

# From one industry to another, thank you.

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At the end of week two of lockdown, we hear the Queen tell us "Better days will return," and boy, I hope so. She said this time has given us an opportunity to "to slow down, pause and reflect" – this sentiment has been echoed in recent weeks with a surge in people taking up activities for self-betterment to fill up their new-found spare time. While others look for ways to connect with friends and family or kill time with gaming and streaming services. But for many of the heroic front-line workers, this has not been the case. They haven't been baking banana bread, probably won't have had an online

# ‘Houseparty’ and most certainly won’t have had the time to watch Netflix’s Tiger King.

I’m sure you have seen the wide array of brands offering discounts and rewards to those workers; from free coffees at Pret, 50% off at Hotel Chocolat or a discount at ASOS – all things that would make me feel only slightly better knowing I was risking my own household’s lives by simply going to work. The media has played a huge part in raising awareness of the government messaging, and they too have been doing a few things to show gratitude with thank you messages for our nation’s front-line workers.

My personal favourite was Channel 4’s NHS ad takeover to support the #ClapForOurCarers initiative. The three-and-a-half-minute special ad break was a sequence from thirty-nine brands of user-generated content clips, filmed on handheld devices, featuring a selection of the workers from each brand clapping and taking the opportunity to show their appreciation. I knew the ad would be moving, but I wasn’t prepared for how emotional it made me feel. As I watched the ad comfortably from the living room (my new office), I thought about all those unable to work safely from their own homes and how nice it was to see the faces behind the brands showing their support.

A campaign that had me in tears of laughter (rather than tears of sadness) was by the Outdoor industry who have come together with donated media space for a campaign running in April & May with the message: “Thank you to our croc wearin’, patient carin’, stethoscope slingin’, bin collectin’, letter postin’, prescription fillin’, shelf stackin’, lorry drivin’, loo roll deliverin’ heroes.” The use of humour and rhyme to show appreciation of key workers still out and about on their way to work.

Kate Waters, Director of Client Strategy and Planning at ITV talks about “the ‘responsible majority’ of brands” and I think this summarises my view: “These brands may not be stealing the headlines with extraordinary sacrifices, nor eliciting the condemnation and outrage that follows the reckless, but they are still worth our attention... Just as it is the human responsible majority that will make the difference in terms of ‘flattening the curve’, so too will it be this middle majority of brands whose collective action will help soften the

economic impact of the crisis. Because, in order to emerge with an economy that is robust enough to bounce back, we need to invest in it right now... And, there is a further, perhaps less obvious benefit attached to marketing ‘business as usual’ because brands themselves can act as symbols of normality.”

Although as an industry we aren’t saving lives, it is nice to see some forms of appreciation & gratitude towards the industries that are. At MediaCom we believe in “people first, better results”; this feels particularly important now: putting people at the forefront of everything. Media can play an important role to amplify the nation’s collective sentiment: that we support our key workers and are here for each other during difficult times.

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