

# Cutting Edge: Our weekly analysis of marketing news

17 March 2021

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

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## Marketing trends and issues

### Advertising

#### Consumers prefer fictional characters

Consumers prefer fictional characters in ads, according to an Ipsos MORI survey, which revealed that 38% of the UK public would “most like” to see fictional characters in ads compared with celebrities (22%), musicians (22%) and sports stars (18%). Yet, an analysis of 4,000 UK ads from 2018 to 2020 found fictional characters appear in the ads just 1.1% of the time, compared with celebrities (6.2%), sports stars (5.9%) and musicians (2.4%). David Born of Born Licensing, who conducted the analysis, argues creative agencies and brands tend to work with what they know (celebrities and sports stars) and many actively avoid fictional characters. In some cases, licensing fees can be too high; in others have complications, such as the fictional character is linked to another brand in the same category.

**thedrum.com, 15 March 2021 (Born)**

#### AI advertising – the “promises and perils”

AI is an exciting development in advertising and has the potential to affect all aspects of the advertising process. Critics warn of the perils: for consumers these could be a loss of privacy and control; and for marketers there is a steep learning curve, uncertainty over return on investment and its effect on brand image. But, as companies continue to generate huge quantities of data, AI is becoming more of a necessity than an option. By 2023 global digital advertising is expected to reach \$517.51 billion with AI accounting for 80% of this. This article defines AI advertising; considers a classification schema for research on AI advertising; and sets out its “promises and perils”.

**Journal of Advertising, Vol 50(1), January-March 2021, pp1-10 (Rodgers)**

### Agencies

#### WPP – the gender pay gap

WPP has reported that 80% of its group companies have reduced their gender pay gaps, according to figures published for 2019 and 2020. The company has issued data for both the median and mean pay gaps, although the median (the difference between the midpoints in the ranges of gender pay) is considered to be more representative. Across the company, the mean gender pay gap fell by 2.1% between 2019 and 2020 and the median by just 0.1%. However, the pay gap is more pronounced at more senior levels of the company, pointing to the disproportionate number of men in those roles. There are some significant variations between the group companies: the 2020 pay gap for Grey Advertising Ltd was 26.5% and for Ogilvy & Mather 24.7%, but it was just 4.2% for MediaCom Holdings and 2.6% for Hill & Knowlton.

**thedrum.com, 11 March 2021 (Bradley)**

### Brands and branding

#### Building a co-branding partnership

Co-branding is a very effective way to build a business, build awareness and bring brands to new audiences. If done properly, the crossing over of ideas can please customers and attract new ones. In order that the partnership succeeds, the concept must work for both parties but that can be tricky. Here are some essential guidelines when embarking on a partnership with another brand. They include: establishing mutual expectations; having a back-up plan; using co-branded promotions; creating trust; and using clear, friendly communications.

**Public Relations Strategies and Tactics, Vol 4(3), March 2021, pp1-2 (Bailey)**

### Conferences and events

#### Supporting the supply chain

#WeMakeEvents, an industry collective, has

launched a new video campaign which aims to raise awareness of those who work in the struggling live events supply chain. The initiative has the support of some big stars, such as Sir Mick Jagger, Griff Rhys Jones and Simon Callow, who have provided video messages of support. Some 700,000 people work in the supply chain but most have had no work for the past 12 months. The campaign includes the TEXTING TEXTING ONETWO appeal which aims to raise funds through the industry charity Backup. The event supply chain is a £70 billion market in the UK; without additional support, 40% of businesses could go under, while a third of employees say they have already left the industry, according to a #WeMakeEvents survey.

**eventindustrynews.com, 12 March 2021 (Parry)**

## **Consumer behaviour**

### **New shopping behaviour – new models**

Today shoppers can no longer be stereotyped as “Westerners stuffing mountains of groceries into the boots of their cars and loading up on monolithic, all-American brands”. Firstly, shoppers are increasingly from Asia and secondly, shoppers are anxious for their purchases to reflect their ethical and political values so they may choose a brand based on its eco-credentials. The other major trend is digital: as data offers more information about shopping patterns, the relationship between mass consumption and mass production is breaking down. Producers and consumers have a more direct relationship with each other and the middleman is disappearing. This in turn could lead to a rise in creativity. Shopify, a Canadian tech platform, offers brands the chance to circumvent Amazon. It sold \$120 billion-worth of merchants’ goods in 2020, double that of 2019. Meanwhile, companies like Nike are selling direct to consumers or even selling trainers in vending machines.

**economist.com, 13 March 2021**

## **Customer relations**

### **Recognising customer lifetime value**

New research reveals that 80% of marketers do not fully understand customer lifetime value (LTV), despite its importance. The study, conducted by the CMO Council, found that only 17% of CMOs track their LTV well, even though it enables them to forge meaningful relationships with customers, to respond to changing needs and is a key revenue driver. Data is a crucial factor in relationship-building because the more information brands have, the more they can create meaningful messages for customers and this in turn leads to loyalty. The key is to use the right data to track the right variables and to track them consistently. Yet, the report reveals that one in four CMOs aren’t tracking LTV at all. The report also covers ownership of LTV, including alignment of stakeholders to help create a “cohesive” marketing strategy. Ultimately, LTV comes down to loyalty:

after all, “One loyal customer can prove to be more valuable than ten new leads”.

**cmocouncil.org, 3 March 2021 (Stephani)**

## **Direct marketing**

### **Turning to first-party data**

While 2020 was a year of survival, 2021 will be a year when brands re-evaluate their position and try to strengthen their direct customer relationships. With more restrictions on data collection, and the end of the third-party cookie, brands must reduce their dependence on third parties. This means more direct-to-consumer advertising. Successful brands will shift to owned channels and first-party data for their strategies which will include: improving the purchase experience; investing in email marketing; and launching SMS programmes.

**emarketer.com, 11 March 2021**

## **ICO issues fines for spam during pandemic**

The Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) has fined two companies a total of £330,000 for sending “nuisance” emails during the pandemic. Leads Work Ltd, a Sussex-based firm, was accused of sending over 2.6m text messages to customers without permission during May and June 2020. It was fined £250,000 and was told to stop sending unlawful marketing messages. Valca Vehicle Ltd, a Manchester-based company which specialises in lead generation for financial products, was fine £80,000 after sending over 95,000 text messages without the recipients’ consent. The ICO said the messages targeted people who could be financially vulnerable due to the pandemic. The cases also highlight the importance of obtaining valid permission before sending direct marketing.

**lexology.com, 12 March 2021 (McKenzie)**

## **Law**

### **Multiple trade mark owners – online selling**

Trade marks tend to relate to a particular territory, but problems arise where there are multiple owners of the same trade mark in different territories. A recent case involved the “Beverly Hills Polo Club”, which has different owners in the US and the UK/EU. Products with the trade mark went on sale on Amazon.com with the consent of the US owner but not the UK/EU owner. A case was brought against Amazon by the UK/EU trade mark rights owner who said that consent should have been obtained since the goods were accessible in the UK/EU. Amazon was able to prove that the goods were targeted at US consumers and the court concluded that it would only have been guilty of infringement if the goods had been positioned for sale in the UK/EU. In other words, a trade mark owned by multiple owners can be used in an online marketplace provided that it has the consent of the trade mark owner in the country where the products are being marketed or sold. The global nature of

retail is something brands will just have to accept, concludes the author.

**lexology.com, 8 March 2021 (Pearson)**

### **Public demonstrations – patents at risk**

Some new inventions benefit most from being demonstrated in public or it may simply be impossible to hide them due to their size, such as in the case of a wind turbine. However, this could be detrimental to obtaining a patent, depending on the amount of knowledge disclosed to the public. A demonstration of a product in public could be considered as a public disclosure even if no one has observed it. However, a UK High Court has concluded that, in such circumstances, it is possible to ensure that an invention doesn't become public knowledge. This is illustrated in the case of *Mishan vs Hozelock*, where the inventor was testing out his garden hose in his own garden. He had been careful to ensure that no one was watching, which meant that no information about it had been made public. Nevertheless, the advice is to file an application ahead of any possible public disclosure...

**lexology.com, 10 March 2021 (Darby and Gisseleire)**

## **Marketing**

### **How the pandemic has changed marketing**

One year on from the start of the pandemic and marketers are looking at how the industry has changed. Amy Fuller, chief marketing and comms officer for Accenture, stresses that: "Empathy and compassion are a permanent part of marketing's new tool box". However, the need to tread carefully and be sensitive has to be balanced with changing technology, data-driven marketing and e-commerce. Many organisations are looking to their CMOs to take on wider responsibilities and over half of CMOs, surveyed for an M&C Saatchi white paper, say their influence has increased during the crisis; just 5% say it has decreased. Marketing executives from Gap, Chipotle, General Mills and others reflect on how they are positioning marketing to meet rapidly changing conditions.

**marketingdive.com, 8 March 2021 (Adams et al);**  
<https://mcsaatchi.com/change/brand-clarity>

### **Avatar marketing**

Avatar-based marketing is still in its early stages and marketers will need help in designing strategies to apply it successfully. One of the most important questions is: "How to design effective avatars?" The authors define the term "avatar" and then present a typology of avatar design to identify elements that academics and practitioners can use to achieve particular goals. They define four distinct categories of avatars: simplistic, superficial, intelligent unrealistic and digital human. They conclude that companies should carefully consider five interrelated areas: when to deploy avatars; avatar form realism; avatar behavioural realism; form-behavioural realism

alignment; and avatar contingency effects for optimal avatar-based marketing.

**ama.org, 9 March 2021 (Miao et al)**

### **From content marketing brief...**

Marketing content doesn't happen without a strong brief. Whether it is content for internal or external consumption, it is important to define a comprehensive brief. This article includes a step-by-step guide for creating an effective brief for any content marketing asset. This includes establishing the strategic context; being clear on a marketing and promotional plan; providing editorial direction; communicating the design vision; and technical details and housekeeping.

**business2community.com, 10 March 2021 (Ahmed)**

### **...to content creation**

Orbit Media has created a process for content creation and has set out all the steps involved in a single flowchart, which is presented here. The 17-step process is accompanied by notes and links to resources and input from experts. The process includes: updating past content (rewriting an old article); socialising the topic within your network; original research; search-optimised articles; visuals and collaboration; and planning the promotion.

**orbitmedia.com, March 2021 (Crestodina)**

## **Market research**

### **Investment up despite pandemic**

Last year ESOMAR forecast a 22% fall in global insights industry revenues, which led to concerns that investment in the industry would also decline. In fact, last year venture capital and private equity interest in the sector reached levels not experienced since the rise of "big data" in 2014. Just under \$5.6 billion of new capital was invested in the market research and consumer analytics industry in 2020, according to *Cambiar Capital Funding Index 2020*. This is up by 75% on 2019. The surge in funding is explained by various factors, including growth in the use of technologies allied to market research and analytics. This article looks at the investment landscape, including investment by region and subcategory. The greatest investment last year was in customer analytics, followed by big data and mobile analytics.

**researchworld.com, 4 March 2021 (Chadwick)**

## **Public relations**

### **Achieving success with in-house PR**

Some companies have been re-evaluating their PR strategies during the pandemic and have decided to bring the function back in-house by expanding existing teams or creating a new one. Here are some tips for streamlining in-house workflow, tackling social media and proving your value. They include having the right PR tools; focusing on the

channels that will be most beneficial to the business; and ensuring that you connect your PR activities to business objectives. These considerations will give a PR team a solid foundation which can make them into an essential ingredient of business growth.

**prdaily.com, 11 March 2021 (Knowles)**

## **Sponsorship**

### **Second screens impact on TV sponsorship**

Traditionally television has been the most important medium for delivering sponsorship activities to sports fans but now it is being challenged by smartphones or "second screens". Media multitasking – using a smartphone while watching TV – has become common. This study investigates how multitasking affects sponsorship outcomes, such as brand recall and attitude towards the brand, with sport involvement as an additional factor. The results suggest that multitasking negatively influences both brand recall and attitude, while sport involvement positively influences attitude towards the brand independently.

**Sport Marketing Quarterly, Vol 30(1), 2021, pp47-57 (Sanghak)**

## **Agriculture, fishing and forestry**

### **Vertical farming – the sky's the limit**

The vertical farming sector has taken off. In 2018 it was worth just \$43 billion globally but it is expected to reach \$22 billion by 2026. This is quite an achievement for a sector that didn't exist just over a decade ago. This article showcases some diverse concepts, such as Perfectly Fresh in Cheshire, which grows baby leaf for M&S. Baby leaves are usually imported but vertical farming enables them to be grown all year round in almost any location. Growpura, based in Preston, is a commercial-scale vertical hydroponics demonstrator facility which is backed by a £4.5m government grant. Square Mile Farms is an example of Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) which involves a closed-loop system, it is keen to connect with urban consumers by growing greens on the walls of offices and even in the basements of flats. It believes that this is a good way for businesses to "embed well-being and social responsibility objectives into everyday living".

**fginsight.com, 11 March 2021 (Black and Yorke)**

### **The seed industry**

Indian law firm Lakshmikumaran and Sridharan (LKS) has produced a report on the seed industry as part four of its series: *Farm to Food: Key trends and regulatory outlook in agritech*. It highlights the need for India to move from production-centric to market-centric agricultural practices while giving market access to all farmers, including small operations. Technological innovation and using digital for real time solutions could help to transform the sector.

While central Government is keen to reform the sector, there is a struggle between farmers' rights and the innovation interests of private corporations. The paper also mentions the fact that exports of Indian seeds could be impacted if climate issues are not addressed. India has the potential to become the export capital of seeds and agricultural products; but the right infrastructure is needed to support this and the competing interests of stakeholders should be taken into account.

**lexology.com, 4 March 2021 (Hassan)**

### **From grass to glass – Guernsey milk campaign**

A "grass to glass" video forms part of a new campaign to promote Guernsey's famous dairy industry. The video shows the collection of milk from the island's 13 dairy farms which is then processed by Guernsey Dairy. The dairy says that the journey from grass to glass is one of the shortest in the world, which reduces its carbon footprint. The video also emphasises the nutritional qualities of milk from Guernsey cows.

**fwi.co.uk, 15 March 2021 (Henderson)**

## **Building industry**

### **Green constructions jobs needed for Wales**

A new report from the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) suggests that the industry will have to create 12,000 new jobs by 2028 if Wales is to achieve its net zero emissions target by 2050. The new jobs will need to be a mix of new skilled jobs, greater efficiencies and innovation in decarbonisation. Construction in the UK currently generates 40% of the UK's emissions, according to the UK Green Building Council (UKGBC). Moving to greener construction could make the industry more attractive to potential recruits as well as existing workers who could be upskilled.

**business-live.co.uk, 15 March 2021 (Barry)**

### **Encouraging apprenticeships**

Over a third (37%) of 16- to 21-year-olds are less likely to go to university than before the pandemic, according to a survey by house-builder Redrow on attitudes towards apprenticeships and careers in construction. Some 42% of young people are now more likely to consider on-the-job learning or an apprenticeship. Yet most respondents (67%) say they believe schools do not promote apprenticeships in the same way as other educational paths; there is also gender stereotyping, with just 33% of females discussing a career in construction at school compared with 46% of males. The report analyses the barriers to entry-level recruitment into the construction sector and provides recommendations, which include: expanding the apprenticeship levy; introducing a living wage for apprentices; and making careers advice digital.

**theconstructionindex.co.uk, 16 March 2021**

## Businesses and strategy

### Most innovative companies

Fast Company's ranking of the *World's 50 Most Innovative Companies* celebrates businesses that have remade themselves during the pandemic or found a way forward as an example to others. Not surprisingly, it is the biotech firms which created the first mRNA vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna) that head up the list. But it also includes Stablegold Hospitality, a developer of high-quality, affordable housing and pioneers of business models, such as Peloton. The list also includes the likes of Shopify, SpaceX, Epic Games and Microsoft, with an explanation of what contribution they have made.

**fastcompany.com, 10 March 2021;**

<https://www.fastcompany.com/90603436/the-worlds-most-innovative-companies-2021>

### Salesperson stress – variable compensation

As a profession, sales can lead to considerable stress. One reason for this is the use of variable compensation plans which are dependent on predetermined sales targets. Although this may motivate salespeople to work harder, it also causes considerable stress, burnout and sickness. During four studies, researchers found that, by reducing the variable share in a person's compensation plan, their performance decreased but they also fell sick less, by about 30%. Recommendations are that: if the variable compensation share is high, salespeople should be screened to determine their ability to cope with stress; managers should help salespeople to manage their sales pipeline better, to reduce uncertainty and stress; managers could personalise incentive schemes; and companies should make their managers more sensitive to the "health-harming" effects of compensation decisions.

**ama.org, 4 March 2021 (Habel et al)**

### Inspiring motivation

How do you encourage your employees to deliver the high performance that produces results for your organisation? In this environment people want, more than ever, for their work to matter. It is the manager's role, not to motivate individuals, but to create the context in which they can be self-motivating. This is difficult in normal times but it is much harder via a webcam. Relationship is key to achieving this: focusing less on the achievement of tasks for their own sake and more on personal connection, helps to build psychological safety and a desire to experiment and contribute. Here are four practical approaches that you can take.

**managementtoday.co.uk, 10 March 2021 (Turnbull)**

## Charities and NGOs

### Charities predicting fall in funding

Charities are expecting a decline in funding from all

sources over the next financial year, according to a survey for the *Respond, Recover, Reset: The Voluntary Sector and Covid-19* project from Nottingham Trent University and others. Yet the research also finds that the impact of the pandemic has been "uneven and unpredictable": 43% of respondents say they have reduced their range of services since March 2020 while 37% have widened them; 31% have reported a rise in total income since last year vs 47% who say income had fallen. Some 44% of respondents say they have enough cash reserves for more than six months while 9% have no cash reserves or not enough to last them a month. The findings reflect the "huge, complex and diverse" nature of the voluntary sector, says Alex Farrow head of networks and influencing at NCVO.

**fundraising.co.uk, 15 March 2021 (May);**

<http://cpwop.org.uk/what-we-do/projects-and-publications/covid-19-vcse-organisation-responses/>

### Online auction house is key to success

The Sick Children's Charity raises money through initiatives such as its annual Supper Club, an event for high-net worth individuals. Last year, due to the cancellation of in-person events, the charity brought the event online allowing it to open up to a wider audience with a change of name to "Online Auction House". Working with fundraising platform Givergy, the event ran for two weeks in October. Here are some of the actions the charity took to make its online move a success. By the time the auction was over, it had raised over £30,000 which is 50% more than its in-person auction. It also diversified the audience, with 17% being service users of the charity and almost half new supporters. A key learning was that a flexible and agile approach to communications was the most effective way to maximise success.

**charitycomms.org.uk, 16 March 2021 (Harrison)**

## Durable consumer goods

### Shortage of garden furniture

There is a shortage of garden furniture in the UK due to high demand and shipping costs. Ikea is among the companies to have reported supply issues while the Leisure and Outdoor Furniture Association says that all 70 of its members are experiencing problems. A key factor is cost, with shipping prices from countries, such as China, rising astronomically. Last year companies were charged \$1,200 for a container from China and Indonesia but this year this cost has risen to between \$7,000 and \$10,000, or more. Ikea attributes the problems to high demand, as people are spending more time at home, plus issues in the global supply chain.

**bbc.co.uk/news, 14 March 2021 (Byrne)**

## Economy

### **Business and consumer confidence update**

This House of Commons Library bulletin brings together the latest business and consumer confidence information. An ONS survey, which looks at the impact of the pandemic on businesses, has found that in the two weeks to 7 March 2021, 79.1% of respondents expressed high or moderate confidence that their business would survive the next three months. The latest *CBI Industrial Trends Survey* has found that in February 2021 more manufacturers thought that output would fall over the next three months than that it would rise (-2% of manufacturers, up from -24% in January). GfK's *Consumer Confidence Index*, undertaken for the European Commission, measures a range of consumer attitudes, including views on making major household purchases. The index rose to -23 in February 2021, from -28 in January.

[commonslibrary.parliament.uk](https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk), 11 March 2021 (Brien)

### **Basket of goods reflects changing habits**

The pandemic has led to some changes in the basket of more than 700 goods used by the ONS to calculate inflation. Hand sanitiser and loungewear, along with hand weights used for exercise, have been added to the basket due to their high demand during the pandemic. Retailers are increasingly labelling clothing as "loungewear" to reflect the shift to casual clothing, according to Sam Beckett, ONS head of economic statistics. Meanwhile, goods to leave the basket include white chocolate bars (replaced by Maltesers), ground coffee (replaced by coffee sachets), and canteen sandwiches which would normally be purchased at work. Smartwatches, WiFi lightbulbs plus hybrid and electric cars have also been added.

[bbc.co.uk/news](https://bbc.co.uk/news), 15 March 2021

### **Trade – the UK deficit**

The UK usually imports more than it exports which means that it has a trade deficit. Last year the overall trade deficit was £10 billion. This was made up of a deficit of £116 billion in the trade of goods which was partly offset by a surplus of £106 billion on the trade in services. In the three months to January, the UK trade deficit widened to £14.5 billion compared with just £7.6 billion in the previous three months. Exports had also fallen by 2.9% over the period while imports increased by 1.9%. However, this paper cautions against making short-term comparisons due to the effects of Brexit.

[commonslibrary.parliament.uk](https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk), 12 March 2021 (Jozepa)

## Education

### **Corporations should offer skills for all**

This article is part of a new executive guide entitled *The Future of Workplace Learning*, which can be

downloaded. It argues that organisations should rethink their approach to workplace learning and explores how business leaders across functions can collaborate to drive transformational learning. Interestingly, 94% of employers expect their employees to acquire new skills on the job, up from just 65% in 2018. However, this involves shifting the initiatives and resources to where they are most needed. Skill development programmes tend to focus on highly skilled jobs when it is the many lower-skilled jobs that need the resources. To harness the "innate human drive" to move on, executives should take three actions: make developmental pathways visible; make low-cost training available at scale; and invest in skill development opportunities for wider supply chains and communities as well as current employees.

[sloanreview.mit.edu](https://sloanreview.mit.edu), 8 March 2021 (Gratton);  
<https://sloanreview.mit.edu/series/the-future-of-workplace-learning/>

### **Digital skills training – Government funding**

In answer to a question on funding for digital skills, Gillian Keegan, parliamentary under-secretary of state for education, says that the Government will invest £138m in in-demand technical courses for adults. This will include £95m for a new level 3 adult offering and £43m for employer-led skills bootcamps. The level 3 offer, which will support any adult aged 24 or over who wants to acquire their first level 3 qualification, covers multiple sectors including 33 digital qualifications in areas such as cyber security, coding and digital design for the creative industries. Skills bootcamps will involve free courses of up to 16 weeks' duration, allowing people to build up skills in areas such as digital marketing and data analytics.

[theyworkforyou.com](https://theyworkforyou.com), 12 March 2021

## Energy and utilities

### **IRENA says energy transition must ramp up**

Almost \$4.4 trillion a year will need to be spent on energy transition if we are to reverse the impacts of climate change, according to a new report from the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). It says that there will have to be a 30% rise in investment in clean energy between now and 2050. It predicts that electricity will be the main energy carrier by 2050 but that renewable power capacity will increase ten-fold. Transport, which will see a nearly 70% fall in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for the period, will experience the highest growth in electrification. Meanwhile fossil fuel use will decline by over 75%. However, Francesco La Camera, director-general of IRENA, warns that "the gap between where we are and where we should be is not decreasing but widening" and he fears that the world will not meet the 1.5°C set by the Paris Agreement.

[energylivenews.com](https://energylivenews.com), 16 March 2021 (Mavrokefalidis)

### **Total and Microsoft partnership**

Total and Microsoft have partnered to drive digital transformation and progress towards net-zero emissions. Total is committed to supply green energy to support Microsoft while Microsoft will supply Total with cloud and AI solutions to “accelerate our digital transformation”, says Patrick Pouyanné, Total Chairman and CEO. Satya Nadella, Microsoft CEO, says this is an “opportunity to use advances in digital technology to reduce greenhouse gas emissions”. Microsoft has committed to use 100% renewable energy by 2025; while Total is building its renewables and electricity portfolio so that it will account for up to 40% of sales by 2050.

[worldoil.com](http://worldoil.com), 11 March 2021

## Environment

### **Ariel set to decarbonise laundry**

Ariel, P&G’s laundry detergent brand, has announced an expanded 2030 Brand Ambition which centres on, “reinventing clean to decarbonise laundry across its entire value chain.” As well as encouraging small changes in consumer habits, it is working with industry and suppliers to establish a sustainable supply chain. The first stage is a pan-European consumer engagement campaign, called “Every Degree Makes a Difference”, conducted in partnership with National Geographic Creative Works. It aims to show how greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced by turning down the temperature on washing machines. The target is a five-degree drop in average washing temperatures in Europe by 2025. Some 60% of laundry’s carbon footprint comes from the washing temperature.

[businesswire.com](http://businesswire.com), 11 March 2021

### **Green garments – you need to water them!**

The fashion industry accounts for between 4% and 10% of global emissions so it would be interesting if clothing were to actually extract carbon from the air. This year’s Paris Fashion Week saw a tie-up between design studio Post Carbon Lab, clothing label EgonLab and car company DS Automobiles. The garments in their four-piece fashion collection are covered in live algae which absorbs CO<sub>2</sub> and turns it into oxygen. Although the clothes appear normal, the living organisms require maintenance in the form of daily misting and exposure to the sun. The amount of carbon they absorb depends very much on how well the algae are looked after!

[fastcompany.com](http://fastcompany.com), 12 March 2021

## Fashion

### **Harry and Meghan patio furniture a sell-out**

It is not unusual for designer clothes and accessories to sell out within hours of being worn by first ladies, royals or celebrities at a prominent event. The outdoor chairs which Prince Harry and Meghan Markle were sitting on during their Oprah

Winfrey interview have been selling like hot cakes. The Christopher Knight Home Burchett outdoor chairs, at \$554 a pair, have sold out on websites such as Amazon and Target. Viewers haven’t stopped at the patio furniture, with some of the 17.1m viewers also purchasing the \$4,700 Giorgio Armani dress worn by Meghan, and Oprah Winfrey’s Götti glasses!

[adage.com](http://adage.com), 10 March 2021 (Craft)

### **Next buys stake in Reiss**

Next has acquired a 25% stake in luxury clothing brand Reiss for \$33m. Reiss had been put up for sales before the pandemic. Next chief executive Lord Wolfson said: “We are excited to see what can be achieved through the combination of Reiss’s exceptional product, marketing and brand building skills with Next’s total platform infrastructure.” Next has been adding hundreds of brands to its website over the past few years, including Barbour, Boden and Gant.

[retailgazette.co.uk](http://retailgazette.co.uk), 10 March 2021

### **M&S to sell competing brands**

M&S is to start selling clothing from 11 other brands on its website as part of an ongoing “transformation programme”. M&S has already seen 7,000 job losses and last year the company made its first loss in 94 years. The interim statement for the six months to 26 September reported losses of £87.6m, although clothing and homeware sales have risen by 34%. The new brands will appear alongside M&S ranges such as “Classics” and “Limited”. It hopes that the new labels will attract people who do not normally shop with M&S. M&S is the latest in a string of businesses to announce fashion tie ups. (See previous article)

[bbc.co.uk/news](http://bbc.co.uk/news), 11 March 2021

### **How Zara responded to the pandemic**

Inditex, parent company of Zara, has created “one of the best business models in the apparel industry”, often reporting double-digit earnings growth. Zara is renowned for its ability to react fast to consumer demand and to stock its stores with the latest fashion ahead of its competitors. Most clothing retailers outsource to low-cost Asian countries, but Zara uses both Asian plants for stable demand and more expensive but flexible plants in Europe, for faster response. It can take products from design to sales in less than six weeks. Despite its just-in-time model being heavily hit by the pandemic, Zara has been able to use its agility and flexibility to perform a quick pivot so that by October 2020 sales had returned to 94% of their pre-pandemic levels. Here’s how...

[managementtoday.co.uk](http://managementtoday.co.uk), 9 March 2021 (harbott)

## Financial services

### **The need to upskill**

The pandemic has resulted in much innovation in the way that financial services (FS) companies operate and has accelerated digital transformation. FS companies have had to be more agile which has placed a greater reliance on their people. Yet they are struggling to keep up with the new skills and capabilities needed within the workforce. According to the *Future of Work Report 2020* by the World Economic Forum, half of all FS employees are likely to see their jobs change. At a time when many bank branches have already disappeared and fintechs are commonplace, FS firms need a "radical upgrade of their internal skills". Here are three things the industry can do to help bridge the skills gap.

**strategy-business.com, 8 March 2021 (Wakefield)**

### **Klarna – mistakes with advertising**

Klarna, the buy now, pay later brand, has attracted controversy, with some people even comparing it to pay day lender Wonga. Now Sebastian Siemiatowski, co-founder and CEO, says that mistakes had been made in the way the brand was advertised and that: "We have not always followed our own advertising principals". Klarna has seen 100% year-on-year growth in the UK but the Financial Conduct Authority is to be given powers to regulate the sector.

**marketingweek.com, 11 March 2021**

## FMCG

### **Beverages**

#### **Heineken delivers drinks through windows**

Heineken is marking a year of working from home by providing a new type of delivery service. It will serve alcohol-free (0.0) lager through the windows of home-workers using a bar attached to the end of a cherry picker. The bar will start operating on 1 April in London before moving north, with a range of celebrities serving the drinks. Those receiving the beverages will first have to enter a ballot for the "Wind0.0w Service".

**campaignlive.co.uk, 12 March 2021 (Hickman)**

#### **New blend made by women winemakers**

Campo Viejo has announced a new wine blend made by three female winemakers. The Winemakers Blend is described as combining "the most vibrant expressions of Spain" and the grapes are sourced from some of Spain's oldest vines. Launched on 5 April in Tesco, it will be supported by a campaign entitled "Decant La Vida".

**thegrocer.co.uk, 11 March 2021 (Dawson)**

### **Food**

#### **Cadbury links with Google Maps for egg hunt**

For a second year, Easter egg hunts will be restricted due to lockdown measures. Now Cadbury, which had to cancel its traditional Easter egg hunt last year, has created a virtual Easter egg hunt using Google Maps. Consumers are able to hide an egg anywhere on a map and then send a personalised clue to someone. They can also buy and send a real egg after the virtual one has been found. The "Cadbury Worldwide Hide" campaign follows on from the 2019 initiative when Cadbury hid its Cadbury Crème Eggs in other Mondelez brand ads across print, outdoor and TV.

**adweek.com, 9 March 2021 (Spary)**

#### **Thorntons to close all stores**

Thorntons is to close its remaining 61 stores due to challenges which it says are just "too severe". The Derbyshire-based chocolatier will continue to operate online and sell chocolates in supermarkets and other retailers. Needless to say, the business has been hit hard by the pandemic, with store closures hitting peak trading times such as Easter and Christmas. Yet online sales rocketed by 71% last year with over four million customers visiting Thorntons' website. Thorntons has been owned by Ferrero since 2015 but, even before then, it was struggling and it has had to reduce its store numbers from their peak of nearly 400.

**thegrocer.co.uk, 15 March 2021 (Devlin)**

#### **Homepride aims to be top baking brand**

Baking brand Homepride has expanded into the butter and spreads category for the first time with a Baking Spread range. The brand, which describes this as a "natural expansion" of its product range, aims to become the leading brand in the baking category. The move coincides with the Easter baking period and the rise in popularity of home baking over the past year. According to Kantar, 1.9m more shoppers have purchased products in the cooking and baking category over the past 12 months.

**thegrocer.co.uk, 15 March 2021 (Sandercock)**

### **Tobacco**

#### **BAT acquires cannabis company stake**

British American Tobacco (BAT) plans to buy a 20% share in OrganiGram, a cannabis producer based in Canada. The aim is to develop new oral and vapour-based products to be developed under their own brands. BAT will have access to R&D technologies, product innovation and cannabis insight. Alcohol and tobacco brands have been investing heavily in the cannabis growing sector as the product is seen as less harmful than cigarettes. BAT will become OrganiGram's biggest shareholder.

**marketingweek.com, 12 March 2021**



## Government and public sector

### **Politics not a social media deterrent**

Despite many social media users expressing “election fatigue” due to the volume of political content in the lead up to the US election, users didn’t actually reduce their engagement on social media. A July Pew Research Center survey found that the share of people who liked seeing lots of political posts had fallen from 20% in 2016 to 15% in 2020. Yet the number of US social network users rose by seven million last year to 212.1m. The pandemic was clearly a major factor in the significant rise in time spent on social media and this could have offset the “politics-related” decline that might otherwise have taken place. However, the fact is that people enjoy divisive comment and it is one of the ways in which social media boosts usage and engagement. Limiting this type of content could deter users. Global Equities Research estimated that Twitter’s ban of Trump’s account following the Capitol Hill riot, could lead to 15% decline in revenue and engagement.

**emarketer.com, 11 March 2021 (Enberg)**

### **ICO guidance on political campaigning**

The ICO has published “Guidance for the use of personal data in political campaigning”. It emphasises the importance of processing personal data in compliance with data protection law and offers practical advice for complying with the UK General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the PECR 2003. The guidance reflects the rapid rise in digital political marketing over the past five years vs the impact of Covid-19 on door-to-door canvassing.

**lexology.com, 12 March 2021 (McKenzie et al)**

## Health and pharmaceuticals

### **Promoting a B2B pharma brand**

Pharmaceutical marketers have two main goals which is to build awareness and to generate leads. Certain tactics can be used to drive awareness, generate leads or do both at the same time. Whether the brand is B2B or B2C, you need to know your end customer and what they want to achieve because the objective and overall strategy will influence the tactic deployed. This article, which evaluates ways of promoting a pharma B2B brand, covers print and digital publications, newsletters, digital display ads, social media, SEO, webinars, content marketing and events.

**orientation.agency/insights, 10 March 2021 (Murray)**

### **Big pharma – maintaining newly found favour**

Despite making well-known drugs and household brands, pharma companies are generally not well-

known by name. Yet now they have become more high profile than ever due to the pandemic. Pfizer, AstraZeneca and Moderna, in particular, have become household names. In the rush to tackle Covid-19, companies have not had time to “brand” their vaccines which means that their names are in the spotlight. Pfizer came bottom out of 22 companies in a 2018 US study by the Reputation Institute but now it is perceived as a “world saviour”. The success of these companies has had a halo effect on the wider industry, with a recent study suggesting that almost half of people have a more positive view of the pharma sector. So how can pharma capitalise on its current popularity? The author considers the options.

**thedrum.com, 11 March 2021 (Everson)**

### **First AR lens for organ donation awareness**

NHS Blood and Transplant has joined up with Snapchat to raise awareness of organ donation. It will use an AR body-tracking lens to allow people on Snapchat to locate vital body organs, educate themselves and discuss organ donations with those close to them. The AR lens, which claims to be the first of its kind, targets young people of 16 to 20. The technology identifies the organs that can be donated and enables the user to select specific organs to learn more about or go to the organ donation website.

**mobilemarketingmagazine.com, 11 March 2021 (Stewart)**

## IT and telecoms

### **Apple invests in new silicon design centre**

Apple is to invest over €1 billion in a new Silicon Design Center in Munich, Germany, which will focus on the company’s 5G and future wireless technologies. Apple says this will be “Europe’s largest R&D site for mobile wireless semiconductors and software”. The European Silicon Design Center, which will open in 2022, will run on 100% renewable energy.

**zdnet.com, 11 March 2021 (Tung)**

### **Berners-Lee – Web access for young people**

Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the World Wide Web, is calling on industry leaders to ensure that every young person has access to the Web. In a letter written with Rosemary Leith, Web Foundation co-founder, Berners-Lee claims that a third of young people have no access to the internet while many have inadequate data, devices or a reliable connection. He wants industry leaders to ramp up investment so that everyone everywhere has a “meaningful” internet connection. He calculates that it will take \$428 billion in additional investment over ten years to have quality broadband connection for everyone. The letter ends with a call for tech companies to understand the needs of young people and to work with them to create products and

services that respect their rights.

**zdnet.com, 12 March 2021 (Barbaschow)**

## Leisure and tourism

### Logo change and brand loyalty

There has been limited research into how sport rebranding influences sports fans. This study examines how sport rebranding in the form of a logo redesign impacts fan loyalty. The results suggest that attitude toward rebranding plays a key part in fans' response when sport rebranding occurs. Logo evaluation also influences the relationship between logo change and brand loyalty. The proposed model suggests directions for future sport rebranding research and how sport marketers can use rebranding strategies to improve rebranding outcomes and lessen negative responses from sports fans.

**Sport Marketing Quarterly, Vol 30(1), 2021, pp69-81 (Williams et al)**

## Materials and mining

### Lithium and the rise of LFP batteries

Lithium prices have been rising in China thanks to strong demand for lithium iron phosphate (LFP) batteries. The price of battery grade lithium carbonate has risen by 88% since the beginning of 2020 to over \$12,600, its highest level since March 2019. Last year Tesla announced that some of its Model 3 electric cars made in its Shanghai factory would have LFP batteries. The "cobalt and nickel free vehicle" has been a resounding success, having gained 5.9% of the global full electric car market by battery capacity deployed, even though the car was not for sale in the US. LFP's share of the overall global battery market by capacity rose to 18.5% in January.

**mining.com, 15 March 2021**

## Media

### Film

#### What next for blockbusters?

In 2019, before the pandemic, the top ten highest grossing films were from the big studios and tended to be franchises, such as Marvel's superheroes. But the landscape has changed and six out of the top ten revenue earners in 2020 were not even in English (five were in Chinese and one in Japanese). One reason is that Asian countries might have fared better during the pandemic than the West. Another is that smaller productions are coming to the fore. At least five of the top ten highest-revenue earners last year had budgets of under \$100m compared with just one the year before. The few blockbusters released last year had earnings way below expectations and some even went straight to streaming. Streaming could help to boost studio profits by cutting out the cinemas but watching a

blockbuster at home might not have the same appeal. However, a faster turnaround from the big screen to the small would reduce marketing costs...

**economist.com, 13 March 2021**

### Games

#### The in-game brand experience

In its final instalment of its *Future Trends Series*, the DMA examines the new opportunities that gaming offers to brands in terms of in-game engagement. This in-depth article describes the digital gamer, how often they play and where they can play. During lockdowns, gaming has been a popular leisure option. Although other forms of leisure may gradually take over as the pandemic recedes, many consumers will remember the supportive role of games. Opportunities for brands include: e-sports and livestream sponsorships, digital ad placement, in-game versions of real-world products, product launches within game worlds and even branded games or adver-gaming. It seems that gamers like seeing real-world brands in games (59% of 25-34-year-olds say so); while 23% say they make in-game purchases on a weekly basis. The article includes case studies of Burger King, Co-op Academy, Gucci and Fortnite.

**dma.org.uk, 11 March 2021**

### Internet

#### Businesses buy five-star reviews on Google

Google has not been doing enough to tackle fake reviews in its business listings, according to consumer group Which? As part of its investigation, Which? created a fake company and purchased five-star reviews. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) began to scrutinise the sector last year and has threatened enforcement against the platforms who are not taking it seriously. Google claims to have "significantly" invested in technology to address the problem. Which? research has previously found that almost half of people who check reviews of online businesses do so on Google.

**bbc.co.uk/news, 9 March 2021**

### Social media

#### Copyright within social media

Copyright applies to social media but you may not know how to protect your rights and to enforce them on a platform that is, after all, intended for sharing content. Rebecca O'Kelly-Gillard of Bird & Bird LLP looks at the role of the digital footprint, cross platform content rights, common social media fallacies and advice for small businesses that are selling through social media in this *Two IPs In A Pod* podcast.

**lexology.com, 5 March 2021 (Gillard);**

<https://cipa.buzzsprout.com/1045420/8068671-social-media>

## Television

### **Disney+ reaches 100m subscribers**

Disney+ now has 100m subscribers around the world, having launched just 16 months ago. It has far exceeded its goal of 90m by 2024 and is now predicting 230m to 240m subscribers in that timeframe. CEO Bob Chapek says the company has become “even more ambitious” and set a target of at least 100 new titles a year since the “direct-to-consumer business is the company’s top priority”.

[marketingweek.com](https://www.marketingweek.com), 10 March 2021

## Packaging

### **Petfood pouches in short supply**

Sainsbury’s has sent an email to shoppers warning them about a “national shortage” of dog and cat food pouches, which it expects will continue “throughout the year”. Tesco says it has experienced a significant rise in sales of petfood over the past year, with strong demand for branded catfood pouches. This reflects “an unprecedented rise in pet ownership across the UK”, according to Morrisons. Suppliers are trying to increase their capacity but it could take several months before full availability returns. Mars Petcare UK general manager Helen Warren-Piper says that the problem is not the supply of ingredients or packaging, but the increased demand for petfood. With more people working from home, people are “treating” their pets.

[thegrocer.co.uk](https://www.thegrocer.co.uk), 10 March 2021 (Woolfson)

## Retailing

### **Retailers adjust to omnichannel**

Retailers have had to shift their marketing strategies to a more omnichannel approach and, of course, the pandemic has accelerated this trend. In a September 2020 survey of US retail CFOs by Rabin Research, 51% of respondents said they had increased their e-commerce investments over the past six months while 64% intend to do so over the next six. Some of the biggest increases in investment will be in mobile commerce, physical stores and voice commerce. Retailers are in a better place to know what works and what to invest in next than they were a few months ago. Click and collect, for example, is not new but is on the rise, while cashierless checkouts and contactless payments will help to reshape the landscape and lead to better omnichannel experiences. This in turn will help retailers to reach consumers.

[emarketer.com](https://www.emarketer.com), 8 March 2021 (Kats)

### **Over 17,500 chain outlets closed in 2020**

Over 17,500 chain store outlets closed permanently across Great Britain during 2020. An average of 48 shops, restaurants and other venues closed every single day, with only 21 opening, according to the Local Data Company. The net closure of 9,877

stores was 30% higher than during 2019 although these figures exclude independent retail outlets. The enforced lockdown and closure of non-essential stores has accelerated the trends already apparent on the high street. After lockdown restrictions ease, we will see a different high street with the disappearance of some big names. The fastest-growing chains include supermarkets, coffee shops, takeaways and patisseries, all of which have been able to trade to some extent during the pandemic.

[theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com), 14 March 2021 (Butler)

### **John Lewis to close more stores**

John Lewis, which made a loss of £517m in the year to January, has warned that it will be closing more stores. This is the retailer’s first ever loss but the pandemic has forced it to reconsider which stores will reopen in the light of lockdown measures and the rise in internet shopping. Before March 2020, £6 in £10 spent with John Lewis was driven by its stores but now that figure is down to £3 in £10. The company is considering closing another eight stores in addition to the eight already announced. Chairman Sharon White said it is a matter of reflecting, “how customers want to shop – right space, right place”.

[bbc.co.uk/news](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news), 11 March 2021

## Services

### **Royal Mail to trial Sunday parcel deliveries**

Royal Mail is to trial the delivery of parcels on Sundays in response to the rise in online shopping during the pandemic and the fact that online shoppers now expect seven-days-a-week delivery. Royal Mail is trialling a seven-day service with “a number of retail brands” although it hasn’t identified them. Competitors, such as DPD and Hermes, already make deliveries on Sunday. Commentators reckon that this could be a challenge for Royal Mail which has struggled to cope with growing demand during the pandemic.

[bbc.co.uk/news](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news), 12 March 2021 (Espinier)

### **Hybrid working the way forward**

Many companies will adopt working from home or hybrid working as “the norm” after the pandemic is over, according to workspace provider IWG. Companies will be able to save money as well as being more environmentally-friendly, according to IWG CEO Mark Dixon. IWG itself has suffered during the pandemic, sustaining a pre-tax loss of £620m last year, but it has secured a number of big deals. These include one with NTT, the Japanese telecoms group, which allows its 300,000 employees to work at any of IWG’s 3,300 offices. Dixon believes that many companies are keen to reduce their office space and use third-party facilities which may be closer to where staff live.

[bbc.co.uk/news](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news), 10 March 2021

## Transport and travel

### **Jet engine makers – trouble ahead**

Makers of jet engines have suffered from the triple whammy of lower plane sales, fewer flying hours and older planes being decommissioned early. The industry, which is dominated by Rolls-Royce, Pratt & Whitney and GE Aviation, is likely to be impacted for years. These companies operate a bit like services firms by selling engines at cost to build up an “installed base”. An engine may last 20 years but providing spare parts and maintenance is a lucrative business. However, as Airbus and Boeing, who make the planes, have been reducing production, there is less demand for engines. Meanwhile carriers that have retired some of their fleet, can use the older planes for spare parts to save on costs. Another trend is for plane makers to work towards net-zero emissions, which might involve using hydrogen as a fuel. This will pose another threat to the engine makers.

**economist.com, 13 March 2021**

### **VW plans 1m electric/hybrid car sales in 2021**

VW aims to sell one million electric or hybrid cars this year, with around half being battery-only and the rest plug-in hybrids. The company expects profit margins to recover to 5% to 6.5%, albeit lower than the 7.6% achieved in 2019. Carmakers are speeding up their electric vehicle rollouts to comply with stricter rules emissions in Europe and China. VW missed its European CO<sub>2</sub> targets last year due to delays in the launch of its ID.3 electric car and it could face a hefty fine as a result.

**ft.com, 16 March 2021 (Campbell)**

Written by CIM’s Knowledge Services Team

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