

Partnerships can help brands combat Covid-19



By [Sindiswa Masuta](#)

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During this time of uncertainty, consumers are looking to brands because they are intrinsic to every sphere of a consumer's life. With this life-changing event being faced globally, many economies are suffering a downturn, which has a ripple effect on consumer spend and, therefore, on brands. Brands should use this opportunity to find different ways of engaging their buyers as consumer behaviour changes.



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Marketers can help economies stay afloat at this time by exploring new avenues to generate revenue; this, in turn, can assist their brands in building equity and salience among potential and existing customers. As Helen O'Dowda, group sales and marketing manager at hospitality company Moriarty Group, said,

"Now is the time to think outside the box, of ways we can remain human with our audience in a bid to help where help is needed, in a bid to be the voice of reason and consistency in a time of uncertainty, and in a behind-the-scenes bid to come out on top when this crisis subsides and we are all functionally back in business."

"In finding new ways of generating value and revenue, we are seeing the importance of partnerships between brands in ensuring that they remain relevant and loyal to their customers. The value in partnerships can also mean that each of the brands has the potential to acquire a new customer base and gain trust by association."

Adapting your service offering to suit consumers' evolving needs A good example of this is the alcohol delivery company, Bottles, which has partnered with supermarket giant Pick n Pay to deliver consumers' groceries to their homes. This was a new way for both brands to generate revenue — Bottles could not deliver alcohol due to the lockdown level 5 and 4 restrictions and many consumers wanted to buy their groceries online as this was preferable to venturing out to stores. The partnership between Bottles and Pick n Pay addressed both issues.



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An email sent out to Bottles' subscribers read, "With the full reality of Covid-19 changing every day, we're fully embracing the 21-day lockdown to combat the spread of the virus. Due to this and our responsibility towards our customers and country, we have teamed up with Pick n Pay to trial a same-day online delivery service that offers customers an easier, more efficient way to stay safe and stocked-up on necessities".

Most brands have been sending their consumers messages about how much they care about them but with no real action; what consumers need is to see caring in action and how the brand is adding value to their life, and we see that in this partnership. Now that alcohol sales are open again, Bottles is continuing with its new offering of grocery deliveries as an additional service to alcohol delivery.

Ensuring employment in times of crisis

Another great example of a partnership that not only benefits consumers but also the brands' staff, is between Qantas Airways and Woolworths in Australia. In an article on Warc, Tom Mouhsian writes, "Qantas Airways decided to help Woolworths, its frequent flyer programme partner and Australia's largest grocery chain, by redeploying some of its furloughed staff. While Qantas doesn't have enough work to occupy its personnel due to its fleet's grounding, Woolworths has the opposite problem — it doesn't have enough workers to respond to the growing demand."

In this way, loyalty remains with the brands both externally and internally, as these brands would be seen to be helping during these uncertain times, which instils confidence in them. It is imperative at this time for brands to be seen as being helpful, especially through partnering with their ecosystem.



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Partnering for good

This is also a time where trusted brands are seen as partners in helping resolve the crisis by manufacturing and selling goods they would not have otherwise previously created, such as Proctor and Gamble (P&G) manufacturing masks and sanitisers.

"P&G people across the world are stepping up to use our innovation, marketing and manufacturing expertise to directly support our communities for the greater good," says David Taylor, P&G's CEO. P&G has partnered with relief organisations like the International Federation of the Red Cross, Americares and Direct Relief, the China Youth Development Foundation, the Korea Disaster Relief Association, the United Way, and more.

In these examples, the brands have found new ways of not only generating revenue but also of creating value for their

internal and external stakeholders and inspiring trust and loyalty. At a time like this, brands will be remembered for how they gave more. However, these ways of generating revenue and value must be genuine and benefit both internal and external stakeholders.



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Brands should not be doing what everyone else is doing but rather should be seen to be remaining true to their brand purpose. Done in this manner, partnerships will be seen as two brands aiming for the same goal, which is to make the world a better place for their consumers, and ultimately, keep the economy going. Strong brands will recover a lot faster from this corona crisis than those that sat back and solicited no action.

ABOUT SINDISWA MASUTA

Sindiswa Masuta is the strategy business director at Grey Advertising Africa.

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