

21 POSITIVE THINGS TO TAKE INTO 2021

| And how they will improve
your marketing efforts.

JAYWING

We know it's been a tough ride.
But there is hope. There is optimism.
A vaccine, signs of an economic recovery.
There are signs of people coming together,
examples of people joining forces for the
greater good. Reflecting on lessons from 2020.

End of year resolutions will be different this year
for sure – many of us will already be thinking
about what new practices and behaviours
we take into 'life after lockdown'.

These new habits, attitudes and opinions
have implications for brands. Positive ones.
But challenging ones too, for brands left behind.
It's time we looked forward.

Let's consider the 21 positive things we can
take into 2021 to improve how we engage
customers and build high performing brands.

POSITIVES? WHAT POSITIVES?!

**COMMUNITY
IS
KINDNESS.**

BE KIND. LET'S LOOK OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER.

**COMMUNITY
IS
STRENGTH.**

BE STRONG. LET'S LOOK OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER.

8089

01

**WE LEARNED THE
VALUE OF COMMUNITY**



01

Our loss of freedom in 2020 made us long for connection. Many of us jumped onto our computers for contact with friends, family and co-workers, others shopped locally. This sense of togetherness and community suddenly had a renewed sense of importance as we gave thanks from our doorsteps, banging pots and pans with neighbours, now with a common purpose.

Understanding people's need for connection and community is so important for brand communication. Creating authentic touch-points with customers, listening to feedback and supporting the community's businesses will continue to be key into 2021.

02

WE RECOGNISED FRONTLINE HEROES

National
Portrait
Gallery

PRESENTED BY
HRH THE DUCHESS OF CAMBRIDGE
NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

HOLD
STILL

A PORTRAIT OF OUR NATION IN 2020
EXPLORE THE FINAL 100 PORTRAITS
NPG.ORG.UK/HOLD-STILL

co
op

SUPPORTED BY
CO-OP FOODS UK/CO-OPERATE



02

Speaking of pots and pans. In 2020 we suddenly took stock of our frontline heroes. Not just NHS staff, but care workers, shelf stackers and lorry drivers. Many jobs previously viewed as low skilled suddenly took on new value.

The question remains, how will frontline workers be rewarded ‘when this is all over’? While some brands still have discounts and schemes in place, longer term programs to give thanks will be needed to avoid (further) accusations of profiteering in a crisis.


It will also raise questions about how brands and businesses care for their staff and supply chains, many of whom may be considered ‘frontline workers.’

78% OF PEOPLE EXPECT BRANDS TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR STAFF.

(Kantar)

[illegible]

Craig Oldham



03

**WE ZOOMED,
SKYPED & TEAMED**



03

As we adjusted to life in lockdown, many of us downloaded new technology to accommodate home working – as well as the odd family quiz, online date night, choir practice and even doctor's appointment. We took birthday celebrations and work conferences online, generating countless memes... cue the pets/children on calls and unfortunate wardrobe malfunctions caught on camera etc.

We've adapted to technology and adjusted to video conferencing as the new norm. And brands have followed suit – digital consultations, virtual assistants. Video conferencing and new technology has enabled us to feel closer to brands, many of which previously only offered their expertise via face to face contact in store.

04

**WE DISCOVERED A
LOVE FOR PODCASTS**



04

Digital audio has skyrocketed in popularity this year – from podcasts to audio books. Lockdown has changed listening patterns: in-car radio, for example, has plummeted, but Bauer has observed a sharp rise in listening via connected devices; and with fewer people commuting, more people are listening to podcasts during normal working hours.

850,000 **ACTIVE
PODCASTS
AVAILABLE**

6.5M **ADULTS IN THE UK
LISTEN TO PODCASTS
EVERY WEEK**

49% **PEOPLE WANTING
TO CREATE NEW
PODCASTS**

Podnews say there are currently more than 850,000 active podcasts available to listen to, and 6.5 million or 12% of adults in the UK listen to podcasts every week. And it's inspired new creators with Acast reporting a 49% month-on-month increase in the number of people wanting to create new podcasts.

Whilst work habits may change as we become more mobile, the longer term trends for home working or a more flexible agreement to the traditional 9-5 may see digital audio around for the long game. Brands may need to evaluate the role of digital audio in their media mix through strategic content partnerships aligned to target audiences. The connection and intimacy of podcast consumption requires a well thought out approach. No muscling in please!

05

**WE RE-EVALUATED
OUR RESPONSE TO
IMPORTANT SOCIAL ISSUES**

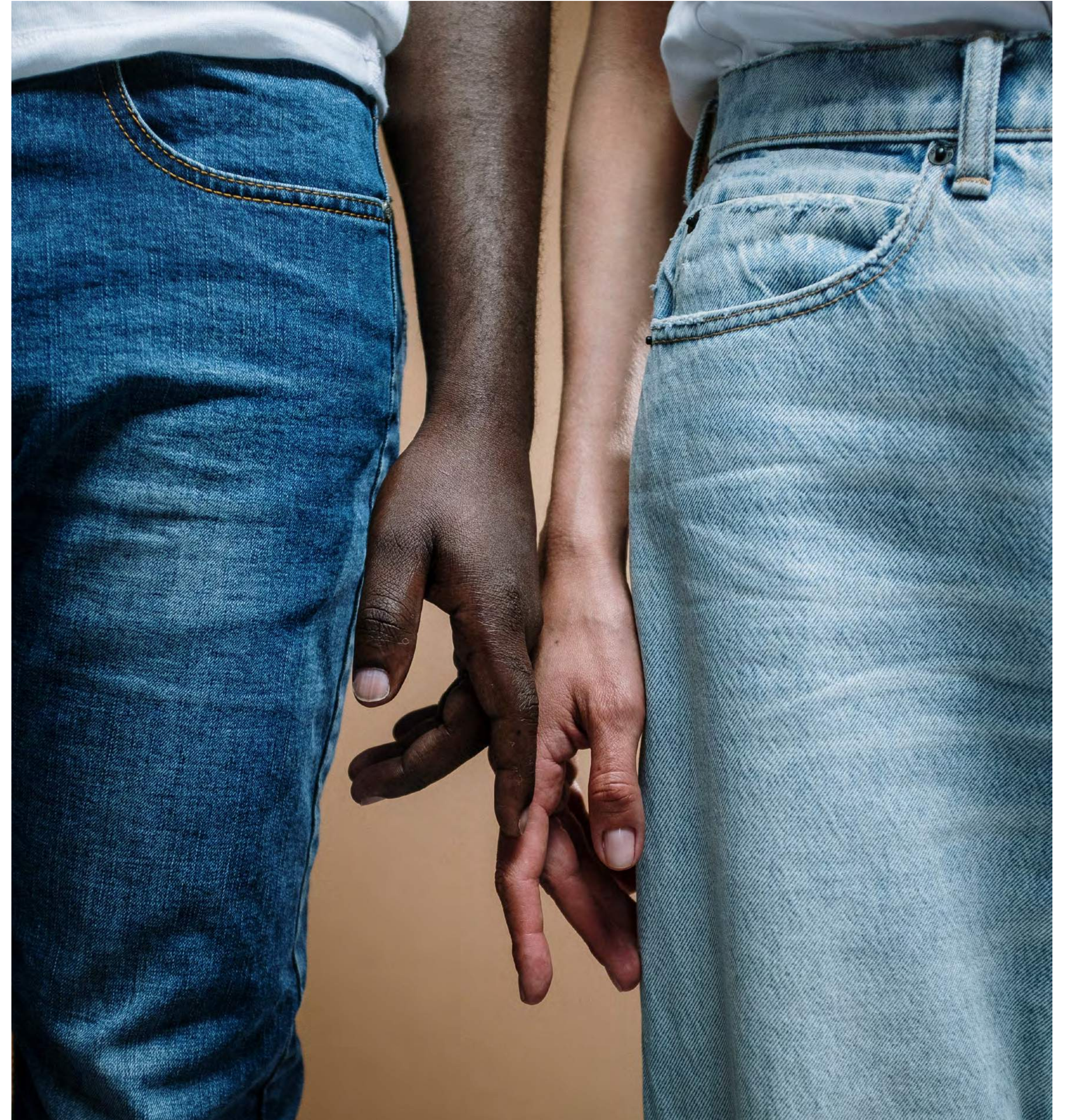



05

Alongside COVID our worlds were rocked by increasingly vocal conversations about a range of social issues – from Black Lives Matter, triggered by police brutality, an increasingly shaky global political narrative over in the US, investigations into anti-semitism in the Labour Party to same sex couples on Strictly.

People wanted to have an opinion (quite rightly) on the issues that mattered to them, shining a spotlight on the injustices they saw before them.

Whilst this shift in behaviours has previously been levelled at those most 'woke', there's no denying brands have been under some pressure to get involved and have a say. Whilst we know customers expects brands to have an opinion on important issues, businesses must ensure opinion is matched with credible practices to avoid accusations of tokenism. Embrace an inclusive culture, stand for something – and make sure everyone is on board.



A photograph of a man with a beard and short hair, wearing a pink shirt, carrying a young girl with curly hair on his shoulders. The girl is wearing a white shirt with a black and white pattern and is holding a yellow snack bag. They are outdoors at a community event with trees and other people in the background. A yellow banner with the number '06' is in the top left corner.

06

**WE SAW THE IMPACT OF
PEOPLE POWER AS WE CAME
TOGETHER DURING CRISIS**

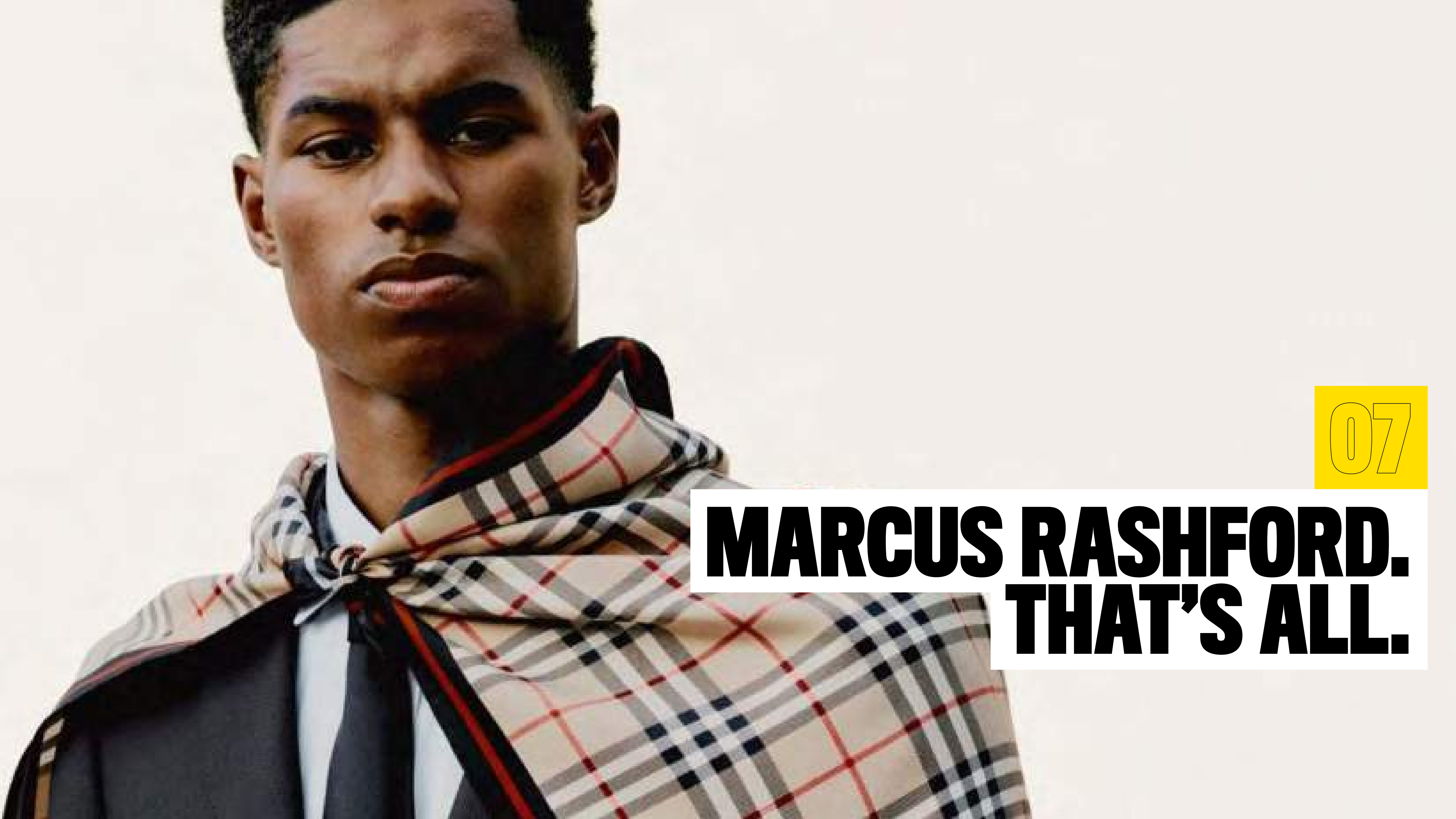


06

Fashion brands, large and small, redeployed their teams to produce PPE. Breweries did their bit to make hand sanitiser overseas as well as right here in the UK.

Local communities created support networks for people in isolation, offering help to those cut off from friends and loved ones. And most excitingly, scientists worked around the clock to create a vaccine and we're now in the fortunate position, globally, to have multiple options being slowly rolled out across the globe.

Seeing how people can come together has been truly heartening. Events like COVID-19 have impacted us all, personally and professionally, and it's more important than ever that businesses act empathetically but also do their bit to support good causes and lead by example. Customers expect it, welcome it, need it.



07

**MARCUS RASHFORD.
THAT'S ALL.**

ONE OF US

MARC

07

Unless you were ‘into football’ you’d be forgiven for having not heard of Marcus Rashford until this year.

Just when the nation was feeling down, step forward a genuine hero – a celebrity using his influence for good, this time campaigning against cuts to kids’ free school meals. And this guy really went above and beyond (despite MPs saying footballers could really do more...) working with charities and brands to raise the profile of this plight, sharing his own experiences of hunger poverty as a youngster.

Many brands jumped to get involved, offering free meals during half term to families in need. But equally exciting was Burberry’s decision to cast Marcus in a campaign, showing how the fashion house had shifted its priorities during the wake of 2020. And from 2020 emerged a hero we could all get behind.

08

WE RECONNECTED WITH FAMILY & LOVED ONES



08

We're not going to lie. For a lot of people, working and living together 24/7 was hard.

But it also forced us together. To find new ways of co-existing. Entertaining each other. Learning from one another. Many of us became teachers from the kitchen table. Juggling the challenges of home schooling with working. And it was tough. But lockdown has brought many of us closer together, and even those families forced apart by social distancing have ironically been brought closer together. We appreciate one another and have connected on new levels.

Family has always been important, and brands have often tapped into the emotion of 'being home' in advertising, particularly at Christmas. That need for connection will continue next year and we'll look for products and services to make the most of time with family and loved ones just that bit more special.





09

**WE WORKED IN OUR PJS...
& GOT A NEW PERSPECTIVE
ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE**



09

It took some time for people to adjust to full time home working and there were definitely peaks and troughs. But it brought about new discussions (many would argue were overdue) around flexible working and the ability for businesses to trust their employees to manage their productivity.

Many employees have welcomed the extra time they have that's no longer spent on a commute, the ability to nip out for a lunch time run or restructure their day around personal commitments.

It might not be for everyone, but long-term, expect more companies to incorporate flexible working. Not only will this have operational implications for businesses and employees, it will also impact brands on how they choose to market products and services.

10

**WE INVESTED IN OUR
PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND
EMOTIONAL WELLBEING**



10

2020 has been a time of reflection for many of us. We've relished time outdoors, often as a way to see friends but also as a means to connect with nature, unplug from our computers and digital devices and get perspective. It's never been so important to invest in our wellbeing – physically, mentally and emotionally.

Fitness and mindfulness apps have provided free access for users. Joe Wicks has inspired families to exercise together during the nation's biggest PE class. Wellbeing has been at the top of our agenda and it's a trend we expect to see remain into the New Year.



**WE CALLED OUT BUSINESSES,
INSTITUTIONS & POLITICIANS
WHO WERE DOING WRONG**



11

Whatever your political views, you can't fail to have groaned at the news Dominic Cummings had made a detour to Barnard Castle during lockdown. And who could forget Boohoo being accused of mistreating staff and supply chain staff during the course of the pandemic. Alongside accusations of modern-day slavery.

Sadly, cases of this nature are not unique or rare. But the public reaction has changed – our response have been more tangible, with media, social media audiences and most importantly customers demanding change.

Customers expect brands to behave better, caring for the welfare of people. Marketing doesn't end in the marketing department. Embracing a brand, living the right culture is the responsibility of every person and department. Getting called out for a lapse of judgement or a shortcut here and there can be expensive and damaging. Don't fall short.

A person is cooking in a kitchen, with a tablet displaying a video call with two people. The background shows various kitchen items like a jar of herbs, a bowl of rice, and a bowl of vegetables.

12

**WE STOPPED DEMONISING
TECHNOLOGY & REMEMBERED
IT CAN BE A FORCE FOR GOOD**



12

In the not-so-distant past, ask families about the use smart phones and tablets and they would frequently say they were distracting families from quality time, often mealtimes. But maybe technology has had its [latest] moment in 2020?

Cut off, isolated from doing normal things, we've been able to check in with friends and family members. We've spent more time on social media and messaging apps, encouraging those who were perhaps hesitant to engage. It's accelerated digital adoption and actually many of us have seen the up sides to having entertainment, news, information AND family readily available at our fingertips.

Social media owners will continue to come under fire and with that, brands also have a shared responsibility to act responsibly and transparently.

13

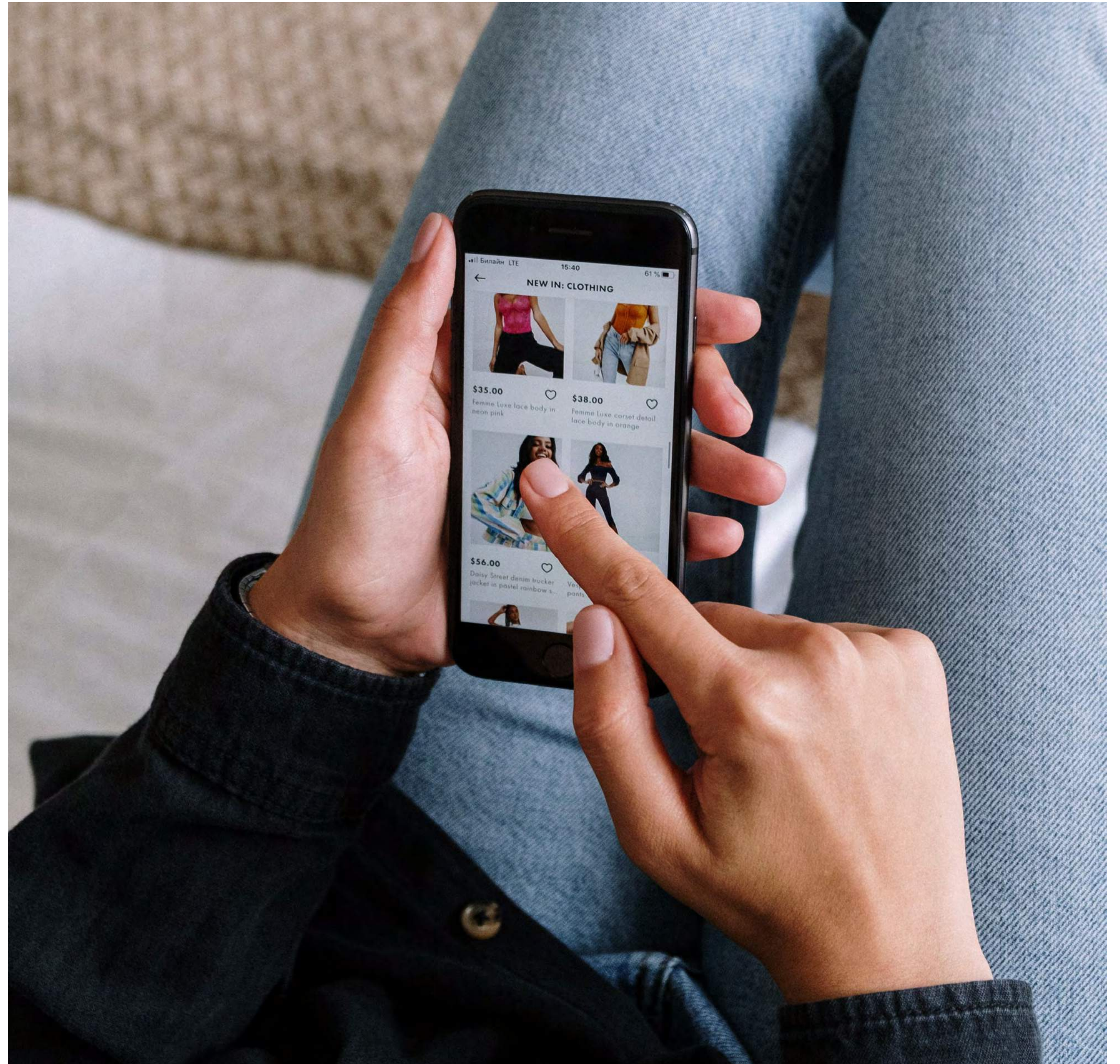
**WE FLOCKED TO
ONLINE SHOPPING**



13

In fact we accelerated digital adoption. For everything – for shopping, for socialising, for working. But what it showed was just how woefully under prepared many brands were. Brands across the board are investing, committed to improve their e-commerce platforms to cope with increased demand.

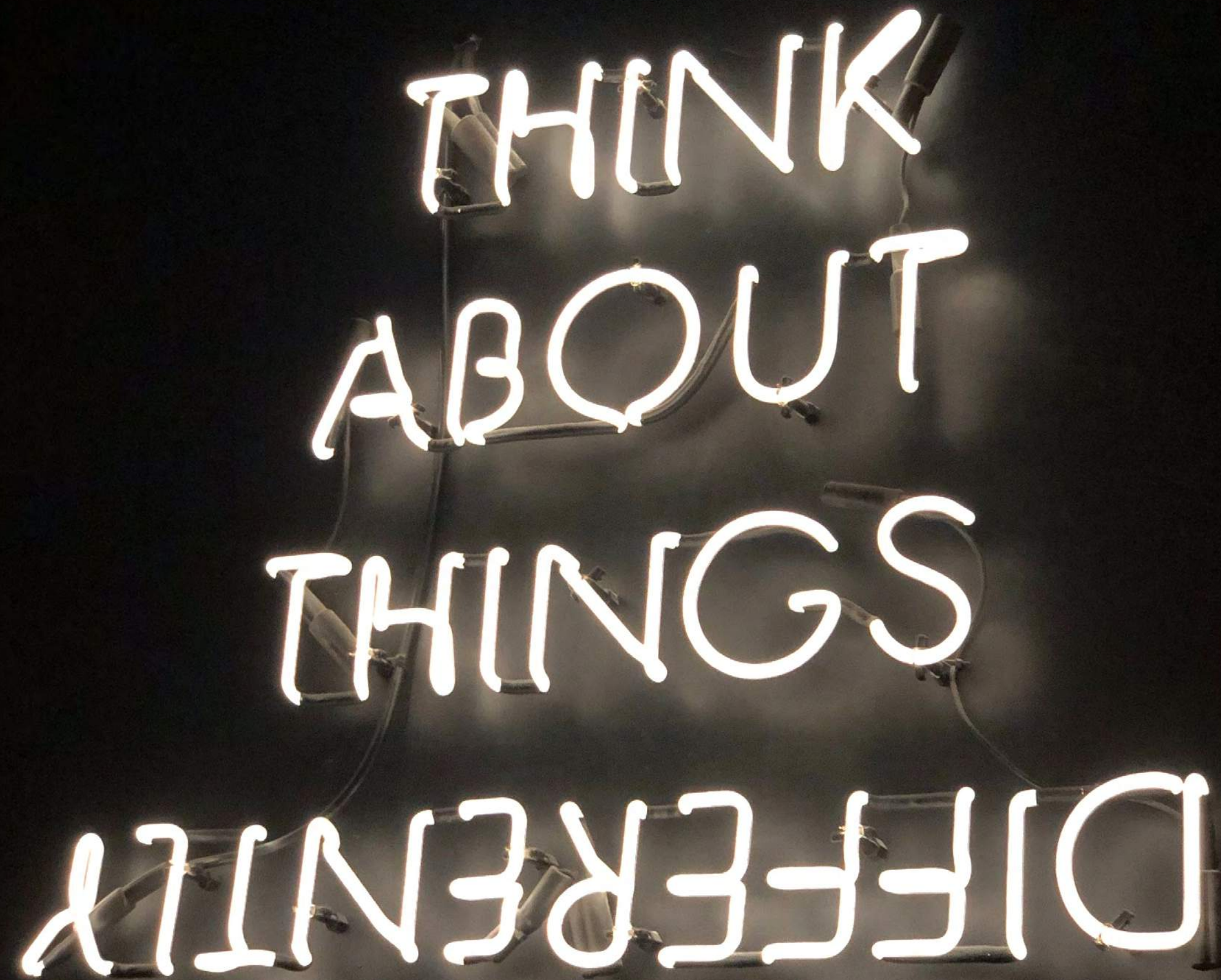
The lesson? Get your website into shape. Whilst we still believe the high street has a place and footfall will return, there will be lasting implications for retailers as customers are experienced and familiar with the benefits of online shopping.



An aerial photograph of a large parking lot filled with hundreds of cars, mostly sedans and SUVs, parked in neat rows. The cars are of various colors, including white, black, blue, red, and yellow. The perspective is from directly above, showing the tops of the vehicles and the asphalt surface.

14

**WE QUESTIONED OUR
NEED FOR 'STUFF'**



THINK
ABOUT
THINGS
DIFFERENTLY

14

We cut back (in the main). Despite increased spend on groceries and alcohol, many of us cut back. For some it was to be smart with pennies, with so many on furlough, so many unknowns about the future economically speaking. For others it was about a changing relationship with 'stuff'. Did we need to consume in the same way as before – are material things as important?

The values and habits that once shaped how people relate to spending are shifting. Customers may be more cautious about spending; making more informed decisions. Be present to help and support through advice and information. Consider how, as well as reviewing price marketing, you can deliver value.



15

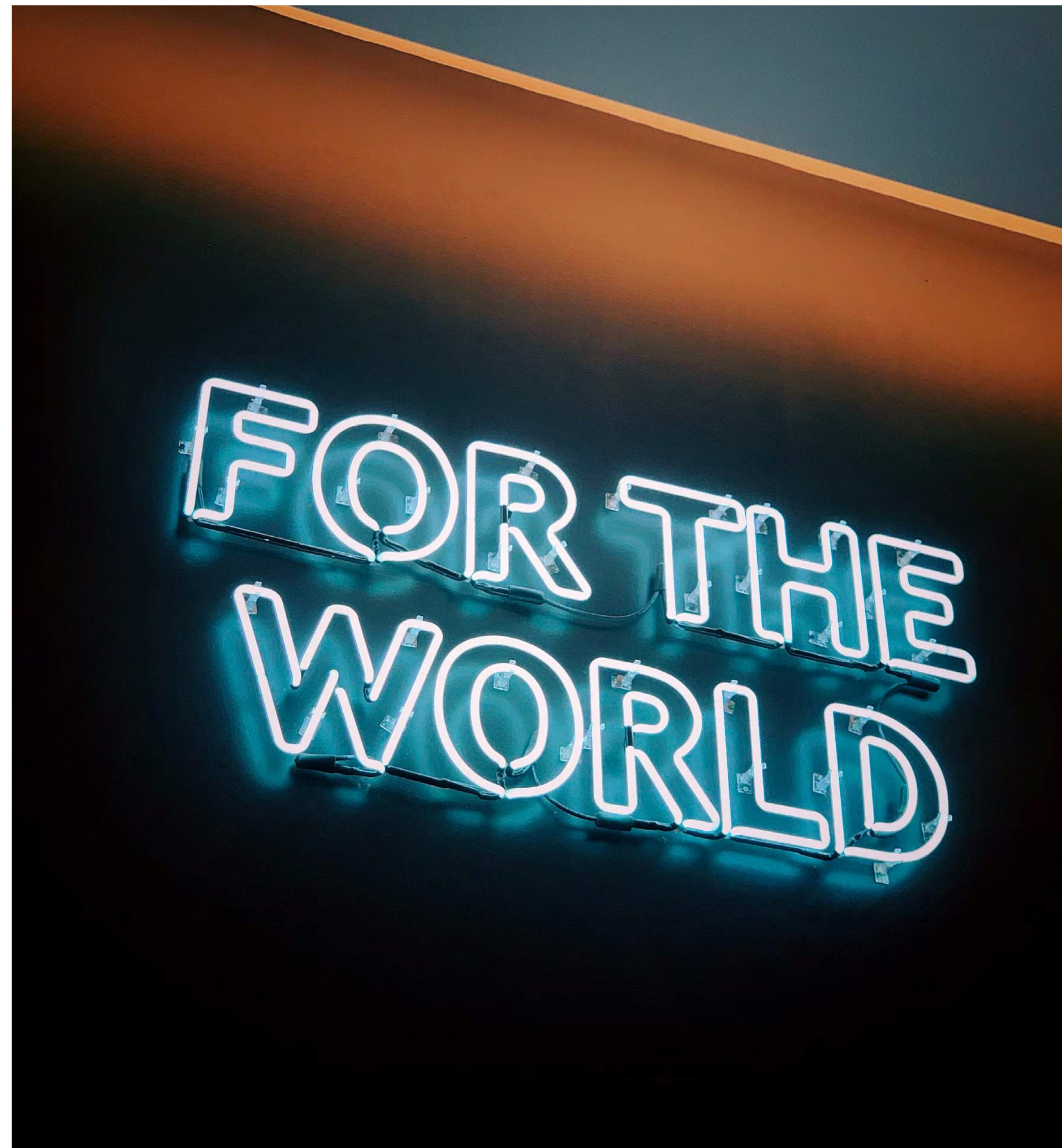
**WE LOOKED TO
EXPERTS TO TRUST**

15

We googled. We diligently tuned into the Prime Minister's daily press briefing at 5pm. We craved information from credible sources.

Whilst 'fake news' continues to be a widely contested issue, this year has presented brands and individuals the opportunity to forge trusted connections with audiences. Elevating the importance of experts, often built around data and science, to offer opinion, information and advice.

Brands should always look to review how they can use their people as assets – as spokespeople for their businesses, as a means to engage and connect with customers. People trust people. Just make sure you trust the right people with your brand and ensure you remain 'human' but on message.



16

WE FENG SHUI'D OUR SPACES





16

Confined to our homes during the lockdown, our homes became a place of sanctuary, a space where we suddenly had to socialise, work and study all at once. It's unsurprising therefore that we were keen to adapt and renovate our spaces for these new purposes.

With swathes of the population working from home or on furlough, many of us had more time than usual to get into those shelved DIY projects to turn our houses into homes.

As the lockdown restrictions persist, the concept of working from home is becoming increasingly normalised and we expect a steady future demand for well designed and ergonomic spaces. DIY and home/homewear brands enjoyed an uptick in consumer interest as our connection to our personal spaces are stronger than ever before, but these brands still need to prepare for how our relationship with our homes will change yet again once the world begins opening up.

17

**WE REDISCOVERED
AN APPRECIATION
FOR NATURE**




17

As cities around the world went into lockdown, we began to see signs of nature rebounding which really provoked thought, as people begun to tangibly observe just how much of an impact our activities have on the environment. With more people working from home, exploring local areas, slowing down and spending more time in their back gardens, people are truly noticing and appreciating nature and wildlife that surrounds us and are becoming more mindful of their own actions.

With brands, sectors and governments coming together globally to battle climate change and increase sustainable practices, it may be easier than ever to shift and encourage customer behaviour change.

In fact, with a pandemic induced CSR interest, we'll likely see consumers keeping brands in check. Having sustainability embedded within brand identities is bound to be a key driver of customer loyalty in the future!



A close-up photograph of a gray cat lying down on a white, textured surface, possibly a bedsheet. The cat's eyes are closed, and its ears are slightly pointed. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the cat's fur and the surface it is resting on.

18

**NOW WE KNOW FOR SURE
WHICH MEETINGS REALLY
SHOULD JUST BE EMAILS**



18

We've all had our fair share of 3-hour long aimless boardroom ramblings, pre-lockdown. Operating online during the lockdown has meant more purpose, focus and reasoning behind any Zoom meetings or even face to face ones (when restrictions eased around September). But this concept of more purpose extends not only to work meetings, with less manpower, reduced budgets and freedom, we saw brands cut the fluff and frills, homing in and streamlining strategies, communications and activities.

From a consumer perspective, with stockpiling and a boost in online shopping, brands managed to get more data and a clearer picture of the basic needs and wants of their consumers.

Many brands have now stripped operations and marketing to the bone in order to keep afloat, but this has also meant more re-evaluation/consideration and therefore more purposeful and connected strategies.

19

**WE INNOVATED.
QUICKLY!**

19

From virtual queue apps to online deliveries, to AI powered supply/operating systems and delivery vans, brands have had to respond to events almost instantly. It may have taken a year or two to even get to the stage of testing new tech pre-pandemic.

But now we've seen brands cut through all the bureaucratic red tape, launching new tech solutions within 8-week time frames in some cases.

This year has hopefully ushered in a more open mindset towards adopting tech solutions and for the bigger brands, doing so with more agility and speed!

**BRANDS
HAVE HAD
TO RESPOND
TO EVENTS
ALMOST
INSTANTLY**



20

GAMING GREW UP



20

Once upon a time when you mentioned gaming in a marketing meeting, you'd think of teenagers holed up in their bedrooms wired up to headsets. Fast forward to 2020, marketers are finally taking gaming seriously. And its appeal has grown, across demographics. eSports continues to grow in popularity.

Brands are elbowing their way to get premium content opportunities on the newest and most popular game releases. Musicians are releasing new tracks, the metaverse is creating 'events' and engagement opportunities many of us would have struggled to fathom 12 months ago.

There is huge opportunity for brands to engage with gamers natively; but approach with caution. Games are based around social interactions (largely), people seek escapism and entertainment. Advertising or brand opportunities need to be developed authentically and with understanding of your audience.

A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a person's face, focusing on the eyes and mouth. The lighting is dramatic, with a strong orange glow emanating from the mouth area, creating a fiery or intense effect. The background is dark, and the overall mood is mysterious and powerful. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

21

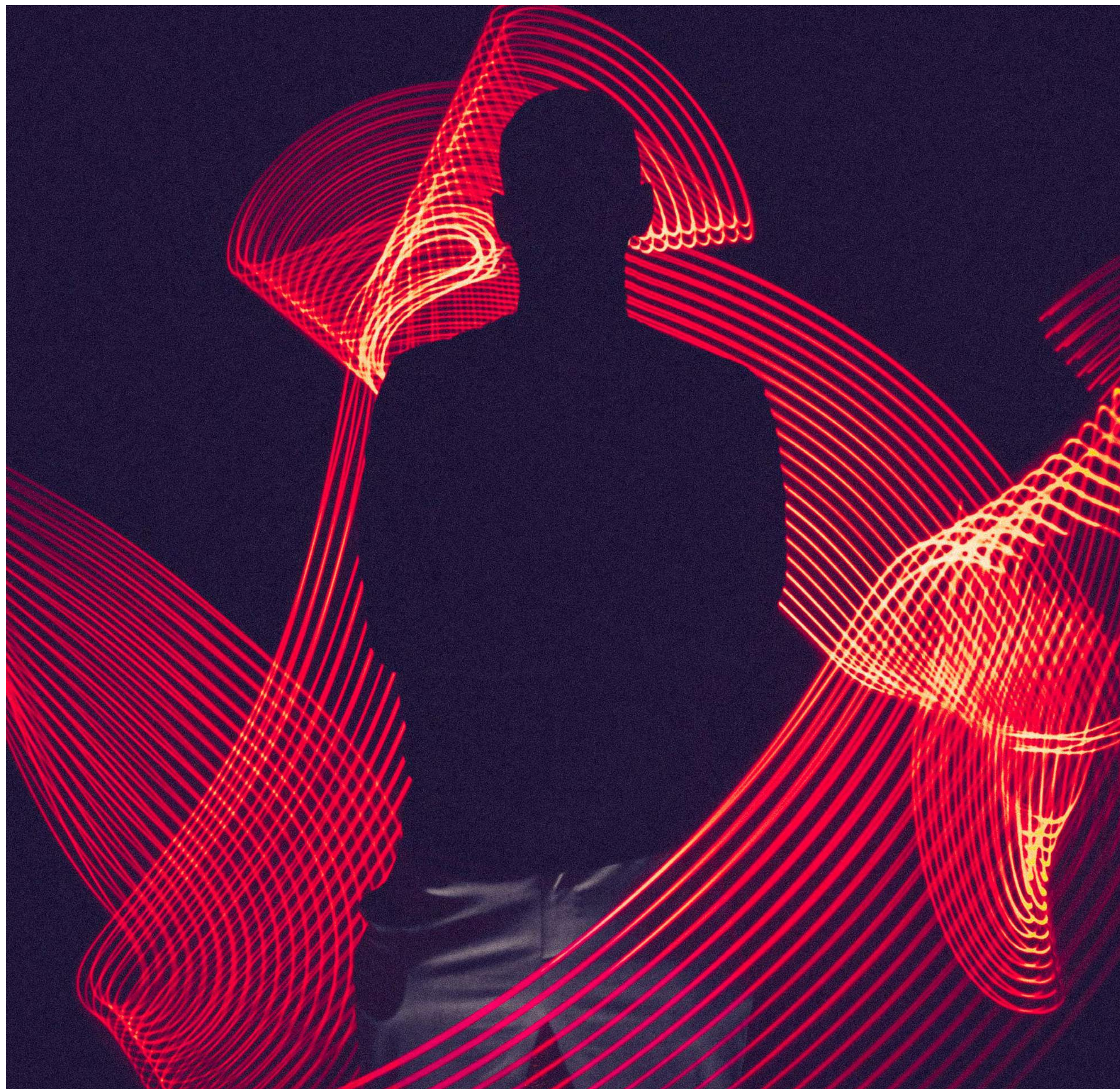
**WE'LL ALWAYS
'EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED'**

21

From an alarmingly close potential WW3 confrontation, to political uprisings, controversial elections, a global pandemic and Brexit, disruption used to be a scary word... now it is just expected.

We may emerge from this year with multiple bumps and bruises, but it has only made each and every one of us that little bit stronger. It's important to plan ahead, but if 2020 has taught us anything, it's that being able to respond spontaneously in crisis is equally important.

Resilience will be the defining factor of successful brands in the future, as we continue to 'expect the unexpected' and thrive anyway!



THANK YOU

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