

MediaCom Presents: What's Next?: A View from China

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In the second instalment of our “What’s Next?” webinar series, our Chief Transformation Officer, Sue Unerman, interviewed MediaCom China’s Chief Strategy Officer, Howard Thompson, in a live virtual event. The premise of the talk was a look at China’s experience of the pandemic; what measures the country introduced, what has changed, and what the ‘new normal’ (or ‘new abnormal’) looks like. Read on for some of the key takeaways from the event.

Client Behaviour

Lockdowns and a shift in consumer behaviour led to clients re-evaluating their current (and planned) campaigns. Ultimately, clients showed varied responses; while some cancelled, others chose to pause or adapt. Budgets were also shifted with some ad spend moved to later in the year. Some clients even moved ad spend to other markets to focus on those

further ahead with the pandemic.

Consumer Behaviour

Digital was the winner. This is a result of increased internet penetration, app usage (especially food delivery) and livestreaming during lockdown periods. A similar uptick for eCommerce meant, as Howard commentated,

“If you’re not on eCommerce in China, you’re nowhere.”

Moving out of lockdown, focus turned to spending. The Chinese government have incentivised spending, e.g. shopping festivals, for consumers to restart the economy. The luxury sector has also seen indications of recovery due to the newly coined “revenge spending”; consumers are overcompensating for their inability to spend during lockdown.

‘New Normal’

As China is further ahead with the pandemic than most Western countries, they have begun to show signs of normality. Workers have returned to offices full-time across the country, with the exception of areas with local flare ups.

Touched on in the *Consumer Behaviour* section, China’s encouragement of spending to restart their economy is one strand of a more inward-focused plan. The country is choosing to pay more attention to their domestic performance through its economic recovery and in-country tourism.

Howard also highlighted six predominant themes from Chinese consumers moving forward: a new fondness for the physical, future survival, heightened health prevention; purposeful

time, pride towards the country's response, and mobility preference shifts.

Watch the full video below!

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