

30 March 2020

BUSINESS THE DAY AFTER

MARKETING, COMMUNICATION AND
SALES ACTIVITIES IN 13 KEY AREAS TO
SUCCESSFULLY OVERCOME THE
CRISIS TRIGGERED BY THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC

13

All rights reserved
© PM d.o.o.
Part of C3 Network

www.p-m.si
www.c3.co



This analysis includes a set of key marketing, communications and sales areas and action suggestions necessary for businesses and organisations to properly prepare and equip themselves for the time after the COVID-19 pandemic. The document covers: changes in **customer behaviour**, changes in **media and communication**, changes related to **sales**, urgent **technological and process** changes, and **strategic communication** changes.

The document is intended for key decision makers: directors, executive board members, communication and marketing managers, technology managers and other decision makers in businesses and organisations who want to focus on solutions and new opportunities.

- The expert team of the communication and technology agency: PM , poslovni mediji

CRISIS IS THE TIME FOR CHANGE

Despite common understanding of a crisis as the time of distress, danger and economic hardship, the word crisis actually derives from the Greek noun *krisis* meaning a decision. The crisis businesses and organisations are facing today therefore marks a point of decision-making and turnaround that will bring about new opportunities.

One of the key areas which already plays an ever-greater importance is marketing and broader brand communications with their most important stakeholders: customers, partners and employees.

Current circumstances will change the established habits and expectations of users faster than ever. The businesses that will timely recognise and adapt to the new reality will not only survive but also prosper.

The crisis has demonstrated how critical fast, thoughtful, quality, creative, and technologically sophisticated marketing, sales and broader communication activities are to survival and growth.

13 KEY AREAS

The document of the agency PM Ljubljana asserts the key areas which should be subject to serious consideration, decisions and prompt planning of activities in companies eager to explore the months and years to come.

13 KEY AREAS

1. IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

2. INCREASED TRUST IN DIGITAL

CHANGES IN CUSTOMER HABITS

3. NEED FOR DIVERSE CREATIVITY

4. GREATER NEED FOR AUTHENTICITY IN COMMUNICATION

5. BUILDING OWN MEDIA AND CHOOSING RIGHT CHANNELS

6. DIGITALISING EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS IN A MORE EMPLOYEE-FRIENDLY WAY

7. NEW TYPE OF DIGITAL AND PHYSICAL CORPORATE EVENTS

CHANGES IN COMMUNICATION

8. WEBSHOP AS THE MOST IMPORTANT SALES »LOCATION«

9. CUSTOMER JOURNEY TO WEBSHOP IS DIFFERENT FROM PHYSICAL STORE

10. PLANNING PURCHASES IN ADVANCE AS OPPORTUNITY

CHANGES IN SALES

11. BUILDING LASTING QUALITY RELATIONS, CONFIDENCE AND SIGNIFICANCE IN KEY STAKEHOLDERS

12. EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF LASTING CONNECTIONS TO CUSTOMERS

13. NEW WAY OF WORKING (TELECOMMUTING)

STRATEGY AND PROCESS CHANGES

CHANGES IN CUSTOMER HABITS

CHANGES IN COMMUNICATION
CHANGES IN SALES
STRATEGY AND PROCESS CHANGES

FEATURING

1. **IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES**
2. **INCREASED TRUST IN DIGITAL**

IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

1.

Due to the expected economic outlook (slowdown in economic growth, friction due to negative effects of globalisation), customers will again be more inclined to purchase local products and services, as they will actively contribute to faster recovery of the local economy.



OPPORTUNITY

Companies and producers active and socially responsible in the local community will gain trust and loyalty of consumers for a longer period of time.



WHAT CAN MARKETING AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS ACHIEVE?

1. Define the communication position and a content platform as a producer of local products and services.
2. Establish and implement a strategy for communication activation in the local community.
3. Select, connect and activate the right communication channels and technology platforms to communicate with the local community.

INCREASED TRUST IN DIGITAL

Almost overnight, we've shifted to a new way of working, learning, shopping...remotely. This new situation has been pushing even those less inclined to use digital technologies to change their habits.

They will overcome the fear of the unknown and learn firsthand about many advantages and disadvantages of the digital world.



OPPORTUNITY

Increased use of digital services and channels during the crisis will create a new group of users whose confidence in digital channels will significantly increase during the crisis. Companies and producers able to listen to and address new users will gain a new and fairly large audience.



WHAT CAN MARKETING AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS ACHIEVE?

1. Appropriately adjust digital touch points of your products and services (simplified for the most intuitive user experience).
2. Mobile phones will become an even more important touchpoint for customers and thus must offer an optimized user experience on their screens as well.
3. Properly address the new segment of users and create content tailored to that target audience that will encourage the use of digital channels and their services even after the crisis.

CHANGES IN CUSTOMER HABITS

CHANGES IN COMMUNICATION

CHANGES IN SALES

STRATEGY AND PROCESS CHANGES

FEATURING

3. NEED FOR DIVERSE CREATIVITY
4. GREATER NEED FOR AUTHENTICITY IN COMMUNICATION
5. BUILDING OWN MEDIA AND CHOOSING RIGHT CHANNELS
6. DIGITALISING EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS IN A MORE EMPLOYEE-FRIENDLY WAY
7. NEW TYPE OF DIGITAL AND PHYSICAL CORPORATE EVENTS

NEED FOR DIVERSE CREATIVITY

Despite different expectations, due to the crisis, media consumption of certain traditional media (mainly television and radio or audio on different platforms) will be maintained or temporarily increased.

Simultaneously, due to the increase in digital communication, a new approach to creativity and communication is needed. The one that will better integrate often separate approaches.

The new integrated creative marketing strategy must originate in the creativity primarily used in digital communication (more interaction, multichannel campaigns, online creative optimisation, clear calls to action, measurable effects on sales, etc.)



OPPORTUNITY

Advertisers need to adjust their creative patterns when advertising through traditional media (TV, radio). These should become more similar to the patterns and measurability that have already been established in online advertising.



WHAT CAN MARKETING AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS ACHIEVE?

1. Reallocate content advertising through traditional media (when their use is reasonable) to more native formats.
2. Provide for the necessary simultaneity and interconnection of analogue, electronic and digital channels.
3. Establish production and distribution modes that will allow the principle of „prepare ad / test / measure / optimise / redo.”

GREATER NEED FOR AUTHENTICITY IN COMMUNICATION

The period of communicating through influencers, who actually cannot offer the right reach nor sincerity, is coming to an end.

Target audiences desire authentic communication with clear value for the user and the opinions of people they can trust because they are experts in their field or for other reassuring reasons.

4.



OPPORTUNITY

Advertisers must make sure that their overall communication is honest and authentic. Only genuine and honest stories and content will ensure customer loyalty.

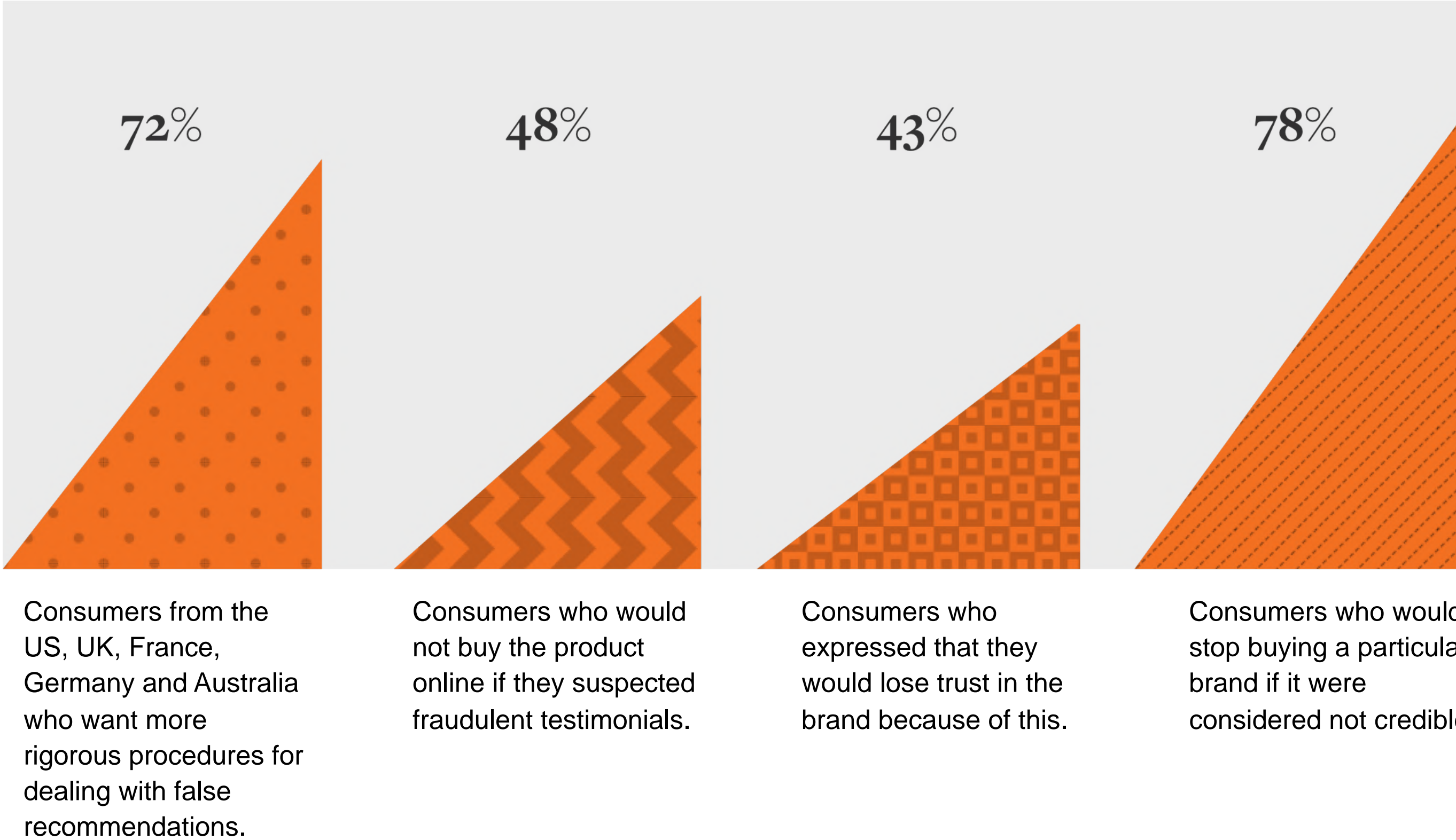


WHAT CAN MARKETING AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS ACHIEVE?

1. Develop an authentic content marketing strategy to produce quality content of clear interest to selected audiences.
2. Develop a sustainable model of continuous production and distribution of honest, authentic and useful content.

Authentic content marketing strategy can provide more loyal customers that are critical to long-term success.

CONSUMERS DEMAND STRICTER RULES FOR ONLINE RECOMMENDATIONS



Source: Bazaarvoice, 2020

BUILDING OWN MEDIA AND CHOOSING RIGHT CHANNELS

Increasing customer trust in information sources (the emergence of fake news and irrelevant media) will make it ever more important to establish credible own media and communication channels as a lasting form of communication—emails, content platforms, social networks, virtual events, etc.

Choosing the right technical platforms and the right way to manage content is a key to success.



OPPORTUNITY

Advertisers need to tailor their media strategy, production and editing of their content in a manner of building their own communication channels and media on one hand, and effectively utilising other communication channels to increase their reach on the other hand.



WHAT CAN MARKETING AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS ACHIEVE?

1. Plan building your own media and communication channels.
2. Select the appropriate technological platforms to host and distribute your own media content.
3. Establish a process for creating and promoting your own media content.

DIGITALISING EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS IN A MORE EMPLOYEE-FRIENDLY WAY

One of the main competitive advantages of a company is the harmonisation of employees and the speed of responding to the needs and desires of customers.

Because digitisation enables extremely fast information transfer, it is imperative to digitalise and adapt employee communication so that it is easy enough and accessible to everyone in the company.

The right employee communication, delivered at the right time, helps one understand the brand's actions, increases productivity, gives you a sense of connection, and increases employee productivity.



OPPORTUNITY

Businesses that establish an appropriate way of continuous and accessible employee communication (a mobile phone is a communication channel that virtually every employee has) will increase the engagement of their employees and improve the overall customer experience, as employees will work even more uniformly and coherently.



WHAT CAN MARKETING AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS ACHIEVE?

1. Establish a new, accessible channel for employee communication via mobile phones (this enables internal communication with just about all employees, including those who do not use a computer at their work).
2. Prepare employee communication content that are adapt to use via mobile phones (educational content, urgent messages, other internal communication).
3. Establish a continuous content creation process for employee communication and a two-way communication process with employees.

NEW TYPE OF DIGITAL AND PHYSICAL CORPORATE EVENTS

Organising corporate events will change significantly in the future, but people's need for F2F meetings and experiences will not decrease.

Good content and excellent event planning for a period of time after the crisis will not necessarily be enough to guarantee the attendance we were used to before. Therefore, we expect that a new type of events shall soon be established, which will be a combination of a live and digital event.

The duration of such an event will not only be limited to the moment of the live event but will be extended to a longer period during which visitors will also be able to consume content remotely and with delay.



OPPORTUNITY

Brands should not interrupt corporate events for an extended period of time. Otherwise, they are throwing away all the capital they have built up to date with planned corporate events. They must establish new types of corporate events as soon as possible to continue to reach and maintain contact with their target groups.



WHAT CAN MARKETING AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS ACHIEVE?

1. Quickly define the new corporate event format so that the break in contact with the target audience is as limited as possible.
2. Establish a new event concept that will work remotely, and later live, using digital technology.
3. Define the technical infrastructure that enables such events to take place.
4. Plan content areas that will attract the desired audience to such events.

CHANGES IN CUSTOMER HABITS

CHANGES IN COMMUNICATION

CHANGES IN SALES

STRATEGY AND PROCESS CHANGES

FEATURING

8. WEBSHOP AS THE MOST IMPORTANT SALES »LOCATION«
9. CUSTOMER JOURNEY TO WEBSHOP IS DIFFERENT FROM BRICK-AND-MORTAR STORE
10. PLANNING PURCHASES IN ADVANCE AS OPPORTUNITY

WEBSHOP AS THE MOST IMPORTANT SALES LOCATION

A large proportion of people who make online purchases during a crisis will turn a personal online shopping experience into a habit. After the crisis, we expect that the proportion of purchases made through online stores will increase significantly (relative to the pre-crisis period).

8.



OPPORTUNITY

Brands need to strategically plan effective online sales (customizing the entire sales funnel).

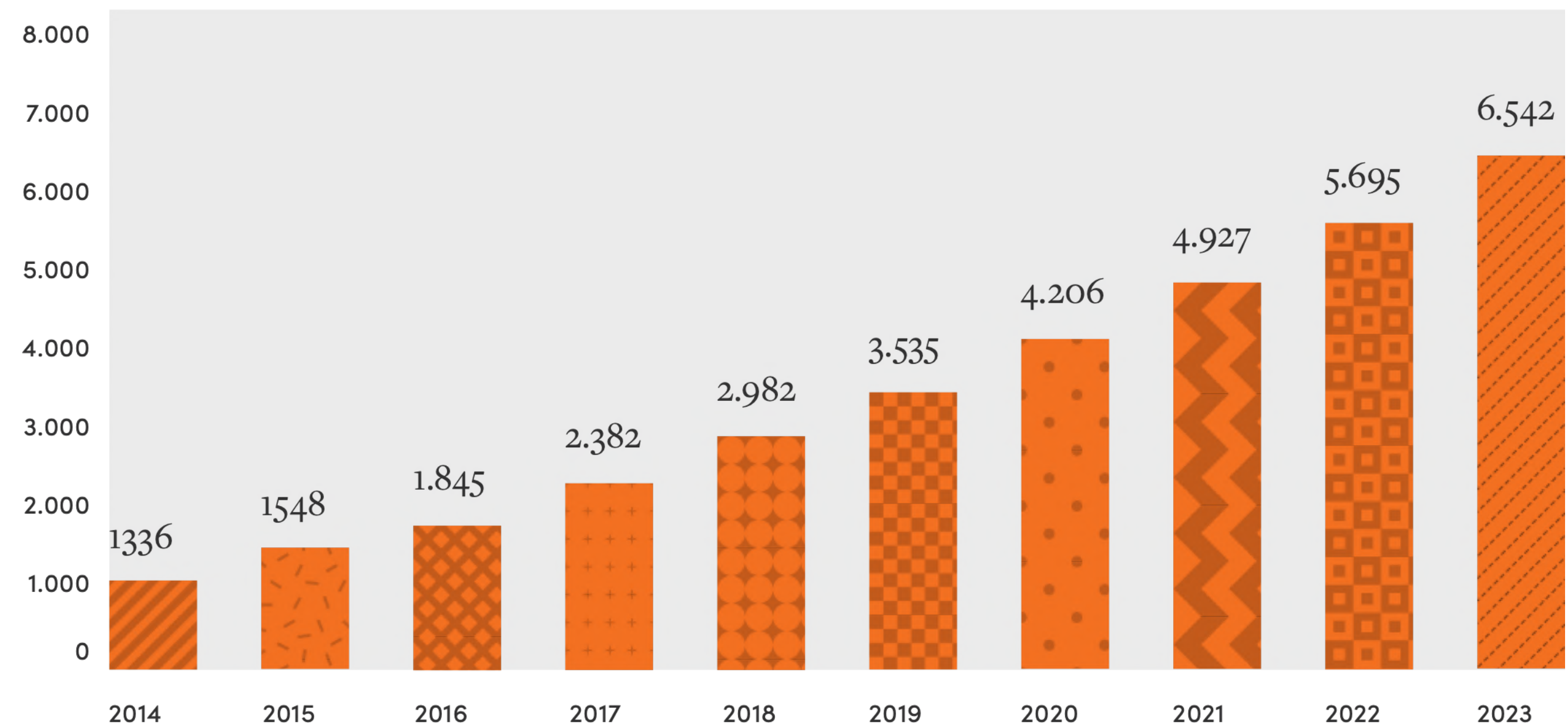


WHAT CAN MARKETING AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS ACHIEVE?

1. Take a strategic approach to setting up / optimising an online store in your business.
2. Establish appropriate processes and technology for a smooth operation of the online store.
3. Allocate sufficient resources to ensure that the overall user experience (from promotion, selection, ordering to delivery and after-sales activities) is truly optimal when online shopping.

After the crisis, the percentage of online purchases will be much higher than before.

ONLINE SALES GROWTH TREND GLOBALLY BETWEEN 2014 AND 2023
(in millions of US dollars)



Source: Statista, 2020

CUSTOMER JOURNEY TO WEBSHOP IS DIFFERENT FROM BRICK-AND-MORTAR STORE

Brands must ensure that they adequately cover all the touchpoints where their potential customers are and bring customers to their online store.



OPPORTUNITY

Brands need to build an effective digital ecosystem to systematically cover all stages of the online purchasing process. In doing so, the experience that customers are accustomed to from the physical world must be transmitted as naturally as possible to the digital environment (e.g. to enable the seller to be consulted "live" via the website).



WHAT CAN MARKETING AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS ACHIEVE?

1. Identify digital touchpoints where potential customer contact can occur.
2. Understand the behaviour of potential buyers in a digital environment (where the seller reaches the buyer, not the other way around).
3. Recognise quality leads and deliver them to sales staff.

PLANNING PURCHASES IN ADVANCE AS OPPORTUNITY

It is very likely that after the crisis, people will slightly change the way they plan to buy food and other goods (technological, media, health, hygiene, etc.), taking care of a larger stock of basic and non-perishable goods than before the crisis.

Despite some impulsive decisions made in recent years, we can reasonably expect more in advance planning and inventory creation »just in case«.



OPPORTUNITY

Producers of products that will make this kind of planning easier for their customers will gain a significant competitive advantage.



WHAT CAN MARKETING AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS ACHIEVE?

1. Upgrade existing applications and websites with features that will make it easier for customers to plan.
2. Find new, easy-to-use digital solutions that will make it easier for customers to plan and execute purchases (pre-set product baskets, pre-packaged essentials, etc.).
3. Design special sales packages (baskets of selected goods), which are properly promoted to their target groups through content marketing.

CHANGES IN CUSTOMER HABITS

CHANGES IN COMMUNICATION

CHANGES IN SALES

STRATEGY AND PROCESS CHANGES

FEATURING

11. BUILDING LASTING QUALITY RELATIONS,
CONFIDENCE AND SIGNIFICANCE IN KEY
STAKEHOLDERS
12. EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF LASTING
CONNECTIONS TO CUSTOMERS
13. NEW WAY OF WORKING (TELECOMMUTING)

BUILDING LASTING QUALITY RELATIONS, CONFIDENCE AND SIGNIFICANCE IN KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The crisis in which brands suddenly found themselves in revealed the (in)equality of relationships they have with key stakeholders, be they employees, suppliers, partners or customers. Communication and relationships with key stakeholders is and will be the key factor in getting out of the crisis.

A relationship of trust and affection can only be built gradually and systematically through quality content and an effective combination of communication channels.



OPPORTUNITY

Brands need to design an operational strategic communication plan based on a self-critical review of the situation, integrating all perspectives and aiming at building a new sustainable brand that can effectively support sales.



WHAT CAN MARKETING AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS ACHIEVE?

1. Start the process of establishing or redefining communication strategy and key activities.
2. Establish an expert team (internal / external) to prepare short- and medium-term tasks and help redefine current routine activities.
3. Select, connect and activate the right communication channels and technology platforms for communication with key stakeholders, on which the success of the company depends.

EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF LASTING CONNECTIONS TO CUSTOMERS

Lasting connections with customers have become part of everyday reality. However, the complexity and diversification of channels that customers use to connect on a daily basis significantly increases the cost of business-to-business support activities.



OPPORTUNITY

Businesses need to establish an ongoing interaction with customers, yet also ensure its effectiveness (automation and integration of tools) and that the data collected in the process is properly used to improve products and processes.



WHAT CAN MARKETING AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS ACHIEVE?

1. Redefine own market position to further integrate customer relationships (before visuals, messages, slogans).
2. Define the optimal model for developing and maintaining a continuous relationship with its target groups.
3. Define the process and the right choice of channels, media, content and interaction.

NEW WAY OF WORKING (TELECOMMUTING)

During the current isolation, the technological and organizational challenges of remote work will emerge even at companies that have not previously practiced this method of working.

We expect that the growth rate of those working from home after the crisis will be accelerated, as companies will have to prepare for similar situations in the future, and some companies will even recognise the opportunity for competitive differentiation (greater employee satisfaction, lower costs of premises and equipment and others).



OPPORTUNITY

Adaptation of internal processes to work from home (organizational and infrastructure transformation).

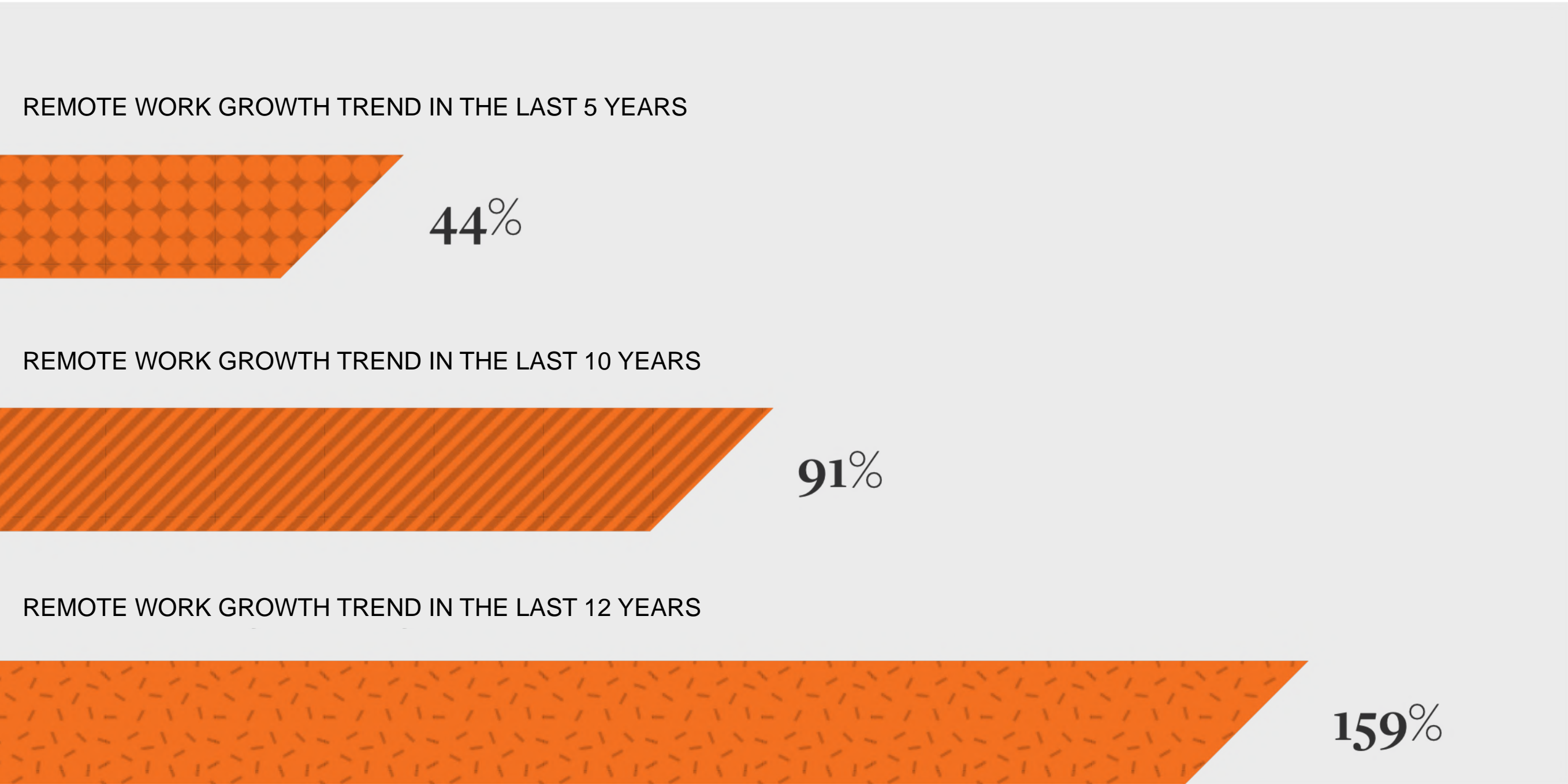


WHAT CAN MARKETING AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS ACHIEVE?

1. Identify which business functions within the company could convert to remote work to create a new competitive advantage for the company in the market.
2. Define the methods of internal communication crucial for coordinated and efficient operations when working remotely.
3. Create educational content to establish effective remote work.
4. Develop an "onboarding" process for the quick and ongoing introduction of new employees to a company practicing remote work.

Telecommuting can create a new competitive advantage for brands.

REMOTE WORK GROWTH TREND



Source: Flexjobs, 2020

WHAT CAN YOU DO RIGHT NOW?

1 **Form a marketing-communication “think tank team”.**

Now is not the least, but the most appropriate moment for it. Rely on external experts who can actively assist you with experience and expertise from their industries.

3 **Establish or improve your digital sales.**

Immediately begin the process of setting up or upgrading your digital sales, carefully link it to your marketing activities and invite experts to come up with your first improvement package.

5 **Set up your own media.**

Establish and manage your own media, communications channels and networks, which are your key capital, both in normal situations and in any kind of crisis. Immediately make process-management adjustments while relying on the expertise and good practices of others.

2 **Give priority to the immediate development of new technologies to support marketing communication.**

Do it immediately. Even small technological steps will now prove to be big and important in the future. Insist on connecting the two areas.

4 **Ground your marketing and strategic communication in quality in-house content.**

The focus should be on the added value you bring to users. Start preparing your content immediately. Encourage new creativity and engage those who understand and deliver it.

6 **Encourage diverse creativity and innovation in marketing.**

Traditional media and channels (radio and audio channels, TV and video channels, events, print media, outdoor) will change. Strategically connect them to digital innovation. It's time for a new wave of creativity. Rely on expert knowledge.

CONTACTS

PM is a comprehensive communications agency providing effective solutions for brands: marketing, technology, content, media, advertising, sales, crisis communication, digital, production, strategic communication, and business development.

We can be your communications agency and partner for crisis management and development – connect with our experts.



Igor Savič

Partner & CEO

igor.savic@p-m.si
041 641 786



Primož Inkret

Partner & CEO

primoz.inkret@p-m.si
041 355 100



Anja Garbajs

Strategic client director & event specialist

anja.garbajs@p-m.si
041 529 291



Urban Pfeifer

Chief Technology Officer

urban.pfeifer@p-m.si
030 384 929



Boštjan Sukič

Strategic client director

bostjan.sukic@p-m.si
041 355 011



Mitja Jereb

Strategic client director and head of strategic consulting

mitja.jereb@p-m.si
041 273 404



Mia Vouk

Strategic client director

mia.vouk@p-m.si
040 654 776



Nenad Senič

Corporate media Editor

nenad.senic@p-m.si
041 866 901