



Coming out of Lockdown

The OMD UK **GUIDE**

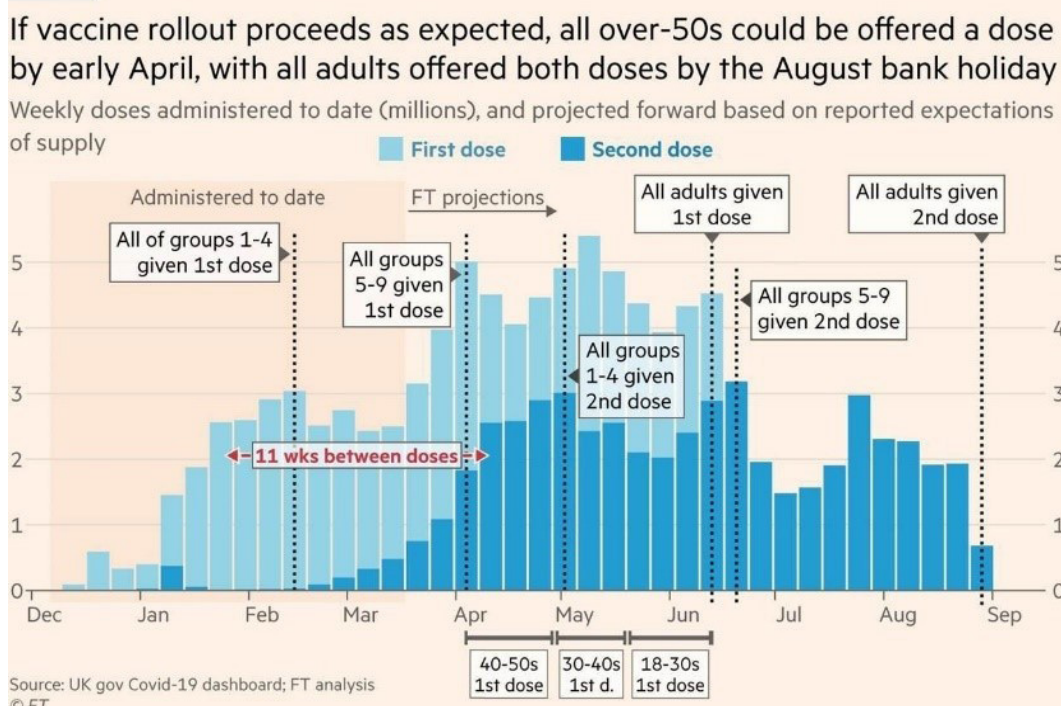




Introduction

It's now over 12 months since Boris Johnson announced the nationwide UK lockdown, which is scary to think, but so much has happened in this time. From changing consumer behaviours to several vaccines being developed around the world to counter Covid-19: all in the space of 365 days (and counting). It's safe to say no one has been immune to the impact of the Pandemic.

At OMD UK, we've been monitoring the mood of the nation closely via our ongoing OMD Radar surveys (now in its 58th edition), as well as providing our point of view on the impact Covid-19 has had on our clients' businesses. These include "Marketing in Transition", "Empathy in a Pandemic" and "Preparing for Lockdown 3". However in this, (what we hope is) our last lockdown related opinion piece, we will try to uncover how brands, marketers and agencies alike need to behave in order to smoothly adjust to life **Coming Out of Lockdown**, as the vaccine roll out is set to be fully completed by August end.



In doing so, we will look at five key aspects of society, both through the lens of what has changed in the last 12 months as well as what we believe will be here to stay – and more importantly how brands need to adapt to meet these needs.

The five areas of investigation are:



01 The Work Dilemma



02 The Social Drought



03 The Residual Behaviours



04 The Economic Impact



05 The Holiday Cravings



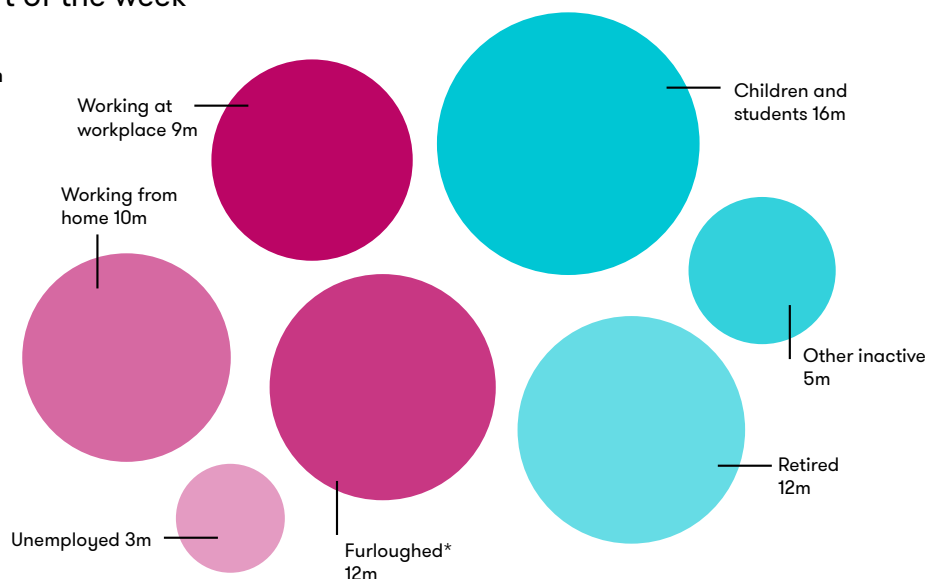
The Work Dilemma

UK population in lockdown

ICAEW chart of the week

UK population 67m

- Workforce 34m
- Outside the workforce 33m

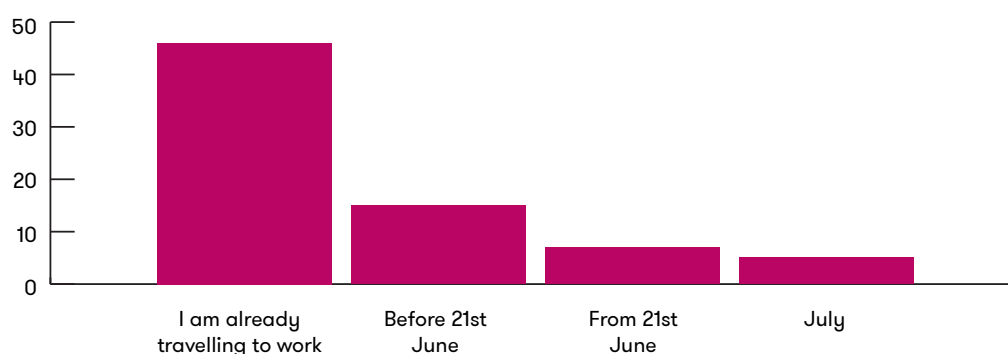


3 July 2020. Chart research by Martin Wheatcroft FCA, design by Sunday.
Source: ICAEW calculations extrapolated from ONS and HM Treasury data.
* Furloughed workers comprise 9.3m employees on CJRS and 2.6m self-employed on SEISS.

@ICAEW 2020

One of the biggest changes for many in the past year has been our offices moving into our homes. When we were in the first lockdown, less than 1/3rd of the working population was working at their workplace, 1/3rd was WFH and the rest were furloughed (Source: ICAEW). As we progress through the lockdown easing road map this time around, the UK Government will actively instruct people to return to their workspaces from 21st June onwards (or at least it plans to). Our OMD RADAR survey tells us that **46% of us are already going into work and this number will jump to 68% by June end.** For many, the easing of social restrictions won't result in much change, but instead be a continuation of behaviour that has been carried out as normal across the period of the Pandemic. For example, YouGov have recently reported (22nd March'21) that 17% of those surveyed are "never working from home".

When do you think you will return to workspace



01 The Work Dilemma

So, what has the whole experience been like? We have all realised there has been a DICHOTOMY that has existed in our WFH experience – while no one can deny humans’ inherent need for social interaction that was brutally, abruptly snatched away from us by COVID-19, it has also unveiled some great flexibility in how we could work more productively and happily in the future. Zoom fatigue has been a thing and workdays have become more intense for some with no relief. In the words of **Anna Whitehouse**, “We’re in a period of ‘fake flex’ where employees are competing to prove their worth by logging on 24/7 and in turn aren’t taking a break, resulting in them breaking. I don’t think anyone was prepared for the level of **teaching, working, conference-calling, cooking, fringe-cutting, news-watching or general worrying** that the past nine months had in store for us”.

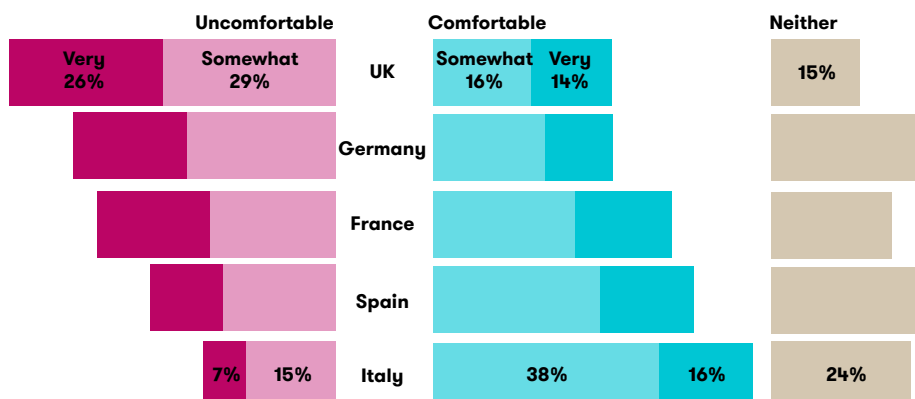
Many employees feel stretched further than before in the work they need to deliver. 30% report an increase in their hours whilst working from home, and more than half (53%) agree they feel they always must be available (Source: YouGov & Microsoft Research). Employees also miss seeing their colleagues in person, and the opportunity for social interaction is a key driver for people’s decision to go into the office when guidelines allow - 65% quote socialising as what they miss most when they work remotely (Source: YouGov & Microsoft Research).

On the other hand, are the memories of hours spent in a cramped train or stuck in traffic on the motorway. Thousands of pounds a year spent on commuting have added to savings in time and money as a by product of working from home, and many who have tasted freedom aren’t interested in giving it up. In fact, as a nation we are most reluctant to go back to work when compared with other countries.



The British are more concerned about hot desking than their peers

Once Covid-19 concerns have died down, if your employer were to introduce ‘hot-desking’, how comfortable would you be with this? (%)



01 The Work Dilemma

So, how will we go back this summer then? What would the WFH and at workplace split be for most?

Ben Willmott, Head of Public Policy at CIPD, said: “The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered the biggest homeworking experiment we have ever seen in the UK”. While the demand for flexibility will continue with people’s changing attitudes to work in the wake of the Covid-19 Pandemic, social capital remains critical. Twitter initially offered the opportunity for its UK staff to ‘work from home forever’ but has reverted on the same. Most are finding a hybrid model as their solution - **55% believe they would take up a hybrid model of working and fewer than 1/5 of UK workers want to go back to working in the office five days a week** (Source: Survation Poll). The new way of working has provided an opportunity for UK workforces to live life to a different rhythm. 55% use their lunch break to focus on their personal life and 56% report an increase in their levels of happiness working from home (YouGov and Microsoft Research). Working parents in particular have appreciated the benefits home working brings, when juggling childcare. Businesses too are responding to both sides of the WFH experience. 53% have said they want their offices to feature more collaboration space to welcome employees back into more productive, social environments. (Source: Knight Frank research). But they are equally taking the advantages of hybrid working into account – for example HSBC has said it would use the shift in working patterns to cut its office space by 40%, while Lloyds has downsized by a fifth.

10 TYPES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING

www.Ten2Two.org



1 PART TIME WEEK

This can be anything from two to four days per week, usually 9-5.30/6pm depending on usual office hours of the company.



2 PART TIME DAYS

These are reduced daily hours, often Monday to Friday, 9.00 to 3.00pm.



3 CONDENSED HOURS

Full-time hours condensed into four longer days or a three-day week worked across four shorter days.



4 STAGGERED HOURS

This is full-time hours worked over different times, e.g. 7am to 3pm or 10am to 6pm



5 JOB SHARE

When you job share a role between two employees, so both parties either work three days each with one day overlapping, or one person works three days and the other one does two days.



6 NINE DAY FORTNIGHT

These are usually full-time hours worked across nine days instead of ten over a fortnight. So you get one day off every two weeks but maintain a full time salary.



7 CONTRACTS

Many businesses recruit individuals to cover specific fixed-term projects or roles, particularly since IR35 changes were announced.



8 TERM-TIME ONLY

A role that is generally full-time during school terms but allows employees not to work during school holidays and half terms.



9 WORKING FROM HOME

A role where some of the job or all of it can be worked from home on a full time or part time basis.



10 FREELANCE

This is when you offer your services and skills to an employer on an hourly/daily/set project basis.

CREATED BY TEN2TWO
RECRUITMENT SPECIALISTS IN FLEXIBLE WORKING AND PART TIME JOBS FOR
EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONALS AND EXECUTIVES

Covid: Can my boss force me to go to work?

7 days ago



Coronavirus pandemic



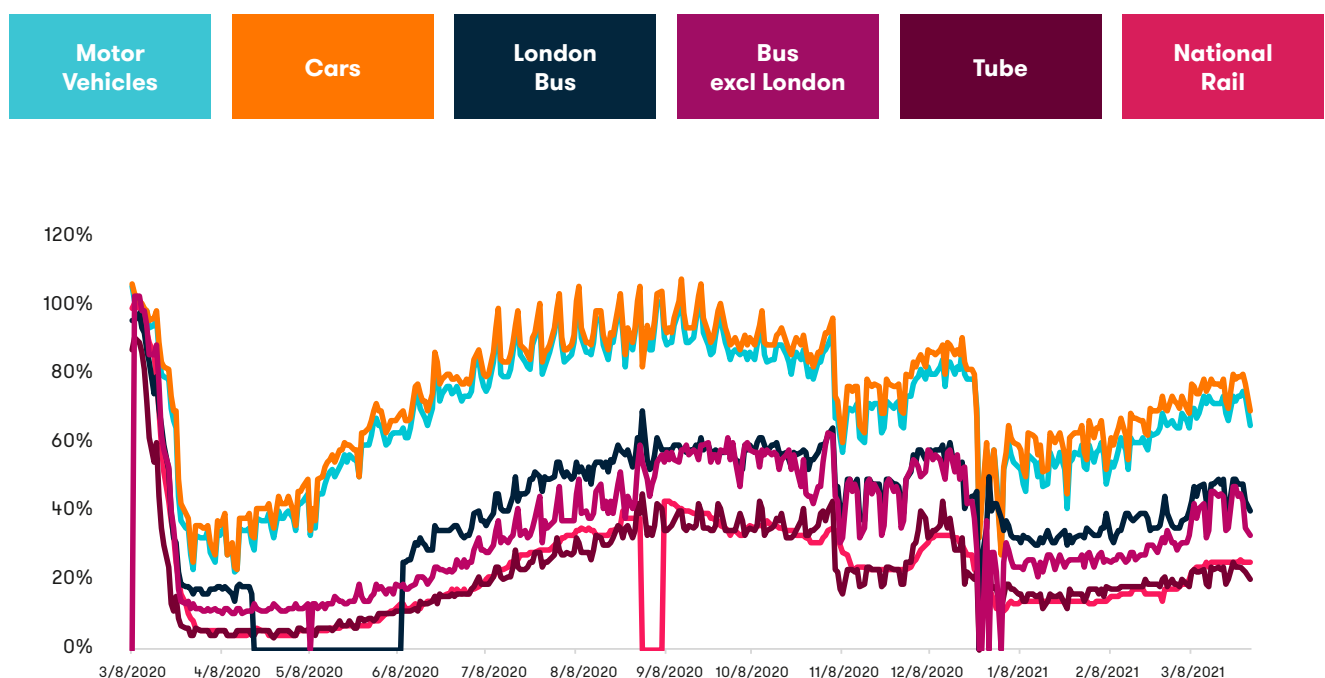
Lockdown rules are beginning to ease across the UK, and shielding has stopped in England and Wales.

01 The Work Dilemma

We will have to wait and watch how many embrace different styles of working vs. going back to their old ways completely. We believe the kind of work and personal circumstances will also dictate a lot of this:

- There will be differences across blue collar and white-collar attitudes in returning. A lot of blue-collar workers, hospitality businesses and small businesses might be working overtime to make up for lost incomes. Some industries like construction for instance have never been busier.
- There will also be industry specific implications. For example, bankers need to be on their trading floors with heavier infrastructural needs such as large multiple screens and many banks have kept traders going in even through lockdown.
- Demographics also have a sway in who embraces flexible working further. Twice as many under-35s want permanent flexible working post Pandemic, compared to over-55s. Almost half of over-55s have returned to offices in some capacity, compared to a third of under-35s (Source: Deloitte Research).
- Working parents are also loving the increased flexibility to help support childcare duties with 48% of those who worked in an office before lockdowns started saying they were considering asking for some more remote working (Source: Bright Horizons).

Change in ways of commuting Post-Covid-19



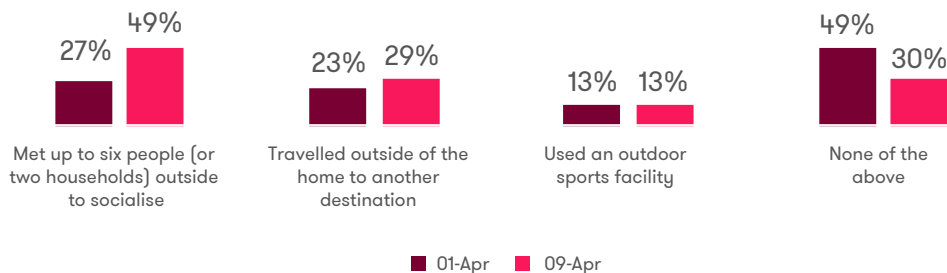
The implication for brands and marketers:

- A mental and physical opportunity will present itself. Adjusting lives back to long, crowded commutes is a mindset opportunity brands can speak to as well as help with. Brands are already including and addressing this in their comms. Watch this fun, playful ad chewing gum brand Extra have just launched as an example here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gxm7Hu-IHJs>. Physically the way people commute and the media they are exposed to, and how often they are exposed to it will change too. **Active commuting** became a popular way to both avoid public transport and break up a sedentary working day. Increased flexible working may result in some more permanent shifts in morning routines and 'on the go' behaviours moving forward, so we would need to consider how to flex our media channel mix accordingly. For e.g. 27% of rail commuters said they would make fewer public transport trips (Source: Systra Survey) and Buses, Rail and Tubes are running at less than half of their capacity in the past year (Chart above, Source: UK Govt).
- Whilst many people use public transport for commuting, a whopping 68% (source: Statista) of Brits mainly commute via car. This highlights how roadside OOH will be an important format with impacts growing above pre-COVID levels once restrictions have lifted. But outside of OOH, Radio within commuter hours will return to some level of "normal" patterns providing an opportunity for brands to reach the masses cost efficiently.
- Businesses catering to the commuter crowd (food, drink, retail in office hubs), need to win demand as people return to offices and establish new routines. While businesses that were discovered through "local living" have an opportunity to retain peoples' business in a new normal of hybrid working.



The Social Drought

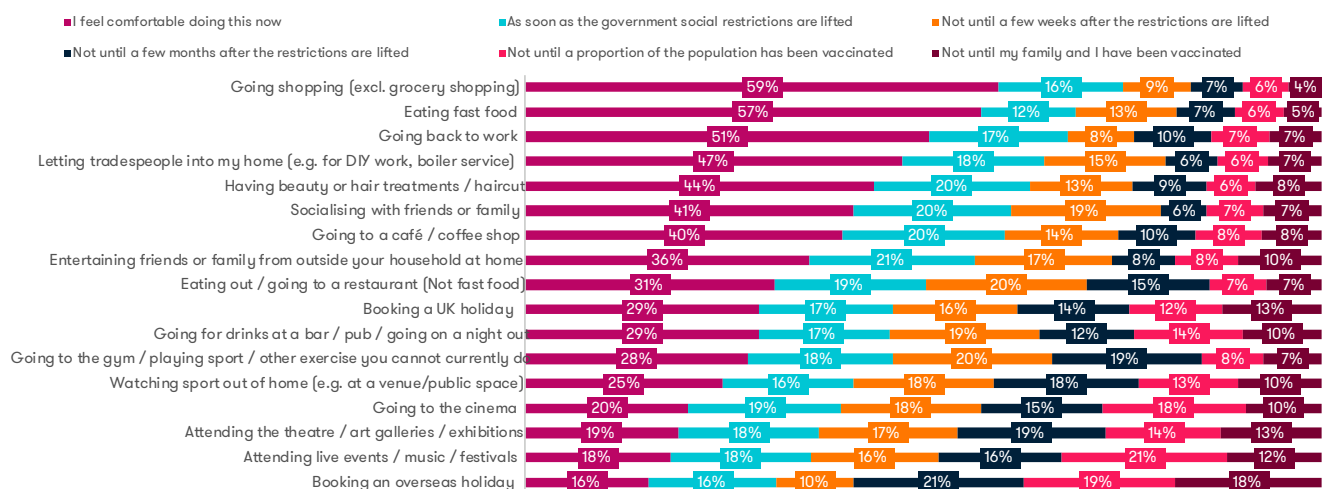
Since the easing of lockdown on 29th March, half of the nation have met up with six people and over a quarter have travelled, hinting at the fact that many are itching to get back into the world and spend time with friends and loved ones.



However, although many are looking forward to spending time outside of their homes, some are feeling more anxious about doing so. For example, our latest OMD Radar survey (5th May) has seen anxiety levels reach **21%**, this being up **+6%** vs pre-Pandemic levels, showing the impact the Pandemic has had on consumers' mental health. The report further reveals **41% of consumers feel comfortable socialising with friends and families, leaving 59% that aren't completely comfortable.** Equally those who are more introverted, and experience social anxiety may have enjoyed aspects of lockdown.

As mental health writer Matt Haig says, "Not all of us want to get back to all the 'normal' things. Because some of them made us feel abnormal".

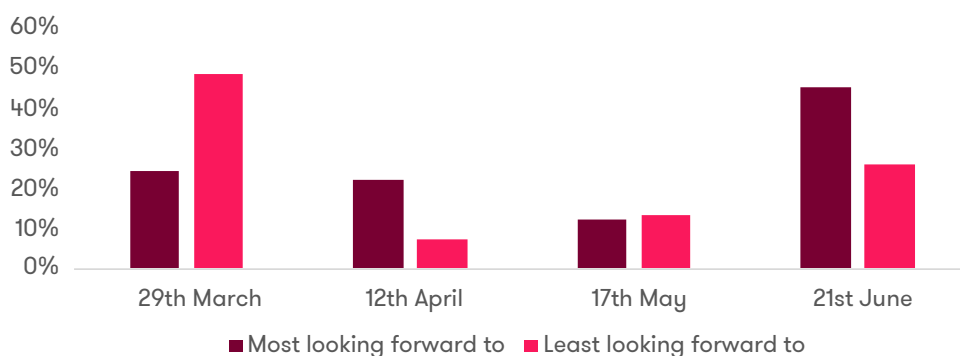
When would you feel comfortable doing the following again?



02 The Social Drought

So currently, the UK is displaying mixed emotions with regards to getting back to normal. That said, the **21st June** is the date that is generating the most excitement amongst UK consumers (45%). And, in our latest OMD Radar survey, **64% of Brits are confident that the current national lockdown restrictions will be completely eased on this date**, as per the roadmap set out by the UK Government. For brands there will be an opportunity to play on the sentiment of full freedom that this milestone will create, as well as the opportunity to harvest demand in the market and look to boost sales over what is set to be a busy summer period of spending.

Which date are you most looking forward to

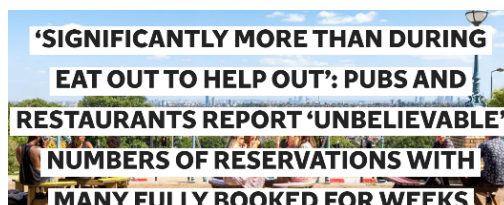
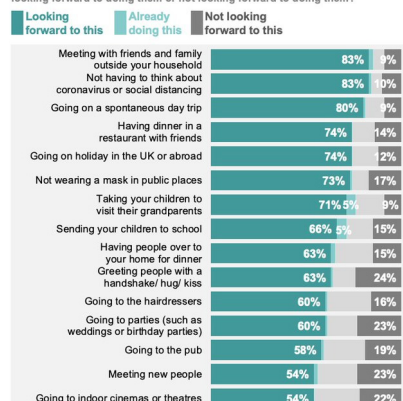


On the social side, some consumers are eager to get back to enjoying live events when measures ease. **A high proportion (83%) of people are planning to go to the same or a greater number of events once lockdown restrictions are lifted** (Epson European Research, 2021). A survey by Live Nation showed **95%** of fans signalled enthusiasm to return to concert venues when restrictions are lifted, and artists are chomping at the bit to resume performing in front of live audiences. UK parks and staycation destinations will likely be overcrowded and are already getting impossible to book. For example, most holiday accommodation in Cornwall is booked up until October!

To top it all off a wealth of sport is coming our way with Summer 2021 being touted as the 'Summer of Sport' bringing us the Euros, British and Irish Lions in South Africa for the rugby, followed by the Olympics and Paralympics.

What are you excited to do when Coronavirus restrictions end?

Now thinking about when life returns to "normal" (i.e. back to how things were before the pandemic began). For each of the following, would say you are looking forward to doing them or not looking forward to doing them?



A busy summer of sport



With a busy summer pending, it's likely that many of us will be busy scrambling through booking sites – OpenTable, BookaTable etc – trying to find a booking that is suitable. This could all become quite overwhelming and indeed frustrating for some consumers, so how can brands help?

02 The Social Drought

The implication for brands and marketers:

- OOH spaces will be in high demand, with everyone trying to vie for increased footfall. For example, we've already seen that high street, leisure and retail environment footfall increase by **+174%** alongside restrictions easing on April 12th [source: Talon].
- Turning to experiential activations could help brands win big this summer. Never will there be a warmer welcome from consumers to pop ups, brand activations or events that will help to facilitate consumers socialising together. Brands are already tapping into such moments – for example Heineken offered a pint and a haircut in selected pub gardens on 12th April.
- Social feeds may become less about meme sharing, and more about self-sharing over the summer. So, activations that facilitate consumer experiences “IRL” as well as through their social feeds will be an important way for brands to stand out. Think ‘Instagrammable’ more than ever before.
- The energy and excitement of a festival, concert or sports events has been sorely missed presenting opportunities to align with humans’ needs to belong and participate through collective experience. Brands should consider partnerships, broadcast sponsorships and brand activations in and around such events more than ever before. This can be extended to big telly events too: keep the big Love Island finale this August in mind as the much loved, talked about reality show returns to our screens for a summer of love.
- An exciting slate of films is releasing in cinemas across the UK and taking learnings from the release of Tenet in summer 2020, there's set to be some huge box office numbers this year. With restrictions easing, there will be lots of pent up demand amongst audiences, allowing brands to use cinema to drive reach and capture attention. Marvel have launched a lovely little film reminding us the power of cinema to bring us together. You can watch it here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yedOZgRaOE8>.
- Keeping in mind not everyone will be out socialising this summer, brands can continue to utilise some of the channels that have paid back. For example, just because social restrictions are easing, doesn't mean consumers will stop watching TV, YouTube content or listening to music via streaming platforms. In fact, ThinkBox's 2020 report shows that TV viewing grew by +40% per person, per day in 2020, and this may not diminish as lockdown eases. People will just find different ways to fit viewing into their schedules. Therefore, a continuation of the channels that have grown in lockdown, will remain important outside of lockdown as well.



The Residual Behaviours

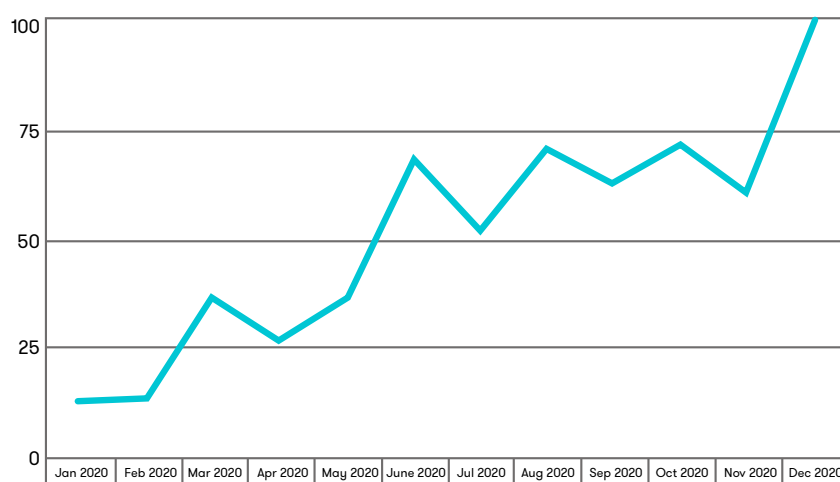
On average it takes 66 days for a new behaviour to become a habit (Source: Healthline). And we have had 6× that amount of time living through lockdown or some form of social restrictions in place. So many Brits have indeed formed new, or different, habits and behaviours during lockdown. But, it's our point of view that these won't magically disappear when restrictions are lifted. Instead there will be a residual impact of these behaviours for many months, and possibly years, to come.

For example, **85% of Brits claim to want to see at least some of the personal or social changes they have experienced during the Pandemic continue afterwards, while just 9% want a complete return to normal (Source: YouGov).**

The Pandemic and subsequent lockdowns have of course been an extremely stressful time for many, but at the same time it's also been an opportunity for consumers to get more out of how they spend their day. Whether it's finding a new hobby, getting into shape or learning a new skill – many have been able to make use of their change of routine and daily life.

Many of these shifts in behaviour ladder up to what Think With Google have termed **“Slow Living”** – a trend which has been “growing exponentially on YouTube and is closely associated with popular themes of simple living and minimalism”. For many the past 12 months have been their busiest ever, with free time at a premium, but for others the Pandemic has freed up time. Many consumers have looked to fill their time with new hobbies such as cooking (even taking time to eat a proper breakfast), DIY, crafts, gardening and upcycling furniture – these new hobbies present opportunities and new avenues for brands to align themselves with and connect with consumers.

Views of videos with “slow living” in the title



Note: Views are indexed, with a value of 100 representing peak views for this trend

03 The Residual Behaviours













A key demographic who have had less time in the past year are parents of school age children, particularly those juggling work as well. With the strain of two rounds of home-schooling and less available childcare from family or babysitters unable to come in and help, this group is most likely to feel exhausted and mentally strained from lockdown. However, there are mixed emotions, as many in this group have also enjoyed a “simpler family life” with basic rituals and routines. So, they are also likely to want to continue some of these and not get swept away in the hustle bustle of normal life.

The Pandemic has also forced or sped up the digitisation of many categories with broad uptake across all social demographic groups changing many consumer journeys. Take online grocery shopping for example, which now accounts for 11.5% of total grocery shopping...equating to more online shoppers in 2020 vs. the previous five years (source: Kantar). Now that people have seen services work well online, many will continue using them. While FMCG brands have previously invested in instore activations and ways to grab attention at shelves, they now need to work harder to get into peoples’ digital shopping basket too. However, we do expect some digitised behaviours to settle down as we come out of lockdown. For example, Hello Fresh doubled their revenue in 2020, and demand was so high at the start of lockdown they were closed to new customers and provided a limited menu (source: Financial Times). We know these subscribers are more likely to be ABC1 and city dwellers (source: TGI). Therefore, it can be assumed that when this group can start eating out in restaurants again, it’s likely that will have an impact on the surge in demand and sales.

There has also undoubtedly been a shift in how we’re spending time with media channels across several lockdowns. In a relatively short space of time, some channels have quickly matured, grown or changed in the way that they are consumed. Something that would have taken much longer ordinarily, had it not been for the Pandemic.

Some of the key changes in consumption include:

2020 resulted in several big shifts in media consumption

-   TV viewing has grown across audiences and daytime; particularly during lockdown. **Streaming** has accelerated rapidly- despite this many big shows are performing very well as people remain in the home.
BVOD viewing has increased significantly over the course of the UK lockdowns, as people explore more online content and boxset binging.
-   **Cinema** closures resulted in the sector being hit hard, with many films instead released online or delayed.
-   **OOH** saw turbulent times in 2020, however it has recovered to more consistent levels since lockdown 1.0 as the nation is more well equipped for unexpected changes.
-   **Audio** usage has grown with audiences working from home increasing digital use particularly across smart speakers. With radio seen as a good way to stay connected with the outside world, keep company or offer trusted news source.
-   We saw further growth- particularly in time spent- across **digital channels**. Tik Tok grew at pace in 2020.
Within Online, **Gaming** is becoming an increasingly important and expansive media ecosystem- spanning in-game, streaming, sponsorship and much more.
-   By the summer of 2020, lockdown restrictions had relaxed, and with sport resumed, **print** figures returned to near pre COVID-19 levels. However, any print audience lost throughout this period was more than off-set through the traffic to **digital Newsbrand channels** which reported huge YOY increases.

03 The Residual Behaviours

But, with lockdown restrictions easing, there will likely be a resurgence in some channels. OOH will be looked to across the summer months more than ever before as a means of reaching mass audiences, whilst print circulation may pick up again once people start getting back into lost routines and follow the busy summer of sport. And lastly cinema... the media channel that has been worst hit by the Pandemic will recover alongside a fantastic slate of film releases.

Another area we believe will remain popular (and potentially even continue to grow), is gaming. During the first national lockdown, the UK gaming population increased by +63%... 18% of which have been coined “Covideogamers”, people who only started gaming during the Pandemic (Source: YouGov). And recent reports from gaming platform Twitch, have suggested that these “Covideogamers” haven’t gone away alongside initial easing of restrictions, but their consumption of the Twitch platform has slightly changed. It’s now less constant across the day, and more concentrated towards “peak gaming hours” of 6 – 11pm. Therefore, early signs showing that gaming wasn’t just something to fill the time but has become a new hobby for millions of Brits.



03 The Residual Behaviours

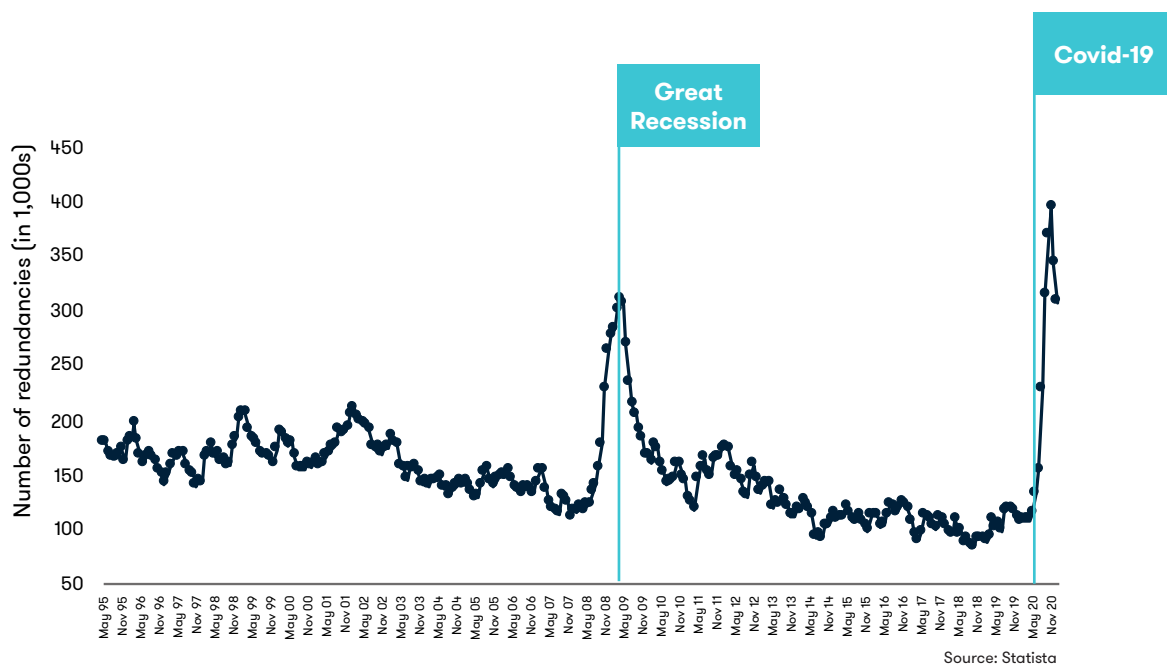
The implication for brands and marketers:

- Things won't revert back to what it was pre-Pandemic overnight. There needs to be a balancing act between the short term and long term. Many of the new behaviours, hobbies or habits that have been adopted throughout lockdown will remain for some time to come. So, taking learnings from advertising campaigns during lockdown, as well as testing newer avenues to connect with audiences via new hobbies, can really help to navigate where and how to spend when restrictions are eased.
- Think about how your brand can complement some of the new hobbies, interests and family activities that have been adopted throughout lockdown. These new passion points could provide a rich opportunity to speak to consumers in ways you're not doing so currently – for e.g. partnership opportunities with digitally led brands.
- Make the most of new platforms and environments available. Use gaming as a way of reaching new and untapped audiences, extend your social footprint into untapped social platforms like TikTok or create greater impact with consumers via the continuing rise in popularity of podcasts and digital audio channels. Do consider what impact the addition of cinema can have on your campaign as a means of reaching a relaxed and captive audience and get your OOH booked before availability is gone!



The Economic Impact

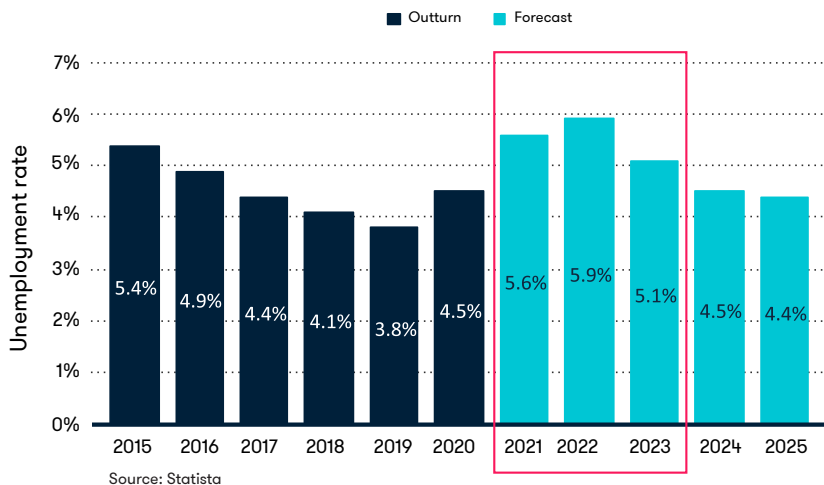
The Pandemic has caused divisions across several aspects of everyday life, but one of the biggest divides it has created is on consumers' finances. For many it has led to job losses, redundancies, and a struggle to make ends meet. For others it has been an opportunity to save when they otherwise wouldn't have done so.



Average number of people made redundant in the United Kingdom from May 1995 to January 2021 (in 1,000s)

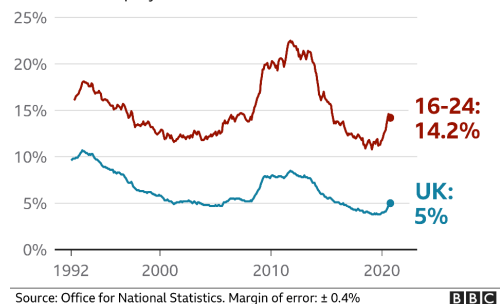
We know the economic outlook doesn't look good for many. In fact, COVID-19 made many more redundant than the Global Financial Crisis back in 2008-09. In the UK, people will be eligible for furlough until 30 September 2021 if their employer agrees as unemployment is expected to reach its peak only in 2022, starting to return to pre-COVID levels in 2025. More than half of the UK's youngest adults fear post-lockdown social pressures, after being one of the demographics hardest hit by the fallout of the Pandemic. Women particularly have been hit harder as well as they have had to take on more - "if one person has to cut back... for care, it is likely to be the person who earns less in a couple, and that is more likely still to be the woman." Women are overrepresented in lower-pay jobs such as; retail, tourism, and food services that lost more than 64 million jobs last year, a 5% total loss, compared to a 3.9% loss for men. **"A typical recession decreases the gender wage gap by a sizeable amount, but a pandemic recession increases the gap by an even larger amount" - Michèle Tertilt, German Economist.** According to the World Economic Forum, closing the global gender gap has increased by a generation - from 99.5 years to 135.6 years - due to negative outcomes for women in 2020. Debt charities warn of long financial Covid implications for many in their latest research.

04 The Economic Impact



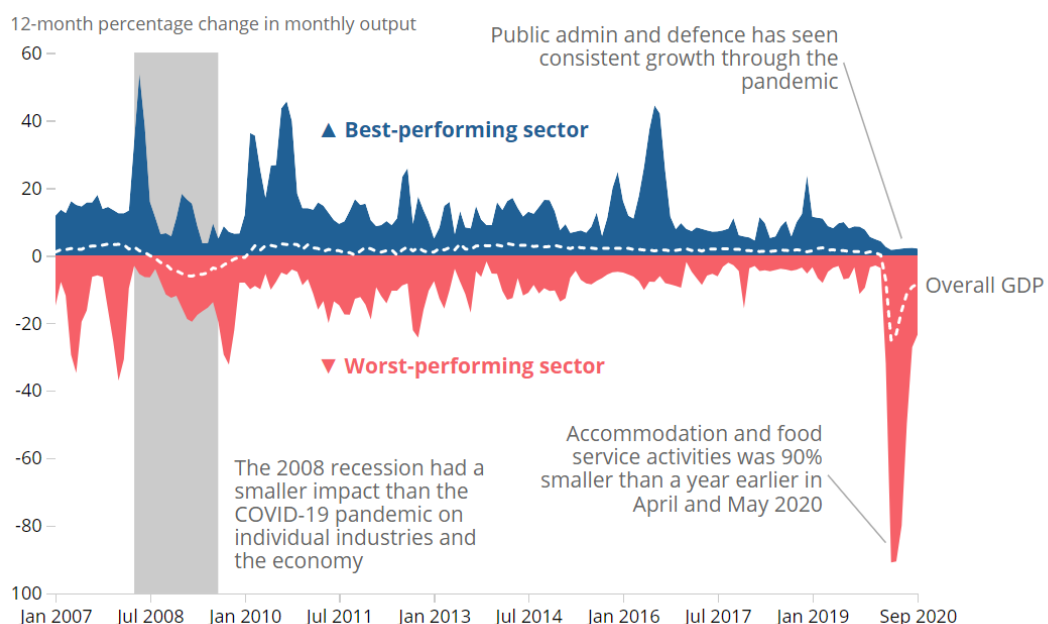
Young people hit by rise in unemployment

Percentage of economically active people aged 16-24 who are unemployed



Apart from certain demographics, there have been different implications for different industries as well. Hospitality and Travel have been two of the hardest hit as COVID-19 for months has made it impossible for them to run their businesses. Charities have suffered - the total amount of charitable giving fell during the last recession by 11% when compared with pre-recession rates. While COVID-19 actually drove people to donate more the mix of where those donations went changed. There was a large increase in the number of people donating or sponsoring to the cause 'hospitals and hospices' with a fifth of people specifically reported donating to charities which support the NHS. There was a significant decline in the amount of money donated to overall 'medical research'. This cause, which often attracts donations via fundraising events, such as the London Marathon and coffee mornings, lost out on up to £174 million during the first half of 2020 (Source: Charities Aid Foundation).

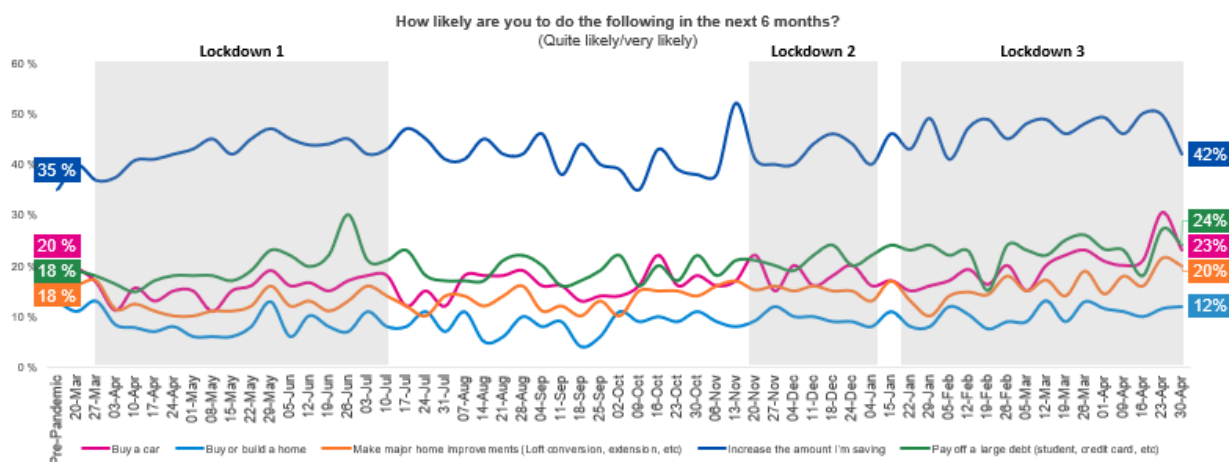
Overall impact on GDP



04 The Economic Impact

On the other hand, **the pandemic has resulted in an estimated “6 million accidental savers” (source: BBC News) who have (in a way) benefited from the pandemic due to a decrease in daily outgoings as they spend more time at home.** Although lockdown restrictions easing will be an opportunity for many to unleash this pent up spending power in retail and leisure environments, the long term implications of the Pandemic (such as more time at home due to flexible working) may result in an improved financial status for these consumers who have been able to save during the Pandemic.

For some of these consumers, this has resulted in more of a “savings minded” culture which was previously lacking - something we have consistently seen in OMD Radar’s weekly consumer tracker where 42% of consumers surveyed planning to save more in the coming six months - +7% up vs. pre-Pandemic levels.



Apart from savings there is another way Brits have battled financial strains through COVID-19 - both old and young have been investing in themselves to futureproof their careers and diversify their skillsets as well as income sources. COVID-19 has kindled the entrepreneurial spirit amongst many. **54% of the UK workers say they are more open to taking on a side hustle or freelance work since the Covid-19 Pandemic (Source: Fiverr Study).** The older cohorts of 55+ who some might say are more set in their ways are leading the way when it comes to self-employment, with 38% of limited companies & side hustles formed post COVID-19 having been established by that age group. LinkedIn reported a 3x increase in time spent learning through COVID-19. The hashtag #ShopSmall gained 34M posts on Instagram and 597.4M on TikTok in 2020 as people looked to support their local shops and small businesses while Etsy UK, an online marketplace, saw a 350% increase in its business and has become a firm household name through the Pandemic. In fact, side hustles contribute close to £14.4B to the British economy and will be a driving factor in UK’s economic recovery.

FEBRUARY 18, 2021

Self-employed workers and side hustlers to drive the UK’s economic recovery

10-23-20 | CAREER EVOLUTION

**Want a secure financial future?
Consider the side hustle**

Future-proofing your career (and bank account) means taking the concept of a side business

The implications for brands and marketers:

- Keep those that might be struggling financially in mind. Consumers will recognise empathy and support from brands in their hard times.
- Brands can look to support the entrepreneurial spirits in different ways and help their consumers contribute to UK's economic recovery faster. Whole campaigns can be organised around this topic and in a post Pandemic world where consumers are expecting more of brands such efforts would bode well on brand affinity and preference.
- Many Brits will be spending their money more cautiously as the Pandemic has put things in perspective for many. Therefore, brands should look to apply learnings from previous recessions, ensuring that their tone of voice is spot on, and acts as a short-cut to consumer decision making.
- Banks and financial providers need to be mindful of the diverging 'haves' and 'have nots' and consider how they are providing the right support and product suite to both groups, with different needs.

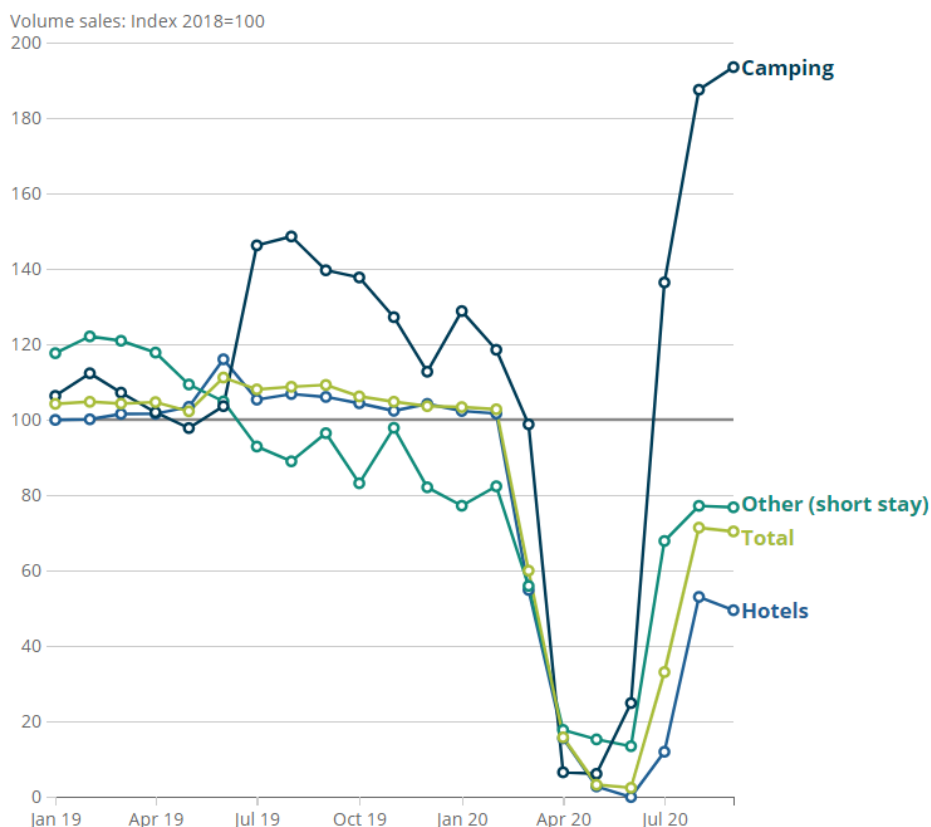


The Holiday Cravings

Travel has been one of the categories hardest hit by the Pandemic. For air travel specifically, it is the hardest period since the second world war. Yet this has not stopped people from hoping and dreaming of travelling again. In AMEX's travel report (March 2021), they said **“people miss travelling so much that 76% of respondents are creating destination wish lists for future travel, even if they can't travel yet”**. The second reason they give to travel is a chance to reconnect with family and loved ones.

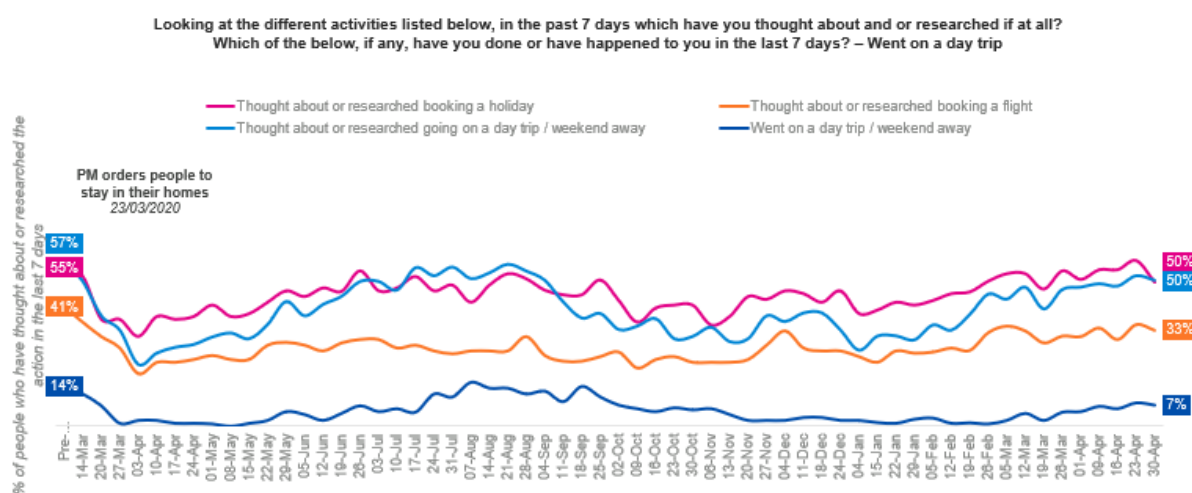
Throughout the Pandemic, consumer demand for travel has been strongly linked to Government announcements. When Boris Johnson has announced a hopeful message, demand and bookings have spiked, and the reverse is also true. We saw this after the February press conference, announcing the four-step route out of lockdown. When we were told self-contained UK holidays could be allowed as early as April 12, there was a rush of domestic bookings. Self-catering cottage companies saw 300%+ growth in the following days and weeks. Campervans and camping saw a huge spike in bookings, a similar trend to last summer. Centerparcs has sold out in key windows. Most accommodation in Devon and Cornwall is booked solidly until October. **People are prioritising more open space and ways to safely socially distance in their travel choices** (people have adjusted to “2 metre” behaviour, even if restrictions don't enforce it after June).

Types of holiday accommodation booked



05 The Holiday Cravings

There is a clear opportunity for domestic hospitality to serve those holidaying in the UK this summer. With more people on the roads and staying in the UK versus a 'normal' summer, this also has implications for media channels which will deliver higher audiences this year. In AV the summer is typically a period where broadcasters put out less of their top programming and audience figures are down. However, with the packed summer of sport ahead of us, and more people holidaying in UK with access to British channels & programming, there is reason to believe AV will work harder for advertisers this year.



For foreign travel, it is a more complicated picture. The Governments' four stage route also spoke of international travel opening up from May 17. There was an initial flutter of increased demand and bookings, but it has not maintained yet. There is an undeniable appetite to go abroad as shown in the OMD Radar report - **50% of people have thought about or researched booking a holiday, and 33% have thought about booking a flight. That said 37% of people also do not feel comfortable until a high percentage of the country or their own family are vaccinated (Source: OMD RADAR).** With news stories around possible fines for those going abroad, hotel quarantines costing £2000, other countries' vaccination programmes lagging behind UK's, and the potential for Covid passports, there is understandably a level of confusion and concern amongst consumers. People are unclear where and when they can go abroad. There has been a growing habit of more affluent audiences 'hedging their bets', reserving a UK and foreign trip and seeing what will pan out. But with less planes flying in the Pandemic, the sky has got clearer with less air pollution. Hence sustainable travel has risen up the agenda for many, which presents additional opportunities for carbon neutral airlines like easyJet or Eurotunnels' more sustainable mode of travel to the continent.

05 The Holiday Cravings

However, with the announcement of traffic light countries coming last week, there are more reasons to be hopeful. If countries like Malta, Portugal, Gibraltar and Israel are on the green list, there is more certainty for people to start planning foreign holidays. With the need for flexibility and assurance from travel providers paramount, the appeal of package holidays has increased (so that your flight and accommodation is covered, if you can't get there). With travel experts being hopeful that countries like Spain and Croatia could be on the green list later in June/July also gives hope. Vaccination roll outs point to more countries becoming 'green' as the year progresses. **So, it's likely that the usual summer holiday window will push later and later until Christmas, with Brits travelling further south of the equator to get some heat.** Looking ahead to 2022, it's likely the typical travel seasonality will change again, as people will want to make up for lost time and those who missed out on foreign trips this summer (perhaps with school age kids), will commit to summer 2022 foreign holidays sooner. So, 2022 could be an exciting year of travel for many!



05 The Holiday Cravings

The implications for brands and marketers:

- It is important to evaluate WHO is in market for your product. Due to financial hardship, some audiences will not be able to travel now or adjusting their holiday aspiration this year. While the young were more confident to travel abroad last summer with a higher appetite for travel amongst 16-34s, the older audience will actually be in a better position to travel abroad sooner with full vaccinations, particularly if COVID passports come into play.
- Flexibility and assurance are key to communicate for any travel brand, with many introducing new and changed policies to support people trying to plan. While people are thinking about holidays to get that 'wanderlust' fix, they are initially prioritising trips as a chance to reconnect with family and loved ones. So, helping people to plan 'safer bets' and staycations will pay off.
- With more people holidaying in the UK, especially in the South-West, brands (particularly hospitality, food/drink, retail) should consider how they cater to them (e.g. partnering with cottage rentals and the welcome food/drink packs provided).
- With the traffic light system, the typical 'summer holiday' window will stretch until Christmas, so travel brands need to reconsider plans to win this demand.
- Like most categories, sustainability is a vital growing theme to consider in how travel brands communicate.
- With a summer of sport on the TV and more people staying in the UK this summer, there are new opportunities (e.g. new broadcast sponsorships) and some channels will deliver more reach than 'usual' so should be carefully planned

Five questions to ask yourself:



01 The Work Dilemma

Have you planned the right channel mix to reflect new commuter behaviours, as well as catering for those working more flexibly?



02 The Social Drought

Are there any experiential or pop up opportunities your brand can create to help facilitate consumers' social interactions and allow them to make the most out of their summer?



03 The Residual Behaviours

Are there any new passion points your audiences have embraced within your category that you can support and drive further? What are the potentially untapped, or new, media channel behaviours that can allow your brand to connect more meaningfully?



04 The Economic Impact

Are you striking the right tone of voice in your comms? How can your brand help those with less disposable income?



05 The Holiday Cravings

Are you thinking about the long term, and priming consumers for when overseas travel is more likely? Are you easing the consumer journey and path to purchase to make consumer decision making more straight forward?

Five opportunities to tap into:



01 The Work Dilemma

Think about mindsets, moments and messaging as some settle back into old routines whilst others see a continuation of newer ones.



02 The Social Drought

Consider an evolved channel mix to tap into the moments and environments that will allow you to reconnect with audiences who have craved the social connections and buzz of socializing across the last year.



03 The Residual Behaviours

We have been pushed into doing things more digitally and some of these behaviours will continue as they bring convenience and flexibility. So digital media will become an even more important channel and a haven for partnership opportunities.



04 The Economic Impact

Look to support the rising entrepreneurial spirit in the post-Pandemic world which we believe will land a brand in the good books of many while helping the economy recover, and those affected, too.



05 The Holiday Cravings

A shift in travel rules & behaviour pushing us to be more local brings opportunities for brands to add to the holiday experience this summer by being in unexpected places.



Additional sources:

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