



Essential lockdown survival guide –
see inside



FINANCIAL HELP

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HOW YOUR IP CAN REAP
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WELCOME



We are in the strangest of times, inconceivable in January. At the start of this year, we looked ahead and whilst Brexit seemed like the hurdle we all needed to clear (and it still will be), the challenges of how to

now simply survive makes Brexit look like a walk in the park in comparison. We have spoken fondly of the Brexit debates from a simpler period in our business and personal lives and at least we can still take a walk in the park.

We always knew that the NHS was an incredible organisation but if you've ever moaned about trying to secure an appointment with your doctor or getting seen in A&E, what wouldn't we all give to be able to see those

amazing people now and say thank you for all they are doing for us? How differently do we feel now about Tesco and Morrisons after seeing the efforts they are making on our behalf to keep food on the shelves and in our homes, supporting those in need so admirably?

There is no doubt this virus has changed our outlook in an incredibly short space of time. How we react and view the world now will remain in our memories for a long time. The events, people, brands, services and products we come into contact with in this period will create significant memories linked to our emotional state. When we look back, our recollections of this time will be sparked by the senses.

Emotion and perception can be changed in an instant and with initiatives from our industry such as #PromotetheNHS

which get important and useful items to those working on our frontline at NHS Nightingale Hospitals, we have proved our agility as an industry. The ability to adapt to bring a positive connection with the senses, even in the hardest of environments, creating positive emotional connection that lasts, shows how our gratitude can take on physical form.

We are entrepreneurial, innovative and resilient. Over the last few weeks, it has become starkly apparent that this industry is a fighter and won't give up. The road ahead is hard and we make no bones about this. It will be how we behave and communicate as an industry that will impact the survival of the many, not the few.

Carey Trevill
BPMA Interim CEO

Product Media Magazine is available to the whole promotional merchandise industry. It is the official magazine of the British Promotional Merchandise Association (BPMA).



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Merchandise industry comes together to support the NHS



Merchandise providers have combined to say a big 'thank you' to frontline NHS teams battling COVID 19.

A request to produce goody bags for NHS staff that went out to the industry resulted in a flood of offers of support from suppliers and distributors. Within a week, enough donations were made to generously fill 3,000 goody bags that went out after Easter. Such was the response that the initiative has reset its target at 5,000 bags.

The #PromoteTheNHS appeal was the brainchild of Matt Pluckrose, managing director of Desktop Ideas, and Richard Milliken-Smith, managing director, Print Run Promotions, who put out a call to action in March. Suppliers were urged to supply stock, and distributors requested to make a donation to buy products for the bags.

The first packs have been collated and delivered to the NEC Birmingham Nightingale Hospital, one of several field hospitals that have been built around the UK to handle the growing number of patients requiring specialist treatment for COVID-19. The hospital is expecting nearly 10,000



nursing staff to cover the NEC in shifts, so the planned 5,000 bags will be most welcome.

The campaign has received widespread support from the industry with 25 suppliers companies and nine distributors onboard. BPMA interim CEO, Carey Trevill also backed the industry's show of unity.

"At this time of national crisis, the NHS are taking the brunt of the outcomes from the virus and where you can, please support this initiative with practical items and thoughtful gifts that will mean a lot to those working tirelessly on our behalf," she said.

Voices of support

"We are all now adapting and changing our business and life schedules on a daily basis. However, this is nothing in comparison to the pace of change our NHS is currently experiencing. In these strange and uncertain times, it is important to focus on the positives and offer support where we can." -

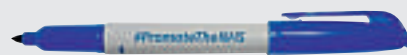
Helen Dyl, operations director, Snap Products and The Pen Warehouse

"I've just seen your pledge initiative, a great idea and a fantastic cause. Thank you for organising it. At BIC Graphic would be very happy to support this - we'd like to pledge 2,000 pens." - **Ian Barham - BIC**

"Thank you for your time today and congratulations again on a superb initiative. Keep it going and we are proud to support what you are doing." - **Paul Green - Galpeg**

"We initially donated 500 of our pens but we are so bowled over with what the NHS is doing that we want to now donate a further 2,000 of our Markie Mini Markers to help say that big thank you to the NHS heroes." - **Keith Lewis - Premier Brands**

"The team at TM is pleased and proud to be playing a small part in this brilliant idea. It shows what amazing things can happen when our industry pulls together." - **Total Merchandise**



BPMA represents sector views to government

As part of its mission to keep the government informed of developments in the promotional merchandise industry, the BPMA is surveying members to better understand how they are being affected by the coronavirus outbreak.

An online survey is being used to gather information and guide the association on the best way to represent the sector's needs to relevant government departments. These are the Department for Business, Economic and Industrial Strategy (BEIS); the Department for International Trade (DIT), and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), which is involved in creative industry strategy.



Overall, the BPMA representations of accurate and timely information mean it is front and centre when the needs of SMEs are in question. The BPMA

will continue to drive our agenda tirelessly and seek to bring about change on important issues such as business rates for the sector, particularly linked to members' involvement in the leisure and hospitality sectors.

BPMA member stories and case studies have enabled the association to bring individual challenges to life for the people instructing change. The responses to surveys and questions deliver the facts needed to contextualise the rapid changes government needs to make.

Keep the information coming through the survey link in BPMA newsletters and on productmediamagazine.co.uk.



USB2U invests to aid supply chain

USB2U has increased investments in new equipment to help combat the impact of the coronavirus.

The Northampton tech and smartphone promotional products company, is increasing its stock holding, printing and engraving capacity in the UK to minimise disruption caused by supply chain and shipment delays in China.

USB2U has invested more than £100,000 in production equipment and staff training in the last 18 months to grow its UK production. It is now set to invest an additional £70,000 in new printers.

Its latest printing machines will enable the firm to print more than 20,000 USB sticks and other tech products in a day.

Sebastian La Porta, managing director at USB2U, said that past experience had shown that the company could not solely rely on the Far East supply chain to meet orders.

"We are continuing to adapt our business to increase our printing and stock holding capacity in the UK with significant investments in equipment to future-proof our business against major global events."

Direct Route launches £1 debt recovery service

Direct Route Collections has launched a service for SMEs to help them recover overdue debt – at a cost of £1 for unlimited usage, with every pound paid donated to the NHS to help combat COVID-19.

Mike Collins managing director of Direct Route Collections and AccountAssyst Online Credit Management, said: "We are in unprecedented and challenging times where SMEs, the backbone of the economy, are taking drastic measures and paring overheads to the bone to stay afloat. Whilst we welcome the recently announced government initiatives to help SMEs, no business can afford to overlook the importance of collecting unpaid debt. Every business needs a robust easy to implement online strategy because now more than ever their focus has to be on healthy cash flow. Recovered debt plays a vital part in facilitating this. For some businesses it can place them in crucial survival mode until the economy is back in recovery mode."

Collins said his discussions with SMEs and many of the trade bodies that support them had revealed the needs of small business at this time.

"It's become glaringly clear that the emphasis is predominantly on discussing how emergency business government support can be accessed. Unpaid debt remains in the shadows despite it being a critical problem. This is especially so for those businesses supplying products. They now find themselves having to pay their suppliers or risk supply and credit lines being cut if they don't, despite not being paid by customers themselves."



To sign up, businesses that have not been paid have to complete a simple online secure form as many times as they want with the contact details of every client with an unpaid debt. Direct Route then emails each one using its letterhead and formal protocols.

Businesses signing up for the service have no obligation to instruct Direct Route if a company refuses to pay or doesn't respond. If they subsequently decide to instruct Direct Route, they can take advantage of the zero-cost debt recovery service under BPMA member benefits.

Direct Route has also committed a further 10% of any debt collection revenues or commissions generated from clients joining via this service to the NHS plus waiving the joining fee of £200.

Collins said that the service had recovered £153,000 that was seven months' overdue in just five days.

BPMA Members can access the service by visiting directroute.co.uk/covid19support.

For more practical financial advice, go to p28.

Watch out for fake PPE certification

The BPMA is urging members to check out the documentation and certification accompanying personal protective equipment (PPE) products to ensure they are fit for purpose.

Anomalies have been brought to the BPMA's attention by a number of members, including members of the Board.

There are reports that certificates provided to prove PPE products are suitable and have passed the rigorous testing required have either been changed or are not recognised by those who purportedly provided the certificates.

With global demand for PPE increasing by 1000% in the past few weeks, the BPMA stresses that it is critical to validate PPE products to ensure those who receive them are not exposed to unnecessary risks and the PPE does the job it was intended for.

PPE can consist of several elements: face masks, gloves, hand sanitisers and protective clothing. Not only must advertising

messages for these products comply, but the certification behind them as well.

It is vital that all PPE is made from appropriate materials and holds the relevant certification related to their medicinal or medical application, otherwise protection may be compromised.

The European Safety Federation has pointed out the ignorance of many entering the market due to demand, and has commented: "We have the impression that manufacturers outside the EU (and probably even 'newcomers' and importers in the EU) are not entirely familiar with the EU Legislation on PPE and thus believe that by paying the 'certificate' from such an organisation, they are fully in compliance with the EU legislation. And most likely, also on the side of the customers (including health authorities), the knowledge about the exact requirements of the EU legislation is lacking and thus they judge those documents as accurate."

The European Safety Federation urges



companies to look out for the following validating information:

- In first instance the Declaration of Conformity (DoC) has to be provided and checked.
- For products imported from outside the EU (including EFTA and other participants to the single market), the importer has to make sure that the manufacturer has done the conformity assessment as foreseen in the PPE Regulation (EU)2016/425.
- In cases where there is doubt about the DoC, there is no DoC available or there is import from outside the EU, check the certification.

Please report any infringements to the BPMA, which will collate a report on this topic.

New base for Wild Thang

Wild Thang recently had the official handover of its new £2 million offices from Frank Rogers Building Contractors.

The project, which has been designed by K2 architects, is an integral part of the company's ambitious development plan. The Liverpool company has enjoyed growth of around 18-20% for the past three years and is aiming for further 20-25% growth following completion of the project. The transformation of the headquarters will allow the business to significantly increase manufacturing capacity and headcount to meet its aspiration to be one of the leading branded clothing, merchandise and print companies in the UK.

- Wild Thang is also supporting NHS workers with a T-shirt campaign that donates 50% of the proceeds, or a free T-shirt, to NHS staff. The company has also donated much-needed clothing to local NHS staff who are working flat out at this time. For more details on the You'll Never Walk Alone campaign, go to wildthangshop.co.uk.



Simpson gets on board for 50th celebration

Lloyd Simpson, managing director of Yorkshire distributor, LSi, got a big surprise for his 50th birthday, when greetings were splashed all over a billboard near his home.

Orchestrated by LSi sales director, Chris Dickinson, the poster site featured a cheeky greeting including pictures of Lloyd at milestone ages in his life.

"After years of punishment at the hands of Lloyd it was about time I paid him back with the local billboard," said Dickinson. "In the strangest of times we just wanted to wish our boss the very best for his lockdown birthday."

Happy birthday Lloyd

I first met Lloyd in 1999 shortly after I joined PAGE. He was one of my first customers. I have watched him grow along with his company. His outlook on life is amazing. He lives by the motto play hard and work harder – and I could add to that, 'honourably'. He's a good man.

Brian Hayward, Page Partnership

All the very best wishes from me personally and all at PF Concept. Have a wonderful day – as best you can during these very strange times that we are now living in. I am sure you can celebrate hard once we get back to somewhere near normal.

John Barrett, PF Concept

I've still not forgotten your punishment for the 4am finish after the Europop bar crawl at PSI and then having to fly home the same morning. Best wishes from us all mate.

Stephen Reeve, The Umbrella Company

Happy 50th birthday Lloyd! Enjoy your birthday and look forward to celebrating. Keep flossing!

Angela Wagstaff, Allwag Promotions

Happy birthday Lloyd. Hopefully, we can meet up very soon and celebrate in style.

Roy Deakin, Bizz Badges

Plastics consultation in Wales

B-Loony, the UK's oldest and largest printed balloon manufacturers, is alerting merchandise companies to a consultation on single use plastics in Wales.

Wales has announced that it is to introduce a ban on single use plastics including plastic straws, cotton buds and balloon sticks from 2021. England and Scotland's restrictions on plastic straws and plastic drinks stirrers are due to come into force this year too but the consultation in Wales goes further and is in line with the EU directive on the issue.

B-Loony has been calling for businesses that use plastic to become more sustainable. Andy MacInnes, commercial manager, said: "This is good news for the environment from the Welsh Government. However, businesses across the UK, should remember that even though we are in the process of leaving the EU, the single use plastics ban still applies to all businesses across the UK."

MacInnes said companies should look to plastic alternatives where possible. B-Loony developed an award-winning and recyclable cardboard BalloonGrip, designed to replace the single use plastic alternative.

"Please remember that the EU plastics ban goes much further than the English ban that comes into force this year, so you need to be ready now for its implementation in 2021," he said.



Kinasz takes over at GeigerBTC

GeigerBTC has announced that Vicky Kinasz will join the company as managing director, replacing Frank Murphy who is retiring at the end of May 2020.



Kinasz was with premiums and promotions company, Supremia for almost nine years, rising to become managing director. She said: "I have spent over 20 years in the promotions industry, and to have the opportunity to join a world class organisation with such an incredible culture and heritage is truly the most exciting opportunity of my career."

Murphy, who was a founding partner of BTC Group, which Geiger acquired in April 2018, said: "I could not be more delighted to hand the reins over to Vicky Kinasz. I know she will lead GeigerBTC on to even greater things."

GeigerBTC has also welcomed new account director Josh Haftel to the team.



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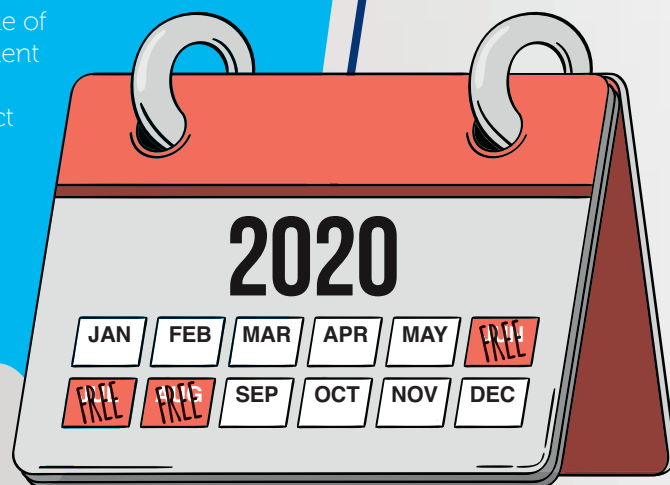
AN IMPORTANT UPDATE ON BPMA MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

On 2nd April, the BPMA announced in its weekly critical industry and business update webinar that it was supporting members during this critical time by offering 3 free months' membership to the trade association upon membership renewal on 1st June. **Members will pay for 9 months' membership rather than 12 months.**

Explaining the move, BPMA interim CEO, Carey Trevill, said: "The coronavirus has left many businesses across the world suffering and counting the cost to them. We understand that our members need as much support as possible right now and it has been important for us to assess the current climate and help take some of the pressure off our members. During this unprecedented time, we feel that members need their industry body and we want members to stay with us and be part of the recovery journey with us and not feel the pressure to cancel membership because of cash flow reasons."

What does this mean for your membership?

1. The BPMA is providing all members with 3 months complimentary membership from 1st June until 31st August.
2. Members will be invoiced for 9 months of membership at time of renewal, and payment will be collected in September by direct debit or by BACS transfer.
3. All membership bands for 2019-20 will remain the same for 2020-21.



Revised Membership fees for 2020-21

Band	Excluding VAT			With VAT			Monthly DD & Inc VAT	Quarterly DD & Inc VAT
	Old Fee	New Fee	Saving	Old Fee	New Fee	Saving		
Band 1	£345.00	£258.75	£86.25	£414.00	£310.50	£103.50	£37.00	£111.00
Band 2	£445.00	£333.75	£111.25	£534.00	£400.50	£133.50	£47.00	£141.00
Band 3	£525.00	£393.75	£131.25	£630.00	£472.50	£157.50	£55.00	£165.00
Band 4	£625.00	£468.75	£156.25	£750.00	£562.50	£187.50	£65.00	£195.00
Band 5	£995.00	£746.25	£248.75	£1,194.00	£895.50	£298.50	£102.00	£306.00

What is my membership fee for the 2020-21 period?

- The table above will outline your membership fee.
- If you are on a monthly direct debit payment plan, payment will be collected 20th May to complete your current membership fee. The direct debit payment plans will then be paused until September.
- This means that fees for 2020-21 will be reduced by up to £248.75+VAT.
- Therefore, no membership payments will be collected in June, July or August.
- Please note that monthly and quarterly direct debits will incur a £18.75+VAT admin fee which will apportioned across your 9 monthly payments.

What will happen to my direct debit?

To minimise administrative burden on members, the BPMA is taking much of the action on behalf of members. Direct Debit mandates will automatically be updated so there is no need to cancel your mandate already in place. The date will be changed so no monies will be collected in June and this will be changed to September.

Queries?

Please contact Daniela Arena on daniela@bpma.co.uk if you have any immediate queries on your membership and membership renewal with the BPMA. The BPMA team looks forward to speaking and corresponding with its members regarding renewals in the coming weeks.

Not yet a member?

Now is the time to join your industry association. Be inspired, stay connected and stay educated and informed whilst we begin our recovery journey throughout 2020. For membership enquiries, please contact Daniela Arena daniela@bpma.co.uk or call 01372 371182.



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Merchandise World: embracing a new frontier

The events industry has taken a huge hit during the coronavirus crisis and with so many shows having to reschedule and potentially reschedule a second time, it came as no surprise that Merchandise World also had to change its plans.

Announcing on Thursday 30th April that the face to face aspect of the show was to be changed, Sourcing City and the BPMA covered the reasons why during the popular weekly member webinars, inviting Sourcing City members into the session.

Addressing the sensible move, both the BPMA and Sourcing City cited the need to maintain social distancing and also conduct business responsibly. BPMA interim CEO Carey Trevill and Sourcing City CEO David Long have asked all normal visitors to the show to keep 9th September in their diaries as news of a virtual exhibition will shortly be launched.

In line with many companies now addressing how best to approach the need for trade shows to continue, virtual platforms will be more widely used as



we embrace this new way of working. With more opportunities to showcase and perhaps take advantage of different ways of presenting, this next stage of evolving business practice will be another step towards the UK economic recovery.

Shows on hold

Other industry shows have taken the decision to reschedule because of coronavirus.

The B2B Marketing Expo has been postponed to 10-11 November 2020, when it is due to return to London's Excel. The venue is one of several of the UK's major exhibition spaces that has been drafted into use as a Nightingale Hospital to help the NHS deal with the COVID-19 outbreak.

WA Media, organiser of the HAPTICA live '20 show in Bonn, Germany, has announced that the show is postponed to 18 June 2020.

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NECESSITY IS THE *mother of invention*

Adaptability is the key to getting through these tough times, says **Greg Connell**



During these unprecedented times everybody is having to adapt creatively to meet new challenges or change their product mix.

My local pub has diversified to become a butcher and cake shop by day, and a takeaway by night. It is utilising the assets at its disposal, such as bulk buying of food, kitchen facilities and trained chefs, to maintain an income and keep staff employed. Meanwhile, another pub in the village has simply closed until further notice.

Strive to thrive

When all this is over, perhaps it will return to being a pub-restaurant, but I hope that it continues with the part of the business that it created overnight as

a response to current conditions.


The phrase 'necessity is the mother of invention', is very apt at this time.

Procurement International is no stranger to adapting to changing conditions. For example, in 2018 we made the bold decision to open an office and warehouse in Rotterdam to ensure that whenever Brexit happens, and whatever new rules will apply at that time, we will be in a position to be able to cope and more importantly keep the supply chain flowing to seamlessly keep delivering loyalty and incentive rewards across the globe.

Changing times

Over the past few weeks, we have made changes in our warehouse to ensure our staffs' safety while trying to carry on as

usual. Other changes, such as increased demand for board games, home exercise machines, garden equipment, tablets, games consoles, and coffee machines have resulted in us revising our stock holding. Before this, we had already started to increase our ordering of items that we feel might suffer a production delay caused by factory disruption in the Far East.

Your market and your customer's requirements have probably changed in the last month, but if you can be agile, not just in where your staff work, but in the types of services or products you can offer to support your loyal customers then they will support you back through these tough times and beyond. 

Greg Connell is account director at Procurement International



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TIME FOR A CHANGE OF CLOTHING

Demand and behaviour is being affected by the current pandemic, and clothing companies must respond, says **Clive Allcott**



At the time of writing, it is apparent that the coronavirus pandemic is changing the promotional sector significantly with the cancellation of events, supply chain disruption and a downturn in business enquiries. It's at times like this that we need to re-evaluate and look for differing opportunities that the marketplace could bring.

With essential services at the forefront of the fight against this virus and support organisations at full capacity, this may be an area that we as an industry can help and assist by offering our clothing experience.

Protective clothing

PPE and general workwear is now in demand in certain areas, as supply workforces expand to cater for added demands. This is where we need to step up and offer our support and be the clothing experts, to help organisations make the easy and right choice.

Why not create an email

offering based around workwear with such offerings as cargo trousers, fleeces, polo shirts, and lab coats? Base the offering around a business pack so that the local delivery and transport company can kit out their workers in branded wear.

Another topic generating a lot of discussion is face masks and gloves, all of which are classed as PPE (personal protective equipment). However, there are a multitude of products that are available to keep everyone protected.

The hazards addressed by protective equipment include physical, electrical, heat, chemicals, and biohazards all of which can be branded and supplied by your garment decorator, who will be able to help you with all your requirements including PPE.

Working from home

On this workwear theme, there is a new market sector that has appeared overnight, and

that is the WFH, or working from home, clothing. Smart and comfy so that you are comfortable for the day in your jogging pants but smart enough for that video conference call with your branded polo shirt.

Working from home is now becoming the norm and as such will be a new experience to many, bringing new challenges on a daily basis.

No distractions

I have been working for many years from a home or remote office and while being comfortable is important, I cannot stress the importance of choosing an appropriate workspace in your home and one that does not blur the lines between home life and work life. This means choosing an area that is used exclusively for work and work only. It also means choosing an area that is free of the distractions of home life and one where you feel enabled to work your



best each and every day.

So, if possible, set up an area in your home that is suited for your daily working needs. It will greatly enhance the quality of your work and enjoyment of it because you'll be able to draw a clearer line between it and home life. I understand that some individuals may be in a situation where the available space at home does not always allow this, but it is something to strive for whenever possible.

Happy selling

Clive, The Clothing Guru

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Edible promotional merchandise may be more transient than other options, but with many workers cut off from their workplaces and colleagues, they can provide a much needed bit of cheer, says **Andy Poar**



There really is no better way to create a positive feeling towards a brand than to give the target audience something tasty to eat. However, it is also a product set that is often overlooked or misunderstood by distributors as they can be used in lots of different ways to promote a brand either externally or internally.

In 2019 the market for edible promotional merchandise was just over £51 million and was the seventh largest market of the traditional product groups behind bags, pens, mugs, plastic and USBs, and the suppliers and manufacturers of these products keep growing year on year.

Merchandise with bite

The edible product options range from traditional sweets and chocolates with branded packaging through to products with actual edible logos including chocolate, cakes and biscuits and even fruit. Edibles are generally UK made and can be supplied quickly in both small and large quantities and are a great complimentary product to traditional promo products.


Distributors and customers often shy away from edibles as it is felt they cannot provide the long term 'subliminal' brand marketing of more traditional products due to the fact that they get eaten. However, the power behind edibles is that everybody loves to receive something nice to eat and as a result they are a favourite amongst those who receive them.

Staying power

When someone receives something really tasty as a business gift it may not provide long lasting brand marketing physically, but the memory of that product and the good feeling it gave them when they ate it will stay with them for a long time as well as generating immense goodwill towards the brand they received it from. If it has a customer brand on it though it has to be good quality as a poor tasting product it will reflect badly on the brand.

In the current climate where thousands of people are homeworking and self-isolating, edibles are a great product to send in low volume and through the post to cheer up these employees and help keep them connected to their workplace.


Edibles are very social media friendly and can be used to create great coverage on the traditional platforms. If

you want to generate social media coverage people are far more likely to post a fun picture of themselves with something to eat than with other products. We call it the #TweetBeforeYouEat principle and if used well it can create fantastic coverage for a brand on social platforms. 


Andy Poar is director of Eat My Logo

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Coronavirus has led to more people working from home. It is important to support yourself and your colleagues



It's fair to say we've never experienced a time like the coronavirus pandemic.

There are lots of messages, advice, opinions and predictions around. Some of it sounds pretty drastic, and some of it can be contradictory and confusing. Also, the uncertainty, in itself, can feel very stressful. Mental Health at Work, a website curated by mental health charity Mind has assembled useful and practical information for employers dealing with employees in radically changed circumstances.

In terms of workplace wellbeing, the coronavirus situation presents a few different things to think about, and they've chosen resources that can help with each of them.

A pandemic isn't just a physical health issue; it's a mental health issue as well. Mind has produced a guide for anyone who's feeling worried about this. It covers lots of issues to help support the mental health of yourself and others in the coming weeks and months, including those with existing mental health concerns.

Home working

It's likely that many people have found themselves suddenly working remotely much more.

Mental Health at Work has produced guides to keeping yourself and your employees well.

Whether you're an employer, line manager or concerned colleague, there is lots you can do to improve life for others who are suddenly working remotely. The coronavirus resources can be found in mentalhealthatwork.org.uk's toolkit section and are constantly updated with new, high quality, resources that can help. The pages include detail on mental health, safety, infrastructure and more, as well as the latest UK government advice and updates for employers and the public.

Current government advice is that, with the exception of some non-essential shops and public venues, other businesses are not being asked to close – indeed it is important for business to carry on.

Businesses and workplaces should encourage their employees to work at home, wherever possible and should let them know about any policies they have for home working.

Sometimes this will not be possible, as not everyone can work from home. Certain jobs require people to travel to their place of work – for instance if they operate machinery, work in construction or manufacturing, or are delivering frontline services.

If someone becomes unwell in the workplace with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they should be sent home and advised to follow the advice to stay at home.

Working from home may be unfamiliar to some staff, so here are a few things to bear in mind:

Isolation

If you're suddenly forced to work from home, and have never done this before, it can be a shock to the system on top of the anxiety around the pandemic. There's also the risk of remote workers feeling like they're less a part of the business.

In a 2019 US study, remote workers spoke positively about the enhanced flexibility. But they acknowledged downsides:

- 49% said their biggest struggle is wellness-related
- 22% can't unplug after work

- 19% feel lonely
- 8% can't stay motivated

Employers have to make it a priority to keep up communication and organise virtual events to bring everyone together. There are also lots of great guides to equipping people to deal with working from home – use them.

Prepare

Plan for working remotely by assessing the technology required, and chatting to your team about how you're planning on communicating. What tools will you need to use, what habits should be in place, and what structures will be in place?

The basics

With so many things to consider, emphasise that staff look after themselves by eating and sleeping well, and getting some exercise in.

Structure

A good structure for the day should stick to what people were used to before with the same time waking up, getting dressed, and having breakfast. They'll have more time as there is no commute, so that time could be used profitably by reading, listening to a podcast, learning something new, or exercising alongside the working day.

At the end of your day, shut your computer off, stop checking emails, and stop working at the normal time. One of the biggest challenges with remote working is how home and work life can blur. Keep the separation and don't succumb to an 'always on' mentality. It could ultimately affect performance.

Don't forget to build in time for lunch breaks, cups of tea, and 'watercooler' moments, with virtual chats about non-work topics, for example.

Communication channels


Don't neglect phone calls, video chats and communication that gives more of a sense of face to face or personalised communication. It's easy to lean heavily on digital tools when you're remote, such as slack, email, texts, intranets, but these lack the nuance of the kinds of communication that are more normal in a place of work.

Mix up your use of communication forms, and do try video conferencing as an alternative to meetings and a way of feeling less disconnected.

Schedule in socials

Don't make it all about work – there's plenty of time during the working day where your interactions are not work related. Small microinteractions in the workplace, such as making a cup of tea, waiting at the printer, or chatting at the lifts, help create a sense of belonging. They're hard to replicate remotely, but be imaginative to try and find ways to put non-work interactions back into the day.

Something as simple as asking 'how are you?' assumes a new importance at this time. Remember to listen and share, and don't forget that this won't be forever. Things will get better.

Mind's Workplace Wellbeing team has more tips for people working from home, including advice if you manage others while working remotely. For more advice, go to mentalhealthatwork.org.uk. 

A HELPING HAND

These are tough times, but there is help for businesses.
Here is a round up of what's available

The past few months have redefined the word 'unprecedented' as the coronavirus crisis has brought about challenges to business and society that most of us will never have experienced before.

From a merchandise business point of view, the crisis has hit hard and quickly, but there is help available. The government has moved rapidly to try and shore up the economy, with new strategies being introduced, and refined, on an almost daily basis.

The BPMA has been playing its part in feeding the experience of members to various government departments, to help them understand and respond to the plight of SME (small to medium-sized enterprises, i.e. those with under 250 employees) companies.

With the stark declaration that 'normal' will be some months away, the resilient, the entrepreneurs, the innovators and those who will always find a way will be at the forefront of the UK recovery and our industry future. The BPMA is committed to ensuring you have the information you need now and your voice is counted as a critical factor in the UK's economy and future success. We will continue to update through our various platforms, so please talk to us about your challenges as they arise so we can help anticipate your needs and key areas of focus.

This is a summary of some of the main financial support options for businesses and staff. For more details, go to bpma.co.uk/news/coronavirus-updates/

EMPLOYEES

SSP REFUNDS

For SMEs, the government will cover the cost of Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) for up to two weeks, for employees who are ill with COVID-19, or who have been advised to self-isolate.

This is available from day one of the employee's absence and covers employees on all types of contracts.

JOB RETENTION SCHEME

A key plank of the government's efforts to protect jobs is the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS). Rather than lay off staff, companies are urged to take up the scheme which allows businesses to furlough staff for up to four months, to the end of June. During this time, HMRC will reimburse up to 80% of workers' wages, to a maximum of £2,500 per employee per month.

The scheme is open to all companies and to a range of employees on different types of contracts, as well as apprentices. It is expected to be up and running by the end of April.

The scheme can also be used to re-employ employees who were made redundant before 28 February 2020.

Furloughed staff cannot carry out work for their employer, but they can undertake training, such as the BPMA education programme (see page 35 for details).

ANNUAL LEAVE

Regulations are being amended to make all businesses eligible to allow staff to carry over statutory annual leave for the next two years.



CASH

BUSINESS LOANS

Companies with turnover of less than £500 million can apply for a Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan (CBILS). Those with a turnover of less than £45m can apply for a maximum of £5m, and companies under the £500m threshold can access up to £25m in loans.

There are more than 40 accredited lenders across the UK, including most high street banks. The government backs 80% of the loan with no interest charge for 12 months. Personal guarantees are not required for facilities under £250,000 and a principal private residence (PPR) cannot be taken as a personal guarantee. For smaller businesses, the government has introduced bounce back loans for up to 25% of turnover, up to £50,000. A new streamlined application has been launched, and government backs 100% of the loan with no interest in the first year.

GOVERNMENT GRANTS

Retail, hospitality or leisure businesses may be eligible for government grants through their local authorities. This is based on the normal rateable value of the business and will provide up to £10,000 in cash grants for businesses with a rateable value of £10-15,000, and up to £25,000 for those with rates of up to £51,000.

TAX

RATES

All retail, leisure and hospitality companies will be exempt from business rates for the 2020-21 tax year.

VAT

All businesses are eligible for a VAT payment deferral for payments due between 20 March 2020 and 30 June. The deferral is automatic, with payment due on 31 March 2021, although companies can still pay if they wish.

Those who do wish to defer do not need to inform HMRC, but they will still need to complete a VAT return.

TIME-TO-PAY AGREEMENTS

Companies in financial distress with an outstanding tax liability can apply for new payment terms through the HMRC TTP service. Businesses can also apply for an extension on filing their annual accounts with Companies House – they must apply as it is not applied automatically.

INSOLVENCY LAW

The government has announced it will amend insolvency law to give companies breathing space and keep trading while they explore options for rescue. UK companies undergoing a rescue or restructure process will be able to continue trading while they explore their options.

This will enable companies to continue buying much-needed supplies, such as energy, raw materials or broadband, while attempting a rescue, and temporarily suspending wrongful trading provisions retrospectively from 1 March 2020 for three months for company directors so they can keep their businesses going without the threat of personal liability.

SELF-EMPLOYED

SEISS

For individuals with trading profits of under £50,000, the government's Self-employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS) extends a similar level of help offered to furloughed staff. Individuals are offered a taxable grant worth 80% of trading profits, up to a maximum of £2,500 per month for the next three months.

HMRC will contact self-employed individuals by about mid-May 2020 with details of the online application process, which is still under development. Payments should be made by early June 2020 and will be based on average earnings during the previous three tax years. The grant will be subject to Income Tax and National Insurance contributions but does not need to be repaid.

INCOME TAX DEFERRAL

Self-assessment payments due on 31 July 2020 may be deferred until 31 January 2021.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXTENSION

The deadline for submitting income tax self-assessment for 2018-19 has been extended to 23 April 2020.

Information correct at the time of going to press. Please check Gov.uk for updates.

Job retention

Furloughing staff using the government JRS offers an attractive alternative to making staff redundant at a time when there is insufficient work for all employees. It involves temporarily changing the status of workers so that they do not work, but are still on the books.

In all cases, you should discuss the situation with employees and agree with them that you are designating them as a furloughed worker. It is especially important that you get agreement to any reduction in pay, otherwise this may give rise to claims of unlawful deduction from wages, breach of contract or constructive dismissal.

Once agreement is obtained, you should confirm the temporary furloughed worker status to the employee in writing and you must keep a record of this communication for five years.

Staff cannot work for the business, or associated companies, while furloughed, but can undertake training, or volunteer subject to public health guidance.

If work is intermittent, staff can be taken off furlough and brought in to do work, and put back on furlough if necessary. Each period of furlough must be at least three weeks' long.

Wages on furloughed staff are subject to income tax and national insurance (NI), and employers must make their NI contribution as well as relevant automatic enrolment pension contributions.

PASSING THE

Protecting your creations is becoming a more important part of thriving in business, but it can be confusing

MARK

We are generally aware of intellectual property when linked to products and new variations of products when they come on to the market. Infamous cases hit the headlines and we're all reminded of the presence of such elements when they do. However, we more often become aware when ideas are presented only to re-emerge in the campaign you pitched for under another company name.

It is important to understand how to protect yourself and what happens if you don't in this competitive world.

True product innovations are few and far between with 90% coming from a known source with a 10% interesting twist. This makes it harder to determine ownership.

You may have come face to face with a product that is similar to one of your own and may breach IP or represent a case of 'passing off'.

Understanding the difference between IP and passing off is also important. A little known term, it's suddenly become more common as different entities fight over the identity of logos, images, form and function and the associated goodwill attached.

Passing off is a tricky concept for many as it is based on the perception of the goods or service in question. Passing off is a 'tort' law - a civil wrong that causes someone else to suffer, and proving it has five essential requirements:

- A misrepresentation
- Made by a trader in the course of trade
- To prospective customers of his or ultimate consumers of goods or services supplied by him
- Which is calculated to injure the business or goodwill of another trader, and
- Which causes actual damage to a business or goodwill of the trader by whom the action is brought or will probably do so

And it's not the same as trade mark infringement as this deals with registered rights and common law governs passing off.



WHY IT'S DIFFERENT

Passing off relies on the presence of these elements:

1. That you possess goodwill in your goods, name, mark, or other identifying features, that associates the public with those specific goods (and distinguishes them from others)
2. There must be a misrepresentation by the other party which has led others to believe the goods are yours
3. The misrepresentation has caused damage to your goodwill

Take the case of Claridges Hotel, which found a company called Claridge Candles owned the registered trade mark Claridge and was selling candles under this highly recognisable name. Claridges Hotel claimed that the company was taking advantage of the name, reputation and premium standing of Claridges Hotel, leading to potentially higher prices and sales as a result of the assumed affiliation. Claridges Hotel set out a case under the Trade Mark Act 1994 and also had a further claim upheld of passing off for the same reasons i.e. the assumption of the purchaser that Claridges Hotel was linked to or authorised this product.

Although it sounds like this is a case that Claridges Hotel should have sailed through, there was in fact not enough evidence to show genuine use of the relevant goods and the candle company was actually able to revoke the hotel's Claridge mark on its own toiletries.

With numerous cases hitting the courts, passing off has hit the headlines for many reasons in the last few years. The case that made this expression common parlance in product circles, was the widely reported Topshop vs Rhianna. Topshop used an image of Rhianna on a T-shirt without permission in 2013, leading to a very public spat that did not end well for Topshop.

Among the numerous issues the debate on the high street centred around Topshop profiting from this assumed association with the famous celebrity. The clear case here was that customers were likely to buy this product, believing Rhianna endorsed, approved or authorised the use of her image. Cases that set precedent also have helped shape current

views and success on whether a case is viable. Trunki, those adorable ride along suitcases that help mum or dad transport the smallest part of their entourage, or the scourge of airport lounges (dependent on your personal view), brought a case against discount rival ride on Kiddee Case for infringement of its idea – a Community Registered Design or CRD.

In this case, the Supreme Court Lords unanimously agreed with the Court of Appeal that the Kiddee Case created a different overall impression to that of the Trunki. The overall impression of the design was a horned animal which was significantly different to the impression created by the Kiddee Case which was an insect with antennae or an animal with ears.

This case shocked many as it appeared an open and shut case in Trunki's favour, if you excuse the pun. But importantly, while Trunki creator Robert Law of Dragons' Den fame was commended for his clever and original idea, he was reminded that the design rights exist to protect designs not ideas.

WHEN TO PROTECT AND WHAT TO USE

It is also important to note the differing aspects of trade marks and copyright in this context as both perform an important function and understanding their correct use can make a huge difference when determining how to protect your work.

WHAT IS A TRADE MARK?

A trade mark is a type of intellectual property consisting of a recognisable sign, design or expression which identifies products or services of a particular source from those of others. Trade marks used to define services are however usually called service marks.

WHAT IS COPYRIGHT?

This is the legal right that protects the use of your work once your idea has been physically expressed, stopping others from using it without your permission. It is useful to know that you automatically get copyright protection when you create original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work including illustration and photography.

Copyright duration is linked to the kind of work and how long ago it was all created; a frequent question that is posed when distributors are pitching for work.

Recording copyright is important

before your work is made public as is making it clear that the intellectual property remains with you as a business until such time as a sale is agreed or title for items passes to a new owner.

OWNING INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (IP)

You own IP if you created it and it meets the requirements under current law, bought intellectual property rights from the creator or a previous owner or have a brand name that could be a trade mark and it's worth noting that intellectual property can have more than one owner, belong to a people or a business and be sold or transferred.

IP allows you to make money from the IP you own however it is very important to understand that if you create IP as part of your day to day work while employed by someone else, you usually won't personally own the IP.

HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOUR IP?

Automatic protection comes under design rights particularly for the shapes of objects, but you will have to apply for trade marks (names, logos) registered designs (appearance of a product including the shape, product, packaging, patterns, colours and decoration) and inventions.

MAKING SURE THAT YOU ARE PROTECTED FROM MULTIPLE ANGLES

More than one type of protection could be linked to a single product, for example, you could:

- register the name and logo as a trade mark
- protect a product's unique shape as a registered design
- patent a completely new working part
- use copyright to protect drawings of the product

WHERE TO FIND THE RIGHT ADVICE

However, you decide to protect your IP and valuable property, it's always advisable to get the right professional advice.

You can go to the government IP Equip service to find out what type of IP you have at ipo.gov.uk/ip-support or go to a professional such as a patent attorney or a trademark attorney where some basic advice may be free of charge. There are also local IP 'clinics' and the British Library Business & IP Centre.

Disclaimer: Product Media Magazine has researched this topic using publicly available information at the time of going to press. The references contained within this article are not legal advice and cannot be used as such for any future litigation or reference. Legal cases quoted are in the public domain. The use of any brand name or term is in reference to the article context.

UNCOVER YOUR HIDDEN VALUE

Intellectual property and intangible assets can be an unrealised benefit to your business says Martin Croft



In the 21st Century 'knowledge economy', intellectual property and intangible assets are the drivers of value.

As Mark Getty, founder of the Getty Images picture library, said: "Intellectual property... is the oil of the 21st century... All today's richest men have made their money out of intellectual property."

What you know – your knowledge-based assets – are now far more valuable than the physical assets you own, a complete turnaround since the last century. For instance, Apple's balance sheet net assets at the end of June 2019 were \$96.5bn; but its market value on the same date was \$904.6bn.

So why the massive difference? Because business accounting rules haven't caught up with the realities of the modern business world, and they don't yet allow

for an easy way to put intellectual property (like trademarks, patents and copyright) and intangible assets (like processes, databases, customer lists, 'know-how' and trade secrets) on the balance sheet, or an easy way to unlock the value tied up in such knowledge-based assets.

Accounting for change

Accountants can easily value physical assets – buildings, equipment, vehicles, finished products, raw materials – and record them on a company's books, because they are regularly bought and sold and there is a historical record of value ranges – they are commodities.

But accounting standards say you can't show IP and intangibles you have developed yourself on your balance sheet. You can show IP and intangible assets you have

bought in on your balance sheet, but initially only at cost (what you paid for them). In subsequent years, you have to write them down, so the value always (apparently) falls. That's regardless of the increasing revenue those intangibles may be driving.

IP and intangibles are bought and sold – so there must be ways of estimating their value. It is true that companies can have specialist IP valuations conducted. However, these can be very expensive, so SMEs – and almost all promotional products companies will fall into that category – have largely been priced out of the market, with the likely sale price of their IP making it not worth the cost of a valuation.

There's also the issue that, for many or even most SMEs, the IP which they could sell represents the 'crown jewels' of the business – and without this IP, what's the business supposed to do?

About Inngot

Inngot operates an online platform for intellectual property (IP) identification and valuation, which helps companies, particularly SMEs, unlock the value of their IP and intangibles through its online profiling and valuation tools. These have helped SMEs around the world find more than £710m in previously 'hidden' value, and its standardised valuation reports are increasingly being used by banks and other lenders as validation in the IP lending process. Inngot also advises governments and NGOs on how to implement IP-backed financing, and has worked with the UK IPO, the British Business Bank, Innovate UK, the Singapore IPO and the OECD amongst others.

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Hidden value

However, things are changing in the IP world around IP valuation and, perhaps more importantly, how companies can use IP and intangibles to get financing without having to sell them off.


Governments, international and national financial and enterprise bodies, banks and other lenders and the accountancy profession have all been working together for years to try and come up with ways to allow companies, and particularly SMEs, to leverage the value locked up in their IP and intangibles.

China and Singapore have been running programmes to support borrowing against IP for some years, while major lenders around the world have been developing specialist lending products. In the UK, HSBC and Lombard have both provided finance packages for SMEs, with IP being used as collateral.

For example, in July 2019, Bristol-based e-commerce operator British Corner Shop, which offers 10,000 British food and drink brands for delivery worldwide, secured a £2.73 million finance facility from HSBC UK through the bank's new Intellectual Property lending product, which enabled it to validate the hidden value of the company's IP, via Inngot's online valuation toolkit.

The British Business Bank, set up by the Government to support UK businesses, launched its Enterprise Finance Guarantee (EFG) in 2009, which supports lending to companies with non-traditional assets, including IP and intangibles. In the current emergency, this has been temporarily replaced by the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) which makes it easier for companies to get such loans, by increasing the percentage of the loan covered by a Government-backed guarantee from 75% to 80%. This means banks will be more likely to lend against IP.

So, if you need to raise funds, don't dismiss the value that could be buried in your IP and intangible assets; get a shovel, and dig up your hidden treasures.

Martin Croft is marketing manager of Inngot. He previously worked for the Institute of Promotional Marketing for six years. 



Business boost from CBILS

The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) provides financial support to smaller businesses (SMEs) across the UK that are losing revenue, and seeing their cashflow disrupted, as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

It is designed for SMEs which don't have traditional tangible assets but which do have intellectual property and intangibles. BPMA members may have patents, trademarks, copyrights, databases, trade secrets and so on, all of which can be used as collateral for loans, if they have an IP valuation.

The scheme is a part of a wider package of government support for UK businesses and employees.

CBILS has been significantly expanded along with changes to the scheme's features and eligibility criteria. The changes mean even more smaller businesses across the UK impacted by the coronavirus crisis can access funding.

Importantly, access to the scheme has been opened up to those smaller businesses who would have previously met the requirements

for a commercial facility but would not have been eligible for CBILS. Insufficient security is no longer a condition to access the scheme.

This significantly increases the number of businesses eligible for the scheme. The expanded scheme went into operation with lenders on Monday 6 April 2020.

HOW IT WORKS

The British Business Bank operates CBILS via more than 40 accredited lenders currently working to provide finance. They include:

- high-street banks
- challenger banks
- asset-based lenders
- smaller specialist local lenders

A lender can provide up to £5 million in the form of:

- term loans
- overdrafts
- invoice finance
- asset finance

CBILS gives the lender a government-backed guarantee for the loan repayments to encourage more lending.

The borrower remains fully liable for the debt. Under the scheme, personal guarantees of any form will not be taken for facilities below £250,000.

For facilities above £250,000, personal guarantees may still be required, at a lender's discretion, but:

- recoveries under these are capped at a maximum of 20% of the outstanding balance of the CBILS facility after the proceeds of business assets have been applied
- a Principal Private Residence (PPR) cannot be taken as security to support a personal guarantee or as security for a CBILS-backed facility

KEY FEATURES OF THE SCHEME

- The maximum value of a facility provided under the scheme is £5 million, available on repayment terms of up to six years
- The scheme provides the lender with a government-backed, partial guarantee against the outstanding balance of the finance
- The Government will make a Business Interruption Payment to cover the first 12 months of interest payments and any lender-levied charges



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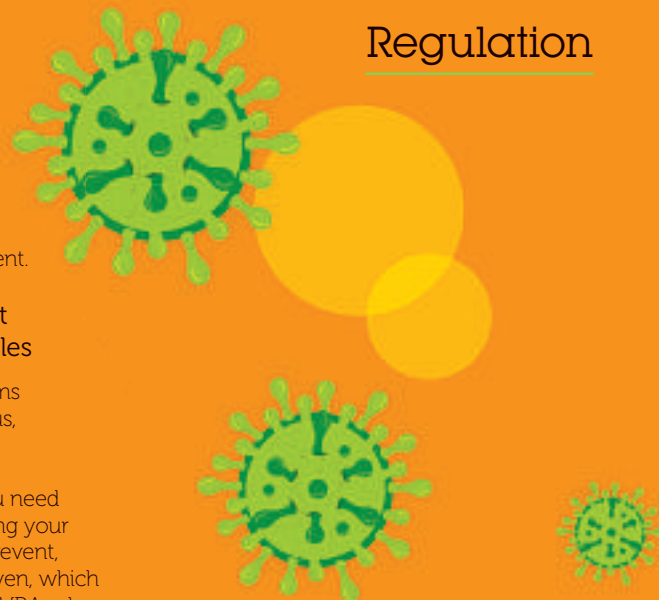
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Promoting your **MESSAGES** responsibly

In these times of confusion, it has never been more important for merchandise companies to provide legal, decent, honest and truthful communications



With more than 50% of BPMA member companies stating that business has ground to a halt, the creative mindset of our industry will be finding ways to promote relevant products to the right businesses at this time.

With suppliers and distributors still operational and taking enquiries and orders, communication about what is now available needs to happen fast. As China loosens restrictions and goods start to move, the market is starting to receive long awaited orders from lockdown regions affording capacity for certain goods where for months there has been no, or limited, availability.

So, what is the challenge when promoting to the audiences in the supply chain?

Firstly, understand your responsibility as a business to promote responsibly and accurately and secondly, beware medical claims that you can't substantiate.

In the UK, we 'self-regulate' our advertising and marketing. This means that the Government does not oversee or regulate what we can and cannot say in most cases but will have policies when talking about medical claims.

The Code in the UK is put together by the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP). This covers what is broadly known as a broadcast and non-broadcast set of rules for anyone engaged in advertising, promotion or direct response linked messages to both consumer and business audiences.

CAP works with the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), which is the public facing body that investigates advertising claims and complaints. As part of its extensive work in the creative industries, it also operates a number of specialist panels to examine specific cases arising from complaints.

BPMA interim CEO, Carey Trevill, was part of the CAP board representing the IPM for several years and is an expert panel member for CAP's Promotional Marketing & Direct Response Panel helping guide rulings. This panel is charged with reviewing the most serious or problematic cases and with guidance being issued weekly by CAP around coronavirus linked activity, getting the right advice to industry sectors is essential.

Do advertising rules really include our sector?

Yes, they do and for one simple reason – your promotions are all forms of advertising and for the person seeing them, they are promoting your products with key information that informs the purchase decision.

During the coronavirus pandemic, we have seen advertising messages from within the sector with products that claim to destroy, remove or protect from the virus – often linked to anti-bacterial properties in a product.

With a rise of claim-linked products, as an industry we must take care not to fall under both advertising and medicinal claims when

talking about products such as hand sanitisers and face masks in particular, or claims linked to PPE – personal protective equipment.

How to check if your product promotions are within the rules

If you promote a product that claims to prevent, treat or cure coronavirus, this is likely to be considered a medicinal or medical claim.

Words that indicate whether you need to check the rules when considering your messaging include cure, restore, prevent, avoid, fight, heal, and clinically proven, which may come under both CAP and MHRA rules.

Unlike CAP, MHRA, the Medicines & Healthcare Regulatory Agency, is a government agency involved in the regulation of all medical devices and products.

In addition, you must not play on the fears of your audience. This essentially covers the way a promotion is worded and should never exploit the fear of the audience reading the message. Messaging of this nature can often mislead customers into buying products based on the fear and distress the communication they are seeing gives rise to.

Products already under scrutiny

The ASA has already upheld complaints about hand sanitisers and face masks on the market as they played on the fears of their intended audience to sell their product, making claims about the product efficacy in preventing or protecting from COVID-19 capped with claims about how the virus was spreading. The companies involved were considered to have misled customers with irresponsible and scaremongering tactics to achieve sales. While this may not have been the intention of the ad, the perception of the advertising messages was assessed as breaching several areas of the Code. These included rule 1.3 social responsibility, 3.1 misleading advertising, and 4.1. harm and offence.

Examining these cases, aimed at a wide audience of consumers and businesses, shows the clear reasons why they were assessed as breaking the CAP Code and additional medicinal claims.

When it comes to products, claims to prevent, treat or cure the infection are likely to be considered 'medical or medicinal claims'. Such claims can only be made for products when they are licenced medicines or appropriately marked medical devices. If your product is neither, you cannot make these claims for it at all as this breaks the rules in Section 12.

Making claims in your messaging

So, what should you be considering when making sure your promotion or campaign is responsible?

Once you have created your promotion or campaign that might promote products linked to the current crisis, review the messages to see whether you are using words like

prevent, cure, and avoid, linked to products such as a hand sanitiser or face mask.

If you are, do you have the appropriate back up for any claims you are making especially if your product is unlicensed?

Take care that any clothing you promote that may have a PPE (personal protective equipment) claim or message is suitable for the product.


Approach CAP for advice on whether your messages breach any of the rules if you are concerned and review as necessary.

What happens if you receive a complaint?

The majority of complaints about advertising will result in an investigation by the ASA and they will ask for evidence to address the complaint made. It only takes one complaint to kick off an investigation and if upheld, these are published weekly on public forums such as Twitter and often make national news.

In the most severe cases particularly concerning unlicensed product claims, Trading Standards will become involved which can also include fines.

If in doubt, check

With several resources available at no cost and with fast advice, it is always recommended that you check first. 

CAP Copy Advice

An online, 24hr turnaround advice line that comes at no cost

asa.org.uk/advice-and-resources/bespoke-copy-advice
asa.org.uk/advice-online/anti-bacterial-products

MHRA

If you are unsure if the product you want to sell comes under the MHRA, the on line section has a number of references to check.

gov.uk/government/organisations/medicines-and-healthcare-products-regulatory-agency

ACT NOW TO SAVE YOUR BUSINESS

Direct Route has a raft of credit control advice for BPMA members in these challenging times

Keep calm and take action

In order to provide full support for distributors and suppliers of all sizes and standing in these challenging times, the BPMA Credit Management Package is waiving the joining fee of £200 + Vat to give members instant access to a range of zero cost debt recovery options.

Provider, Direct Route, remains fully operational, working from home and underpinned by cloud-based bespoke software. Its chasing methods and communications are industry proven and well established, generating invaluable cash daily for clients in the current climate.

There is a fine line between customer retention and the dilemma of bringing overdue monies in for your business survival. There will be some genuine customers that simply can't pay without being supported by agreed instalment plans or similar. Full support options are also available in this area, again through the BPMA Credit Management Package.

Call Sam Mellor or Mike Collins on 01274 223190 for an informal chat to discuss existing overdue customer difficulties and how they might help. There is no charge for any pre-legal support, guidance or advice.

Email memberbenefits@directroute.co.uk to activate your free BPMA debt collection benefit. Your invitation to join Direct Route will then be sent out and collection action will begin on your behalf immediately.

Existing direct route client members can send new debt instructions to: newdebts@directroute.co.uk

Taking action now might just save your business.

Distributors are the key

Distributors have a massive part to play in saving the promotional goods industry from further avoidable pain. If their overdue monies can be brought in quickly from end user customers, then they will be able to pay their own suppliers, keeping everybody that is important to the supply chain afloat. By acting responsibly and quickly, distributors can ease pressure and release all-important lifeblood cash back into the industry.

Distributors that procrastinate may very soon not have suppliers or customers. They will be remembered for their actions in the coming weeks and months one way or the other by their suppliers. Alternatively, if they do right by suppliers (even in instalment plans at both ends) then they will be remembered for the right reasons.

There will be consolidation and short-term hardship for many going forwards, so it is going to be extremely difficult for some distributors to stay focused and be firm with end users in order to make them pay to terms. This can be especially tricky if the

company's historic mindset has primarily been sales driven. There is a different skill set required to chase down payments.

Bringing in your cash now is all that ultimately matters however, and it has to be done for your business survival and the good of the industry as a whole. It is time to put your own future first and not pander to the whims of a faceless accounting department located within end users who are working to their own self-preservation agenda.

You might even find that the accounting department is almost equally disliked by the very people that you deal with daily, as they often perceive their own accounts department to be responsible for putting orders on stop and causing extra hassle and frustration.

Suppliers should share this message with all distributors you hold records for, whether they be BPMA members or otherwise. A full blown industry collective effort might just be the best chance the industry has right now.

Which is the most worrying dreaded C-word for businesses right now?

Is it COVID-19 or is it Cash? The answer is probably both.

These are clearly very concerning times for BPMA members concerned with their cashflow situation. Direct Route Collections has shared some key thoughts on how overburdened credit control and administrative personnel can handle the inevitable objections from customers and clients seeking to retain their cash:

1 Always remember that if you are chasing overdue invoices then the supply of your goods or services pre-dated the health crisis and so your monies should already have been paid. The current excuses within the economy are not actually that relevant right now (although they may become so to some extent in future months, especially for invoices falling due after mid-March 2020).

2 It is possible that many business owners will try to retain their own internal cash flows as a short-term safety mechanism. While this stance may not work with essential suppliers, in the promotional goods industry it is almost certainly going to be the non-essential suppliers to distributors that suffer most, alongside distributors at all levels that have provided items on credit to end users.

This will become more common as companies go into self-preservation mode.

As a non-essential provider in the chain you do not have to accept this in any way. You supplied on agreed credit terms and are fully entitled to be paid when invoices fall due on those terms. When chasing overdue monies don't be afraid to say so - overdue is the key point. A late paying customer will always be legally in the wrong, simply because they are overdue. No ifs. No buts.

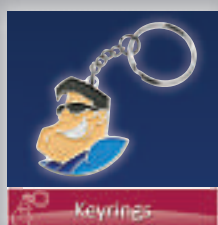
3 Know that support and help is readily at hand through your BPMA Credit Management Benefit Package to help you with your cash collections. Let's face it, cash-challenged companies generally just rob Peter to pay Paul, and the role of debt collection agencies is to make you Paul.

4 For suppliers and distributors that are not familiar with the process debt collection support is far more affordable than you think. In fact, with Direct Route Collections, for example, several zero cost debt collection options are instantly available, often costing you absolutely nothing to get your money in.

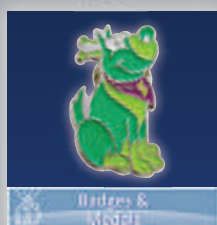
5 If you are speaking to a customer or business acquaintance that is also struggling to collect its monies, then why not point them in the direction of your debt collection company? If it assists your customer in getting its cash flow into line, then you should get paid quicker as well. Help to spread the word - in these difficult times why not send on something positive?



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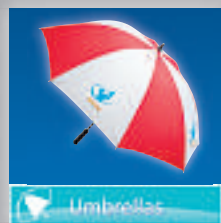
Ties & Scarves



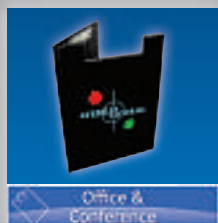
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SOCIAL NOW, SELL LATER

Social media channels are set to be the next ecommerce route to market. **Melissa Chevin** says it's time to get ready



The unstoppable ecommerce revolution continues to evolve year on year – and it's vital that businesses have an idea of the roadmap.

So, where does it go next? The answer appears to be social media. Regular YouTube users will probably have seen a few examples of the 'merch shelf' concept, where vloggers and musicians sell branded merchandise directly from the app.

Similarly, Instagram now offers content creators the ability to link stories to e-commerce transactions. We're already very familiar with the ads in our Facebook feeds and even the 'younger' members of the social media clan, such as TikTok and Snapchat, are exploiting this concept.

How big?

As we adjust to the 'new normal'

of self-isolation and working from home, many of us are finding ourselves using social media more than before. In fact, Facebook and Instagram have reported a 40% increase in usage due to COVID-19. With that sort of exposure, investing marketing spend in these platforms looks like a no-brainer.

Although some social selling tools are currently open only to well-established brands or content creators with large followings, their availability is likely to grow as social shopping becomes more widely used, and consumers become increasingly comfortable with shopping on their phones.

Adobe Analytics found that 35.6% of online sales last November were completed via smartphone, up from 28.8% the previous year. Only a small proportion (2.1% on Cyber Monday) are currently

delivered via social media, but the trend for growth is clear.

Make your play

So, what are the implications for the promo industry? Clearly, the personalisation aspect of many of these shopping experiences represents potentially rich pickings. The key to success, however, looks likely to be plugging into this market early and decisively.

If you want to be involved in social commerce as it grows, you must be active on social media now. You need to understand each platform and create content that respects its nuances. Thus, when these in-app selling tools become widely available, you'll be well-positioned to take advantage of the opportunity.

Most importantly, remember the golden rule of social media – you

can't always be selling, no matter how easy the platform makes it.

Melissa Chevin is BPMA board director and marketing consultant with GF Consulting - mchevin@gf-consult.co.uk



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IT'S TIME TO BUILD

British manufacturers' response to the current situation is proof that they're fit for the bounce back, says **Mark Alderson**

This unprecedented period in all of our lives has highlighted the importance of UK manufacturing, not only to the economic prosperity of our country but also to the societal significance of the sector. The Prime Minister's recent call on UK manufacturers to help step up production of vital medical equipment such as ventilators illustrates this. Responding to COVID-19 and reducing its spread requires a national effort, and UK manufacturers are rising to the task in ways that would not previously have been thought feasible.

Firms have been asked to help by offering skills and expertise, as well as manufacturing essential items. The government's call to adapt production lines has also highlighted the significance of smart manufacturing facilities which are enabling companies to switch production lines to the manufacture of key components. The promotional industry has demonstrated great adaptability with manufacturers changing production at unprecedented speed, to produce a range of products including hand sanitisers, PPE, alcohol gels,

facemasks, ventilator parts, signage for new hospitals, staff name badges and lanyards, as well as patient hydration systems.

The virus will have enormous ramifications, both short and long term, but the overriding message for industry as we emerge from these most troubling times is that UK manufacturing has a significant role to play. No one can predict the future but the government must surely now appreciate the importance of manufacturing to the fabric of British society, which goes a lot deeper than just economics.

First and foremost, we can all only hope that the human tragedy is limited as much as possible, but post-COVID-19 our world will inevitably be different. Let's also hope that the UK's manufacturing sector's response to this crisis allows it to be seen from a different perspective. The role it is about to play over the coming weeks and months should give us all time to reflect on why we are a proud manufacturing nation.

**Mark Alderson is chairman
of the Briman Group** 

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- ▶ Compliments company training and development

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www.education.bpma.co.uk



NOW IS THE TIME TO EMBRACE *online learning*



2 The CPM Qualification, (Certified in Promotional Merchandise) is aimed at individuals who have 3-5 years' industry specific experience.

3 The MPM Qualification, (Master in Promotional Merchandise) is aimed at individuals who have 5 years or more industry specific experience. Some of our MPM learners are reaching the end of the qualification by working on a written dissertation.

How it works

Each learner will be expected to study a series of mandatory content; the course then becomes tailored to each individual. Credits are obtained by studying a series of mandatory and elective video content, which is enhanced by PDF material, and the learner must gain 80% in the subject related quiz to be awarded credits.

Credits can be accrued by attending BPMA led seminars, webinars and events, organised factory visits and the BPMA Education Day. Once the credit goal has been achieved, they are eligible to sit the exams.

Seminars, events and factory visits involving face to face contact will be resumed once it is safe to do so as advised by Government. We are working to provide online versions where appropriate.

What content will they study?

The education programme offers 14 subject categories. Within each subject category you can expect to find anything from 3-12 related videos varying from 5-35 minutes. There are more than 60 videos to study from, offering more than 20 hours of online video content.

A TPM qualification can be gained for £175+VAT and can be completed within two months with just 1-2 hours study a week. The course does involve an element of self-discipline but the BPMA will be in contact to help learners stay motivated.

The exam

Each level has its own exam. Timed multiple choice question exams are invigilated by the BPMA over Skype at a time to suit the learner. There are resit opportunities. CPM and MPM levels will also have a written exam to take under the same strict exam conditions. The BPMA team will support the learners through this and ensure they are fully prepared for the exam.

To find out more about the TPM course on the BPMA education programme, please visit education.bpma.co.uk. If you would like further information emailed to you or would like to discuss in detail please contact Daniela Arena on 01372 371 182 or by email: Daniela@bpma.co.uk

Staff may have been furloughed, but training and career development are being encouraged, says **Daniela Arena**

During these unprecedented times, online training is firmly on everyone's agenda for 2020. In recent weeks, the BPMA has seen a rise in the number of learners actively logging in to begin or continue their online studying on the TPM and CPM course.

Can I train on furlough?

With the introduction of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, many businesses have placed staff on furlough. During this temporary scheme, furloughed staff cannot work for or on behalf of their employer, but will receive 80% of their usual monthly wage costs, up to £2,500 a month. The government has stated: "furloughed employees can engage in training, as long as in undertaking the training the employee does not provide services to, or generate revenue for, or on behalf of their organisation. Furloughed employees should be encouraged to undertake training."

Further rules state that if training has been requested by the employer the employee training will need to be paid. Therefore, it is important that as employees you continue your existing studies or sign up direct to the TPM or CPM course.

During this pandemic, many of us are now working from home and have time to

do tasks that were on the backburner. Training and professional development is firmly on the agenda for the 130 learners on the TPM or CPM course. Staff have been in contact and booked in for their exams, which are taken online over Skype, and they are now busy studying and prepping for exams. In fact, 67% of exams since June 2019 have been taken since January 2020 to date.

If you have invested in staff to undertake the education programme, now is the time to get them studying on the TPM course. It is also the right time for you or your staff to consider training.

About the BPMA education programme.

Our education programme is an online continuous professional development training tool with optional introductory seminars and factory visits. It is a training programme that can enhance and support a company's existing training and development programme or can be used as a standalone training tool.

Three courses are offered

1 The TPM Qualification (Trained in Promotional Merchandise) is aimed at individuals who have up to three years' industry specific experience. 85% of our learners start at this level and work their way up.

EDUCATION SUCCESS

The start of the year has seen many learners investing in their career development

Learners on the BPMA Education Programme have kept the executive team busy since the start of 2020, with a record number of exams. A third of exams were taken between January-March with great success.


"Since January, we have 24 exam successes to share with you. To study whilst working and in particular to study in what have been challenging, worrying and unprecedented times is a massive achievement and an achievement we should all acknowledge and be proud of," said BPMA's Daniela Arena.

Tallulah Atkin from Cyan Group, who passed her TPM exam in March, said: "Being new to the industry it has massively helped my confidence with client and supplier relationships. It has enabled me to recommend best branding methods to clients and suggest new and innovative options, thus helping the company I work for feel confident that I understand the foundations of the industry."

BPMA distributor member Pink Sheep enrolled many of its sales team to the TPM course. "Even though we have a highly skilled team with many years of experience, we wanted to get the team all fully BPMA trained and to be highly knowledgeable when dealing with clients," said Billy Gubby, operations manager. "I'm so proud of my team's success, I knew they would all smash it. It's really great to see the team putting their knowledge into practice on a daily basis."

Katie Murrell, account manager at PinkSheep, recommends the TPM course. "My knowledge of the industry, products and print processes has definitely increased which is helping me provide a better service to my customers. The videos were very informative and the quizzes were easy to manage and fun to complete which was a great tool for learning."

Jessica Steele from distributor member Thesourcer.com, said: "Being new to promotional merchandise, the course has really helped me to gain knowledge around the processes and industry. I have really enjoyed learning in this course, the collateral was informative and easy to understand and I feel more confident when discussing projects with customers."

For more information about the course, for study tips or to book your exam, email daniela@bpma.co.uk. 

WELL DONE

The BPMA would like to congratulate the following people for passing their TPM exams

Name	Company	Course	Date of Exam
Rebecca Wheeler	GeigerBTC	TPM	03/01/2020
Lorna Gross	Mania Merchandise	TPM	08/01/2020
Lily Fawcsett	GeigerBTC	TPM	13/01/2020
Millie Beswick	GeigerBTC	TPM	15/01/2020
Olivia Steven	GeigerBTC	TPM	15/01/2020
Freddie Firth	Outstanding Branding	TPM	20/01/2020
Holly Knowlden	Outstanding Branding	TPM	20/01/2020
Jordan MacAskill	Outstanding Branding	TPM	20/01/2020
Kelly Rutherford	Outstanding Branding	TPM	20/01/2020
Tom Taylor	Outstanding Branding	TPM	20/01/2020
Laura Page	Total Merchandise	TPM	03/02/2020
Gaynor Eason	Macdonald Fyne	TPM	07/02/2020
Kathleen Faulkner	Willsmer Wagg	TPM	19/02/2020
Jordan Scott	Macdonald and Fyne	TPM	25/02/2020
Zoe Grant	Pinksheep	TPM	25/02/2020
Elliot Stokes	Innovation 1st	TPM	28/02/2020
Dani Newman	Pinksheep	TPM	16/03/2020
Katie Murrell	Pinksheep	TPM	16/03/2020
Marie Officer	Pinksheep	TPM	23/03/2020
Sarah Hudson	GeigerBTC	TPM	24/03/2020
Emma Cornelius	Fluid Branding	TPM	27/03/2020
Tallulah Atkin	Cyan Group	TPM	30/03/2020
Domonique Curaba	Fluid Branding	TPM	03/04/2020
Jessica Steele	thesourcer.com	TPM	03/04/2020

A LEARNING JOURNEY

Beth Coleman recently achieved MPM accreditation after more than two years of study. She is the second person in the industry to achieve MPM status

Why did you sign up to MPM?

I have worked in the promotional merchandise industry for 20 years. After completing my BPMA Academy course, I was keen to continue expanding my knowledge and as this accreditation allowed me to move straight to the MPM level, it was an obvious choice.

How long did it take you study?

I have been working towards my MPM for over two years. It takes a lot of effort and time to work up to the amount of points needed and the research required for the written element can be time consuming. I tried to make sure I did at least an hour a week, but when it came to the written piece, you just have to take half a day and get writing.

What subjects interested you the most?

I enjoyed the marketing and the technology aspects as I was learning lots of new things and I knew they would be useful in future. I made a point of including compliance – although it can be ‘information overload’, it is going to be so valuable to be moving forward in this industry.

What knowledge from the education programme have you applied to your role?

A lot of the knowledge gained from the data protection section with the introduction of GDPR, as well as many of the outcomes of my written assessment topic on UK-made merchandise. This has become so much more relevant in current times.



Beth Coleman
is business development manager at Allwag Promotions

Tell us about your written assessment?

My written assessment was focussed on UK made merchandise, primarily if and how it's used and viewed in the UK education sector, focussing on UK universities. I surveyed UK manufacturers, product importers, distributors, universities and their students to identify opinions, trends and knowledge across this area. It showed, at that time, how little purchasers consider the country of origin of product they buy, but also how this would evolve alongside sustainable themes to become a considered factor in the future.

Sustainability is such a wide topic and I needed to bring one area into focus and decided upon UK-made merchandise, as I haven't been hearing much about this area. So, I combined the two and wanted to understand the perception of UK-made products within UK universities.

What support did you get for the written element?

The BPMA was very supportive when deciding on and writing my written assessment. They were available to discuss ideas, help you look at the pros and cons and also proof read drafts with helpful feedback. The Association values industry knowledge and really contributes to make your study effective and relevant to your daily work.

What did you learn about the industry or yourself during study?

I learnt that the BPMA has a vital role to play in raising awareness in the industry and encouraging all parties to communicate better. From suppliers telling distributors what they can offer, to clients communicating more information to recipients about the products they are giving to them, we all need to do better to improve our businesses, to help the environment and communicate this more widely.

Did you enjoy the course?

Yes, very much. It's so important in my role as business development manager to keep learning and understand the very latest technology, product and branding advancements, legislation and trends in our marketplace and this course helped me to do this. I am very much hoping to continue refreshing my knowledge at annual BPMA education days and exhibition seminars in the future.

Would you recommend the education programme for industry peers?

Absolutely! It's a great experience, a personal challenge and you get to meet some really interesting and creative people. It has brought great benefits to my job role and I hope to my employer, who has been a fabulous support.

What advice can you give the current MPM learners?

Choose subjects that interest you and are relevant to your job role. This will keep you motivated and allow you to see quickly the benefits this course can bring. I would also recommend you discuss the course, and especially your written assessment, with your friends and family outside the industry, as they often have a different viewpoint.

How did you feel when receiving the results?

I was over the moon! I had experienced a lot of issues, delays and setbacks during my study period and so to achieve success has been wonderful. I am so pleased to have achieved this accreditation. I'd like to thank everyone who supported me, responded to my surveys and encouraged me. 🙌



TECHNOLOGY BRINGS OUT OUR HUMAN SIDE IN A CRISIS

With face-to-face interactions replaced by electronic means at this time, will there be a lasting effect, asks **Matt Pluckrose**



One of the most frequent complaints I have heard from clients and other suppliers over the last few years is that nobody wants to meet up any more to discuss their promotional requirements.

The switch by many to letting technology take over the communication, sourcing, order placement and even feedback on service has caused many to question their ways of doing business. It now seems amazing that the same technology is currently bringing together many people when thrown into the current nightmare pandemic scenario.

Suddenly, when faced with weeks of 'lockdown' we are all becoming familiar and choosing to communicate via software such as Zoom, Google Hangouts, Microsoft Teams, and good old Skype. For many, such platforms were not heard of before mid-March, with people choosing to

use the impersonal email approach. We are now seeing all kinds of video events popping up. Virtual coffee breaks and tea parties during the day; after work there are early evening 'beer chats'; sales catch up calls; training and product seminars, and people just staying connected and chatting as a sales team, whole company or with old friends and clients.

Human nature is such that for many, staying in touch in this current crisis does not mean: "Can I sell you or show you something?" It now means: "How are you? How are you coping? Is there anything I can do to help?"

The amazing thing is such sentiments are also now delivered face-to-face over video software using laptops, phones and tablets. It seems technology is now keeping us communicating as people and some of the previous anonymity is disappearing as we change the way we

approach our business relationships.

So, what about after lockdown is over, the virus is defeated and life starts to return to normal? My feeling is the adoption of video over face-to-face, and in person meetings, will remain popular, saving time, money, pollution, and work stress.

Will home become the new office for some? What about our industry - will product demos be done by video and exhibitions be done virtually? Perhaps this is where virtual reality and augmented reality will finally catch on and become the new norm in terms of information collation and using this to make marketing buying decisions.

The nature of technology will continue to change, and how we use it won't quite be the same again post COVID 19.

Matt Pluckrose is managing director of technology specialist Desktop Ideas PIA

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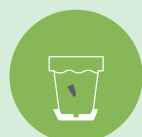


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2. Plant the cap and seed capsule in the soil.



3. Water often in saucer to keep moist.



4. Place pot in natural light but avoid direct sunlight. A temperature of 20°C/68°F is ideal.



5. Within 1-4 weeks, fresh plants will sprout.

Eco Friendly Paper Sleeves



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Available

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