

Ketchum London COVID-19 media intelligence report – Edition 10

Open for business

Welcome to the tenth edition of Ketchum London's COVID-19 media intelligence report. With the mercury hitting 28°C in parts of the UK this week, the nation's resolve has been tested. Thousands flocked to UK coastlines to soak up the sun and cars were photographed queuing round the block for Whoppers and Big Macs. This week, we take a closer look at 'reopening'. It's clear that businesses are beginning to consider their reopening plans with gusto, but is this same optimism and energy to reopen matched with consumer desire to actually visit? Let's take a look at some of the innovations being tried and tested and get a read on how consumers are really feeling about the reopening of retail.



The media is awash with stories about businesses (mainly in the food sector) carefully reopening in countries like Italy and China as these nations face into a brave new world. For most business owners however, the new rules remain too difficult to operate under. If footfall is impacted and social distancing exists, it would be more expensive to reopen than to stay closed. The Italian retailers' association Confcommercio estimated that about 30 per cent of restaurants and cafes would have to remain shut. This was echoed in the UK with the British Independent Retailers Association reporting that 20 per cent of British retailers did not intend to open after lockdown.

An article in the [Financial Times](#) last week quoted Adam Galinsky, a business professor at Columbia University as saying “the pandemic plus the economic downturn is an incredibly incendiary combination and a double blow to consumer confidence.” Yes, consumers will be itching to get back to ‘normal life’ and will want to experience things physically again, even if the polls don’t quite say that. It is surely our primal human instinct to want, and need, to socialise with others again. However, seeing floor decals advising a 2m distance, observing people with masks and transacting through so-called ‘sneeze screens’ will surely serve as subliminal reminders that this is far from ‘normal’ and that risks are all around us.

A report by [Ipsos Mori](#) revealed that more than 40% of UK citizens would still be reluctant to go shopping even if the government ordered the lifting of the imposed restrictions. This is remarkable and should serve as a warning to businesses that planning for reopening is not just about screens and stickers. Consumer confidence is at an all-time low and we’re on

the brink of a global recession. Delivering reassurance to consumers to come back to shop and spend their money is therefore vital. Less use of “intimate, cosy and atmospheric” in sales patter and more use of “bright, clean and spacious.” Communications will count, and be scrutinised, more than ever before. Getting it wrong could be devastating.

But enough of the doom and gloom. We’re already seeing huge innovation being applied to retail and hospitality settings – both physically in terms of in-store safety measures, and digitally in terms of how brands have retained connections with consumers. Ultimately, this may force businesses to find new ways to be more creative, adopt a ‘less is more’ approach and completely reset the mood of Britain PLC. It will take time. No one has all the answers. But this is the nation’s biggest ever test and learn in retail, business and hospitality; that much we’re sure about.

So, what are the four strategic client takeaways for this week?

- DEFINE YOUR HEALTH STRATEGY: Brands that have a public facing “health strategy” will likely have a strategic differentiator for the foreseeable future, we believe. Even if that business is not in the health sector, it may well be critical to business survival, much in the same way brands have adopted sustainability practices and built these into the fabric of their business. Consider what this is and how you communicate it effectively. Brands should also do scenario planning around potential pitfalls. Don’t expect footfall to magically resume to pre COVID-19 levels.
- TAKE THE TEMPERATURE OF YOUR PEOPLE: Not literally...although that may not be a bad piece of advice. Ensure there is an active feedback loop in place to gauge how your store staff, waiting staff, managers and customers are feeling post reopening. Don’t assume doors will open and everything will be business as usual. Be prepared to reinvent, reengage and re-establish your retail operations, POS / technology solutions and customer comms at any point. Being able to pivot fast based on real-time feedback will be critical.
- TEST AND TRIAL: This a brave new world of retail and hospitality we are about to enter, as business owners and consumers. Don’t be afraid to test things out; consumers will be sympathetic to that. Brands like McDonald’s are carrying out trials, behind closed doors, of socially distant working in order to get some sites open again. Trial limited menus, new store layouts and shop fronts. Be sure to track reactions to these plans to ascertain what to do next.



- HAVE A PERSONALITY: It’s easy to let health and safety regulations get the better of your comms when it comes to reopening but don’t be a corporate robot. Be true to your brand personality and build that reassurance with your customers in an authentic and emotional way. KFC has done this to finger lickin’ perfection with their ‘we’ll take over from here’ adverts doing the rounds on TV and on social channels. Consumers may almost be blasé to continuous, repetitive health advice so try to find ways to be memorable.

Stats to consider as you plan re-opening

- Close to 90% of the UK consumers say they are worried about COVID-19 [Source: [GlobalWebIndex](#)].
- Concern for personal health is far greater than for finances – 70% versus 45% [Source: [GlobalWebIndex](#)].
- As many as one in five shops may never return to the high street after the lockdown is lifted [Source: [BIRA](#)].
- 20 per cent of retailers surveyed claimed they do not intend to reopen after the lockdown [Source: [BIRA](#)].
- More than a third of consumers have stopped visiting shops except for essential items [Source: [Quidini](#)].
- The number of Britons visiting shops collapsed in April by 84.7% year-on-year [Source: [BRC](#)].

How retailers and restaurants are attempting to reopen

RETAIL



- In the US, [Sephora](#) will reopen its stores in phases, starting with more than 70 locations on May 22. They have established 48 safety procedures and extensive employee training.
- [Waterstones](#) is preparing to put books into quarantine after they have been handled by browsing shoppers as part of plans to reopen its stores when allowed. The bookseller intends to ask shoppers to set aside any book they touch on trolleys which will be wheeled away into storage for at least 72 hours before being put back on shelves in an effort to protect customers from the spread of COVID-19.
- [Suitsupply](#) stores in the US are planning to cleverly use plexiglass screens with strategically-placed openings that allow sales staff to make adjustments to suits in a safe way (image above).

SUPERMARKETS

- Sainsbury's CEO has warned that social distancing restrictions, like queues to get into supermarkets, could be in place until September.
- [Aldi](#) is joining forces with Deliveroo in the UK to trial a grocery home delivery service. The trial will start at an Aldi store in Nottingham and will subsequently be extended to seven more stores across the East Midlands in June.

LEISURE

- Plastic screens have been set up in [gyms in Hong Kong](#) to allow social distancing for people using treadmills.

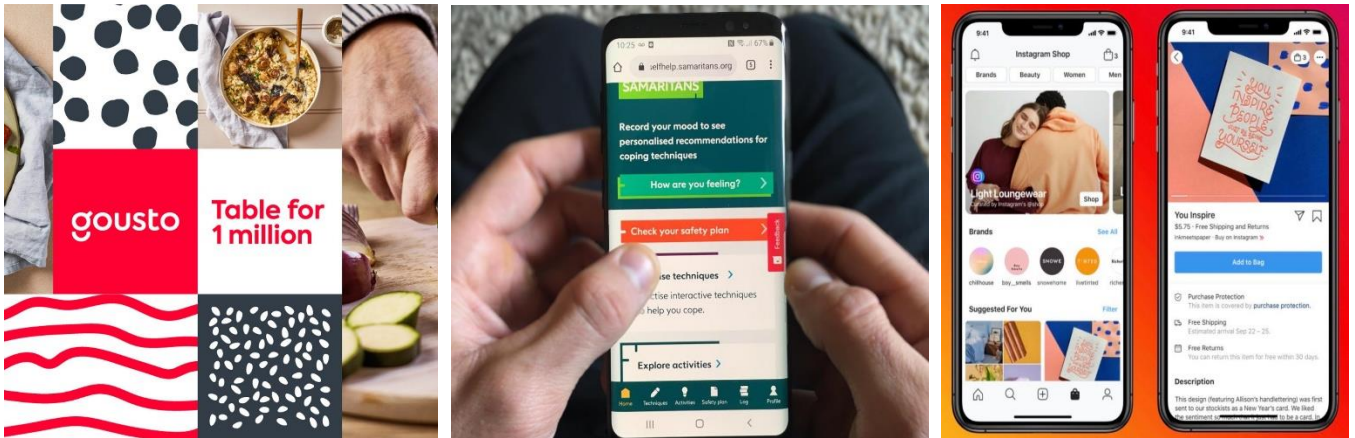
TRAVEL

- The Drum reported that [Southwest Airlines](#) chief executive Gary Kelly declared that it was now safe to fly and he would be taking steps to reopen bookings, he was seen to be "out of step with the public mood," "putting his firm's financial interests ahead of public. A survey showed 37% of respondents now view the brand negatively.
- BBC News reported that [EasyJet](#) has said it will resume some flights on 15 June, with all passengers and cabin crew told to wear face masks to protect against COVID-19.



- [McDonald's](#) is carrying out trials, behind closed doors, of socially distant working in order to get some sites open again. Tests will include exploring social distancing measures for staff, PPE options and opening in a limited capacity. The picture above shows how a [Dutch McDonald's](#) has trialled a social distancing restaurant which would allow them to operate at 66% of their usual capacity.
- [Burger King](#) drive throughs have reopened to immense success. Staff are wearing PPE uniform and there is a limited menu on offer. The company hopes to reopen a chain in every city by May 31.
- [Pizza Express](#) has confirmed it will reopen thirteen of its London restaurants for delivery only in the next 10 days as it trials new working measures before a nationwide return. This has been branded as a 'test and learn' programme.
- [Costa](#) has reopened 46 more branches, following a trial across the UK earlier this month. Customers will be queueing two meters apart and just a handful allowed in each branch at a time.
- The FT reports that [Michelin-starred chef Jason Atherton](#), who runs eight restaurants plans to digitise the business's 150-page hardcover wine list and have chip-and-pin card machines brought to tables on trays with disinfectant wipes.
- A [Swedish hotel](#) is transforming rooms into a restaurant by offering private dining experiences to make guests feel safe. The decision was made as usually during this time of year there is a surge in popularity at the hotel.
- A [restaurant in Houston](#) in the US now offers outdoor seating only. Has bottles of hand sanitiser and silverware vacuum-sealed in plastic at each table and diners wait in their cars until their tables are ready. They also have waiting staff wearing masks and gloves to take orders and starters and main courses all at once.
- [Greggs](#) announced it was reversing its decision to reopen, citing the risk of excessive customer turnout. This move showed their indecisiveness and lack of full consideration for the impact on staff and customers.
- A [pub in the UK](#) has started prototyping how pubs might reopen. The image below shows how screens and booths may be used to section off punters (image below).

Brands taking action



ENTERTAINMENT

- [Gousto](#), the recipe box delivery brand, is inviting consumers to a virtual dinner party with Nick Grimshaw as host and Paloma Faith, Katherine Ryan and David Haye as a few attending.
- BBC Radio 1's big weekend is to take place this weekend, virtually, originally planned to take place in Dundee. [Radio Today](#) details the artists as part of the virtual line up.
- [Emmerdale](#) announced return to filming, with special features. Six episodes will be available to view in June.
- This year's [summer cinema box office rests on a handful of films](#). *Unhinged*, a road-rage thriller starring Russell Crowe, could be the first new film in cinemas after they open.

FOOD

- [Aldi](#) expands Deliveroo deal as the demand for online shopping increases.
- [Majestic and Deliveroo](#) expand partnership to offer across 80 UK sites across the UK. Encouraging the aspect of staying at home.
- [UK dairy](#) has partnered with Mind as part of a £1m campaign to promote the 'Milk Your Moments' campaign. The campaign aims to celebrate and inspire small moments of connection that are bringing people together whilst being apart.

FITNESS, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- [The Prudential RideLondon 2020](#) cycling festival, due to take place on 15-16 August, has been cancelled due to COVID-19.
- [Formula One](#) has mapped out a blueprint for an eight-race, behind-closed-doors European leg to kick off the season. However, if there is a second peak of the virus it is expected to be cancelled and no European season would happen this year.
- [Samaritans](#) has launched a new self-help app for people struggling with their emotional wellbeing during lockdown. The new app offers practical advice on how to cope and stay safe and includes a mood tracker to allow people to record how they are feeling.

GAMING

- Dele Alli has posted on his Instagram that he will take part in a \$10m COVID-19 charity Fortnite tournament.

- [Lego](#) extends the Power-Up Packs to Nintendo Mario sets.

TECHNOLOGY

- [Apple and Google](#) have launched their contact-tracing system on smartphones around the world, which gives public health agencies the option to build apps based on the technology.
- [Facebook](#) will launch its Shops service on the platform that allows businesses to display and sell products. CEO Mark Zuckerberg hopes it will create easier access for small businesses to sell online.
- Analytics from AppBrain has found that [Google Meet](#) has seen a surge in downloads after Google started offering free access to its video call service following the COVID-19 outbreak and an increase in remote working.
- Videoconferencing service [Zoom](#) has suspended individual users from signing up in China and will only allow companies with proof of business registration and corporate banking accounts to purchase its service.

HOW BRANDS ARE REASSURING CUSTOMERS, STAFF & WAREHOUSE OPERATIVES

Striking the right tone in communications to reassure people about your health and safety measures is paramount right now. We're seeing many brands beginning to emerge with content marketing plans designed to build confidence with their customer based. [Edited.com](#) featured a range of examples of brand comms to show the many ways companies are trying to get their message across.

NET-A-PORTER

WHAT'S NEW DESIGNERS CLOTHING BAGS SHOES ACCESSORIES BEAUTY

Dear Alice,

We are pleased to be in touch with some good news: we are open again for business, and you can resume shopping NET-A-PORTER as usual.

We are working closely with our delivery partners to ensure orders reach you as soon as possible, but please bear with us if deliveries take slightly longer than usual.

NET-A-PORTER customers are at the heart of what we do and every step we take. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for your patience and continued support as we open gradually and carefully.

If you have any questions, you can check our FAQs [here](#) or reach out to our dedicated Customer Care team at customercare@net-a-porter.com

Update from our distribution centers

As you may be aware, in March we made the decision to voluntarily and temporarily close our distribution centers. This was a tough choice for our teams, but we're proud of the action we took to safeguard the health and wellbeing of our colleagues, customers and the wider community.


Over the past few weeks, we've been working hard to build on the many existing safety measures we have in place at our sites and have enhanced them even further to protect our teams, going above and beyond government guidelines to maximize protection. You can read more about these [here](#).

In agreement with our colleagues and in line with government guidelines, we have welcomed back a reduced number of staff to our distribution center, and we continue to keep the situation under close and constant review.

We hope you are continuing to stay safe and we look forward to you visiting us again soon.

Best wishes,
NET-A-PORTER

THERMAL SCANNING AT ALL OUR WAREHOUSE SITES



next

WHAT WE'RE DOING TO KEEP OUR COMMUNITY SAFE...

IN-STORE

- Limited number of people allowed in our stores at a time
- Floor stickers to ensure social distancing
- Hygiene and safety guidelines for our store staff
- Face masks and visors will be worn by all store staff
- Hand sanitisers placed all over the store for your use
- Updated safety signage
- Scan to Pay - Quick, safe and contactless payment method on the MRP app
- Customers to adhere to government regulations
- We'll be opening our stores gradually from 1 May.

ONLINE


Deliveries are now available!

We've introduced changes to our Order Processing. Click + Collect from our stores and Door-to-door contactless delivery in order to keep our staff and community safe.

This includes continuous cleaning and upgraded hygiene and safety guidelines at our warehouse.

together we do good.

As a business, we are committed to a country-wide solution to the spread of COVID-19. Mr Price Group have donated to the solidarity fund and will continue to help as much as we can towards the relief efforts.




MORE TIME TO RETURN, LESS TIME TO WORRY.

We've extended our returns policy to 60 days for all purchases and you can return your online purchase by post **FREE** of charge.



CURBSIDE CONTACTLESS PICKUP



Free. Fast. Easy as 1-2-3!


Get it Fast with Curbside Contactless Pickup, available seven days a week. Check your local store for hours.

LEARN MORE

Subject to product availability. Some exceptions apply.

- 1 Buy online and select Curbside Contactless Pickup.
- 2 Wait for email or text confirming order is ready.
- 3 Check in at arrival and stay in your vehicle.

A MESSAGE ON CLEANING

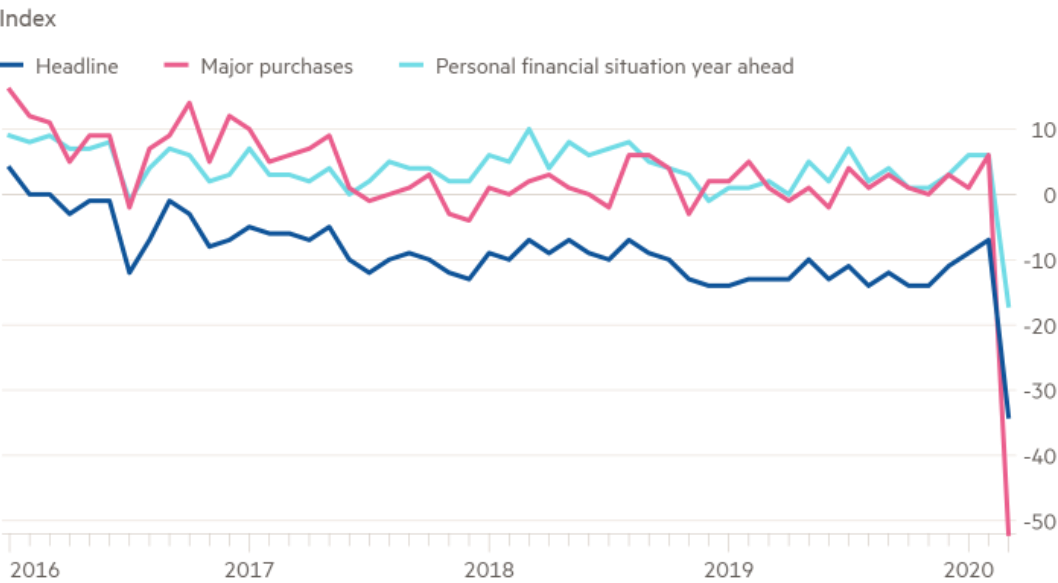


We've got you covered. All items are thoroughly sanitized according to CDC guidelines, then reviewed by our team of inspectors to ensure they arrive in pristine condition.

NEW ARRIVALS

EXPRESS NEXT CREDIT CARD

UK consumer confidence has plummeted



March data refers to second half

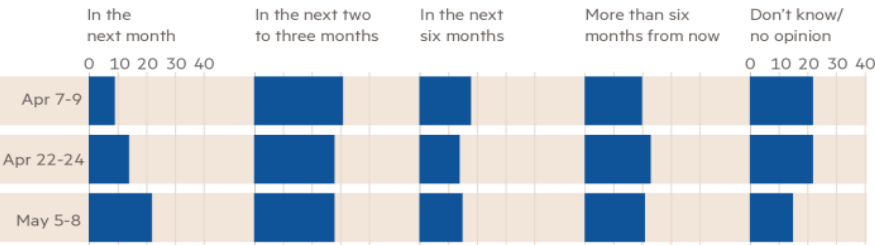
Source: GfK

© FT

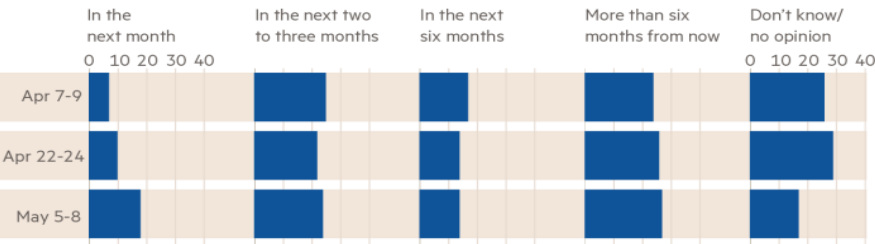
Uncertainty about resuming activities is declining

Based on what you know about Covid-19, when would you feel comfortable going to ...
(% of responses)

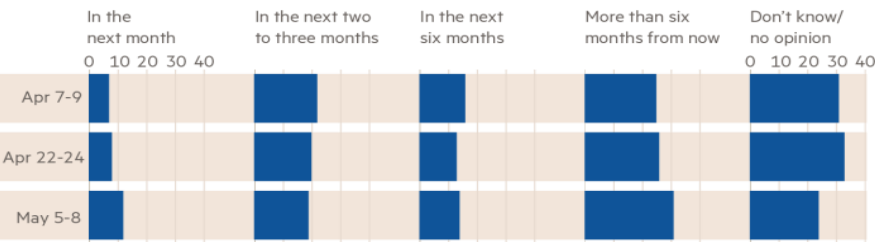
Eat at a restaurant



A shopping mall



The movies



Polls conducted among 2,200 adults each; error margin +/- 2%
Source: Morning Consult
© FT

Media insights on key verticals

BROADCAST

- A number of [BBC News](#) presenters of South Asian origin have united in a campaign to promote work by the BBC Asian Network, which shares vital COVID-19 information in language for the British Asian community.
- The [BBC has launched a new experimental feature](#) which will allow small groups of friends and family to watch TV together during lockdown. The BBC Together tool will be available via the corporation's Taster website and will enable a host to generate a link to a programme that can be shared with others.
- [ITV executives](#) are said to be considering options for this year's series of I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out of Here to go ahead, including flying contestants out two weeks early to quarantine before entering the Australian jungle.

CONSUMER LIFESTYLE

- [Vanity Fair's](#) June issue cover, featuring Janelle Monae, was shot via videoconferencing platform Zoom. It is one of the last examples of creative teams finding new ways to work around lockdown measures.
- The Metro looks at the question that is all on our mind ["When will gyms reopen in the UK?"](#), the articles answer is as close as July
- [The Sun](#) reports the 'new normal' gyms that are opening in Hong Kong. The article outlines how UK gyms might take similar actions when UK gyms start to reopen.
- [The Daily Mail](#) had outlined how gyms in Australia could be open as soon as June 8th.

TRAVEL

Insights from 'The New Normal? Country Branding at the time of COVID-19... and after' Webinar

Speakers:

- Samantha Adams -VP, Advertising Sales, Western Europe, BBC Global News
- Alex Greenwood – Senior Content Strategist, BBC StoryWorks
- Alessio Nesi -Associate Director, BBC StoryWorks

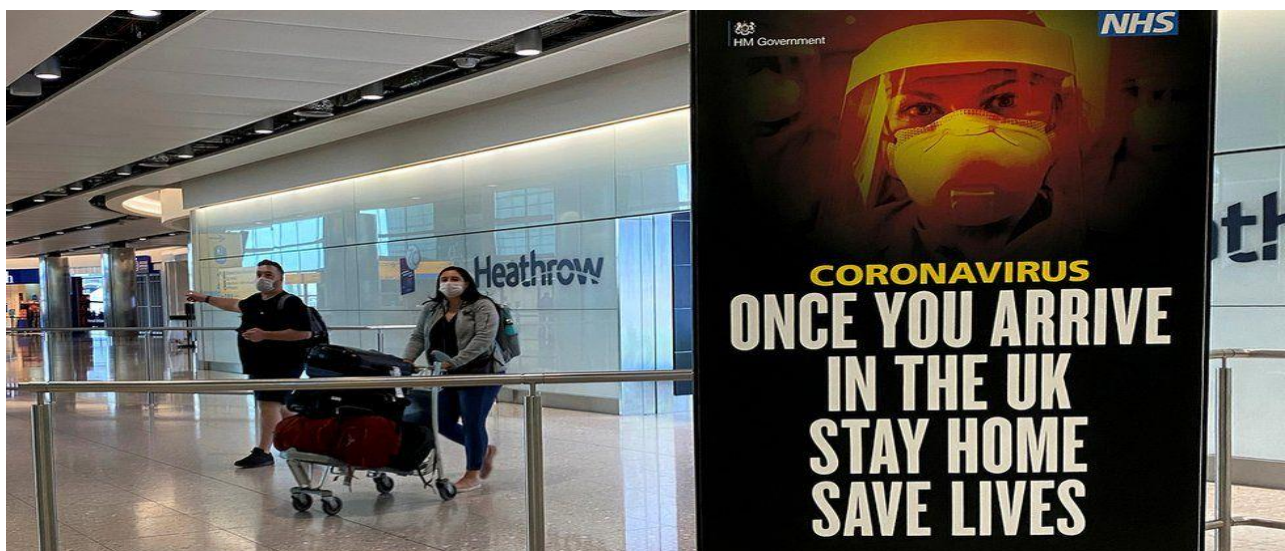
Key take outs:

- COVID-19 has had an impact on consumer choices. Due to the lack of TV advertising, consumers are spending more time hand-picking their next destinations by looking online, and using this time in lock-down to research and re-think their values on how they interact with the world.
- BBC has conducted research around COVID-19 and found that 1 out of 2 frequent travellers are looking to travel/get on a flight as soon as the market opens up again.
- It is predicted that sustainable travel will see a spike due to consumers having more times to learn/think about ways to live more sustainably during this period.
- The BBC believe it is important for brands to communicate sustained messaging through this time (escapism phase) to capture consumers imaginations and to maintain brand health.

- When it comes to international travel, it is predicted that travellers will be more selective, critical on destination choices as more time to research a place.
- Suggestions are that consumers will go from five holidays a year to one, therefore every trip will be researched more as this will be the 'one big trip to last the year' - brands need to capture this essence and align accordingly.

Core Travel Insights/ Take outs

- **Indications of travel industry restarting:** Many articles have surfaced this week that highlight and discuss plans for some international travel and tourism to resume as early as this June. From [EasyJet announcing that it will begin some flights](#), [Greece planning to restart tourism](#) and [Cruise lines releasing preliminary restart dates](#), such actions can be seen as a step forward for the travel industry as it emerges slowly from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **UK Centric Travel:** Articles focussing on domestic travel and staycations are ever strong, following indications that this type of travel is set to return first in the UK. Such pieces showcase and reinforce the beauty the UK has to offer and act as inspiration for those that are planning/thinking about a domestic holiday once travel restrictions being lifted. ([The Telegraph](#): Summer hasn't been cancelled, it's just full of exciting new opportunities; [Mail Online](#): With summer holidays abroad 'cancelled' here are pictures of 10 stunning places you could visit in Britain instead that LOOK LIKE they're abroad).
- **When will international travel return?** Despite the excitement towards domestic travel returning, there is also a noticeable presence of articles that are discussing and predicting when international travel will return ([Mail Online](#): When WILL international tourism return? An A-to-Z guide to the travel status of countries around the world - and their timelines out of COVID-19 lockdown; [Express Online](#): Holidays 2020: When can you travel abroad in the future? Country-by-country list).
- **Thought Leadership:** Articles have surfaced following TUI's CEO, Fritz Joussen, communicating that travel should restart across Europe and that 'Summer holidays are possible responsibly and with clear rules'. Such comments follow TUI setting out a roadmap for restarting the industry as the COVID-19 pandemic eases - the company plans to run holidays at scale from July. ([Independent](#): TUI says travel should restart across Europe and vows to 'reinvent the holiday'; [BBC News](#): COVID-19: TUI urges opening up tourism to safer countries).
- **Continued resistance from tourism boards:** With the UK weather forecast set to pick up over the next few weeks, tourism boards have continued to urge the public to stay away from their 'beauty spots'. For example, Weston-Super-Mare changed its twitter name to (Don't) Visit Weston-Super-Mare, whilst Cumbria Police has told the public to consider carefully and not to rush back to the Lake District. ([ITV](#): Public urged not to travel to beauty spots ahead of sunny weekend; [Evening Standard](#): Peak District national park urges people to stay away for second day as visitors flood in by car).



International Updates

NORTH AMERICA

- Following a two-month lockdown [all 50 US states have partially reopened after Connecticut became the final one to allow the opening of some shops and restaurants](#). However, there is concern this will lead to an even starker picture for the country, which has a death toll of more than 92,000 with over 1.5 million confirmed cases.
- US President Donald Trump has admitted [he is taking hydroxychloroquine to protect himself from COVID-19](#), despite the potentially dangerous side effects linked to the anti-malaria drug. Trump has previously called the drug a 'game changer' and said there was no risk of death from taking it.
- The first results from human trials of a vaccine against COVID-19 have given a glimmer of hope [after a US firm's study produced positive results](#) in a group of eight volunteers. These results showed that each of the participants produced an antibody response on a par with that seen in people who have had the disease. And they suggest that the vaccine is safe for use in humans.

EUROPE

- In an address to the House of Commons, [Boris Johnson said the UK-wide COVID-19 tracking system will be in place by the start of June](#). He said the "world-beating" track and trace operation would be able to cope with 10,000 new cases per day.
- [Health authorities in France have confirmed 110 new COVID-19 deaths in the last 24 hours](#), an increase of 0.4%.
- [Spain is planning to kick-start its tourism sector by allowing foreign visitors by the end of June](#), according to the country's Transport Minister Jose Luis Abalos. He said: "We must make Spain an attractive country from the health point of view."
- [The Spanish government is making the use of face masks compulsory whenever social distancing is not possible](#), both indoors and outside. Face coverings were already compulsory on public transport. The new rule applies to all with only children under six and people with certain health issues exempt.
- [Sweden has overtaken the UK with the highest deaths per capita rate in the world](#). The country was one of the only nations not to implement strict lockdown measures and the figure of 6.08 deaths per million residents will throw the strategy into doubt.
- [Italy registered the lowest number of new COVID-19 cases since early March](#) as the government eased a nationwide lockdown Monday allowing shops, bars and restaurants to reopen as long as they respect health and safety rules. It confirmed 451 new cases, with 99 fatalities.
- [France and Germany have announced a €500bn recovery fund to help EU member states worst affected by the COVID-19 outbreak](#). The proposal was put together by French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

ASIA

- [South Korea's new COVID-19 cases rose by the highest number in nine days](#) on Wednesday amid looming mass infections at a major hospital in Seoul and a rise in nightclub-linked cases. The country added 32 new COVID-19 cases, raising the total caseload to 11,110. The daily new infections mark the largest since May 11, when the number hit 35.
- [Chinese authorities have sealed off the north-eastern city of Shulan after an outbreak of COVID-19](#), imposing measures similar to those used in Wuhan. All villages and residential compounds in the city of about 700,000 residents were closed off, and only one person from each household allowed out for two hours every second day for essentials.

- [President Xi Jinping of China has defended his country's handling of COVID-19](#) and has backed plans for an independent review of the global response to the pandemic under the auspices of the World Health Organization. He has also pledged funding of \$2bn over two years to help with the ongoing COVID-19 response.
- Japan's economy has fallen into a recession, with GDP shrinking by an annualised 3.4% in the first quarter of 2020 as [exports fell and consumer spending was hampered by COVID-19 lockdown measures](#).

AUSTRALASIA

- New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has suggested that companies should introduce more flexible working options in order [to help staff address work-life balance issues, stimulate the economy and boost domestic tourism](#) in the post-COVID-19 environment. Ardern said employers could consider introducing a four-day week and also suggested that there could be more public holidays.

SOUTH AMERICA

- [Brazil has reported more than 1,000 deaths related to the COVID-19 in a single day](#) amid warnings the outbreak is weeks away from its peak. While it has confirmed 271,628 cases, the true number is thought to be significantly higher because of insufficient testing.