

Cutting Edge: Our weekly analysis of marketing news

5 May 2021

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

Quick [links](#) to sections

Marketing trends and issues

Advertising

Rise in ASA and CAP cases assisted by tech

There was a significant rise in the number of ads that were withdrawn or amended last year. The ASA and CAP annual report records 36,491 cases, up by 346% compared with 2019. The report also reveals how new technology, data science and industry partnerships are being used to address irresponsible advertising. Tech-assisted monitoring of online ads accounted for 61% of all cases and almost half of complaints. A fifth of cases related to TV and a quarter to influencers while more ads were amended or withdrawn in the health and beauty sector than any other. Other foci for the ASA and CAP were: irresponsible ads about Covid-19, children's online media and influencers. They also launched a Scam Ad Alert system last year.

[marketingweek.com](#), 29 April 2021;
[ASA and CAP Annual Report](#)

UK ad market to overtake 2019

The UK ad market will grow by 15.2% this year to reach £27 billion and is forecast to be 6.9% bigger than it was in 2019, according to the latest Advertising Association/Warc *Expenditure Report*. This compares with a 7.2% decline last year and represents the strongest ad recovery of any major global market. Every pound invested in advertising is expected to generate £6 in GDP. Adspend for 2021 is forecast to grow across all media with the greatest upswing among sectors most affected by the pandemic, notably cinema (up 266.8%) and OOH (up 36.9%). The largest channel is search which is expected to grow by 18.4% while online classified will see strong growth at 20.4%. However, neither TV (up 8.8%) nor radio (up 12.9%) are forecast to fully recover until 2022. Stephen

Woodford, the AA's CEO, said the UK's "sophisticated" online presence had helped "to keep the economy moving".

[campaignlive.co.uk](#), 29 April 2021

Search overtaken by display

Search spend in the UK grew by just 5.3% last year, down from 17.7% growth in 2019. Travel tends to prominent in search advertising so it is unsurprising that last year was dismal. By contrast, retail e-commerce sales grew by 34.7% in the UK in 2020. However, Google's share of the total search market has fallen: from 72.6% in 2019 to 70.3% in 2020. Although its share is expected to recover this year as travel returns, it is predicted to fall to 68.7% by 2023. Display ad spending exceeded search for the first time, last year, largely thanks to video. Display made up 48.9% of total digital adspend compared with search's 44.6%. By 2024, display is expected to account for the majority of all UK digital media spend (50.5%).

[emarketer.com](#), 3 May 2021 (Fisher)

FMCG adspend recovering

FMCG adspend fell by 11% last year but brands are expected to boost their spending by almost 6.4% this year to \$28.1 billion, according to Zenith's latest *Business Intelligence: FMCG Food and Drink Report*. It predicts annual adspend growth of 4.4% between 2020 and 2023 to reach \$30.3 billion by 2023. However, e-commerce is expected to be the "key battleground" for FMCG brand growth and Western brands might want to look to China for best practice in using digital communication to drive e-commerce sales, says Jonathan Barnard, Zenith head of forecasting.

[mediapost.com](#), 26 April 2021 (Mandese)



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Agencies

Ad Agency performance – a mixed bag

Most major agency holding companies have now reported their results for the first quarter of 2021 as lockdown restrictions lift in many key markets. They show an industry that is returning to growth as clients ramp up their ad budgets again. This article summarises the key numbers: the 2020 decline, Q1 growth and major new business wins. Some groups have returned to growth in Q1 (WPP, Publicis and Interpublic) while others are still struggling (Omnicom, Havas) and Dentsu has yet to report its figures but was already suffering losses back in 2019. Small, more agile groups without big legacy systems cannot really be compared with the big groups. However, two examples are mentioned: Sir Martin Sorrell's S4 Capital, which saw a 19.4% rise in gross profit in 2020; and You & Mr Jones, which grew its organic net revenue by 27% last year.

thedrum.com, 29 April 2021 (Faull)

Brands and branding

Protecting the brand for SMEs

This article looks at some branding issues that SMEs should consider before launching a new product or service. A brand has value as a business asset and should be as well protected as other parts of the business. The author considers what steps can be taken to protect the brand from the outset, such as undertaking "clearance searches" to ensure that another party hasn't registered the name; applying to register the name as a trade mark to prevent third parties from using it; monitoring to prevent uses and misuses of the brand name; and enforcing action where necessary. This article was written to coincide with World IP Day on 26 April which focused on IP rights for SMEs.

pinsentmasons.com, 26 April 2021 (Traub)

Brand personality – a definition

Despite many years of brand personality research, there is still no commonly accepted definition. In fact, definitions tend to refer to "brand personification" rather than "personality" in the strict psychological sense. In this paper, the authors look at the history of brand personality and offer advice for its future use. They suggest a new definition, which is: "the distinct set of human personality traits that lead brands to regard their environment in characteristic ways, and as a result, communicate and behave consistently over situations and time". The aim is to enhance segmentation, positioning and differentiation as well as to improve research in the field.

Journal of Brand Strategy, Vol 9(4), Spring 2021, pp466-477 (Conejo)

A sense of purpose – who owns it?

Consumers increasingly expect brands to demonstrate values and social responsibility.

Communicating these can be crucial for gaining loyalty and building brand equity. The pandemic has meant that many brands have been forced to focus on society and show that they care. Research in February 2021 by Connect2 shows that over half of CSR and marketing teams feel that corporate purpose and brand communications generally operate side by side, but 68% say they are not always aligned. This article examines how well departments work together, the challenges (for example, is CSR telling marketing what to do or is marketing going it alone?) and how purpose-driven marketing can avoid "purpose-wash".

campaignlive.co.uk, 29 April 2021 (Arnold)

Children

Children's privacy rights

Children are going online at an increasingly young age which opens them up to the risk of their data being processed. Children have the same rights as adults when it comes to their personal data and there is growing regulatory scrutiny in Europe over the use of their data. TikTok, in particular has been investigated following the death of a 10-year-old girl in Italy. It and its parent company, ByteDance, are also facing a legal challenge in the UK by a 12-year-old girl. Despite the controversy surrounding TikTok, Mark Zuckerberg is forging ahead with his plans to develop an Instagram service for the under-13s although it claims the app will be "managed by parents". A coalition of children's and consumer groups is calling on Instagram to abandon its plans. The growing vigilance of EU data protection authorities is also a wake-up call for companies who promote their services on social media.

lexology.com, 30 April 2021 (Hardy)

Conferences and events

Event apps

This article looks at how event apps have evolved during the pandemic, what they can provide for organisers and audiences and how hybrid events will dominate proceedings. Apps play a key role in a range of activities, from virtual floor plans to tracked sponsorship opportunities and instant messaging. They are also expected to play a "crucial part in redefining the events model". In fact, a recent survey among B2B companies, by Markletic, reveals that most B2B firms have allocated around 20% of their marketing budget to virtual events in 2021, with much of it going to online software. Some event apps are profiled, including: All In The Loop, MeetingPlay, Blerter, Conference Compass, Live Group, Eventr, LinUpr and SOCIO.

eventindustrynews.com, 28 April 2021 (Parry)

Consumer behaviour

Possessions and consumer identity

Consumers often use their possessions to convey a sense of identity. This article considers the many ways in which possessions become “identity relevant” to consumers. The research reveals five main sources of “self-possession identity relevance”: internal management, impression management, activity facilitation, personal preference satisfaction and self-communication. These findings can help in the development of new consumer-product relationships as well as offering three product positioning strategies for managers: staging possessions for future resourcing; positioning possessions as activity proxies; and promoting products as multipurpose.

Journal of Strategic Marketing, Vol 29(3), May 2021, pp206-226 (Hawkins and Rome)

Customer relations

Immersive technology and CXM

Immersive technology, such as AR and VR, has become more evident in the consumer market as companies such as Apple and Facebook invest in it. However, there has been limited research into the role of such technologies as part of the customer experience management (CXM) process. This study explores the influence of immersive technologies on CXM and proposes a strategic CXM framework that illustrates a continuous cycle embracing: a cultural mind-set, strategic direction and developing the firm’s capabilities. It highlights how the concepts of value co-creation, experience economy and immersive technology are central to the future of CXM.

Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, April 2021, 12 pages (Dieck and Han)

Cause-related marketing and IMI

This study looks at the value of cause-related marketing campaigns for customer relationship management and consumers’ “inferences of companies’ manipulative intent” (IMI) in such campaigns. The survey of US consumers found that when they believe that non-profit partners benefit more from a campaign than the company does, then IMI positively affects consumer-brand relationships. However, when they perceive greater benefits to the company, IMI negatively impacts those relationships. The implication is that, in order to nurture a long-term communal relationship with consumers, companies should promote their cause-related marketing programmes by emphasising the programme’s social benefits.

Journal of Consumer Behaviour, April 2021, 15 pages (Song et al)

Direct marketing

Email still wins for channel choice

Email is the clear winner in the minds of customers in terms of choice of channels, according to the DMA’s *Consumer Email Tracker Report 2021*, but they are also keen to engage with a range of other channels and email can be the catalyst for engagement with those channels. The most common action taken by respondents across analysed touchpoints is to click on the link in an email (29%). Email has also become the most popular place for customers to store information sent by a brand, including offers/marketing (56%) and product/service information (53%). Customers have also shown a rise in the proportion of brand emails they engage with and find useful. Although there is still an issue with relevance, it is encouraging that customers who believe that less than one in four emails is valuable has fallen from 69% in 2019 to 56% this year.

dma.org.uk, 28 April 2021

Tips for a newsletter/blog campaign

If a newsletter or blog is successful, it will encourage people to sign up or opt in to your communication. Here are eleven tips for those embarking on a newsletter campaign. The people being targeted are customers or potential customers, so it is important to decide who you want to follow you and what you want to say to them. A key point is to stick to a date or time when the newsletter is to go out rather than send it out randomly. Place the newsletter on all your channels to help reach a wider audience and don’t forget GDPR!

orientation.agency, 29 April 2021 (Pickering)

Marketing

Average CMO tenure shortest since 2009

The average tenure for CMOs has been falling, with the latest data suggesting it has declined to just 40 months, its shortest since 2009. Yet the tenure of CEOs at the same companies has reached an all-time high of 80 months, according to an analysis of 100 of the most-advertised US brands by Spencer Stuart. The difference between the two is “surprising” since the two roles “typically trend together” says Greg Welch of Spencer Stuart. He attributes the decline in CMO tenure in part to the pandemic. In contrast, the number of female CMOs reached 47% last year, up from 43% in 2019 but the number of CMOs from diverse backgrounds fell from 14% in 2019 to 13% in 2020. Spencer Stuart also noted that most companies (63%) hired their CMOs from internal candidates, probably due to the difficult virtual environment during the pandemic.

marketingweek.com, 29 April 2021 (Jefferson)

Marketer opportunities in B2B marketplaces

Marketers who haven't yet considered the opportunities offered by B2B marketplaces should do so, according to a report by Lori Wizdo of Forrester Research. Both B2B buyers and sellers are increasingly participating in marketplaces and those that have experience and success in this field "will reap the benefits of early adoption", she says. This year B2B e-commerce sales are predicted to reach \$1.2 trillion, up by 36% on 2017. B2B marketers can help B2B businesses by creating value. Once they acquire a customer, they need to use a multichannel marketing engagement strategy to, "maintain that relationship and get longer lifetime value". Wizdo offers some recommendations for growing the B2B marketplace environment, which include: understanding the relationship between the marketplace and the customer buying journey; and considering the holistic digital experience.

CRM Magazine, Vol 25(3), April 2021, pp15-16 (Britt)

Marketing complex propositions

Marketing a complex product or solution requires a particular type of marketing approach. Buyers will spend time researching the options and connect through various channels including leadership content, social media, videos and webinars as well as person-to-person conversations. All these channels should work together in a coordinated way, with marketing, sales and other functions being closely aligned. Five factors for success when marketing complex propositions are: a clear value proposition; cross-functional integration; a customer-focused strategy; consistent communication across channels; and ability to build trust. Voice is a channel that can be used for multiple goals at any stage of the business but, to use it, you must first put several key elements in place.

dma.org.uk, 29 April 2021

Marketing risks vs competition

This paper examines companies' use of marketing activities aimed at boosting valuation and achieving differentiation and competitive advantage. This is balanced against the risk of causing "unintended negative consequences". The authors build a theoretical model where companies offering similar products compete on marketing strategy and pricing. Each firm has to choose between a number of marketing activities that have varying potential for enhancing consumer product valuations while carrying the risk of lowering consumer valuations if unintended negative outcomes occur. The results suggest that there is an increased incentive to take marketing risks when there are higher levels of competition in the marketplace.

Marketing Letters, April 2021, 15 pages (Lin and Pazgal)

Market research

Market research a key strategy for B2B

In this article the authors talk to Matthew Powell, MD of B2B International about the most successful strategies of B2B CMOs, following a survey of 908 B2B CMOs across 12 countries. The top five challenges identified over the next six to 12 months were: understanding the temporary vs permanent changes in consumer behaviour (40%); aligning new and changing customer sentiment (39%); declining customer spending (37%); changes to the workforce (35%); and obtaining the right data to make the right decisions (34%). When looking at the strategies that had been used and would be continued ("the leading strategies to drive future growth"), the top strategy was "understanding changing customer behaviour and market research" says Powell.

researchworld.com, 27 April 2021 (Powell and Joe)

Public relations

Going viral – less can be more

Our idea of going viral has been distorted to the point that we expect to see millions of views. But are videos that attract fewer than 500 views (as over 50% of YouTube videos do) a sign of failure in communication? It all depends on your goals and the structure of social networks. Social networks are built of nodes and within each node people are connected by strong ties and have much in common. Nodes themselves are connected by weaker ties that connect people with less in common. If your goal is to go "deep" and nurture "strong ties", then your video may not jump across a weak tie to a different node. However, if you choose to go "wide", you are aiming at the lowest common denominator. This will be enough to gain a quick view and a share. Another way of looking at it is whether you want to engage with "fast" thinking or "slow" thinking. It takes cognition and mindfulness for deep content to trigger emotion, but this can make it more powerful. So maybe a video with a few hundred views might be doing what you intended...

prdaily.com, 29 April 2021 (Hotchkiss)

The data-driven internal comms plan

Before planning internal communications, first conduct a communication audit to look at what you did in the past and any improvements that can be made. The only way to find out if your communications have been effective is to gather objective data. This requires a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures of communication effectiveness, such as audience preferences and channel use combined with reach, readership and engagement. This will help you to construct a plan of action. Here are three steps for a successful internal comms audit.

Public Relations Strategies and Tactics, Vol 4(4), April 2021, pp1-6 (DesRochers)

Sponsorship

Attitudes towards ambush marketing

This study looks at what ambush marketing means to consumers and why some even regard it as an ethical marketing approach. A series of focus groups reveal that favourable evaluations of ambush marketing rest on three main themes. The first is a "Machiavellian understanding" or an amoral way of manipulating others. Another is the "Robin Hood effect", which is in evidence when the ambusher is a small or local brand. The third suggestion is that ambush attacks are exciting or enjoyable in what is termed "dark charisma", akin to how consumers might evaluate supervillains! The implications for the actions of organising committees and sponsoring firms are considered.

Marketing Intelligence and Planning, Vol 39(3), 2021, pp485-499 (Aytac)

Pelaton gets fit with Rule 40 relaxation

As we get closer to the Tokyo Olympics, Pelaton is ramping up its activity with a new campaign featuring nine current and former Olympians and Paralympians, including Usain Bolt. This is despite the fact that Pelaton is not actually a sponsor of the Games. Rule 40 says that Olympic athletes cannot appear in ads from non-Olympic sponsors for several days before opening ceremonies and for a period after the Games have finished. Now IOC rules have changed to make it easier for non-sponsors to run campaigns during the Games. There are still many restrictions, however, such as not using the word "Olympics" in advertising, but marketing around the Games may increase because athletes will have more freedom to enter into endorsement deals with brands.

Advertising Age, Vol 92(5), 19 April 2021, p4 (Pasquarelli)

Businesses and strategy

Small brands getting in front of the big buyers

How does a small new brand make a connection with big brand buyers in retail? Andy Sutton, founder of luxury cat-furniture maker Catipilla, managed to obtain a listing with Pets At Home within a year of launch in 2018. He has also sold over 2,500 cat climbing frames and other items across 16 countries. Here he shares his strategies for connecting with big retailers. They include thinking creatively about how to pitch rather than sending a bland email that starts with "Dear buyer", being persistent but not annoying and using the trade show circuit to introduce yourself. When you get a meeting with a buyer, start by listening, demonstrate an understanding, tell them your unique story and explain how your product can add value. Remember to overdeliver on your promise if the buyer sounds genuinely interested. The next hurdle is to achieve stand out on the shelves...

managementtoday.co.uk, 28 April 2021 (Bassett)

Why are most start-ups doomed?

Two-thirds of start-ups never achieve a positive return but why is this? Tom Eisenmann, a professor of entrepreneurship at Harvard, has concluded that failure is attributable either to the founding team or the business idea. He has identified six patterns to failing ventures, two of which are particularly common: "Bad bedfellows", in which other parties play a part in the firm's downfall; and "false starts", where many firms overlook the importance of researching customer needs before testing products. Firms can overcome this by defining the problem they want to solve, getting one-to-one feedback from potential customers and validating concepts with real customers.

Harvard Business Review, Vol 99(3), May-June 2021, pp76-85 (Eisenmann)

Capturing the value of sustainability

Companies that create value from their sustainability programs follow a particular set of management practices, according to a McKinsey global survey. These distinctive practices are more widely followed by companies that are generating value from sustainability than those that aren't. The key practices are: an optimistic outlook; strategic, purposeful intent; a sharp focus; engaging employees; meeting customer expectations; and value chain collaboration. Companies with effective sustainability programs also plan and manage them with the same commitment that they would apply to other business ventures. The article contains infographics illustrating sustainability practices.

mckinsey.com, 28 April 2021 (Granskog et al); [How companies capture the value of sustainability: Survey findings](#)

Economy

International GDP comparisons

This paper reports on the GDP growth of major economies. Figures for Q1 2021 show that Eurozone GDP growth fell by 0.6% compared with Q4 2020 while US GDP grew by 1.6%. The UK's figures are due out in May. The IMF's forecast, published on 6 April, presents a more optimistic picture for the global economy compared with its previous forecast in January. It expects UK GDP to grow by 5.3% in 2021 following the -9.9% decline last year. Only the US (6.4%) and France (5.8%) are predicted to grow faster. It also forecasts Eurozone growth of 4.4%. The OECD's forecasts, published on 9 March, forecast UK GDP growth of 5.1% this year compared with Eurozone growth of 3.9%.

commonslibrary.parliament.uk, 30 April 2021 (Harari)

Falling food prices unlikely to last

April saw a fall in food prices of 1.3%, a slowdown on March's 2.4% fall, according to BRC-Nielsen's *Shop Price Index*. Meanwhile, non-food prices fell by 1.7% compared with 4% in March. Overall prices for

both food and non-food have fallen during April year-on-year. The decline in prices is unlikely to last, according to BRC CEO Helen Dickinson, who says that retailers are likely to respond to issues relating to Brexit and rising food and oil prices around the world.

retailgazette.co.uk, 28 April 2021 (Nazir)

Digital divide narrows but 1.5m excluded

The digital divide narrowed in the UK during the pandemic as more people went online. The proportion of homes without internet fell from 11% in March 2020 to 6% (about 1.5m) in March 2021. Adults with limited digital skills have been using online shopping, digital banking and video to call friends and family, while younger people have been helping with IT support for those who are less confident. For people who do not have online access, digital exclusion could be more “disempowering” than ever. Those least likely to have internet access are over-65s (18%) and those with lower household income (11%). People who remain offline say it is too complicated (46%), not of interest (42%) or they don’t have the equipment (37%).

ofcom.org.uk, April 2021; [Digital divide narrowed by the pandemic, but around 1.5m homes remain offline](#)

Environment

Sustainability – action, not words

It has become harder for brands to ignore sustainability in their business strategy but, unless they take it on board, they risk being left behind. Taking the lead in responsible action is an important role for marketers. At a recent webinar exploring sustainability, Advertising Association CEO Stephen Woodford pointed out that brands are taking a “radically different” approach to their advertising to demonstrate how they are becoming sustainable. Keith Weed, CMO at Unilever, emphasised the “brand say, brand do” mantra: it isn’t enough for brands to talk about changes because they must also take action. A sustainable future may require brands to act collaboratively to tackle problems, as in the case of Ad Net Zero, to which 15 companies have signed up. After all, in just three years’ time, UK businesses will have to report on their carbon footprint...

decisionmarketing.co.uk, 22 April 2021 (Asscher)

Dale Vince – green business strategist

Dale Vince is the founder of Ecotricity, which claims to be the first company in the world to sell green electricity. In 2010 he purchased Forest Green Rovers which he has transformed into a “model of sustainability” and which FIFA has named “the greenest soccer club in the world”. Previously a new-age traveller who spent ten years living off grid, Vince decided to return to society to “make

change happen”. He has also pioneered the electric car in the UK and has invented a way of making diamonds from carbon in the atmosphere. In this interview, he explains more about his green business agenda.

strategy-business.com, 28 April 2021 (Lyttelton)

Barriers to green purchases

Many companies are marketing sustainable products but 60% of UK and US internet users say that the high cost of eco-friendly products deters them from buying the products. Moreover, 24% says eco-products are hard to find and 10% don’t believe their choice would make a difference anyway. The research was carried out in January by eMarketer’s Insider Intelligence.

emarketer.com, 21 April 2021 (Lebow)

Five brands for environmental awareness

Consumers, especially Gen Z, are increasingly paying attention to the environmental footprint of products. Brands are stepping up to the mark to make their supply chains, products and stores greener but some are doing it better than others. Here are five that have made a success out of being green and why they have succeeded: Ikea, Tide, Volvo, Adidas and Patagonia.

[Advertising Age, Vol 92\(5\)](#), 19 April 2021, p16 (Sherwood)

Packaging

Packaging has become a marketing channel

It can be challenging for SMEs to gain standout and packaging is often side-lined in favour of the product, marketing and website. Yet 72% of customers see packaging as a major part of their buying decision and it has become another marketing channel to help connect with customers. In fact, 49% of customers say they will spend more if the packaging is done well. Here is a two-step guide to help small businesses tackle packaging and achieve stand out. Step one looks at “design it yourself” vs “outsource to the pros”; while step two considers how to achieve an “Insta-worthy” unboxing experience which is a must-have.

packagingstrategies.com, 30 April 2021 (Brafman)

Ecolabels

Ecolabels and sustainability are key areas of focus this year as the G7 Summit approaches in June and COP26 takes place in Glasgow in November. The European Commission is also looking at harmonising rules on the substantiation of green claims used on products and their packaging. Two legislative proposals are expected in Q2 2021 aimed at addressing eco-claims and greenwashing. Businesses, meanwhile, are trying to be more sustainable and finding ways of measuring sustainability. Ecolabels are used on products that

conform to various environmental standards but there are over 450 of them globally covering aspects such as water, landfill and carbon labelling. They vary so much in scope that businesses struggle to decide what to use and the label could amount to a "significant investment decision". This article examines different categories of ecolabel and offers a link to a detailed set of tables.

lexology.com, 2 May 2021 (Prinsley et al);
[Ecolabel tables](#)

The first disability-friendly deodorant pack

Unilever has developed the "world's first deodorant designed for people with disabilities. The Rexona deodorant container, called "Rexona Inclusive", is a hooked container designed for one-handed usage. It is also easier to grip and has a magnetic "click" closure making it better for those with limited grip or eyesight. In addition, it has a larger roll-on applicator, allowing a greater surface area to be reached and the label has instructions in braille. Rexona, which has partnered with a number of disability charities to test the deodorant, plans to use the feedback to improve the product ahead of its commercial launch.

packagingeurope.com, 28 April 2021 (Skoda)

Written by CIM's Knowledge Services Team

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Sources

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Journal of Marketing Theory & Practice**

Journal of Strategic Marketing** (18-mnth delay)

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www.managementtoday.co.uk

www.marketingweek.com

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