

Courage under fire: How marketers and agencies made lemonade

 By [Johanna McDowell](#)

22 Apr 2021

The old adage talks about how to react when life gives you lemons - but under circumstances unseen in our lifetime, what do you do when life hands you a pandemic? If you're in our sector, you respond with grit not seen in our lifetime.



Photo by Allan Mas © from [Pexels](#)

"Where were you when the world shut down?" is a question we'll raise at dinner parties far into the future, and each of us will tell our story. Each sector will relay either devastation, just getting through the trauma or being able to take the challenges Covid-19 created and making something special.

Scopen's January 2021 white paper *The Show Must Go On: Success stories during a pandemic* shines a light on some of the marketers and agencies who faced fire with fire and braved these less favourable conditions with agility and boundless creativity.



Agency Scope Insights: Deep, decisive and digital

Johanna McDowell 1 Apr 2021



Burger King in Brazil comes to mind for a campaign that not only reinforced the slowly-growing body of medical wisdom at the time, but also used one of the pandemic's key methods of stemming the spread of the virus – stay at home to flatten the curve – to underpin a winning campaign.

The premise saw the “gamification of a duty, where any obligation is more easily endured when there is an emotional or material reward for fulfilling it”, according to Rafael Donato, Creative VP DAVID agency. “We gamified the quarantine, turning the isolation time into benefits at Burger King.”

The campaign saw 238,000 people staying home for over 27 days, racking up a massive 306,000 rewards given out by Burger King. ROI from media mentions all over the world – uncountable and invaluable.

Necessity as a driving force

The primary driving force for most new initiatives is need, and Covid-19 provided plenty of that. From the Nike campaign in China to Orange France’s 700,000 connections uniting people all over France, big brands went the extra mile to help out wherever they would be most effective. Even South Africa’s Shoprite Group kept supply chains open during lockdown, reducing risk for customers and providing essential products and services without profiteering.

Most striking when we read through the white paper is how marketers and agencies worked together so closely, even while they were not allowed to be close.

This is what we at the IAS mean when we talk about the value of an authentic relationship between marketers and agencies. People from both sectors were effectively in silos, but working as one mind to meet the demands put on them. The courage it took to trust each other was immense and paid off in spades.

Imagine just two years ago telling a TV production team they would have to create vital messaging during an unprecedented time in history – but they weren’t allowed to meet in person. Many of us would have put money on an epic fail. Instead, driven by necessity, teams found workarounds, ways and the will to put the best of themselves into projects that truly made a difference.

I’ve often said that the attitude “That’s the way we’ve always done it” has no place in our business, and Scopen’s *The Show Must Go On* is proof that when all there is are lemons, we can – and do – make lemonade.

To enjoy this exceptional, innovative and courageous creative work click [here](#).

ABOUT JOHANNA MCDOWELL

MD of the Independent Agency Search and Selection Company (IAS), and partner in Scopen Africa, with a background that includes being on both the agency and the client side of the fence, Johanna McDowell is well-placed to offer commentary on marketing and advertising in the South African and international contexts. She built her career in marketing and advertising since 1974, holding directorship in both SA and British advertising agencies. She was MD of Grey Phillips Advertising in 1988.

- Creating a “magic middle”, not a “them and us” of brand vs performance - 29 Apr 2024
- Unlocking agency methodologies: Why understanding operations is crucial for clients - 14 Feb 2024
- #BizTrends2024: Johanna McDowell - Agency ecosystem trends defining future working methods - 22 Jan 2024
- Post pitch relationships: Keep the glow when the real work hits hard - 13 Nov 2023
- It's pitching time as marketers are looking ahead to 2024 - 27 Sep 2023

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>