even after the pandemic ends. DTC has several advantages for manufacturers, including making products easier to find and purchase, gaining more control over customer experience and having access to first-party data. Here is a checklist for planning and executing a DTC e-commerce strategy.

[bigcommerce.com, 1 March 2021 \(Kilpatrick\)](https://bigcommerce.com, 1 March 2021 (Kilpatrick))

When marketers benefit entrepreneurs

Marketers can help entrepreneurs in emerging markets to expand their businesses, according to a new study in the *Journal of Marketing*. This in turn means that entrepreneurs can improve living standards and help strengthen societies in these markets. The researchers examined whether entrepreneurs in emerging markets can benefit from marketers' help, by conducting a field experiment in Uganda. The results showed that volunteer marketers are effective at helping to grow sales, profits, assets and employees, compared to firms which didn't have marketing support. The researchers use their findings to argue for greater support from government in designing support services, from business schools in promoting "remote coaching" interventions and from multinationals in remote marketing interventions.

[ama.org, 2 March 2021 \(Anderson et al\)](https://ama.org, 2 March 2021 (Anderson et al))

Entertainment salaries exceed FMCG...

Entertainment has overtaken FMCG to become the best paid sector for marketing, according to the latest *Marketing Week 2021 Career and Salary Survey*. Out of 23 sectors, the top mean salary for marketing was found to be in entertainment (£73,700), followed by FMCG (£72,200), beauty (£72,000) and financial services (£69,200). Those working for an industry or trade body have the lowest salaries (£45,800). Pay for marketers ranges from £24,100 for a marketing assistant to £144,000 for a CMO.

marketingweek.com, 3 March 2021

...but gender pay gap remains

The pandemic has had a negative impact on women's careers and there are concerns that it has hindered progress in gender equality. According to McKinsey, women's job losses have been 1.8 times greater than men's as result of the coronavirus. According to the *Marketing Week 2021 Career and*

Salary Survey, the gender pay gap for full time marketing workers has come down, from 28% in 2020 to 23% now, but it still exceeds the national gender pay gap (where the median is 7.4% and the mean 11.5%). The problem gets worse for women the higher up the ladder they climb. A female marketing assistant can earn slightly more than their male counterpart but by the time they reach director level men are earning almost £10,000 more. McKinsey reckons that if action is taken now to address the global pay gap, \$13 trillion could be added to world GDP by 2030. (See also under Business)

marketingweek.com, 8 March 2021 (Rogers)

Market research

How brands can use insight post-pandemic

The pandemic has had widely differing consequences for brands depending on their industry sector or product. While travel websites like Expedia have seen bookings fall by almost 90%, connectivity apps like Zoom have reached 300m daily meeting participants in a matter of months. So, how can brands like Zoom hold on to their success after the pandemic and how can hard-hit sectors get back to normal? The answer lies with "holistic, nimble consumer insights". Brands that are in the limelight now, as well as those that need to recover, can both use the same techniques to help them understand how to pivot to best meet their audience's needs. You need the right type of system, process or technology in place to get the right answers.

ama.org, 3 March 2021 (Feldhaeuser)

Yum! Brands in AI insights acquisition

Yum! Brands, parent of Pizza Hut, has bought Kvantum, an AI-powered insights business. Yum! plans to integrate algorithms and AI models developed by Kvantum to help understand consumer behaviour and to make "informed" media choices. It will also use the technology to measure the effectiveness of marketing in different locations in owned, paid and earned channels. In addition, Yum! Plans to combine Kvantum's AI and machine learning with the anthropological and sociological work of Collider Lab, a consumer insights and marketing consultancy which it acquired in 2015.

marketingweek.com, 3 March 2021

Public relations

No publicity is bad publicity?

The Chipping Farm Shop in the Ribble Valley near Preston received plenty of publicity when a helicopter pilot flew all the way from City Airport in Salford to Lancashire to collect a roast beef sandwich, an 80-mile round trip. The farm shop posted a video on Instagram of the pilot having the sandwich delivered to the helicopter with the message: "When your customers are literally 'flying

in' to collect their favourite Roast beef in Caramelised Onion Gravy Barns". Police are investigating a "possible Covid-19 rule breach" by the helicopter pilot!

manchestereveningnews.co.uk, 6 March 2021 (Vesty and Beardsworth)

Sponsorship

Sponsorship and ambush marketing

The researchers investigated the effects of sponsorship and ambush marketing on the consumer reactions of fans in relation to an event, team and player (the sponsees) in the FIFA World Cup. They found that, while there were significant relationships between the sponsor and its sponsees, there was also a significant relationship between the ambusher and the sponsees but at more of a cognitive and affective (emotional) level. Overall, they found that, although some partnerships benefit the sponsor, the cognitions and feelings towards the event can actually be more profitable for the ambusher.

[Journal of Strategic Marketing](https://journals.sagepub.com), Vol 29(2), April 2021, pp158-180 (Chanavat and Martinent)

Agriculture, fishing and forestry

Meat and dairy sales up in January

Retail volumes of red meat rose by 15% and dairy volumes by 12% in January, compared with 2020, according to data from Kantar. This is despite the Veganuary campaign which encourages people to switch to vegan. Since the first lockdown in March 2020, red meat and dairy sales have enjoyed solid growth thanks to shoppers buying more produce from supermarkets rather than the food service sector. However, meat-free and dairy alternatives have also seen strong growth, with meat-free products up by 13.3% over the past quarter. Research suggests that people are adopting meat-free as part of their diet alongside meat.

fwi.co.uk, 8 March 2021 (Davies)

Farming lessons in school

Children went back to school on 8 March, and many of them will be learning about farm-related subjects as part of British Science Week. The NFU's education team will broadcast live lessons on topics ranging from the lifecycles of animals and plants to how robots and technology can help to benefit farming problems. NFU President Minette Batters says the lessons enable children to have a farming experience even if they can't visit a farm and a greater understanding of how food is produced.

farminguk.com, 8 March 2021

Building industry

Building crisis communications

Some building projects encounter resistance and controversy but adverse publicity can threaten the project's future and it is essential to intervene quickly to prevent a crisis. Jan Knikker, an expert in media relations for architecture practices, is experienced in turning around negative publicity. A key principle in "crisis communication" is to stick to what you are expert in: in the case of architects, this means the design concept. However, the best crisis response is a planned one in which potential controversies have been anticipated. Crisis comms is not solely the architect's remit as it is also the responsibility of the client and it is important to coordinate the response across the whole team. Here is some advice about the importance of engaging with the public and conveying the value of the project right from the very beginning.

[architecture.com](https://www.architecture.com), 4 March 2021 (Knikker)

Calls for industry to aim for Net Zero by 2050

The Construction Leadership Council (CLC) is urging companies to sign up to its nine-point CO2nstruct Zero change programme which aims to remove all carbon from the construction industry by 2050. Andy Mitchell, chair of CLC, says that the industry came together to tackle Covid-19 last year and now it must do the same to help the UK reach Net Zero. The CLC has set out an action plan covering existing buildings and construction activity, which involves developing a "Net Zero supply chain"; working to change expectations of clients and consumers; and sharing performance data with the Government and public.

[constructionenquirer.com](https://www.constructionenquirer.com), 8 March 2021 (Morby)

Businesses and strategy

Midsized companies – prospering virtually

Maintaining customer relationships was difficult for midsized companies during 2020. This size of company often relies heavily on in-person sales since they have fewer resources to put into digital selling tools and training than larger counterparts. Some midsized companies have adapted to virtual selling and have even managed to ramp up sales during the pandemic. They've achieved this through: using online connections to "humanise" transactions; greater sales process efficiencies; and crossing their traditional geographical boundaries. Smart companies will look to capitalise on the changes brought about by the pandemic.

hbr.org, 26 February 2021 (Sher)

Gender pay gap a low priority post-pandemic

A new global report suggests that Britain is the "least likely" to address the gender pay gap as it recovers from the pandemic. Research suggests that

women have been hit harder by the pandemic yet only 28% of the British public think that closing the pay gap is important, according to a study across 28 countries by Ipsos MORI and the Global Institute for Women's Leadership. Other countries consider it to be of higher priority: France, (51%), Spain (46%) and Italy (44%). The gender pay gap regulations, which were introduced in 2017, require companies with 250 staff or more to report on gender pay on 4 April ever year, but this year they have been given a six-month extension. (See also under Marketing)

[business-live.co.uk](https://www.business-live.co.uk), 8 March 2021 (Baker)

Body language for women leaders

The author offers some tips for women leaders in the field of nonverbal communication skills, which are an essential part of developing professional relationships, bonding with team members, presenting ideas with impact and being seen as having "leadership presence". She describes the importance of adopting a business rather than social "gaze" when meeting someone in a business context. Other aspects of body language and how women in particular should use them are: head tilts, handshakes, vocal pitch, smiling, head nods, expressing emotion and space. But this is only half the answer, because you should be able to read the body language of the other person...

[koganpage.com](https://www.koganpage.com), 3 March 2021 (Gorman)

Charities and NGOs

Digital transformation

The impact of digital on the charity sector has been huge and last year saw a massive "digital acceleration", which is expected to go even further this year. This article looks at the steps charities have already taken and what we can expect in the future, including blockchain, cashless technology, videoconferencing and "gaming for good". It then looks at the main challenges to digital transformation, such as the lack of funds, a paucity of knowledge and the digital divide, and how to overcome these. It mentions organisations such as St Mungo's, Make a Wish, the Norwegian Refugee Council, Gaming Without Borders and Women Win.

charitydigital.org.uk, 5 March 2021 (Jones)

Economy

OECD upgrades growth forecast

The OECD has upgraded its forecast for global growth this year based on the progress of the Covid-19 vaccine rollout and President Biden's stimulus package. It predicts that the world economy will grow by 5.6% in 2021, up by 1.4% on its December forecast of 4.2%. It also expects a return to pre-pandemic levels by the middle of 2021 but cautions that recovery will be stronger if vaccine rollout increases since there is still the risk of new variants.

theguardian.com, 9 March 2021

Global economic forecasts – white paper

The global recession of 2020 saw global “real” GDP contract by 3.6%, which was somewhat better than expected and the global economic outlook has since been improving. Euromonitor’s latest *Global Economic Forecast* for Q1 2021 looks at the quarterly macro changes across eight key markets, the impact of different Covid-19 scenarios and what this means for the future of the global economy. The paper is free to download.

go.euromonitor.com, March 2021;
<https://go.euromonitor.com/white-paper-economies-210309-global-economic-forecasts-q1.html>

Education

Universities – value for money?

Rent strikes have taken place at British universities over the past year as students object to paying for accommodation they can’t occupy. A recent survey by Yonder found that only 36% of British students think they get value for money. Out of the 21 countries surveyed, only South Korean students think they are worse off than British students. Many students cannot foresee how they can get a good return on their investment, while the Institute for Fiscal Studies has calculated that a fifth of graduates would have been better off ten years after leaving university if they hadn’t bothered going at all. However, in reality only a fifth of students are expected to pay off their loans. Meanwhile the pandemic has left students paying huge sums for what they see as a worse experience.

economist.com, 4 March 2021

Part-time students in England in decline

Last week (Cutting Edge 3 March) we commented on the new highs in student numbers and concerns over segments such as international and part-time students. This latest House of Commons Library briefing, entitled *Part-time undergraduate students in England*, gives an overview of the numbers of part-time students, the decline in numbers, the reasons for that decline (which is complex and attributed to a number of factors) and its impact on the sector.

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7966/>, 3 March 2021 (Bolton and Hubbe)

Energy and utilities

Bath Abbey to be heated by Roman baths

Bath Abbey in Somerset has found a unique answer to its old, inefficient heating system. It will use hot water from the Roman baths to provide the energy for a heat pump system in the seventh century church. The temperature of the Roman bath waters stays at a constant 40°C all year round. Isoenergy, the renewable energy company, is developing the system.

energylivenews.com, 9 March 2021 (Mavrokefalidis)

Environment

Do eco-labels influence consumers?

This research investigates the effectiveness of ecolabels in influencing consumer intentions to purchase green products and looks at whether consumer self-confidence in green labels affects their decision making. The findings give strong evidence that ecolabel information can provide the necessary information for consumers when making informed choices. The results also suggest how marketers can position their ecolabel information as a communication strategy to influence purchase intentions.

Journal of Strategic Marketing, Vol 29(2), April 2021, pp141-157 (D’Souza et al)

Benetton creates sustainable store

United Colors of Benetton, the Italian fashion brand, is to launch a new sustainable store concept that uses upcycled materials and energy-saving measures. The Florence store has flooring made from river gravel and waste wood from beech trees felled by a storm. The walls are covered in mineral paint with anti-bacterial and anti-mould properties which reduce pollutants in the air. The store interior is made from new materials made from scrap textiles. Display stands, for example, are made from a material deriving from used buttons. Benetton says the store uses 20% less energy than a standard store. The company aims to become, “a global reference point in terms of sustainability”.

fashionunited.uk, 8 March 2021 (Stenzel)

Fashion

Ralph Lauren introduces subscription service

Ralph Lauren is to launch a subscription rental service enabling customers to rent from a range of clothes for \$125 a month. Subscribers will be able to put together a wardrobe from the luxury designer’s latest collection. They will then have the choice of exchanging them for new garments or buying the clothes at a discount. The clothes are eventually donated to Delivering Good, a not-for-profit that provides people with new and nearly new clothing. The new model is, “revolutionising how we look at fashion consumption” says chief innovation and branding officer, David Lauren.

marketingweek.com, 3 March 2021

Financial services

Attracting Millennials and Gen Z

Consumers tend to remain with their primary bank account but there is a trend for opening an additional account with a fintech or other non-traditional institution. New research by software provider Zafin suggests that almost three-quarters of younger consumers (Millennials and Gen Z) would use a single bank for all services if one of them met

all their needs. This article looks at what it takes to attract these generations. The data suggest that Covid has increased the value of online and mobile banking to consumers while personalisation is a key loyalty builder. Some benefits, such as cash back, are also important, while 85.8% of Millennials and 79.3% of Gen Z say they would switch institutions if they were rewarded for reaching a financial goal.

financialbrand.com/insights-magazine/; Insights, Vol 2(1), Spring 2021, pp8-12 (Streeter)

Industry gender equality not improving

Anne Boden, chief executive and founder of Starling Bank, claims that Britain's financial services sector has "not got better" for women since the 1980s. At executive level there "are still far too few women" and only one percent of venture capital money goes to women, she says. Starling Bank currently consists of 42% women employees and 40% of the board are female.

business-live.co.uk, 8 March 2021 (Baker)

Contactless limit rises to £100

The UK Treasury is increasing the limit for contactless transactions from £45 to £100. The changes should take effect later this year to allow for payment terminals to be upgraded. According to a YouGov survey in August 2020, 32% of UK consumers said they were in favour of the increase.

nfcw.com, 3 March 2021 (Phillips)

M&S to close bank branches

M&S Bank is to close all its current accounts in August and customers will have to find a new provider. The bank, which is a joint venture with HSBC, will also close its 29 in-store branches. The service was launched in 2014 and the bank has been trying to find new ways of attracting customers, such as offering a £100 gift card. Now it says it will focus on credit cards and other services.

theguardian.com, 6 March 2021 (Jones)

FMCG

Beverages

Oatley to open big alt-milk factory

Oatley, the Swedish alternative milk brand, is to open one of the biggest plant-based dairy factories in the world, in Peterborough, East Anglia. Due to open in 2023, it will be able to produce up to 450m litres of oat milk a year and will source the oats locally. Oatley has seen strong demand for its products thanks to a combination of guerrilla marketing and good timing as more people turn to a vegan diet. Sales are expected to have doubled last year. According to Nielsen, UK sales of plant milks have risen by 16% to £278m over the past year.

theguardian.com, 9 March 2021 (Wood)

Crème egg-flavoured stout

Cadbury has joined forces with Goose Island, a beer brand, to produce a limited-edition Crème Egg flavoured beer. The Golden Goo-Beer-Lee Crème Stout is part of Cadbury's Crème Egg Golden Goobilee celebrating 50 years of the chocolate egg. There will be a "season-long celebration" of the Creme Egg.

campaignlive.co.uk, 5 March 2021 (Bold)

Cosmetics and toiletries

Unilever tackles photoshopping and "normal"

Unilever is to eliminate excessive photoshopping and will remove the word "normal" from its beauty product advertising. The Photoshop ban will cover "all digital alterations to body shape, size, proportion and skin colour" both in advertising and by paid influencers. The word "normal" will be removed from the packaging of at least 200 products within a year. This follows criticism that the idea of norms could be exclusive to a single racial or demographic group. Unilever has been trying to position itself as an ethical brand and has set a target of net zero emissions by 2039. Its beauty and care division is one of the largest advertisers in the world with adspend of between \$4 billion and \$5 billion a year.

theguardian.com, 9 March 2021 (Jolly)

Food

Getting beyond vegan messaging

In February KitKat launched a vegan bar but many mainstream brands try too hard to "join some kind of green product party", argues the author. The main issue for brands is not trying to prove that their product is vegan, dairy- or meat-free, but that it is good to eat and worth buying. Mainstream brands should think about recrafting their messages to make the products more attractive in their own right. Impossible Burger and Oatly are examples of vegan products that have "bold, colourful, confident identities" with their own unique appeal that goes beyond the usual CSR messaging.

campaignlive.co.uk, 4 March 2021 (Forster)

Stilton gets US trade reprieve

Stilton, the UK's only trademarked cheese, is to be part of a "stop-gap" deal with the US, following longstanding trading issues between the two countries over aerospace tariffs. The UK has recently announced that it would suspend tariffs and the US has reciprocated. Stilton, which has protected designation of origin status, has suffered during the pandemic with sales down by 16% for 2020. The US has agreed to suspend tariffs for four months which may allow time to resolve the problem. Other products affected by the trade dispute are scotch whisky and Scottish cashmere.

business-live.co.uk, 4 March 2021 (Pegden)

John West unveils Salmon Fridge Pot

John West is launching a Salmon Fridge Pot with the aim of attracting younger consumers to the tinned salmon category. This follows research which found that tinned salmon was considered "old-fashioned and uninspiring" and regarded as just a "handy back-up" for emergencies. John West is moving towards foods aimed at younger shoppers who are "health-conscious but time-poor", having previously launched a Tuna Fridge Pot.

thegrocer.co.uk, 8 March 2021 (Sandercock)

Household

Bamboo plasters more widely available

Patch, the Australian hypoallergenic and compostable woundcare brand, is expanding its reach with the introduction of natural bamboo fibre, aloe vera and coconut oil plasters that can biodegrade in just ten weeks. The plasters, which are already stocked by Holland & Barrett, will be rolled out in WH Smith followed by Ocado. The company hopes to persuade more retailers to boost sustainability in their woundcare products.

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

Government and public sector

Branding Chernobyl

The Chernobyl Exclusion Zone has received an official logo designed by the Ukrainian creative agency responsible for the branding of Ukraine Now. First Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources for Ukraine Bohdan Borukhovsky says the Zone is a "unique phenomenon on our planet" and that we should refer to it not just as an "exclusion zone" but as a "development zone" and "a zone of the future". The logo, which is based on the shape of the reactor at Chernobyl, is depicted as a distinctive dark shape which gradually fades until it has disappeared altogether by 2064, the year when the Chernobyl power plant will be completely decommissioned.

designyoutrust.com, March 2021

The Edelman Trust Barometer

The *2021 Edelman Trust Barometer* reveals a picture of widespread mistrust of institutions and leaders around the world. There has been a notable fall in trust in the two largest economies, the US (40%) and China (30%), among respondents in the other 26 markets surveyed. Overall, there is a growing trust gap, with people rejecting societal leaders including those in the four institutions studied: government, business, NGOs and media. Trust in news sources has also reached record lows with social media (35%) and owned media (41%) the least trusted while traditional media (53%) has seen the largest fall in trust globally. Despite CEO credibility being at an all-time low in several

countries, it appears that business is both the most trusted institution of the four and the only trusted institution, with a 61% trust level. There are high expectations for business to fill the void left by politicians, with 68% believing that CEOs should "step in when government does not fix social problems".

edelman.com, March 2021;

<https://www.edelman.com/trust/2021-trust-barometer>

Health and pharmaceuticals

Disney teams up for healthcare experience

Royal Philips, a health tech brand, has teamed up with The Walt Disney Company to test how animation can be used to help nervous patients, especially children. Philips Ambient Experience will use animated stories featuring Disney characters, such as Yoda and Mickey Mouse, to help children during MRI scans. Disney has a history of helping children's hospitals. In 2018 it pledged \$100m to hospitals as part of its global social purpose programme.

marketingweek.com, 4 March 2021

Trade deals could lead to unhealthy imports

New research suggests that future trade deals could result in a "flood of cheap, unhealthy foods" into the UK. The study, undertaken by the London School of Economics and published by Sustain, the alliance of UK food, farming and health organisations, warns that some trade deal clauses could undermine plans to halve childhood obesity by 2030. "The government has already removed tariffs entirely on cane sugar, and has made it easier and cheaper to import junk food like biscuits, pizza, waffles and confectionery", says Orla Delargy, Sustain head of public affairs. This type of trade policy could "nudge" low-income families towards unhealthy choices".

thegrocer.co.uk, 4 March 2021 (Quinn)

The vaccine – a conundrum for companies

The pandemic has created new ethical dilemmas for businesses. Customers may want company employees to be vaccinated and a company can't afford to gain a reputation for being unsafe. Yet the customers themselves may not want to be vaccinated and companies can't force employees to take the vaccine. Rules within industries are often inconsistent. While one might reasonably expect medical workers to be vaccinated; cruise ships, which helped to spread the pandemic early on, have varying rules. The Saga cruise line expects passengers to provide proof of vaccination, but their crew is exempt, while Swan Hellenic insists its crew has the vaccine but not the passengers...

economist.com, 6 March 2021

IT and telecoms

O2 campaign targets digitally disconnected

Some seven million people, or a tenth of the UK population, are still unable to access an internet-connected device. Now O2 is launching a campaign called "Community Calling" aimed at highlighting tech poverty and how it affects all aspects of life. It also promotes O2's partnership with Hubbub in which it aims to donate 10,000 unused smartphones to people who have no access to the digital world.

[marketingweek.com, 3 March 2021](#)

T-Mobile offers work-from-home bundle

T-Mobile is targeting the working-from-home model with a bundle of services for businesses and government to give to their employees. The WFX Solutions package contains a suite of calling and collaboration tools, business smartphone plans and a home internet service based on T-Mobile's 4G and 5G networks.

[fastcompany.com, 5 March 2021 \(Pegoraro\)](#)

Leisure and tourism

Apps cater to wanderlust

Over the past year, the internet has provided for various needs, including entertainment and communication. New apps have emerged that cater for people's need to travel while older travel-related apps have seen a surge in downloads. One example is Radio Garden, which allows people to tune into over 31,000 radio stations worldwide. Virtual Vacation has put together geography guessing games and driving tours. WindowSwap enables you to look out of a stranger's window to view scenes such as the desert in Texas or listen to birds chirping in Brazil. This has helped both homesick people and those looking for travel inspiration, according to the app's creators.

[wired.co.uk, 28 February 2021 \(Bedingfield\)](#)

Materials and mining

90-year-old paints business remains animated

HMG Paints, a paint supplier based in Manchester, has supplied the likes of Aardman Animations, Aston Martin Racing and Jaguar. Despite the pandemic, it has reported a "robust year", with profits static at £1.2m. The company, which celebrated its 90th anniversary last year, has proved its agility by extending its product range and gaining new customers while remaining confident that it can continue to grow the business.

[business-live.co.uk, 5 March 2021 \(Robinson\)](#)

UK coal mine – locals vs greens

A new UK coal mine in Whitehaven, Cumbria the first new deep coal mine in over 30 years, has received approval from the county council. It has opposition from climate groups and the British

public; but has strong approval locally because of the jobs it will create. If it goes ahead, the Woodhouse Colliery would produce 2.7m tonnes of coking coal a year, which can be used in steelmaking. Supporters say it would reduce transport emissions since supplies are normally imported from Australia, the US and Russia. However, there is a danger that the mine could become redundant as steelmakers start to invest in hydrogen power. This is bad timing, with the Powering Past Coal Alliance summit having just taken place and the UK trying to lead the battle against climate change at COP26 this year.

[ft.com, 7 March 2021 \(Bounds and Pickard\)](#)

Media

Internet

Google pilots alternative ad-targeting

As Google moves towards the elimination of third-party cookies and stronger controls over how personal data is collected, it is opening up its alternative ad-targeting tool for public tests. This follows an erosion of public trust in how the data is used. According to figures from the Pew Research Centre, 72% of consumers think that everything they do online is being tracked by advertisers and others, while 40% say they would stop buying services from a company because of privacy concerns. This has spurred Google to embark on a two-year plan to phase out cookies. It wants to test whether the new tool will work across diverse markets such as Asia. David Temkin, Google's director of product management for ads, privacy and trust says that it is possible to "deliver a private and secure experience" without sacrificing "relevant advertising and monetisation".

[znet.com, 3 March 2021 \(Yu\)](#)

Improving your landing page conversion rate

Your ads may be driving traffic to your landing page, but is the page converting at the rate you want it to? The average cross-industry landing page conversion is 2.35% but it is possible to achieve a much higher rate than that. Here are eight tips for boosting your conversion rate. They include building a sales funnel which will help to guide the user through a step-by-step experience which will take them to where you want them to be.

[clickfunnels.com, 18 February 2021 \(Flick\)](#)

Music

Licensing music in podcasts

Music in podcasts is restricted by three aspects of copyright: synchronisation mechanical, streaming mechanical and streaming to the public. The user may have to deal at the very least with a publisher, societies and labels, in order to avoid infringement. This could be quite a complex task when compared

with rights clearance on more “traditional” forms of music use in radio, TV broadcasts and adverts. This article looks at licensing music for use in podcasts and advises podcast producers to tackle the issue of music clearance early on in the process.

[lexology.com, 26 February 2021 \(Rendle\)](#)

Podcast

Be clear about advertising

Podcast advertising presents an opportunity for marketers to tap into a growing audience at a time when traditional media are becoming less effective. It is a good way for brands to engage with listeners because the podcast audience tends to be committed to the topic and is actively listening. Although there are no ad rules specific to podcasts, advertisers should be aware of the CAP Code. It is important to understand what constitutes an ad and that it should be identifiable. Podcasters often place ads in different parts of an episode which can make them harder to identify, or the ad might resemble editorial content, but this should be clearly distinguishable. With podcast sponsorship, the sponsor's messages should be clearly differentiated from the editorial content. Ultimately, the message should be clear and transparent to avoid confusion.

[lexology.com, 26 February 2021 \(Jupp\)](#)

Spotify to overtake Apple Podcast listeners

Spotify's US podcast listener numbers are set to exceed those of Apple Podcasts for the first time, according to eMarketer. It predicts that 28.2m people will listen to Spotify podcasts at least monthly vs 28m who will listen to Apple. Apple has been losing podcast listener share since 2018 when it had 34% of podcast listeners; its share is expected to fall to 23.8% this year. Spotify has benefited from putting music and podcasts in one place, making it a one-stop-shop for digital audio. It has also invested in the medium, making it easier for podcast creators and advertisers. Podcast advertising is expected to grow its share of digital audio advertising to reach 24% this year.

[emarketer.com, 1 March 2021](#)

Social media

The evolving world of influencer marketing

Social influencers are likely to become more important to ad campaigns this year as younger consumers spend more time online. This reflects key trends, including the shift from social media creators to long-term brand ambassadors and the increasing role of customers as influencers. As Gen Z spending power continues to increase, it will have a greater impact on influencer-generated content. Meanwhile, marketers will be able to evaluate their influencer campaigns using better metrics. The industry is gradually evolving away from a transactional relationship between brands and creators working

on one-off campaigns, to longer-term contracts which can be renewed and that might include services such as consulting on product launches. This article explores the evolution of influencer marketing and how its meaning has changed.

[marketingdice.com, 25 February 2021 \(Williams\)](#)

The rise of the granfluencers

Senior citizens are using Instagram to attract millions of followers. These granfluencers or Instagrannies are making money by posting pictures of themselves in attention-grabbing outfits. A few of them are profiled here, such as 92-year-old Helen Ruth Elam of Kentucky, also known as “baddiewinkle”, who wears feather boas and colourful couture. Her sponsorships, which include Amazon Echo Show 8, LG and Canada Dry, bring in \$9,815 per promotion!

[nypost.com, 25 February 2021 \(Cost\)](#)

Television

Harry and Megan ad spots to attract 6-figures

Having bought the rights to the 90-minute Duke and Duchess of Sussex (Harry and Megan) interview with Oprah Winfrey, ITV has been able to position ad spots during the broadcast as a “special premium buy”. It is estimated that it could charge advertisers between £100,000 and £120,000. As well as this “ad revenue bump”, ITV will benefit from viewers on catch-up TV via ITV Hub.

[campaignlive.co.uk, 5 March 2021 \(Oakes\)](#)

Packaging

Sustainability a key issue for consumers

Consumers are 15% less frustrated by packaging than they were seven years ago, according to a survey commissioned by Essentra Tapes. This still leaves a high level of frustration, although environmental concerns and rising e-commerce has had an effect on consumer opinions. For example, 58% of consumers say that too much packaging is their prime concern, up from 49% who said so in 2013. For 57%, the difficulty in opening packaging is still the number one issue, compared with 61% who said so in 2013. Since the onset of the pandemic, hygienic packaging has become a major issue for over 50% of consumers. Recycling is also a major concern, with a third of consumers saying they would even be prepared to pay more for sustainable packaging.

[packagingnews.co.uk, 5 March 2021 \(Qureshi\)](#)

Retailing

Amazon – first cashierless store outside US

London now boasts Amazon's first cashierless grocery outside the US: the Amazon Fresh store in Ealing Broadway. Amazon's Just Walk Out Technology allows customers to load up with

shopping and then leave the store without the need for a cashier. The customer downloads a QR code to their mobile device which they scan at the shop entrance, allowing them access; then they can put their phone away and the technology automatically detects which products are being selected. Amazon opened its first cashierless grocery store in Seattle in February 2020 and has since been trialling palm recognition technology at its checkouts.

nfcw.com, 4 March 2021 (Phillips)

Online shopping reaches “sticking point”

Supermarkets are still enjoying strong growth, with sales for the four weeks to 27 February up by 10.6% year-on-year, according to NielsenIQ. This is their highest growth since June 2020 when sales rose by 14%. The online share of grocery sales has risen to 17%, its highest ever share. Over the past year the percentage of British households who have bought groceries online has reached 41% compared to 18% a year ago while sales at physical grocery stores have fallen by 1% year-on-year over the past four weeks alone. Mike Watkins, NielsenIQ's UK Head of Retailer and Business Insight, says online shopping is now past the “tipping point” and has reached a “sticking point”, with consumers preferring to shop online.

thegrocer.co.uk, 9 March 2021

Amazon changes Hitler-like logo

Amazon was forced to change its shopping-app logo recently when people spotted that the recent changes made it look like Adolf Hitler. The icon, which was launched in January, showed a strip of blue tape positioned above the Amazon “smile”. The serrated edge of the tape resembled a toothbrush moustache, according to some commentators. The Hitler moustache shape is embedded in people’s subconscious and is not the best association for a brand “that wants to create delight on the doorstep” says Vicky Bullen, CEO of agency Coley Porter Bell. Hitler’s face is sufficiently recognisable that people see it in all sorts of objects and other brand errors have occurred in the past.

bbc.co.uk, 3 March 2021 (Cridle)

General merchandise to be sold in Waitrose

John Lewis plans to introduce John Lewis general merchandise products to its Waitrose stores. These will be in categories such as gifting, homeware and cookware and will be tailored to the size of store and local customer preferences. The company has been trialling the concept at five stores where general merchandise sales have risen by an average of 80% year-on-year. The move forms part of John Lewis’ drive to bring the two brands together.

thegrocer.co.uk, 2 March 2021 (Calnan)

Services

Poptop delivers afternoon tea

Poptop, a Newcastle-based events booking platform, has been making up for the lack of live events by helping people celebrate special events at home. Its platform is usually used by wedding and party planners, but during the pandemic it has been delivering afternoon teas and has just delivered its 5,000th. Poptop, which has over 14,000 suppliers around the UK, launched the afternoon tea service in May 2020 and delivered over 550 teas on Valentine’s Day alone.

eventindustrynews.com, 5 March 2021 (Parry)

Chinese law firms – expanding globally

Hong Kong’s “Red Circle” of elite law firms competes with London’s “Magic Circle” lawyers and New York’s “white-shoe” partnerships. Increasingly they are poaching legal expertise or merging with Western firms to create large groups. Beijing wants to offer Chinese law services alongside other professional services such as accounting, consulting and investment banking. Yet Chinese firms appear to have made little progress in London or the US, possibly for cultural reasons. The Red Circle also has limited experience in common law which is essential to international commerce. However, China is luring international students to its law schools from where they will return to their own countries as members of “China-friendly legal networks”. The All-China Lawyers Association, an international group, is active in at least 36 countries. There are also informal networks, which are potentially more powerful.

economist.com, 6 March 2021

Transport and travel

Cars – reducing carbon emissions

Transport is the largest source of carbon emissions in the UK, with most of them coming from cars. In November 2020 the Government announced a target of having no sales of new petrol or diesel cars by 2030 and only sales of zero-emissions cars by 2035. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has responsibility for getting to net zero while DfT is responsible for reducing the CO₂ emissions of cars. This report looks at how well the Government has used public money to support ultra-low emissions cars uptake; progress in increasing the uptake of ultra-low emissions vehicles thorough the plug-in car grant; the development of charging infrastructure; and the impact of ultra-low emissions sales on CO₂ emissions.

nao.org.uk, 26 February 2021;

<https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Reducing-Carbon-Emissions-from-cars.pdf>

Can you afford a Porsche? – on your bike!

Porsche has introduced two electric bikes, the eBike Sport and eBike Cross, with a design inspired by its Taycan Cross Turismo electric vehicle. E-bikes have enjoyed a surge in popularity during the pandemic. By June 2020 sales of e-bikes in the UK had grown by 190% compared with 2019, while 17% of all bicycle sales in the EU in February were e-bikes. Big brands like Harley Davidson are also entering the market.

[fastcompany.com, 5 March 2021 \(Toussaint\)](https://www.fastcompany.com/5-March-2021/Toussaint)

Virgin to sue Brightline for brand damage

Virgin Enterprises is suing Brightline, a US railway company, after it dropped the Virgin name from its trains while claiming that Virgin is no longer “a brand of international high repute”. Virgin, which says the brand has been damaged by “cynical and spurious” claims, accuses Brightline of reneging on its 20-year agreement to rebrand as Virgin Trains USA. The Virgin Trains USA line, which ran between Miami and West Palm beach in Florida, was due to extend to Orlando and Disney World. Virgin has suffered during the pandemic having lost 1,150 jobs in September and 3,500 jobs earlier in 2020.

[marketingweek.com, 8 March 2021](https://www.marketingweek.com/8-March-2021)

Written by CIM's Knowledge Services Team

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