



Week 3

5 big insights from this week's
'Life on Lockdown'.

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Ground hog day



- We are about a month in now and as the novelty and adrenaline of the situation wears off, we are realising how **burnt out** we have become by it all.
- It is not exactly surprising. The **worry and stress** of the situation is with us constantly. We are not sleeping well. Some of us have a **huge amount on our plates** (working on the front line or juggling full time work with full time childcare). But those of us who have been laid off or furloughed are also **finding it draining** as time hangs heavy and lethargy takes over.
- The announcement last Friday that we would be in lockdown until at least 5th May was hardly surprising, but it certainly did not lift the mood. As this **never ending groundhog day** grinds on and on, we are wondering what will be left of us by the end of it. Assuming there is an end.
- The **arrival of the sun** saved us from going over the edge entirely. For now.

Social networks



- Easter came and went, the **second big celebration** after Paddy's day that has been radically impacted by the crisis.
- Yet again, we surprised ourselves with our **ability to make the best of it**. There was a lot of chocolate, there were elaborate dinners, there was craft, there were (more limited than usual) egg hunts.
- But our **human need for family, friends and community** around us hits us forcefully in the gut at times like this.
- Lockdown conditions are particularly tough for people **living on their own**. Zoom and WhatsApp, while lifelines at the minute, are **very poor substitutes** for gathering round the table with the people we love.
- The desire to **connect with wider community** is **finding expression** in many ways. From shining a light for healthcare workers and the sick, to clapping front line workers, to displaying pictures in our windows to cheer the kids up. It is all we can do.

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News blackout



- While many individual presenters are doing a good job in covering the crisis, we are **reaching our limits** of being able to deal with the coverage.
- It is the **same, grim story**, told day after day. There is nothing to lighten the mood. We don't even have sport as a distraction.
- Many of us have now **limited our exposure to the news** (once a day) or tuned out from it entirely.
- Instead we are looking for **content that distracts, comforts, cheers**. We are turning to classic comedies, old favourites, crazy escapism (all hail Tiger King). We would love more classic sports matches.
- There is a lot of **re-watching (and re-reading)** going on. Our favourite movies, series that remind us of simpler times (Friends, Gilmore Girls, ER). Here we find comfort and solace, predictability, old friends. Perhaps most crucially, we know how they end!

Bending and breaking



- Most of us have been good about obeying the rules so far, but the **Irish spirit of rebellion** is bubbling up under the surface.
- We are seeing **varying degrees** of this. There was some flagrant flouting at the weekend, with family visiting and beach trips done on the quiet.
- Others are contemplating how they can **bend the rules** rather than break them, by 'happening' upon friends and family in the park for example.
- There is a **spirit of self-preservation** about this. Balancing our need to contain the virus with our need to maintain our sanity.
- Rightly or wrongly, we are doing our own individual cost benefit analysis to determine **how far we should go**.

Nourish & nurture



- This is **not the global crisis we expected to live through**. The catastrophe movies we grew up with told us that when humanity was under threat, we would be fleeing the enemy, fighting for our lives, charging through forests and industrial wasteland.
- We never imagined our best weapon to be **staying at home, watching Netflix**.
- Which plays havoc with our **fight or flight response**. It also makes us feel somewhat inadequate. Those of us not on the front line wish we could be doing more.
- It is interesting that we have filled the gap with **nurturing behaviours**. We are cooking and baking (or we would be if we could get flour and eggs), we are tending to our houses and gardens. Our living spaces have never been better cared for.
- This cherishing of ourselves and our environments is promoting **self sufficiency**, it is also **an act of love** in the face of danger. But it is surprising to find this experience more *Little House on the Prairie* than *Apocalypse Now*.



Implications for brands

- **Self-care** has been deprioritised by many in the short term, but it's becoming **obvious how badly it is needed** as the stress and burnout takes its toll. If your brand has a role to play in helping people relax, decompress and take time out, now is a good time to promote this.
- Anything brands can be doing to foster a sense of **community** among people is valuable right now. Whether that is aligning with a bigger cause or tapping into the 'community' of brand users in some way.
- For those brands providing **content**, consumers are crying out for **distraction, comfort and familiarity** right now. Lots of people will have **many hours to fill in the next few weeks**, so take advantage. It is interesting to see things like theatre companies thinking outside the box and making classic productions available to stream. What further opportunities are there?
- There are huge opportunities for brands who can support consumers' **desires to nourish** themselves and their living environments.
- **Baking and cooking** are obvious opportunity areas for those in that space.
- **Interiors/gardening/DIY** might have to work harder to give consumers access to their products, but there is strong interest in this area for those who can facilitate it.

