BRANDZ TOP 75 MOST VALUABLE Indian BRANDS 2020

WPP KANTAR
The Top 10 Most Valuable Indian Brands 2020

% = Brand Value Change 2020 vs. 2019

| Category | % Share | Top 10 Risers | Top 10 by Brand
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banks</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
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<td>Technology</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
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<td>Telecommunication Providers</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
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<td>Retail</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
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<td>Food &amp; Drink</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consumer Technology</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Automotive</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
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<td>Personal Care</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
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<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others*</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
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Total Value of the Top 75 Most Valuable Indian Brands 2020

$215.6 Bil.

-6% vs. 2019

Newcomers

- Ranking Position:
  1. LIC
  2. TCS
  3. Kotak Bank
  4. Asian Paints
  5. Paytm
  6. State Bank of India
  7. Amazon
  8. Rajya Sabha
  9. Reliance Jio
  10. Reliance

Top 10 Risers

- Brand Value Change 2020 vs. 2019

Rise by Brand: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Category:
  1. Banks: $20.3 Bil. (-11%)
  2. Insurance: $18.3 Bil. (-9%)
  3. Technology: $14.6 Bil. (-20%)
  4. Telecom Providers: $10.9 Bil. (+36%)
  5. Paints: $8.0 Bil. (+14%)
  6. Banks: $7.2 Bil.(-6%)
  7. Telecom Providers: $6.9 Bil. (+26%)
  8. Retail: $6.3 Bil. (+40%)
  9. Payments: $4.6 Bil. (+50%)
  10. Banks: $4.4 Bil. (+12%)

- Sector:
  1. Insurance: $18.3 Bil. (-9%)
  2. Technology: $14.6 Bil. (-20%)
  3. Telecom Providers: $13.9 Bil. (+36%)
  4. Paints: $8.0 Bil. (+14%)
  5. Banks: $7.2 Bil. (-6%)
  6. Retail: $6.3 Bil. (+40%)
  7. Payments: $4.6 Bil. (+50%)
  8. Banks: $4.4 Bil. (+12%)

- BrandZ™ India Top 75 Portfolio continues to out-perform the market

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In extraordinary times, Meaningful Difference carries the day

Agility and resilience are key to ‘Repurposing brands for the future’

2020 has been an unprecedented year for India. From the start of this decade, it was clear that there would be growing pains as India settled into the role as one of the world’s largest economies. The COVID-19 pandemic has since thrown India’s existing challenges into sharper relief, while testing its communities and institutions as never before.

This is not the kind of moment that yields silver linings: Only difficult adjustments, and hard-won breakthroughs. What has been evident since the early days of 2020, however, is the resilient spirit of India’s people and businesses.

This year, the combined value of the BrandZ™ Top 75 Most Valuable Indian Brands declined by 6 percent. Beyond this headline rate, however, lie the stories of nearly two dozen top Indian brands that have managed to increase their brand valuations since 2019, amidst difficult circumstances.

What these brands have in common is a theme we have emphasized across seven years of this report. Namely, that authentic and distinct brand building remains the key to economic resilience.

In the months and years to come, you’ll read plenty of advice about how businesses can pivot to account for a profoundly changed world. But don’t forget that these companies will need strong brand assets to pivot around. Brand agility and brand resilience go hand in hand - a truth we explore in this year’s analysis of the BrandZ™ Top 75 Most Valuable Indian Brands.

We know that brand strength is key. History won’t repeat itself exactly, but it is an important guide. Coming out of the global financial crisis, strong brand equity was the key to recovery. Globally, between 2006 and 2020, our BrandZ™ Powerful Brands Top 10 Portfolio increased 285 percent in value, while the S&P rose only 120 percent. The most important driver of that growth was Meaningful Difference — relevantly meeting consumer functional and emotional needs in ways that stand out and are trendsetting.

In India, we’ve seen time and again that strong brands retain more of their value during tough economic times, and recover more quickly when market conditions begin to improve. This was the case during the demonetization process of 2016, and shows every indication of holding true today.

Intelligence is key to navigating these complex times. This report contains the latest findings around topics like “shopping local,” the shift to e-commerce, the rise of rural India, and the ways that traditional marketing levers can ignite sales even in slow-growing or declining categories. Thought Leadership and Brand Building Best Practice pieces from experts across our network contain further insight on India’s evolving brand landscape.

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In this report, you will also find analysis of how brands can leverage new forms of innovation and purpose—two cornerstones of brand equity—to retain brand value. In addition, this year’s collection of interviews with C-Suite executives includes perspectives from some of India’s most exciting brands. And as always, you’ll find an overview of this year’s top performers on the BrandZ™ Top 75 Most Valuable Indian Brands ranking, as well as an introduction to the five brands making their debuts on the 2020 list.

As comprehensive as it is, this report should be taken as a starting point. I urge you to follow up with the experts who contributed to the report. They continue to monitor the impact of the pandemic on brands across categories, around the world, and throughout India. We have an extensive library of annual BrandZ™ reports available. Each year we produce the BrandZ™Top 100 Most Valuable Global Brands, an exhaustive report that delivers knowledge and insight about brand building developments, category-by-category, worldwide. We also produce annual BrandZ™ reports about the most valuable brands in countries and regions such as China, Germany, Indonesia, Latin America, Japan, and many more. I invite you to access the reports with our compliments at BrandZ.com.

One of our key strengths at Kantar and WPP—is that when we say we cover the world of brands, that’s exactly what we mean. The WPP and Kantar proprietary BrandZ™ database includes information from over 3.8 million consumers about their attitudes about (and relationships with) 17,801 brands across 512 categories in 51 markets. All that produces more than 5.3 billion data points.

To learn more about how to harness our passion to work for your brand—especially during these trying times—please contact one of the WPP companies and Kantar divisions that contributed expertise to this report. Turn to the resource section at the end of this report for the contact details of key executives. Or feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

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The need for incisive, up-to-date market intelligence has never been greater

Insights from BrandZ™ and Kantar can point the way to recovery and growth

Preeti Reddy
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Much of the business playbook for India has been rendered quaint by the events of 2020. In its place have arisen a host of open questions: questions surrounding new distribution channels, India’s rapidly shifting media landscape, recovering consumer demand, and the ideal tenor of brand messaging in uncertain times. To name only a few examples.

Change, of course, is nothing new in India. Over the past decade, India has surely been one of the world’s most dynamic major economies. Even before the coronavirus crisis, 2020 seemed primed to be a pivotal, transitional year for the Indian economy.

But this moment promises change of a different magnitude. First and foremost, in the lives of those most directly affected by COVID-19, including the brave medical staff and first responders on the frontline of this health crisis. But also, and more collectively, in the vast project that is now underway to reopen and rebuild a 1.3 billion person-strong economy.

India’s great restart will only accelerate major structural transformations that were underway at the start of this new decade. How could it not? Over the course of less than a year, India’s digital-first destiny has already become an established reality. The most basic daily rituals have been reformed and rethought - from work, to dining, to shopping online. The need for entertainment and escape has become more important (yet more homebound) than ever before. Rural migrant workers have asserted themselves, under the most trying of circumstances, as a vital yet underserved component of India’s economic fabric. Urban citizens, meanwhile, have had ample time in lockdown to consider what they truly value in life, and what seems suddenly frivolous.

Even amid this current crisis, India remains an optimistic, entrepreneurial country - and with good reason. The fundamentals of India’s brand landscape remain strong. The Kantar Brand Footprint report on FMCG categories shows that India is responsible for one-fifth global “consumer reach point” volume - defined as the frequency with which global and local brands are chosen by consumers over the course of a year.

Relative to consumers in more mature economies, Indians remain curious and enthusiastic about making branded purchases. This is especially the case in rural and small-town India, where the number of product categories sampled by the typical consumer has actually increased during the first half of 2020.

Indeed, this report serves as a testament to the varied and successful ways that brands in India have risen to meet an extraordinary moment. The BrandZ™ Top 75 Most Valuable Indian Brands is not an easy list to get on. The brands on this year’s ranking are all here because they are committed to adding new and meaningful value to consumers’ lives.

At Kantar we, too, have found new ways to deliver on our business of providing essential market intelligence. This year, in addition to its wide range of existing data offerings, Kantar has launched the COVID-19 Barometer to glean real-time consumer insights during this fast-moving period in history.

As the world emerges from the shock of COVID-19, brands will need to find new ways that their products and services can be relevant to how we will live in a changed reality. That’s where we at Kantar can help, as the world’s leading data and insights consultancy, with 30,000 people working with Kantar worldwide.

We help define and build meaningfully different brands with our holistic brand guidance approach that combines innovations, experiences, creative content, and media investment to optimize investment and accelerate profitable growth.

Using the vast Kantar and BrandZ™ reservoirs of intelligence, we can help you successfully navigate today’s uncertainty. I am available to personally discuss how we can help you and your brand succeed—building valuable brands that add value to people’s lives. Please feel free to contact me directly or contact any of our Kantar leaders listed in the Resources section at the end of this report.

Sincerely,

Preeti Reddy
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Introduction
India ranking shrinks 6 percent year on year

The country and its brands plot a new course amid unprecedented global upheaval

This was always going to be a consequential year for India. There was hope that the decisive 2019 reelection of the Bharatiya Janata Party would clear the way for further reforms and economic growth. Even after years of debates over tax codes and macroeconomic indicators, India had been growing at a steady clip, faster than other world powers. India’s economy was diversifying, and consumer spending remained strong. At the same time, however, there was a sense that 2020 would be a year when India would either consolidate its gains, or risk a future slowdown. The hope and expectation was for the former outcome.

Then India entered lockdown.

By August, rural workers had once again begun to move back into cities in search of economic opportunity. The hope is that in the interim, India has learned just how crucial this workforce is to the country’s economic health—and that issues with informal contracts, unstable living conditions, and the lack of a social safety net will be ameliorated. (To that end, major industry leaders across India have already promised to improve their migrant employment programs in the months and years to come.)

Not surprisingly, one of the most pressing challenges India has faced during this pandemic year is the question of health care provision. Despite recent increases, India’s public health expenditure is only 1.29 percent of GDP, and the country’s hospital system has been stretched to the breaking point. Many middle class and poor Indians have struggled to access adequate healthcare during the pandemic.

The interplay between nationalism and geopolitics has added another layer of complexity to today’s business climate—in India, and in the world. In today’s environment, for instance, a military clash on the India-China border can have knock-on effects on the mobile handset industry, TikTok and PUBG’s global userbase, and domestic Indian support for locally-made brands.

India’s information ecosystem has grown similarly complex. Countries around the world are struggling with how to enjoy the positive benefits of social media while minimizing the risks of “fake news.” Information technology has provided a gateway to the world for even the smallest Indian businesses and the remotest of its towns. At the same time, however, false rumors that start in a village can inflame social tensions in a metro, and vice-versa. The internet, it seems, has a unique ability to exacerbate the kinds of tensions around identity and belonging that continue to vex modern societies. Meanwhile, businesses that choose to take a stance on a hot-button issue can face unpredictable online backlash—but can catch equal fury for not speaking up at all.

This, then, has been a year of facing great challenges and hard truths.

By August, India had reported over 2 million confirmed cases of the coronavirus (though the data also seemed to suggest a lower death rate than in other countries). Economists have forecasted that India’s national GDP could fall by 4 - 4.5 percent in calendar year 2020, down from 5 percent in 2019. And this prediction may be conservative since for fiscal year 2021, (which began in April), GDP has fallen by 23.9 percent. Unemployment remains a pressing concern.

Urban India has been hardest hit by coronavirus in terms of total infections. But rural India has undergone significant upheaval as well, both from lockdown itself, and also from absorbing the waves of migrant workers who made the arduous trek home after work in the cities dried up. For a brief time, before the agricultural season picked up, rural unemployment soared from single digits to nearly 25 percent, eclipsing urban joblessness.
Repurposing Brands for the Future

But there is hope, too, that Indian society can emerge from this crisis more resilient than ever before: that it will emerge better-equipped to recognize and surmount the multifaceted challenges of the 21st century. India has always been an optimistic country, which goes a long way. Just as importantly, it is right to be optimistic.

Whatever its challenges, India has surely entered the 2020s as a more diversified economy than it was ten years prior - thanks to factors like the rise of India’s digital unicorns; renewed interest in local and ayurvedic FMCG brands; and a connectivity boom that most recently saw mobile internet usage rise by 45 percent from 2019 to 2020. Whatever its impact on GDP, the coronavirus crisis cannot erase these gains.

Indeed, diversity is one of India’s greatest sources of resilience. In the months since India entered lockdown, a wide array of brands and businesses have found smart, surprising ways to work together and create new pathways to growth. From PepsiCo’s tie-up with Dunzo; to ITC’s partnership with Amway; to Reliance’s work on e-commerce with kirana stores (which, incidentally, have surely been the great retail heroes of this pandemic period); cooperation is the new competition.

One of India’s biggest IT breakthroughs of the past decade, the implementation of a Unified Payments Interface (UPI), is another testament to cooperation: a diverse array of finance, government, and retail stakeholders came together in a private-public partnership to vault the country’s digital payments system into the future. The lockdown has only accelerated UPI’s usefulness in an age where some merchants have begun to move away from cash and Cash On Delivery payments.

Cooperation has been the watchword of the day at the local level, too, with urban resident associations and community groups creating new protocols to take care of their most vulnerable residents. These local associations have also partnered with brands to bring van-powered, mobile markets and bank services to apartment-dwellers’ doorsteps. This is jugaad in practice on the most intimate neighborhood scale.

Brands with strong Indian roots are having an especially important moment. Economists have long argued about whether India’s inwardly-focused economy is a blessing or a detriment. Those debates are far from over - but it’s true that in this period of global trade disruption, Indian companies with robust domestic supply chains have been able to restart business in a way that more internationally exposed companies have not.

Going forward, businesses and brands will have a crucial role to play in building a stronger India. The health sector is a prime example of this. Two years ago, the government introduced the Ayushman Bharat scheme, which has since provided health care to some 10 million beneficiaries, but it’s clear that improving health care in India will continue to be a massive, country-wide undertaking. The growth of telemedicine and prescription delivery services is one positive example of the role that private enterprise can play; on the demand side, consumers - for their part - are buying all the supplements, sanitizers, and medicines they can afford. As Indian brands aim to “repurpose for the future,” providing healthy living solutions for eager customers is one way that businesses can do good while doing well.
Overview

Constrained household income will nevertheless be an immoveable reality in the years to come. But while Indian consumers are suffering - the poorest among them most of all - they remain a massive economic force. Prior to the pandemic, the Kantar Brand Footprint report on FMCG categories shows that India is responsible for one-fifth of global “consumer reach point” volume - defined as the frequency with which global and local brands are chosen by consumers over the course of a year.

As detailed in this report’s special section on Recovery & Growth, Indian consumers have continued to purchase everyday goods at a surprisingly strong clip during the pandemic. And although they may “trade down” in product ranges or reduce purchase volume, consumers haven’t lost their preferences for their favorite brands and products – especially those that serve as proof of their hard-won economic progress.

This is the kind of behavior that isn’t necessarily captured by headline growth rates. India’s short-term balance sheet may show retrenchment. But the pandemic cannot erase the more wide-ranging effects of India’s recent economic miracle. India’s economy has diversified and matured in positive, irrevocable ways. The country’s human capital has increased apace, and just as irrevocably. The optimistic, entrepreneurial spirit of the Indian people will survive this fraught moment – and prove an undeniable boon to the country’s long-term promise.

BrandZ™ Selection Criteria
India’s Premier Brands

Brands ranked in the 2020 Brand™ Top 75 Most Valuable Indian Brands must meet one or more of these eligibility criteria:

- The corporate parent is listed on a stock exchange in India.
- The brand originated in India and its corporate parent is listed on a recognized stock exchange.
- The brand is privately owned, but its complete financial statements are publicly available.
- Indian unicorns have their most recent valuation publicly available.

As always, brand value is calculated by combining proprietary BrandZ™ measures of a brand’s financial value and its brand contribution. Brand contribution scores draw on how brands rate on being Meaningful, Different, and Salient. These brand contribution attributes allow brands to both capture market share (Brand Power) and command a price premium (Brand Premium).

**Meaningful** brands are brands that consumers feel meet people’s needs and connect with them emotionally.

**Different** brands feel different from the rest of their category and set trends in the marketplace.

**Salient** brands come to mind quickly and readily when activated by ideas relating to category purchase.
BrandZ™ India

Top 75 portfolio recovers faster than SENSEX

Strong, valuable brands deliver superior shareholder returns

Strong brands provide stock market resilience during periods of volatility, providing a reliable, positive return on the money invested to build valuable brands. When turbulence drives markets down, strong brands decline more slowly, and when markets recover, strong brands rebound faster.

That is the premise for investing in strong brands. And this year’s unprecedented COVID-19 stock market swings provided extreme conditions to test it.

Globally, during the five weeks from February 14 to March 20, when the MSCI World Index dropped by 75 percent and the S&P 500 dropped by 51 percent, the BrandZ™ Strong Brands Portfolio dipped just by 42 percent, and the BrandZ™ Powerful Brands Top 10 Portfolio dipped only 37 percent.

Since just prior to the Global Recession, during the period between April 2006 and August 2020, the BrandZ™ Strong Brands Portfolio has increased by 229.5 percent. Over the same period, the MSCI World Index increased just 65 percent, and the S&P has increased by 140 percent.

In concrete terms, this means that $100 invested in 2006 would be worth $165 today based on the MSCI World Index growth rate, and $240 based on the S&P 500 growth rate. That $100 invested in the BrandZ™ Strong Brands Portfolio would have more than tripled in value to $329. These results demonstrate the investment reliability of strong brands and the way that they deliver superior returns to shareholders.

The data in India tells a similar story: Recovery during a pandemic occurs much faster for strong brands. In March 2020, both the BrandZ™ India Top 75 Portfolio and the SENSEX India index declined to levels well below a baseline set at August 2014 (the inaugural year of BrandZ™ India). Just three months later, however, their performance had already begun to diverge: While the BrandZ™ India Top 75 Portfolio rose to a value 21.1 percent above its baseline, SENSEX India had surpassed its August 2014 valuation by only 3.5 percent.
**Top 75 brands shrink by 6 percent**

At a time of near-unprecedented economic challenges, the total value of the BrandZ™ India Top 75 fell by 6 percent in 2020, shedding $13 billion in value for a total brand value of $215.608 billion.

Though significant, these changes represent a lower de-growth rate than that seen among top brands in the UK, Australia, and South Africa. Individual brands’ performance in the India Top 75 remained highly variable. While 43 returning brands declined in value in 2020, 26 returning brands actually gained in value from their 2019 performance.

**Top 75 Portfolio beats SENSEX**

The stock portfolio of the BrandZ™ India Top 75 has recovered more of its pre-pandemic value, at a faster rate, than India’s SENSEX. Especially in difficult times, valuable brands deliver superior shareholder returns.

**HDFC Bank retains top ranking**

For the seventh straight year, HDFC Bank remained the top-ranked brand in India with a total brand value of more than $20.2 billion - though that figure declined 11 percent from the year prior. HDFC Bank’s share of the total value of the BrandZ™ Top 75 remained largely unchanged, falling from 9.95 percent in 2019 to 9.4 percent this year.

**Five Newcomers enter the list**

Five brands made their debut on the 2020 rankings. Among these are two Personal Care brands, Dove and Closeup; they are joined by Energy brand Indraprastha Gas, Home Appliances brand Crompton, and Telecom provider BSNL. Dove was the top-ranked Newcomer at number 61.

**Top risers led by digital, retail, food brands**

In addition to strong financial performance, this year’s 10-strong group of Top Risers averages well above the rest of the Top 75 on measures of Meaningful Difference. In addition to 2020 Top Riser Reliance Retail – and runner-up Zomato – this year’s Top Risers group includes food brands such as Maggi, Nestlé, and Horlicks; as well as digital platforms and providers like Naukri.com, Flipkart, PayTM, and Airtel.

**Reliance Retail adds most value**

With a 102 percent year-on-year increase in value, the fast-expanding brand Reliance Retail led this year’s crop of Top Risers – one year after its sister brand Jio claimed the number one spot. In 2020, Reliance Retail’s core grocery offerings, as well as its integrations with other Reliance Group partners, have become agile assets for its parent company during the COVID-19 lockdown.
INTRODUCTION

Banks lead in total category value

Banks and finance brands make up the largest share of the BrandZ™ India Top 75 in 2020, though they declined in value by 21 percent from 2019. Today, brands in the Banks category make up 20 percent of the total brand value in the BrandZ™ India rankings.

Retail, Personal Care and Telecom among fastest-growing categories

Rapidly growing categories in this year’s BrandZ™ India Top 75 include Retail, which grew 33 percent in part on the strength of Reliance Retail. Personal Care, which grew by 32 percent, was another strong category performer. Telecom Providers rose 25 percent this year thanks to strong performance from both Airtel and Jio. Telecom is now the second-largest category in the India Top 75, up from fourth in 2019.

Any brand can win with Meaningful Difference

There was no correlation between the size of a brand’s valuation in 2019 and its performance on the BrandZ™ Top 75 in 2020. Instead, the biggest driver of brand value change in the India Top 75 was Meaningful Difference – which is something that brands can achieve at any size.
Cross-Category Trends

Resilience, not Recovery

It’s too soon to expect recovery. The traditional language we use to talk about business cycles - of winners and losers, booms and busts, bears and bulls - doesn’t apply to the magnitude or uncertainty of this moment. The watchword of today is resilience. Resilience is about hunkering down and finding new efficiencies and ways of doing business. This is the time to be honest and vulnerable with consumers, and to lean into concepts like reciprocity, honesty, and mutual trust. Resilient brands will discover new ways to work together and innovate - and surprising new relevancies for their existing products. The goal for brands should be not just to get through this period intact, but to come out on the other side more unshakeably themselves.

Agility

The key to Resilience in these times is Agility - the ability to quickly adapt, assess, and execute brand strategies. Not all brands will be able to roll out entire new product ranges over the next year. But Agility is as much about small adjustments as it is large-scale pivots. In these times, Agility can also mean new solutions for packaging, inventory management, and delivery - so long as these changes tie back to a brand’s core identity. This is a moment that calls for flexibility, speed, and clear-eyed action.

The diverse Indian consumer

In some ways, the events of 2020 have united Indians as one: this was a time when everyone came together to fight the virus by staying indoors. At the same time, however, one should not ignore the ways that the pandemic has exposed key differences in Indian society. The pandemic experience of an upper-middle class family in metro India is not the same as that of a precariously housed daily wage laborer. Rural India has seen an influx of jobless migrant workers, while urban areas have lost key segments of their labor force. Rather than trying to put forth a single, overly rosy message, brands can market their dresses by understanding the different ways that Indians have experienced adversity this year. Unity is real, and worth celebrating, but so is the continued need for segmentation.

Life, Online

Movie theaters have been closed for much of 2020 - while OTT streaming platforms have multiplied. Some two-thirds of urban adults now regularly access the internet on smartphones - while rural internet connectivity grew by 45 percent in the past year. For months, almost all commerce that took place outside local kirana stores was a form of e-commerce (and even kiranas have been moving online!). Zoom, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram have become the new public square - for good and for ill. The laptop has replaced the corner office. In short: India’s much-hailed digital future has arrived.

Focus on rural villages and small towns

Economic and population data suggests that by the end of the decade, residents of the country’s thousands of small urban towns - and tens of thousands of developed rural towns - will have similar income profiles to their striving big-city counterparts. The mass migration events of this year haven’t changed Bharat India’s economic destiny. If anything, through the crucible of COVID-19, India has awakened to the vital economic role played by its migrant workers from rural areas. Brands can no longer afford to remain metro-only concerns. Rural and small-town India’s time has come.

Going home

In 2020, home has evolved to be more than just a shelter. Increasingly, it’s also Indians’ primary workplace and entertainment center. At the height of the pandemic, home has become a sanitary oasis - so long as it’s carefully scrubbed and sanitized - but also a site of mental stress, as people struggle to regain “me time” amid all the togetherness. In some households, men and women are sharing chores more equally - but there’s also more work to go around, especially in middle- and upper-class households going without help for the first time. For brands, then, home represents a site of great upheaval - but also an opportunity. From appliances to healthcare, beauty to beverages, entertainment to e-commerce, home is where the heart is. It’s also where the profits lie.
Cross-Category Trends

Shrinking wallets

As India enters a de-growth period, declining household income is the invariable fact that all marketing activity will have to contend with. When people have less money, consumer behaviors like “trading down,” opting for generics, and delayed purchasing all rise to the fore. In response, it’s not enough to trumpet discounts and value. Brand Salience - though important - is no guarantee of purchase in difficult times. Instead, Meaningful Difference matters more than ever; consumers are looking for that “extra push” to go with the brand name.

Category transformation

For some categories that stand to be hardest-hit in the years to come, it’s true that amid the difficulties of the current moment, brands have already identified the seeds of future transformations and growth opportunities. Think of the way that car ownership - so recently under threat from ride-sharing platforms - has been reframed as an oasis of safety and freedom. Or how personal care is focusing less on status and perfection, and more on ritual and self-care. There’s no reason to assume that a recession will mean permanent disaster for any brand categories; instead, it can be a catalyst for change.

Vocal for Local

According to Kantar’s COVID Barometer - India, two-thirds of people surveyed in early June agreed that it was “important to buy local/Indian brands” - and more than 60 percent agreed that “shopping at local stores is important.” Certainly, the experience of lockdown has rooted Indian consumers more closely to their neighborhoods, cities, states, and country. Businesses are taking the local view, too, optimizing their delivery networks to emphasize hyper-local, block-by-block operations.

Going forward, brands of all stripes would do well to emphasize their ties to Indian communities: from the roles their products play in Indian household rituals, to the ways that their supply chains support port communities. Brands that were founded in India will obviously have a leg up in this regard. But interestingly, “Indianness” can also encompass brands with more global codes – so long as they have demonstrated a lasting impact on Indian society.

Media disruption

India’s media landscape was already a highly dynamic one for brands to navigate at the turn of this decade, for good and for bad. Social media apps have introduced new dynamics of misinformation and backlash into the cost of doing business. On the upside, booming mobile internet usage has created new ways for brands to segment and reach consumers. 2020 has brought even further upheaval. Prior to this year, India’s media market was a uniquely balanced one: Internet advertising was booming, but India also retained strong print and TV spending. That could change thanks to the pandemic-induced acceleration of OTT streaming, as well as a recent decline in print revenues. In the years to come, India’s media ecosystem could start looking like the rest of the world.
INTRODUCTION

BRANDZ™ TOP 75 MOST VALUABLE INDIAN BRANDS 2020

ECONOMY

GDP $2.88 Trillion
(World's fifth-largest economy, after Germany)

GDP RATE OF GROWTH 5.0%

GDP PER CAPITA $2104.15

EASE OF DOING BUSINESS
(On a scale of 1 to 190, 1 being the most business-friendly)

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Country 1</th>
<th>Country 2</th>
<th>Country 3</th>
<th>Country 4</th>
<th>Country 5</th>
<th>Country 6</th>
<th>Country 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NEW ZEALAND

UK

CHINA

INDIA

RUSSIA

MEXICO

BRAZIL

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>$42.2 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>$50.6 Billion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE:
- World Bank and for 2019 unless otherwise noted.
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development 2020
- CIA World Factbook 2020
- Asian Development Bank, 2019
- India Census 2011

GEOGRAPHY

LAND AREA
1.3 Million sq. km.
1.2 Million sq. mi.
(World’s seventh-largest nation, about one-third of the size of the US)

POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS
29 States and 7 Union Territories

CENTERS OF POPULATION
(2020)

30.29 million

POPULATION
TOTAL POPULATION 1.36 Billion
POPULATION ANNUAL GROWTH RATE 1.14%

POPULATION BY AGE
65 years and over
55-64 years
50-54 years
45-44 years
40-44 years
35-34 years
30-24 years
25-24 years
20-19 years
15-24 years
10-14 years

MEDIAN AGE
28.7
31.1
32.2
33.4
38.4
40.3
40.6

POPULATION DENSITY
(People per sq. km)
455
1,240
148
36

URBAN POPULATION
(as Percent of Total Population)
1960
18%
1995
27%
2019
34%

POPULATION BELOW THE POVERTY LINE
60.0%
45.9%
38.2%
31.1%
21.0%

POPULATION EARNING BELOW $1.90 PPP / DAY
10.7%

RELIGION (2011)
Most Indians are Hindu or Muslim.

Hindu
79.8%

Muslim
14.2%

Other significantly represented faiths: Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism

LANGUAGES
India’s constitution recognizes 22 languages. The most widely spoken language, Hindi, is spoken by over 43 percent of the population. Among the other official but less widely-spoken languages are: Bengali, Telugu, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, and Gujarati.

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- India Census 2011

LAND AREA
3.3 Million sq. km.
1.2 Million sq. mi.

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- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development 2020
- CIA World Factbook 2020
- Asian Development Bank, 2019
- India Census 2011
According to Kantar’s ICUBE™ 2019 report and proprietary dataset, the number of monthly active mobile internet users in India reached 572 million in 2019, up 28 percent from the year previously. During this same period, monthly active internet users grew to 574 million, up 24 percent from the year before.

Analysts used to speak of mobile phone usage and internet usage in India as two somewhat separate phenomena. Now, several years down the line from Jio’s disruptive entrance into the telecom market, that is scarcely the case. When brands began to compete over rock-bottom data rates, and smartphone and “smart feature phone” prices began to fall, India entered a new age of connectivity convergence. Internet usage became decisively mobile-first — and has continued to soar year on year.

Which is not to say that all Indians are now internet and smartphone users. Indeed, disparities in mobile internet penetration are one key to understanding the different marketing landscapes that exist across urban, small town, and rural India. Gender, age, income, and educational divides also exist in internet penetration - all of which are detailed in Kantar’s ICUBE™ datasets.

For now, the headlines. Of India’s 572 million monthly active mobile internet users in 2019, 308 million are urban citizens – an increase of 14 percent from the year before. And 264 million are rural Indians – up a steep 51 percent from the year before. That said, though the adoption of mobile internet in rural India is growing at a faster rate than in urban India, the overall penetration of mobile internet in rural India is less than half of its reach in Urban India. While mobile internet reaches 66 percent of potential users in urban areas, it has only spread to 28 percent in rural areas. There are thus plenty more chapters left to write in the story of India’s internet - and smartphone - revolutions.
Online shopping goes mainstream

During the COVID-19 lockdown in India, as retailers began to migrate their in-store business online, Kantar’s COVID Barometer - India reported that 45 percent of households expected to increase their online shopping in the near term. Even before the pandemic hit, e-commerce was well on its way to becoming a major feature of India’s urban shopping landscape. According to Kantar’s 2019 ICUBE™ survey, 128 million of India’s 699 million active internet users are “Net Commerce Users.” This means that they participate at least one of the following activities monthly: Online finance; E-tail; Online travel booking; Food delivery; and Online services (Online grocery delivery, Education, Entertainment-related services, etc.).

Penetration of e-commerce categories in urban India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E-commerce Category Penetration (Millions)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Finance</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Travel</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Delivery</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Services</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Kantar 2019 ICUBE™

Connectivity

Active Mobile Internet Users (AMIU)
AMIU - Individuals who have accessed internet in the last 30 days
All Active Indian Mobile Internet Users (Millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>AMIU (Millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>572</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Urban
Rural

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Kantar Worldpanel Division

SOURCE: Kantar 2019 ICUBE™
A stressed but vital media landscape

Released in February 2020, GroupM’s “This Year, Next Year” report offered a picture of India as one of the most robust media markets in the world. In 2019, a year in which overall global ad spend rose by 3.7 percent, Indian ad spend increased at more than double the global rate, rising by 9.0 percent over the year prior. This was enough to make India the fastest-growing major ad market in the world. Just as impressively, India achieved this feat while maintaining a more balanced array of advertising channels than was typical worldwide: In India, a growing internet advertising business could thrive alongside similarly healthy print, TV, and radio businesses.

GroupM’s preliminary forecasts indicated that 2020 would be another strong year, with India retaining its “fastest grower” title with a projected 10.7 percent rise in national ad spending, compared to a global ad spend rise of 5.1 percent. Internet media’s share of ad spend was expected to rise to 30 percent for the first time, behind only TV’s share of 42 percent. Advertising for auto, e-commerce & mobile handsets brands was expected to drive ad growth in 2020.

Obviously, we are now in a different world, and a different ad market. Revised 2020 figures for India were not yet available from GroupM at press time. But in its June 2020 global ad spend forecasts, GroupM proposed a set of India trend forecasts for the decade to come. Many should still continue to shape India’s media and advertising ecosystem in the years ahead. They include:

- The rise of “social commerce”
- Audio 2.0: the mainstreaming of streaming audio, internet-powered radios, podcasts, and using voice-controlled devices
- The growth of gaming and other “immersive experiences”
- Customizing content for Indic languages

These trends – alongside the other growth areas identified by GroupM in this year’s analyses – could offer room for innovation and growth even during periods of temporarily constrained ad spend.

The economic consequences of 2020 will outlast the discovery of a vaccine. In others, pent-up demand is expected to over-compensate for 2020’s losses. Overall, we expect global advertising to grow by 8.2 percent next year on an ex-U.S. political basis, or by 5.9 percent including it. The median market is expected to grow by 10 percent.

In India, many of the fundamentals that made the country the fastest-growing major ad market in 2019 have not been altered by the pandemic. Among these are a vast rural and small-town population primed for upward advancement; a savvy population of shoppers; and India’s historically bustling cultural marketplace (this is a country of highly engaged readers, watchers, listeners, and now gamers).

At the same time that it released its February 2020 “This Year, Next Year” ad spend forecasts, GroupM put out a set of India trend forecasts for the decade to come. Many should still continue to shape India’s media and advertising ecosystem in the years ahead. They include:

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INTRODUCTION

BRANDZ™ TOP 75 MOST VALUABLE INDIAN BRANDS 2020

Takeaways

Key actions for building valuable brands in India

Brand still matters

Strong brands succeed in all types of economic weather. Meaningful Difference has long been the cornerstone of the BrandZ™ approach to business insight - an approach recently validated by a University of Oxford Saïd Business School study (that was extensively detailed in the 2020 BrandZ™ Top 100 Global Brand Report). Academics at the school’s Future of Marketing Initiative found that incorporating BrandZ’s complex, deep, and far-ranging data into its existing financial forecasting models allowed it to explain abnormal market returns with an extremely high level of precision. Plugging BrandZ™ into its research models allowed the Oxford researchers to anticipate exceptional company performance with 99.5 percent accuracy; Without it, their results were at best 75 percent accurate.

In India, the past seven years of BrandZ™ data have demonstrated how strong brands can continue to thrive amidst a rapidly evolving business climate. In the months and years to come, amid daunting challenges, business leaders would do well to make decisions with not only their physical and financial assets in mind, but also their company’s intangible brand assets. By guarding and growing their brands’ Meaningful Difference, leaders can give their companies a “stimulus” that comes from within.

Win at any size

Perhaps more than ever, India represents an open playing field where brands can grow at any scale. From 2019 to 2020, there was no correlation between a company’s size and its propensity to grow. This year’s BrandZ™ Top Risers encompass a constellation of different brand backgrounds; the list includes disruptive upstarts, beloved legacy players, home-grown heroes, and foreign imports alike. Brands are hardly limited by their histories: Once-scrappy local startups can park themselves on the global cutting-edge; companies with overseas origins can turn themselves into indispensable parts of Indian life. At the same time, core brand assets and DNA do matter: Success for the companies on this ranking lies not in trying to emulate competitors’ playbooks, but in working to understand and amplify what makes their own brands singularly unique.

Protect Meaningful Difference

This year, the most Meaningfully Different brands in the India Top 75 were also the most valuable. And the good news is that Meaningful Difference is not a zero-sum game; indeed, most top Indian brands do well on measures of these two attributes. The average Meaningful and Different scores for brands in the Top 30 of this year’s India rankings are markedly higher than the Top 30 averages for this year’s Global rankings. Relative to many of their foreign counterparts, then, the challenge for Indian Brands in the year ahead will be to protect existing positive views of their brands amid the challenges ahead.

There are many varied and successful strategies that Indian businesses have used to build their brands. The question now is: How should these approaches evolve in 2020 amid new economic realities and shifting consumer values, as well as radically changing shopping and media landscapes? Many smart proposals on how to move forward can be found in Thought Leadership and Brand Building Best Practice pieces - but ultimately, brands will need to study the data around their own brand health metrics to formulate an optimal response.
Reevaluate brand positioning and purpose

Purpose is one of five “vital signs”—Purpose, Innovation, Communication, Experience, and Love—that work together to build Meaningful Difference in the proprietary BrandZ™ metric of brand health called vQ. When businesses want to understand how they can improve or protect their brand position, they should first look at their vQ indicators.

Brands with a strong sense of purpose are perceived as “making people’s lives better.” In the 2020 BrandZ™ India rankings, the 15 most purposeful brands grew 11 percent over the year before, while the 15 least purposeful brands fell in value by 15 percent. In the times ahead, the importance of Purpose should only grow: people will remember and reward those brands that helped them in difficult times—and punish those seen as mercenary or exploitative. At the same time, in a pandemic era when seemingly every brand has claimed to be “here to help”, standing out in consumer’s minds as truly Purposeful may well become harder. The most successful brands will find ways to “walk the talk” on Purpose in a natural, authentic way.

Innovate for Agility

Most modern executives believe that a brand that lacks Innovation will struggle to adapt and grow. And the data suggests they’re right. In the 2020 BrandZ™ India rankings, amid unprecedented economic pressures, the 15 brands with the lowest scores for perceived Innovation fell by 54 percent (compared to a decline of 10 percent for the most innovative brands).

Especially in these times, “Innovation” needs to be understood as being more than large-scale research breakthroughs and manufacturing shifts. It’s also about solving problems on the local level, on the ground with consumers in their newly constrained neighborhood lives. More than ever, Innovation can be unlocked—and profited from—when brands find agile new ways to package, deliver, advertise, and recommend products on an everyday scale.

Tend to Health

The Top 75 brands are in excellent health, far exceeding “average” brand performance on the core brand equity elements of being Meaningful, Different and Salient (where a score of 100 or above means “healthy”). This means that they can command both Power (purchase share) and Premium in the marketplace.

But the consequences of letting any aspect of Brand Health lapse can be harmful—especially at a time when there’s less cash to go around, and thus less margin for error. For instance, the 15 brands that ranked lowest in the Top 75 on Communication declined 35 percent in overall value from 2019. And the 15 brands that ranked lowest on Experience declined 17 percent in overall value. Just like humans, brands need to be proactive in monitoring their vital signs—the better to identify and build on existing strengths, and also to head off any looming trouble.

Keep your foot on the gas

At times of crisis, it’s tempting for brands to go into “maintenance” mode: to cut back on campaigns and communications, and hope to draft off existing brand perceptions while preserving marketing resources for sunnier days. But experience shows that this is not a winning strategy. BrandZ™ analysis of brand recovery since the financial crisis of 2008 shows that brands that protected their perceptions of Meaningful Difference recovered more swiftly and grew more quickly in the years to follow. As BrandZ™ Global Strategy Director Graham Staplehurst wrote in the 2020 Global Report, “Waiting to invest will not add comfort or certainty, but it will jeopardize effectiveness. Brands need to come easily to mind and be easily accessible. Disappearing from the marketplace to gain a short-term financial benefit will make it more difficult and expensive to rebuild brand presence.”
BrandZ™ Analysis of Market Dynamics
Amid challenging circumstances, new forms of inventiveness and purpose

It’s too soon to talk about recovery. The traditional language of business cycles - of winners and losers, booms and busts, bears and bulls - don’t apply to the magnitude or uncertainty of the current moment. India took two full years to bounce back from the damage it incurred from the sidelines of the 2008 global financial crisis. COVID-19, by contrast, has struck at the heart of India’s metropolises, and touched off country-wide waves of mass migration and upheaval. All this, in a country that was already contending with trade tensions, political division, and persistent unemployment in the months before the pandemic hit. No wonder, then, that according to Kantar’s June 2020 COVID Barometer, urban Indians are more concerned about their current situation than the population of any major country surveyed.

Urban India is the most concerned set across the world
“The situation concerns me hugely”

Source: Kantar COVID-19 Barometer

Indian brands, in particular, have the advantage of being more battle-tested than their global peers. They have faced uncertainty and upheaval before, in the form of events like demonetization (after which they quickly resumed their paths to growth). It’s true India didn’t yet have a robust e-commerce system in place when lockdown hit, as Chinese brands did. But India has built out a unified payments infrastructure over the past few years, which in 2020 has meant that brands could rapidly scale up their online shopping channels.

No amount of brand resilience would matter, of course, if Indian consumers weren’t themselves highly resilient. Indian’s resourcefulness and jugaad spirit may be something of a hoary cliché. But it’s one of those clichés that’s born out of deep, undeniable truth.

India’s daily wage earners have been especially vulnerable to the disruptions of 2020 - and are in dire need of more social security protections and health care assistance. But they have also touched the world with their determination to return homeward, and to aid their friends and loved ones. India’s middle and upper classes, meanwhile, have been diligent over the past decade in saving money for harder times - all in preparation for just such a moment as this one.

Indian brands, in short, could hardly ask for better partners to get through this period than Indian consumers. This is, therefore, a time for brands to be honest and vulnerable with their customers. They should lean into concepts like reciprocity, honesty, and mutual trust.

Resilient brands will discover new ways to cooperate - with consumers, and also with other brands. In doing so, brands can uncover surprising new channels for their offerings. (Think of the ways that, for example, food brand ITC has partnered with platforms like Swiggy and Zomato to get its products into homes, or that soap brands have united to promote proper hand washing.)

And yet. Indians are, at their core, a hopeful people. And India is an optimistic society. That is why this year is not about survival, nor subsistence but Resilience. Resilience is about hunkering down, yes - but Resilience is also about using adversity to uncover new and transformational ways of thinking.

You Can Do It!
A Rise In Self Reliance

We as Indians love convenience. Why do something yourself when someone else can do it for you instead? For any odd job, hired help is usually just a call away.

But in these times, is having a literal open-door policy – that is, allowing strangers with an unknown contact history into your home – still feasible? For many Indians, the answer is no.

In the name of safety, we anticipate a begrudging growth in consumer self-reliance – as currently best showcased in the rising preference for at-home baking over ordering in.

Considering this is still an emerging concept, a good way to attract people to this style of self-reliant thinking is by avoiding intimidating, strenuous-sounding messaging like “Do It Yourself.” Instead, speak from a place of ease and achievement. Remove any concerns about difficulty or hassle. Leave people in no doubt that – through your brand – they themselves can solve their own problems quickly, bringing back the convenience that they so love.

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Resilience and Agility

Of course, all of this is easier said than done. The road ahead is a hard one. Brands will need to change and innovate just for the privilege of breaking even in the years to come. Any business that doesn’t realize this… is due for a rude awakening.

But wait: What do change and innovation have to do with the steady work of Resilience?

More than you might think. Somewhat paradoxically, it turns out that the key to Resilience in these times is Agility. More than ever, Resilient brands need to be flexible - Agile - in the ways that they adapt, assess, and execute brand strategies.

If Resilience and Agility were ever truly opposites, they are no longer so today. Instead, they are two indispensable, complimentary drivers of brand value in this difficult economic climate.

One major facet of Agility is innovation. Not all brands will be able to roll out entire new product ranges in the middle of a pandemic. But they may be able to unlock intelligent “micro-innovations” in the realms of packaging, product bundling, inventory management, and last-mile delivery. Now is not the time for retrenchment. This is a moment that calls for flexibility, speed, and clear-eyed action.

But at the same time, Agility doesn’t only involve physical improvements and innovations. Consider, too, what might be described as “Emotional Agility”: the ability for brands to pick up on shifting consumer moods and needs, and adjust their messaging accordingly. It seems clear that this pandemic’s effects will lift from Indian towns in unequal, uneven fashion - with huge shifts in consumer moods from week to week.

Will consumers be looking for a nostalgic escape into the past? A glimpse of a more hopeful future? A quick laugh? A helping hand? Brands will need to be able to monitor these attitudinal shifts and adjust their local communications accordingly - all in line with what consumers will need on a given day, and across a range of ever-changing occasions.

In today’s environment, where entire categories and large facets of life are short on certainty, agility must surely count as one of the most prized brand characteristics.

Agility shifts the imagining of a brand from the realm of long-term ideology into a more immediate entity. The latter doesn’t come at the cost of the former, of course. A brand must still retain an ideological direction - it’s just that it must be able to display it in both more and varied contexts. There are steps brands can take to establish agility.

Brands can also shift toward a more consumer-centric position, rather than being wedded more narrowly to product functionality. Brands can thus reinterpret themselves to fit more consumer stories.

Lastly, brands can incorporate elasticity, rather than aim for more rigid, singular, or reductive definitions of what they do.

In sum, it is India’s Agile and Resilient brands that have the best shot at transcending mere survival in the years to come. As perilous as this moment is, strong brands will nevertheless have the opportunity to emerge on the other side… as somehow more themselves - and profitable - than ever before.

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Similar kinds of emotional intelligence may well be needed to keep other forms of Agility in check. We have already seen examples in lockdown of Indian brands become too Agile: of moving too fast and loose in order to make a quick sale — and in the process, tipping over into the kind of mercenary opportunism that consumers abhor. Agility, then, is about more than just speed: it’s about a culture of intelligent adaptability.

There is also the risk that misapplied Agility could lead to wrong-headed corporate transformation. In the race to “disrupt” and “adapt,” brands easily can lose sight of their core purpose and value propositions. Agility should not be taken to mean “trying everything at all once, with no regard for brand reputation.”

That’s why the combination of “Agility and Resilience” is so important. An Agile and Resilient mindset is one that constantly ladders back to a brand’s true, essential reason for being - and protects that quintessence at all costs.

In sum, it is India’s Agile and Resilient brands that have the best shot at transcending mere survival in the years to come. As perilous as this moment is, strong brands will nevertheless have the opportunity to emerge on the other side… as somehow more themselves - and profitable - than ever before.

The Fleet-Footed Brand: Agility as a brand virtue

In today’s environment, where entire categories and large facets of life are short on certainty, agility must surely count as one of the most prized brand characteristics.

Agility shifts the imagining of a brand from the realm of long-term ideology into a more immediate entity. The latter doesn’t come at the cost of the former, of course. A brand must still retain an ideological direction - it’s just that it must be able to display it in both more and varied contexts.

There are steps brands can take to establish agility. They can look to own certain forms of consumer interactions. Doing so can enable a brand to tap into frequent conversations. On digital platforms, interactions can also trigger snowball effects of purchasing.

Brands can also shift toward a more consumer-centric position, rather than being wedged more narrowly to product functionality. Brands can thus reinterpret themselves to fit more consumer stories.

Lastly, brands can incorporate elasticity, rather than aim for more rigid, singular, or reductive definitions of what they do.

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In some ways, the events of 2020 have united Indians as one. The first half of this year was a time when everyone in this vast nation - urban and rural, North and South - was asked to come together and lessen the crisis by staying indoors. And there have been, indeed, real moments of commonality and solidarity to be found: In the ways Indians have expressed pride in their country’s first responders and essential workers. In the ways that they’re learning how to commemorate big life moments within the confines of home. In the ways that a fragmenting culture has once again converged toward everyone watching the same old nostalgic TV shows to pass the time in lockdown.

Everyone has been thinking more about the importance of family and the fragility of life. Everyone has been worried about job security. Everyone has lamented the difficulties of raising kids in such uncertain times.

In some ways, too, this has been a good time for mass brands and mass advertising. It’s not always easy - or even desirable - to go broad in a country with so many diverse and demanding consumer segments. But 2020 campaigns like Lifebuoy’s message to “prevent the spread of COVID-19 by using any soap available” hit exactly the right broad notes for the times. Advertising is the perfect medium to spread important messages of health, hope, and hygiene to more than a billion anxious Indians.

Some aspects of consumer behavior have also converged in 2020. Suddenly, almost everyone - even senior citizens - become open to trying out online banking. (How else would they access their money?). Everyone has gained a newfound appreciation for the experience of shopping at their local neighborhood store. Demand for hygiene and health products have soared across all segments of society.

There is no doubt that pandemic has had a cataclysmic effect on our society. There is hardly anyone who has not been impacted by it. Gen Z is no exception, though in many ways COVID-19’s impact has been deeper on them as many were on the verge of stepping onto their career path. Until recently, this generation was heavily influenced by Millennials, and looked forward to a life that was all about exploring, experimenting, and following their entrepreneurial spirit. However, sensing the fragility and uncertainty of the world that they have inherited, they are no longer sure if they want to take that path. Perhaps it would be safer to emulate their parents’ trajectory of convention and stability? Gen Z kids are confused and vulnerable - but all they need is a bit of encouragement not to give up their dreams. Brands could be the cheerleader that India’s youth so desperately needs!
The Indian Consumer

Insight

Brands need to “resolve to evolve”

No one knows for certain how people will animate their lives with the pandemic still looming. But one can imagine that the new normal will be characterized by flux — like an evolution — some of which will be slow, and some drastic.

With a market that is brimming with change, brands need to “resolve to evolve.” For brands to make a dent, they have to be ahead of the curve and churn out solutions faster than others — and possibly outdo their own pace of delivery as well. Agility in designing and delivering products and ideas will be key to succeeding in these changing times. Moreover, one can never be sure when the new normal will start changing again; hence, brands need to be brave and resilient, be open to failures, and create plenty of backup plans.

Not only for the human race, but for brands as well, it will be the survival of the fittest!

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Most of all, from a brand-building perspective: As shopping occasions decline in frequency and move online, consumers are increasingly sticking to their mental “shopping lists” versus making impulse purchases. As a result, the need for brands to be mentally available (Meaningful, Different, and Salient) has never been greater.

It’s important for a brand to be part of the shopping list

% Agree

69%

SOURCE: Kantar COVID-19 Barometer

It’s also true, that, even before the pandemic, there did exist a few commonalities that united all Indians. These include shoppers’ love for the “ultimate deal”, as well as their affinity for nostalgic triggers like cricket and Bollywood musicals.

But for marketers, these commonalities, while real, should hardly spell an end to segmentation and consumer insight. Even before the pandemic, the early months of 2020 — with their protests, legislative controversies, and social media fireworks — made it clear that BJP’s second term would not be a festival of unity. Serious divides have persisted in the Indian body politic — and by extension, its consumer base.

Precarity among India’s poorest

Lockdown has further exposed key economic fault lines in Indian society. The pandemic experience of an upper-middle class family in metropolitan India is that not the same as that of a daily wage laborer confined to a single windowless room. For many of India’s daily wage earners and rural citizens — about whom more will be said in the next section of this report — life in India was already an exercise in precarity. The pandemic has only made the situation worse.

The State of Kerala’s system for televised educational programming (and its TV-equipped Neighborhood Study Centers, for those who lacked viewing capabilities at home) is perhaps the most prominent example of a pandemic-era “campaign” geared toward Indians at this more precarious level of society. In metro areas, meanwhile, Uber’s call for donations to its Driver Fund represents a notable brand effort to address the lives of daily wage earners — albeit in the form of a campaign that’s directed toward upper- and middle-class viewers.

Discretion and trading down

While the wealthiest Indians may still have the funds to make major purchases, the channels and frequency with which they will do so have changed for the foreseeable future. Some gold and jewelry shopping has moved online — but not enough to forestall a significant decline in sales for those sectors. There may be a renewed focus on discretion, as people reevaluate the concept of “status” in light of what’s truly important. Think luxe materials, but in quieter packaging, with fewer logos and bling.

Meanwhile, India’s HENRI’s — “High Earners, Not Yet Rich” — will feel the squeeze as job cuts go forward. Though it will vary from category to category, expect some degree of “trading down” behavior. Consumers who once drank imported single malt whisky will trade down to blended Scotch. Those who drank imported Scotch blends will opt instead for local labels. And so on down the line.
Is empathy enough in a world where everyone speaks kindly?

Empathy is defined as the ability to understand another person’s feelings and experiences. And it has been the cornerstone of some of the greatest marketing campaigns. This year everyone’s life got disrupted, and brands found new meaning in empathy. But when every brand is talking about how they understand and share customers’ feelings, very few expressions of empathy break out of the pack to get noticed, appreciated, and talked about.

So we should ask ourselves the question: Is this definition of empathy enough in today’s world? Or does it need something more? The answer might lie in understanding what really differentiates those few brands that did get noticed for their empathetic displays during lockdown.

Whether it was LVMH making and distributing free hand sanitizers, or Mahindra indigenously developing ventilators… Whether it was Rebook, Nike, or Cult.fit helping people stay to stay active at home… All of these brands expressed their empathy by taking the initiative to genuinely help either society in general, or their customers in particular. They translated empathy into action, in the same way that we ourselves would act in our personal lives to help someone we feel empathetic towards.

We sometimes forget that customers expect brands to behave like people do. So while empathy is still about understanding another person’s feelings and expressing authentic emotions – for brands, that emotional expression should be paired with genuine action that enables better lives for customers. Or the question will always be raised: “Is empathy without genuine action just faking it?”

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A population whose time has come

When historians look back on this period from 20 or 40 years down the line, one of the biggest legacies of 2020 may well be the rise of Bharat India. India has long relied on its population of millions of rural migrant workers to function economically — but until now, this was a fact that was easy to overlook and take for granted. (Indeed, a lack of data on the exact size of this migrant workforce has long gone hand-in-hand with a lack of social programs geared at helping this population.)

In the wake of a difficult, disruptive, heart-wrenching period of reverse migration, the needs of India’s rural workers can no longer go ignored. As an executive at a BrandZ™ India Top 75 company recently told LiveMint:

Bringing this workforce back to metro India will be easier said than done. Bharat India’s ranks include a number of skilled laborers - welders, fitters, fabricators - who may choose to apply their talents closer to home. So-called “unskilled” returnees, too, may prove anything but. Among them are budding entrepreneurs of all stripes, who may realize that their old hometowns have become sites of economic opportunity (thanks in no small part to the remittances these migrants had been faithfully sending home). Existing businesspeople in these rural areas - and there are many - will find new opportunities in providing the types of housing, products, and amenities that these new returnees became used to while living in urban areas.

Even setting this new influx of migrants aside, demographic data suggests that residents of the country’s thousands of small urban towns - and tens of thousands of developed rural towns - are on the economic upswing. Indeed, economists expect that they will attain similar incomes to their striving big city counterparts over the course of the next decade or two. Brands looking to uncover pockets of growth potential in the difficult years to come cannot afford to overlook these markets.

Even after the shocks of early 2020, the hope for rural India is that the rest of the year will see renewed spending behavior. It helps that 2020 is on track to have a normal monsoon season - and that urban areas have tended to be harder-hit than rural zones by COVID-19.

According to Kantar Worldpanel data, rural FMCG volume growth in the first half of 2020 continued to grow above the previous year’s levels - with an especially strong bounce-back recorded May.

Average monthly household spending in rural areas also increased in the first half of 2020, with hygiene-related products proving especially popular in the Home Care and Personal Care categories.
The clarion call for business traditionally has been to maximize the bottom-line and exist for profits alone. But has the lexicon of profit changed in the recent past?

In 1994, business writer John Elkington coined the term Triple Bottom Line - a three-part framework that focuses on social, environmental and financial performance of a business, and not just on the monetary profits. It is this holistic approach that needs the attention of all businesses today.

Low-cost, sweatshop-produced goods have caused global boycotts of iconic brands. Industrial waste dumping in rivers has led to companies being rapped by both local regulatory authorities and their consumers. In the same breath, fast fashion brands that have increasingly focused on sustainability have been rewarded by their customers.

Studies by MIT have found that businesses that take sustainability seriously do profit in the long run. At some point there has to be a better financial, societal, and environmental integration in the balance sheet for a sustainable business. And it may no longer be a choice.

Here’s hoping that brand-builders and business leaders soften on the Friedman doctrine and look at sustainability as a growth engine. After all, nothing is permanent but change.

“I can’t go back to yesterday because I was a different person then”. - Alice in Wonderland

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Sustainable profit or profitable sustainability?

National brands have responded to these trends by making it easier for rural consumers to sample new products - as seen, for instance, ITC’s launch of a 50 paise sanitizer geared toward the rural market. Brands have also invested wisely in rural-focused celebrity and influencer marketing. Even more so than their urban counterparts, Indians feel proud when people from their home regions “make it” to become celebrities in the real-world and social media realms (by winning a spot on an IPL team, say, or placing well on Indian Idol).

By and large, brand strategies for courting rural customers have paid off. From February 2019 to February 2020, sales volumes for national FMCG brands grew by 10 percent year-on-year in rural areas - as compared to a sales volume growth rate of only 6 percent for urban areas.

Forget the clichés about small town and village India. This is a population whose time has come.

A higher rural growth than previous years

National brands volume (million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>February 2017</th>
<th>February 2018</th>
<th>February 2019</th>
<th>February 2020</th>
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<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>3,223</td>
<td>3,418</td>
<td>3,685</td>
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<td>Rural</td>
<td>2,744</td>
<td>2,944</td>
<td>3,077</td>
<td>3,379</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Kantar Worldpanel

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Forget the clichés about small town and village India. This is a population whose time has come.
Local and Global Brands

According to Kantar’s COVID Barometer - India, two-thirds of people surveyed in early June agreed that it was “important to buy local/Indian brands” - and more than 60 percent agreed that “shopping at local stores is important.” Certainly, the experience of lockdown has rooted modern Indians more firmly to their neighborhoods, cities, states, and country. The experience hasn’t all been positive - lurid, possibly overblown stories abound of Resident Welfare Associations gone rogue in metro India - but on the whole, Indians feel increasingly invested in their country and their hometowns.

What makes a local brand?
Q: What, in your opinion, is a local brand?
- An Indian brand manufactured in India and owned by an Indian company
- A global brand manufactured in India
- An Indian brand manufactured in India but owned by a global/multinational company

61% Indian shoppers report buying more local products
SOURCE: Kantar COVID-19 Barometer - India

Businesses are taking the local view, too, optimizing their delivery networks to emphasize hyper-local, block-by-block distribution networks and efficiencies. The Swiggy Genie courier service, which launched in April, is a prime example of such an optimization.

Going forward, brands of all stripes would do well to emphasize their ties to Indian communities: from the roles their products play in Indian household rituals, to the ways that their supply chains support community development and empowerment. Brands that were founded in India will understandably have a leg up in this regard.

But interestingly, “Indianness” can also encompass brands that may have more global codes in their DNA - so long as they have also demonstrated a lasting impact on Indian society. As part of a 2020 survey of Indian consumers, Kantar Worldpanel found that 61 percent of people considered Pond’s to be a “local” brand, while 43 percent saw Maggi as a “local” brand. And in a very real sense - who’s to say they aren’t?

Brands like Ponds and Maggi have long run advertising that’s emphasized their ties to the social fabric of India - as have as Colgate, Horlick’s, and many other leading entrants in the BrandZ™ India Top 75. This should help them immensely in an India that’s increasingly “Vocal for Local.”

PepsiCo’s snack division is another case study in how a brand with global codes can adapt to “local-first” tastes and sentiments. In 1999, the company launched its Kurkure sub-brand of corn puffs, which it manufactures locally alongside global brands like Lay’s (which in turn has incorporated more chili-forward flavor profiles in its Indian range of crisps). This year, PepsiCo and Lay’s have further emphasized their local ties with a campaign called “#Heartwork” that celebrates the company’s hardworking workforce and robust Indian supply chain. PepsiCo has also emphasized “localness” on the distribution side, by partnering with Dunzo to ensure easy last-mile delivery for brands like Lay’s, Kurkure, Doritos, and Quaker.

61% 20% 13%
SOURCE: Kantar COVID-19 Barometer - India
As discussed earlier in this report, Indian companies will need to exhibit both Resilience and Agility to flourish in the difficult years ahead. In BrandZ™ terms, this means that brands will need to pay special attention to how well they communicate - and embody - the attributes of Purpose and Innovation.

First, a refresher. Brands with a strong sense of Purpose are perceived as making people’s lives better. Brands with a strong claim to Innovation, meanwhile, are perceived as leaders and change agents in their sector. Purpose and Innovation represent two of the five “vital signs”—Purpose, Innovation, Communication, Experience, and Love—that work together to build Meaningful Difference in the proprietary BrandZ™ metric of Brand Health called vQ. When Brands want to understand how they can improve or protect their Meaningful Difference, they should first look at their vQ indicators.

Even at the start of 2020 - before the pandemic, but after several key economic indicators had pointed toward the possibility of an Indian recession - the importance of brand Purpose and Innovation were clear in the BrandZ™ data.

In this year’s BrandZ™ India 2020 rankings, the 15 Most Purposeful brands rose 11 percent in value relative to their performance in 2019 - while the 15 Least Purposeful brands fell in value by 15 percent. (All in a year where the total value of the Top 75 fell by 6 percent.)

Innovation - and specifically, the perceived lack of Innovation - played an even stronger role in brands’ valuations in 2020. The 15 brands with the lowest scores for perceived Innovation fell by a combined 54 percent from their 2019 valuations - as compared to a decline of 10 percent for the most innovative brands.

Levelling up to higher Purpose

At the most basic level, “Resilience and Agility” means transforming to meet new challenges - but always, always doing so in a way that enhances a brand’s core values. Those core values are intimately tied to a brand’s Purpose.

In BrandZ™ terms, Purpose involves more than just Corporate Social Responsibility. (Although India is unique for the ways that conglomerate foundations like Tata Trust can provide a “Purpose halo” for an entire family of affiliated sub-brands.) When properly nurtured and expressed, Purpose flows beyond charitable activities to nourish a brand’s entire ecosystem - from the brand’s product design and offerings, to its mission statement, to its marketing and brand assets. Purpose is the unique “Why” that each brand possesses. It is ways in which a brand exists to make its customers’ lives better.

In the times ahead, the importance of Purpose should only grow. People will remember and reward those brands that helped them in difficult times - just as they punish those seen as particularly un- Purposeful, mercenary, or exploitative.

At the same time, in a pandemic era when seemingly every brand has claimed to be “here to help,” standing out in consumers’ minds as truly Purposeful may well become harder. It’s well and good, for instance, that so many outfits have pivoted to making hand sanitizer or masks. But only a few hygiene- and fashion-related brands will be able to connect these activities to their existing commercial activities in a way that enhances their brand’s overall perceptions of Purpose.
The most successful brands find ways to “walk the talk” on Purpose in a natural, authentic manner. To do so, they will not need to reinvent the wheel, or risk sounding holier than thou.

Brand managers at a loss for how to focus on Purpose should strip away all the rhetoric, and think of ways that their brand can simply a little weight off of consumer’s backs.

Maybe Purpose involves saving people from undue mental exertion — by, for instance, implementing new kinds of safety protocols, so the customers don’t have to improvise their own at-home sanitation schemes whenever they want a product delivered. In the early months of the pandemic, Domino’s moved quickly and aggressively to roll out its “Zero Contact Delivery System” at a time when consumers were still figuring out how to best keep themselves safe. Domino’s also built on its reputation in the delivery space to offer customers a variety of new grocery staples — thus expanding the Domino’s offer in a way that felt reasonable, non-opportunistic, and altogether in line with the brand’s purpose of providing the most reliable food delivery in India.

These are the kinds of concrete, action-oriented manifestations of brand Purpose that brands will need to deliver in the months and years ahead. At the core, they are about communicating to consumers: “We understand what you’re going through — and here’s how we’re going to help.”

Purpose in these times can mean new forms of distribution, as in the case of HDFC Bank’s fleet of mobile ATM vans. This was a surprisingly nimble and local-scale offering from India’s largest bank, but one that’s wholly in line with the brand’s purpose of serving all Indians.

Innovation can also mean new standards of service, as in the case of HP’s lockdown-era campaign to offer tech support to anyone who owns a laptop — regardless of the brand they own. Ford India, for its part, scaled up its “Dial-a-Ford” program once the pandemic hit: this involved bringing cars to consumers’ front doors for test drives, as well as door-to-door servicing for car repairs and maintenance.

In the FMCG realm, Innovation can mean new types of product bundles, brand tie-ups, and packaging formats — the better to capture, for instance, the shift from individual occasions to family consumption. In the finance and retail categories, it could involve new forms of insurance, credit, rewards and discounts.

In sum, events of 2020 have not constrained the possibilities for Indian innovation. They remain endless — and vitally important for brands of all stripes.
Thought Leadership
Changing cultural and social fabric of the Indian consumer

We’ve all heard that, “When the vaccine is launched, life will go back to what it was.” It could – but will it?

Watershed events have always triggered fundamental changes that shape society. The COVID-19 outbreak is likely to do the same, not only because it has spared no one – but also because in the midst of fear and anxiety, it forced people into a space where they had to be alone and suspend.

In this interplay of introspection and fluidity, though placed on the surface, could lead to tectonic changes. Physical and social distancing will give people the mental space to introspect and adopt new mindful ways of being. From reflex to reflect, real wants and desires will have fresh allocations. This journey, though singular, is not lonely. Dave Hollis, CEO of the Hollis Company, which helps people build better lives, says, “In this rush to return to normal, use this time to consider which parts of normal are worth rushing back to.”

This journey through introspection and fluidity is a learning curve. It may lead to discoveries that leave one changed on the other side. Like people, brands too must practice the technique of introspection: to rethink the new Need-Want matrix that is likely to emerge out of the change model. Brands must be fluid to change their narrative; to create new meaning in people’s lives; to blend, morph, and partner.

While we cocoon ourselves in safety, our social fabric is getting woven anew – but with a silver thread. Generations live under the same roof and are no longer passing souls. Physically and cognitively, they are coming closer and are not the disconnected “mental factions.” They are one of the same lineage, separated in time, trying to endure and make sense of these strange, new days. Think of a vinyl player, cassette player, CD player, iPod, and Alexa simultaneously communicating with each other… attempting to synchronize their invariably different mechanics to produce the same music.

While the silver generation may be medically vulnerable, and see their physical freedom curbed – culturally, they are returning to a position of centrality in decision making because of their life skills and experience in navigating difficulties. Storytelling, the established method of learning and communication, is becoming the new family glue. Compelling experiences of past deprivation are teaching us new coping mechanisms. The silvers are now taking center stage.

The Gen Z youth who have grown up amidst affluence and proliferating choice (but also increasing inequality and polarization) are finding resonance in the simplicity and tenacity of the Silver Hair. Their fantasy flights are morphing into experience deep dives.

Changes are about not just within families, butolation has forced our hand to make the choice of who we have the time and capacity to keep up with. Beyond family, few make the first cut. Friends need to ask: Are we blood enough? As we introspect about who we will take the risk for and interact with, social “business” may be replaced by mindful selection.

When the key forces in society are introspection and fluidity, it is difficult to predict what the dominant five changes will be, or what exactly the future looks like. As said before, we need to be on this journey with the consumer to be on the pulse of early changes. But it’s clear that as brands, we can’t be silent or missing. We also will have to deliver unique value as never before – because during deprivation, the consumer has experienced category as well as brand substitutability. As the consumer evaluates allocations, it’s important to be satisfying a need and not a want. In terms of messaging, the tone required is more hopeful, positive and victorious than lonesome and paralyzed. In an evolving world, we have to guard against slipping into use of existing stereotypes. The mindset is collective and connected.

Brands as curators of popular culture must recognize and participate in this cultural rejuvenation. They must take note, as they look to create new meaning in people’s lives. Meet the generations at their confluence, as the idea of “generation gap” appears to be an imperfect hypothesis. Celebrate the Silver resurgence, their return to center stage – both individually and socially. Rescue the Millennials from a dilemma of their own making, when planned paths take a new turn. Curate authentic, singular mind travel experiences for the Gen Z, and portray them in vivid shades as they review and reconfigure their cultural ideology.
Crisis management for unprecedented times

Unprecedented: the word of the year. Even as the world has turned awry, some companies were hit harder by the pandemic and the ensuing lockdown than others. The unprecedentedness of the situation caught them off-guard and unprepared. The result was massive losses at least, and annihilation at worst. Could anyone have prepared for this? What marked the difference between the survivors and the defeated? What made some companies more resilient than others? In short, it was their ability to anticipate, prepare for, and mitigate a crisis. And then bounce back from it.

Crisis management has today become central to the role of a communicator. Even at the best of times, given the excess of information and the spread of traditional and social media, a crisis could emerge for a brand at any time. During the pandemic, everything has become even more precarious, reputation risk management can really be pivotal. A holistic approach to crisis communications spans the range from preparedness or resistance, to response or mitigation – and finally to recovery, restoring trust and confidence in the brand.

There has to be a holistic approach to crisis management, and communications sits front and center of the strategy table in that regard. In the current scenario, when things are already precarious, reputation risk management can really be pivotal. A holistic approach to crisis communications spans the range from preparedness or resistance, to response or mitigation – and finally to recovery, restoring trust and confidence in the brand.

As mentioned before, the brands that are doing better than others are those that have been able to anticipate and prepare for a crisis. No one knew a pandemic was coming, but one of the main elements of crisis preparedness is scenario-mapping. What are some of the worst-case situations that the brand could be hit with? Some of those could be situations peculiar to the brand’s industry, while others could be all the situations that contraints group under the term “force majeure.” In essence, this has been a “force majeure” year. But still, the most resilient brands were the ones that thought to ask: what are the possible mitigation strategies that could be applied to a global crisis?

The other big element of crisis preparedness is setting up a crisis protocol—which should answer questions ranging from who will be in the crisis management team, to what will be the direction in which information and responsibility will flow. In times like this, such scenarios and protocols can come in handy, because they give a brand standard operating procedures (SOPs) that can be applied to a range of crises. Also, with the right protocols in place, a resilient company gains a head-start because they give a brand standard operating procedures that have built resistance and those that haven’t. If you have the protocols ready and activated, you can directly get to the messaging, medium, and monitoring. In the current moment, the monitoring component is one of the most critical undertakings. A war-room of course, a virtual one needs to be set up immediately. Besides helping you keep an eye on the evolving situation, this war-room monitoring space can also create new inputs into your response strategy. Speed, creativity, and a keen sense of identifying the right message for the right medium are the pillars of a good crisis response.

Once the immediate danger to the brand has passed, it’s time to make sure there are no more holes in the boat. Also, once trust is lost, it takes a long time to earn back. Companies are likely to stay under the microscope for months, if not years, following a crisis. Rebuilding trust calls for a rigorous approach. On the one hand, you need to consistently chip away at the core issue so that it eventually stops being the only lens through which your stakeholders view the brand. And on the other, you need to reinforce other aspects of the brand so that there are other touchpoints to engage your target audience.

Ultimately, a brand’s response to a complex issue or crisis is a test of character. And character is at the essence of why stakeholders will stay with or abandon a brand during this time. With the principles of crisis communications and reputation resilience in mind, a brand can move people through authentic and transparent communications to build trust. The goal is to not just survive, but emerge stronger after a crisis.

Important points for crisis management

- Make sure that crisis management protocols are in place that outline roles and responsibilities clearly.
- Set up a war room to monitor and analyze the situation 24/7. This should have a combination of technology and human intelligence at work.
- Activate the strategy and strictly follow the agreed protocol to avoid confusion and escalation of the crisis.
- Once the crisis has passed, it’s time to rebuild trust.
Changing dynamics between brands and retailers

"It's not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change." - Charles Darwin

Emerging new technologies and radical shifts in consumer behavior are pushing companies to rethink and realign their business strategies with human-centric goals. The need for agility in the face of uncertainty has never been greater than it is now. E-commerce, which has undergone years’ worth of growth within the space of a few months, is a prime example of this truth.

Traditionally, physical retailers were the principal connection between brands and the consumer, buying what they thought people wanted, and then selling it at a profit. But the internet and smartphone penetration has changed the retail model from a linear path to a platform-based play where many make and many sell. For instance, a decade and a half back I used to purchase my monthly groceries from Jain Bros., my local kirana, or I would drive down to buy them from the closest supermarket. Fast forward to today, when I get my groceries home-delivered from my local kirana using Dunzo - or I can get it from Amazon, to name just two among countless many options.

In this digital age where young and technology-savvy consumer expect a seamless shopping experience, technological innovation has become imperative.

"Adaptation," consequently, is the new holy grail!

But is it adaptation to survive, or to win? It is important to understand the difference. Adaptation to survive is a slow-paced struggle to stay afloat, where chances of disappearance are very high. Adaptation to win is future preparedness to stay ahead of the game - to conquer one’s environment with sharp focus and strategic agility.

Adaptation to survive: India’s retail majors have been slow at adapting to the digital world

"Waltzing the trolley around, waiting for hours at till, and carrying my purchases back home... give me a break!" says 28 year old Tanya, a task-rich, time-poor consumer for whom shopping should be more than a chore.

As the market moves to more omnichannel and delivery-based models, brands and consumers expect retailers to adopt innovative approaches to not just enhance the consumer experience, but also reimagine operations for tomorrow’s needs.

The recent pandemic is a true consumer experience barometer in which all the challenges associated with retail have become magnified. It is a time when many of the retailer’s have had to shut stores, or else barely make footfalls due to multiple restrictions or snake-like queues.

While a few retail majors are now integrating technology, their speed is too slow. This lack of agility has changed the dynamics between brands and retailers for the worse.

Emerging new technologies and radical shifts in consumer behavior are pushing companies to rethink and realign their business strategies with human-centric goals. The need for agility in the face of uncertainty has never been greater than it is now. E-commerce, which has undergone years’ worth of growth within the space of a few months, is a prime example of this truth.

Adaptation to win: Leveraging technology and understanding consumer shifts with agility

Amazon’s personalized “recommendations” thrill my friend while she is shopping online. “Isn’t that great!” she says. Unflinchingly, the e-commerce industry has risen on the back of its effective analytical tool. Much more so than physical retail, e-commerce uses technologies like AI and machine learning to predict future trends and consumer behaviors. The result? A seamless experience for both brands and consumers.

Consumer brands (both national and regional) are increasingly placing their bets on e-commerce through marketplace models like Amazon, Flipkart, and Snapdeal. They are also investing in DTC models by beefing up their e-commerce sites. Doing so offers brands multiple leverage points:

- An expanding consumer base for whom convenience is the new normal

The consumer base of digital natives (Gen Z and Millennials) in India is expanding, offering tremendous growth potential for consumer brands and retailers. These digitally empowered cohorts are always on the lookout for shopping experiences that meet all their needs in one place; for them, convenience means online shopping.

Gone are the days when consumers patiently waited for 6-8 weeks for shipments; today, they expect “same-day shipping.” As a result, e-commerce giant Amazon has launched same-day delivery for its Prime customers, while Flipkart launched a hyperlocal, 90-minute delivery service called Flipkart Quick in Bengaluru. Easy-to-use payment methods like BHIM UPI, cashless payments, and net banking have added additional convenience to online shopping.

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An expanding reach: exploring the hidden treasure

Robust supply chain networks and e-commerce giants’ improved logistical infrastructures have helped brands transcend geographies and serve unexplored markets in India – the most vivid example being Snapdeal, for whom 85 percent of consumers come from non-metro cities.

Facebook, similarly, has introduced a Facebook shop for sellers that is agnostic of vendor size and budget; the goal is to make it easy for even the smallest of companies and local brands to reach Facebook’s nearly 3 billion users.

While the digital players are adapting with agility, India’s very own, non-glitzy traditional mom pop retail sector (which accounts for 87 percent of the total retail industry) has also shown keen desire and agility to upgrade themselves and co-adapt with FMCG giants and marketplaces.

Walmart-owned Flipkart has already established a delivery model using local kirana stores across 700 cities. Meanwhile, JioMart is massively gearing up to enable and engage many kirana stores across the country.

Embrace with agility

“To touch and feel” is a human need that will always pull consumers to physical stores. Organized retailers need to leverage this advantage by quickly adopting a hybrid physical-digital sales model – the better to enhance the shopping experience for consumers, and optimize supply chain management for sellers. They can take inspiration from international “hybrid” players like the HEMA stores that have thrived in China, or the checkout-free Amazon Go store in Seattle. Both use technology to smartly enhance the in-person rituals of buying and selling.

Ultimately, success will accrue to players who embrace “Adaptation to win” thinking: who are committed, in other words, to evolving alongside the fast-changing trends and forces shaping the Indian retail landscape.
The advent of COVID-19 in India has widened the existing gap between urban and rural India. While urban India went indoors, rural India devised its own ways to tackle the pandemic.

Madhuri Chawan lives with six other family members in the village of Pahur in Maharashtra’s Jalgaon district. She likes to watch YouTube and chat on WhatsApp. Madhuri is worried about coronavirus and has kept soap outside her home so that anyone can wash their hands before entering the house. She has given a new cloth to her husband and he covers his face with that when he goes out for work in the fields. When he comes back home, she mixes a bit of Dettol in warm water and then soaks his clothes in it.

The India vs. Bharat debate is not new anymore, but it’s more relevant than ever with the advent of COVID-19 in India. During pre-lockdown days of the pandemic, when it was primarily restricted to urban India and only amongst incoming international travelers, there was a growing fear of spread into the vast hinterlands of rural Bharat. The concerns were both around lives and livelihood, with special worry about rural communities’ healthcare infrastructure and dwindling income possibilities.

Based on our interactions with villagers across India as a part of a recent study, the disruption of nationwide lockdown brought things to a halt and gave rise to systemic shifts that have slowly rippled across rural India.
As rural India adapts to a new normal, there is an opportunity to better meet the needs and address the challenges of the newly returned migrant workers.

Madhuri is worried about the long-term situation. She believes that people in her village can manage for 1–2 months as they have their farming. Her brother plans to return home as his factory is shut and he is running out of his savings. For now, Madhuri is trying to earn some extra money by making papad and pickles but does not know how to sell them beyond her village.

Rural India’s initial response to COVID was further disrupted by the unprecedented return of the migrant worker to the Indian villages with an open question of whether the return is temporary or permanent.

Over the past few months, our interactions with recently returned migrant workers raised some poignant questions and existential challenges which are based on the Three Rs impacting rural-urban divide:

- **(Perceived) Risks** - Life in cities (especially for lower-income migrant workers) is an everyday battle for survival. Many who chose to return home felt that it would be impossible to survive in brutal city conditions with no financial relief or medical support.

- **(Promise of) Recovery** - There is a feeling that returning to their home and community will allow them to be cocooned – that they could sustain themselves with the help of family and community.

- **(Perception of) Refuge** – It was felt that COVID-19 infection is spreading from cities to villages and hence villages can provide sanctuary. Government data indicates only around 10 percent of all COVID-19 cases came from rural areas.

Madhuri reassures her panicking mother that the rakshashya will not come to their village. She knows that some of the villagers stand guard at night so that nobody from outside can get in. Madhuri feels dull in her village, she continues to social distance for now and frets that everything is going to be different from now on.

For India to regain its growing economy, it must focus on developing rural India much more than ever before.

Is there an opportunity for rural India to be reborn?

As we are crossing the six-monthly period of COVID-19, the economic swing seems to be more led by increased rural demand (fuelled by good monsoon and agricultural season). But the question remains how to ensure that the rural demand can be sustained.

With the newly returned migrants wanting to bridge the gap between the desired life of the city and the accessible life of the village, the question remains whether rapid structural reforms can be undertaken to strengthen Bharat:

- **New-age agriculture**: mechanization, technology, distribution

- **New-age industrialization**: development of industrial zones at district levels with infrastructure like water, electricity, roads, etc.

- **New-age human settlements**: “Rurban” clusters connecting proximate villages through infrastructure like highways, healthcare facilities, and educational institutes

- **New-age consumer marketing**: treating rural consumers not as secondary to their urban counterparts – with brands and products that are developed for their unique needs and demands
Spurt in Digital Commerce: New challenges for brands

As Maruti Suzuki India resumed business after the pandemic lockdown, they shared that every second car sold by them over the months of June-July was sold online!

Significantly large proportions of stock market sales and purchases are also happening online now.

Who would have imagined? That we would be buying cars online, or that the online stock trading platform will pose a threat to the good old stockbroker?

It had all started with books. Yes, you knew the title of the book that you wanted to purchase, and it was an easy thing to do: to go to an online site, order it, and have it shipped home. There was no mystery about purchasing a book, and you would be sure to get what you asked for. But then the categories kept growing. From music to fashion to jewelry to food items to furniture and gift items. Some of them were not as intuitive fits for e-commerce success as, say, books were. Would people like to purchase fashion online, without trying the clothes out? Would people purchase expensive jewelry without seeing and feeling it in their own hands? And so on. In spite of all these doubts, these categories gradually took off. Today, one hardly hesitates to purchase anything online.

But even then, who would have imagined that we would be purchasing a 4-wheeler online? But that is the kind of transformation that this pandemic has brought about!

And this is very symbolic of what changes have transpired from March 2020 onwards.

Even as the country went into complete and then semi-lockdown periods, a vast majority of businesses were not able to operate, nor able to sell their products. The only exceptions were those businesses that had existing e-commerce setups – thanks to which, they were able to meet consumer demands through their online stores. After years of being a relatively small percentage of the retail pie, during these periods e-commerce sales became a very dominant and large percentage of retail.

The businesses that had only made small beginnings on their e-commerce journey, or others that had not yet started into e-commerce, all accelerated their efforts to be impactful via e-commerce. Since it was clear that regular physical stores would take a while to reopen with regular working hours, it made total sense for businesses to step into the e-commerce space and enable sales as best as they could.

Ordinarily, setting up a full-fledged e-commerce site and supporting it with necessary logistics can take several weeks of work. But because there was a sense of urgency involved, many businesses found quicker ways to sell online, even if there were some compromises involved. If not through their own website, many have found a way to sell via marketplaces. And a few have even embraced what would be termed as social commerce – selling via Facebook front-end, or even using WhatsApp.

Beyond the world of pure-play product sellers, even businesses that offer different kinds of services have found a way to go online and sell.

On the consumer end, where pre-pandemic online shopping adoption was driven by a matter of choice, during the pandemic many adopted digital commerce because it was their only means to get products and services that they needed. Much as demonetization hastened the use of digital payments, the pandemic has done the same for digital commerce. And while the pandemic may be what originally brought these new consumers to digital commerce, many will become long-term online shoppers after seeing the convenience, choice, and overall ease of use available to them.

All of this has clearly happened at the expense of brick-and-mortar retail.

For the longest of times, a deep physical distribution network was considered to be a huge asset for a brand. And while this truism still holds value, the distribution that e-commerce provides is far deeper and wider. So let’s say you are an established brand with several thousand storefronts across the country selling your products. And this has been an asset for you for all of these years. And then along comes an upstart competitor, who opts for a direct-to-consumer model using e-commerce. Thanks to the logistics partners that the new brand can engage, their distribution is not restricted to a few thousand stores, but pretty much every home in the country!
Clearly, the challenges for traditional brands that have not adopted to e-commerce so far are:

- A sharply reduced “asset value” for the physical distribution network that they had developed
- In a world where consumers will continue to fear the virus, they face much reduced footfalls into those physical stores
- Consumers, having tasted blood using e-commerce in pandemic times, and understood the convenience of online shopping, may well make digital their preferred way to shop
- Using a variety of technologies combined with the basic cost-efficiency of e-commerce, the competitor selling online has extra cost savings that they can pass on to the consumers - putting price pressure on traditional stores

Irrespective of how and when the pandemic ends, some of these changes are irreversible. If a traditional business is considering to “wait it out” before the “old normal” returns, the reality is that the old normal will NOT return. Some changes are for good and will stay with us. And that, indeed, is the new normal.

Traditional brands will need to reinvent themselves rapidly.

The answer does not lie in a knee-jerk, isolated e-commerce plays. What is essential to do at this point in time is to embrace the entire gamut of change that can be loosely termed as “digital transformation.” High-level digital transformation is about imbibing a true digital culture across all aspects of the business.

Setting up an e-commerce front end is part of the solution - but it’s certainly not the only thing brands need to do. Other elements to embrace will include digital marketing, marketing automation, investing in a data management platform (DMP) and perhaps a customer data platform (CDP), and investing in a rugged, state-of-the-art website and other digital touchpoints – with a key focus on user experience (UX).

But efficient transactions are the key, and hence a good strategy around e-commerce becomes the key. As emphasized, internal cultural and organization structures become critical as companies make such big moves. Digital transformation may require some retraining for existing team personnel. It may also require bringing in some key new roles, starting with a Chief Digital Officer and Head of E-commerce.

Most of all, there has to be an understanding that there is no going back. One has to be prepared to only dig deeper into understanding the digital consumer, as well as the platforms, dynamics, and tools of digital businesses. Traditional businesses need to embrace these tools – truly embrace them – and then work to create success.

Success in this new normal digital age will require a fundamental shift in the ways that traditional organizations both deliver value and drive revenues.
The BrandZ™ Indian Top 75
## BrandZ™ Top 75 Most Valuable Indian Brands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Brand Value 2020 $Mil.</th>
<th>Brand Value % Change 2020 vs. 2019</th>
<th>Brand Contribution Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>HDFC Bank</td>
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<td>-11%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>LIC</td>
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<td>Tata Consultancy Services</td>
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<td>Airtel</td>
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<td>Asian Paints</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Jio</td>
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<td>Flipkart</td>
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<td>SBI</td>
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<td>Infosys</td>
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<td>Maruti Suzuki</td>
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<td>Nestle</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Home Care</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Axis Bank</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Home Care</td>
<td>2,732</td>
<td>+25%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: BrandZ™, Kantar (including data from Bloomberg)
Brand contribution measures the influence of brand alone on financial value, on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the highest.

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## Valuable Indian Brands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Brand Value 2020 $Mil.</th>
<th>Brand Value % Change 2020 vs. 2019</th>
<th>Brand Contribution Index</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Tobacco</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Retail</td>
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<td>Food</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Automobiles</td>
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<td>Automobiles</td>
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<td>Job Portals</td>
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<td>Telecom Providers</td>
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<td>Online Food Delivery*</td>
<td>1,795</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>Personal Care</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>Paints</td>
<td>1,487</td>
<td>+16%</td>
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</table>

*Online Food Delivery category is a subset of the Lifestyle Platform category in the BrandZ™ Valuations.

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Note: The image shows two tables side by side, each listing the top 75 valuable Indian brands with their respective brand values, category, and percentage change from 2019 to 2020. The tables also include a brand contribution index on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest influence. The source of the data is BrandZ™, Kantar (including data from Bloomberg).
### BrandZ™ Top 75 Most Valuable Indian Brands

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<th>Brand Contribution Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Technology</td>
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<td>Alcohol</td>
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<td>Technology</td>
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<td>49</td>
<td>Energy</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>Tires</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Nimra</td>
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<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>closeup</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Tech Mahindra</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>-33%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Mahindra</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>-27%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Personal Care</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>-16%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>Paints</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>-26%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Crompton</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>Telecom Providers</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: BrandZ™ / Kantar (including data from Bloomberg)
Brand contribution measures the influence of brand alone on financial value, on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the highest.
An Up-And-Down Year

During a period when the total brand value for the BrandZ™ India Top 75 declined by 6 percent, the category-level view told a more complicated story. While many prominent brand categories saw double-digit percentage declines, others saw strong growth.

Consider, for starters, the five largest categories in the Top 75 in terms of total brand value.

Banks is once again India’s leading brand sector—and is once again led by BrandZ™ behemoth HDFC Bank, India’s most valuable brand for the seventh year running. Overall, however, Banks as a total category declined 21 percent, for a total value of around $42 billion. This year, Banks captured 19.5 percent of the total value of India’s Top 75; in 2019, it made up 23 percent of the ranking’s total value.

India’s second-biggest brand sector in 2020, Telecom Providers, was the fourth-biggest in 2019; this year it grew by a quarter and leaped ahead of both Technology and Insurance on the category ranking. Rounding out the top five categories for 2020 is Retail, which grew by nearly a third over last year. The Automotive sector, meanwhile, fell from being the fifth-largest sector in 2019 to the ninth-largest in 2020.

Normally such results would be described in language of category “winners and losers”—but to do so in this report would be inappropriate, given that the “game” at hand involves responding to a series of unprecedented economic and humanitarian challenges in the age of COVID-19. What these category-level results do capture, however, are the complicated and uneven ways that India’s economy has responded to the shocks thrown its way in 2020.

Financial services categories dominate as in many other countries. Telecom brands are also highly valuable and important. Indian FMCG brands have a strong showing relative to other countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Value (m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banks</td>
<td>$42,098m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecom Providers</td>
<td>$25,506m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>$24,022m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology (B2B)</td>
<td>$22,345m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household</td>
<td>$16,237m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>$14,572m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Drink</td>
<td>$14,153m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology (Consumer)</td>
<td>$11,986m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automotive</td>
<td>$11,424m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Care</td>
<td>$11,315m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>$5,337m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>$3,658m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHERS*</td>
<td>$12,955m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Automotive brands include: Automobiles and two-wheeler (TVS, Mahindra, Hero Moto), Electric vehicles (Mahindra, Hero Moto), Two-wheeler (Hero Moto), Light trucks (Eicher, Mahindra & Mahindra, Ashok Leyland), Commercial (Ashok Leyland, Tata Motors, Eicher), and Commercial Electric (Ashok Leyland, Tata Motors, Eicher).

Consumer Technology (Consumer) includes: Online Food Delivery, Transport (Vogo, Urban), Personal Health (Vogo, Urban), Online Food Delivery (Zomato, Swig), Home Appliances (Urban, Vogo), and Online Transport (Jubilant, Vogo).

Source: BrandZ™ brands (including data from Bloomberg)
India’s automobile industry was not alone in facing strong headwinds in 2020. Prominent sectors such as Banks, Travel Services, Tobacco, and Technology also declined by a fifth or more in total value. Alcohol and Insurance also fell in value this year.

These declines make sense in the context of an Indian economy that was already showing signs of contraction - and declining household income and consumer confidence - before the COVID-19 shutdown. What’s interesting, however, are the ways that current moment may also create new conditions for these categories’ recovery.

The automobile industry, for instance, had recently faced disruptive competition from ride-hailing apps. Now, however, it may have an edge as personal transport vehicles become seen as the more “safe” and “sanitary” alternative to the sharing economy. (So, too, do short-range road-trips seem like an attractive alternative to long-haul vacations - with implications for both the Automobile and Travel Services categories).

In the Banks category, mass quarantines have brought many new consumers to the world of online finance - including older Indians who had previously been wary of e-banking. Already, 2020 has seen some of India’s biggest financial institutions acting with the flexibility and urgency needed to serve customers in remote locations.

Telecom Providers grew by 25 percent in 2020 after a 9 percent growth rate the year before. This upswing was due to continued strong performance from upstart provider Jio - but also from established provider Airtel, which also ranks as one of this year’s individual “Top 10 Risers”.

Going forward, Indian brands of all stripes and pedigrees will have to work hard to maintain their positioning into 2021. Brands that are part of these “Top Categories” no exception. Some sectors that saw growth in 2020, such as Personal Care and Fast Food, will have to contend with the fact that Indians are leaving home less often - and thus may exhibit less demand for their category offerings. Retail brands, meanwhile, will need to balance their growing e-commerce operations with a careful shift back to in-store service during the months and years to come.

Other growing categories, such as Telecom Providers, Home Appliances, Home Care, Food, and Paints, may seem especially suited for an era in which consumers feel inclined to stay indoors. But even these relatively well-positioned categories will have to contend with the immovable reality of declining household incomes: Indians will simply have less money to spare, even for the things they actually want to buy. Quarantine-friendly brand categories will have to adjust their brand strategies accordingly: What worked this year may not achieve the same results during a more prolonged period of de-growth.
In the lockdown-induced India, the Top Risers unsurprisingly comprise of brands that make up essential services and have been relied upon most often in a socially distant environment.

Categories like Food and Retail dominate the Top Risers list. The others included:

- Online Food Delivery - in absence of restaurants and hotels, food delivery was seen as the next best alternative.
- Telecom Providers - which grew thanks to the rise in online gaming and OTT viewership in absence of new TV content.
- Payment platform - these helped to push zero contact transactions.
- Job portals - due to the economic slowdown and loss of jobs across sectors.

The flip side of so much recent upheaval is that India, perhaps more than ever, represents an open playing field where any type of brand has the potential for growth. This fact is clear across this year’s Top 75 ranking: from 2019 to 2020, there was no correlation between a company’s size and its propensity to grow. Instead, success could - and did - come from brands of all sizes and types.

What, then, do the 2020 Top Risers have in common? For starters, strong brand equity: as a group, these brands average well above the rest of the BrandZ™ Top 75 in their results for Meaningful, Different, And Salient.

On average, the Top Risers are more Meaningful, Different and Salient
Among this year’s Top Risers, Maggi is a prime example of a brand that honed in on improving Meaningful Difference - not to mention Trust - following a safety recall in 2015. It now reaps the rewards of being a strong, valuable brand - a product that Indians have turned to for comfort and convenience in difficult times. Indeed, Maggi’s parent company, Nestlé – another Top Riser – has built an entire stable of trusted brands that also includes Nestlé a+ Milk and NESCAFE. The trust Nestlé built with consumers over the years paid off during lockdown, when a decline in the brand’s “out of store consumption” channels was offset by consumers opting to stock up on trusted Nestlé staples to fortify their home pantries.

Reliance Retail, by contrast, is earlier than Maggi in its brand journey with Indian consumers - though having already amassed some 11,806 retail stores in over 7,000 towns, it hardly fits the profile of a scrappy upstart. Reliance Retail has distinguished itself during the COVID-19 lockdown by quickly expanding its e-commerce offerings in conjunction with sister company JioMart’s WhatsApp platform. That kind of agility in action should further boost Reliance Retail’s Meaningful Difference scores in the years to come - and in turn, lead to faster recovery and future brand growth.

Agility is another common theme across this year’s Top Risers. Food delivery platform Zomato rose to the second spot on this list following a year of continual business reinvention: from expanding into the restaurant supply space with its Hyperpure service, to cementing its standing in the consumer business with a successful bid to acquire UberEats’ India operations. This culture of agility has also allowed the company to rapidly expand into new businesses like alcohol, grocery, and personal care product delivery during lockdown. Similarly, agility and flexibility are baked into Paytm’s brand DNA: even in a growing digital payments market, it remains the easiest way to transact across multiple types of mobile wallets and bank accounts.

Brand Equity drives the strong brands
Reliance Retail has totally disrupted the category and Paytm has seen tremendous growth in a short span of time. Maggi is continuously maintaining its equity.
BrandZ™ Analysis – Newcomers

Five New Faces

The story of this year’s BrandZ™ India Top 75 Newcomers dovetails nicely with the narrative of this year’s fastest-growing categories: with one exception, these debuts hailed from those segments of the BrandZ™ India Top 75 rankings that were already primed for growth. For example, the value of the Personal Care segment was already set to increase by 14 percent in 2020 thanks to the category’s growing appeal among image-savvy Indians. Instead, with two Newcomers in Dove and Closeup added to the mix, the category grew by an even heftier 32 percent.

Similarly, legacy communications company BSNL enters the ranking amid a continued boom in smartphone and internet usage. And Crompton, for its part, debuted this year to join an already growing Consumer Technology category – at a time when Indians have been looking for all the technological assistance they can get while stuck at home.

(The country’s largest compressed natural gas distribution company, Indraprastha Gas, has meanwhile entered the ranking at a time when the only other Energy brand, Indian Oil, saw a year-on-year decline – as would be expected during periods of economic headwinds).

But why have these brands entered the Indian Top 75 instead of other well-positioned aspirants in their category? For one thing, it’s no accident that each Newcomer has a compelling and distinctive brand identity. Dove, for instance, has adapted its global “Real Beauty” platform to champion female self-confidence and tell stories of (extra)ordinary, diverse Indian women. Closeup’s proposition is a marriage of tradition, compassion, and innovation: its range features advanced gel formulations, combined with natural ingredients like Tulsi, Cardamom, and Clove - all in service of a message that celebrates love and attraction.

Crompton, for its part, is well-positioned to grow into the consumer technology space - marrying its technical know-how with delightful design across a range of kitchen tools, fans, and other home appliances. And in the Energy realm, Indraprastha Gas hopes to combine reliable service with digital innovation (starting with an initiative to move toward 100 percent digital billing).

In a dynamic and competitive market like India, maintaining one’s spot in the BrandZ™ India Top 75 is hardly a foregone conclusion. In the years to come, then, these five companies need to use their distinctive brand assets to further emphasize Meaningful Difference in consumer’s minds. That’s what turns promising Newcomers... into BrandZ™ mainstays.
How has the current moment caused Axis bank to transform (or accelerate existing transformations)—both in its consumer-facing services and also in its internal approach to doing business?

The words “unprecedented” or “difficult times” have often been used to describe the situation we are in, even six months into the lockdown. In recorded human history no single event would have caused so much disruption that has affected every single country on the planet.

However, the character of any individual or institution is best manifested during a crisis. And I am happy to state that in these crucial times, Axis Bank stood not just with its customers, but with all its stakeholders, including employees, partners, and the community at large.

Our Brand philosophy “Dil Se Open” and the various campaigns we launched during this phase truly encapsulate the spirit of hundreds of our branch employees who were physically present for our customers during the lockdown. More than 99 percent of our branches and 96 percent of our ATMs, our back offices, and call centers remained functional during the lockdown phase, providing all essential services to our customers. In this phase, our Customer Service Managers and Relationship Managers have been constantly in touch with more than 3 lakh customers on a daily basis to assist them in every way possible.

While it is true that the pandemic did fast-forward many critical processes, as an institution, “customer-centricity” has always been at the center of our ethos. Consequently, at Axis Bank, we were agile and quick in responding to this rapidly evolving and uncertain situation. We activated the Central Emergency Response Team (CERT) more than a month before the lockdown, seamlessly moved to a “Work from Home” environment for a majority of our people, enabled IT and infrastructure to address all relevant activities, and ensured that customer services go unhindered. The Bank’s digital channels - our award-winning mobile app, internet banking portal, Axis Pay (our UPI app), corporate internet banking, and our website – helped people access more than 250 products and banking services digitally, with a few clicks.

We also supported the government and citizens in this tough phase. As part of our government services, for example, we extended help in Odisha and other states to service all citizens. Similarly, we were associated with the Directorate of Municipal Administration Goa for door-step house tax collection, as enabled by our POS machines.

Internally, we reinforced our long-term GPS (Growth, Profitability and Sustainability) strategy with near and medium-term imperatives to address COVID related challenges and mitigate the adverse impact of the associated economic slowdown. These imperatives have helped the Bank in addressing the requirements of different customer segments, identify and draw action plans to double down in select businesses and sectors, while strengthening our focus on portfolio management, capital conservation and profitability. The medium-term imperatives impart greater focus on accelerating progress in the digital space, reshaping our HR practices in line with future of work, and rethinking risk management practices. These imperatives have accelerated the digital enablement of our frontline Resources through bring your own device (BYOD), launch of a revamped Digital Savings account and leveraging digital and phone banking channels to engage and serve our customers.
You joined Axis Bank in early 2019. You couldn’t have known then that you’d be steering the bank through a global pandemic. But were there any experiences or initiatives from your first year at Axis Bank that have proved crucial to how the bank has met the challenges of this current year?

Last year, we had laid down our Vision and Strategy, which has stood the test of time and is guiding us even in these difficult times. We had committed ourselves to the strategic mantra of Growth, Profitability and Sustainability (GPS), which is as relevant today as it was when we conceptualized it. The GPS strategy, along with our values and the “One Axis” framework, form a strong foundation that has truly helped us navigate the last few months of turmoil and guide us as we move forward. Our emphasis on S (Sustainability) has served us well through these troubled times.

The Bank’s operating performance has been tracking well to the GPS objectives that we had laid out for ourselves and am happy to state that we are all set to leverage every opportunity that comes our way as the economy opens up. Further, we bolstered our strategy with several near- and medium-term imperatives to help the Bank navigate the COVID crisis and emerge stronger from it.

One of the things that stood out during this phase was the kind of fabulous talent that the organization housed, at all levels. I am referring to all our employees across functions and branches. We have the best employees one can think of who exhibit compassion and empathy, both internally and while dealing with our customers and partners, and have gone beyond the call of the duty on many occasions. In fact, our customers have acknowledged this through their appreciation time and again. I take this opportunity to call out our employees, who have been the strongest pillar of support during these times.

How has Axis risen to the challenge of growing more with less - creating demand, and offering new value propositions, in times of economic headwinds?

We are on a journey to transform the bank into a prudent and conservative franchise. Having said all this, we will pursue growth wherever we see an opportunity. We will use the time to ensure we capture the right opportunities that present themselves. We believe that we will grow our market share over the short- to medium-term.

Another element that has truly stood out in this period, is our strength in the digital space. We were the first to have a separate digital team in place and we will continue to invest in this area. 80 percent of our digital team comes from non-banking backgrounds such as consumer internet and fintech. Our focus has been on scaling direct to customer (D2C) products and digital channels as well as enabling our staff digitally. We have also made significant progress in simplifying our core tech architecture, becoming cloud-native and moving to an agile mode of development. All these investments are starting to show tangible results across the Bank.

Over 70 percent of our fixed deposits, 53 percent of mutual funds, and 50 percent of business loans are sourced digitally, and 40-45 percent of PL and credit cards are digitally sourced. We are digitizing at every level. For our staff, we have recently rolled out “bring your own device,” which has now been rolled out to 36,000 frontline staff.

Recently, with Mastercard and Worldline today, we launched “Soft POS” to become the first financial payments service in India to transform everyday smartphones into merchant Point of Sale terminals. We are the first Bank to on-board a school on BBPS, an innovative digital solution that brings convenience, efficiency, and security to businesses for recurring payments. We have launched the “Full Power Digital Savings Account” that can be opened instantly with Video KYC. Keeping in mind the need of the hour, the product proposition provides access to more than 250 services online and a virtual debit card through which customers can start transacting immediately after opening the account.

We are building digital capabilities on the SME and corporate side as well, where we are building an omnichannel solution for corporate customers. The last few months have greatly accelerated our transition into the digital.
C-Suite Q&A

Amitabh Chaudhry
Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer
Axis Bank

How do you see the changing banking landscape with now that small finance banks and fintech have entered the fray? Will the levers of growth change, and is there a need to lay a fresh roadmap for growth?

All of us have been talking for many years about fintech, small finance banks, and the general role that technology will play in banking and financial services. I have always believed that so long as an entity has a value proposition which connects with the customer, it will grow and gain market share. Banks are not going anywhere – they are here to stay, though there is room for other entities as well.

With regards to growth, the global growth environment was challenging even before the pandemic hit us. The contagion has affected both lives and livelihoods, which has resulted in a huge shock for the economy. The authorities are relentlessly working to address the challenges that have emerged in the banking and non-banking financial space. Both fiscal and Monetary levers have been put into action to give confidence to market participants. The Monetary Policy Committee has responded with large cuts in the repo rate, has kept system liquidity in surplus, and shown readiness for further rate cuts.

The key lies in firing all cylinders of growth: consumption, investment, and exports. But first things first; we need the pandemic to be behind us for substantial dialogues on growth and recovery to happen.

Brand Purpose connects the consumer at an emotional level and strives to achieve business goals and benefit society. How do you think Axis bank has been able to build purpose over a period of time?

Every business must serve a social purpose. At Axis Bank, we believe that having an authentic sense of purpose – a reason “why” we exist beyond the desire to make profit – drives commercial value in a hyper-competitive world. And we puruse it as a passion and not a job. Our employees proudly share that sense of purpose and derive dignity – and not just a salary – from their daily work. They feel like they matter and what they do matters. With our inspiring Purpose – “To nurture the spirit of Openness – every customer, every employee, every interaction, everywhere, every day” – we have truly put what we care for at the heart of what we do.

The key always lies in making the Purpose evident in actions on a sustained basis. That’s when Purpose comes to bear, making it tangible. At every phase of our journey, we are conscious and conscientious in the manner we deliver banking experiences: creating holistic value for our customers, communicating with them consistently and innovating to be the institution that we want to be.

Banking is a relationship-based business. How does Axis Bank approach its brand communications and value proposition from this perspective?

Branding too is based on relationships. For us, branding is a verb, not a noun. What sets Axis Bank apart from the rest is the “human touch” that balances the “tech-touch,” evident in all our dealings with those who walk in through our doors. Our customers play back those moments. Our brand is centered on the belief that “Openness advances relationships.” It is all about what we believe in the heart, before it manifests in our actions. This is very aptly captured through the expression – “Dil Se Open.” This philosophy of ours transcends just communications/messages and fuses seamlessly into our organizational design and operations – everyday customer and employee experience through genuine actions and behaviors.

What are the kinds of products or services you think will gain new relevance for consumers over the next several years? Conversely – are there any elements of “the old way of doing things” that you think won’t come back?

Technology and innovation-led journeys in the financial services segment have thrown up lots of opportunities for multiple entities and this will benefit all stakeholders - the customer, the organization, and the employees. Today, enabled by technology, service-providers are addressing customer needs faster than ever before. Going forward, the instances of entities offering products to customers based on their specific preferences will go up exponentially, and this would be the one category of products that shall gain the maximum relevance – personalized experience. Embedding oneself in the customer’s journey is a way to ensure mindshare.

The trends that will continue to influence this space are: digitization, big data and analytics, and artificial intelligence. It is imperative to reach out to customers who have so far not been serviced, by leveraging technology. Conversely, if customers are not happy with a product, it’s best that one identifies this quickly and redesigns the product with better features. This new culture is built on responsiveness and quick turnarounds. The mind-set required today is that you are only as good as your last performance.

I firmly believe that there is no “old way of doing things” – like I have mentioned earlier also, the emphasis should be on delivering value-proposition, even if it means adopting something that is otherwise considered old-school. For instance, I hear a lot of talk about branch-banking becoming obsolete, but I do believe that while the emphasis on technology will continue to rise, bank branches will continue to have an important role to play.
Nowadays consumers value brands not just for what they can do for individuals, but also for what they can contribute to society. What are the roles you see for a brand like Axis Bank in the realms of sustainability and corporate social responsibility?

Society has always been integral to who we are as an institution. In fact, it is the very basis of why we are here. Our purpose has always been to be relevant not just with the products and services that we offer, but also the value that we create for our entire stakeholder spectrum, down to the last mile. So, in many ways, I believe the Axis Bank brand is already closely associated with community stewardship.

We were well on our CSR journey before the Companies Act made it mandatory in 2013, and I can proudly claim that today, our CSR program is possibly among the most evolved and well-recognized CSR programs in the country. Our CSR philosophy has always been to make a meaningful and measurable impact in the lives of India’s economically, physically, and socially challenged communities in both rural and urban India, focusing on sustainable livelihoods, education and skill development, and financial inclusion and literacy, as well as environmental sustainability.

We established the Axis Bank Foundation in 2006, and today it has interventions across 20 states in the country, and actively collaborates with the non-profit sector, our peers in the industry, government entities, and civil society to amplify our impact.

Our activities are strongly aligned to the sustainable development agenda that the world has embarked on, concretized by the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. Through our microfinance program, for example, we are directly working with millions of rural women entrepreneurs, helping them not just to achieve financial independence, but also to be inspirations for their communities. We are lenders to the green sectors of the economy such as renewable energy generation, mass transport and low carbon infrastructure, while helping marquee clients raise funds from the global capital markets towards green financing. Within the bank too, we have taken up many initiatives that have helped reduce the environmental footprint of our own operations.

With regards to the pandemic, in March we had set aside Rs 100 crores to support our customers, employees, government agencies, and the community in our collective battle, while our employees benevolently contributed a day’s salary to the PM’s Fund. We have been supporting police departments, municipalities, healthcare institutions, district authorities, and other relevant government entities in multiple states towards meeting their urgent requirements for safety and health equipment. Through our Foundation, we helped thousands of families meet their urgent nutritional needs in the initial phase of the national lockdown in April, and even today, the Foundation is working with thousands of impacted families towards restoring their livelihoods or simply helping them restart their disrupted lives.
What have been the biggest wins during IKEA’s first few years in India?

IKEA’s vision around the world is to create a better everyday life for the many people. And India is the perfect country to reach out to the many. We are quite many, as you know! That’s probably been one of our biggest wins in the initial years, that we have been able to attract the many people of India into our store in Hyderabad and to our online store. A multinational, high-quality design brand always has the danger of being perceived as a premium brand and for the “few.” But our strong commitment to designing and selling affordable products, with an inclusive communication externally, all supported by our deep culture and values, have helped reinforce that we are here for the many - in India, as well, just like in any other country in the world.

As a result, we’ve had a really successful two years in India, with a strong and loyal customer base, who has given us their love and trust. The people love our wide range of home furnishing products and services, where we literally have everything you need for your home, under one roof. They love the experience of shopping at IKEA, which is a unique experience, where you can easily spend a few hours. They love the quality and the design. And they love that all of this is at really good prices.

This has set the base for building a strong foundation of a modern retail brand in India. And the best is yet to come, because we’re just getting started.

IKEA products appeal to a wide range of demographics. What has IKEA learned about the home needs of Indian youths - and, on the other side of the age spectrum, it’s senior citizens?

Absolutely, IKEA has something for everyone, no matter what living situation, what kind of home, what age, or what wallet size. Everyone is welcome. And everyone can find something for their life at home at IKEA.

India is a young country, demographically. And a youthful country, psychographically. So, in a sense everyone is young in their minds. And IKEA is a youthful brand. And that’s why it’s a perfect match.

What we’ve learnt is that the fundamental needs at home are quite universal, not just for different demographics, but in fact, around the world. And that’s why the IKEA range and the entire offer works well across all countries. Everyone wants a home that’s beautiful, affordable, functional, high quality, healthy, and sustainable. And this is how our products are designed to cater to all these aspects (what we call the Democratic Design principles).

And similarly, everyone has similar needs from the different rooms and spaces in the home. For example, everyone wants a comfortable seating solution in the living room, either to be by themselves reading or watching TV, or when socializing or entertaining guests. The only thing that changes is that comfort may mean different things to different people. So, if you’re younger, maybe you’re looking for a certain design and maybe say, “Low seating is okay,” because you can get up and down easily. But if you’re a senior citizen, maybe you’re looking for a little height and back support.

Similarly, everyone has the need for a convenient kitchen that allows them to cook good, tasty, healthy meals. Everyone needs a good night’s sleep from their beds. Everyone needs easy to use, store, and clean cooking and eating vessels. Everyone needs little decoration items around the house. And of course, everyone now needs working from home solutions!
What have been the most important channels to reach out to the Indian consumers? And what have been the most resonant marketing themes?

Of course, the most important channel has been our store. Our first store in Hyderabad city had one of the most talked-about launches in India in a very long time. Once you’ve been to an IKEA store, you’re hooked. Our inspiring store experience, combined with our unique range of products and solutions, are our most important channels.

Apart from this, the regular marketing media mix channels continue to play a significant role in reaching consumers and building the brand. Apart from the usual mass media of TV, print, outdoors and, radio, we have significantly and successfully leveraged digital in a big way - led by social media (we have beautiful and popular Facebook and Insta pages), our own website, and of course other regular digital marketing channels like search, etc.

Then our direct engagement with our customers has been the other significant channel for us - through our loyalty program (which we call IKEA Family). As well as through user-generated content programs on our social media handles.

Finally, and just as importantly, our co-workers at IKEA are our biggest ambassadors of the brand.

How has IKEA balanced global and local codes in the Indian market - in everything from product ranges to marketing strategy?

This has been where we have spent the most time in the last few years, in establishing the brand from scratch in India. Contrary to popular belief, the many people in India are not aware of IKEA. It’s only the privileged “few” who have travelled outside India and have been to an IKEA store. And therefore, for us, in India it was starting from the beginning. Let’s start with the “I” of IKEA.

Of course, IKEA is a very strong brand around the world with a very strong identity and values. We started with that, and then looked for how we “interpret meaningfully” in the local culture. Note the words interpret and meaningfully. Interpretation is not translation. Good interpretation is not just about the language, but about understanding. It’s about deeply understanding the brand values and then communicating it in a way that the Indian audience understands so that it’s relevant and meaningful to them. That has been our entire endeavor right from the start.

So, if IKEA is about equality, inclusiveness, and progressive values, what do these values mean in India? One manifestation could be the equal roles that men and women play at home in building the home, doing everyday activities around the home like cooking and cleaning, and perhaps most significantly, parenting and raising children. These may be taken for granted in Europe, but in India, they become highly relevant for us to build the brand. Similarly, we followed this thinking across all elements of the brand, that helped us translate the global vision of “better everyday life” to our India positioning of “Make Everyday Brighter.”

On our range and products, again following the similar principles of how we not necessarily only make new products for India, but also get the best of the products from around the world and make them relevant for use in India. Like I said above, a comfortable bed and mattress is the same, no matter where you are.
Adapting to the present

IKEA is known for its extensive consumer research into “Life at Home.” What has the brand learned about what makes Indian living unique - and how do you see “Life at Home” changing in the years to come?

Yes. That’s correct. We have spent and continue to spend a lot of time in researching about people’s life at home. At last count, 2 years ago, we had done over 1,000 home visits. But since then we’ve lost count! We are curious about people’s life at home, and that’s our main driving force, as an organization and as a brand.

We’ve learned many things. But to repeat one point from what I’ve said above. One thing we’ve learned is that most of the needs from life at home are universal around the world. Everyone around the world at home has the needs of cooking, eating, sleeping, socializing, comfort, health, leisure time, privacy, grooming, entertainment, and so on. The basics remain the same.

What’s unique to India is how these things manifest themselves. For example, many people in India like to eat while sitting on the floor, so may be a dining table is not really the solution they are looking for. Maybe we could propose a low seating platter or a smaller side table, which is a better dining idea than a dining table. And there are many, many little things like that, where the everyday magic happens.

The last few months have only made life at home more relevant and central to our lives than ever. These needs above from home will only increase. And we will discover new needs from home that were earlier not expected - working from home, exercising at home, picnics at home, gardening at home, so on and so forth.

How has IKEA most successfully pivoted during the events of 2020? What product ranges have proven particularly resonant in these times?

As a great man has said, “These are the best of times, these are the worst of times.” The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged all of us in multiple ways. But when the going gets tough, the tough get going. As a brand and as marketer, we need to do what we do best – listen empathetically to the people and respond in a humbly conscious and relevant way. And that’s what our mission is, and we hope we have done through the crisis of the last many months.

When people got stuck at home, we learned through the research we did with our research partners, including KANTAR, that they were looking for ideas on doing various things at home. They wanted brands to tell them how to navigate this amplified time and space at home, and they wanted to hear it in a positive, constructive way. We embarked on the idea of “Your Home Is Full of Possibilities,” which was not just a marketing campaign to connect emotionally, but also a series of ideas and inspiration on our website and social media handles on what and how to do the different things people wanted to do at home. Including a user-generated-content program #IKEALifeathome on Insta, that allowed people to share their ideas with us, ideas that we then featured on our page.

Working from home, cooking and eating, healthy living, home decoration, and textiles – as well as comfortable living room, seating, bedroom, and sleep solutions: these have all been popular and relevant during these times.

One thing we’ve learned is that most of the needs from life at home are universal around the world. Everyone around the world at home has the needs of cooking, eating, sleeping, socializing, comfort, health, leisure time, privacy, grooming, entertainment, and so on. The basics remain the same.

What’s unique to India is how these things manifest themselves.

One of the fault lines that the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed is our obsession with “consumption.” Consumption-driven growth has been at center of most brand building. But everyone starts questioning, “How much more can we consume?” and equally, “How much more do we really need to consume?” Brands need to find meaning beyond consumption. And that meaning lies in purpose. Why do I exist as a brand, what is my purpose in the world? And that’s the only way forward.

And in that sense, I would say it’s not about “re-purposing” but about “discovering your true purpose” as a brand, for today and the future.

These are uncertain times, but the importance of home seems more certain than ever. Where do you see the brand heading in the short and medium term?

The answer lies in the question, doesn’t it.

The importance of home has never been higher, and is clearly going to be the defining space for the future. IKEA as a brand exists because of people’s life at home. Need I say more?
Brand Building Best Practice
Sharing the same pedestal: purpose-led marketing

“PURPOSE MOVES US: Our purpose is to unite the world through sport to create a healthy planet, active communities, and an equal playing field for all”

This is the statement from Nike’s mini-site https://purpose.nike.com/ dedicated to driving its purpose-led marketing.

Nike voices issues that need a platform. A platform created with media money, reaching out to a wide audience with a point of view. Nike is a brand that takes a stand on issues that matter to its consumers.

Today, socially conscious consumers are radically connected and have strong opinions. They don’t hesitate to share their views on social media, and get intensely involved in important conversations. A brand can play the role of an enabler in this environment.

Find a shared purpose

A shared purpose is like a pedestal on which a brand and consumers stand together. Every organization has a purpose, well-articulated in its vision and mission statements. That purpose should not stay only with employees and stakeholders. Consumers need to be part of it. Brands must share their overarching purpose and the subsets of that purpose to engage consumers. This is the only way you can move consumers emotionally closer to your brands.

Find partners with shared intentions

Brands need to create an ecosystem of the right agencies and partners who can allow them to execute their purpose-led marketing with shared intentions. For instance, partnerships with broadcasters or media platforms that genuinely believe in a brand’s purpose, and are ready to partner for the long term.

Or partnerships with agencies that can help to connect the right dots and execute well on communicating your purpose to consumers.

Brand partners thus play a vital role in driving purpose-led marketing. More than commercial consideration, there has to be a commitment and intent to be available to each other and drive a shared purpose passionately. Fading out purpose-led content from your programming or marketing calendar because it doesn’t show immediate results is not the way to win on purpose. Consumers need to see a brand and its partners living out their values, time and again. That’s what brings credibility and trust.

Be creative to drive a purpose

In India, Idea Cellular (Now Vodafone Idea Cellular) famously created memorable advertising campaigns worthy enough to create purpose-led marketing. Their core proposition “What an Idea” took social issues and created quirky, solution-led propositions around them. Consumers used to wait for the next campaign and how the brand would come up with the cleverest solutions to the problem at hand.

Motivator, a leading media agency in India, is GroupM’s specialized agency to handle “emerging brands”.

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Though this was not explicitly purpose-led marketing, it certainly offered an example of a brand fully living out its core proposition while applying an abundance of creativity. Where it may have fallen short of its full potential, in my opinion, was in failing to invite consumers to “share the pedestal”: to bring consumers into a two-way conversation around an explicitly shared purpose.

Let consumers take the charge

There’s nothing more powerful than consumer-advocates when driving a brand’s purpose-led marketing. No, I am not talking about paid influencers talking about a cause and garnering views on social media. I am talking about an ecosystem of purpose-led marketing where consumers take charge of conversations with their own subsets of hashtags and topics.

If you enable consumers to express themselves creatively and innovatively, the rest will be taken care of by them. Be available to them with your purpose at platforms that enable consumers to create and distribute personalized content innovatively.
Don’t mix purpose up with CSR

Sometimes CSR is mistaken as purpose-led marketing. That’s cause-marketing, which needs to drive entirely different objectives. Purpose-led marketing is about driving your beliefs and standing by them, consistently. It’s true that purpose-led marketing can be on the borderline of a CSR activity, or integrated with it. But they are not the same. For example, “Periods should not be a taboo,” and, “Distributing free sanitary pads,” are two different marketing activities. They can surely go hand in hand, but purpose-led marketing is a two-way communication that needs consistent engagement.

Adapt to change

If 2020 has taught us anything, it’s the importance of adapting to change. For example, health and hygiene have become the purpose of many luxury brands that are now producing sanitisers in factories where they once made perfumes. A purpose may become redundant with unexpected changes in consumers’ lifestyles or category preferences. Embrace the change and align your purpose to the changed circumstances.

A brand’s core purpose can remain the same, but it has to adapt to emerging situations. Take cues from consumers’ emotions and align your purpose-led marketing with them, in the framework of core purpose.

Measure ROI – Return on Intent

Well, you have to be responsible with the money you’re spending. But when driving a purpose, think expansively about value and return on investment. Measure impact and engagement in a variety of ways that go beyond immediate sales; for instance, in the ways that consumers spent emotional currency with the brand, and in the ways that consumers felt closer to the brand as a result of being invited into shared purpose.
The COVID-19 crisis will be a true demonstration of the Darwinian principle of evolution. Only the fittest of the species will survive (not the smartest, not the fastest, but the fittest!). We will see large-scale destruction of businesses and job roles. But on the other side of the crisis, we will see a new brand paradigm and new ways of doing business. Here are some transformational changes that I envisage:

**Brands will become purpose-driven**

The modern-day economy has been built on the simple premise of growth: revenue growth, profit growth, GDP growth. This has been the single most important barometer that has driven 20th century economics. And it has helped us well in terms of creating a much better standard of living across all sections of society, and being able to cater to the needs of an ever-increasing population. However, this has resulted in increasing damage to the environment, to planet Earth, and has widened the socio-economic gap. The COVID-19 crisis has given humanity a chance for reflection and a realization that nature needs to be respected. And also that safety and preservation have to be mutual, and cannot be self-centered.

Consumers will align with brands that are willing to become vehicles for socio-economic changes, beyond just providers of goods and services. Patagonia boldly says on its website that it is, “part of a movement for change,” and self-imposes a tax to provide environmental support to NGOs. Unilever globally has already adopted the platform of sustainability, and is putting its money where its mouth is by removing plastic and other environmentally damaging chemicals from its manufacturing lines. Brands with a purpose will no longer be an exception, but the norm.

**Creativity will continue to be the king**

Creativity will see multiple challenges. On account of faster adoption of marketing automation, personalization will become even more important than before. Thus, creative ideas will need to be developed in terms of each individual cohort getting a differentiated message within the overall brand umbrella. Rapid growth in the OTT category at the cost of television has created differentiation of the consumer experience. Nike has been at the forefront of leveraging technology to create super consumer experiences. Nike has been at the forefront of leveraging technology to create super consumer experiences. Nike has been at the forefront of leveraging technology to create super consumer experiences. Nike has been at the forefront of leveraging technology to create super consumer experiences.

**Customer Experience will drive brand adoption**

Once upon a time, brand success could be attributed to a great product or close proximity to the customer. Now, on account of technology, everybody can make a great product. From a time that a brand launches a fabulous product, it takes the competition less than 90 days to replicate this to perfection. Also, on account of the internet, every brand is now just one click away from the customer. In such a situation, the key differentiator will be a great customer experience. A brand needs to look at every single consumer touch point (online or offline) and find ways to use the power of technology to create a much better standard of living across all sections of society, and being able to cater to the needs of an ever-increasing population. However, this has resulted in increasing damage to the environment, to planet Earth, and has widened the socio-economic gap. The COVID-19 crisis has given humanity a chance for reflection and a realization that nature needs to be respected. And also that safety and preservation have to be mutual, and cannot be self-centered.

**E-commerce in India**

The B2C e-commerce market in India had neatly settled into a battle between Flipkart and Amazon (much like the cola wars are between Coke and Pepsi). However, Reliance’s JioMart is going to alter this competitive landscape. The Jio model enables every neighborhood store to get the benefit of e-commerce, without making commensurate investments. With their close proximity to the customer and ability to deliver personalized service, once again kiranas may become the flavor of the month. And Reliance Jio has plenty of other advantages besides consumers newfound appreciation for kiranas: chiefly, its huge ambitions and deep pockets, its retail expertise, and consumer love of its Jio devices and data network. Expect Jio to give Flipkart and Amazon a run for their money.

**The Human Cloud**

All of us know about the computer cloud. Plug into the cloud and access whatever software you want, be it Excel or SAP or Salesforce, and pay only for what you use. Now we will see the emergence of Human Cloud. COVID-19 has taught us that remote working can be as efficient as sharing a physical workspace. Very soon it should be possible for you to plug into the Human Cloud, find the expertise that you require, do a reference check, and then use that person – regardless of whether that individual is based in your locality or your city, or even your country.
New normal brand influencers: Understanding the “Three As” of their role

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The COVID-19 pandemic has reframed all mental and emotional structures, consumer insecurities, and expectations from brands— as well as consumption and media habits. Brands, both in essential and non-essential segments, are facing unprecedented challenges. Indeed, they are facing a “New Normal” in which the rise and fall in brand trust is now directly proportional to how well brands are able to solve consumer’s problems and society’s problems—big and small. In doing so, we see consumer expectation reframed at many levels:

- From being a reliable solution provider to being an effective problem solver
- From being an innovation and technology leader to a being visionary and a civic leader
- From understanding struggle to creating optimism

Consumer behavior, too, has changed drastically during lockdown. In the realm of media consumption, one of the biggest shifts is that people are now spending a lot more time scrolling through social media. Not surprisingly, this shift has inspired an expanded role for influencers and influencer marketing in the New Normal. Brands like Goodknight and Asian Paints have been early adopters in acknowledging the evolved role of new normal influencers and has inspired homebound influencers to share videos for their “Stay Home, Stay Protected” and “Har Ghar Kuch Kehta Hai” campaigns, respectively.

In this evolving consumer and brand context, we see a complete reframe in the roles and responsibilities of brand influencers. The “Three As” — Advocacy, Authority and Authenticity — can give you a framework to identify and define their role.

### Advocacy for change

Conventional wisdom dictates that influencers are among the best ways for brands to build awareness and persuasion. But in the COVID-19 context, consumers expect brand influencers to grow beyond their old roles and become advocates for change. Brands and influencers need to work together to be a positive force in shaping our culture, and in influencing acceptable behaviors and attitudes. For example, one aspect of our “New Normal” involves heightened safety protocols. The voice of influencers can be a way of providing a platform for educating audiences about these measures.

### Authority driven by credibility

In pre-pandemic times, celebrities in the movie and sports worlds served as trusted endorsers across brands. However, going forward, credible voices of influencers need to have a personal connection to the topic or issue. Knowledge and experience matters more than mere media popularity. Media consumption patterns have changed over time, even moreso during COVID-19— with increased consumer presence and activity on social media. People are now directly connected to the voices of authority in a subject matter through platforms like Twitter, as well as on blogs. And that eventually turns these voices of authority into trusted influencers who have the credibility on the topic of influence. Influencers going forward won’t always be glamorous entertainers: they’ll also be industry authorities, brand technical experts, founders, and brand employees—all of whom, depending on the topic, can be seen as much more credible voices of authority and influence than those celebrities that have no connection to a cause.

Brands need to identify influencers on the basis of the ‘Three As’ framework

1. New Normal brand influencers need to be advocates for change
2. They need to be authentic and relatable to inspire empathy
3. They should not just be any type of celebrity — they should be people with a credible voice of authority

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Evolving Role of Influencers

Authenticity that inspires empathy

Authenticity is the cornerstone of communication in the "New Normal." COVID-19 has redefined consumer expectations from brands: they are now expected to be accessible and to act with empathy. But in times when more and more consumers are installing ad blockers or otherwise trying to avoid all advertising, influencers have understandably become a brand priority to connect and communicate. But what’s become increasingly clear is that not just any influencers will do when the goal is true authenticity. As influencers increasingly become one of the main voices and outlets for a brand, they should be highly aligned with brand goals in the realms of authenticity, accessibility, and empathy.

This brings us to the topic of "New Normal influencers." Who are these influencers that align with the "Three As" of the "New Normal?" Brands need to look beyond celebrities and explore micro-celebrities (who influence scores of consumers on social media platforms due to their relatability and subject matter authority), as well as brand employees who inspire advocacy and authenticity. Community heroes and celebrities who have shared a similar hardship in the past or present can also drive the "Three As" for a brand: Advocacy, Authority, and Authenticity.
Sustainability: the key to growth, survival and long-term profits?

“I don’t want you to be hopeful. I want you to panic. I want you to feel the fear I feel every day. I want you to act. I want you to act like you would in a crisis. I want you to act like your house is on fire, because it is.” Greta Thunberg

We have ample data that supports the fact that our climate is dramatically changing. We know the society that we have built is driven by greed and profits over what’s good for nature. We know now we have run out of time and cannot put the climate crisis alarm on snooze anymore. That’s the clear message from a study from Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). To avoid some of the most devastating impacts of climate change, the world must slash carbon emissions by 45 percent by 2030, and completely decarbonize by 2050.

In 1992, Cormac Cullinan’s Wild Law proposed “earth justice” or “earth jurisprudence,” a concept underlying the law’s ability to protect the environment and effectively regulate businesses that pollute. If a business activity harms the environment, what rights does the environment have to fight back? The older generations may have ignored this question and the parasitic relationship humans share with nature. But the young adults of today have acknowledged it.

The Greta effect

Across the world – including in India – millions of students joined the movement “School Strike for Climate.” The marchers have demanded urgent action from authorities to address the climate crisis. The innocent voices have shamed not only governments across the globe for their inaction – but also corporations. A recent report from the United Kingdom on sustainable business leadership attributes changing attitudes in global boardrooms to the 2019 worldwide strikes led by Swedish activist Greta Thunberg. Similarly, in India top corporate philanthropies have come together and started the initiative India Climate Collaborative (ICC) to find solutions for the challenges posed by the climate crisis, in collaboration with more than 40 organizations. Initiative members include major industrial corporations such as Tata, Godrej, Mahindra, and Wipro.

The black swan showing the way

The COVID-19 Pandemic is a black swan event that has paralyzed the global economy and imprisoned 7.7 billion people in their homes. It has caused worldwide socio-economic losses and undeniable suffering – but there have also been environmental gains. A recent University of Sydney study of the pandemic’s effects reported perhaps the biggest-ever drop in greenhouse gas emissions in recorded history. The study also noted, however, that the that the experience of previous financial shocks has shown that without structural change, any environmental gains are unlikely to be sustained once the economy recovers. Therefore, the pandemic may have shown us how to reverse the environmental damage in matter of few months. But to make this reversal permanent, drastic structural changes are still required.

Green generations demand green actions

Brands today cannot remain oblivious to the impact their business practices have on the environment. More than half of the global population is made up of young adults (31.5 percent Millennials, and 32 percent Gen Z) who are demanding authenticity and sustainability from governments and corporations. Businesses are left with no choice but to re-evaluate their business practices to continue being relevant for these consumers. A study by the Wharton Business School found that these young adults are interested in supporting brands that are ethical, caring, and full of purpose.

Ybrands recently surveyed 80,000 young consumers globally (Millennials and Gen Z) and found that the brands they consider most trustworthy offer more than just a good product or service. For example:

- Netflix: The company purchases renewable energy certificates to match its non-renewable energy use and it funds renewable energy production from sources like wind and solar.
- Google: In 2016, the company marked 10 years of operating as a carbon neutral company. Six of its operating data centers have achieved 100 percent landfill diversion, and one of these has also reached Zero Waste to Landfill.
- Amazon: The company has a goal to install solar systems on 50 fulfillment facility rooftops worldwide by 2020.
Brand Building Action Points

1. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions:
Dell Computers has created the Connected Workplace, a flex-work program that reduces the number of miles workers commute each year. This sustainability initiative has helped the company avoid about seven thousand metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions.

2. Build green products:
Siemens’ commitment to sustainability is demonstrated by its decision to manufacture and sell more environmentally friendly infrastructure products such as green heating and air conditioning systems.

3. Practice sustainable procurement and sourcing:
Cisco relies on its Supplier Code of Conduct to set standards for suppliers, so that they follow fair labor practices, ensure safe working conditions, and reduce their carbon footprint.
These days, empathy is easier said than done

Empathy, originally derived from German phrase *Einfühlung*, has been defined and redefined throughout the history of its existence. However, never has this word had as loaded a meaning as during this COVID-19 pandemic. Brands have been trying to be purposeful for the past few years with cycles of “wokeness.” Up until now, however, for most brands such exercises were an add-on to communication to align with the general climate of the community. There was also a certain amount of FOMO – fear of missing out – that kept brands from trying to sympathize with job loss, loss of aspiration, and loss of a future?

Empathy is not an easy task even in best of times due to its possible moral ambiguity. The concept of “empathy” can lead us down two morally conflicting paths. It can mean a willingness to understand an individual’s situation in order to inspire compassion. But it can also mean a blind emotion that gets in the way of rational thinking – a form of tribalism. As brands go beyond their functional promises to empathize, they need to be careful of which route they choose.

COVID-19 has changed it all. That it was never enough to just “say” was obvious, but scrutiny around whether brands are “walking the talk” is more intense than ever. In the Eiderman “Trust Barometer,” 66 percent of Indians surveyed say a brand should do, “Whatever possible to protect the wellbeing and financial security of employees and suppliers, even if it brings financial losses.” The ubiquity of social media means that any perceived empathy deficits will be met with an immediate backlash. For example, Richard Branson’s decision to ask Virgin Atlantic staff to take unpaid leave triggered just such a negative response.

In the best of times, it is easier to sympathize than to empathize, especially when there is a language and class divide between those creating the brand proposition in “India” and those receiving the message in “Bharat.” It is, furthermore, easier for brands to simply mimic emotions that are seen during a simple, cursory read of social media trends and editorials. It is much harder for a brand to genuinely try to understand a problem in its entirety, and to go beyond advertising and tweak its business model to truly “walk the talk.”

Some 92 percent of people in Kantar’s June COVID-19 Barometer – India say they have faced a real loss of income. How can a brand even try to sympathize with job loss, loss of aspiration, and loss of a future? Similarly, the Solicitor General of India recently informed the Supreme Court that 9.7 million migrant workers have been transported home. Estimates suggest another 2.7 million are still stranded. This is pain at a scale never seen before.

Another major shift – that was present before the pandemic, but has only grown in force ever since – is that today’s customer expects authenticity. She is willing to forgive lapses in service or product if she believes the brand has tried its honest best.

So it makes sense that empathy will have to be different in today’s context. Namely, it will have to incorporate some of the following themes.

- **Gratitude.** A new manifestation of empathy could simply be gratitude. #Heartwork, a social media campaign by Pepsi Foods highlighting its workers, is an excellent example of the power of simple gratitude.
- **Courage.** Courage is a willingness to understand others’ viewpoints and stand with them even if doing so does not align with public opinion. In Kantar’s COVID-19 Barometer survey, we find Centennials expect brands to lead the change. This means brands need to be braver than they have been before. Brands will need to take on prejudices and challenge stereotypes at the risk of alienating a section of their buyers. They will do well to remember that the next generation of buyers are watching carefully.
- **Optimism.** Brands can’t take away suffering, but they can build the hope of normal - of those comforting everyday habits and rituals that brands have always facilitated. Hyundai’s “Haq hai humara” simply salutes the resolve of people to stay strong: the resolve of ordinary people who have the right to freedom, free will, and spirit.

Brands need to understand customers beyond the marketplace – as humans with the indomitable human spirit to overcome, but also human foibles and prejudices.

Brands will need to try to walk in our shoes, help us in our daily struggles, give us hope, and appeal to our better selves. The next generation is watching!
Empathy

The changing role of empathy

In his 1968 sci-fi novel “Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?” - which later became the movie Blade Runner - Philip K. Dick put forward a fascinating idea. He wrote about a diagnostic tool called the “Voigt-Kampff Empathy Test.” In a dystopian future world, this test was administered by the Law Enforcers to separate out humans from androids. The androids were thought necessarily to be lacking was the human capacity that the androids were thought to be willing to share that person’s suffering.

From the imaginary world of science fiction to the real world of society and culture – where systemic and institutional biases prevail – empathy is becoming the proverbial touchstone for many marketers. They hope to use empathy to evoke emotions and induce consumer actions: actions like sharing, responding, and prompting change within communities.

Let’s start from the basics of marketing theory. Any commodity becomes a brand when it successfully “earns your trust” by fulfilling a need gap through differentiation and relevance. But it can become your “true friend” only when it elevates its purpose beyond transactions and shows “empathy.”

What exactly do we mean by that? In simple words, the brand ceases to treat its consumers like an anonymous data point as opposed to being someone. That sense of “being something to someone” is best conveyed through empathy. It could mean a display of human-like virtues: virtues such as brands giving a patient hearing to their consumers; putting oneself in consumers’ shoes; truly identifying with consumers’ situations; and thinking of ways that the brand can improve the lives of consumers and their communities— and then going ahead and implementing them. Much more than showing sympathy or compassion, empathy is rooted in values like transparency, kindness, support, respect, and dignity in action. These binding values, not incidentally, also define the intimate relationships between friends and families.

Let’s take the example of Ford Motor Company in India. Ever since 2016, all of its business and brand initiatives have been aligned to a unique brand platform, “Feels Like Family, For A Change.” This platform made Ford championed human values in people, processes, products, and brand. The brand walked the talk by creating a series of authentic, reliable and transparent online and offline experiences around “unmet needs.” Ford seized on what it meant to be a part of a “family” - a welcome change from what consumers suffering from a “trust deficit” was to receive. The brand was otherwise used to the automotive category were otherwise used to. At the core of all these “Moments of Truth” - critical moments of interactions between the brand and its consumers - lay the act of “passing the control back to the consumers,” led by empathy.

Another example has been Dove’s, “You are more beautiful than you think,” a long-standing initiative that centers empathy as the most critical emotion in the brand’s communication craft – as well as in its actions.

Cut to the first half of 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic created a worldwide disruption overnight – India included. Many Indian businesses and categories have been adversely affected. Some brands and corporations, however, have successfully managed to earn their stripes and build brand loyalty in anxious times by connecting with their consumers through empathy, purpose, and doing something good for the community.

In the early days of the Pandemic, when it seemed we may run short of masks, medicine ordering app Pharmeasy ran an initiative called “Donate a Mask” in which every time a user purchased an N95 mask from their platform, one mask was donated to healthcare professionals by Pharmeasy. Mahindra Group, meanwhile, embarked on the production of ventilators at its factories, a practice that was soon emulated by other manufacturers.

Food delivery aggregator Swiggy launched the Swiggy Genie service, which allowed consumers to do any task they needed to be done right, from delivering home-cooked food to loved ones, to picking up non-prescription medicines from neighborhood stores. FMCG companies like Pepsi forged partnerships with delivery aggregators and went beyond the call of duty to train their new partners on changing paradigms – all geared toward serving consumers’ evolving needs and choices. HUL introduced “Essentials on Wheels” - a Contactless Direct-To-Home RWA Distribution Channel. Ford India launched “Dial A Ford” - an initiative that allowed new customers to book a test drive or buy a new car and get it delivered (while also allowing its existing customers to schedule door-to-door servicing).

With looming economic uncertainty, buyers have grown apprehensive about spending large sums. As an empathetic gesture, many companies offered the assurance of innovative EMI Holidays with flexible terms and conditions to lessen the economic burden. A few even went to the extent of extending financial support for a limited time frame in case a job loss happened. Pepsi joined hands with the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) and Swiggy to provide 25 lakh meals to distressed workers in the restaurant community. Is there a possibility of falling into an “Empathy Trap”? Many marketers mistake preaching for purpose. In the name of showing empathy and solidarity to consumers and their causes, brands should not come across as opportunistic. If a brand is not able to offer authentic value through empathy, or to take an action to eradicate a deep-seated bias, mere platitudes will not suffice. Doing nothing becomes the next best course of action rather than putting a false foot forward!

Going forward, empathy will manifest itself in multiple ways. Over the next few months and years, we will find ourselves in a world dominated by AI applications meant to deeply understand behavior – perhaps first in the forms of multilingual interfaces, shopping assistants, easier payment interfaces, and chatbots for quick resolutions to problems. Our workplaces will emerge from the current crisis as virtual spaces, where people can be present, engaged, and heard from anywhere.

Which brings us back to the sci-fi story we started this piece with. For brands aspiring to be “more human than humans” in order to differentiate themselves and shine through amid new paradigms, they have no choice but to lead with empathy-driven propositions.

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Key Takeaways

1) Make empathy the DNA of the brand platform development process.

2) Rigorously apply behavioral science to understand what it means to be in the consumer’s shoes.

3) Offer authentic value through empathy; take a brand action to contribute towards eradicating a deep-seated institutional or systematic bias.

4) Make efforts to democratize empathy-led solutions.

5) Remember that doing nothing can sometimes become the next best course of action rather than putting a false foot forward or mistaking preaching for empathy.
Agility in Building Successful Brands

The Oxford dictionary defines “agility” as the “ability to move quickly and easily.” However, a deeper meaning of the word is “the ability to think and understand quickly”, and that, to my mind, is more critical. In the current scenario, where things are changing every day, it has never been more important for brands and businesses to “think and understand quickly,” for that precedes “moving quickly and easily.”

It is common knowledge that agile organizations survive better during a crisis. However, agility is not just about responding to the external world to maximize trinomial revenue. A successful organization needs to be agile at multiple levels and from a holistic perspective.

First and foremost, organizations need to be agile internally, in the way they are structured, and in the way they function. Those companies that have adapted to remote working with speed have also been those who have been able to respond well to the current uncertainty. Technology plays a big role in internal agility, be it at a relatively simplistic level of having systems to work remotely, or at a more complex level of having a system which helps, let’s say, to have a single end-to-end view of the supply chain. Cross-functional teams – with products, projects, and processes which are on the cloud and accessible to all relevant stakeholders – can go a long way in driving efficiency and nimbleness.

Agility is not only about having the right systems and processes. It goes deeper than that, into organizational culture. An organization needs to have a culture of being agile – of taking quick decisions and not being caught in hierarchies. Never before has the appetite to take risks been more important. As John C. Maxwell said famously, “Fail early, fail often, but always fail forward.”

What does all of this have to do with brands, though? A brand, it is important to remember, is not just what one sees on the outside – on a store shelf, on a website, or in an ad. It started as a product or a service that was developed internally by a particular organization. And the extent to which that organization can rapidly adapt to flux and fluidity is what determines how agile the outward-facing brand will be.

In times of crisis, agility and adaptability in response can be both long term as well as short term. Responding to a critical consumer need that is immediate and short term can go a long way in acquiring consumers and building brand love, as well as delivering immediate revenues. Swiggy delivering essentials as soon as lockdown was announced is a prime example. Though grocery delivery is not its core business, the company responded to the need of the hour rapidly, and stood to gain from it. There are many businesses that did the same. And its consumers, we are always primed to remember brands that have understood us and been with us in hard times.

However, for long term sustainability, organizations also need to adapt in a way that is close to their core and to their purpose. Brands need to find those opportunities and plan for them quickly. A key example is Himalaya, which stands for wellness. Launching Pure Hands handwash during COVID-19, and prioritizing it over other product launches. Another example – out of many – is Amul launching Haldi ice-cream as an addition to its immunity booster product range.

However, at the heart of everything is the consumer. Agility is irrelevant if it doesn’t serve to actually solve a problem, or serve a real (and not contrived) need for the consumer. Hence, it is above all important for a brand to have an ear to the ground – to invest in understanding consumers and the nuances of their socio-cultural environment. Brands need to go beyond being “consumer-centric” and be “human-centric.” They need to understand people, their behavior, their hopes, their fears, and their emotions. They will then need to craft not just their communications, but also their products, accordingly. It is critical to invest in data, both structured as well as unstructured, and have people who can read between the lines, to peel the layers of data.

At the end of the day, what decides whether a brand is a success or a failure are wonderful, intelligent, but often irrational people out there. Hence it is more important to “think and understand quickly” than to “move quickly and easily.”

Key Takeaways

- Agility is the “ability to think and understand quickly.”
- The internal culture of an organization drives how agile their brands are.
- Technology, technology, technology – it’s the key to being nimble and agile.
- Agility can be geared towards the short term, which has tangible returns.
- However, for long term sustainability, be close to your core and purpose.
- Be “human-centric” and not “consumer-centric.”
- Invest in data, structured and unstructured – and know how to peel the layers of data.
**Employee Advocacy**

**Employees can be your best brand advocates**

For most brands, marketing is about external stakeholders—consumers, partners, the government, and other key opinion leaders. In some cases, potential hires are also a target group. However, there is one stakeholder group that doesn’t get marketing attention—existing employees. Sure, they get addressed by internal communications, but what most marketers miss is how powerful employees are in building a strong voice for a brand.

A company that has successfully managed to do that is Cairn Oil & Gas, Vedanta Ltd. Cairn is the largest oil and gas exploration and production company in India and accounts for a quarter of the country’s domestic crude oil production. But given the nature of the industry, the company is subject to a lot of regulatory and stakeholder scrutiny, and often faces unfavorable public opinions, especially on social media.

Since it is not a consumer brand, Cairn realized that it would benefit from fostering brand loyalty ownership and positive messaging from within—in order to develop positive perception towards the sector and company from the outside. With that in mind, they launched an integrated employee advocacy program.

Employee advocacy, as the name suggests, harnesses the influence of employees on social channels to strengthen the brand. Through these employees, the brand reaches a wider network of current and prospective clients, potential and past employees, and other stakeholders and opinion-shapers.

**Get the objective right**

While the overall objective is to get employees to become your brand ambassadors, it is always good to specify a clear objective. In Cairn’s case, for instance, the objective was to use employees to counter instances of unfavorable public opinion on social media with positive stories from within of the work that employees were doing, the community they were building, and the bond they had as an extended family.

**Identify your brand squad**

Ideally, you want every employee to be your brand advocate, but realistically, that is neither feasible nor necessary. You therefore, need to identify a set of people who have the following attributes:

- They are loyal and passionate about their work
- They are vocal on social media
- They have a decent influence footprint

To identify these people, consider running a survey—which is what Cairn did. Once you identify a smaller group, run a pilot with them.

**Getting the squad up to speed**

Your squad can’t just be let loose on the world at large. For Cairn’s program, more than 200 employees were given basic social media training on dos and don’ts, and were briefed about their role on social media as employees of Cairn:

- **Social media dos and don’ts:** Posting as an individual and posting as a brand advocate are different activities. Employees need to be sensitized on issues such as what topics are a no-no, and what type of people or conversations to be wary of.
- **Messaging for the company:** By the time they start posting, employees should know the answers to some key questions: What are some of the most critical topics to talk about? What is the brand’s narrative? What are some of the things you can’t talk about?

**Turn employees into storytellers**

Training employee advocates on what they can or can’t do is not enough. For them to really bring the proposition alive, the squad also needs to be shown how to weave a story together and build campaigns. In the case of Cairn, too, employees were encouraged to share their ideas for campaigns. The best content was picked up and amplified by Cairn’s social media team, which brought gratification to employees, and created a steady content stream for Cairn’s social handles. And best of all, this was all credible, relatable content.

In time, employee-sourced social media campaigns became one of the most vibrant streams of content for Cairn. Once the pandemic began, this content became even more impactful, showcasing how Cairn was focused on its people and community during this time. From CSR outreach, to videos by employees’ kids on safety norms, to increased engagement on the CEO’s social handle, the employee advocacy campaign really matured in this difficult period.

People connect with people, not with esoteric concepts. And nothing makes a brand more human than its employees. A well thought-through employee advocacy program can really make a brand’s voice credible, strong, and unique.

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**Employee Advocacy**

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**Key Takeaways**

- Employees make a brand human. An employee advocacy program helps build a human and credible voice for a brand.
- To build an impactful program, identify a core set of advocates through a survey.
- Train the squad on the do’s and don’ts, as well as on the brand’s messages.
- Help them in planning a campaign, and in executing it.
COVID-19 can be a springboard for India’s Modern Retail sector

India’s modern trade retail brands have had a good run. Despite being dwarfed in size by general trade, the sector has experienced steady growth over the last decade, sustained by strong economic and social factors. Rising incomes, favorable demographics, and growing urbanization – combined with high levels of foreign investment – created a sense of certainty about the future. Long-term growth felt assured.

The events of this year, however, have challenged these assumptions and are raising fundamental questions about the future of modern trade retail in the country.

To date, the sector has been able to rely on latent demand, which led to an attitude of, “If we build it, they will come.” COVID-19 and the resultant financial uncertainty has shut down demand. From being in a situation where providing access to brands in well-kept modern stores was enough, retailers are now in a situation where there aren't enough customers to go around.

Yes, retailers will become more adept at protecting customers through new safety protocols. But as the fear of COVID-19 and concerns about financial security are now hardwired in to the consumer conscience, the repercussions are likely to be here for the long term.

Brands can’t afford to wait this out.

Some steps are being taken

With necessity being the mother of invention, it’s interesting to see how certain brands are innovating. For some, COVID-19 has acted as a catalyst for positive change, prompting brands to make innovative leaps.

Given customer reticence to venturing out, Domino’s Pizza has gone mobile. Food trucks are working with housing societies, announcing their visit ahead of time to allow residents to order pizza right outside their home. This is a perfect response to the “new normal,” and also one that has longevity, as customers actively seek out brands that make it easy for them to buy.

Another smart move sees IKEA developing click-and-collect services, meaning that customers can order and pay online, and pick up sanitized products from store carparks at pre-agreed times. Like Domino’s, this initiative serves as a response to current needs, but also provides a new and valuable way for customers to engage with the brand. It creates an impact in the short term, but also opens up more channels for longer-term benefit.

While Domino’s and IKEA have identified key touchpoints that put them in winning positions with the customer, some brands need to look beyond single touchpoints and reconsider their overall brand experience.

An opportunity to boldly reconsider the fundamentals

The first step in the process is doubling down on a universal consumer truth: “The more your retail experience matches my need, the easier it is for me to say yes to you.”

This means that in order begin to thrive again (or in cases, merely survive), retailers need to re-examine their purpose and rethink how they operate.

Here’s an example of this type of re-examination, using bold thinking to take a retail brand in new directions.

John Lewis, one of the UK’s most respected retailers (and famous for its employee-owned business structure) is considering turning recently closed stores into new, mixed-use affordable housing. Other potential initiatives tap into the brand’s commitment to social good and reflect growing consumer trends. Interest in the shared economy has led them to consider renting products rather than only selling them.

Create a stronger commitment to consumer “experience”

As the John Lewis example shows, moving forward, the consumer needs to be placed front and center. In these times, taking decisions that benefit consumers will ultimately benefit you.

While retail brands can’t predict the post-pandemic future, they can connect with people, their lives, and how life is changing. In doing so, brands can influence and design their own futures by offering powerful retail experiences that allow customers to see brands differently. This, in turn, creates tangible differentiation versus the competition, giving people compelling reasons to visit a certain brand.

At FITCH, we achieve this through what we call “Experience Themes.” Using BrandZ™ data, we’ve taken “experience” (something considered by many to be vague and intangible) and codified it for brands – empowering them to take control back into their own hands.

Establishing the right themes, and blending them with a brand’s positioning, creates a unique experience signature – enabling retailers to effectively express themselves across all touchpoints, whether they be physical, human, or digital.

While COVID-19 provides Indian retail with its biggest challenge, the chaos presents opportunity – a chance to move from a purely transactional exchange to something more sophisticated: an empathetic customer relationship.

So create stores where people want to be, enable customers to easily engage with your brand, and help them to achieve their needs.

In these times of uncertainty, real and personal connections make all the difference.
How to maximize brand experience

• Obsess about, and be guided by, the customer.

• Develop a unique and focused Experience Signature.

• Make Physical touchpoints immersive and inspiring: Consumers want to feel that a store visit is time well-spent.

• Realize the potential of human connections through empathic customer service.

• Combine the storytelling and interactive opportunities of Digital with the benefits of a physical store.
There has been a giant, collective wake-up call for consumers and for brands. Wunderman Thompson, South Asia sees the COVID-19 crisis as the tipping point for businesses in “The Age of Responsible Living.” Simply put, businesses have to start “Doing.” Doing more not just for profits, but for society at large. There has been a realization of what really matters. We call it the “Big Bang of Do.”

Titled “The Big Bang of Do,” Wunderman Thompson’s study provides clients and businesses at large with a short and easy guide on how to make critical marketing and communication decisions in these times. The thinking behind the study was that businesses and brands will have to be more careful, responsible, and creative in their actions and communications. Instead of going dark, businesses and brands will need to modulate, calibrate, and present their response to this crisis depending on what kind of need they are satisfying in consumers’ lives, or what product and services they are providing.

Studies on business and social good have shown that over 80 percent of consumers across all ages believe that brands and big companies should take responsibility for improving the world. In other words, they should comprise a new class of civic-minded leadership.

Three broad templates were identified for brands to do this:

• Do the doable: Acts that directly respond, generously, on whatever scale is doable, within the framework of rapid response (e.g. a day or two).

• Do the supportable: Acts that support individuals or groups serving as crisis managers in the field, in the labs, or in the wider infrastructure – the better to enable and facilitate humanitarian efforts.

• Do the transformational: Acts that protect people from consequences, now and in the future.

The COVID-19 pandemic is the first global crisis of its kind and magnitude where the majority of consumers are either Millennials or belong to Gen Z. While the 2008 global financial crisis can be seen as the birth of the need for more socially responsible behavior from brands and businesses, the COVID-19 crisis will be the tipping point. I speak for members of my team who helped with this study, and for many consumers. Their lens is that, “How businesses and brands behave during this time will have a long-lasting impact on consumers’ relationship with them, which will carry on even after things go back to normal, whatever that normal may look like.”

In the last three months, Wunderman Thompson, South Asia has helped brands navigate the new challenges and realities of this moment. Three brand case studies provide examples of interventions at the various “Do” levels; all resulted in the brands involved maintaining a relevant and tangible connection with their audiences.

• Do the doable: Wunderman Thompson helped TATA PRAVESH (the prefabricated door business) – in a very rapid response time – to creatively connect its product to the safety and well-being of their consumers, and to urge them to stay indoors during lockdown.

• Do the supportable: Wunderman Thompson conceptualized a Pepsi campaign called #PepsiSaveOurRestaurants. This campaign focused on providing restaurant workers (whose workplaces have been largely shuttered during the pandemic) with much needed meals. This was done in association with the National Restaurant Association India and Swiggy: Every time any beverage was ordered on Swiggy, funds were contributed by Pepsi to feed hungry workers.

• Do the transformational: Wunderman Thompson helped the Times of India media group conceptualize and run the “Mask India Movement,” which harnessed the power of the group’s reach to not just make consumers safe, but also give them a new way to connect, express, and contribute to the “masking” effort themselves.

What a brand needs most in these times is a real intention to “DO.”
Recovery and Growth
In volatile times, marry Meaningful Difference with the latest consumer intelligence

What does it mean to talk about recovery and growth in 2020? For most brand categories, the goal at hand is not necessarily a full return to normalcy by the end of the year. (Even for those product categories seeing increasing demand - for example, hand sanitizers - one could hardly describe the current business climate as normal). The reality is that COVID-19 could cycle in and out of our lives well into 2021.

Resilience, then, is the watchword of the day - and a necessary prerequisite to future growth. Resilience is not the same thing as passivity. As BrandZ™ Global Strategy Director Graham Staplehurst and BrandZ™ Global Head of Research Martin Guerrieria noted in this year's Global Top 100 report, “Brands did not recover automatically after the [2008] financial crisis. And they will not recover automatically from this crisis. Understandably, during a period of uncertainty and financial pressure, it is tempting to cut back on advertising and marketing investment, at least short-term. But cutting back is counterproductive.”

They continue: “It may not be possible to always be physically present, or to have certain products available all the time. People are becoming accustomed to shortages. Mental availability is possible, however, and it is critical. Brands that continue to advertise reduce the risk of future market share loss. If it is necessary to reduce a product range because of slackening demand, then it is best to focus on the parts of the range that best represent the core brand purpose and do not compromise core positioning and values. It is important to focus on salience, reach, search, distribution and pricing.”

The global financial crisis offered countless examples of this resilient philosophy in action. In India, the detergent brand Fairy increased its market share from 52 percent in 2008 to 61 percent in 2013 - all the while increasing consumer perceptions that the brand represented a “very good value for money” (which is a key to being able to charge a brand premium). How did Fairy accomplish this? By identifying the brand’s Meaningful Difference around the theme of “Enduring Care,” and reminding people of this brand legacy in a well-crafted, well-supported campaign.

Brands, therefore, should remember the lessons of the recent past: that Meaningfully Different brands decline less in value, and recover quicker, than brands that fail to invest in these attributes. But brands also need a deep understanding of the present. Kantar’s COVID-19 Barometer - India paints a picture of consumer sentiment that’s constantly shifting alongside conditions on the ground.

Insight
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Unmanned experiences: Shopping without humans

In a contact-fearing world, people want to buy but are afraid to shop. With the primary customer worry being in close proximity to other humans, can you really create and sustain a physical shopping experience without them?

Yes!
Take, for example, the Singaporean telecom giant SingTel’s latest format: Unboxed. It’s a fully automated 24-hour pop up store where people can see, try, and buy phones and data plans, all without coming in contact with others – a truly unmanned experience. Thanks to its safety, convenience, and intuitive flow, Unboxed has won over shoppers and is thriving.

The takeaway: unmanned experiences can be a medium worth exploring and growing. If done right, they will be a powerful stimulant to give customers the confidence to shop again.

By combining the right aspects of physical and digital, you can create an experience that is people-free but still human in the way that it responds to customer needs.

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For instance, the data shows up-and-down urban consumer enthusiasm for online shopping during the pandemic, especially early on, when online platforms struggled to keep items in stock. By early June, however, delivery had become more reliable. That month, 45 percent of urban consumers surveyed said they expected to shop more online over the following month. They showed particularly strong interest in online shopping for personal sanitizers, home sanitizers, groceries, and health and nutrition supplements. (Personal care products, however, lagged somewhat behind.)

By early June, 65 percent of shoppers surveyed said they were paying increased attention to prices, across all categories. Similar proportions of consumers said that they were making more “shopping lists” versus buying things impulsively. Some 93 percent of those surveyed reported that the COVID-19 crisis had already made an impact on their household income.

Under these conditions, clear - but ever-evolving - preferences have emerged around what consumers want from the brands in their life. In June 2020, for instance, 54 percent of Indian consumers said they expected brands to “be practical and realistic” while providing everyday help to consumers; a quarter of consumers, meanwhile, thought brands should be “attacking the crisis and demonstrating that it can be fought.”

The correct approach for brands in the coming year, then, will be to combine the timeless with the timely. Meaningful Difference will always be the key ingredient for recovery and growth in times of crisis. But when deciding how to emphasize Meaningful Difference, brands will need to draw upon the latest consumer intelligence to chart their tactical path ahead. That’s where reports like Kantar’s COVID-19 Barometer will prove crucial.
It doesn’t take a retail expert to tell us that health and hygiene products have seen a surge of interest during a global pandemic. Especially when these two categories were already on the upswing heading into 2020. The hygiene product segment, for instance – comprising skin cleansing, bathroom cleaners, shampoo, floor cleaners, and hand sanitizers, had already posted 15 percent value growth between February 2018 and February 2020.

But Kantar data from March 2020 onward shows just how strong growth in these segments has been. In the 14 weeks preceding 1 June 2020, for instance, an average of 2.70 lakh households per week became “new triers” in the Hand Wash category. Growth in the Hand Sanitizer category was nearly as strong, bolstered by the introduction of more than 350 new sanitizer brands between March and May of this year.

Though it’s easy to consider hygiene products as purely functional offerings, that has not been the case during lockdown. Instead, hygiene brands have become emotional bulwarks of reassurance and protection. Some of the most resonant marketing campaigns of 2020 have come from soap brands: from Lifebuoy’s exhortation to “Please use any soap nearest to you. Not just Lifebuoy”; to an arresting Satyam television spot that used military sound effects to tie the prompt of sanitizers to the “war” against coronavirus.

Going beyond pure hygiene plays, consumer interest in the wider world of health products has been just as notable during the pandemic, if somewhat harder to pin down, due to the range of products in this space.

What is a “health product” these days? How is the average Indian thinking about “Health” in 2020 - and how might it carry over in the years to come?

Some hints about where health in India is headed. According to the Kantar COVID-19 Barometer - India in June 2020, some 68 percent of Indians said they were likely to maintain healthy eating behaviors once lockdown was over. 63 percent said they were likely to maintain “increased overall hygiene,” while 54 percent said they planned to maintain “focusing on their personal development.”

Mental health has become increasingly linked to physical wellbeing. When surveyed in June 2020 about what they were doing to manage their mental health, 60 percent of Indians said they were “trying to meditate and/or practice mindfulness.”

The biggest theme in health and wellness at the moment, however, is protection from external threats. The form of scrubs and sanitizers, to internal protection in the form of immune-boosting food, drinks, and supplements. Three-quarters of Indians surveyed by Kantar have expressed a preference for immune booster products in the post-COVID-19 scenario. A product category like Adult Wellness Drinks (e.g. Ensure, Horlicks Active) which was already increasing year-to-year in the pre-pandemic period, has seen even higher sales from March 2020 onward. But so too has a more traditional, Ayurvedically based category like Chyawanprash. After declining category sales in urban India from 2017 to 2019, Chyawanprash sales for March-April-May 2020 were up 16 percent from the same period a year before.

Spending to Stay Well

Brands need to deliver on multiple levels of empathy

Consumers are facing a flux, a new normal that is marked by a negotiated restriction, one that balances the fear of disease with the courage to normalize. Times like these call for brands to be more empathetic than ever. Brands need to deliver at multiple levels of empathy.

Cognitive Empathy: Understand and offer. Acknowledge the fear and panic people have felt, and also acknowledge consumers’ desire to mitigate these feelings. Design solutions that can help manage psychic stress: for instance, the reassurance provided by Zomato’s contactless delivery system. Brands can also help to manage fear by offering innovations that fulfill the glaring needs of health, nutrition, or immunity – Viproprtek’s sanitizer spray for surfaces, and Mother Dairy’s turmeric milk for boosting immunity, are both successful examples of this.

Emotional Empathy: Be positive and meaningful. With reopening, a new sense of courage and determination to fight back the pandemic has emerged. Brands need to infuse this spirit in both their tonality and their offerings. They need to touch the lives of consumers in a meaningful manner, and in turn create positive memories. Brands need to be seen as partners who stood their ground alongside consumers during the pandemic. A good example of this is when Barilla pasta partnered with Roger Federer to play tennis on the rooftop with budding Italian players. The goal of such communications is to inspire a sense of hope and optimism in consumer – while weaving a positive image for the brand.

Compassionate Empathy: Connect and deliver. Brands need to be visible and talk directly to consumers. They need to empathize with not just the consumer but the community as well. Purposeful marketing can be used to build the right emotion and image for a brand. Think of Perfetti’s Alpeliebe “Salute the Heroes” campaign, or Coca Cola’s drive to provide hygiene kits for frontline warriors. The undiluted consideration and intent of a brand could go a long way in building trust and love.

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Spotlight on Health and Hygiene

Also notable are the ways that a variety of non-FMCG brands have been able to associate themselves with health and hygiene. A cleaning appliance brand like Dyson has been able to reposition itself in the Indian market as a health-first brand by emphasizing the hygienic benefits of its vacuums, fans, and air purifiers; personal automobiles have gained a new advantage as the “healthier alternative” to ride-sharing, taxis, planes, and trains; some hotels have pivoted to becoming 5-star, ultraclean laundry service providers; and even a pizza delivery brand like Domino’s has a credible claim to being in the health-first vanguard after moving quickly to implement strict new standards for “contactless delivery.”

There are some risks tied to “pivoting towards health.” For starters, there is always a chance that a brand will be seen as overpromising and underdelivering on their health claims. This, perhaps, is survivable.

More damaging would be the perception that a brand has knowingly made false medical claims for profit - or has otherwise unscrupulously taken advantage of people’s health fears at a time of crisis. Brands selling products with “immunity-boosting” effects will need to be especially careful in this regard, as sometimes ad copy can verge on the border of making (potentially disprovable) medical claims.

On the whole, however, brands are meeting the need for increased health products with appropriate gravity and haste.

Insight

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Norms for the New Normal

Here are four trends that a year ago may have seemed less urgent, but are rapidly becoming of utmost importance.

BOUNDARYLESS EXPERIENCES. Physical environment restrictions has limited brands’ ability to craft larger-than-life experiences. Hence, brands should focus on creating more boundaryless, accessible experiences - like the way Samsung used Instagram filters to demonstrate the superiority of its new smart phone camera.

AT YOUR SERVICE. In the early days of the pandemic, consumers found it hard to purchase many products due to limited availability. Brands have learned that they need to be accessible across multiple (and sometimes entirely new) channels. For instance, ITC introduced food trucks and partnered with housing societies to make it easy for consumers to buy essential products at their doorsteps.

ASSISTED KNOWLEDGE. An overload of information has made it difficult for consumers to trust brands. Brands need to provide knowledge that is trustworthy and supportive – and present it in a way that cuts through the clutter.

COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES. Brands need to show preference to loyal members in ways that make them feel special. For instance, One plus recently launched exclusive AR experiences for its members so they can virtually try products while at home.

Insight

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Fewer trips and a focus of "the essentials":

Shopping dynamics in post-lockdown India

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a new mood of frugality - and with it, a consumer shift towards prioritizing products seen as "essential." But what types of goods typically qualify as such - and conversely, which categories will Indian consumers delay purchasing until later in the country’s recovery period? Kantar’s COVID-19 Barometer has been tracking aggregate shifts in the "recovery horizons" for major consumer categories. While individual consumer behavior may vary, in early June 2020, the overall category picture looked like this:

"Recovery Horizons" for major consumer categories

**Immediate Recovery**
"Spend more"

- Personal Cleaning
- Home Hygiene
- Health Spending
- Antiseptic Liquids
- Food Essentials
- Personal Grooming
- Nutritional
- Household Insecticides
- Beverages
- Financial Investments
- Financial Protection
- Packaged Foods
- OTT Subscription
- Air Fresheners

**Mid-Term Recovery**
"Spend same as before"

- Cosmetics
- Long Shelf Life Products
- Applicances and Durables
- Non-Alcoholic Drinks
- RTC Items
- Confectionary
- Apparels
- Mobile Handsets
- Small Technology Appliances
- Financial Investments
- Food Home Delivery
- Home Furnishing

**Delayed Recovery**
"Spend less"

- Appliances and Durables
- Holidays
- Luxury Goods
- Public Transport
- Vehicle Purchase
- Home Furniture
- Taxis, Car Renting
- Air Travel
- Jewelry

Indexing definitions: Spend more on category/services among those who will spend more versus spend less on category/services among those who will save more in future. Initials for recovery: IMR, MTR, DLR

Source: Kantar COVID-19 Barometer - India

Not surprisingly, personal and home hygiene products ranked high on the list of categories consumers reported they planned to "spend more on." But interestingly, so too did OTT Subscriptions, a category that scarcely existed a few years ago. Financial Investments, a category that in May 2020 had ranked in the "Middle Recovery" Group, has also come to be seen as a priority. Results like these confirm that consumer perceptions of what is "essential" extends beyond basic physical needs, and can subject to revision and reevaluation over time.
For now, it appears as if most Indian consumers are drawing a line between “necessities” and “indulgences,” and delaying purchases of the latter. For instance, while Personal Grooming products are primed for “Immediate Recovery,” Cosmetics falls under the “Mid-term Recovery” umbrella. Similarly, Food Essentials are immediate buys, while Confectionary purchasing has been delayed. For most consumers, perceived luxury categories such as Vehicles and Jewelry will be the longest-delayed purchases, alongside categories seen as holding elevated safety risks (for instance, Taxis and Travel).

In the near term, when Indians are shopping - mostly for perceived FMCG “essentials” - they are doing in new or changed ways. One dimension of consumer change - an increased preference for local brands - has already been discussed in this report. Another change lies in the size and frequency of consumer purchases. In the years prior to 2020, there existed a clear trend toward consumers making more, smaller store runs for FMCG products. Kantar’s shopper data shows that has reversed: for safety reasons, consumers are opting for fewer, more consolidated shopping occasions. During these consolidated occasions, they are buying a higher volume of goods, and spending somewhat more money than they would have during their smaller, more frequent pre-pandemic shopping trips. Indian consumers are now especially keen on product formats that offer larger packs at an affordable price - both because they are spending (much) more time at home consuming products alongside family members, and because they are looking for perceived financial value wherever they can find it. This represents a reversal of the consumer trend towards smaller, more personal, and more “on the go” FMCG package sizes.

Time - and the data - will tell if this behavior reverts back to “normal” after the pandemic recedes. Consumer surveys will be essential toward guiding FMCG brand strategy and messaging. If households begin to increase their trip frequency - buying less each time, but shopping more overall - brands can resume their pre-pandemic price laddering strategies geared toward increasing “premium” and “on the go” formats. If households stick to their reduced trip frequencies, however, brands should consider emphasizing larger SKUs, as well as value-driven promo offers and “bundling packs.”

Minimal contact, maximum value

New norms set by consumers in these current times have caused brands to restructure to change, adapt and yet keep up their growth. There has been a shift in consumer mindsets and comfort zones. Consumers have reduced their radius, making it compulsory for marketers and advocacy professionals to step up their game.

The need of the hour? If you can’t get the consumer out, bring the experience in!

The industry has witnessed burgeoning brand visibility through At-Home as a concept. From DIY hair color makeovers and simplified beauty tutorials, to enhancing your cocktail-making skills with expert tips, marketers have played their cards right and spontaneously adapted to change, the better to ensure consistent brand recall across audiences.

With no set precedent to follow, and ever-dynamic consumer needs, the world of brands today must adapt to the new norms, which will inevitably challenge capabilities and ensure the survival of the fittest.

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A BrandZ™ ranking of brand valuations lists the brands making the largest absolute $ contribution to the total value of their respective parent companies, considering both current and projected performance.

This is the true value of brand building and we want to isolate and reward the brands making the largest contributions to the success of their parent companies.

A company may have huge overall business value but the absolute $ contribution made by the relevant brand(s) that the company owns may not be a comparatively large figure – at least not a large enough figure to qualify for the given BrandZ™ ranking of brand values.

The brands that appear in this report are the most valuable brands in the world. They were selected for inclusion in the BrandZ™ Top 75 Most Valuable Indian Brands 2020 based on the unique and objective BrandZ™ brand valuation methodology that combines extensive and on-going consumer insights with rigorous financial analysis.

The BrandZ™ valuation methodology can be uniquely distinguished from its competitors by the way we use consumer viewpoints to assess brand equity, as we strongly believe that how consumers perceive and feel about a brand determines its success and failure. We conduct worldwide, on-going, in-depth quantitative consumer research, and build up a global picture of brands on a category-by-category and market-by-market basis.

Globally, our research covers over 3.8 million consumer interviews and more than 17,801 brands in 51 markets. This intensive, in-market consumer research differentiates the BrandZ™ methodology from competitors that rely only on a panel of “experts,” or purely on financial and market desktop research.

Before reviewing the details of this methodology, consider these three fundamental questions: why is brand important; why is brand valuation important; and what makes BrandZ™ the definitive brand valuation tool?

Importance of Brand

Brands embody a core promise of values and benefits consistently delivered. Brands provide clarity and guidance for choices made by companies, consumers, investors and other stakeholders. Brands provide the signposts we need to navigate the consumer and B2B landscapes.

At the heart of a brand’s value is its ability to appeal to relevant customers and potential customers. BrandZ™ uniquely measures this appeal and validates it against actual sales performance. Brands that succeed in creating the greatest attraction power are those that are:

### Meaningful

In any category, these brands appeal more, generate greater “love” and meet the individual’s expectations and needs.

### Different

These brands are unique in a positive way and “set the trends,” staying ahead of the curve for the benefit of the consumer.

### Salient

They come spontaneously to mind as the brand of choice for key needs.

Importance of brand valuation

Brand valuation is a metric that quantifies the worth of these powerful but intangible corporate assets. It enables brand owners, the investment community and others to evaluate and compare brands and make faster and better-informed decisions.

Brand valuation also enables marketing professionals to quantify their achievements in driving business growth with brands, and to celebrate these achievements in the boardroom.

Distinction of BrandZ™

BrandZ™ is the only brand valuation tool that peels away all the financial and other components of brand value and gets to the core – how much brand alone contributes to corporate value. This core, what we call Brand Contribution, differentiates BrandZ™.

To achieve this, we calculate and combine two important elements: Financial Value and Brand Contribution.

1. **Financial Value** – the proportion of the total $ value of the parent company that can be attributed to the brand in question, considering both current and projected performance.

2. **Brand Contribution** – quantifies the proportion of this Financial Value that is directly driven by a brand’s equity, i.e. the ability of the brand to deliver value to the company by predisposing consumers to choose the brand over others or pay more for it, based purely on perceptions.

Note: this does not include the proportion of consumers who choose the brand for reasons other than this predisposition e.g. those attracted by price promotions, a particularly prominent display etc. Such purchases are not due to the brand’s equity and so are removed as part of the process.
Methodology

**Part 1 – Calculating Financial Value**

Calculating Financial Value is a three-step process:

**Step 1**

We begin with the brand’s parent company, which generates earnings from:

1. **Tangible assets** (assets with a physical form, which include fixed assets—e.g. buildings, machinery, land & current assets e.g. cash and inventory)

2. **Intangible assets** (such as patents, trademarks and brands)

Example: Volkswagen AG is a parent company that generates earnings from tangible assets like its manufacturing plants and equipment, as well as its intangible assets—the brand names under which the cars are sold—Volkswagen, Audi, SEAT etc.

To determine the proportion of earnings directly derived from the company’s intangible assets we begin with Corporate Earnings—sourced from Bloomberg, which represent the latest annual earnings reported by the parent company. Then by using other financial data from the same source, we calculate and apply a metric called the Intangible Ratio.

By multiplying Corporate Earnings by the Intangible Ratio, we are left with Intangible Earnings, which represent earnings derived from intangible assets.

**Step 2**

Next, we need to determine the proportion of these Intangible Earnings that are directly attributable to the brand we want to value.

To do this we take the Intangible Earnings identified in Step 1 and apply the Attribution Rate, which literally attributes a proportion of the parent company’s Intangible Earnings to the brand we want to value.

The Attribution Rate is determined by analysis of brand level financial information from the parent company’s published financial reports and other credible sources, such as data from Kantar’s Consulting and Worldpanel Divisions.

Once the Attribution Rate is applied to Intangible Earnings, we are left with Branded Intangible Earnings i.e. the proportion of the parent company’s Intangible Earnings that can be attributed to the specific brand in question e.g. this step would attribute a proportion of Volkswagen AG’s Intangible Earnings to Volkswagen, Audi, SEAT etc.

**Step 3**

The final step is to consider the projected earnings of the brand in question, which measures the brand’s ability to generate earnings in the future and requires the addition of a final component—the Brand Multiple, which is also calculated from financial data sourced from Bloomberg. It’s similar to the calculation used by financial analysts to determine the market value of stocks (Example: 6X earnings or 12X earnings).

When we multiply the Branded Intangible Earnings from Step 2 by the Brand Multiple, we reach the brand’s true Financial Value i.e. the proportion of the parent company’s $ value that can be attributed to the brand in question accounting for current and projected performance.

**Part 2 – Determining brand Contribution**

To arrive at the true value of the brand (i.e. the asset in the minds of consumers) we need to quantify its strength relative to competitors i.e. to isolate the Financial Value that is directly driven by its BRAND EQUITY.

This allows us to understand the proportion of the Financial Value that is explained by the brand alone and hence the total $ value of the brand itself.

A brand’s equity can impact consumer behavior and contribute value to a corporation in three ways:

- **Current demand**—based on the strength of its equity alone a brand can influence consumers to choose it over others in the present—generating volume share.
- **Price premium**—based on the strength of its equity alone a brand can influence consumers to be willing to pay more for it over others—generating value share and profit.
- **Future demand and price**—based on the strength of its equity alone a brand can influence consumers to buy the brand more in future or to buy it for the first time at the desired price—increasing volume and value share in future.

Using BrandZ™’s unique survey-based brand equity model (The Meaningfully Different Framework) we are able to quantify a brand’s abilities in each of these three areas relative to competitors, with a survey-based measure:

1. **Current demand** = POWER
2. **Price premium** = PREMIUM
3. **Future demand and price** = POTENTIAL

Each of these measures contributes to the proportion of the company’s total value accounted for by the brand’s equity alone—i.e. the BRAND CONTRIBUTION

**Part 3 – Calculating Brand Value**

Brand Value is the $ amount that the brand contributes to the overall business value of the parent company.

**BRAND VALUE = FINANCIAL VALUE X BRAND CONTRIBUTION**

**Eligibility Criteria**

Brands ranked in the BrandZ™ Top 75 Most Valuable Indian Brands 2020 meet one or more of these eligibility criteria:

- The corporate parent is listed on a stock exchange in India
- The brand originated in India and its corporate parent is listed on a recognized stock exchange
- The brand is privately owned, but its complete financial statements are publicly available
- Indian unicorns have their most recent valuation publicly available

For further details and context, please see the full Methodology segment of the report.
Why BrandZ™ is the definitive brand valuation methodology

All brand valuation methodologies are similar – up to a point.

All methodologies use financial research and sophisticated mathematical formulas to calculate current and future earnings that can be attributed directly to a brand rather than to the corporation. This exercise produces an important but incomplete picture.

What’s missing? The picture of the brand at this point lacks input from the people whose opinions are most important – the consumer. This is where the BrandZ™ methodology and the methodologies of our competitors’ part company.

How does the competition determine the consumer view?

Interbrand derives the consumer point of view from different sources like primary research and panels of experts who contribute their opinions. The Brand Finance methodology employs a complicated accounting method called Royalty Relief Valuation.

Why is the BrandZ™ methodology superior?

BrandZ™ goes much further and is more relevant and consistent. Once we have the important, but incomplete, financial picture of the brand, we communicate with consumers, people who are actually paying for brands every day, regularly and consistently. Our on-going, in-depth quantitative research includes 3.8 million consumers and 5.25 billion data points in 51 markets worldwide. We have been using the same framework to evaluate consumer insights since we first introduced the BrandZ™ brand building platform in 1998 which allows historical understanding of the change in brand equity.

What’s the BrandZ™ benefit?

The BrandZ™ methodology produces important benefits for two broad audiences.

- Members of the financial community, including analysts, shareholders, investors and C-suite, depend on BrandZ™ for the most reliable and accurate brand value information available.
- Brand owners turn to BrandZ™ to more deeply understand the causal links between brand strength, sales and profits, and to translate those insights into strategies for building brand equity and fuelling business growth. Since we have been using the same framework to measure these insights, this enables historical and cross-category comparisons.
Now BrandZ™ gives you the ability to do the same for your brand of choice.

The BrandZ™ Brand Genome visualizes your brand's "genome" on a page, with all the genome sequence measures providing an instant overview of your brand.

The ultimate tool for a new business pitch and a lot more...

Brand Genome is a unique BrandZ™ tool, exclusive to WPP. It's free, available 24/7, and takes just seconds to create.

Visit http://genome-measures.wppbrandz.com/ where you will be able to find out about each of the BrandZ™ measures, what they are, how they are calculated and how you can access a report which contains the measure.

To download a sample genome map visit: http://wppwrap.com/bg.pdf
Building Brand Equity

BrandZ™ tools diagnose brand strengths and weaknesses

Based on unique insights derived from our proprietary BrandZ™ database, we have created an ever-expanding library of tools for building and sustaining valuable brands. These tools are only available via your WPP and Kantar agencies.

Vitality Quotient (vQ)
Diagnose a brand’s health based on five elements that are proven to grow brand value: purpose, innovation, communication, brand experience, and love.

Brand Equity
Measure brand equity and momentum. Diagnose your performance across three key building blocks: is your brand meaningful, different and salient?

Corporate Reputation
Why corporate reputation matters and how to influence it using the latest analysis. First new report in the BrandZ™ Perspectives series.

Consumer Trust
Third report in the BrandZ™ Perspectives series, summarising and diagnosing your brand’s trust credentials.

InnovationZ
Evaluate a brand’s perceived innovative power, what drives it and why it’s important. Discover sector-relevant real-time innovation and startup ideas, sourced via the exclusive Springwise global network of spotters.

CharacterZ
This innovative deck allows you to diagnose brand character and delve into the dynamics, clarity and consistency of a brand’s personality.

PitchDoctor
Everything you need to know about your brand’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in one easy-to-digest page.

StoryTeller
An interactive data-visualization tool to allow anyone to create story-led insights on how to build and maintain brand equity.
Get the BrandZ™ Perspective on Corporate Reputation, Consumer Trust and Brand Purpose on Kantar.com/Marketplace

- Understand the evolving influence of Consumer Trust, Brand Purpose and Corporate Reputation in this series of new BrandZ Perspectives reports
- Review your brand’s performance over time, across countries and versus competitors
- Access recommendations grounded in insights proven to drive brand and business success


Going Global?

We wrote the book

BrandZ™ The Ultimate Resource for Brand Knowledge and Insight

Our BrandZ™ country reports contain unparalleled market knowledge, insights, and thought leadership about the world’s most exciting markets. You’ll find, in one place, the wisdom of WPP brand building experts from all regions, plus the unique consumer insights derived from our proprietary BrandZ™ database.

If you’re planning to expand internationally, BrandZ™ country reports are as essential as a passport.
Looking East

In-depth brand-building intelligence about today’s China

The opportunity to build brands in China is greater than ever. But so are the challenges.

The fastest growth is happening deep in the country, in less-well-known cities and towns. Consumers are more sophisticated and expect brands to deliver high-quality products and services that show real understanding of local market needs.

Plus, emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chinese market is becoming even more complicated as consumers reexamine their priorities.

WPP has been in China for over 40 years. We know the Chinese market in all its diversity and complexity. This experience has gone into our series of BrandZ™ China reports. They will help you avoid mistakes and benefit from the examples of successful brand builders.
Spotlight on...

BrandZ™ Spotlight on Cuba
Cuba is a market unparalleled both in the Caribbean region and the world. Brand awareness among Cubans is high but gaining access to them uniquely challenging. Now is the time to plan your Cuba strategy.

BrandZ™ Spotlight on Mongolia
Mongolia’s GDP has grown at rates as high as 17 percent in recent years, encouraging a growing number of international brands to gravitate toward this fast-growth market and make a beeline for one of Asia’s hidden gems.

BrandZ™ Spotlight on Vietnam
Check out the latest Spotlight report on this fascinating, fast-paced market. Whether you’re interested in food and beverages, have a passion for fashion, or would like an insight into Vietnam’s financial services, this is your first stop!

WPP in India

We help build valuable brands
WPP is a creative transformation company. We use the power of creativity to build better futures for our people, clients and communities. For more information, visit www.wpp.com.

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Kantar in India

Kantar is the world's leading evidence-based insights and consulting company. We have a complete, unique and rounded understanding of how people think, feel and act, globally and locally in over 90 markets. By combining the deep expertise of our people, our data resources and benchmarks, our innovative analytics and technology, we help our clients understand people and inspire growth.

To learn more about how to obtain valuable insights applicable to all business areas contact:

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You can also keep updated on the latest news and studies from the Kantar network through our portal: kantar.com or twitter.com/KantarIndia.
BCW (Burson Cohn & Wolfe), one of the world’s largest full-service global communications agencies, is in the business of moving people on behalf of clients. Founded by the merger of Burson-Marsteller and Cohn & Wolfe, BCW delivers digitally and data-driven creative content and integrated communications programs grounded in earned media and scaled across all channels for clients in the B2B, consumer, corporate, crisis management, CSR, healthcare, public affairs and technology sectors. BCW is a part of WPP (NYSE: WPP), a creative transformation company.

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Genesis BCW (Genesis Burson Cohn & Wolfe) has mirrored the journey of India’s public relations and public affairs landscape for over 27 years. We have been setting benchmarks with our imagination, creativity and agility to deliver impact for our clients, and help them in moving people: to act, to inspire, to change. We provide digitally and data-driven creative content and integrated communications programs grounded in earned media and scaled across all channels for clients in the business-to-business, consumer, corporate, crisis management, CSR, healthcare, public affairs and technology sectors.

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Grey is one of the ten largest advertising agencies in the world, with offices in over 83 countries. It has one overriding focus: to produce truly great creative work, to produce work that soars, makes us proud and fosters the brand relationship with consumers—work that helps our clients prosper. Grey Worldwide provides highly creative services including brand ideas and strategies, brand planning, creative development and production. Our agency is organized into four geographical units: North America; Europe, Middle East & Africa (EMEA), Asia-Pacific and Latin America.

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GroupM is the world’s leading media investment company responsible for more than $50B in annual media investment through agencies Mindshare, MediaCom, Wavemaker, Essence and m/SIX, as well as the outcomes-driven programmatic audience company, Xaxis. GroupM’s portfolio includes Data & Technology, Investment and Services, all united in vision to shape the next era of media where advertising works better for people. By leveraging all the benefits of scale, the company innovates, differentiates and generates sustained value for our clients wherever they do business.

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A global, industry-leading communications agency, GTB transforms businesses through the world’s most purposeful, creative solutions fueled by precise marketing. Founded in 2007, GTB leverages its deep understanding of the consumer and its clients’ business to deliver true integration within the speed, diversity and potential of modern communications to “make what matters” for people and for business.

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Setting a scorching pace since its inception in 1986, Contract Advertising has built a reputation for igniting the flames of passion that have created trailblazing brands across industries.

A passion for insights, an obsession with out-of-the-box ideas, strategic thinking that breaks the traditional mould, a fanatical pursuit of creativity and a commitment to driving business results; these resolves sum up the Contract difference and have made us India’s firebrand agency. Besides mass media advertising, Contract offers truly integrated marketing and communication solutions through its specialist divisions.

Our network across South Asia includes wholly-owned offices in six of India’s key metros and a strong affiliate footprint in over 200 cities across India and neighbouring countries including Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

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**Hill+Knowlton Strategies India**

Part of the WPP group, Hill+Knowlton Strategies India comes with three decades of experience in reputation management, strategic communication counselling and brand building.

Our heritage in owned, earned and shared media enables us to craft purpose-driven integrated communication campaigns that bring stories to life. Our teams collaborate across zones, languages and cultures to help clients make prudent decisions in an always-on world. Our client obsession means constantly evolving new products and services to help clients and their public communicate.

[H+K India is home to 40+ employees with owned offices in Delhi NCR, Mumbai and Bangalore, and supported by affiliates in 100+ cities spanning across India.](www.hkstrategies.com)

**MediaCom**

MediaCom helps brands unlock growth through media. We do this by applying our unique Systems Thinking approach to data, technology and creativity to design communication strategies that build brands and generate sales.

As part of WPP, and part of GroupM, we have access to rich data sets and most robust benchmarks in the business, enabling us to identify great avenues for growth and unlock the potential in every brand.

In 2018, MediaCom became the first network to hold all six major Media Network of the Year titles concurrently: Adweek, Campaign, Cannes Lions, Festival of Media Global, M&M Global and WARC Media 100.

[www.mediacom.com](www.mediacom.com)

**Mindshare**

We were born in Asia in 1997, a WPP start up designed to make media exciting, fun and life changing. We are the Cannes Lions Media Network of the Year 2019 and WARC Media 100 #1 Media Network 2020, with the top 3 most creative campaigns of the past year – so basically, statistically the best media agency in the world! Our 10,000 people work with some of the world’s best brands and companies to challenge convention. Hear our stories (and join us) at www.mindshareworld.com and follow us: WeChat ID: Mindshare_China; Instagram and Twitter: @mindshare; Facebook: facebook.com/mindshare and LinkedIn: LinkedIn.com/company/mindshare.

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**Mirum India**

We are a borderless agency of over 2,500 digital experts, storytellers, technologists, makers and relentlessly curious minds. Across the globe, we make experiences that people want and businesses need. Our approach is to be entrepreneurial and to create agile teams that blend strategy, creativity, technology, media and analytics to drive innovation. We work to discover business and human motivations because we believe experiences build brands.

[www.mirumindia.com](www.mirumindia.com)

**Motivator**

Motivator is one of the leading media agencies in India. It is GroupM’s specialized agency to handle “emerging brands”. It is one of the fastest-growing agencies within the GroupM eco-system, with over 50 clients, both Indian and global, across 5 offices. Motivator partners businesses in travelling the trajectory “from start up through scale up” – be it new age, challenger or existing brands looking to diversify and grow. The delivery is on the back of data, digital, content and measurement to drive marketing ROI.

Motivator’s current client base includes CortZA, Huawei, Yamaha, Himalaya Wellness, Pepperfry, Kalyan Jewellers, Bajaj Corp, BharatPe, Redington, Ingram, Del Monte, Essilor, Tata Foods, Safari, ZoomCars, Cello Pens, Indigo Airlines, Pierre, Hitachi and Milklane to name a few.

[www.groupm.com](www.groupm.com)

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**Landor & Fitch**

Our ambition is to deliver extraordinary brand transformation for our clients, by design.

With Landor’s brand consulting and strategic design capability, Fitch’s experience design and retail consultancy, and ManvsMachine’s leading edge motion design, we are the largest specialist brand and design group in the world. We’re proud to work with clients that include P&G, Kellogg’s, Kraft Heinz, Barclays, Bayer, BP, FedEx, Huawei, Dell, Lego, Sberbank, Bang & Olufsen and ESPN to deliver brand-led growth. We are a team of over 1100+ curious minds, with 43 offices across 19 countries, working as one, to create extraordinary brand experiences.

[www.landor.com](www.landor.com)  
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**RESOURCES**

**BRANDZ™ TOP 75 MOST VALUABLE INDIAN BRANDS 2020**
Superunion is a next-generation brand agency built on a spirit of creative optimism. We believe in the power of creativity to improve the future of people and organisations. We are experts in brand strategy, design, communications and brand management.

With 750 people in 15 countries, we are a truly global agency. Our clients include some of the world’s most iconic brands, such as Vodafone, Bank of America, British Airways, Coca-Cola, Deloitte, Ford, FIFA, Heineken, Nestle, and the BBC, alongside technology unicorns, ambitious start-ups and inspiring not-for-profits.

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VMLY&R is a global brand and customer experience agency that harnesses creativity, technology, and culture to create connected brands. The agency is made up of nearly 7,000 employees worldwide, with principal offices in Kansas City, New York, Detroit, London, São Paulo, Shanghai, Singapore and Sydney. VMLY&R works with client partners including Colgate-Palmolive, Danone, Dell, Ford, New Balance, Pfizer and Wendy’s. For more information, visit www.vmlyr.com.

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Wavemaker
We believe there always is a better way to grow. We positively provoke growth for our clients by reshaping consumer decision-making and experiences through media, content and technology. The Wavemaker way is globally consistent. Fueled by the world’s most powerful consumer data, we understand where and how marketing can intervene decisively to help brands win more sales. Our 7,200 people across 90 markets have the deep knowledge, confidence and courage to provoke growth for some of the world’s leading brands and businesses.

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Wunderman Thompson South Asia Group provides integrated communication solutions to its clients through its network across India (New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Hyderabad and Bangalore), Sri Lanka and Nepal. The group includes Wunderman Thompson, Contract Advertising, ADK-Fortune and Minum. With a reach of over 1000 employees in over 18 offices across three countries, we work with some of the most well-known and ambitious Indian and global brands, supporting them across data-driven communications, experiences and platforms. In a fast-changing communication environment Wunderman Thompson is committed to staying ahead of the curve by adding new skill sets, building new capabilities and collaborating with partner companies to offer the best business solutions to our clients.

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Ogilvy
Ogilvy has been producing iconic, culture-changing marketing campaigns since the day its founder David Ogilvy opened up shop in 1948. Today, Ogilvy is an award-winning integrated creative network that makes brands matter for Fortune Global 500 companies as well as local businesses across 132 offices in 83 countries. The company creates experiences, design and communications that shape every aspect of a brand’s needs through six core capabilities: Brand Strategy, Advertising, Customer Engagement and Commerce, PR and Influence, Digital Transformation, and Partnerships. Ogilvy is a WPP company (NASDAQ: WPPGY). For more information, visit http://www.ogilvy.com, or follow Ogilvy on Twitter at @Ogilvy and on Facebook.com/Ogilvy.

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The Store is a global retail practice of WPP, specializing in providing expertise, support and added value to client initiatives in retail dynamics. The Store is a knowledge hub, built to help clients navigate through insights for consumers, retailing, marketing and sales activation, and technology. The Store is also a host of global workshops that bring together retailing and branding experts to share their vision and expertise for future growth.

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WPP Company Contributors
Delightfully illustrated, rich in charm and colour, the custom-written graphic novels combine AI, big data analytics and creative story-telling to present data analysis in a new and engaging way— as we like to say, the novels are where human rhythms and algorithms combine.

Thought-provoking, insight-driven and consumer-centric, BrandZ™ Graphic Novels are a must-read for any brand builder.


As many of you know, late last year we published what quickly became a hugely popular series of graphic novels—custom written and illustrated books combining AI, big data analytics and creative story-telling to present brand analysis in a new and engaging way.

We have had many requests from colleagues around the world for different language versions of the novels. Well, I’m delighted to announce that our graphic novel characters have all been studying hard in their lock down isolation and are now multi-lingual….. …and fluent in Chinese, French, Spanish, German and Portuguese...

Olé
WPP Company Brand Building Experts
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With special thanks and appreciation to:


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Contact:
BrandZ.Marketplace@kantar.com

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The brand valuations in the BrandZ™ Top 75 Most Valuable Indian Brands 2020 are produced using market data from Kantar, along with Bloomberg.

The consumer viewpoint is derived from the BrandZ™ database. Established in 1998 and constantly updated, this database of brand analytics and equity is the world’s largest, containing over 3.8 million consumer interviews, more than 17,801 brands, and 5.25 billion data points in 51 markets.

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