

# The power of online research amid the COVID-19 pandemic

---

Shekhar Mishra

The coronavirus outbreak is, without question, an unprecedented crisis, with economists suggesting that it is both a **healthcare** and **economic** crisis that would lead to a recession. It has become a very difficult time for governments as they decide to shut down their economies and pause their nations' activities.

Decisions taken by governments and corporates at this time would affect the way their citizens see the world and how they evaluate their leaders and organisations. Organisations have been very supportive, taking a big digital leap towards providing their employees with the facilities necessary to work from home. This was a sudden change, very often not provided for in many companies' policies, as they had until then worked with a traditional approach. We believe that after this crisis, companies may shift towards remote-working policies permanently, saving on infrastructure spending.

## Changes in consumer attitudes and behaviours:

This pandemic has affected almost everything around us – from business to daily routines. Travel bans and other restrictions have significantly disrupted daily routines, and this, coupled with risks to personal health and financial loss, has led to visible signs of emotional stress, anger, anxiety and fear of isolation.

During the initial stages of the outbreak, consumers panicked and started hoarding supplies. However, they subsequently adjusted to the situation and started purchasing sensibly. This was enabled by government guidelines and clear communication that there was no shortage of supplies.

With everyone staying indoors, online shopping is likely to increase significantly versus traditional shopping and remain the preferred method for a while even after the restrictions are eased.

Listed below are some of the biggest concerns due to the current situation:



Going out shopping



Travelling



Partying or eating out



Working from office

---

## **Consumer behaviour analysis never stops:**

The social-distancing and self-quarantining measures in place are enabling companies to access target viewer groups across generations under one roof. This is because digital content-viewing dynamics have changed, with people subscribing to packages with content meant for the entire family.

This opens an opportunity for companies to capitalise on by advertising and endorsing their products. They can earn trust by maintaining their presence and demonstrating a sense of normalcy by delivering value in a period of anxiety.

We recommend that they follow due diligence and adapt their strategies to the most effective way of reaching their target audiences. Rather than print and outdoor advertising, they should shift their advertising budgets to the TV and digital platforms.

Advertising concepts have shifted recently, with companies and brands pursuing customers with advertisements that mention the following:

- The hygienic practices they adhere to
- Provision of contactless delivery to the doorstep
- Contextualising support and connecting with consumers' emotions
- How they are supporting the nation in these difficult times

Some disruptive advertisements:

- Cab aggregators/transporters requesting the public to stay at home; also providing free transport for healthcare personals
- Distilleries making sanitiser
- Fabric houses volunteering to make masks
- Honda taking online bookings and delivering cars to the doorstep
- Banks relaxing credit payment timelines

**“When times are good you ought to advertise, but when times are bad you must advertise”**

Advertising and branding are viable and vital for both companies and consumers in these times, as consumers would trust and remember these brands after the crisis as well.

## **How online market research can help**

Getting close to customers and understanding their emotions is critical, but companies would not be able to conduct in-person research for the next 15-18 months at least. This is where online market research comes in, proving to be the most viable solution in these circumstances. Continued tracking of brand health would help companies focus on building more sustainable and resilient business models amid this

---

global paradigm shift and uncertainty.

Why market research is essential

- **To understand consumer needs, changing behaviours and sentiments**
- **To track brand health**
- **For input for new product development**
- **For insight on how to be competitive and maintain performance**
- **Migration from offline to online migration ensures continued and timely insights**

### **How Acuity Knowledge Partners can help:**

As a leading provider of high-value research, analytics and business intelligence, we offer a full suite of market research services. In addition to our unparalleled survey programming and data processing services, we now provide authentic and cost-efficient online data collection services.

### **Our range of market research services include the following:**



Questionnaire  
Design Assist



Survey  
Scripting



Online Data  
Collection



Data  
Processing



Online Reporting/  
DIY Dashboards



Survey  
Analytics

To help our clients navigate through both the people and business impact of COVID-19, we have created a [dedicated hub](#) containing a variety of topics, including our latest thinking, thought leadership content and action-oriented guidelines and best practices.

### **Sources**

<https://www.statista.com/>

#### **About Acuity Knowledge Partners**

Acuity Knowledge Partners is a leading provider of high-value research, analytics and business intelligence to the financial services sector. The company supports over 300+ financial institutions and consulting companies through a team of over 2,500+ subject matter experts who work as an extension of the clients' teams based out of various global delivery centres.

We empower our clients to drive revenues higher. We innovate using our proprietary technology and automation solutions. We enable our clients to transform their operating model and cost base.

