

# Lasting Pandemic Impact on Marketing of Things

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## Abstract:

The COVID-19 outbreak is a pointy reminder that pandemics, like other rarely taking place catastrophes, have took place in the past and will continue to appear within the future. Even though we cannot prevent dangerous viruses from rising, we should put together society to be prepared for such situations in the future.

COVID-19 has brought it at whirlwind pace, and marketers are feeling it. COVID-19 has shocked the world and sent economies spinning. It was late-2019 when the virus first appeared in the Chinese city of Wuhan. Initially, it only affected China, but its effects are now felt around the globe, with many countries in lockdown.

Majority of Organizations are fighting to survive, and marketing will be a critical element for their revival. More importantly the present article stresses on how considerable an effect the virus will have on marketing of things. The realization is that the crisis will affect some industries far more than others. Businesses deemed vital are struggling to meet demand at the moment. Luxury and service-related firms are in a more precarious position. And companies that have not kept up with the times, for example, "old media" are in the most dangerous situation of all.

**Key Words:** Covid-19, Pandemic, Essential Services, Marketing of things, Luxury Brands

## Introduction

Throughout the course of history, disease outbreaks have ravaged humanity, sometimes changing the course of history and, at times, signaling the end of entire civilizations. There has been a long history of fear of pandemic outbreaks. The discussion has not focused on whether there will be an outbreak, but when new outbreaks will happen ([Stöhr & Esveld, 2004](#)). The events leading to

influenza pandemics are recurring biological phenomena and cannot realistically be prevented. Pandemics seem to occur at 10–50-year intervals as a result of the emergence of new virus subtypes from virus re-assortment (Potter, 2001) Today, again we are facing a truly unprecedented situation. The global coronavirus pandemic is affecting all of our families, our businesses, our communities and our lifestyle. The spread and transmission of Covid-19 has been extreme and has surprised almost every nation that has experienced this. We remain in very uncertain times and while we are managing the risks, we are also being driven by Government advisories and orders.

### **Evolving Dimensions**

All businesses or projects have been affected by Covid-19 and all are finding ways and means to survive. This has evolved a new dimension to meet the current challenges. Even the marketing activities which were more dependent on direct contact with consumers like road shows, events, public gathering, hoardings, canopy at market places would require a new and effective way to promote. As no one was prepared for the unprecedented situation, these activities now require a new platform. Everyone has now felt the importance of Electricity and Communication and these would be a platform for new world. The world before the impact of Covid-19 and after the impact of Covid-19 would be a different one and every individual; businesses need to cope up with it.

Marketing activity as in the past will always play a vital role. Presently, all the spending is limited to essential buying, but it will not be the same always. Recently, the homes of individual have turned into class-rooms and meeting rooms, similarly the marketing activities will be carried out in e-platform. The world was slowly shifting towards becoming an e-world, but this epidemic has pushed that button too hard.

### **Shift from Luxury To Essentials**

The Covid-19 is impacting consumer mobility, media shifts, supply chains, consumption habits, and economic volatility. Many businesses are fighting to survive, and marketing will be an essential part of their recovery. Luxury and service-related firms are in a more precarious position. And companies that have not kept up with the time, for example, "old media" are in the most dangerous situation of all. For example, magazine publishers have already pulled the plug on significant and long-running publications. Presumably some of the brands expect that they will decrease ad spend in lockdown and will have already stopped ad campaigns for products they cannot currently sell.

There is a distinct movement in the types of goods on which people spend their money. They are shifting their spending to essentials, and a limited range of non-essentials that some people may consider essential to their wellbeing, e.g., alcohol and religious items.

### **Brands to focus on Re-Think**

The COVID-19 crisis forcing brands to re-think their course of action, where the behavior of consumers are transforming overnight. The current situation has generated panic and paranoia among people across the world. A sense of foreboding and loss of control is generated because of uncertain duration of the lockdown and the potential risk to life and employment. Daily life is becoming maladjusted. A high level of stress is caused by fundamental challenges, including a tight cash-flow situation and the inability to procure essentials. This is escalating by the operational challenges of working from home while balancing family time and household work. Added to this, is the significant increase in sedentary behaviour and screen time, leading to sudden lifestyle changes.

Consumers globally are valuing services, products, people and institutions which at best can focus on six dimensions—digitally bridging the divide with the outside world, reducing anxiety and effort, promoting wellness and reducing risk, offering entertainment, providing hope and doing good things for people and society.

Interestingly, the most significant drop in ad spending is for law, government, and politics, presumably because governments have refocused their activities, shuttering government departments in many areas. The worst private-sector group is travel, which has almost come to a standstill in many places. It should be no surprise that advertising spending is down here – nobody is booking holidays at present and will certainly hold themselves for a bit longer now. There were also noticeable drops in ad spending on sports, science, and family & parenting.

This pandemic virus has made changes in our shopping lists too. Hand sanitizers were never our top priority, but it is much demanded now. Shoppers claim to have stocked up on hand sanitizer, which is higher than disinfecting wipes, household cleaners, antibacterial hand soap, paper products, bottled water and canned foods. With the combination of increased online sales, lockdowns, and a general unwillingness to touch currency that has been in the hands of others, many people are moving away from cash. ATM usage is way down, and people are using less real money as they try

and stay away from germs. We have all heard about the panic buying that occurred in many places around the globe.

The period started in early March 2020 in India and will continue through the lift of the quarantines. Even if the virus slows down, the businesses are going to fight for well over a year because they will have to make up for their losses. The businesses that deal specially into non-essential products and services may get ready to address following concern of customers in their current advertising and messaging as these are the major hurdles in front of majority of marketers.

- *Why should I buy your product when my need right now is only essentials (food, water and shelter)?*
- *How you going to make my interaction with you safe? As my prime concern is protecting myself and my family from being infected. I have a fear of getting infection during any unnecessary interaction.*
- *How you are going to offer me value, discounts, free delivery, deferred payments, no interest etc.? As I fear spending money on non-essential products and services because I am not sure of that my income stream will continue in the situation.*

So to persuade a consumer to make a purchase during this period, adding a humanitarian layer to your communication and offer will strengthen your brand and build post COVID-19 loyalty.

The impact of coronavirus is severe than the recession of 2008. But the question is, what is in it for India? Will COVID-19 devastate the Indian economy or can India sow a seed of opportunity in this? The pandemic has caused significant disruptions to economic activity across the world, as nations enforce lockdowns. China has been the biggest exporter of steel, chemicals, garments, drugs, mobile parts and many other items. This virus has also impacted the trust that the corporate giants had on China. Now many of them are trying to find an alternative place for business. This was already a heated topic due to a trade war between US and China, but this epidemic has made it a big fuss. Japan has already made a package of over \$2bn for its companies to move out. Many other countries are thinking of the same way. Many global firms have shown interest in India making the world's gaze to shift towards India. If we are able to attract these huge firms, then in the long run, we could add ourselves in the global value chains.

Indian logistics is currently worth at \$160 bn and has gone up from 54<sup>th</sup> position in 2014 to 44<sup>th</sup> in 2018. With our continuous improvement in logistics ranking we can give the world an opportunity to invest in India. Recently when the world was complete lockdown, we kept our supply chains open maintaining an open global trading system. After the COVID-19 pandemic, India will have the opportunity to build an economy that is more resilient, diversified and attractive to the global manufacturers and services as the majority of the businesses worldwide have faced disruptions. This industry will actually behave as a shock-absorbent for us in the near future!

India can also become a great player in pharmaceuticals as in this deadly situation, we managed to make excessive amount of hydroxychloroquine for ourselves as well as exported it to many countries including US, Israel, and many European countries. Now India is seen as a country with great trust and ability to become China + 1.

But all this is still a dream, until we work sedulously, there is a huge scope of improvement, and in order to attract global business, we need to narrow the gaps.

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