

Marketing during COVID means ongoing experimentation

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Businesses may feel pressure to scale back their marketing and advertising efforts to reduce costs during economic downturns, but the coronavirus pandemic has proved that there is no one-size-fits-all response. We've also seen continuing shifts in behaviors as the realities of and responses to the pandemic have evolved.

"We have seen a little bit of a decrease in search volume on the B2B side, so we're getting less volume but the leads that we are getting seem to be warmer leads, and on the B2C side it's the opposite," said Amy Bishop, owner of Cultivative, during our brand marketing session of Live with Search Engine Land.

"A lot of those lower-funnel performance campaigns for some of those B2B folks that you wouldn't expect to perform well still are [performing well]," said Michelle Morgan, director of client services at Clix Marketing, adding that she's seen the sales cycle speed up for certain clients. "For whatever reason [customers] either really need to get a solution in place or maybe they just realized that they were having too many meetings [before the pandemic] . . . and things are moving along quite a bit quicker than they have been," she reasoned.

"It has really depended on how they can do business and if they're able to do business without being in person," Bishop said, adding, "some of [the demand also] depends on where that [customer] is right now in their life." Applications for her education clients have increased dramatically; which Bishop attributes to the sector's ability to transition online as

well as increased demand from people looking for new opportunities in their free time.

In other sectors, businesses may have to adjust their tactics to get them through the pandemic. For brands that can only conduct business in person, Bishop has seen better ad performance when ads explicitly mention contactless pick-up options. For in-person services, expectations often need to be reframed. Despite stable interest from prospective customers in sectors such as home improvement, leads are scheduling appointments for the distant future.

Why we care. The impacts of the health crisis and economic downturn are not the same across industries. Businesses need to experiment to find the offerings and messaging that most resonates with their customers, instead of turning off their marketing efforts simply to reduce costs. Brands that do so are more likely to thrive both during and after the recession.

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About The Author



George Nguyen is an Associate Editor at Third Door Media. His background is in content marketing, journalism, and storytelling.

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