

Seeing Into the Future:

Leveraging fringe consumer insights to build a sustainable brand in a post-Covid world

About Shelton Group

Subject Matter Experts

- 28 years in business
- 15 years exclusively focused on creating a market advantage for organizations working to create a sustainable future

Recognized Thought Leaders

- **14 years of conducting our own, proprietary Pulse™ trending studies re: US market beliefs and expectations surrounding sustainability issues**
- Featured speaker at 15-20 industry events annually
- 8,000+ subscribers to weekly insights newsletter
- Regularly featured in business press

Solution Providers

- Insight-driven marcomm strategies and communications that:
 - Evoke emotion
 - Change mindsets
 - Build brands
 - Sell products
 - *With no greenwashing*

Let's level-set: What did consumers expect brands to do for the environment before Covid-19?

86%

of Americans believe that companies should stand for something other than making money

63%

of Americans say that a company's environmental reputation has a moderate to very strong impact on their purchase intent

n=2,012

25%

of Americans can name a specific brand they've purchased – or not purchased – because of the environmental record of the manufacturer... from 2009 - 2014 it was

6%

Bottom line: pre-Covid, mainstream Americans were already changing their buying behaviors to align their purchases with their values.

To prepare for an uncertain future, we can look beyond mainstream consumers to those on the fringe to give us a glimpse of what's coming next.

The background of the slide is a photograph of a person's silhouette walking along the edge of a cliff. The sky is a vibrant mix of orange, red, and teal, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. Several birds are captured in flight against the sky. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

What's Coming Next: How can brands stay resilient in a post-Covid world?

The “fringe” is a small subset of individuals who live on the fringes of society in terms of their beliefs and behaviors.

Fringe individuals are often activist-oriented—they want to help others see what they see.



In his graph, six stages make up the gradual acceptance and adoption of a new idea.

- **Fringe** — the idea is on the outskirts of society and acceptance. “It’s not obvious, proven or readily explained.”
- **Risky** — the idea is unknown, and potentially dangerous to utilize
- **New** — the idea is seen as “hip” by influencers and gets shared with their audiences
- **Hot** — the idea is now being accepted by enough people. It’s a trend
- **Mass** — the idea is now accepted by most people. The *masses* are the ones “who only buy pop hits, who only go to restaurant chains, who only drive the most popular car.”
- **Always** — ultimately, the idea becomes so popular and accepted that the *masses* push it on everyone else who hasn’t already accepted the idea (going back to the “you either begrudgingly accept the new idea or are forced to live with it” *laggard* section)

Many things that are mainstream now were **once new and fringe ideas.**

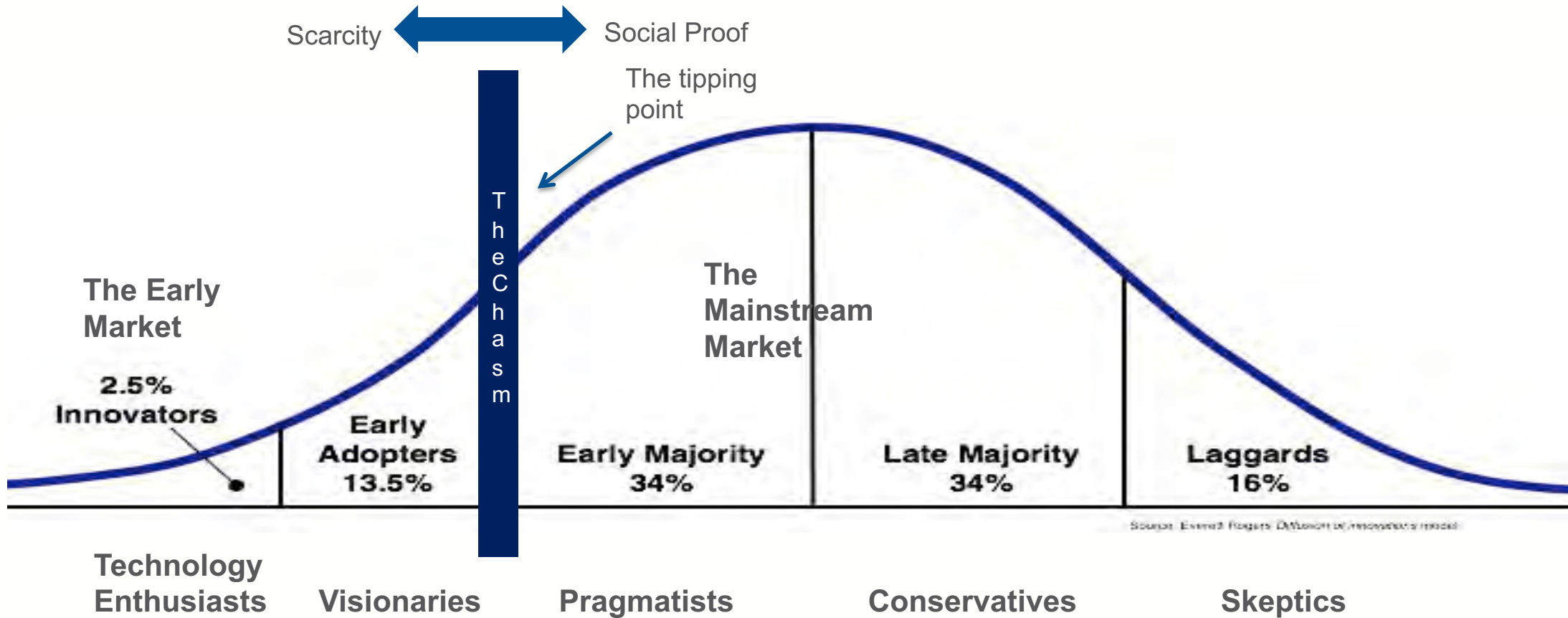
Understanding what is on the fringe helps companies be prepared for **possible futures** and turn what competitors see as threats into opportunities.

Fringe Methodology

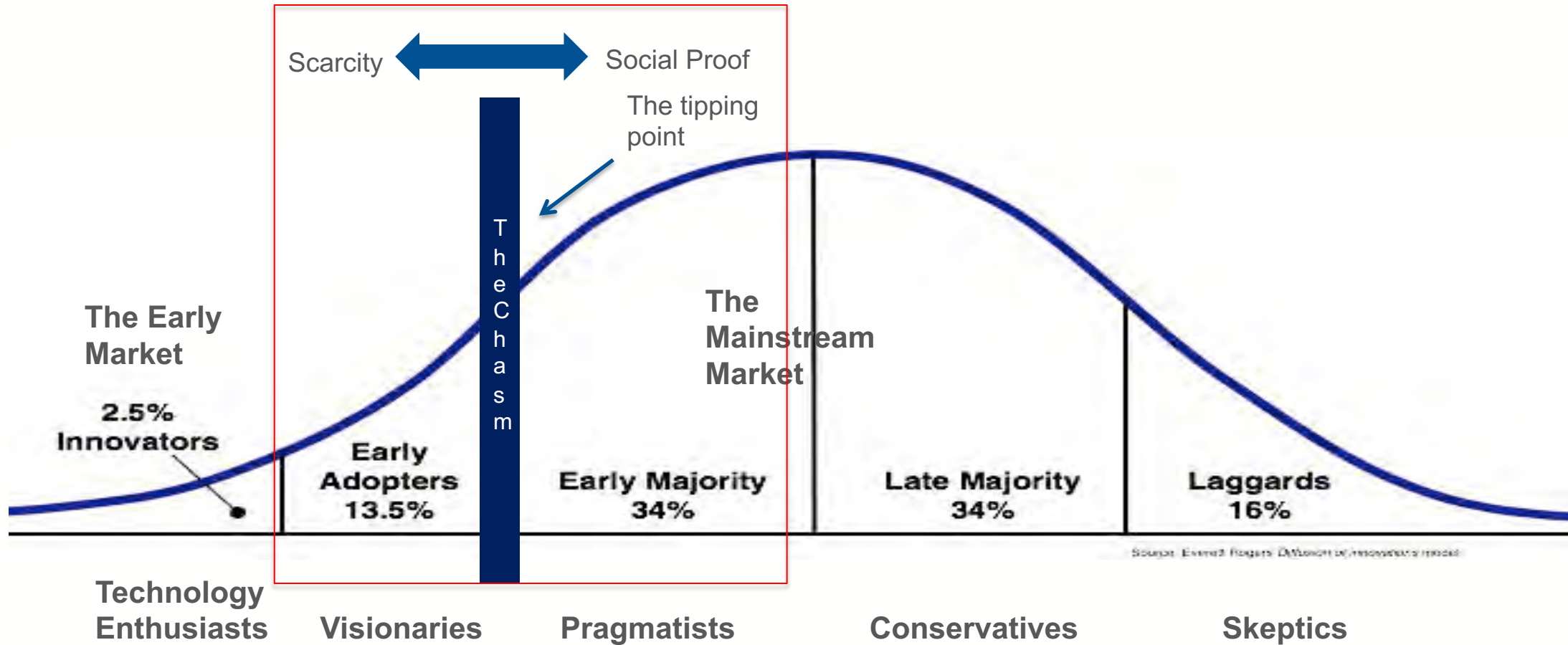
- Intensive, manual social media analysis to track themes and burgeoning concepts across a broad variety of social media platforms including Twitter, Reddit, Instagram, and general internet blogs
- For this study we looked across social media from March until mid-April 2020



It's important to note that not all fringe ideas become mainstream — a key point in Rogers' Adoption Curve is that an idea has to cross a chasm in order to move from the fringe to the mainstream



This is considered the tipping point, or the point of social proof, where the idea is proven to have value



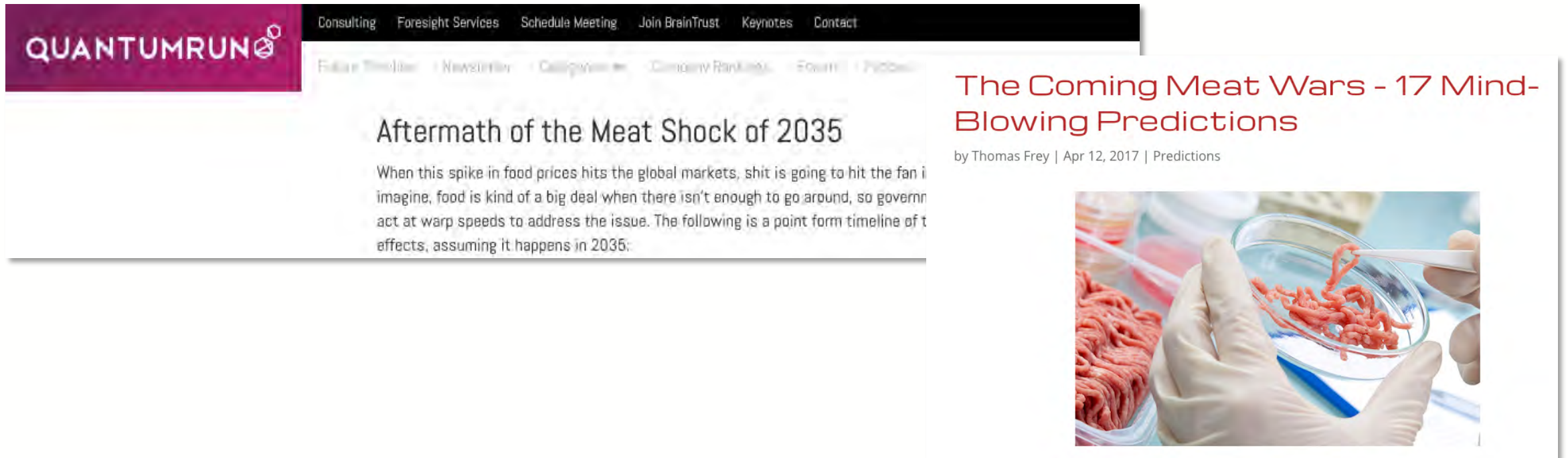
But, again, not all ideas make it **across the chasm.**

Let's look at some ideas from some of our previous work that haven't been able to make the jump, yet (thank goodness).

We've learned over the years that for those on the fringe who are serious about climate change, **veganism** is often a common practice.

So we wanted to learn what the fringe had to say about the **future of food and protein ...**

We talked with some futurists, and most of them used language that implied some sort of inevitable meat cataclysm if protein consumption behaviors go unchanged



The screenshot shows a website header for Quantumrun with navigation links: Consulting, Foresight Services, Schedule Meeting, Join BrainTrust, Keynotes, and Contact. Below the header, there are several menu items: Future Timeline, Newsletter, Callguides, Company Rankings, Events, and Products. The main content area features an article titled "Aftermath of the Meat Shock of 2035" with a sub-headline "The Coming Meat Wars - 17 Mind-Blowing Predictions" by Thomas Frey, dated Apr 12, 2017. The article text begins with "When this spike in food prices hits the global markets, shit is going to hit the fan i imagine, food is kind of a big deal when there isn't enough to go around, so governm act at warp speeds to address the issue. The following is a point form timeline of t effects, assuming it happens in 2035:". To the right of the text is a photograph showing a person wearing white gloves using tweezers to handle a petri dish containing a red, textured substance, likely cultured meat.

Some futurists believe the future of protein consumption begins with lab-grown meat cells.

But that ultimately leads down a slippery slope that could end in things like “lab-grown celebrity skin cells” for designer handbags.

The Coming Meat Wars - 17 Mind-Blowing Predictions

by Thomas Frey | Apr 12, 2017 | Predictions



12. Cultured meats will be developed for non-edible materials similar to leathers, plastic, and rubber. Think in terms of exotic materials such as tarantula skin seats, hedgehog jackets, and anteater shoes.

13. Over time we will develop designer materials from the stem cells of famous people. If you can imagine George Clooney handbags, Scarlet Johansen furniture, Kevin Spacey lampshades, or Drew Barrymore wallets you'll get the picture.

14. We will also begin seeing a number of memorial-type products made from the cells of loved ones. Seat cushions from Aunt Lilly, wall hangings from Uncle Wilber, or a scarf from Grandma Mary.

15. Cultured milk derived from mother's cells will be considered far superior to other baby foods. These products will compete directly with today's baby formula industry.

16. Cultured blood will cause today's blood bank industry to disappear. Cultured baby's blood, or 'young blood' with its anti-aging properties, will pave the way for a variety of "cultured" anti-aging products.

17. Before long we will see cultured hair cells to regrow our hair and cultured skin cells to remove our wrinkles. The fountain of youth will be springing to life in a way we never anticipated.

The fringe can **get weird** ...

So why even look at things
that are so **“out there”**?

“Out there” is usually where the next big shift is looming...

THE MOST DANGEROUS SPECIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The plastic bottle
Origin: city streets, beaches and golf courses.
Behaviour: causes serious damage to marine flora and fauna.
Average lifespan: 500 to 600 years.

The plastic bag
Origin: city streets, beaches and forests.
Behaviour: can be ingested by animals, causing serious poisoning.
Average lifespan: 400 to 500 years.

The plastic bottle
Origin: beaches, city streets and forests.
Behaviour: causes serious damage to marine flora and fauna.
Average lifespan: 500 to 600 years.

The carton
Origin: beaches and city streets.
Behaviour: has an abrasive effect on organisms growing on the sea bed.
Average lifespan: 25 to 50 years.

The paper bag
Origin: beaches and forests.
Behaviour: has an abrasive effect on the digestion of certain sea creatures.
Average lifespan: 4 weeks.

The tin can
Origin: city streets and beaches.
Behaviour: causes cuts and lesions to marine fauna and ecosystems.
Average lifespan: 200 to 300 years.

The cigarette stub
Origin: hotels, houses, garages and city streets.
Behaviour: have marine organisms, causing serious injuries to fish.
Average lifespan: 10 years.

The plastic ring
Origin: beaches and city streets.
Behaviour: have marine organisms, causing serious injuries to fish.
Average lifespan: 400 years.

Discard and engine oil
Origin: boats.
Behaviour: its toxicity destroys the marine habitat wherever it reaches.
Average lifespan: depends on the amount discharged.

The bottle top
Origin: city streets, beaches and forests.
Behaviour: causes digestive problems to marine fauna.
Average lifespan: 300 years.

Plastic ring
Origin: factories and city streets.
Behaviour: can be eaten by other animals and pollutes them.
Average lifespan: hundreds of years, depending on the quantity.

The glass bottle
Origin: city streets, beaches and forests.
Behaviour: causes cuts and lesions to swimmers and marine fauna.
Average lifespan: thousands of years.

The aluminium foil lid
Origin: beaches and forests.
Behaviour: has an abrasive effect on organisms growing on the sea bed.
Average lifespan: 10 years.

The food wrapper
Origin: beaches and city streets.
Behaviour: causes serious damage to marine flora and fauna.
Average lifespan: 20 to 50 years.

Aluminium foil
Origin: beaches, streets and golf courses.
Behaviour: can envelop certain organisms and prevent them from feeding.
Average lifespan: 5 years.

The sanitary pad
Origin: beaches, hotels and forests.
Behaviour: impedes the proper digestion of animals that ingest them.
Average lifespan: 25 years.

All around the world, 8 million tonnes of waste reach the sea every day. All this refuse is generated by human activity. This non-recyclable rubbish is thrown into the toilet, onto the streets, into gutters, onto the sand and into the sea, turning it into a tangible destroyer of marine life. But you can stop this from happening.

Uncontrolled waste is a threat to the seas.

Agència Catalana de l'Aigua
Departament de Medi Ambient i Habitatge

plastic-pollution-coalition [Follow](#)

Beauty Stuff Inc. EXFOLIATING FACIAL SCRUB NOW WITH MICROBEADS

NOW WITH MICROBEADS

NOW WITH MICROBEADS

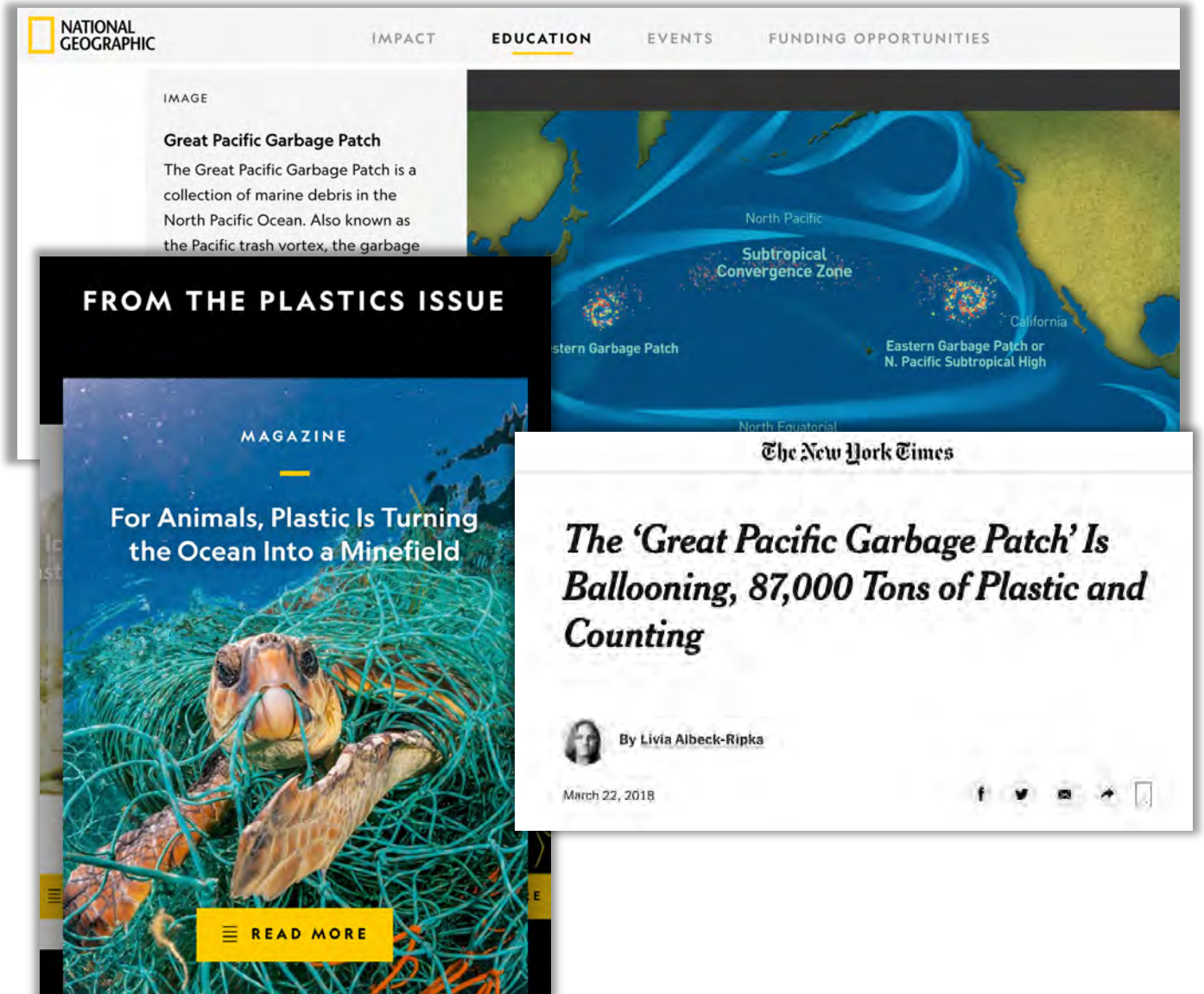
NOW WITH MICROBEADS

NOW WITH MICROBEADS

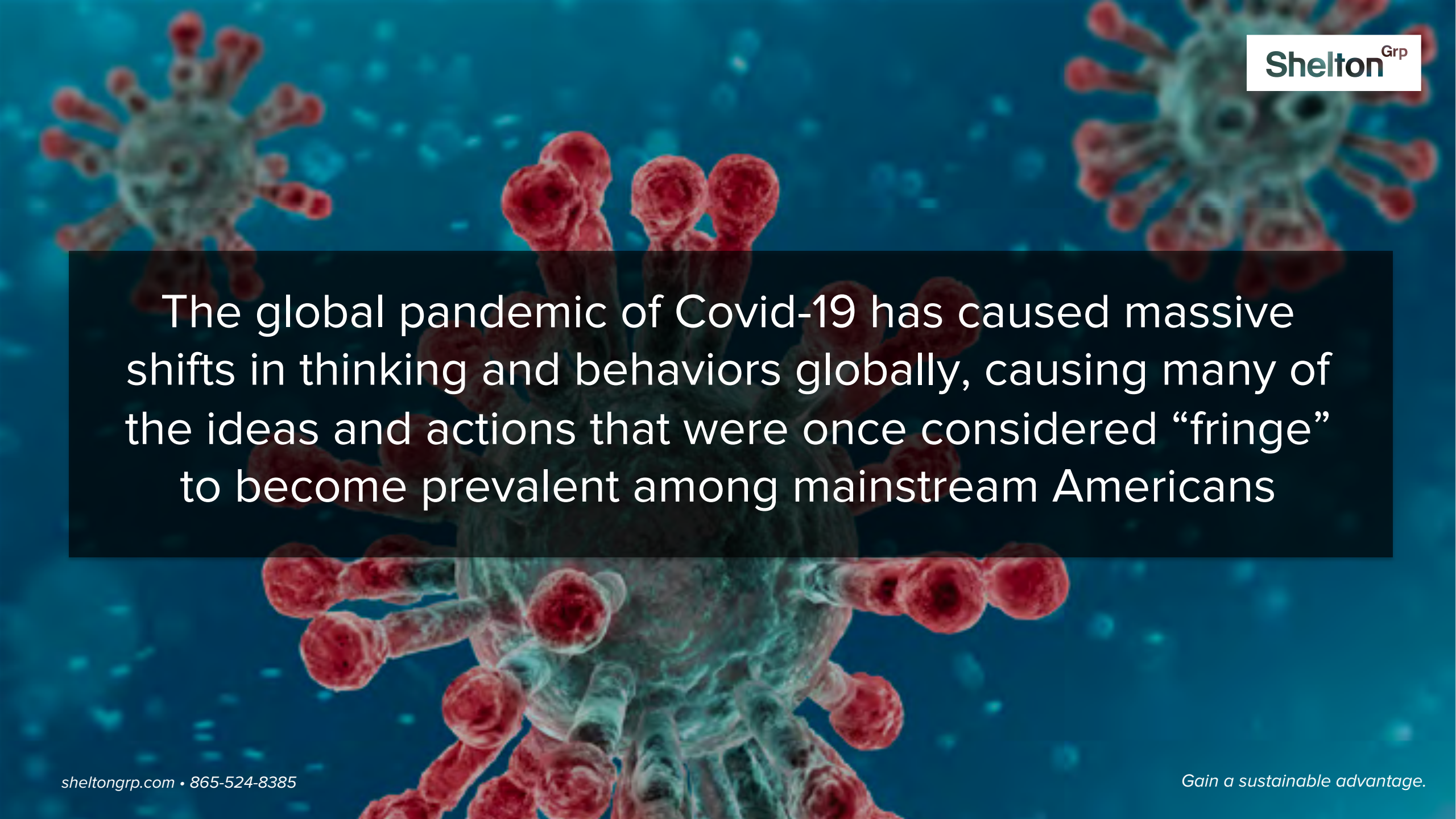
Greenpeace is working to get microbeads banned in the UK.

In 2016, **ocean plastic** was just beginning to bubble up on the fringe as the poster child of the **anti-plastic movement**

Now, ocean plastic is a **household topic** with widespread coverage in mainstream media, like **National Geographic** and the **New York Times**



Fringe research ultimately focuses on **potential** shifts in culture, which makes it well suited to study topics related to sustainability, because a sustainable future will require a **culture shift**.

A detailed 3D rendering of a coronavirus particle, showing its characteristic spherical shape and numerous red, spike-like protrusions (glycoprotein spikes) extending from its surface. The particle is set against a dark blue background with a subtle pattern of lighter blue dots, suggesting a microscopic or digital environment.

The global pandemic of Covid-19 has caused massive shifts in thinking and behaviors globally, causing many of the ideas and actions that were once considered “fringe” to become prevalent among mainstream Americans

A photograph of a park path in autumn. The path is covered in fallen brown and orange leaves. On either side of the path are tall trees with some green and some autumn-colored foliage. There are several black park benches and trash cans along the path. The lighting is soft, suggesting an overcast day.

These are not
“normal” times—we’re
all becoming “fringe.”

DOOMSDAY PREPPERS

2013 TV-14 1 Season

This series highlights a diverse group of survivalists as they prepare for various catastrophic scenarios that could cause civilization to collapse.

▶ PLAY

+ MY LIST



Season 2 of this documentary series had the highest-rated season premiere in its network's history.

Starring: Michael Izquierdo

Genres: Science & Nature TV, Reality TV

This show is: Quirky, Investigative



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Shelton^{Grp}

At the beginning of the decade, the topic of “doomsday prepping” was leveraged as reality entertainment rather than practical advice

Gain a sustainable advantage.

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We're All Preppers Now

Posted March 18, 2020 by [Maria Barea](#)

f t in



Prepping – hoarding, or just stocking up for a potential long period of isolation – has suddenly gone from an odd niche enthusiasm to a common behavior. We dug into our consumer insights to find out what that means to people right now, and what it might point to in the future.

MENU **Reader's Digest** THE HEALTHY FOOD ADVICE CULTURE TRUE STORIES JOKES

9 Things We Can All Learn from Doomsday Preppers

[Kelly Bryant](#)

Updated: Apr. 01, 2020

Once upon a time, you might have dismissed them, but not anymore. Their knowledge is incredibly useful—and not as extreme as you might think.

Source: Bryant, Kelly. "9 Things We Can All Learn from Doomsday Preppers." *Reader's Digest*, 1 Apr. 2020.

Source: Barea, Maria. "We're All Preppers Now." *Brandchannel*, 18 Mar. 2020.

Shelton^{Grp}

But now, thanks to Covid-19, we're looking to preppers for advice

DOOMSDAY PREPPERS

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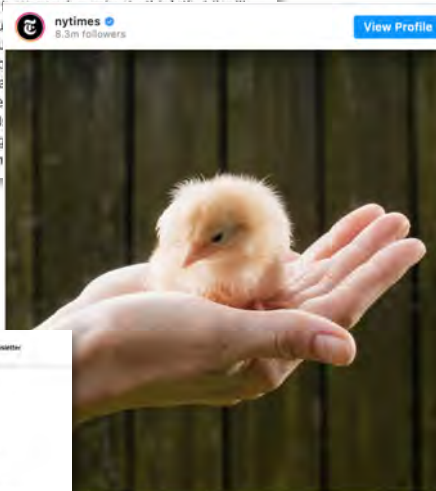
SingularityHub

1. A new appreciation for the benefits of self-sufficiency.

From aquaponics to vertical urban gardens, plant-based diets, and desktop 3D printers, this situation will make many of us see the benefits of relying on locally sourced food and goods—instead of products demanding long and distant supply chains. These practices have been widely advocated for from a sustainability point of view, but this kind of self-sufficiency is ultimately about power. About how independence brings you to a position where, instead of just crossing your fingers and hoping government leaders will do a good enough job protecting you, you can maintain some influence over your own destiny and that of your loved ones.

2. Faster adoption of solar panels.

As yet, no region has experienced a power outage due to the systemic consequences of this pandemic. It would, not happen in certain places. Whether you depends on the border lottery—where you you happened to be stranded during the c away from a more or less centralized syste all love. The benefit of decentralized syste central points of failure. Again, solar panel superior option, a way to do the right thing will reveal how much they can also be a m



The Coronavirus Outbreak

Food Supply Anxiety Brings Back Victory Gardens

Americans were once urged to plant in every patch of available soil — and produced about 40 percent of the nation's fresh vegetables.



During World War II, more than 20 million victory gardens were planted in the United States. [Business/Steve](#)

Source: Ism, Carin, and Julien Leyre. "16 Ways Coronavirus May Change the Way We Look at the World." *Singularity Hub*, 25 Mar. 2020.

Source: "You Guys Worry Me." *Reddit*, 29 Mar. 2020.

Source: Rao, Tejal. "Food Supply Anxiety Brings Back Victory Gardens." *The New York Times*, 25 Mar. 2020.

Going “off grid” and becoming self-sufficient are looking more appealing than ever:

- There is a renewed interest in solar panels to have energy separate from the grid.
- Individuals are turning to urban gardening and farming out of fear of future food shortages.

Gain a sustainable advantage.

But it doesn't **stop there**.

Before the pandemic, fringe consumers were advocating for reform in the **travel industry**, saying we had to drastically **reduce air travel** to aid the fight against climate change.



flightfree2020



In 2019, the possibility of a “flight free” 2020 seemed far-fetched





flightfree2020



But in just a few weeks, we've drastically cut air travel



Flightradar24 @flightradar24



Contiguous United States - March 1 vs March 29 - 21:00 UTC - 6800 vs 2800 aircraft within the map area
flightradar24.com/data/statistics



544 5:36 PM - Mar 29, 2020



Source: Ism, Carin, and Julien Leyre. "16 Ways Coronavirus May Change the Way We Look at the World." *Singularity Hub*, 25 Mar. 2020.

Source: "You Guys Worry Me." *Reddit*, 29 Mar. 2020.

Source: Rao, Tejal. "Food Supply Anxiety Brings Back Victory Gardens." *The New York Times*, 25 Mar. 2020.

Gain a sustainable advantage.



And default virtual meetings,
which were once an aspiration –

– are our new daily reality.



As part of the Mixed Reality team at Mozilla, I've been watching the development and release of Mozilla Hubs with excitement. I've thought about using VR and AR for collaboration for years, going back to the work we did creating an AR client for SecondLife many years ago. Just last week, I wrote about [why I found Hubs so exciting](#), and the idea of enabling new ways of creating social experiences was one of the core ideas.

When we look back in the future, I think we'll see that the most significant impact of social AR and VR will be on access; to people, places, experiences and situations. VR enthusiasts tend to talk about VR letting people go places they couldn't otherwise go and experience those *places*, but I think that will be a minor aspect of MR.

13 Apr 2020 | 15:44 GMT

Forget Video Conferencing—Host Your Next Meeting in VR

Recent advances have made VR the superior technology for conferences and meetings, some experts claim

By Edd Gent



Image: Immersive VR Education

Virtual meeting on the Engage platform.

However, a key aspect of fringe research is tracking the **underlying ideas** that cross over, not just the quirky behaviors. There are two underlying ideas that will impact how brands remain resilient and thrive in the future.

Key Fringe Idea #1 from Covid-19: Our societal “System” will (and needs to) fall.

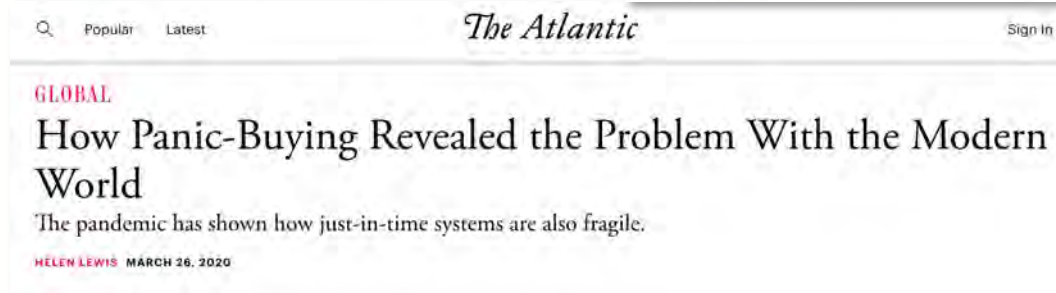
“The System” is flawed.

(the government system, economic system, world order, “the man,” etc.)

While fringe individuals have criticized the flawed system for a while, Covid-19 helped expose the flaws to mainstream individuals

Because of Covid-19, this fringe idea of distrusting the system has taken hold in mainstream individuals

- Mainstream consumers are beginning to see the **fragility of the system**.
- The **lack of universal healthcare** provided by the state is in **complete opposition to a system prepared** for stopping a pandemic.
- The **stimulus package** stipend has been met with backlash for being **out of touch with the needs** of the American people and for favoring businesses.
- This disconnect between the ruling powers and the people is heavily **reminiscent of the culture** that preceded the **French Revolution**.



Mainstream consumers are also starting to see that “big business” comes before individuals in times of crisis

- Consumers are outraged that much of the **funding meant for small businesses** went **to larger chains** before they even got a shot at it.
- Consumers are **paying attention** to which companies are taking the money instead of giving it back, as some have done, and they’re **planning to boycott**.

“Lobbyists always talk about ‘small businesses’ and ‘family farms’ but the biggest benefits always go to the biggest campaign contributors.”

FINANCE & TAX

Big restaurant chains get small business aid, sparking backlash

Potbelly Corp. — the nationwide sandwich shop Hospitality Group, which runs a chain of steakhouses, is one of the largest recipients of the aid. It has disclosed receiving the gov



Jeff Carlock
Lobbyists always talk about "small business" and "family farms" but the biggest benefits always go to the biggest campaign contributors.
Like · Reply · 26 · 4d · Edited

Mark Keeler
And that is playing out again over and over every time these so-called stimulus packages roll out.
Like · Reply · 8 · 4d

John Gibson
Mark Keeler They know why they can do this is that there is the appearance of the little guy maybe getting some crumbs and we should be grateful. Income inequality amongst other things is driving the world to another tipping point
Like · Reply · 8 · 4d

Tom Watson @tomwatson · 2h
Folks, never go near another @RuthsChris again. These people are evil.

Judd Legum @JuddLegum · 3h
@RuthsChris had \$42.2 million in profits last year, spent \$5.2M buying its own stock, and pays its CEO \$6.1M
It has \$86M in cash reserves
It just received \$20M in taxpayer money from a fund meant to keep "small businesses" afloat
But it gets worse
popular.info/p/a-raw-deal

VeggieTales Facts @Veggiefact

isn't it weird that people living paycheck to paycheck are supposed to have months worth of savings for emergencies while billion dollar corporations are so poorly managed they're on the brink of bankruptcy after a week of reduced profits
1:55 PM · 22 Mar 20 · Twitter for Android
26.6K Retweets 91K Likes

Some are even beginning to fear for the future of Western society, as a whole

- Concerns are arising over Covid-19 spurring a **more authoritarian government**.
- The possibility of **actually needing to flee the US** is starting to be discussed.

“As crazy as this may sound, is there any credit to the idea of getting out of the states?”

The image shows a screenshot of a Rolling Stone news article. The article title is "DOJ Wants to Suspend Certain Constitutional Rights During Coronavirus Emergency". The sub-headline reads: "The Department of Justice has secretly asked Congress for the ability to detain arrested people 'indefinitely' in addition to other powers that one expert called 'terrifying'". The article is dated March 21, 2020, at 4:54 PM ET. A comment from a user named 'pineapplevibes' is visible, discussing the author's concerns about authoritarianism and the potential need to flee the US.

Source: Harari, Yuval Noah. "Yuval Noah Harari: the World after Coronavirus." *Financial Times*, 20 Mar. 2020.

Source: Wade, Peter. "DOJ Wants to Suspend Certain Constitutional Rights During Coronavirus Emergency." *Rolling Stone*, 25 Mar. 2020.

Source: Chilton, Adam, et al. "Red and Blue America Agree That Now Is the Time to Violate the Constitution." *The Atlantic*, 25 Mar. 2020.

And it's making them question capitalism as an economic model

- Capitalism's emphasis on **limitless economic growth** is considered **unsustainable** by fringe individuals.
- Things like **Covid-19 are considered the result of that**—we're running out of resources, so we're brushing up against wildlife more and more, which results in disease transmission on a massive scale.
- Fringe individuals believe our obsession with economic measures like GDP has to end—it **doesn't account for the negative environmental effects** that accompany those levels of production.

Published on Monday, November 25, 2019 by Common Dreams

'Everything Is Not Fine': Nobel Economist Calls on Humanity to End Obsession With GDP

"If we measure the wrong thing," warns Joseph Stiglitz, "we will do the wrong thing."

by Jon Queally, staff writer



34 Comments

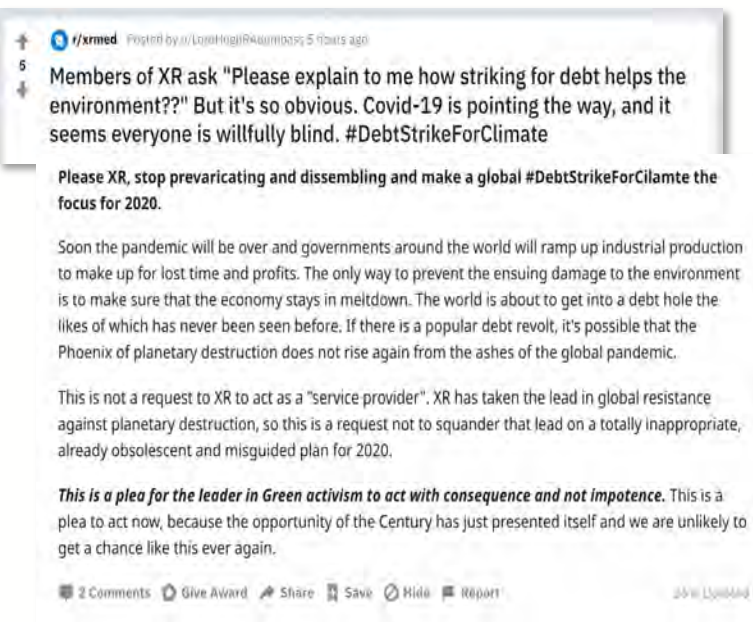


"It should be clear that, in spite of the increases in GDP, in spite of the 2008 crisis being well behind us, everything is not fine," writes economist Joseph Stiglitz, who won the Nobel Prize for Economics in 2001. (Photo: Local Future Project)

"If we measure the wrong thing, we will do the wrong thing."

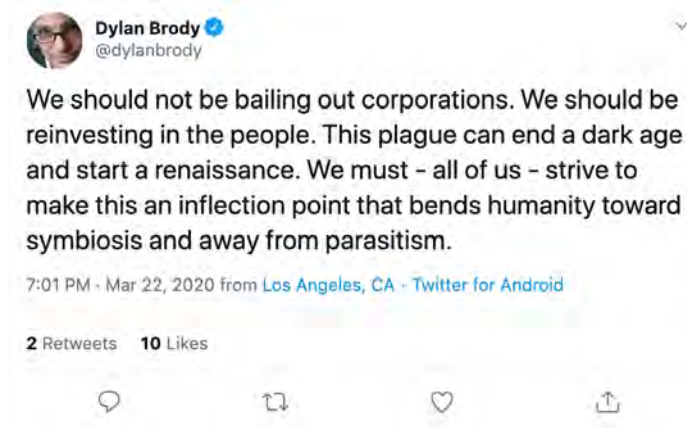
Some believe **a full economic meltdown** is what's **needed** to save the planet—even to the point that they would actively try to spur a meltdown

“I’m pushing for the collapse of Capitalism but not ecological collapse.”



Some hope that Covid-19 will bring about system-wide reform similar to the changes following the bubonic plague

Historians believe the plague was a catalyst to bring about the Renaissance—modern individuals are hoping Covid-19 will spur on the same.



POLITICO

New forms of reform.

Jonathan Rauch is a contributing writer at the *Atlantic* and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

One group of Americans has lived through a transformational epidemic in recent memory: gay men. Of course, HIV/AIDS was (and is) different in all kinds of ways from coronavirus, but one lesson is likely to apply: Plagues drive change. Partly because our government failed us, gay Americans mobilized to build organizations, networks and know-how that changed our place in society and have enduring legacies today. The epidemic also revealed deadly flaws in the health care system, and it awakened us to the need for the protection of marriage—revelations which led to landmark reforms. I wouldn't be surprised to see some analogous changes in the wake of coronavirus. People are finding new ways to connect and support each other in adversity; they are sure to demand major changes in the health-care system and maybe also the government; and they'll become newly conscious of interdependency and community. I can't predict the precise effects, but I'm sure we'll be seeing them for years.

The plague acted as a catalyst for a distrust in the institutions (or “system”) of the time period

People saw that the church could not protect them from the disease—a similar phenomenon may be happening now with people losing faith in their government systems.



When institutions like the government fail to lead, a **power vacuum opens up.**

Key Fringe Idea #2 from Covid-19:

As mainstream consumers lose trust in their systems, a power shift begins to happen—citizens look elsewhere for:

 Information

 Support

 Action



Seeking information through science and experts.

Fringe consumers often seek out expert opinions, usually from the world of academia

- Scholars are beginning to recognize that they **have an obligation** to help society.
- Fringe individuals **openly engage in conversations** with others from their world to better understand certain topics.
- Sometimes, **the “fringe” consumers** actually **end up being the scientists** and the experts, as we see is the case with many climate scientists.



“My ‘hypocrisy angst’ about ‘flying around the planet to save the planet’ became chronic.”
—Phoebe Barnard,
Affiliate Full Professor-Earth Sciences, University of Washington



#listentoscience

 **emma z** @emmasglasses · 6h
FOR REAL.

My work bestie Olivia sent me this and I have been thinking about this A LOT lately...

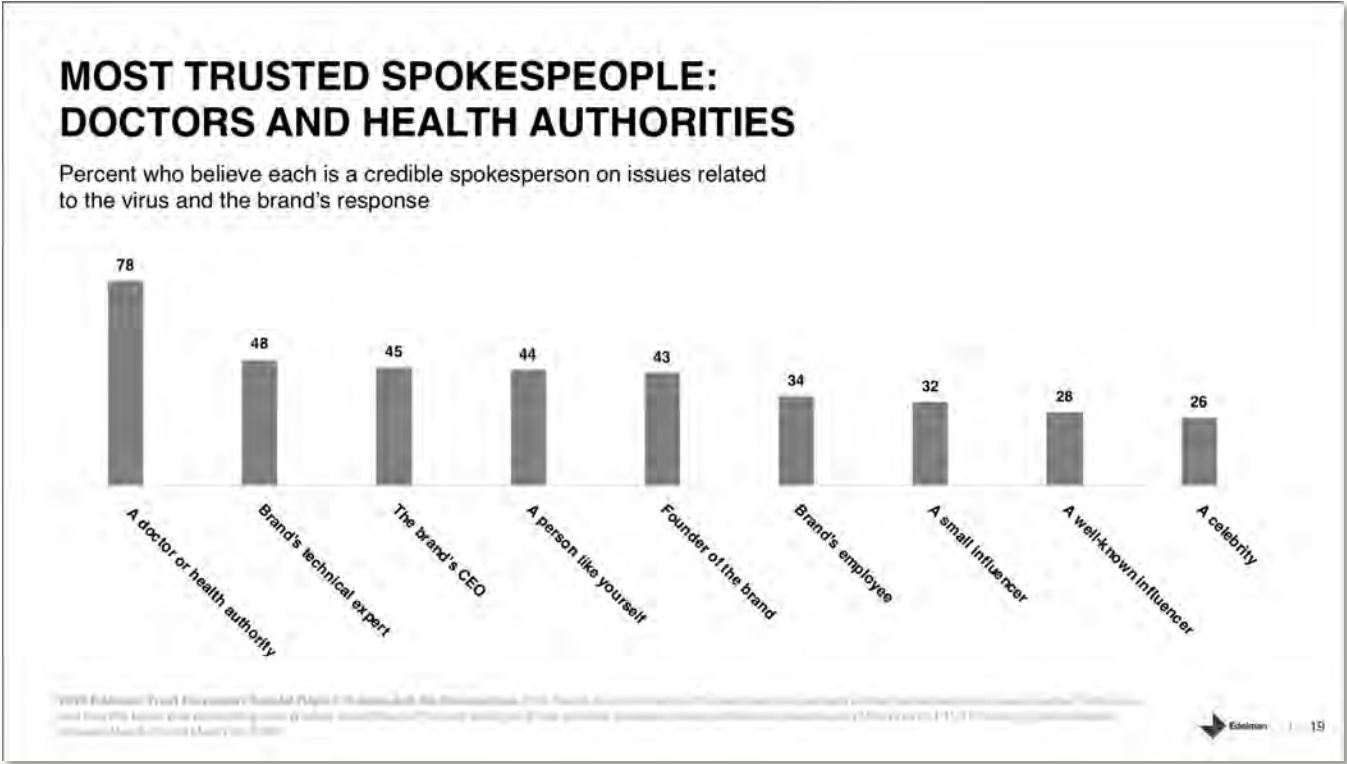
[#formerscienceteacher](#) [#WTF](#) [#Whatishappening](#) [#listentoscience](#)
[#quarantine](#) [#stayhome](#) 🏠 [#selfisolation](#) [#socialdistancing](#) [#covid_19](#)

↔️ [ON!](#) the [#blog: behindtheleopardglasses.com/2020/04/former...](#)



As mainstream consumers grapple with the **power vacuum**, they're also beginning to turn to **scientists and experts** for information





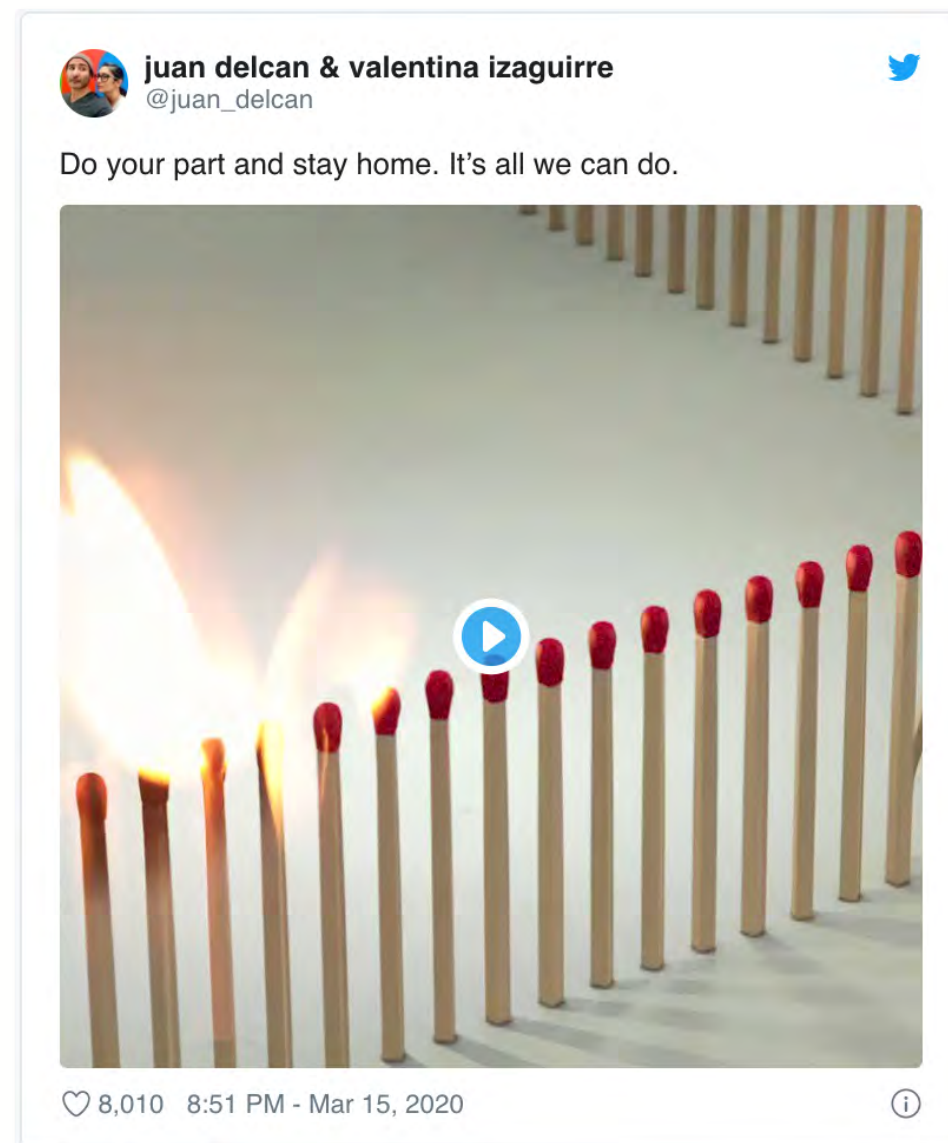
Finding support through
local communities.

We're undergoing a **renaissance** in our sense of **community** and dependence on more **local forms** of support

People are starting to reconnect with their local communities—engaging in acts of solidarity and remembering the value of in-person connection.



And social distancing has reminded consumers that **individual actions** have an impact **beyond just themselves**—their actions affect their **communities**





Demanding action from
business.

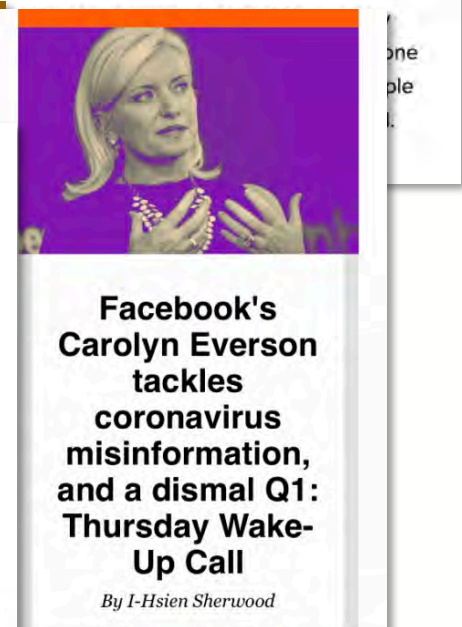
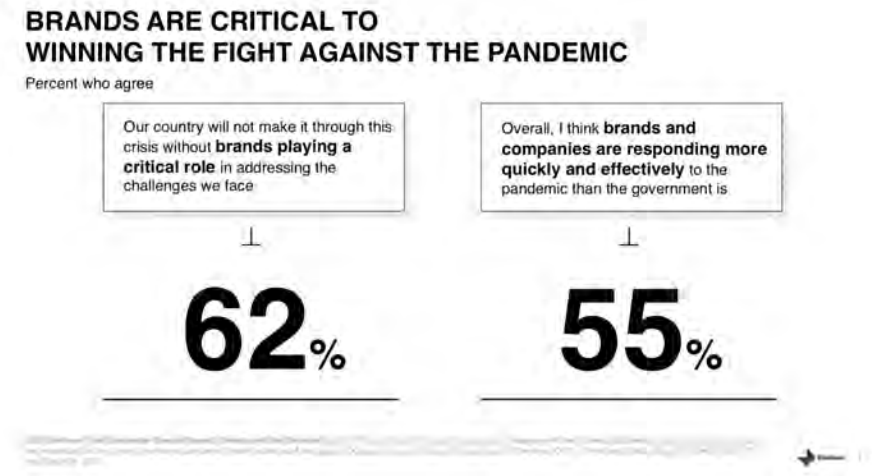
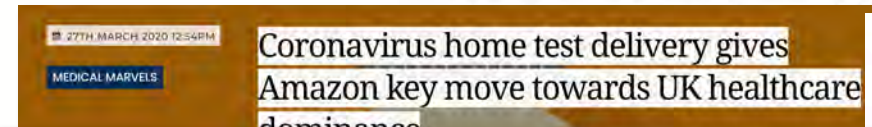
Seen as a **side effect of capitalism**, modern multinational corporations wield external influence that **rivals that of full-scale nations**.

This creates the belief that these corporations have a **duty to take care of their employees** as if they were *citizens* of that company.



The reality is that businesses can act and protect consumers more effectively than their government

- During Hurricane Katrina, **Walmart was able to provide quicker aid** to victims than government response teams.
- As governments failed to provide adequate testing for Covid-19, **Amazon stepped in to provide individuals with home tests.**
- Large manufacturers like **Ford** and **GM** have filled gaps in **protection equipment** manufacturing.
- Social media platforms **Facebook** and **Twitter** have stepped in to **control the spread of misinformation** about the virus and to allow brands to take the lead on communicating.

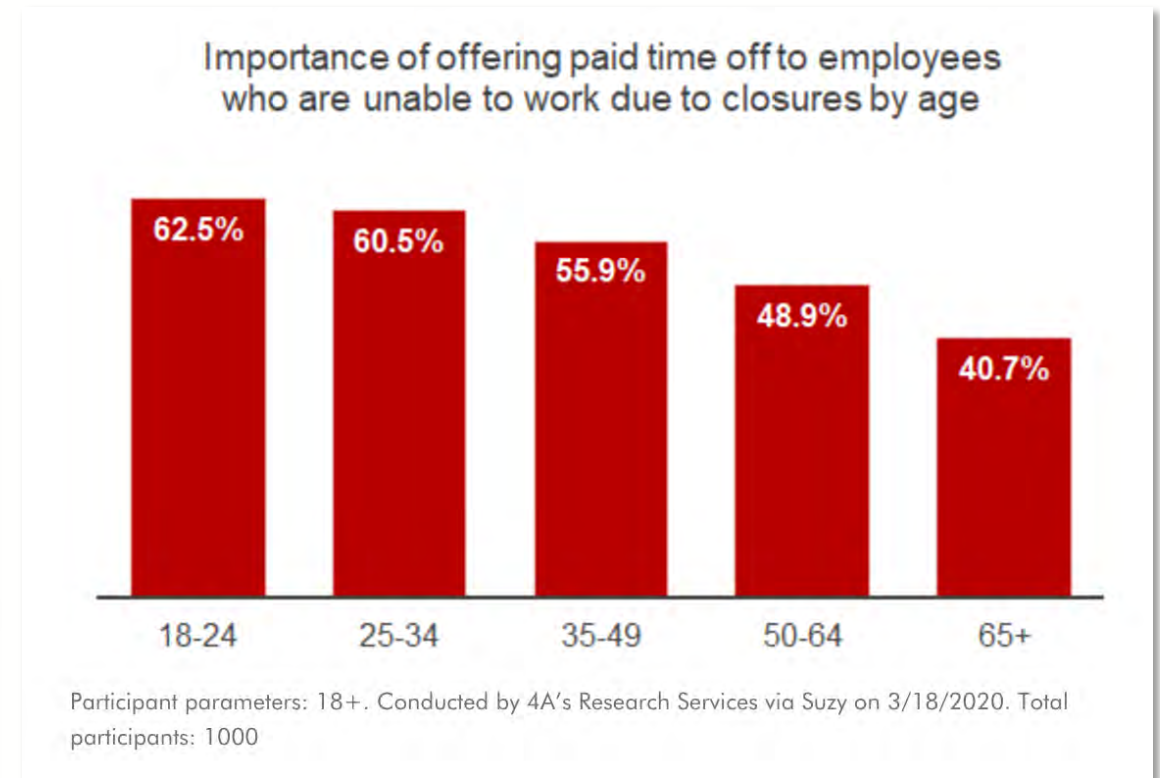


Source: Ingham, Lucy. "Coronavirus Home Test Delivery Gives Amazon Key Move towards UK Healthcare Dominance." *Verdict*, 30 Mar. 2020.

Source: Siddiqui, Faiz, and Reed Albergotti. "Ford and GM Are Undertaking a Warlike Effort to Produce Ventilators. It May Fall Short and Come Too Late." *The Washington Post*, 4 Apr. 2020.

Businesses will be forever judged by how they treat their employees during the pandemic

- In the future companies will have to answer to how they protected their employees during Covid-19.
- Employee treatment is increasingly important to younger generations.





7eregrine 610 points · 3 days ago · edited 3 days ago

My friend works for Home Depot. I fucking hated Home Depot. Now I am a big fan. So far they have:

- Given every employee an extra week of sick time. This was like 2 weeks ago.
- Sent thermometers to every employee.
 - *Just today gave an extra 40 hours of sick time to everyone and encouraged anyone not feeling well to stay home...
 - Let me text him... There's more. It's crazy how well HD is doing they're employees. My buddy "I'm fucking retiring from this job..."
 - This is how you get some fiercely loyal employees.
 - /Edit/
 - *Extra 2 weeks sick time to anyone over 60.
 - *Extra \$100 if you work your full schedule this week because people are taking time off.
 - *If diagnosed with Covid, full salary while you recover.
 - /Edit/
 - If your spouse gets diagnosed, you get paid while taking care of them.

👍 Reply Give Award Share Report Save

--bite_me-- 100 points · 3 days ago

👍 Cleaning supplies for the stores, 2 weeks sick time, weekly bonuses, 2x on all OT, additional week for anyone over 65, full pay if you test positive until you are cleared to come back... Yeah, I'm gunna die with this company.

👍 Reply Give Award Share Report Save

NeakosDK 58 points · 3 days ago

👍 If someone took care of me like that, I don't care if I was sweeping floors for them. I would be loyal for life.

👍 Reply Give Award Share Report Save

Putting employees first not only creates **employee loyalty** but also **consumer loyalty**

*“My friend works for Home Depot. I ... hated Home Depot. **Now I am a big fan.**”*

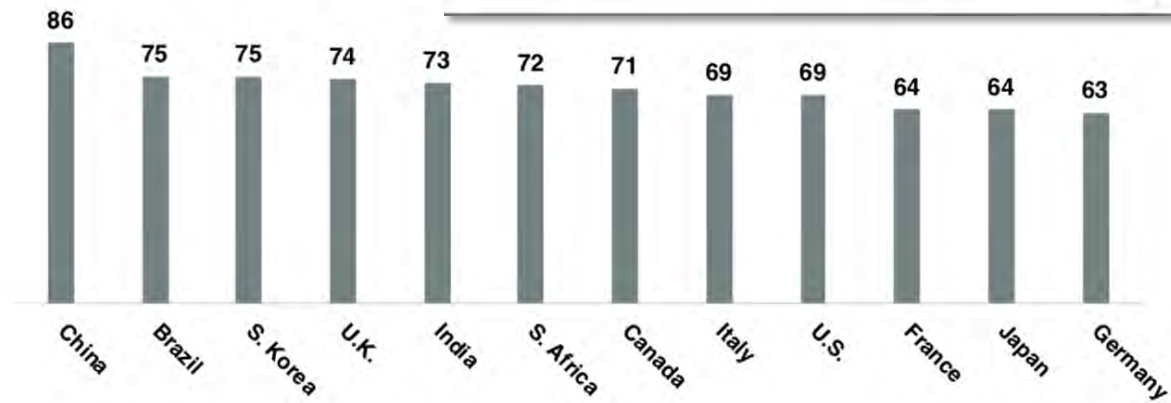
*“**If someone took care of me** like that, I don't care if I was sweeping floors for them. **I would be loyal for life.**”*

The reverse is also true—neglecting employee health is detrimental to brand reputation

FUTURE OF BRAND TRUST AT RISK

Percent who agree

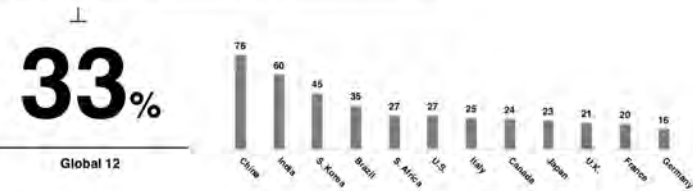
Brands and companies that I see placing their profits before people during this crisis **will lose my trust forever**



1 IN 3 HAVE ALREADY PUNISHED BRANDS THAT DID NOT RESPOND WELL

Percent who agree

I have convinced other people to stop using a brand that I felt was not acting appropriately in response to the pandemic.



2020 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Brands and the Coronavirus. Q2. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about brands and how they are responding to the current coronavirus pandemic. 9-point scale; top 4 box, agree. Question shown to those who have heard of the virus (Q1/1). 12-mlk avg. Data collected between March 23 and March 26, 2020.

As distrust in the overall government and economic system grows among mainstream individuals, it becomes crucial for a business to **set itself apart** from those systems—now is the time to **show that you are different.**

What Is Coming Next:

How can brands stay resilient in a post-Covid world?

The shift in **consumer faith** caused by Covid-19 puts us in a unique position to tackle climate change next ...

But only if we **choose the right path** out of this

Option 1:

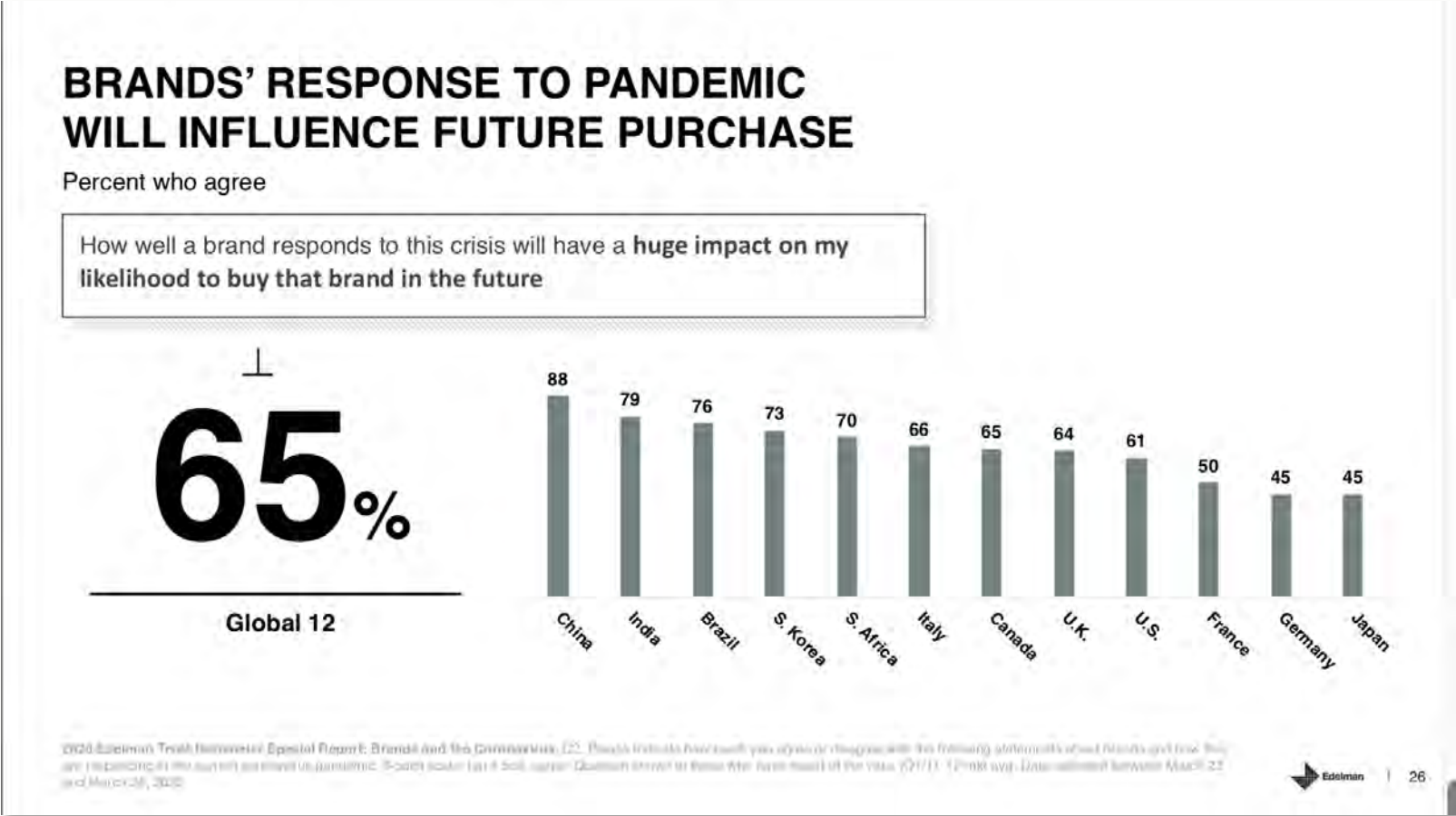
We try to return to “business as usual” after this is over, losing crucial social momentum needed for tackling climate change

Option 2:
Businesses embrace
the responsibility
consumers have given
them to tackle large-
scale issues like
climate change

Here's why you should choose Option 2:

It makes your business
resilient

Consumers are watching how you respond to the pandemic, and they're going to do the same for climate change—*your* behavior affects *their* behavior



When you set yourself apart from the overall system by doing what's right, it's a power play in the minds of consumers—you gain their trust and their loyalty

Several large chains faced backlash for accepting PPP loan money meant for small businesses. Shake Shack made their power play by returning the money they received.



The brands that are weathering the pandemic well are the ones setting themselves apart by *getting involved ...*

But not all involvement is created *equal*.

Donating small aid that takes advantage of losses already incurred due to the pandemic

Marriott
INTERNATIONAL



In the Community

Marriott understands that the pulse of the world beats as one to overcome COVID-19 and its devastating impact around the globe. As we all watch the news unfold about this unprecedented event, it's clear that there is a need to assist and bolster healthcare workers and community caregivers who are on the frontlines working to contain this disease. To that end, we have established the following programs to aid in the urgent fight against the pandemic.

With support from our credit card partners, American Express and JPMorgan Chase, Marriott has committed to provide \$10 million worth of hotel stays for healthcare professionals leading the fight against COVID-19 in the United States. The initiative, called **Rooms for Responders**, will provide free rooms in some of the areas most impacted including New York City, New Orleans, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Washington, D.C. and Newark, N.J. To implement this initiative, we collaborated with the American College of Emergency Physicians and the Emergency Nurses Association to match doctors and nurses with free accommodations at participating hotels.

Donating small aid that takes advantage of losses already incurred due to the pandemic

Making services free to help individuals cope with quarantine life

Planet Fitness closes amid coronavirus outbreak, offering free online exercise videos

by Victoria De Cardenas | Thursday, March 19th 2020



New Audible service offers free audiobooks to children, teens stuck at home

By Aaron Mamiit
March 22, 2020



Donating small aid that takes advantage of losses already incurred due to the pandemic

Making services free to help individuals cope with quarantine life

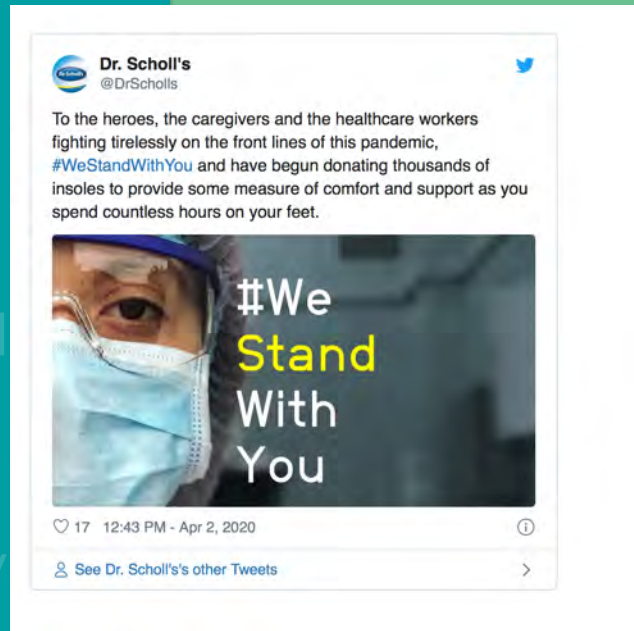
Forgoing profits to help others in the industry and employees

Guinness pledge £1 million to support bar staff across Great Britain

Cheers to that!



Donating small aid that takes advantage of losses already incurred due to the pandemic



Going beyond minimizing losses

Source: Genovese, Daniella. "Companies Join Coronavirus Fight by Helping Health Care Workers." *Fox Business*, 22 Apr. 2020.
 Source: Bobb, Brooke. "How Fashion Is Doing Its Part To Help Stop Coronavirus Spreading." *British Vogue*, 23 Apr. 2020
 Source: Newcomb, Alyssa. "Gap, Zara Start Producing Masks and Other Supplies for First Responders." *TODAY.com*, 30 Mar. 2020.
 Source: Cary, Alice. "Prada, LVMH And Kering Are Producing Masks And Medical Equipment To Combat The Coronavirus." *British Vogue*, 9 Apr. 2020.
 Source: Richey, Sharon. "Louis Vuitton Swap Luxury Perfume for Hand Sanitiser amid Coronavirus Crisis." *Because*, 18 Mar. 2020.

These 4 tiers of “winning” responses to the pandemic

Donating small aid that takes advantage of losses already incurred due to the pandemic

Making services free to help individuals cope with quarantine life

Forgoing profits to help others in the industry and employees

Going beyond minimizing losses

These 4 tiers of “winning” responses to the pandemic mirror the levels of response needed for other wide-scale issues, like climate change

Look like you’re helping when, in reality, you could be doing more

(and yes, consumers know the difference)

Donating small aid that takes advantage of losses already incurred due to the pandemic

Treat the mild consequences of the problem

Making services free to help individuals cope with quarantine life

Protect the people most affected by the problem

Forgoing profits to help others in the industry and employees

Actively fight the problem

Going beyond minimizing losses

But citizens aren't the only ones who want you to **act**—investors also think you're a **safer bet** when you're involved as well.

ESG funds are weathering the pandemic better than their non-ESG counterparts.

Involvement is resiliency.

According to a Bloomberg analysis, the average ESG fund fell by about 12 percent this year. That's a big tumble, but it's just half the decrease seen by the S&P 500 Index over the same period. A separate analysis of about 200 U.S. funds by Morningstar, a financial services firm, also found that, although ESG funds have taken a hit, they're faring better than their conventional counterparts and are overrepresented in the top quartiles of their peer groups, in terms of their performance.



JOHANNES EISELE / AFP via Getty Images

SILVER LINING?

As coronavirus infects markets, sustainable funds prove their mettle

By Naveena Sadasivam on Mar 23, 2020



A photograph of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, California, during sunset. The bridge's iconic orange-red towers and suspension cables are silhouetted against a sky transitioning from orange to a pale blue. A large, bright full moon is visible in the upper left portion of the sky. The water of the bay is a deep blue, and the hills in the background are also bathed in the warm light of the setting sun.

Key Takeaways and Next Steps

Key takeaways for how Covid-19 is changing culture and what you can do

- **The centers of power are shifting**
 - People are losing faith in their government's ability to take care of them—and are putting that faith into experts/science, their communities, and you (business).
- **Businesses are in a better position to act on a crisis than governments AND have a responsibility to do so**
 - You have a responsibility to take care of your people first and foremost, and your brand reputation will be forever marked by your actions today.
- **Culturally, we are in a better position to tackle climate change more than ever**
 - Covid-19 has shown us why experts are who we should be listening to, and our renewed sense of community reminds us how our actions go beyond just ourselves.
- **Being involved makes you resilient**
 - Investors want you to be involved—ESG funds ultimately weather downturns better than non-ESG counterparts.

So what do you do?

1. Get involved on the front lines of the problem

1. Get involved on the front lines of the problem

2. **Get off the political sidelines to participate in system-level change**

1. Get involved on the front lines of the problem
2. Get off the political sidelines to participate in system-level change
- 3. Be transparent and show you truly have skin in the game**

1. Get involved on the front lines of the problem
2. Get off the political sidelines to participate in system-level change
3. Be transparent and show you truly have skin in the game
- 4. Above all else, take care of your people**

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