WHAT MARKETERS CAN LEARN FROM TODAY TO REINVENT BRAND MARKETING TOMORROW
Necessity has always been the mother of invention. And amid the challenges and uncertainty COVID-19 as a crisis has presented all industries, there’s been unprecedented innovation in brand and consumer engagement.

In the early phases of the crisis, brands largely focused on keeping employees and existing customers safe, informed and supported. At a minimum, this meant pivoting marketing plans, campaigns and communications to remain contextually relevant. But at a more disruptive level, it’s required new business models, supply chains, products and services to cater to transformed customer needs.

Just look at some of the innovations close to home: From same-day delivery services and virtual experience platforms, to ecommerce marketplaces, unlikely brand partnerships across category, content and streaming initiatives, and more. All have been driven by customer need, and the very best exhibited a distinctive brand authenticity that consumers will remember long after the crisis has been overcome.

As brands now turn their attention towards tentative recovery, such ‘new norms’ of engagement raise significant questions.

There’s no doubt marketers will need to evolve strategies to suit a transformed consumer mindset and competitive landscape. And many can expect to do so under more scrutiny of spend.

With two-thirds of consumers to a recent survey stating brand actions in a time of crisis will have a major impact on brand trust, and nearly eight in 10 citing stronger affiliation to businesses that went above and beyond during this unprecedented crisis, it’s clear things won’t return to the old status quo. Instead, we can expect significant market dynamic shifts and brand realignment off the back of changing consumer expectations and habits and rapid digitisation.

So what ideas can we pull as brand leaders today to drive brand saliency tomorrow? What lessons can we take from the crisis to regenerate marketing, sales and service propositions for the post-COVID-19 future?

There were just some of the questions explored by marketing leaders across a number of Australia’s high-profile brands during a two-part series of virtual roundtables held by Facebook in partnership with ADMA.
Lesson 1: Become a Useful, Trusted Information Source

From the first moments of the COVID-19 crisis, brand leaders agreed emphasis was on education and information. Xero brand and engagement director, Penny Elmslie, said her team concentrated on supporting customers and advisory partners as each region the accounting software provider operates in entered different crisis stages.

“We quickly recognised there was a mountain of information being thrown at customers and partners from the government, industry, World Health Organisation and more, and our priority was to distil, collect, curate and get that information into an education format,” she said. “Overnight, our education machine was pumping out hours of webinars and banks of information.”

A company-wide program, called ‘Behind small business’, encouraged teams to consider how Xero could support key customers. This led to building product-specific activity for legislative needs – no mean feat given each region’s different challenges. Xero has since moved to ‘rehab recovery’, again evolving messaging and content based on market needs.

For South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC) executive director of marketing, Brent Hill, coping with the crisis has been an extraordinary experience, not least because he was putting out ads telling people not to travel.

“We then had a decision to make between wanting to keep our brand going, but being conscious of the fact we wouldn’t have an industry on the other side if we didn’t look after those guys,” he said. A big chunk of marketing spend became grants, and in a fortnight, SATC allocated close to $6 million across eight programs stretching from money to upskilling people.

Tourism Australia (TA) CMO, Susan Coghill, also saw two paths emerge: One with consumers, and another with providers. Again, becoming a source of truth was vital. Initiatives included update emails to industry leaders 2-3 times weekly, and weekly webinars.

“It was also about trying to eventually bring our market a sense of normality,” Coghill said. “That includes inspirational content to keep dreaming about Australia, because we want to make sure we remain top of mind even through lockdown and restricted movement. But we had to look at our industry as well. It was about making sure the trade remained engaged and as in love with Australia at the other side of this crisis as they were at the beginning.”

Both TA and SATC learnt to balance information with inspiration and community during the 2019-2020 bushfires. TA was also debuting a multi-million UK campaign with Kylie which it pulled when bushfires hit. Having re-envisioned the campaign to share stories of Australia’s reopening, TA again paused and pivoted, developing a new set of communications suited to the Coronavirus period.

“Gone are the days of 12-month planning and six-month production. We’re going to be far more agile and nimble in our communications development,” Coghill said.

Adore Beauty CMO, Dan Ferguson, cited a two-pronged response: One was reacting and understanding what a consumer is going through; the second was responding in a meaningful way. A longstanding and plain speaking health and beauty podcast was a big help. The online retailer also proactively reached out to customers to ensure it continued taking the right brand approach.

As a result, Adore Beauty became more social and media channel responsive. “Some of that is driven by social because of the instant feedback we get on campaigns and marketing. But, in a crisis, it’s even more acute,” Ferguson said.

Lendi, an online home loan platform, also focused on ensuring customers have the right information, not “media overstimulated nonsense”, said CMO, Zara Cobb. For the financial service provider, educating customers on qualifying for hardship, what it meant and what it’d do to credit and payment terms was critical. This led to a moment when Lendi realised COVID was putting its services at the centre of the crossfire.

“We became a lot more relevant to people who would never have considered us before,” Cobb said. “But then how do you make sure you’re not taking advantage of COVID? We had to tread that line quite carefully.”

Even before ANZ bank could help customers, it had to look after employees, head of marketing and brand strategy, Kjetil Undhjem, said. He compared it to the safety announcement on planes advising you to put on your own oxygen mask before helping others.

Having adopted agile working groups, ANZ realised portfolio and product focused teams needed to better attune to customer needs.
From there, ANZ devised a ‘relief’ and ‘recovery’ brand approach. Similarly, BIG W faced widespread disruption and by necessity focused on customers and team safety first, GM marketing, Kristen Linders, said.

“We had to undertake a significant amount of scenario planning and modelling about what the next few months would look like, from potentially need to close, to remaining open as well as needing to fulfil customer demand for essential items,” she said.

Digital became the biggest area of change and shoring up capacity online and fulfilment the priority. “We’ve seen more than double the number of traffic through our online sites, and sales have tripled,” Linders said.

The Iconic may not have physical fashion stores but it does sell fashion, said CMO, Alexander Meyer, presenting potential supply chain challenges. And while nine years of hyper-growth ensured teams embraced adaptability during COVID-19, impact on customer behaviour was immediate. A strong engagement play ensued as customers pivoted away from more formal categories such as dresses and heels, to loungewear.

“From a marketing point of view, the focus was not only about protecting, securing and emphasising new always-on suites of relevant content, but also harnessing the tools powering our general platforms even more than before,” Meyer explained.

What’s interesting about COVID is it’s been an accelerator of change, he continued. “It’s not one big thing that will create a new world and change how we live; this crisis has been more of an accelerator on all the trends we’ve been seeing already – businesses needing to be more customer centric, for example, with demand being more important than supply,” he said.

In addition, Meyer saw partner-oriented relationships rather than transactional ones as a vital approach applied with vigour during COVID-19.

For Hyundai, shoring up customer engagement meant shifting from selling cars to maintaining them. That led to a communication emphasis around car service management and preventing the spread of Coronavirus.

“We’re quite a tactile industry, and you find in a car dealership there’s lots of shaking hands, and warmness if you like, because we’re trying to strike up that relationship and build loyalty. What we shifted to was responsibility,” marketing director, Kevin Goult, said. “Not only do we look after your car to make sure you’re not standing on the road, we keep it clean.

“What we discovered, however, was as a consumer you’re expecting your car to be clean and people to behave in the most appropriate manner. So we went through a stage where we stopped talking about that, because it’s expected of us as a brand.”
LESSON 2: BRAND PURPOSE AND AUTHENTICITY

Through all these experiences, marketers agreed authenticity became an absolute must to retain brand salience. Thanks to the emphasis on informative content, SATC saw its SouthAustralia.com site record more than 1 million visits in May, up 40 per cent on the bushfire period.

“If you have a really authentic brand, and you’re giving clear, concise information, you become more trusted,” Hill said. “We literally had people on the ground assisting in the areas affected by the bushfires, and we applied that same mentality here.”

Hill described it as “going beyond the brand to see the people”. “While we weren’t visible, our voices were visible, telling people what they could and couldn’t do and adding to that really authentic voice.”

Brands see ongoing value from having been these trusted voices. At Lendi, content wasn’t particularly pretty or polished, Cobb said, but customers appreciated the authentic effort.

“IT'S ME IN MY LOUNGE ROOM TALKING TO 'ALICE' FROM DOMAIN IN HER LOUNGE ROOM, TRYING TO HELP CONSUMERS UNDERSTAND AND NAVIGATE THE SITUATION,” she said. “CERTAINLY PLATFORMS LIKE FACEBOOK, WHERE WE CAN CREATE COMMUNITIES, HELPED. WE HAD CREATED A COMMUNITY BEFORE ALL THIS HAPPENED, CALLED ‘HOMELAND HACKS’ AND THAT'S BEEN ONE OF OUR BUSIEST CHANNELS.”

Elmslie agreed brands that responded contextually appropriately in COVID-19 are on a fast-track to advocacy and customer retention as society enters this next phase of recovery.

“Improving yourself in crisis and continuing with the right sort of sentiment has definitely allowed people to jump ahead. Advocacy ultimately becomes a retention and referral play. So, to me, our job is to maintain and continue to earn that trust.”

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— BRENT HILL, SATC

LESSON 3: UTILISE ONLINE AND SOCIAL CHANNELS

Digital and social channels played a primary role as brands strived to engage, listen and respond during the crisis.

“Because we were able to pivot so quickly, customers got what they needed. If anything, this has changed our go-to market, long-term strategy because we are having direct, online responsive, complex conversations with them,” Elmslie said. “I’m excited for the next stage and what it means for our go-to-market strategy because it has made us and customers way more accessible.”

BIG W took to listening more closely to customers socially, both in owned Facebook and Instagram communities, as well as wider group.

“We’ve been able to listen deeply to what’s going on in customers’ lives, how they’re changing behaviours, how they are feeling about COVID. And it allowed us to uncover some of those community movements such as that ‘we, not me’ trend,” Linders said. “There have been lovely little joyful moments communities and families are creating, like going on a bear hunt, kids chalkling on pavements and families decorating their houses. All those sorts of things really go to the heart of BIG W’s purpose. We’re able to almost attach ourselves to some of those social movements and create fun and different content that wouldn’t ordinarily be expected of a retailer like BIG W.”

One initiative was ‘Big Days at Home’, where BIG W utilised Facebook Live and partnerships with the Wiggles, Michelle Bridges, Zoey Foster-Blake and others. The brand recorded 68,000 page views in the first week and 3000 families joining in on live content.

TA undertook 32 live social streams across Australia on two days. More than 39 million people were reached and 126m impressions secured. In addition, TA saw a 9.4 per cent ad recall lift across 12 core global markets. “This was an opportunity to be creative, do something a bit bigger and bolder than we normally would, and trial a format we hadn’t really used,” Coghill said.

Likewise, SATC prototyped new ideas. One was SATV, including Facebook Live streams. One attracted 36,000 views. Engagement stretched out during the COVID-19 crisis, and average views on videos of 30 to 60 seconds extended to four-and-a-half minutes on SATC’s ‘State of relaxation’ content.

Digital innovation extended to creating virtual inspections at REA Group, executive manager of consumer marketing, Sarah Myers, said. “Our priority was trying to keep the property market open. For those looking to sell, we needed to make sure that was still a viable option while navigating any safety concerns,” she said. “Digital inspections were a concept we’d started working on in anticipation of potentially needing to pivot. That requires real estate agents going through properties and providing a walking tour to make you feel as though it’s not necessarily an overly polished presentation, but true to how it would be if you were walking through yourself.”

REA dialled up channels allowing changes to messaging, often on a daily basis. When auctions couldn’t go ahead, it partnered with 10 platforms to roll out technology that could keep auctions going.
A willingness to engage with digital and social channels in trying something new reflects the wider appetite COVID has created for post-crisis. Helping this innovation spree is consumers being more forgiving of brands giving it a go – provided they are authentic. “Consumers are as savvy as ever. They can sniff something out when you’re doing it just to be ‘of the moment’. As long as you’re trying and you’re doing things with good intent, they will be more forgiving,” Coghill said.

Learning goes hand-in-hand with bravery. One idea less successful for SATC than planned was a ‘virtual tip jar’ rewarding operators engaged in tours or content online. “Was it a humiliating fail? Not by any stretch. It did everything we wanted it to do, and everything was set up right,” Hill said. “OK, the tip jar didn’t necessarily generate a lot of money for the industry, but people were super engaged with the content. I look at that and see lots of great lessons out of it.”

Embracing a test-and-learn mentality comes down to truly listening to your audience and customers, ADMA CEO, Andrea Martens, advised. “It is also about translating that into work that is compelling or engaging,” she said.

“We're seeing lots of work out there marketers feel they have to be doing. But by the time the work is produced, we've received the 500th email telling us organisations are supporting us. It took a while to catch on this isn't the right way to secure engagement. Once feedback from customers came in, they very quickly looked to try different things.

“Our sense is consumers are forgiving of brands trying new things, but their money is really, really precious to them at this time. The one thing consumers are not willing to do is invest money where they feel like they are not getting the return. That’s the insight marketers should build on.”

Elmslie experienced first-hand an initial push from internal stakeholders to put out reassuring, nice-to-have statements. In contrast, her marketing team stuck with practical information aimed at keeping businesses going. “Thank God we didn’t do what they had been asking us to do, because we knew it was going to be ‘tick a box’ thing,” Elmslie said.

It’s a situation that’s given Xero’s marketers as well as the wider business confidence not to react but instead lean into brand purpose. “Don’t follow, lead in your own way,” Elmslie recommended.

Lendi calls this time “the great experiment”. “We would never in a million years have sent our entire businesses home and pivoted literally everything we do day-to-day,” Cobb said. “We’ve committed to not going back to some of the old ways.”

One great outcome she cited from this period is putting the human back in business. “We used to over-engineer and overthink things. We would put a TVC into a focus group to see if people like one word or another, for instance,” Cobb said.

“We’ve remembered what it was like at the beginning, when it was nimble, and you just made decisions off your gut. There’s a human element in the way brands are talking now.”

Meyer’s takeaway for The Iconic is to not push things from a supply perspective but instead respond to demand more. It’s a lesson learnt as the creative team stepped into the driving seat during the crisis. It worked, with the ‘ISO’ challenges, fashion, eats and fitness content posted via social increasing engagement by over 300 per cent.

“Campaigns had to be relevant in terms of context and fun and speak to people in a way that's relevant for the times. Then the planning and buying teams would fit it with the right products. That has never happened before,” he said.

Undhjem is less optimistic ANZ can remain as agile long-term as it balances transformation with core business momentum. But three questions introduced during the crisis will remain front and centre: Are we living our purpose? Are we helping people and communities thrive? And are we guided by our values?

Linders felt encouraged by BIG W trying new things, being agile and taking others on the journey. “Customers don’t remember how brands behave in good times, but they will remember how brands behave in a crisis. It's been an absolute delight to see customers reappraising BIG W in ways they never would have before. And it is because the brand is relevant and we are doing the right thing by them,” she said. “That authenticity and honesty goes such a long way.”
LESSON 5:
EXHIBIT A TRULY PERSONAL TOUCH

Hand-in-hand with authenticity is distinct brand personality. Brand leaders agreed it helped them navigate through the crisis and will navigate them out of it.

“This brand movement demands us to be more personal,” Ferguson said. “The old sense of brand as a defined set of conditions, dos and don’ts and parameters, is a little psychotic in an environment which is so personal.”

One way Adore Beauty has exhibited this is by responding to the very real social challenge presented by COVID of domestic violence. The retailer worked with brand partners to put together a new product, donating proceeds to a Victorian Domestic Violence Association.

“That wasn’t a marketing initiative, it was us taking steps to act on something we felt was real, and, the representation of our brand instinct to do stuff that makes a difference,” Ferguson said.

At Hyundai, service-oriented positioning adopted was to “give everyone a lift” while another program focused on maintaining the cars of healthcare workers.

“It was purely about making sure there’s a priority for the healthcare worker,” Goult said. “At one point we almost looked at each other with acknowledgement because it was a case of saying we’re doing something for our country, and for people risking their own lives to make sure we were safe.”

Facebook group industry director, Paul McCrory, brought personal connection back to two elements all brands and marketing leaders have been traversing with staff as well as customers: Optimism and realism. “That authenticity is the way a lot of brands have turned up on, not just on our platforms, but in everything,” he said. “You have to lean into it, be real and be authentic.”

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— DAN FERGUSON, ADORE BEAUTY

EMBRACE BRAVERY
For Hyundai’s Kevin Goult, keeping up momentum around brave innovation is going to be key.

“I’ve always worked as a marketer with a mantra of being the first to taste the mushroom. That’s because it took a brave person to taste that mushroom. Let’s be brave and keep that bravery up,” he said. “We have to be sensible and responsible, but I’m really keen to keep that momentum going.”

PAT EACH OTHER ON THE BACK
One of the ways we encourage bravery is by being more supportive of each other’s experiments, said SATC’s Brent Hill. “At the end of 2019, I did feel the marketing industry and perhaps even society had become pretty ‘cool’. People were trying to do different things or be bold and you were getting assessed as if it was some sort of game show,” he commented.

“What has happened in 2020 is there’s a lot of humanity coming back. We’ve seen amazing examples of what people have done for each other, and within the marketing industry, people will have realised how pushed we all are. When a brand has done something genuine and had a crack, there has been a universal, ‘That’s really good’. If we are more supportive and understanding of each other, that’s a good outcome.”

GET MARKETING INVESTMENT FRONT AND CENTRE
A third learning from Tourism Australia’s Susan Coghill is continuing to make the business case for investment in marketing during this time and going forward. “In our marketing and advertising bubble, we like to talk a lot about marketing effectiveness and the long and the short of it. I’m not convinced that has bridged the gap into the broader business executive community,” she said. “I’d like to see execs championing that and knowing it is key to the long-term success of their brands and businesses, and that marketing is a driver of commercial gain.”

For Xero’s Penny Elmslie, achieving this comes back to ensuring the wider organisation understands the importance of brand equity and value. “As marketers, we get brand equity ultimately equals brand share or market share. That is a really powerful thing we have figured out that we need to translate to the c-suite,” she said.

3 WAYS THE MARKETING FRATERNITY CAN THRIVE
As a final question, roundtable participants reflected on how the industry can better help itself as Australian enters COVID-19 recovery.
LEsson 6: THE NEW NORMAL IS ALL-HUMAN

As the green shoots of recovery emerge, brand leaders know what’s coming is not what they were used to. So what new consumer behaviours, strategies, learnings or experiences will dictate what’s important in the ‘new normal’?

Hill is betting on brand purpose continuing to gain importance. While brands like Nike have been taking a social stance for a long time, the distinction he makes in COVID times is recognition of human need in brand purpose.

“People are naturally a bit sceptical of brands, but I think they’ve allowed brands to step a little closer during this time. That’s going to be an interesting new norm – a brand having more of a human face,” Hill said.

For Coghill, bringing your whole self to your job, work, team and ultimately your brand will persevere long after the COVID-19 crisis has receded. Pre-COVID, brands and especially listed ones, were compelled to have a stance on sustainability and the environment, Elmslie continued.

“That’s still very important, but this authentic human care is just as important now, and I do hope that continues through to how you look after your people,” she said. “And if you don’t have purpose, honestly you don’t really have a future. It’s quite confronting for a lot of traditional companies that have just delivered what they needed to do because there was a need and demand. Now, it’s got to be more.”

“WE’VE ALL HAD TO ADAPT. I THINK THAT’S WHERE THE HUMANISTIC SIDE OF THE BUSINESS AND PEOPLE HAS COME THROUGH” – KEVIN GOULT, HYUNDAI

LESSON 7: DIGITAL AS THE CONNECTION POINT

It’s also clear brands see online and social platforms playing big roles in the new world order. Linders for one expressed confidence digital initiatives introduced by BIG W will continue.

“We’ve introduced new convenience services, pickup in all store locations, contactless pickup and drive up and where we can, we’re trialling same day or fast delivery with Uber. There are lots of innovations that will continue into this new normal,” she said. “We talk about digital as just connecting all parts of our business with the customer. We intend on doing more of that; it is one of our most significant growth initiatives.”

During COVID-19 lockdown, Lendi’s lender partners finally came to the digital table and innovations that sat on the back burner for years bore fruit, Cobb said. “Their speed to adoption has been a game changer for us. There are elements we would have struggled with, such as digital identification and how you can send things like that, without them,” she said. “But with branches shut and consumers not able to leave their houses, obviously they’ve had to accelerate accepting those. Hopefully acceleration continues.”

Over at REA, Myers expected to keep pivoting towards channels its consumers expect the brand to engage in. She noted a rapid rise in people being more online and using social channels as their source of information during COVID-19 lockdown.

A case in point for Myers: 2 million digital inspections occurred in the last week of May. “The appetite for digital change is absolutely there and this is the way consumers want to experience property. So we need to keep encouraging agents to help let them do it,” she said.

Online platforms remain integral to SATC’s strategy, even more so now it’s seen the success of SATV. “We’ve been able to drive longer view times of content, which means potential tourists getting more acquainted with South Australia, which bodes well for intention to visit,” Hill said.

For the car industry, COVID-19 is only the beginning for digital innovation. “The cars are far more advanced than the way we’ve been selling our product,” Goult said. “During COVID-19, we have had more online car configurations than ever before. “But what we’ve also had to do with dealerships closed is virtual test drives and a virtual walk around. And we’ve had to move into the ecommerce space with more vigour than before this crisis happened. There’s not one company now you can’t buy a car online from. So yes, it’s a transformational shift.”

But whatever the digital capability, it’s the humanistic side that’s the common denominator for brands. While ANZ is firmly becoming digitally led, Undhjem said customer centricity has to be the guiding light. He noted 60,000 ANZ customers are still on passbook, while another cohort only has ATM cards.

“As we make this move, let’s stay customer-centric and make sure we don’t leave the ‘vulnerable’ customer groups behind,” he said.

“In this environment, everybody’s been affected in exactly the same way,” Goult added. “We’ve all had to adapt. I think that’s where the humanistic side of the business and people has come through.”
As part of the discussion, Facebook’s Paul McCrory shared five key behavioural insights identified across Facebook and Instagram at the height of the pandemic. All are expected to play a role in consumer-brand relationships as we enter COVID-19 recovery and beyond.

1 COVID-19 FATIGUE
What was massively newsworthy and grabbed attention in the peak of the crisis in mid-March had fallen significantly by May as COVID-19 became part of our daily lives. Facebook research from the end of April found 52 per cent of Australians agreeing brands should continue advertising as normal, with only 12 per cent disagreeing.

“We saw COVID-19 specific content diminish rapidly as people became used to the fact that this thing was here to stay. And it led brands to think about pivoting their content strategy away from that,” McCrory said.

By the last week of April, advertising featuring explicit references to the COVID-19 crisis was also on the decline. Facebook's ad library showed 57 per cent of CPG advertising included COVID-19 references in the week of 20-27 April 2020, but just 3 per cent of ecommerce brand advertising referencing the pandemic directly in the same week.

2 TECH-TOUCH: RETOOLING FOR A CONTACTLESS WORLD
The rise of ‘coronaphobia’ has seen contact-less payments and digital interactions truly become the norm, as consumers increasingly turn to technology to connect, pay and share. Brands responded in kind, debuting immersive experiences via social channels to provide virtual engagement on everything from skin care consultation to drive-through payment services and online Australian holiday location tours. New platforms for contact-less connection have also gained ground, such as virtual Messenger rooms and live platforms for digital events.

“We've see this across all brands engaged in our discussions as they replatform and rethink the way they engage with people, from REA Group and digital inspections, to Lendi and mortgage advice online or via video calling,” McCrory commented.

3 THE RISE OF JOY SUBSTITUTES
Finding ‘little moments of joy’– either through positive engagement online or in social channels, purchasing little luxuries, or seeking alternative indulgences in the virtual realm – has become another clear trend off the back of the pandemic.

For instance, Facebook research showed a threefold spike in nail tutorial viewership on Instagram in March, while interactions on posts featuring the phrase ‘little moments of joy’ also soared in the height of the crisis.

How to try and inject those little moments of happiness back into people’s lives became the all-important question for brands, McCrory said. And it’s one he expected will have longevity as we enter a cautious new normal.

“We’ve seen brands bring that to life through live streaming, fun content and by bringing some humour and fun back into the lives of consumers,” McCrory said.

4 BATTLING BOREDOM WITH SELF-DEVELOPMENT
With people becoming increasingly bored at home, interest in self-development, learning new skills and actively participating in interactive experiences online has soared.

For McCrory, a great example was when DJ, D-Nice, started playing music live on Instagram, quickly gaining tens of thousands of listeners and a list of guest stars stretching from Janet Jackson and Pharrell Williams to Jay Z.

Bringing it back to brands, McCrory highlighted Tourism Australia’s ‘Live from Australia’ streaming as a great illustration of "bringing that joy and fun back into the lives of all the people around our own travelling around Australia”. The live videos garnered more than 39 million viewers in just five days.

5 MOVE TO COLLECTIVISM: FROM ME TO WE
The fifth of Facebook’s key consumer insights during COVID-19 is the shift to collectivism, and a returning sense of local as well as global community. This new-found social connection shone through as more than 4 million people made posts and comments to support Italians through the country’s tough lockdown period, and 200,000 Australians joined over 400 Facebook support groups set up against COVID-19.

In turn, brands activating their communities around purpose and connection during this time not only built resonance, but also authenticity and trust, McCrory said. Examples he pointed to include Jeep Australia’s communications encouraging people to stay at home, and CUB’s ‘For the love of your local’ partnership with AHA Australia.

“This is ultimately about how we play a bigger part as brands within the community,” McCrory added.
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