

# How the Coronavirus pandemic is affecting social media advertising: Five things you should know

We're living in unprecedented times. We don't know how it's all going to play out, how long it's going to last or what the overall impact of the Coronavirus pandemic will be.

**BHP** @bhp · 7h

Amid COVID-19, 1.5B children globally are currently not attending school. BHP Foundation has been a partner of Teach For All since 2018, and continues to support them to help students and their families, particularly in the most marginalised communities to continue to learn.

**BHP**

"We've never been more physically isolated in communities, countries and globally and yet our interdependence has never been more visible."

Wendy Kopp, CEO and Co-founder, Teach For All



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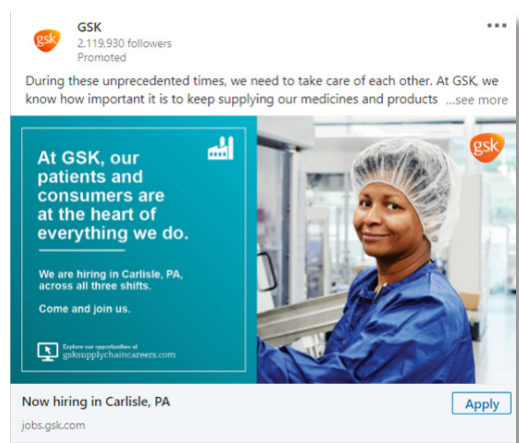


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In this new and evolving environment, businesses are looking to maintain operations and minimise the impact of the largest global shutdown in history. But there's a lack of clarity on how they should behave, particularly when it comes to marketing and promotional activities, areas that many of our clients are engaged in at a corporate communications level.

With much of the world in lockdown, we've seen an accelerated shift to digital forms of communication, and social media platforms are reporting significant increases in usage. People are spending more time online to stay connected with the outside world, yet we're seeing a decline in near-term digital advertising spend.

Given audiences are cautious of businesses they perceive as capitalising on the pandemic, reducing online advertising might seem like a safe bet. However, a recent study found that the vast majority of people believe businesses should continue to advertise during the Coronavirus crisis, and a number of studies have found that brands which maintain their ad budgets during economic downturns tend to come out better off on the other side.



So while now may not be the right time to push certain products and services, it's a good moment to amplify corporate messages, particularly those focusing on business continuity, team culture, COVID19 initiatives and community support, and even relevant thought leadership. In May 2020, 16 FTSE 100 companies ran LinkedIn ads through their primary company pages which tapped into these themes.

Each business should consider its options based on its own position in the market, but the indicators suggest that there are opportunities to use social media advertising to facilitate greater reach and engagement in the current climate. It shouldn't be a question of whether or not to advertise, but how best to approach it. So for businesses who are yet to review or relaunch their social media promotion, what do they need to consider?

## 1. Putting purpose at the heart of advertising

In recent years we've seen a movement towards people supporting businesses they believe in. The Coronavirus pandemic has accelerated this and audiences – both corporate and consumer – are more demanding around commitments to social purpose. Now, more than ever, businesses should be putting corporate reputation at the heart of advertising.

## 2. Changing tack. And changing tack again

We're in the midst of a crisis we've never experienced before. People's behaviour and expectations have changed, but they'll change again. Therefore, businesses need to adapt their advertising strategies and build new, nimble plans which allow them to react to the environment as it evolves.

## 3. Following suit, while remaining true to the business

Some social media platforms, such as Facebook, Messenger, TikTok and YouTube, have seen extreme spikes in usage during the global lockdown. Businesses who might usually focus their corporate advertising efforts on more traditional platforms like LinkedIn and Twitter may want to consider directing some of their budget towards the platforms which are seeing the highest levels of engagement. Before making this move, businesses should ensure their core audiences are active and engaged in these spaces.

## 4. Thinking local

Different regions and countries have been impacted by the outbreak in different ways. It is not a uniform experience and so businesses must provide localised messaging that resonates with target audiences.

## 5. Hypertargeting

New audiences are forming around organisations, and some groups are more open than others to receiving business as usual content. By delivering customised messaging to a very defined audiences, businesses can ensure key stakeholders have all the information they need while ensuring the risk of backlash is reduced.

*FTI works with large corporates and FTSE 100 companies on the development and implementation of paid social media strategies and campaigns that support reputation management. We build tailored, genuinely impactful programmes which are specific to each of our clients and their objectives.*

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