Why these three content types are winning quarantine season

30-second summary:

- In-home media consumption during the quarantine of March 2020, worldwide, shows that 35% are reading more books/listening to more audiobooks, and 44% are spending more time on social media.
- People are looking for education without getting slumped with an information overload. For example, LinkedIn professionals are going “live” to share data-driven and real insight with their audiences.
- On the other hand, people are looking to stay entertained and keep their minds in a good place during this time of change and are resorting to TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, and other social media platforms.
- How can your brand support your audience and employees? How can you test different methods to motivate and encourage, showing that we’re all in this together?
- Lead digital PR strategist at Directive, Ashton Newell helps businesses create content types that can reach their people through.
- Observations, tips, and personal examples of content types and how her organization has performed in quarantimes.

No one planned for a global pandemic. How could you?

However, the performance marketers who were able to adjust quickly and provide support to their audience (in various ways) are reaping the benefits.

As you know, social media is a tool for people to connect and can be used to empower your brand. Now, it’s one of the few ways to stay connected virtually and build genuine

relationships with your audience.

So, what are the winners doing? Here’s a look at the content types that are winning in “quarantimes”:

1. Educating

Think virtual marketing conferences, free online training courses, TikTok dances, business leaders live on LinkedIn, etc.

For those who are interested, continued education has become a way to keep productive and sane during this extra time at home.

According to Statista, in-home media consumption during the quarantine of March 2020, worldwide, shows that 35% are reading more books/listening to more audiobooks, and 44% are spending more time on social media.

Wait, social media….learning? It’s true. Gone are the days of social media just to mindlessly scroll.

For example, LinkedIn professionals are going “live” to share data-driven and real insight with their audiences. This gives them a platform to address what’s happening, share how they’re adjusting, and be vulnerable with their followers.

For example, Chief Content Officer of MarketingProfs, Ann Handley, puts together “a pop-up twice-weekly video show about coping with COVID-19, business, and life” on her LinkedIn profile.

Source: Screenshot from Ann Handley on LinkedIn

Additionally, sharing helpful content is important. However, people may not be as open to read a long whitepaper right now.

How can you provide support and empathy, without being too focused on quarantine that it bums out your reader?

Give them a game plan to succeed during this time.

Source: Screenshot from @thefuturishere on Instagram

The Instagram post above shares 10 quality design slides, actionable tips with real tools the audience can use to add to their WFH set-up, and a strong call-to-action for the reader to leave their favourite tools, so others continue to learn.

A different route

For others, they might not be looking to learn new business skills during this time. Instead, people are looking to stay entertained and keep their minds in a good place during this time of change.

According to Vox, people are turning to Instagram and TikTok to learn how to make Dalgona coffee (whipped coffee) and baking bread. The word “bread” even hit an “all-time high” on Google searches, according to Eater.

Additionally, TikTok videos are now a way that families can learn dances and bond together, according to CNN.

According to the article, TikTok offers various COVID-19 resources for families to engage in positive ways. A nightly series called #HappyAtHome features top creators who share advice, motivation, and more. Educational live streams are also available throughout the popular app.

So, as marketers, why do we care?

Key point

As you’re crafting content for social media, what can you share that is educational in some way?

How can you share easily digestible content that leaves the audience taking something new away from it?

Remember:

- The whipped coffee recipe has three ingredients, and it went viral.

- You don’t need professional equipment to create TikTok videos.
- To go live on LinkedIn, Instagram, or Facebook, you don’t need any equipment. Simply hit “Go Live”.
- You can create free infographics with impressive data using Canva.

Overall, listen to your audience. Find what they need during this time.

Give them something they can learn.

2. Motivating

Think mental health advocates going live, empathetic stories shared by brands, support for hospitals, charity work.

While your audience may be open to learning, many people are feeling low right now.

Job security may be lost, kids may be home from school, the weather may be depressing, a family member may be sick – this may not be the time your audience wants to pick up a new business book or create something new.

So, how can your brand support them? How can you test different methods to motivate and encourage, showing that we’re all in this together?

It might sound crazy, but you don’t need to spend thousands of dollars and make a brand new campaign to reach your people.

Check out this Instagram post from Hubspot that received incredible engagement (their highest of the week) by sharing motivational words that resonate with their audience of marketers and sales specialists looking to grow their businesses.

Screenshot from Hubspot's Instagram

Additionally, companies are doing big things to support mental health.

According to an article on CNN, the Disaster Distress Helpline, a federal crisis hotline operated by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, calls in March have gone up by more than 300%, compared to February. Compared to March of last year, the hotline has seen 891% more calls, according to the article.

At Directive, we wanted to support our team and clients during this time by providing "motivation through movement". As an E-RYT certified yoga instructor, through YouTube Live, I was able to teach a class for our people to get moving, focus on their breath, and keep their wellness a priority through these challenging times.

It was incredibly encouraging to hear feedback that both parties enjoyed the class and felt better, and I was thankful to share my love of the yoga practice with them all.

We highlighted this on social media to encourage other companies to try something similar, as well.

Screenshot from Directive on Instagram

Additionally, companies like Salesforce are utilizing social media to build a schedule around guided meditation, conversations with health and wellness experts, and being present.

Screenshot from Salesforce on LinkedIn

Additionally, companies like Headspace provide motivational (and educational) content on Instagram on how followers can make “no-sew masks from home”. This can help motivate people to stay healthy, even if they don’t have new income coming in.

Source: @headspace on Instagram

Key point

While bringing in new income is essential to your business, right now, it’s imperative to put your brand and culture first. People will remember how you made them feel.

Show sentiment to your audience, and make sure it’s authentic. Your actions should be more powerful than your words.

After you find a rhythm that works for your social content, make sure that what you’re sharing is resonating with your audience. We are marketers, and our audience shows us what they like and don’t like through the data.

According to Janet Balis’s article on Harvard Business Review:

> *“Frequent tracking of human behavioural trends will help marketers gain better insights in real-time. Marketers will want to measure sentiment and consumption trends on a regular basis to better adapt messaging, closely observing the conversation across social media platforms, community sites, and e-commerce product pages to look for opportunities and*

identify looming crises more quickly.”

Be there for your audience. Mean it. Track it.

3. Building a virtual community

Think Zoom happy hours, live Instagram workouts, Instagram challenges, community support, real images from working from home.

Without your community, life can seem a little duller. Luckily, technology has your back and helps you see your colleagues and loved ones as much as you’d like to.

For some, this has been the key to working remotely and showing up every day.

From experience, the Directive team has all Zoom meetings with the cameras on, to see teammates’ faces, and to have “real” conversations and connections.

Source: Image from Directive

Sharing a real image (like the one above) on social media shows your team coming together and the power of your community.

Additionally, Directive was excited to participate in a #ShowUsYourWorkspace social media challenge. It was encouraging to see the team share their spaces, show their furry friends, and how they're adapting into their everyday work lives.

They also tagged other companies to "share their spaces" to carry on the challenge as well.

Here is one of the examples

Source: Image from @directiveconsulting on Instagram

Key point

Building community with your audience, adjusting to working from home, and showing how you're sticking together behind the scenes is impactful.

Show your followers how you are doing it and continue to do it. Also, find creative ways to keep your followers engaged.

We're all in this together

While the world continues to feel a little different, you can educate, motivate, and build your community to encourage your audience to push through and stay on their feet.

You have the tools you need, it's your time to create winning content for your audience.

Ashton Newell is the lead digital PR strategist at Directive, a performance marketing agency specialized in the software space. When Ashton is away from her day job, she spends her time teaching yoga, cheering on the ASU Sun Devils, and drinking numerous cups of coffee. She can be found on Twitter @ashtonmeisner.

More about:

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