



Episode 03: Survival of the Simplest

Going deeper to explore customers' changing lives,
we discovered a world of internal conflict

The opposite is also true

People are pretty good at adapting. Despite the very real tragedies of lost life, business and human interaction... and the very real resulting anxieties, there is also a lens through which we see ourselves actually, doing very well. Our forced constraints have created a newfound focus on and gratitude for fundamental humans needs of safety, love and belonging. And, it turns out, we're really good when we make things really simple.

In this, we are seeing both a fight for and a flight to simplicity. As people are more mindful of every decision, every interaction, every surface we come in contact with, they are forced to reduce. To shift away from a lifestyle built around convenience, toward a more mindful approach to meeting their most basic functional and emotional needs. Small wins over big ones. From planning a summer vacation to figuring out how we buy milk. Replacing the fear of missing out (FOMO) with unity in the reality of "we're all in this together" (WAITT[?]). The freedom to do anything I want trumped by the duty to do the right thing by me and you. Looking inside one's self — encouraged by their own capacity to adapt and thrive within a new lifestyle — is a near evolutionary self-reliance in the now.

While the constraints are temporary, the challenge to survival and the satisfaction for getting through this, largely because of yourself, is a profound personal achievement*. At global scale. Surviving is its own adaptation. Doing so because we made things simple will have a lasting effect.

* This is a marked difference from post-9/11 or the Great Recession where the change was top down. With Covid-19, it's bottom-up. For example, post 9/11, security tightened at airports, so our adjustment was a reaction. With Covid-19, largely, we are free to do whatever we want [with obvious BIG caveats], yet it is us who are making the changes for our own survival. I didn't make flying any safer post 9/11... security did; but I am making life safer now, with my own actions.

What's next for brands?

As consumers are focusing on themselves, encouraged by their own capacity to adapt, brands need to demonstrate their relevance to people's self-reliance; to be "must-have" choices as consumers focus on what's most meaningful and reduce their consumption of what isn't satisfying a true need.

Being essential is reflecting consumers' most fundamental needs back to them in ways that are most relevant to them now. We see 3 forces driving the connection between brands and customers now...

We're taking in pride in making it work



“ *It taught me to live alone and simply. Doing simple things always considered to be great. Survival to the Simplest is the Real success of life in the current scenario.*

- Swapna P



And prioritizing our most basic needs

“ *For me, success it is feeling that I have the resources to deal with life. We still eat, wash and perform the basic functions.*

- Swapna P

“ *I thought I would have found it harder to carry on. The idea that we need to protect ourselves and others is what has kept me going.”*

- Vicki M

We're finding new ways to live our old lives



“ Keeping a schedule and exercising keeps me sane. I am exercising with body weight and using home items as props, chairs, beans, towels to help me achieve my goals.

- Kelysey M

“ Instead of thinking “I’m cooped up in the house”, turn it around and do all of the things you need to do but never have time such as sorting through your clothes or painting the walls.

- Michelle H



And finding that it's the little things that get us through

“ Everything feels slowed down and endless, can't remember which day it is. Looking forward to coffee and meals, just drifting through spring days while lots of people in hospitals are dying every day.

- Ravichandran B

Being essential, now.

As consumers are focusing on themselves, encouraged by their own capacity to adapt, brands need to demonstrate their relevance to people's self-reliance; to be "must-have" as consumers focus on what's most meaningful and reduce their consumption of what isn't satisfying a true need.

At a high level, being essential now is about looking down Maslow's hierarchy of needs, rather than up it, as brands traditionally have done. How brands map to people's physiological needs for health, food, water and sleep; and safety needs of emotional, financial and physical safety.

Being essential is reflecting consumers' most fundamental needs back to them in ways that are most relevant to them now. We see three forces driving

1

Progressive forces

Consumers taking up new routines, learning a new language, taking on new roles in their households and at work. Acquiring new skills to be better equipped through this crisis.

2

Regressive forces

These are our safety zones. Where people feel comfortable and cared for. Where people's good memories reside and they can tap into for love and belonging. To know that everything is going to be ok. Disney movies. Campbell's soup. Comfy couches.

3

Reparative forces

How we take care of ourselves. Not as indulgences, but as motivations to survive in good health. To look better on zoom calls. Painting our nails. Trimming our beards. Drinking water.

The degree to which brands can adapt with empathy for their customers; to align their brands with these consumer forces, is the degree to which brands can prove their essential relevance now, to see benefit now and position themselves for longer-term success.

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“With all this extra time on my hands, I've started to notice the bird song. It's beautiful.”

- Debra H

