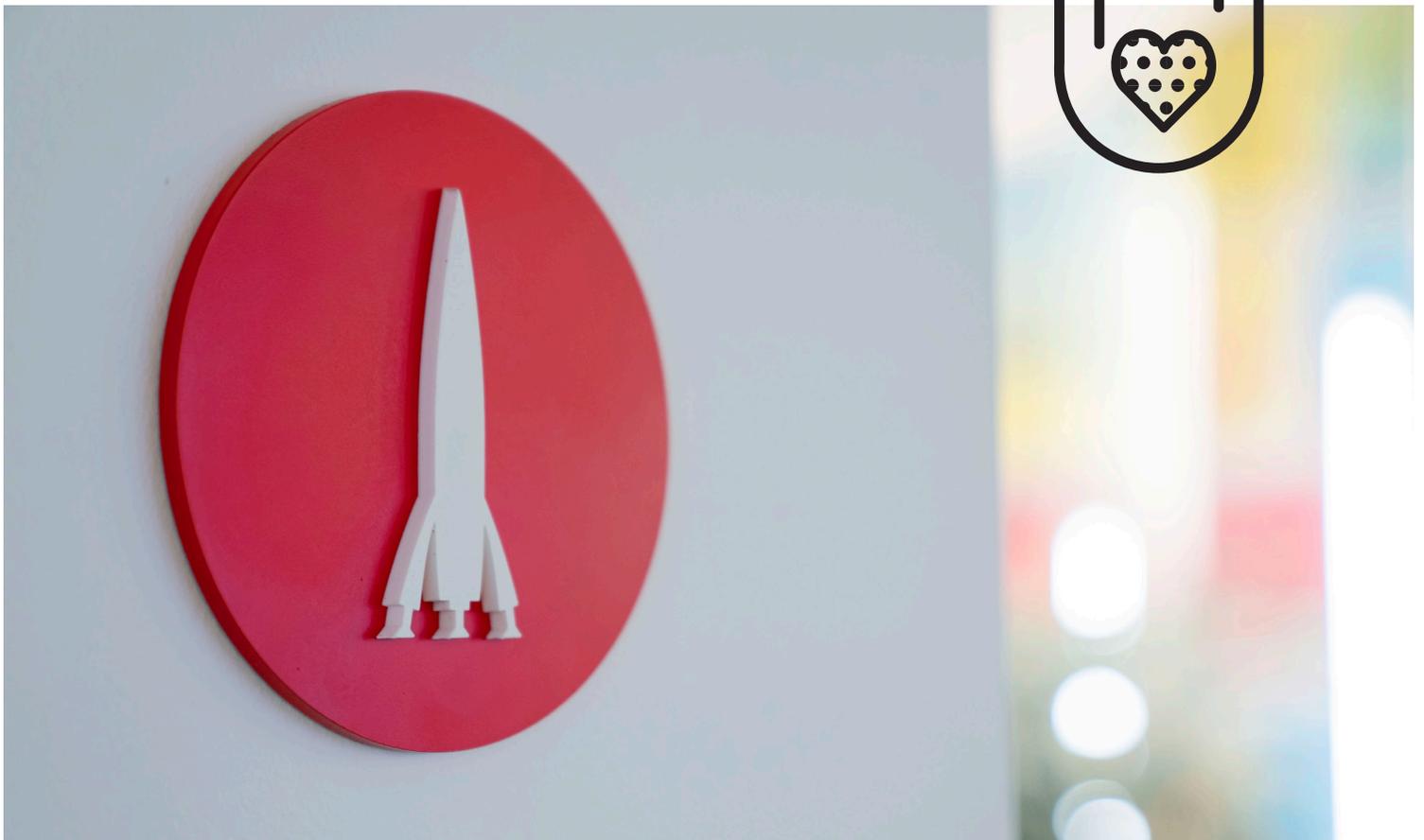




An open brief to invent your future now.



Dear Valued Client,

Right now, we find ourselves in the Peak Phase of this pandemic. And while we're unsure of how long this will last and what societal recovery looks like, we do understand that your responsibility is to continue to make tough decisions. This document is an extension of our first COVID-19 POV. Its aim is to spur thinking as you tackle those tough decisions and plan for how your business comes out of this pandemic.

As with our first POV, this is not a set of tactical ideas, but a series of frameworks and workbook-like prompts you can use with your teams (and ours) to help guide planning. While the current environment is challenging to say the least, we do believe opportunities exist.

Our central POV: Strong brands don't go dark. They focus on useful innovation that will allow them to emerge even stronger than they were before this crisis.

During this time, traditional marketing and communication may not be your primary weapon. So, we are considering the whole brand spectrum, from business strategies to marketing actions. The more useful your brand can be right now, the better suited it will be for the future. And the more you plan a stronger recovery now, the stronger you will emerge.

When it comes to Barkley, the current economic situation has certainly had an impact, but we are happy to report our business remains very strong. This is made possible by a powerful and diverse set of client partners to whom we are extremely grateful, and our independence, which allows us to focus on taking care of our people and our clients.

We hope you and your loved ones are staying healthy. Once again, thank you for your partnership.

Thank you,



Jeff King
CEO



Dan Fromm
President



The Useful Innovation Framework:

This is not a set of tactical ideas. As with our first POV, the intention of this document is to be used as a simple, planning framework, with key prompts to use alongside your own team's efforts – all to work through the Peak Phase of COVID-19 and create a stronger brand coming out of it.

Start with the Whole Brand Spectrum.

This is your toolkit and it's even more powerful in creating equity when guided by a core idea (The Red Thread) and purpose. Use any and all of the points along it as starting points for ideas and work streams.

Business Ideas

Inside



Brand Culture Model Products + Services Design + Experience



Marketing Ideas

Outside

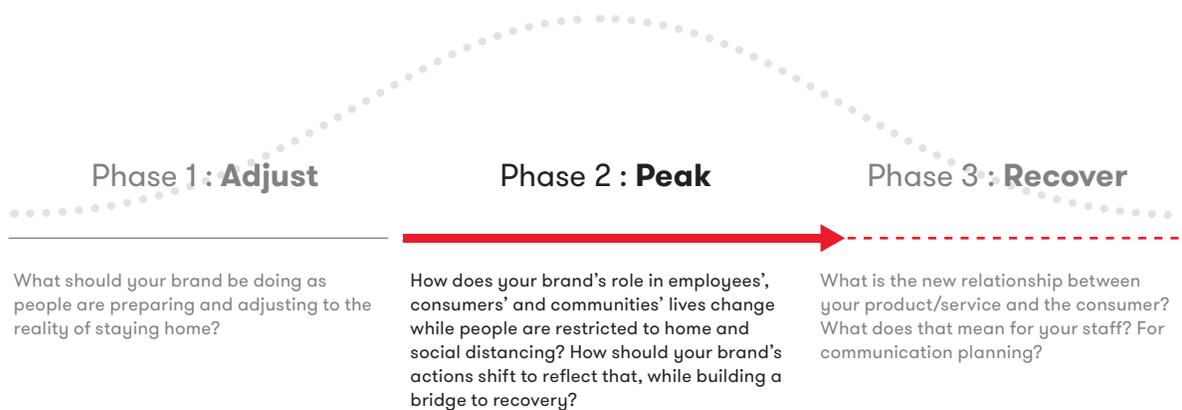


Content Actions Experiential PR Advertising



Next, use the Peak Phase of the COVID consumer journey and its specific need states.

Below are consumer need states derived from Barkley social listening research. Find 1-2 specific needs your audience has and apply what you do to one of the many new challenges people are facing.



CONSUMER NEED STATES

ONGOING NEEDS

1. Working from home with kids.
2. Information reliability.
3. Overworked medical workers.
4. Safe interactions outside the house (i.e., getting food).
5. Caring for loved ones you can't physically see.
6. Public transportation assistance.
7. Ways to cope with a lack of human contact.
8. Simplified information about assistance programs.
9. Rights of passage postponed (birthdays, weddings).
10. Defeat the 'Groundhog Day' effect.
11. Access to non-COVID-19 care and advice.
12. Lost work and wages.
13. Businesses frozen without income.
14. General uncertainty about how long this will last.
15. Need to break from the news.
16. Need for easy meals.
17. Need to explain to kids what's going on.
18. Access to essentials (toilet paper, hand sanitizers).

PEAK PHASE NEEDS

1. Coping with an extended period of lockdown.
2. Question of consumption – do we spend on anything?
3. Uncertainty of when stay-at-home orders will be lifted.
4. Preparing for a pending global recession.
5. Having to work despite the stay-at-home order (essential workers).
6. Fear for family members in health care industry.
7. How to reach people not taking the risk seriously.
8. Understanding what I receive in the stimulus package.
9. Getting access to stimulus money.
10. Securing unemployment benefits.
11. Protecting first responders and essential employees.
12. How to make protective masks at home.
13. Ways to educate kids/trips for virtual learning.
14. How to keep kids physically active.
15. Need to feel productive while at home.



Next, use this simple guide to prioritize ideas and solutions.

We've identified three core business goals for brands during this period that combine purpose + practicality. Use this simple guide to align and execute initiatives.

	Core Focus: Show Commitment to Purpose	Priority A: Drive Business that Helps	Priority B: Deliver Value to Future Business
Approach and Target Categories	Play a leadership role in the community, aligned with the brand's purpose.	Adapt to new needs and find revenue opportunities that help people manage daily lives – e.g., product innovations, solutions and messaging.	Find a way to deliver value to consumers' lives, even if it's not possible to tie directly to your product/services.
Business Goal / Value Proposition	Strengthen the perception of purpose and be a brand consumers want to be affiliated with.	Maintain specific lines of business. Embrace driving top-line sales and acquiring consumers at the expense of margin. Focus on products and services that help people.	Remain top of mind for existing consumers. Attract new ones, so when recovery begins, engagement with your brand is strong.
POV Element	Purpose	Practicality	

Lastly, read through the following five prompts to inspire reinvention of your brand.

These prompts focus on useful innovation to undertake now, in order to emerge stronger as a brand in recovery. And while the future can't be predicted, going on offense now can pay off in the long run.

Consumer	Employee	New Consumer	Partners	Reinvention
Make your consumers feel useful	Turn your employees into inventors	Create a new consumer for life	Find a new partner in recovery	Reinvent your brand in recovery.





1. Make Your Consumers Feel Useful

There's no better time to have them build the future with you.

You have a unique opportunity to have a more candid and frank conversation and relationship with your current consumers. Rather than guess, this is a time to get as close as possible to your consumers, getting to know them better than ever, and, at the same time, making them feel like useful partners of your brand.

Don't ask, "What can my brand do for my consumers?" Ask, "What can my brand help my consumers do?" Reframing this helps break down any barriers between consumer and brand; it helps reduce consumer skepticism.

The first place to start, as brands, marketers and humans, is to admit that we don't have all the answers. We recommend finding simple yet creative ways to get smarter by asking your consumers what they need right now and what their ideal state with your brand is.

Consumer Worksheet

Can you send short email surveys, both open- and close-ended, to get a constant pulse?

Can you recruit for online face-to-face listening sessions, asking consumers about current needs and expectations?

Can you create real-time polls in email or social channels where your most dedicated followers can vote with a click?

Can you leverage the scale of your community of consumers, as a group, to help you be more useful to the world?

Can you conduct online co-creation sessions to have consumers help create the future brand experience?

Can you create a fan forum where consumers can submit ideas for new products and services for incentives?





2. Turn Your Employees Into Inventors

There's no better time than now to give your employees freedom to create.

A brand's first responsibility is to its own people. Any consumer action will be trumped by inaction on the part of the brand for its workforce. This is a time to prove your brand is employee-first and that you believe in your brand culture. Employees are turning to employers for direction more than news and government. Be there for them.

How has your brand put the care of its own people first? How is your brand supporting and/or providing for the safety of those still working? How has your brand supported those who are no longer working, and has it made concessions beyond what is required? How can you rally your people with a powerful shared ambition that gets everyone excited to play their part?

In his book, "The Culture Code," Daniel Coyle shares the three aspects of strong corporate culture: Building safety through belonging, sharing vulnerability and establishing purpose. These are hyper-relevant during the Peak Phase world and very applicable to brands.

Now is not a time to limit internal innovation. In fact, increase it, but not in a business-as-normal way. Create new groups, new forums, new ways for people and teams to work and connect together. Spread responsibility, don't limit it. Your employees want to feel useful during this time, and it's a great way to give people the opportunity to step up and provide even more value.

Employee Worksheet

Can you speed up your prototyping and testing timeline to ignite innovation?	Can you create new idea teams across your company to get more people and new ideas colliding, not just the usual suspects?
How can you help people reimagine and evolve their careers?	How can you give people more responsibility right now, not less?
How can you tap your "internal influencers" to be captains of culture at this time?	How can you use this time to solidify your core brand idea, purpose and beliefs to emerge even stronger?





3. Create a New Consumer for Life

Now is the time to test, learn and acquire new believers.

Rather than thinking of this as a time to save every last consumer, think of this as a time of innovation to bring in new consumers. Brands that emerge from this phase in a strong position will create new experiences and disrupt their category.

Restaurants are becoming commissaries and grocery stores. Distilleries are seeing huge opportunities in product development using their same raw materials. U-Haul has found new consumers by creating storage solutions for college students. We are even seeing an opportunity to be helpful along generational lines with Millennials being financially vulnerable due to their unprecedented amounts of student loans and credit card debt. While Gen X weathered the financial crisis at the same age Millennials are today, they did so with about twice the total assets, according to a New York Times analysis.

Several of our clients are doing rapid innovation and piloting new forms of their product and new distribution channels. We are seeing others develop new ways to engage with the brand through virtual channels that are exposing new opportunities and new products. None of this would have been possible without creating these urgent innovation methods right now.

New Consumer Worksheet

Based on your brand purpose, what license do you have to make other products or services?	What innovation ideas could you try now that have been in your pipeline but haven't had enough urgency?
What specific groups could you help right now that aren't normally in your audience set (college students, restaurant employees, generations)?	What is an even more convenient way to access your products and services?
Can you change your pricing structure to make it more accessible, organized or bundled for a new audience?	What's one new distribution channel that you can use to deliver your product or service?





4. Find a New Partner in Recovery

Now is the time to band together with a like-minded partner.

It is hard to shoulder the challenges of COVID-19 as one brand. One way to build a powerful bridge to recovery is by building partnerships. In fact, partnerships can be one of your biggest creative tools right now. You can talk about who you are as a brand all day long, but having mutually beneficial partnerships can help you across your business.

During times of crisis, partnerships may exist in unexpected places, like industry advocacy groups or partnerships with brands from completely different industries. For example, partnering with an advocacy group from your industry can help shed light on your efforts during the crisis, giving your brand credibility during recovery. And partnering with other brands can help both thrive. All types of partnerships can be right; they just all yield different results, from protection to innovation.

Here are three general ways to think about partnerships right now:

1 **Brand Partnerships (other brands, advocacy groups or organizations)**

can provide a number of other valuable things, including:

- Reach new consumers
- Reach new markets
- Increasing overall market exposure
- Extend your budgets
- Increase speed to market
- Drive new innovation/invention strategy
- Share the weight/pressure of resources (money, people, distribution)
- Cement brand trust and expertise
- Create valuable third-party endorsements

2 **Influencer Partnerships (like-minded individuals with a built-in audience)**

can be a powerful driver of relevant and useful tools during this resource-crunched time. There are several reasons why influencers can be great partners right now:

- They offer content creation and amplification in a time where consumption is high
- They can be a cost-effective solution and are offering flexibility in fees
- They can add a human touch, adding good and supporting your audience base





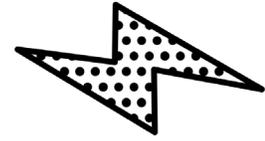
3 Community Partnerships (regions and geographies that are ideal for innovation) can play a meaningful role in the future development of a brand in an era that is seeing the power of local government, local and regional unity, and local ingenuity. Community partnerships help:

- Make your brand feel more human and helpful
- Align your brand with a physical, tangible identity
- Create new audiences and test markets you can scale
- Create a foundation for a powerful sustainability strategy

Partnerships Worksheet

Who are your natural, like-minded partners? Think brands, publishing platforms, influencers.	Who are your unnatural brand partners with resources you don't have? (think competitors, outside of category, etc.)
Which neighborhoods, cities or regional partnerships could make your brand stronger and which would you make stronger?	What brands or influencers have an audience that you wish your brand had?
Where do you have a surplus of resources that another brand will need and vice versa?	Who might you partner with to get to innovation faster, sharing teams and costs?





5. Reinvent Your Brand in Recovery

Don't plan for business as usual. Plan to reinvent yourself.

At the time of this writing, we don't know when the lockdown orders and social distancing will evolve or lift. And when we do emerge, opening up will not happen quickly. There will be a new spectrum of consumer segments, from "can't wait" to "supremely cautious" to "vaccine or bust." Brands will need a plan to address each one of those segments.

In the meantime, some brands will wait out the storm and miss the opportunity to emerge more relevant for a post-COVID world. We believe you shouldn't just plan for recovery, your brand can reinvent itself in recovery, shedding old baggage and becoming your most modern, most helpful, most powerful self.

Here are two important questions to ask as you build the bridge to recovery:

1. If this goes on for 6-12 months, how will consumers want to experience my brand?
2. In what position in the market do we want to reemerge?

Any brand has the opportunity to be the disruptor right now, no matter your heritage or your past. We are already seeing many brands innovating right now, creating new ideas that will be relevant even as the pandemic lifts. The brands that internalize learnings from this time of crisis will be stronger and better for it in the long run.

Now is the time to amp up your products or services because the value proposition has changed. Now is the time to reset consumer expectations in pricing, distribution, products and services, and brand loyalty because each will be seen in a different light. And, based on the increased importance and attention on community, people and the planet, if you don't already have a modern sustainability strategy, now is the time to start developing it. Too many brands right now are behaving as if innovation is a luxury. We understand, but we believe it is a necessity.



Bridge-to-Recovery Worksheet

What is your public health strategy (safety, sustainability, packaging) and roadmap for the next 5 years?	What can permanently be moved from physical to digital in your business model?
What promotions/value adds/meaningful discounts will help you build traffic now and what can you go big on in recovery?	Can you create a “loyalty points stimulus package” to encourage use?
Can you create a “brand pledge” for the Recover Phase, stating your vision and promise moving forward?	Can you make your brand easier and more convenient than ever? (hours, locations, delivery, paywalls)
Can you use this time to create a strong sustainability strategy – one that solidifies you as a useful, purposeful brand for years to come?	What is one product, service or cultural topic you can become the expert at in your category as you come into recovery?
How can you provide regular updates and relevant information over the next year to your consumers?	How will you provide product, service and message flexibility for the different post-COVID consumer segments? (e.g., “can’t wait,” “cautious” or “vaccine or bust.”)





In conclusion, this is the hardest time to be in business, but also your best shot to reinvent your business. Now is the time to release the baggage of your past. Throw away the “W” of your SWOT, leapfrog your category to solve the most modern problems, and come out of this era with a new future for your brand.

MAKE your plan based on these five prompts:

1. Make your consumers feel useful by having them build the future with you.
2. Turn your employees into inventors and give them the freedom to create.
3. Create a new consumer for life. Now is the time to test, learn and acquire new believers.
4. Find a new partner in recovery (brand, influencer, geography).
5. Reinvent your brand in recovery. Don't plan for business as usual.

Make a plan. And then plan to change.

Thank You