

MARKETING

Filling 5 consumer needs to ensure your brand survives COVID-19

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By [Anne E. Beall](#)

Recently, McDonald's released [new ads](#) reminding customers about their drive-through and delivery options seek to soothe the frustration of not being able to go out for a meal.

This is much more than McDonald's adapting to the current times: amid the COVID-19 coronavirus crisis, it is a necessary move for survival.

Feeling good

The coronavirus pandemic and ensuing societal shutdown has created mass change in the business sphere.

Economic upheaval on this scale will lead to a whole new group of brands that win and lose. Leaders everywhere are asking themselves how to make sure they are winners.

Although there are things that obviously differentiate businesses platform, sector there is another key factor that will determine who comes out on top: how good a brand makes consumers feel about themselves.

My firm conducted three major studies with thousands of consumers, and we have studied exactly how emotions affect consumer action.

We have seen quite clearly in the data that if consumers feel good about themselves after purchase of a product or service, 94 percent of consumers are likely to be repeat customers. On the other hand, if consumers feel bad, 70 percent of them will not return to the brand.

This data came from items and services across many regions of products and services, from food to clothing and electronics. Expense is immaterial: emotions drive consumer behavior.

With [anxiety](#) and depression the defining characteristic of our new normal, products and services that reduce these feelings and sooth us are more likely to build a loyal consumer base while maintaining or increasing their sales through the course of this crisis.

Following from my firm's research, I believe brands that address the following five areas of need in consumers will likely come out on top:

Treat yourself. Sometimes people need permission to treat themselves. This is a popular line of thinking for food

manufacturers, showing their products to be a well-deserved indulgence.

Muffin Break has nailed that with its "You Deserve It" ads. Personal care and grooming products such as bath and shower items can also be used in this way.

With anxiety running high, from finances to family life, balancing working from home with homeschooling, consumers are likely to choose products and services that allow indulgence and a small treat.

Good decision-making. If a brand convinces people it is doing the best it can, this will foster loyalty in a company.

For instance, Apple worked with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control to create a **new app** that lets people screen themselves for COVID-19. Purchasing this helps consumers feel they are making a societally conscious purchasing decision that also helps themselves.

Or take your inbox all those emails you are receiving from brands promising preparation and measures to protect against COVID-19? These brands are concerned for you, so you should feel good about your decision to engage with those brands.

Smart spending. While the economy is in chaos, consumers need to feel that they are being smart with spending.

Consumers feel like they are saving money or being financially smart.

If companies want users to feel this way, they should use messaging around value and note that consumers want to be careful. That way, spending seems less risky.

The **Buick GMC ad** about feeling safe is an example. "We understand that you want to feel safe," says the ad.

Buick is also offering 0 percent financing for 84 months and deferred payment options to help consumers feel that they are making smart purchasing decisions.

Self-care. "Self care" has become a mantra of sorts for consumers who currently find themselves in excessively stressful situations.

Calm addresses mental wellness and invites viewers to "Join the millions experiencing better sleep, lower stress, and less anxiety."

There are some obvious product category fits home fitness equipment, for instance but almost anything that increases health, either mental or physical, can be positioned to aid self care right now.

Control. With a lot of things beyond the consumer's control above all, how long this pandemic will last products and services that help create a sense of control will create a deeper emotional connection.

By reminding customers about their drive-through and delivery options, the McDonald's ads mentioned above seek to convey that buying McDonald's will help ease the frustration of social distancing and restaurant closures. This helps consumers feel like they can reassert some control.

Buick, too, is offering online shopping and home delivery with generous warranties and return policies. This will enhance feelings of control for car buyers. .

HELPING CONSUMERS feel like they are checking off even a few of these categories will help them feel good about themselves and your brand throughout this new normal, and afterward.

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