

Cutting Edge: Our weekly analysis of marketing news

26 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

Adspend to rise as consumer confidence up

Consumer confidence in the UK is back to levels not seen since before the pandemic, according to the *GfK Consumer Confidence Index*, which rose to -9 in May; it marks a huge improvement on the -34 recorded in May 2020. The rise is attributed to growing positivity among consumers and reflects the reopening of pubs, gyms, etc. Stephen Woodford, CEO of the Advertising Association, says the GfK findings align with the AA/Warc forecast which predicts a 15% growth in ad spend, exceeding growth in other markets such as the US and China. "As society unlocks, we will see more economic activity and advertising is a key engine of that", he says, and cites the opening of cinemas as unlocking "a vital channel" for advertisers.

[campaignlive.co.uk](#), 20 May 2021 (Hargrave)

Where to place your upcycled product info

An upcycled product has both a past identity, derived from the reused materials it was made from, and a present identity associated with its current value. This research explores how the display of an upcycled product's past identity, compared with its present identity, changes consumer evaluations of upcycled product ads and their WOM intentions. Four studies reveal that consumers evaluate an upcycled product ad more favourably when the product's past identity is shown on the left, rather than the right, of its present identity and this also has an impact on WOM. The research has significant implications for those wanting to effectively advertise upcycled products.

[Journal of Advertising](#), April 2021, 16 pages (Kim et al)

Agencies

Global agency results

Among the "Big Six" ad groups, WPP has risen to the top for the first quarter of 2021, with a sooner-than-expected recovery. Its revenues grew by 3.1% in the quarter to £2.3 billion. While all the large ad groups suffered declines in Q2, Q3 and Q4 of 2020, Q1 2021 seems to have marked a turning point. Both Publicis and Interpublic have returned to growth but WPP has seen the greatest turnaround, having experienced revenue decline every year since 2017. It has beat analysts' expectations probably thanks to significant restructuring led by CEO Mark Read. Meanwhile Publicis grew by 2.8% to €2.4 billion and IPG by 1.9% to \$2 billion. The other three Big Six groups (Havas, Omnicom and Dentsu) all suffered declining revenues. Among other key players, Sir Martin Sorrell's S4 Capital saw a Q1 gross profit increase of 33% to £104m.

[campaignlive.co.uk](#), 21 May 2021 (Tu)

Brands and branding

Hygiene and convenience brands the winners

It is not altogether surprising that hygiene and "convenience" brands did well out of the pandemic. Kantar's Brand Footprint study, based on people's shopping behaviour, has found that Dettol, Vim and Lifebuoy were the fastest-growing brands in the world in 2020 with all expanding by over 15%. Dettol, which was chosen by a quarter of households, grew by 39%. The study reveals that 29 out of 50 of the largest FMCG brands grew thanks to people spending more time at home. Nevertheless, Coca Cola is still the most chosen brand (for the 9th consecutive year). It was followed by Colgate, Lifebuoy, Maggi and Lays (Walkers).

[marketingweek.com](#), 21 May 2021



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Brand nicknames benefit brands

MickeyDs (McDonald's) and Big Blue (IBM) are examples of brand nicknames used by consumers but what does it mean when a consumer uses a brand nickname in a tweet or online review? A new study in the *Journal of Marketing* shows that brand nicknames can convey street cred particularly in the digital world. The research suggests that when someone uses a nickname, other consumers assume that the person has a "real" relationship with the brand ("inferred brand attachment") and that the information provided is true ("perceived information authenticity"). However, including a nickname within an ad message does not necessarily convey information authenticity because the nickname is a type of consumer "lingo". The advice is that brand nicknames work well among consumers and that brands should rely on their use to communicate trustworthy brand information. Given the prevalence of consumer nicknames, brands are also advised to trademark popular ones and protect potential nickname domains.

ama.org, 18 May 2021 (Zhang and Patrick)

Just Eat has most memorable sonic logo

An index of the marketing effectiveness of sonic branding has found that Just Eat has the most effective and recognisable sonic logo of all UK brands. Its "Did somebody say Just Eat?" jingle ranked highest on metrics including likeability. The ranking, compiled by SoundOut, places Asda as the highest-ranked supermarket (27) with Tesco in 33rd place. Haribo, at number eight, ranks highest among food and beverage brands. For decades sonic branding was most common in the food and beverage sector until it was overtaken in 2010 by finance and insurance. The research also found that sonic logos that include the brand's name are twice as effective for brand association than those that don't include it.

thegrocer.co.uk, 25 May 2021 (Nott)

Conferences and events

Government funding for international events

VisitBritain has released information about the Government's Business Events Growth Programme. The initiative aims to help boost international business events in the UK, whether it is attracting international events to the country or developing and internationalising existing events. VisitBritain will offer three types of support: Bid Enhancement and Support; International Delegate Growth; and Government Advocacy. Funding applications will be open up to March 2022 and proposals will be accepted for up to £20,000 per event or bid.

conference-news.co.uk, 24 May 2021 (Fullard)

Consumer behaviour

Why do retailers use "gimmicky" displays?

Imaginative displays in retail stores can boost consumer purchase intention, actual purchases, product sales and ROI. This is according to a new study in the *Journal of Marketing* which looks at the impact of imaginative displays on consumer purchase behaviour. The conclusion is that an imaginative display is a cost-effective way of enhancing consumer purchase behaviour. However, effective displays have to be novel and aesthetically pleasing and the perceived benefits of imaginative displays are dependent on context. For example, a themed imaginative display should be congruent with the perceived product benefit.

ama.org, 13 May 2021 (Tat Keh et al)

Distraction – product similarity and proximity

Not much is known about how the display of other products in the same visual field affects consumer attention when online shopping. This research investigates the effect of placing other, similar products in close proximity to the focal product during a goal-directed shopping task. Eye-tracking was used to show that consumers devote the most visual attention to the "distracting" products when they are similar in category and spatially close to the focal product. The results suggest that when consumers have this sort of distraction, they are less likely to identify the focal product.

Journal of Interactive Marketing, Vol 54, May 2021, pp1-10 (Huang et al)

Customer relations

Shifting to data relationship management

"Any sustainable first-party data strategy must have customer relationship at its core", says McKinsey. But as regulators and tech companies take action to address customer privacy concerns, there are likely to be far-reaching implications for digital marketers who can no longer rely on cookies. Marketers and companies that don't work out a strategy to maintain and grow their first-party data, may end up spending 10% to 20% more on marketing and sales just to generate the same returns. This calls for a new approach to data-driven marketing which involves a, "strong, trust-based approach relationship with customers". This article sets out the four key elements of this new approach which is called "data relationship management" (DRM). Companies that get this right could create a long-term source of competitive advantage.

mckinsey.com, 20 May 2021 (Brodherson et al)

Direct marketing

Direct mail enjoys mini revival

Royal Mail has enjoyed a four-fold rise in profits over the past 12 months thanks to the boom in online shopping. Parcels now represent 72% of group revenue but even direct mail is seeing a "mini"

revival. While letter post declined during the year, business mail proved more resilient. Direct mail volumes declined by almost two-thirds during Q1 but this slowed to a 23% decline in Q4. Consumer and SME channels also saw volume improvements over the year with letter revenue declining by 12.5% year-on-year. Royal Mail commented that: "While it is unlikely that business mail customers who have found an electronic alternative to mail during the pandemic will switch back to mail, we believe that advertising mail has an intrinsic value as a part of the marketing mix, so we could see a more positive recovery in that stream over time."

decisionmarketing.co.uk, 20 May 2021

Law

Bad faith in trade mark applications

In UK trade mark law, the expression "bad faith" has a very specific meaning. A recent case involving Swatch and Apple illustrates how bad faith can be hard to prove because it is based on the applicant's intentions. In this case, Swatch applied for the trade mark ONE MORE THING which was used by Apple's Steve Jobs when launching new Apple products. However, Apple has not registered protection for the mark, neither does it use it as a brand, although it considers it to be synonymous with its brands and products. Swatch's application would have covered a range of consumer electrical products and watches. The UKIPO decided, not only that Apple didn't have enough goodwill in the phrase to prevent the application, but that the application has not been made in bad faith. This article explores some key points regarding bad faith in trade mark applications.

lexology.com, 19 May 2021

Post-Brexit consumer protection law

This briefing paper looks at the implications of Brexit in relation to some areas of consumer protection. Most EU law that applied to the UK on 31 December 2020 remains applicable to the UK as "retained EU law". This includes a raft of consumer protection regulations, which allow consumers to enjoy the same rights as they did before Brexit. However, it may be harder for them to enforce their rights when buying from an EU trader. UK traders selling into the EU are also advised to be aware of the EU consumer protection laws. The UK Government's *Consumer Green Paper* and the EU's *New Deal for Consumers* have similar aims for modernising consumer protection law, especially online commercial practices and markets.

commonslibrary.parliament.uk, 21 May 2021 (Conway);
[Consumer Green Paper](#); [EU New Deal for Consumers](#)

Marketing

Influencers – creating long-term relationships

Marketers are good at building relationships with people but many are still wondering whether to get

involved with influencers. While influencer marketing is maturing, there are still many unknowns. Here Jamie Lieberman, founder of Hashtag-Legal, provides some advice for creating the type of long-term influencer relationship that can lead to conversions. He starts by explaining the two major mistakes that brands make when reaching out to influencers, which are: seeing it as simply a transaction, rather than as any other advertising and marketing relationship; and choosing vanity metrics, rather than engagement. Here are three strategies for bypassing "surface-level" influencer marketing and going "straight into the deep end".

digitalmarketer.com, 19 May 2021 (Gutierrez)

The CMO – a visionary communicator?

A CMO's leadership and communication abilities have become "significantly" more important than skills such as being tech savvy or even revenue-focused. In fact, the CMO has a unique role that involves understanding digital, how to build a brand and knowing how to retain customers. A survey by research firm Advertiser Perceptions asked marketing agency execs about the most important characteristics of the CMO role today. Vision came out on top, followed by being a "great communicator", being analytic/innovative and being data/insights-driven. Being adaptive/creative and having expertise in media were also regarded as more important than being revenue-focused.

Adweek, Vol 62(9), 17 May 2021, p11 (Ortiz)

Marketers looking for new beginnings

Technical skills are in high demand in marketing, especially in the areas of data analytics, CRM and user experience, according to a survey of over 700 marketing professionals by CIM and recruitment firm Hays. The survey reveals that 67% of firms are recruiting marketers this year, which is just as well since 60% of marketers say they are planning to change jobs and three-fifths of these aim for a role that allows hybrid office-home working. Meanwhile, 33% say they are dissatisfied with their current role, with a lack of career progression being a major factor. CIM CEO Chris Daly says: "It's clear that as lockdown eases, and with the roadmap to recovery providing further clarity to brands and their marketing activities for the year ahead, that marketers are looking to new beginnings".

decisionmarketing.co.uk, 19 May 2021

Product sampling – the need to adapt

Brands have for years relied on the strategy of in-person product sampling in stores as a way of getting potential customers to buy their goods. But digital methods are beginning to displace sampling, due partly to the data they deliver and the fact that during the pandemic brands have had to find new sampling methods. For example, in January Heineken partnered with meal-kit company

HelloFresh to include two mini cans of nonalcoholic Heineken 0.0 with orders. Almost 100,000 customers opted into the program which was deemed to have successfully linked healthy food and drink. The idea of placing samples in a "natural" context is seen as preferable to handing out samples to random customers.

Adweek, Vol 62(9), 17 May 2021, p9 (Hiebert)

Market research

How the pandemic is revolutionising data

The last year has been "transformative" in the use and understanding of public data, especially for the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Here UK National Statistician, Professor Sir Ian Diamond, looks at how data collection has changed during the pandemic. The use of tax data and GDP data to discover the pandemic's economic impacts have been supplemented by sources such as web data, restaurant reservations and credit card payments to get information on trends and behaviours. Beyond the pandemic, there are significant benefits to be gained from the smart application of data science to structural issues. The ONS is at the forefront of government plans to inform policy using anonymised data sets from both the public and private sectors.

blog.ons.gov, 20 May 2021 (Diamond)

Public relations

PR is essential for strategic plan positioning

Very often internal comms teams are brought in at the last minute after important decisions have been made and then asked to "achieve the impossible". Yet, carrying out a strategic plan without a good comms strategy can show a lack of transparency, confuse audiences and cause the plan to fall short of expectations. Comms professionals should try to enter the proceedings at an early stage, engage with leadership and promote their value so that they are in a better position to develop plans and support the strategy. In essence, PR is relationship management, responsible for developing and strengthening relationships both inside and outside the organisation. Here are some steps to position yourself as an, "essential resource and strategic partner".

Public Relations Strategies and Tactics, Vol 4(5), May 2021, pp1-5 (Farmer)

Sponsorship

Activists tackle big oil sponsorship

There have been protests against big oil companies' sponsorship of museums in London. Theatrical activist group BP or not BP sang in a "choir of fire" to symbolise global warming, in protest against BP's sponsorship of the Nero: The Man Behind the Myth exhibition at the British Museum. Meanwhile, the UK Student Climate Network protested at the Science Museum about a new climate exhibition sponsored by Shell. BP or not BP claims that BP's sponsorship

contributes less than 1% of the BM's annual income and therefore the Museum must have made an "active choice" to partner with BP. The latter signed a five-year sponsorship with the British Museum, the National Portrait Gallery, Royal Opera House and Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) in 2016. The RSC ended its deal with BP in 2019 due to the "strength of feeling" among young people.

marketingweek.com, 24 May 2021

Agriculture, fishing and forestry

Farm innovation: invention vs good practice

Farmers are under pressure to improve their operations: Brexit has restricted agricultural labour; while the current system of land-based subsidies under the EU is to be phased out and replaced by payments related to environmental and sustainability targets. Without EU payments, many farmers will make a loss so it seems that some kind of digital revolution is required, or is it? Companies like Dyson and Bayer have been investing heavily in research into robotic vehicles, vertical farms and IoT-enabled farms. Arla is looking into cow psychoanalysis to quantify cow happiness! Yet a lot of innovation is likely to come from changes in practice and approach to farming rather than new gadgets, says Tim Isaac of the AHDB. Much of this innovation involves little tech but relies on sound business practices. It seems that innovation shouldn't be confused with invention and that farmers are constantly finding new ways of doing things...

managementtoday.co.uk, 18 May 2021 (Jones)

Concerns over Australian deal

Farmers and MPs have expressed concern about the potential trade deal with Australia following the news that the UK has approved a tariff-zero quota with the country. Shadow trade secretary Emily Thornberry has set out seven questions for trade secretary Liz Truss, including why a "trigger safeguard" is not in place to protect against a flood of imports and whether Australian products are produced in ways that are illegal in the UK. Minette Batters, NFU president calls the situation "incredibly concerning" and says there are a huge number of unanswered questions. The NFU has set out five questions it wants the Government to answer.

thegrocer.co.uk, 24 May 2021 (Holmes)

Building industry

Model design code for planning reforms

The UK Government wants to develop a new national design code for building work and has selected 14 English local authorities to pilot proposed reforms. A new organisation called the Office for Place will oversee the implementation of local standards in all new developments. The

measures follow the January 2020 *Living in Beauty* report produced by the Building Better Building Beautiful Commission. The new code aims to ensure that future developments are beautiful and fit with local character, such as: street, building type and façade; environmental; heritage; and wellbeing factors.

theconstructionindex.co.uk, 24 May 2021

The “hotelification” of offices

Helical, a London developer, has set out its vision for the post-pandemic future of offices. It has identified four key drivers that will shape office use: firstly, tenants will want to occupy the most sustainable and environmentally friendly buildings to help them achieve their own net zero targets; a second trend is wellness where tenants will want the most efficient air conditioning to minimise the risk of viruses; thirdly, there will be greater use of technology to optimise the working environment; and lastly there will be more demand for amenities, such as secure bike parking and “club-style” changing facilities. Enhanced amenities will lead to a “hotelification” of office buildings with five-star management.

constructionenquirer.com, 25 May 2021 (Morby)

Businesses and strategy

Is your company noisy?

Companies depend on their employees to make sound judgements but, “where there is judgement, there is noise”, argue Daniel Kahneman, Olivier Sibony, and Cass Sunstein in their book, *Noise: A Flaw in Human Judgement*. Noise is the “major source of variability in judgement” and therefore a main reason why decisions “miss their mark”. The book explains how executives have underestimated the negative effects of noise on decision-making. In fact, research suggests that the variation in expert judgements within organisations can be four to five times that estimated by senior executives. The book explores why we resist efforts to reduce noise and examines seven objections to decision hygiene. It concludes that, “noise reduction remains a worthy and even urgent goal”.

strategy-business.com, 19 May 2021 (Kinni); [Purchase Noise: A Flaw in Human Judgement](#)

B2B SMEs – targeting international niches

A key strategy for SMEs is to compete in niche markets but it is unclear how internationalising SMEs compete in their niches. This study of B2B SMEs finds that niches evolve in response to resources supplied or withdrawn by market actors. Early customers, sales channels, shareholders and competitors can all influence niches for B2B SMEs. Market niches are seen as “dynamic resource domains” where the various market players co-create new, specialised value. In addition, SMEs may target new niches when they internationalise

because they don’t have access to the resources needed to co-create their domestic niche or because resources are valued differently.

Industrial Marketing Management, Vol 95, May 2021, pp29-40 (Odlin and Bensen-Rhea)

SMEs and trade control compliance

There is limited knowledge about the way in which SMEs respond to economic measures, such as trade-control laws. This study aims to better understand how external pressures and managerial decision-making are associated with trade-control compliance programs. The findings show that SMEs are able to adjust proportionately to regulatory pressures if their decision-makers are well-informed, but that uninformed decision-making leads to a disproportionate response and reduced scope for the compliance program. The study also finds that SMEs that are highly integrated into their supply chains tend to be more prone to “passing-the-buck”.

Journal of Business Ethics, May 2021, 21 pages (Hauser)

Charities and NGOs

Charity shops see record-breaking trading

Mind has raised £1.5m in just the first month since reopening its 160 charity shops in England and Wales. While the charity is predicting a £13m loss in retail income since the first lockdown, it has also seen huge demand for information and support services which its shops help to fund. Other charities, such as Sense and the British Heart Foundation, have reported record-breaking trading in their shops. Separately, online fundraising platform Savoo has analysed the 20 most populated cities in the UK to see which are the most charitable. It concludes that Brighton and Hove; Nottingham; and Belfast are the most charitable cities based on monthly Google searches and number of charity shops. Ed Fleming, MD of Savoo, predicts that charity shops, “will continue to have a deep impact on retail consumption across the UK”.

fundraising.co.uk, 25 May 2021 (May)

Refugee campaign

Conversations From Calais, a UK billboard campaign, aims to “re-humanise” global refugees. The initiative documents conversations with refugees and then pastes them on to walls to show that real people, rather than statistics, are suffering. Starting out as a design project, Conversations from Calais has teamed up with the creative BuildHollywood group to place art on London streets. The posters, which are mainly black text on a white background, are able to make a big impact with their powerful messages.

londontheinside.com, 20 May 2021

Economy

Confidence – some grounds for optimism

This paper looks at the latest business and consumer confidence indicators. In the two weeks to the 16 May 2021, 82.5% of respondents reported high or moderate confidence that their business would survive for the next three months, according to a recent ONS survey. Meanwhile, the CBI's *Industrial Trends* survey has found that in May more manufacturers thought their output would rise over the next three months (+33%) than thought it would fall. However, the figure is down from +36% in April. Meanwhile, GfK's *Consumer Confidence Index*, which measures a range of consumer attitudes, has found that the index was -9 in May, up from -15 in April. This article includes links to the original surveys.

commonslibrary.parliament.uk, 21 May 2021 (Brien)

Latest inflation figures

The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) inflation rate (the main measure of inflation) was 1.5% in April 2021, up from 0.7% in March. The Retail Prices Index (RPI) inflation rate was 2.9% in April, up from 1.5% in March. Rising clothing and road fuel prices contributed the most to inflation growth.

commonslibrary.parliament.uk, 19 May 2021 (McGuinness)

Education

Prospective students want in-person events

Students want to return to campus-based activities as soon as possible, according to research from SMRS, Universities Marketing Forum and 38 UK universities. Conducted in April 2021, the research looked into the application experiences and future intentions of prospective undergraduate students, all of whom have had to apply for a university place during lockdown. Three key themes to emerge from the research were: the desire to return to face-to-face events, 90% were interested in visiting a campus in person and 85% felt that physical engagement would make them more confident in accepting an offer; secondly, feedback on virtual events has not been altogether positive, with 31% of respondents choosing not to attend a virtual event; thirdly there is a need for "timely, accurate and personable" communications to provide reassurance and support.

hepi.ac.uk, 24 May 2021 (Benyon)

Closing the ethnicity gap

The *#ClosingTheGap* report, from the National Union of Students and Universities UK, was published two years ago. It set out the 13% gap between the likelihood of white students and students from BAME backgrounds achieving a 2:1 degree. It also highlighted wider racial disparities,

set out six key recommendations and offered case studies for good practice. Here Amatey Doku, co-chair of the University of Cambridge Black Alumni Network, looks at the progress that has been made to close UK universities' ethnicity gap.

universities.ac.uk, 11 May 2021 (Doku)

Energy and utilities

CBI supports ban on gas boilers

No new gas boilers should be installed in UK homes from 2025, according to the CBI. This follows a major report from the International Energy Agency which said that gas boiler sales should be banned worldwide from 2025 so that the world can reach its zero emissions target by 2050. UK homes currently generate 14% of national carbon emissions and 85% of homes run on gas boilers. The UK Government wants all new homes to have green sources of heating, such as heat pumps or solar panels, from 2025. As yet, there are no plans to end the installation or replacement of gas boilers in existing homes.

inews.co.uk, 24 May 2021 (Cuff)

Ofgem in £300m electricity overhaul

UK regulator Ofgem is to put £300m in investment into more than 200 low carbon projects supporting electric transport and heating. This will include infrastructure for 1,800 new ultra-rapid charging points at motorway service areas and a programme for safe, secure and clean energy. A further 1,750 charge points will be placed in towns and cities for electric vehicles. At the same time, Britain's cables, substations and infrastructure will need to be upgraded to cater for the increased demand for electricity.

ofgem.gov.uk, 24 May 2021

Environment

Greenpeace deluges Boris with plastic

Greenpeace has launched a humorous campaign video called "Wasteminster: A Downing Street Disaster", to show what it would be like if all the plastic waste exported by the UK were to be dumped on 10 Downing Street. The animation, which uses the voices of impressionists Jon Culshaw and Matt Forde, features a plastic Boris Johnson at a press conference outside Number 10 during which he is deluged with plastic bottles, cartons, etc while boasting about how well the UK is doing with its plastic waste. Michael Gove receives similar treatment while being watched by the Downing Street cat. Greenpeace says the UK exported 688,000 tonnes of plastic packaging waste last year. It is calling on a complete ban on all plastic waste exports by 2025.

campaignlive.co.uk, 18 May 2021 (Charles)

UK researches innovative GGR

The UK is to invest £30m to investigate five innovative methods for large-scale greenhouse gas removal (GGR). UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) will fund interdisciplinary projects at the University of Oxford and the results will be fed into government decision-making on the most effective technologies for tackling climate change and emissions. GGR, which refers to methods for removing CO₂ from the atmosphere, will be designed to help reduce emissions in sectors that are difficult to decarbonise, such as heavy industry, agriculture and aviation.

ukri.org, 24 May 2021

Fashion

Fashion sets sustainable agenda

Fashion company leaders, including those from Nike, H&M and Kering, have put forward their priorities for a sustainable industry at this year's Fashion CEO Agenda. The agenda covered five areas of social and environmental sustainability that leaders should focus on, namely: respectful and secure work environments; better wage systems; circular systems; efficient use of resources; and smart material choices. Future reports will measure progress against the guidelines set this year. Alongside this, EU policymakers are introducing initiatives this year to require fashion companies to behave more sustainably.

fashionunited.uk, 25 May 2021 (Zha)

Financial services

Amex sends emails without consent

American Express has been found guilty of having sent millions of marketing emails. This follows complaints to the ICO from Amex customers who had been receiving marketing emails despite having opted out. The emails included information on the advantages of shopping online with Amex and encouraged customers to download its app. Amex claimed these were "servicing" emails rather than marketing. The ICO revealed that over a period of 12 months, 4,098,841 of the emails were marketing which, "sought to persuade and encourage customers to use their card to make purchases". Amex was found to be in breach of PECR and fined £90,000.

decisionmarketing.co.uk, 20 May 2021

FMCG

Beverages

Alcohol adspend won't recover until 2023

Alcohol ad spend will grow faster than the rest of the ad industry in 2021 but won't reach 2019 levels until 2023, according to research from Zenith. Alcohol brands are predicted to spend 5.3% more

on advertising this year than last and spend will be above the average growth rate of 4.9%, according to Zenith's *Business Intelligence – Alcohol Beer and Spirits* report. Brands usually spend around half their budget on TV, but TV spend is likely to fall by 2.4% per year as linear TV audiences get smaller. Instead, budgets will start shifting to digital channels which are expected to account for 30% of spend by 2023.

campaignlive.co.uk, 24 May 2021 (Hargrave)

Brora to reopen after 38 years

The Brora whisky distillery, which closed in 1983, is being resurrected by Diageo. This includes restoration of the distillery building to make it into a carbon-neutral operation powered by on-site renewable energy. Brora is one of Diageo's smallest distilleries, producing just 800,000 litres of spirits a year.

marketingweek.com, 20 May 2021

Beefeater Gin is an Eye-opener

Beefeater Gin has opened a tiny pub on the London Eye. The "Pub Pod" has a barman, wooden furnishings and red velvet seating. In a 30-minute experience, people can have up to two drinks per person from a selection of Beefeater gins although craft beers and wine are also available. The pub will open on 4 June and will take groups of up to five.

campaignlive.co.uk, 21 May 2021 (Douglas)

Cosmetics and toiletries

Deodorant – a Wild innovation

Wild, a personal care start-up, is launching on the high street with a listing in Sainsbury's as part of the latter's Future Brands initiative. The deodorant is natural, with no parabens, aluminium or sulphates. Wild has also switched its packaging from plastic to reusable aluminium which can be refilled.

thegrocer.co.uk, 24 May 2021 (Selwood)

Food

Vegan Society takes forensic approach

The Vegan Society has partnered with Food Forensics, a food and drink test lab, to help identify any animal by-products or cross-contamination in products being tested during the vegan certification process. The process, which uses a next-gen DNA test, can identify even the smallest amount of animal product. This year's Veganuary campaign claims to have inspired up to 1.5m people to adopt a vegan or veggie diet. A YouGov poll suggested that 5% of adults in Britain had adopted a vegan diet for at least some of January. The Vegan Society reports 53,000 vegan trademark registrations from over 2,000 brands around the world.

thegrocer.co.uk, 25 May 2021 (Sandercock)

Bug to launch insect recipe kits

Bug, an edible insect start-up, has reached its £300,000 crowdfunding target, enabling it to launch its recipe kits online. It has developed a range of ready-to-cook insect packs including dried crickets with sauce and a buffalo worm falafel mix. Bug says that, despite insects being eaten in over 80% of countries, it is hard to incorporate them into Western diets. It hopes to become the “go-to” brand for edible insects in the UK.

thegrocer.co.uk, 24 May 2021 (Devlin)

Government and public sector

Police campaign – perceptions and inclusion

A Home Office Campaign, in collaboration with Channel 4, tells the story of black, female and LGBTQ police officers in a series of short films. “Untold: The Police” includes members of the public and potential new police recruits who are also seen having unscripted conversations on topics such as inclusion, stop and search, Black Lives Matter and other issues. Viewers of digital channels have the option to click through to a full-length social film. It forms part of the Home Office’s “Make your difference” campaign to recruit 20,000 additional police officers over three years.

marketingweek.com, 19 May 2021; campaignlive.co.uk, 18 May 2021 (Gwynn)

Health and pharmaceuticals

Maintaining public relations post-Covid-19

At a recent roundtable event hosted by *PR Week* and WE Communications, a panel of comms professionals discussed the future for the pharma sector, which is in a unique position to build on public trust. There has been a huge turnaround in the relationship between the UK public and pharma brands in contrast to the high degree of disinterest or distrust in the past. The pandemic has piqued public interest in the healthcare sector and there are opportunities to build trust, transparency and confidence. The discussion, which is summarised here, concludes that pharma and healthcare comms teams should, “tread carefully, maintain clear messaging and take nothing for granted”.

prweek.com, 20 May 2021

Podcasts for life sciences

Podcast engagement is at an all-time high and has become one of the most popular forms of audio entertainment in the UK. There were over 15m listeners in the UK in 2020 and this is forecast to rise to over 20m by 2024. The question here is how the B2B life sciences industry can take advantage of this burgeoning content platform. This blog offers some hints and tips for running a successful podcast in the life sciences sector. It also offers inspiration in the

form of five podcasts in the pharma or biotech space.

orientation.agency, 19 May 2021 (Murray)

Legal cannabis company lists on LSE

Oxford Cannabinoid Technologies (OCT), a spin-off of an Oxford University research programme into medical marijuana, is developing cannabis-derived painkillers. Now the company is about to list on the London Stock Exchange. Despite the expanding market, only two cannabis companies have so far listed on the LSE. OCT’s decision follows a statement last autumn by the FCA that medicinal cannabis companies could list in London. OCT’s plans may lead to more listings as well as greater acceptance by UK regulators of companies in this sector.

lexology.com, 18 May 2021 (Blundell and Hobbs)

IT and telecoms

Virgin Media and EE permitted to merge

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has given the go-ahead for the £31 billion merger of Virgin Media and O2, having concluded that the deal will not result in “any substantial lessening of competition”. O2 is the largest phone company in the UK with 36.6m customers while Virgin Media has 5.7m cable customers and 3.4m mobile subscribers.

marketingweek.com, 21 May 2021

Samsung putting Gen Z at the centre

Jade Cooper, associate director at Ketchum, explains how the recent campaign for the launch of the Samsung Galaxy A52 5G phone came about. The challenge was to attract the 13 to 25 (Gen Z) age group but this was a highly saturated audience and it would be hard to achieve cut through. The solution was to tap into the nation’s love of dance by using the Samsung phone to shoot dance-pro Perri Kiely’s tutorials. This effectively gave the campaign a GenZ face “with personality”. Gen Z creators, crew and colleagues were also used in the campaign which achieved mass awareness with over 170 pieces of earned coverage. The lesson is that, to win over your audience, don’t simply target them, but put them at the heart of the story.

prweek.com, 20 May 2021 (Cooper)

Leisure and tourism

Campaign to boost UK tourism

UK tourism will recover from the pandemic slowly and spending by tourists this year will be half that of 2019, according to a forecast from VisitBritain. It predicts that domestic tourism will be worth just £51.4 billion this year, down from £91.6 billion in 2019. Nevertheless, demand for UK holidays is likely to exceed supply this summer as people opt not to go overseas. VisitBritain has just launched a £5m campaign, called Escape Everyday – Enjoy the UK

this Summer, aimed at increasing domestic demand, especially for cities and city attractions.

[bbc.co.uk/news](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news), 25 May 2021

Materials and mining

Companies invest in green steel start-up

A group of European companies has invested in a "green steel" start-up which plans to build the very first large factory with emissions-free production of the metal. H2 Green Steel, a Swedish company, which will start production just below the Arctic Circle by 2024, aims to produce five million tonnes of emissions-free steel by the end of the decade. It will use hydrogen produced with renewable energy rather than burning coke in the traditional way. It and another Swedish company are leading the way in trying to make the steel industry green. It currently generates 7% to 9% of all direct fossil fuel emissions. However, some analysts and companies, such as BHP, believe that blast furnaces will still contribute to half of steelmaking in 2050 because of issues with accessing renewable energy.

[ft.com](https://www.ft.com), 24 May 2021 (Milne)

Media

Games

Beware gender stereotypes

Games developer SWAG MASHA LLC has fallen foul of the ASA with its advertising of the online game *Dream Zone: Interactive Story*. It has been accused of objectifying women, using harmful gender stereotypes and irresponsible targeting. The ad, which was for a dating simulation game, showed two women, one looking into a cupboard at a leaking pipe and the other wearing a towel. The options offered to the players were "help her" or "take advantage" and a cartoon hand pointed to the "take advantage" button. The ASA concluded that this had sexual connotations and deemed the ad likely to cause offence; it was therefore irresponsible and in breach of the CAP code. The ASA stresses the need to take care with portrayals of gender-stereotypical characteristics and will ban those that cause harm. Advertisers should be aware that gender stereotyping is an area of focus for the ASA.

[lexology.com](https://www.lexology.com), 19 May 2021 (Helmer);

[ASA depicting gender stereotypes](#)

Social media

Snapchat camera to capture darker skin tones

Snapchat is introducing a number of innovations to its platform. These include an Inclusive Camera aimed at better capturing the image of people with darker skin tones, having worked with people in the film industry to understand the techniques. Snapchat is also developing its Lenses to improve shopping features and capabilities. Connected Lenses, for example, enables people to interact,

whether in the same room or in a different country. Lego has made use of this with its build-a-Lego-kit-together Lens that allows people to build models together using AR.

[campaignlive.co.uk](https://www.campaignlive.co.uk), 21 May 2021 (Douglas)

Television

Generating value through linear TV

Many advertisers allow their agencies to make the decisions when it comes to advertising on linear TV but a survey of CMOs suggests that optimising broadcast-TV spend is not high on their list of priorities. Yet this is a missed opportunity because broadcast TV continues to make up the majority of consumers' TV watching hours. "Broadcast TV is also the single biggest advertising vehicle across all countries and industries", according to McKinsey. Yet brand leaders often pay little attention to how best to deliver TV ads, arguing that they are already fully optimised. However, there are improvements and efficiencies to be made and now is a good time to reprioritise linear TV. Marketers can generate significant value through two elements: smarter spending and getting the most from their agency partnership.

[mckinsey.com](https://www.mckinsey.com), 18 May 2021 (Aukofer et al)

Packaging

Funding for sustainable plastic packaging

UK Research and Innovation's Smart Sustainable Plastic Packaging (SSPP) is offering £7m in funding for projects that help to solve sustainable plastic packaging issues. SSPP wants projects to focus on minimising or reducing plastic packaging, packaging that can be reused and refilled and other sustainable solutions. It is also looking at projects that will result in behaviour change leading to less packaging waste and higher recycling rates.

[energylivenews.com](https://www.energylivenews.com), 25 May 2021 (Shresha)

Retailing

UK retail sales

During April 2021, Britain's retail sales rose to £8.1 billion a week, up from £7.6 billion in March, representing growth of 9.2%. This compares with a rise of just 5.4% between February and March. In the three months to April, the volume of retail sales was 12.8% greater than for the same period in 2020. The growth in April was driven mainly by non-food stores, especially clothing, as non-essential shops reopened. Non-food stores achieved growth that was 15.5% higher in the three months to April compared with the same period last year. It was also 5.6% above the pre-pandemic level of February 2020. Meanwhile the average weekly value of internet sales was £2.6 billion in April 2021, representing 29.4% of all retail sales.

[commonslibrary.parliament.uk](https://www.commonslibrary.parliament.uk), 21 May 2021 (Hutton)

Tesco abandons Metro brand

Tesco is ditching its Metro stores after just two years. It plans to rebrand 89 outlets as Tesco Express while the remaining 58 will become superstores. This latest move is part of a major rationalisation of the company, which has resulted in the loss of up to 4,500 jobs. The Metro format was originally launched as a town centre location aimed at passing trade and weekly shops but customers have changed their shopping habits and research shows that almost 70% of Metros were being used just for top-up shops with only 31% being used for the main shop.

thegrocer.co.uk, 18 May 2021 (Quinn)

Services

Pub numbers in the UK

This paper looks at pub statistics in the UK although it does not reflect the impact of the pandemic on pub numbers. In 2019 there were 47,200 public houses in the UK, according to the British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA) but the numbers have been declining steadily over the years. In fact, between 2000 and 2019 pub numbers fell by 13,600 (22%) while between 2010 and 2020 they fell by 15%. Last year, according to the ONS, there were 58 pubs per 100,000 people in the UK although this number varied greatly by region. Yet, despite the decline in pub numbers, employment has held up, with a 1% rise in employment from 2001 to 2018, although employment in smaller pubs has fallen. This paper provides links to sources, such as data on public houses by parliamentary constituency.

commonslibrary.parliament.uk, 21 May 2021 (Foley)

Transport and travel

The first hydrogen-powered hypercar

The world's first hydrogen hypercar is being developed in Leicestershire by start-up Viritech. It hopes to generate the same sort of interest as battery-powered design by creating energy with hydrogen. Viritech has expressed its business model as: "design, prototype, license, repeat – targeting high-margin, recurring revenues". As well as the Apricale hypercar, Viritech will be working on a hydrogen-powered SUV, a truck and a hydrogen-powered helicopter called Skywolf. Viritech CEO and founder Timothy Lyons expects: "The hydrogen revolution" to "complement mobility electrification".

business-live.co.uk, 19 May 2021 (Pegden)

Nio – so much more than an electric carmaker

In China there is a new generation of electric vehicle makers in part driven by the Government's pledge to be carbon neutral by 2060. Electric car maker Nio has an app which acts as an e-commerce platform and social network: users can buy Nio vehicles in the app but there is also an online shop offering a range of Nio-branded accessories, including pillows, wine and cookware. Nio owners and employees are able to share their thoughts in posts and direct messaging as well as in-person activities in their communities, which helps to generate loyalty. The Nio app has around 150,000 daily users and it gets about 69% of new customers from referrals. However, selling EVs is still Nio's core business which is not surprising considering that the number of EV sales in China is expected to grow by 51% this year.

emarketer.com, 24 May 2021 (Cheung)

Written by CIM's Knowledge Services Team

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