

Creativity loves a tight brief - how businesses are using trends to adjust their strategies to fit the new post-normal

 By [Bronwyn Williams](#)

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Creativity loves a tight brief - in times of crises we can choose to see our new tighter creative brief (that is social, economic and regulatory constraints) as a source of inspiration rather than confinement.



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To that end, here are a few qualitative trends describing how businesses are adapting to the new post-normal environment 2020 has thrown our way.

From pivots to pirouettes

Pivoting (that is leveraging your business strength into a new opportunity) is no longer enough - businesses must be prepared to pirouette - that is adapt to a constant dance of change to a constantly changing environment. If Catholic priests can adapt to offer socially-distant drive-through confession booths and water-pistol baptisms - and empty office parking lots can convert themselves into outdoor rave parties - so can you. Identify your individual and business core strength and then explore how you can leverage that strength into new business opportunities up, down and across your existing supply chain. Think vertical as well as horizontal supply chain integration.

Business empathy

Kind capitalism involves businesses engaging in acts of (non-commercial) kindness, thereby investing in future customer goodwill. In tough times, a little empathy goes a long way, swimwear brands are turning their customer care lines into free tele-counselling services, and co-working spaces are setting up online mental, physical and financial wellness support groups to help remote freelancers survive uncertainty. Think about how you can invest in giving a little kindness to your community - remember the Internet never forgets how brands behave in difficult times, for better or for worse. Consider, how can you add value to your community beyond mere transactional service?

Local first

Globalised supply chains, while more efficient in an economic sense are more vulnerable in crisis. In Africa, we make

things we don't consume and consume things we don't make. This needs to change. We need to make sure we are building robust local businesses and keeping more value in the country and on the continent, rather than exporting value and importing debt. Use the current global trade pause to invest in building these new local networks.

... But think international - Global lockdown means being in South Africa is an advantage rather than a disadvantage. Take advantage of local skills and our weaker exchange rates to expose your business to a (literally) captive global audience.

Build something

As important as the virtual economy is, what the world really needs is builders and makers. We still live in the real world, and there would be no digital economy without the real world supporting it. We know this. We know what essential goods and services are, and they tend to be of the tangible variety. Yes, it is harder to build something in the real world than it is to financialise something, but it is also more rewarding (and essential) in the long run.

Solve a problem

Where there are problems, there are opportunities. Every challenge is an opportunity to solve and add value in the process. (And goodness knows there are enough problems right now.), Every problem reveals its solution if we manage to look at it the right way.... So change your perspective and view your new creative brief as a design challenge rather than as a lost opportunity.

ABOUT BRONWYN WILLIAMS

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