



## COVID-19 needs a Novel '20 Marketing Approach

by Seth Greenberg, [www.linkedin.com/in/sethgreenberg](http://www.linkedin.com/in/sethgreenberg)

*Data Driven & Creative Consumer & Enterprise CMO | Advisor | Investor*

*Seth has built remarkable consumer and enterprise brands like Intuit TurboTax and QuickBooks, LifeLock and most recently helped take Alteryx public (NYSE:AYX)*

Fear, uncertainty and doubt is to be expected in the current state of the nation and world. Media (even remarkably ESPN) is eating it up including a persistent “Breaking News” banner flashing and affixed to the bottom quarter of your television screen. With the sequestering and our newest oxymoron “social distancing” of Americans including working from home to flatten (yet elongate) the infection curve, this pandemic is an opportunity and quite frankly a necessity for your marketers to be master communicators. Thought Leaders are needed to help us navigate the calm before, during and after the storm.

An effective CMO understands human behavior and what makes people tick. She uses her marketing prowess to influence not only her channels but the entire enterprise to communicate with prospects, customers, employees and shareholders in ways that engage, encourage, reassure and provoke thought to cultivate a thriving community.

### **Develop an Insightful and Compassionate Business Approach**

The 2008 financial crisis wreaked havoc as banks needed bailouts and consumer confidence was at a low, foreclosures were the norm and we experienced the biggest economic downturn since the Great Depression. I was at Intuit (TurboTax and Quickbooks). Our messaging and actions focused on empathy and creating new means of loans for small business owners as well as partnering up with Walmart and other retailers to add free and additional funds for consumers who accept their tax refunds onto branded gift cards. This showed Intuit cares and the durable messaging continues to be an important part of how the company is positioned and perceived.

While at LifeLock the world was introduced to the largest data breach in 2013 when Target announced 110 million credit/debit-card wielding shoppers, who made purchases at one of the company's stores during the attack. Their personal and financial information had been compromised. We changed the marketing and company message from Fear to Freedom to “Living freely in an always connected world.” We focused on products and services that helped all stakeholders alleviate the anxiety of the unknown.

### **Return on your Investment**

Business outcomes have been stellar for Intuit and its stock (NASDAQ: INTU) has been a tremendous performing value for shareholders. In 2016 Symantec acquired LifeLock for \$2.3 billion (approximately 3x revenue). Creating offerings with appropriate messaging designed to alleviate anxiety during unsettling times will ultimately pay dividends.

What are your thoughts? I'd love to get your feedback. In subsequent posts I will share more of the “how”...the tactics your marketers can utilize to ensure their CEO's strategies and objectives are met.

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