



## Week 2:

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

Prepared by B&A

 @banda\_ie

 @behaviourandattitudes

 Behaviour & Attitudes

[www.banda.ie](http://www.banda.ie)



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## Reality bites



- As the novelty of the first few weeks of home schooling and working fade, we're coming to terms with **our new reality**.
- At the start of this crisis, we comforted ourselves with what we would do when **'this is all over'**.
- It's dawning on us that we may not return to life as we knew it for **a long, long time**. This is our new 'normal' for now, though 'normal' feels like a strange word to use.
- Presumably this phase of lock down will come to an end at some point. **What's not clear is what follows**, the stages we'll have to go through to ease ourselves back into regular life, the inevitable stops and starts along the way. We suspect that even those at the highest levels of government and health service are **feeling their way in the dark**.
- We're **waiting in trepidation for 'the surge'**. However, we don't know if we'll recognise 'the surge' when it comes or what happens after it. Will there be more than one surge? Who knows?
- We've never had less visibility on the future in our lives.

## The mounting cost



- As the death figures grow, the **economic implications** of the Covid-19 crisis are also becoming clearer and clearer.
- Many felt the economic impact this week, being either laid off or having salaries/hours cut.
- For many more, it's obvious that trouble is brewing.
- And this makes the **uncertain timeline even more difficult to deal with**. We can't imagine the economy recovering until we get back to some kind of normality. In the meantime, we still have rent to pay and families to feed.
- Those dealing with job losses are also struggling with the **sudden lack of activity and purpose** in their lives. While some can channel their energies into family, caring or volunteering, these aren't options for everyone and many of us are mourning the very sudden **loss of the satisfaction** that work can bring us.
- With the world on lockdown, it's hard to know what to do to fill that gap.

### Silent assassins



- One of the hardest things to cope with in this pandemic is that **anyone, even ourselves, could be agents of destruction**, spreading the virus unwittingly.
- This realisation has made our normally open and friendly nation **more fearful of strangers**. Our 'free floating' anxiety is being channelled in this direction. As we queue to do our shopping, the usual banter and pleasantries are less in evidence. Instead, we keep our eyes down, stay silent, on high alert for signs and symptoms from others.
- When it comes to our loved ones, it **goes against all our instincts to keep our distance**, particularly when they're vulnerable and sick.
- We're **struggling to bear the thought of people dying alone**. Being denied a 'proper' funeral, such a fundamental feature of Irish society.
- The worst thing about this disease is how it distances us from our **basic human instincts**.

### Deepening personal bonds



- On a more positive note, the crisis has brought us **emotionally closer** to the people who matter.
- Despite the challenges of working and schooling from home, many families are enjoying spending more time together. Many flatmates are growing closer.
- A lot of us have connected with old friends online. We're spending a lot of time on calls with those we love but are separated from.
- **Bonding rituals (digital and within households) are proliferating**. Family dinners, movie nights, virtual drinks nights, pub quizzes, dance parties, weekend brunches and games evenings.
- On the one hand, there's little to talk about as our day-to-day lives have become so monotonous. On the other, the lack of 'action' and the charged situation has **facilitated our opening up**.
- We're talking about our fears, feelings and emotions. **We're connecting on a deeper level**. And that's giving us strength that's helping us through.

### The weekly shop



- As one of our few permitted, out-of-the-house activities, the weekly grocery shop has become **surprisingly important** in our lives.
- The experience has become strange and alien since the introduction of new distancing guidelines, but many of us still look forward to it **as a link with our 'old lives' and habits.**
- With everyone at home and very little else to spend discretionary income on, we're buying a lot more. **Extra treats are finding their way into the basket** – biscuits, chocolate, gin, wine and beer all namechecked.
- The grocery brands (including convenience) are all seen to be doing a **fantastic job under very testing circumstances.** We've been impressed with the speed at which they've implemented stricter controls, the care they're taking of their frontline staff, their calm approach to keeping shelves stacked and supply chains going.
- **Lidl, Aldi and Tesco** stand out in particular, in terms of the speed, efficiency and thoroughness with which it has responded to changing requirements.
- In normal times, we don't notice the supermarkets' vital role in keeping us fed. But we're realising that keeping supply chains functioning isn't necessarily an easy task right now.
- Lidl's 'Look after yourselves, and we'll look after the shelves' line gives us exactly the kind of reassurance we're looking for. **Our appreciation for this sector has shot right up.**



## Implications for brands

- Attracting the most attention at the minute are the brands that have **been nimble** and used their expertise to help the front line. **An Post**, utilising their networks to check on the vulnerable, **the drinks companies** switching to hand sanitiser production, **O'Neill's sportswear** making hospital scrubs. Those able to help in a practical, meaningful way will be long remembered for their actions.
- The **GAA's efforts** in supplying the vulnerable in local communities (now allied with **SuperValu**) has also been positively received. It's interesting that Irish brands with strong **local connections** have been quick to step up and make a positive contribution.
- It's important to think about the consumer mindset right now. **Is it the right time** to be talking about your product?
- There's been a lot of communication from the travel industry, but much as we'd love to be dreaming of our next family holiday, most people **haven't the visibility on the future** that would allow this kind of planning.
- However, if your brand fits into the category of '**small treat I can buy in the supermarket**', you may be helping consumers through this crisis more than you realise – and they'd love to hear from you.
- In a time of such great uncertainty and lack of visibility on the future, brands can be finding ways to remind consumers that the **human spirit, human values and human connection will always prevail**. Brands with long standing heritage are in a particularly good position to this.

