

If your lockdown experience has been characterised by working from home while juggling full-time childcare, it would be understandable if you’ve been feeling envious of your childfree colleagues. There they are, able to take part in a video call without anyone wandering in to demand more biscuits, complain that the Hey Duggee episode has frozen again, or announce that they “need the toilet, NOW!”

Being a working parent has always had its challenges, but they’ve seemed particularly acute during the coronavirus pandemic, when so many of us have suddenly found ourselves not only trying to carry on with our normal jobs, but also becoming a children’s entertainer, chef and teacher rolled into one.

With schools reopening in phases, and many parents continuing to keep their children at home, home-schooling and entertainments are remaining a reality for many.

For many families, the past few months have provided an opportunity to reconnect, to spend more time with each other and enjoy a simpler and slower pace of life. Whether it’s building a fort in the living room or birdwatching from the garden, we’ve all been finding ways to pass the time and learn together.

And when boredom has hit, brands have been there to provide inspiration.

A close-up photograph of a young child with dark hair and eyes, looking directly at the camera. The child's hands are held up, showing vibrant colors of pink, blue, yellow, and purple paint. The child's face also has pink paint on the forehead and yellow paint on the cheeks. The child is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt with colorful handprints and abstract shapes. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the text "FIRING THE IMAGINATION".

FIRING THE IMAGINATION



With visits to bricks and mortar shops currently restricted and major changes in shopping habits expected post-coronavirus, keeping your customers inspired has been key to keeping your brand relevant and front-of-mind.

Providing a steady stream of inspirational content on social media is key. Take craft brand Stitch and Story, for example. Realising that millions of people were now spending more time than ever at home, they used their Instagram feed to share ideas for craft projects the whole family can get involved in, launching their #stitchtogether campaign to encourage families to create together.



Meal kit company HelloFresh has looked beyond cooking to get families inspired, sharing photos from customers' children putting their recycled boxes to good use, with creative ideas including pirate ships, toy boxes and robots.

Introducing a little levity into your brand content at times like this can really pay off, especially when you show that you understand how tough times are for everyone at the moment. By giving families simple ideas to brighten up their lockdown, they're more likely to feel an affinity with your brand, thereby keeping you at the front of their mind when it comes to purchase journeys.



GETTING THROUGH
THE DAY-TO-DAY

Even in the middle of a pandemic, life goes on, and all the normal family activities we might have previously taken for granted – like the rite-of-passage that is a visit to the shoe shop to get measured for a new set of kicks – have to be reconsidered.

John Lewis has solidified its position as one of Britain's favourite brands by providing useful content for families trying their best to carry on as normal, providing a handy guide for measuring your child's feet at home.

The content itself has been cleverly designed to feature a highlight of the brand's latest children's shoes, helping busy parents find what they need and shortening the path to conversion at the same time.



Getting customers themselves involved is also an effective way to engage with your audience and show that you are there to help them and their families get through the day. Tesco's #FoodLoveStories campaign – previously characterised by glossy yet homely adverts sharing customers favourite recipes – has moved entirely into customers' homes. 'Bitesize' videos of siblings making cookies together or proud sons following their mum's roast chicken recipes have been accompanied by tips from celebrity chef Jamie Oliver on creating tasty family dishes.

A young girl with short brown hair, wearing a light pink long-sleeved top and a matching tutu, is seen from behind. She is holding a long, dark blue ribbon that stretches across the room. The setting is a dimly lit room with a large window in the background, through which bright light is streaming. To the left, there is a tall wooden bookshelf filled with books. To the right, a large green plant is visible. In the foreground, a black office chair and a lamp with a pink shade are partially visible. The overall atmosphere is warm and intimate.

AUTHENTICITY OVER PRODUCT

You'll have noticed that in all of these examples, the brands connecting most closely with families at home aren't necessarily the ones focused on talking about their product. Sure, we've all been making the most of online shopping and home deliveries to keep ourselves occupied and our cupboards fully stocked, but it's those brands that have recognised the emotional impact of coronavirus, especially on our youngest and most vulnerable members of society, that have shone through.

In the early days of the pandemic, being openly humorous or light-hearted in brand content felt insensitive. However, as the UK begins to emerge from the worst of the pandemic, there's more room for brands and organisations to be playful in their content, using their communications strategies to provide some much-needed light relief.

AUTHENTICITY OVER PRODUCT

By putting authenticity first, encouraging customer-generated content and being useful and inspirational, these brands have helped us all find troubling times a little easier. Boredom, frustration and stress have been inevitable in everyone's home these past few weeks, but by using content with a sense of humour, that provides inspiration and shows how we're all still connected, brands have captured our loyalty.

