COVID-19 MARKET INTELLIGENCE REPORT
CURATED CONTENT, INSIGHTS AND ANALYSIS FOR B2B MARKETERS
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There were mixed signals out of Washington D.C. last week on a possible coronavirus vaccine. The administration’s chief scientific advisor claimed it was “highly unlikely, but not impossible” that a vaccine could be available by the end of October. This statement ran counter to the optimistic assertions from the White House that a vaccine could be ready by or close to Election Day.

In the meantime, more than 51,000 cases of the coronavirus have been confirmed at colleges and universities, including thousands that have emerged in recent days as students returned to campus for fall semester. Students have been asked to quarantine in their dorms, and sororities and fraternities on many campuses across the country have been asked to pause their events to avoid a surge. Meanwhile, Labor Day celebrations brought a new set of concerns of case surges in the weeks ahead.

We’re here to support your efforts in effectively communicating an appropriate narrative while being mindful of the shifting nature of this crises. This document is intended to provide the analysis you need to best determine your communications efforts in the weeks to come. Sections for analysis include:
PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

- The US Department of Health and Human Services is planning to spend more than $250m on a campaign to “defeat despair” and “inspire hope” amid the Covid-19 pandemic. *Campaign US*

- Data from its C-19 Inclusion Pulse survey, which polled the ad industry in May, revealed that 83% of working mothers are worried about their financial future compared to 69% of men. *The Drum*

- Facebook announced it will ban new political ads a week before Election Day. *Axios*

- Advertisers seek the right to cancel TV spending as pandemic roils fall season. *WSJ*

- *NYT’s* Tiffany Hsu reports that “For the advertising industry, the pandemic means opportunity.” *New York Times*
Pinterest and Facebook took steps last week to clamp down on misinformation ahead of what is expected to be a divisive election. In a blog post, Pinterest said it will stop showing ads to its users altogether when they search for election-related terms. In addition, the company said it would redirect users to non-partisan voter registration sites when they search for instructions on how to vote.

Meanwhile, Facebook said it won’t accept any new political ads in the week leading up to the presidential election. This is one of several policies that CEO Mark Zuckerberg said will help ensure a fair election in November. These actions were quickly covered by news outlets including CNBC, CNN and Adweek, to name just a few. Each outlet challenged how this might or not benefit both parties in the run up to the election and questioned, for example, whether Facebook was doing enough to control misinformation.

Ad trade press covered the extent of the damage done to the U.S. media economy in the wake of the pandemic-induced downturn. New data from market research firm, Kantar, shows media spending in the first half of 2020 was down 19.1%. That’s grim news for an industry already reeling from layoffs (Droga5 announced a series of cuts last week) and spending cuts by brands. The industry was hopeful the return of sports would help the market bounce back, but early media coverage on the U.S. Open tennis tournament (which began last week) claims the average audience fell by almost half in the first three days. Matches were played in empty stadiums and some of the sport’s biggest stars declined to participate.
SXSW hasn't yet decided if they will be in person for 2021’s event, but organizers confirmed there will be at least a digital component to the festival. PanelPicker, their online platform for entering session ideas, will be opening in the coming weeks.

The remaining 2020 events held by Fortune will all be virtual:
- September 29 to October 1 is the Most Powerful Women Summit, which has become the premier gathering of top female executives
- October 26-27 is the Fortune CEO Initiative and the Fortune Global Forum; this will be a joint meeting with a collection of CEOs
- December 1-2 is Brainstorm Tech.
TRADE ORGANIZATIONS

- The IAB released the “2020-21 Covid Impact On Advertising" report that shows the migration of ad budgets from "traditional" to "digital" across a variety of media, including TV, radio, "print," and out-of-home media, too. [MediaPost](http://www.mediaset.com)
  - The study shows that digital ad spending will actually expand 6% this year, while traditional media advertising will decline 30%, indicating digital's market share is growing as a result of the pandemic.
Netflix dominated top-tier business coverage over the long holiday weekend ahead of a new book by its CEO, Reed Hastings. The new book, ‘No Rules Rules’, is not a memoir, but a deep dive into Netflix’s corporate culture and best practices. Netflix continues to dominate streaming war headlines; we anticipate additional coverage around the platform ahead of this much-publicized book.

Meanwhile, every reporter is anxiously awaiting updates on the impending sale of TikTok as the September 15th deadline looms. China appears to have complicated efforts to sell TikTok to an American company by introducing new rules that could allow Beijing to veto any potential deal. Speculation on the path forward for the popular platform will continue until a deal is signed.

With summer 2020 behind us, interest in what lies ahead and how our lives will continue to change will be top of mind. What will Halloween look like and what will travel look like for Thanksgiving? How brands respond and connect with their audience will be crucial in this time and reporters will continue to explore how the pandemic is changing experiences we’ve grown accustomed to.
BE SAFE & STAY HEALTHY!

Have questions or need help navigating the current COVID-19 environment? Contact MaryLiz Ghanem at maryliz.ghanem@digennaro-usa.com

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