

Brands must reframe relevance to connect with Aussies worried about post-COVID economy

Six in 10 Aussies are still worried about our economic outlook

SYDNEY, 7 MAY 2020: Life under lockdown is changing what we do, how we feel and the role of brands in our lives. New Kantar COVID-19 Barometer research from 23-28 April highlights the increased importance of brands understanding the role they can play to reframe their relevance with Australians.

Six in 10 Aussies are still worried about our economic outlook – a 5% increase from just a fortnight ago

Confronted by this new era of frugality, muted consumption, and the need to learn and embrace a savings ethos; no matter the generation, and whether white, grey or blue collar; the human story remains the same. “And with an overload of ‘we are here to help’ messages over the past month, Aussies are looking for tangible actions by brands that align with their values,” says Kantar Australia’s Executive Director – Qualitative, Carolyn Reid.

“Brands should continue to be practical and realistic in their advice to customers; but acknowledge the growth in the number of people who want to see exactly how brands are fighting the crisis. Freedom (35%), social interaction (45%), routine (25%), the ability to leave the house (33%) and big plans such as holidays and new jobs (27%) have been the hardest things for Aussies to give up since lockdown began. And it’s the messages of hope and acts of enduring optimism that are resonating.”

Ever resilient, Australians are hacking new ways to live as we navigate through and out of COVID-19

A Kantar Profiles poll from 1 May finds just 7% of Aussies are still getting dressed for work despite working from home, while 13% admit to staying in their pyjamas all day. Yet ahead of a potential easing in restrictions looming in Friday’s National Cabinet meeting, the novelty is starting to wear off – three in ten Aussies are continuing their normal personal care, hair and makeup routines. The poll also reveals almost half (45%) of Aussies are dreaming of a holiday at home without flying. A quarter of us crave a sunny vacation or long-haul trip to a tropical island (26%) or an all-inclusive vacation to a resort (25%). Cruising is still appealing to 14% of Aussies as their next holiday experience.

“While we’re at home, we’re dreaming of the future beyond our own four walls; but, hot on the heels of the Australian bushfires, COVID-19 is also accelerating the resurgence of human values,” says Reid. “From belonging and shared humanity to a sense of duty to community, ring-fencing our borders from exposure to risk will amplify this trend. Quarantining is expected to become part of our new normal – viewed short-term as protectionism, but some fear bordering on nationalism. The uncertain future shines a spotlight on the role of trust – redefining brand purpose and sustainability to a must-have.”

Aussies believe brands have a duty to help and bring people together

71% of Aussies surveyed in Kantar’s COVID-19 Barometer approve of the government’s response to the coronavirus crisis (up from 65% a fortnight ago) – but as Aussies overwhelmingly crave leadership, they also believe it’s important for trusted brands to show up in a crisis. “They can take some cues from the way a 94-year-old great grandmother set the tone for a nation in the UK by cancelling traditional birthday festivities because she doesn’t believe it’s appropriate while the country battles coronavirus,” says Reid. “Totally on brand – especially if you love The Crown!”

“Meaningful action today will help recovery tomorrow, she adds. “Amplifying shared values, activating your brand purpose and focusing on engendering feelings of community and optimism is critical. If sociability is core to your brand, elevate the joy of shared moments. Authenticity counts, and right now, empathy is critical to resonate. Your communication must fit the moment. Tune into your customers voice and needs and reframe relevance. This isn’t a time for inaction. Anticipate the changing human story and cultural narrative. Pivoting your offer and message to meet changing human needs is the new brand normal.”

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About the surveys

An online survey of 500 Australians between the ages of 18 and 90 was conducted between 23-28 April 2020 as part of the Kantar COVID-19 Barometer. 1,006 Australians (Personal Care) and 1,005 Australians (Travel) were also surveyed through a Kantar Profiles COVID-19 Quick Poll on 1 May 2020.

About Kantar

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