



BRANDING & MARKETING DURING THE TIME OF #LOCKDOWN

Keep your Branding Activities and Initiatives
Alive with Limited Budgets, Curtailed Teams
and a Long Term Vision



The world is adjusting to its biggest behaviour change in known history. There is no need at the moment to waste space and time to explain how the outbreak of COVID-19 is affecting businesses and brands across the world, both financially and emotionally.

While a lot of brands are cutting down on their spends and saving money to pay their people, they are also pulling back their marketing initiatives and holding digital marketing activities. However, contrary to the popular perception, while saving money is obviously the need of the hour, cutting down on marketing spends might not be the best strategy for the health of the brand in the longer term.

In limited budgets and curtailed marketing operations, brands need to play a crucial role to play in hammering the message that staying indoors is a matter of life and death. It's time to play a positive role for the society as well and show that as a brand, "you care".

To survive, businesses will need to adapt. They'll need to find new ways to operate, new ways to offer value and new ways to find, engage and sell to their customers.

Content marketing is already playing a crucial role as businesses tackle this unique set of circumstances. And that will continue as we all come to terms with our new reality. Here are a few marketing and branding ideas and steps that every brand, big or small, startup or a corporate can implement -



OFFER **FREE** HELP | SUPPORT | SERVICES

While this is already a tough time for money to flow in, it is a good opportunity to look at the bright side that the customers can be made to try products / services for free. Huge e-learning platforms are offering free courses to get potential future customers addicted to their content so that they can play bigger when everything comes back to normal

Obviously, it hugely depends on the kind of business and the industry you are in, but sharing free resource / knowledge or product / service sample at this moment might be a great strategy to build database and acquire potentially new customers



CREATE YOUR OWN CONTENT HUB

Email is an important part of your coronavirus marketing, but right now it's difficult to be heard above the noise. At this time, you want people to be truly engaged with your content.

As content consumption digitally is at an all time high, brands need to understand the positive side of it and bank on the same.

I would rather recommend creating a dedicated landing page on your website to act as a content hub for everything coronavirus-related or related to social-distancing, home-working tips etc. For example, it would be great to put out some home exercises, indoor games etc. for a fitness / sports brand on a dedicated landing page.

How much content you put out will depend on the nature of your business, but the key is to put it all in one place and make it easy to find from your homepage.

This means your customers can get the information they need from you when they need it.



FIND LOGICAL CONNECTIONS TO TRENDING TOPICS

Play on the trends. There are a lot of trending topics, even quirk, at this time of Lockdown.

Agile brands that can create content to meet spikes in demand always have an excellent opportunity to connect with a new audience and build strong, long-lasting relationships.

As well as agility, you will also need good judgement at this moment. The two key questions to ask before you create content on a hot topic are:

- **Do you have the credibility or authority to add value on this topic?**

Make sure it's a natural, logical fit for your brand and not something forced

- **Is it appropriate?**

After all, this is first and foremost a public health crisis. You need to come out as a responsible, sensitive and logical brand with every post



OFFER **REAL** VALUE NOW FOR MORE SALES LATER

Obviously, for everyone across the world, sales have to take a backseat in the short-term. Or maybe your customers decide that for you.

Either way, content marketing can help you build relationships now that will bring sales once confidence and demand returns.

The No.1 rule of brand building and marketing is to offer value most importantly and it is true at this time more than ever



INVEST IN 10X **CONTENT AHEAD OF THE RECOVERY**

Contrary to all popular beliefs that marketing has to be cut down at this time, it is imperative that you invest in content building, marketing exercises and long term plans at this time.

Experiment more, create new formats such as e-books, webinars etc. generate more content and create a content repository for the next entire year. With free and fresh minds right now, it is a golden opportunity to work in advance.



EXPERIMENT WITH NEW FORMATS TO REPLACE EVENTS

Even before public gatherings were banned by the government, a lot of brands had already taken the decision to cancel their events.

In a lot of cases, these events have now switched to live streaming or webinars. From a content marketing standpoint, webinars have a lot of advantages, such as the ability to run email drips to attendees.

Also, the attendee database, real-time conversations and one-on-one chats create an opportunity of more qualified leads and sales in the longer run.

But have a think about how you can mix up the format because differentiating your video or webinar content is going to be a big challenge as more and more brands do it.

You can, for example, cut your footage with custom animations rather than just talk over a slide deck. Or you can try this whiteboard format, which stands out really well in social media feeds. Again, as noted earlier, Experiment!



AUDIT YOUR STRATEGY AND LOOK BACK AT WHAT YOU HAVE DONE!

Now is the time to audit your strategy and ensure you have the foundation in place to find and engage your target audience during and after this crisis. If you don't have a content marketing strategy, write one during the lockdown. If you do, give it a thorough audit.

One thing a lot of strategies lack is buyer personas. It's a really useful exercise to create avatars for key segments of your target audience and identify the problems they have that you can solve.



MOST IMPORTANTLY, STAY HEALTHY, STAY POSITIVE AND KEEP GOING

COVID-19 is creating challenges for businesses all over the world. But remember that this situation is temporary. The important thing now is to stick together – from a distance – and ensure you're providing value to your audience. The most important thing right now is to ramp up your digital activities, stay active on trends and do not let other brands take over the mindspace of your customers.

Stay healthy, stay positive and keep your branding and marketing efforts going, even if that means making adjustments to your strategy.



27 years old Chartered Accountant from Jaipur, Rajasthan, Pawas Jain founded one of the most successful and popular startups of Rajasthan **Blue Box Media Pvt. Ltd.** backed by Angel funds back in 2013. The digital media company worked on **The Tech Portal** (www.thetechportal.com) which was a technology tabloid with comprehensive coverage of Global tech and startup updates and had an international reach in over 50 countries.

Pawas Jain has been a Pioneer in Digital Content space in India, and started his first content venture back in 2010 with **SpringTide**, which gained mass following over the years.

Pawas then took an exit from The Tech Portal and founded his own **Content and Marketing Consulting company**, which is working on content and media products enabled with technology. His aim was to take vernacular content and Storytelling to the next level with integration of technology. **TBC Consulting** works with leading brands and startups across the country on brand building, marketing and content production. TBC Consulting has consulted over 50 brands over a period of 3 years on marketing, content, India Entry and Expansion and Business. It was recently awarded as **Top 20 Startup Consultancy Companies of 2018** by **Silicon India Magazine**

The company owns multiple content platforms such as **TechSamvad, NitiSamvad, Where India Connects and BingeTales**, across different domains and sectors. The company is wholly owned by **OneH Media Pvt. Ltd.** (onehmedia.com)

He is an Investor in **Wired Hub**, which is Rajasthan's first of its kind startup club, an initiative to build a stronger and more closely knit community of startup ecosystem, and provide end to end mentorship and guidance for young entrepreneurs to help them launch their startups.

Pawas also invested in an online incubation platform **Startify, in personal capacity** which was co-founded by IIT Jodhpur students and aims to build India's largest online incubation / virtual co- working space for startups. **He has recently invested in another content and product startup from Delhi.**

Pawas currently mentors over 15 startups in VR / AR, Education, Finance and Media domains, and specifically guides them on revenue models, building sustainable businesses and tapping global markets.

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