



INVENTIVE SOLUTIONS IN **DISRUPTIVE** TIMES

In its nearly 40-year history, Zimmerman has honed its retail craft and has helped guide brands in their efforts to increase transactions at scale. Most marketers and business leaders have typically looked to macro cultural trends, evolving business models, changing consumer sentiments and behavioral patterns to keep their brands relevant and growing. And while this is critical for long-term success, this high-level perspective simply doesn't apply to today. Yes, we literally mean, today.

As COVID-19 strengthens its grip on the global economic engine, each day brings a plethora of unique challenges that have resulted in our clients' marketing plans and business models being nearly irrelevant. As marketers who are in triage mode, we are forced to re-imagine the roles of our brands and businesses to survive. It's the time to be brave, bold and break out of conventional thinking and pivot in response to the seismic **JoltZ** we're facing and flex our strategic agility.

As this crisis continues to interrupt our businesses, we're seeing 4 macro consumer **JoltZ** that have corporate, marketing and business implications:

JOLT #1

OUR MOST IMMEDIATE JOB SUPPORT SYSTEMS WILL PIVOT FROM JUST WORK TEAMS TO HOME TEAMS.

As we navigate the dramatic shift from going to our places of employment to working from home, our relationships have changed – with our co-workers and within our families. We're getting a peek into each others lives via video conferencing and we are seeing that 'it takes a village'. In some cases, our 'personas' have been shed and a new side of us is being revealed. We're seeing a new dynamic where family members 'working', too on our behalf.



<https://www.buzzfeed.com/angelicaamartinez/tonight-show-at-home>



A notable example is Jimmy Fallon's show, broadcast from home with his family integral to the show.

At Zimmerman, our spouses, significant others and family members are all stepping up to help us conduct business from our homes.



IMPLICATIONS:

When thinking of our workers, acknowledge the new team that is helping keep our businesses moving. Brands and businesses should consider finding ways to express their gratitude to the families that have also made these heroic efforts possible. This will increase loyalty and connection because we ‘get it’ and recognize the above and beyond contributions being made by those who aren’t on the company payroll. In addition, consumers love a back-story and brand affinity is fueled by brand compassion in many ways. Companies should also consider giving consumers a look at what they’re going through as it will show their human side and create a stronger bond.

JOLT #2

“SOCIAL DISTANCING” AND WORKING FROM HOME WILL QUICKLY PIVOT FROM NOVEL TO NERVE-RACKING.

Working from home has traditionally been highly desirable, as it represented the freedom to own our work schedule and create flexibility in our hectic lives. Research studies have shown that 80% of people would turn down a job that didn't offer this style of working. However, with the mandated “office-free” policies currently in place and closed businesses, coupled with significant others, school-aged children and other household members all huddled into the same make-shift quarantined home office settings, the close proximity will soon give way to troubles at home. Something on the level of car full of people all trying to conduct calls at the same time. We're already feeling the tensions...

 **Leth**
@Leth
Day 3 of being stuck in the house with my husband: he looks over at me and says "you're kind of ugly" 🤔
LMAO I HATE HIM

 **Aurora**
@Aurora
Not only is my husband stuck in the house with me for the next 14 days, I'm also Bipolar, and on my period. Pray for him. 🙏

 **Katrena McDonald**
@KatrenaLynn
I have to be stuck in the same house with my husband without being able to leave? Y'all want me to end up on Investigation discovery, don't you?

 **Tom Green**
@TomDGreen
After a brief blip my wife has decided to cope with the current crisis by making lists. Endless, dizzying lists. Timetables. Schedules. Spreadsheets. Calendars. Tables. She's like the Oskar Schindler of being stuck in the house with the kids.

 **Mostly Harmless**
@mylittlebrony
Replying to @angelgirl1077
After being quarantined with my kids, how about 33rd trimester abortions? I'm good with it.

 **skye**
@mistress_skye
Replying to @Estochen and @DanRogland
My kids are off for 6 weeks, unexpectedly. When summer comes I'm able to plan activities, and KNOW when that break is coming. This isn't just them on break from school. We are QUARANTINED to our homes. You ever been cooped up in a house with tweens? Yeah, I'm a little stressed.

 **@Pheasum**
Like, I love my husband but I don't want to be stuck in the house with him for at least two week straight!!

 **Paul Andrea**
@PaulAndrea
After being quarantined in my house with my kids the past week I can now understand why some animals eat their young

 **@tanyygabriele**
At this point can I be quarantined with my friends please. It's too many kids in the house

IMPLICATIONS:

Get ahead of it and offer/reposition products and services to alleviate the oddly conflicting pressures and stresses that come from “Social Distancing” while simultaneously feeling constricted. Shift from providing pure entertainment and increasing productivity to finding ways to cut the tension and bring more peace and balance to people's lives.

JOLT #3

PURCHASE DECISION WILL PIVOT FROM IRRATIONAL TO CALCULATED.

This week we experienced an apocalyptic stockpiling blitz (water, toilet paper, sanitized wipes, canned foods), with people buying many things they likely didn't even need. The frenzy triggered a 'copy cat' effect depleting shelves in some cases and people hoarding products that were not even a part of their daily lives. But that's likely over soon. Consumers are now worried about their personal economic situation and livelihood. As of March 14th, the US economy saw a 33% increase in unemployment claims, the biggest percentage increase since before the Great Recession. Purchases moving forward will be met with scrutiny and measured against dwindling disposal resources. "I have to have it" is quickly becoming a matter of "do I need to have it."

 **Mr Perpetuity**
@limpin01
Replying to @TrueTorontoGirl
Too late !! Bought too much toilet paper instead of food .
Enjoying a lovely TP casserole 🍲

 **Sandy King**
@SandyKing3
I think I bought too much TP and not enough wine. 😊
[#COVID19](#) [#SocialDistancing](#)

 **Jaycee Domincel**
@jaycee_domincel
Always wear your mask guys! 🙌 keep safe everyone! 🙌
[#panicbuying](#)

 **Liv**
@_xliv
why did i panic buy so much alcohol just to be too scared to go hang out with people and drink??? where are my brain cells

 **Cassandra Fairbanks**
@CassandraRules
I am so glad I stocked up in February.

 **marcus morgan**
@marcusm59504192
I am stocked up and ready for the weekend. Florida style.

IMPLICATIONS:

Value is more important than ever – what you get for what you pay. It's not that people won't be able to "justify" certain purchases, they actually won't be able to afford them. Brands have an opportunity to pivot to more rational benefits (at least in the short term), alternative product uses and underscoring their benefits and necessity in people's new normal.

JOLT #4

TRIED AND TRUE MARKETING SOLUTIONS FOR STATUS QUO CONSUMER CONSUMPTION WILL INCREASINGLY PIVOT TO **DISRUPTIVE SOLUTIONS** IN THE COMING DAYS AND WEEKS.

Remember when we called Amazon, Uber, Netflix, Peloton and categorically all DTC brands “Disruptor Brands?” These brands are all better positioned to weather the storm more than their traditional counterparts because they have business models that put their products into the hands and homes of their consumers without having to leave the house.

IMPLICATIONS:

Now is the time to be a leader – or at the very least – a fast-follower. Brands that can increase the portability of their products or services and get them inside the 4-walls of their consumer’s homes can gain valuable market share during this time. Delivery services, virtual experiences, BOPIS, social sharing and creative re-tooling of how products and services are consumed are now all vital ingredients to finding the light.

Guinness beer creating virtual St. Patrick’s Day celebrations, tax filing services holding online tax guidance programs, McDonald’s free happy meals, AutoNation car delivery services, Planet Fitness in-home workouts, Party City in-home adventure kits, Urban Air Adventure Parks home awesomeness, Five Below home puzzles, games and toys, do-it-yourself home meal packs from restaurants and grocery, online tutoring and instruction for children, are only some of the examples of how brands can pivot.

Understanding the shifts in consumers' behaviors to cater to their increase in leisure time and shifts in at-home schedules is of utmost importance in today's world. Brands that are offering a heightened in-home experience and tailoring their products and services for our new needs will continue to earn consumers' share of wallet and heart.

While the COVID-19 pandemic is difficult for everyone, retail has historically adapted and lead the pace across all industries with its ability to change on a dime and react quickly to shifting purchasing behaviors. Brands that pivot to change their products and services will win during this time. Strategic agility is the new world order and the ability to quickly and effectively execute the necessary shifts will be the difference between those brands that we know and love today - and those we'll never see again.

**AND RIGHT
NOW THE ONLY
RISK IS NOT
TAKING A RISK.**

Sources:

<https://www.flexjobs.com/blog/post/remote-work-statistics/>
<https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/19/economy/jobless-claims-coronavirus/index.html>
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