

Lessons from *The Atlantic*: Responding to a Global Pandemic



Prepared for Advisory Board for the Arts

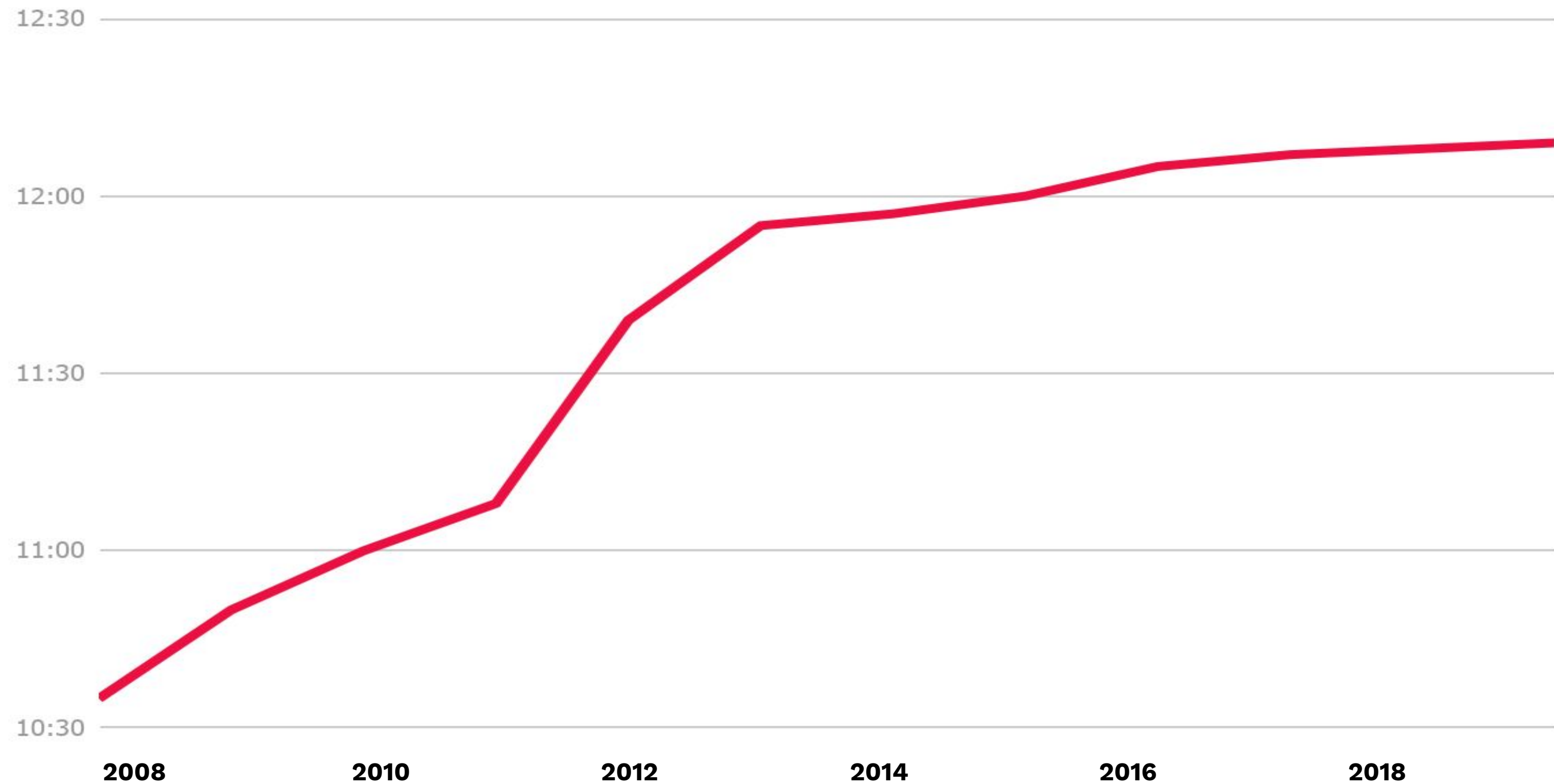
Insights from the Media Landscape

U.S. adults spend an average of

12 HOURS

per day connected to media

Time Spent Engaging with Media Per Day



Audience behaviors are shifting.

41% of U.S. adults often or sometimes avoid the news

74% of respondents report they are actively avoiding advertising

55% of consumers say that trusting a brand now matters more to them

Expectations are high.
Audiences are looking for ...

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Formats that fit into their lives

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- ✓ Formats that fit into their lives
- ✓ Stories that stick with them
- ✓ Brands they can trust

A

“It has never been so important to get people to pay attention to hard truths, and perhaps it has never been as difficult to do that as it is right now. The key is to confront the most brutal facts of reality unflinchingly, while maintaining an unwavering hope for the future.”

How to Talk About the Coronavirus

LIZ NEELEY

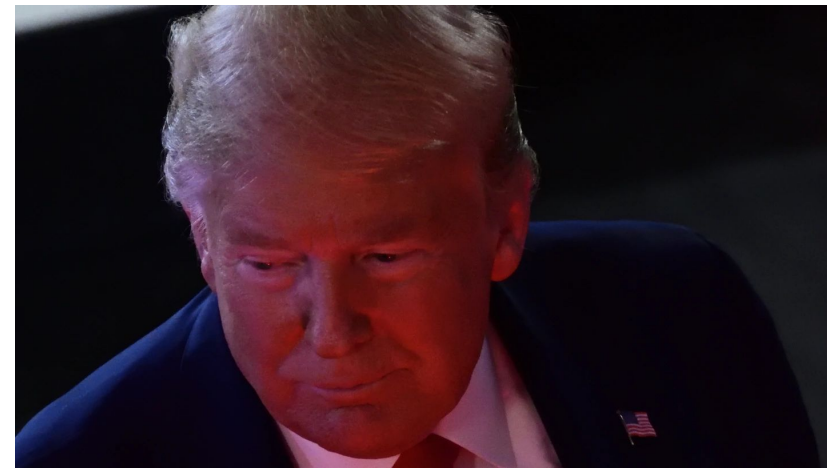
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The Atlantic has been an industry leader in responding to COVID-19.



How the Pandemic Will End

ED YONG



The Trump Presidency Is Over

PETER WEHNER



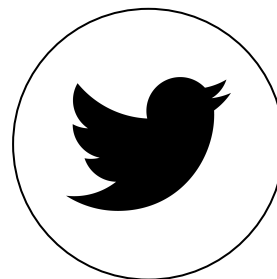
You're Likely to Get the Coronavirus

JAMES HAMBLIN

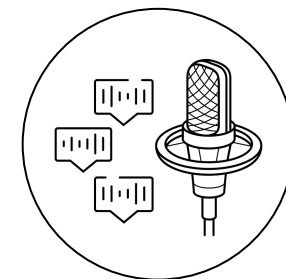


The Extraordinary Decisions Facing Italian Doctors

YASCHA MOUNK



Former President Barack Obama and Bill Gates both tweeting out Ed Yong's "How the Pandemic Will End," citing its usefulness and insight.



Social Distance Podcast
over 150k downloads to date



Glossier CEO citing Atlantic journalism as influence to close all Glossier stores, highlights article in letter to customers

...how?



Three lessons brands can learn from *The Atlantic's* journalism.

01. Match your mindset to your audience's mindset.
02. Position your brand for service over commerce.
03. Be nimble now for endurance later.

01

Match your mindset to
your audience's mindset

Anticipate what your audiences may need, before they even know it.

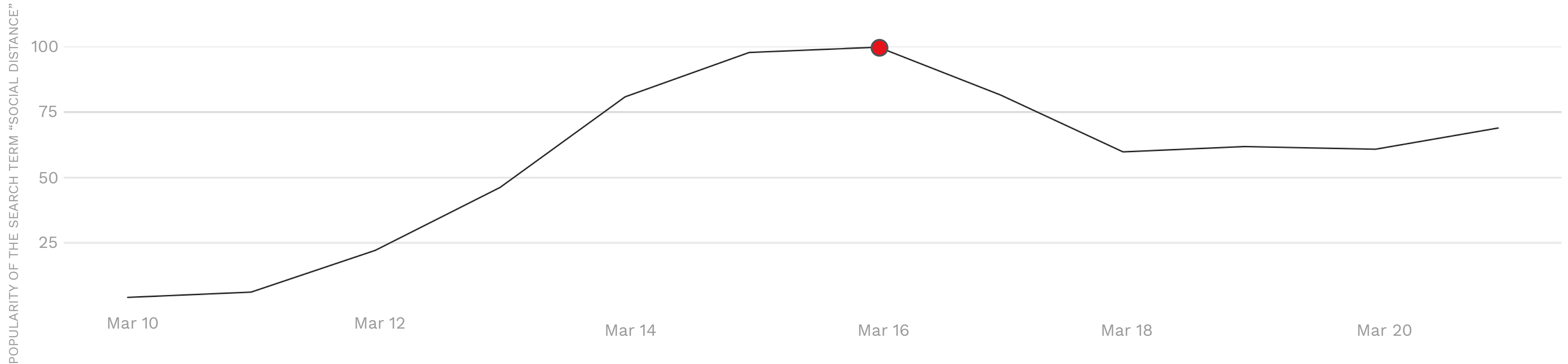
March 12
The Do's and Dont's of Social Distancing published
5th most read article - March. Over 3M unique pageviews

March 13
The Atlantic's *Social Distance* podcast launched

March 16
"Social Distance" search spikes

Interest in the term "social distancing" over time

BASED ON GOOGLE SEARCH NUMBERS



Take the pulse of your audiences to truly understand how their mindsets shift.

RANKING OF AUDIENCE NEEDS,
FROM ATLANTIC READER SURVEY

Information about how the virus is spreading and its potential impacts.

AUDIENCE MINDSET

What's going on?

THE ATLANTIC'S RESPONSE



You're Likely to Get the Coronavirus

Most cases are not life-threatening, which is also what makes the virus a historic challenge to contain.

Understanding how the U.S. and other governments are responding to the crisis.

Is this under control?



The Coronavirus Called America's Bluff

Like Japan in the mid-1800s, the United States now faces a crisis that disproves everything the country believes about itself

Guidance from experts on what I can do to protect myself and others.

What should I do about it?



What Do You Tell Someone Who Won't Stay Home?

A guide to convincing your loved ones to take the coronavirus seriously

Analyses and guidance on how people are self-quarantining + social distancing.

How do I live this new life?



How You Should Get Food During the Pandemic

An age-old dilemma is now much more fraught: Order in or cook at home?

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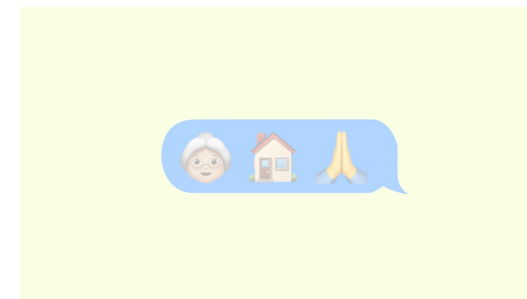


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Note: Update framework with an example from ABA's membership (a museum?) that has mapped audience mindsets

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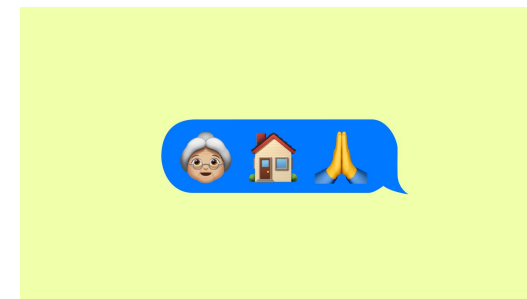


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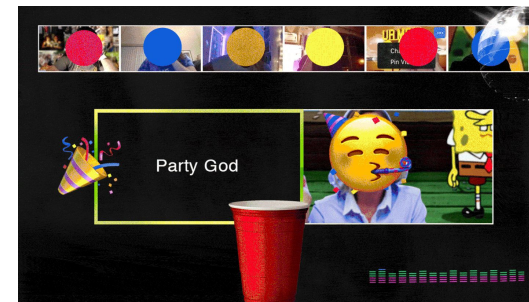
How You Should Get Food During the Pandemic

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Don't forget: We all need a break.

And we seek a respite
in different ways.

A lighthearted
angle on the
crisis



There's No Zoom Party Like a College Zoom Party
Gen Z's impulse to congregate online and post constantly—which older adults often mock—is serving them well in self-quarantine.

A knowing wink
to the crisis



We Need Puppies Right Now

When so much of the world is focused on stories that can create anxiety, it might be helpful to take a breather and enjoy a few photos of adorable pups on National Puppy Day.

A complete
departure



Meghan and Harry Overplayed Their Hand

Megxit is the most complicated, self-involved, grandiose, shortsighted, letter of partial, fingers-crossed resignation in history.

02

Position your brand for
service over commerce

The Atlantic made most of its coronavirus coverage free for all readers...



...and earned **3x** as many subscriptions as a result.

Being of service: a framework

ORIGINAL IDEA

What new story, perspective, or guidance can we provide?

ATLANTIC EXAMPLE:



The Kids Aren't Alright

March 24 - While children aren't at high risk of infection, this piece considers the long-term impact of children's mental health and economic prospects having been raised in the crisis.

CREDIBLE EXPERTISE

Are our messengers trusted?

ATLANTIC EXAMPLE:



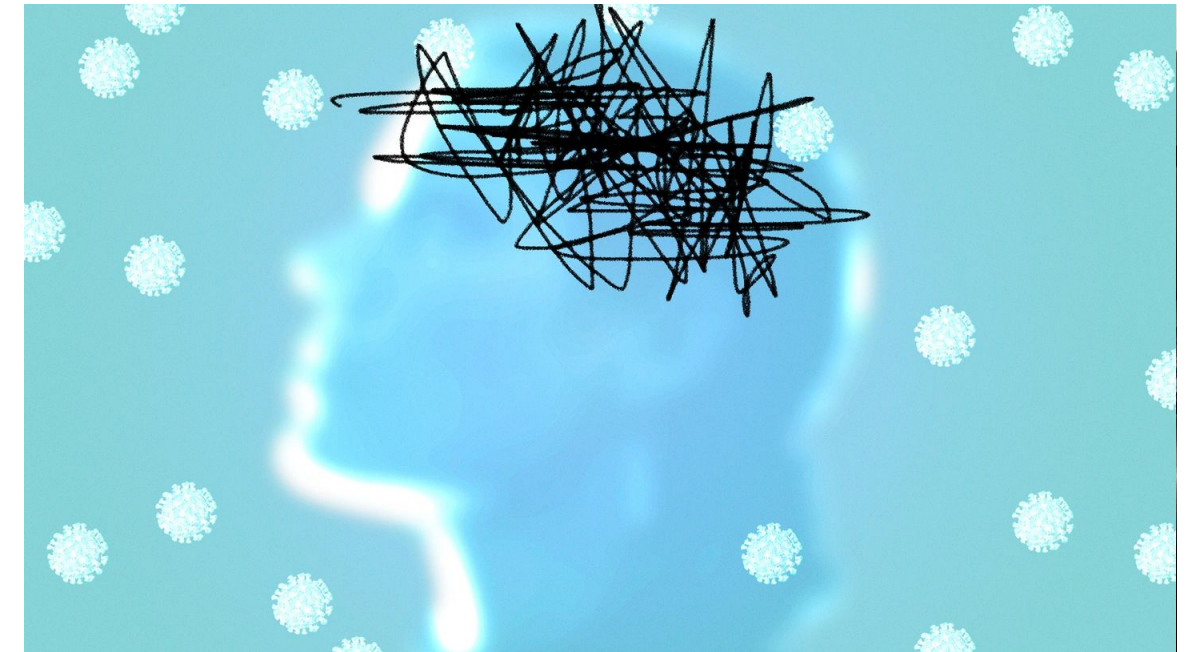
How the Pandemic Will End

March 25 - Ed Yong interviewed 22 different health experts and scientists for this quintessential piece on the pandemic's trajectory and future.

EMOTIONAL ALIGNMENT

Are we acknowledging our audiences' fears, curiosities, hopes, or stress?

ATLANTIC EXAMPLE:



Dear Therapist's Guide to Staying Sane

During a Pandemic

You can let anxiety consume you, or you can feel the fear and also find joy in ordinary life, even now.

PwC's U.S. Chair Tim Ryan



Woman with facemask crossing a neighborhood street in New York City

We can help protect the economy if we protect our people

Published on March 24, 2020



Timothy F. Ryan
US Chair and Senior Partner at PwC

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4,609 · 298 Comments

Note: Keep this example, and add a slide for La Jolla, Blackfriars, or another org that has taken steps to put service before donations/tickets

Original Idea

“We will emerge in better shape if we follow the guiding principle that we will do what we can to put people first by protecting their jobs and livelihoods.”

Credible Expertise

“We know our economy is consumer-led, and we don’t want to amplify an economic downturn by being blinded by the short-term. At PwC, we have adopted the principle that we will only consider laying off employees as a last resort.”

Emotionally Aligned

“Our feeling is that if this is going to be a hard year for people, it shouldn’t be a good year for profits.”

03

Be nimble now, for
endurance later

Now is the time to remove hurdles, break down silos, and eliminate red tape.



SOCIAL DISTANCE

- Quick to market
- Conversationalist in tone
- Fills gap in marketplace
- Low production value

Focus your people on their strengths and encourage them to flex into unfamiliar territory.

Don't be inhibited by rigid roles and responsibilities.



Alexis Madrigal, a technology reporter, is tracking testing data from every U.S. state



Amanda Mull, who writes about consumerism, is focusing on the impact for service workers.

Find your most relevant experts and empower them.



HEALTH
James Hamblin



ECONOMIC POLICY
Annie Lowery

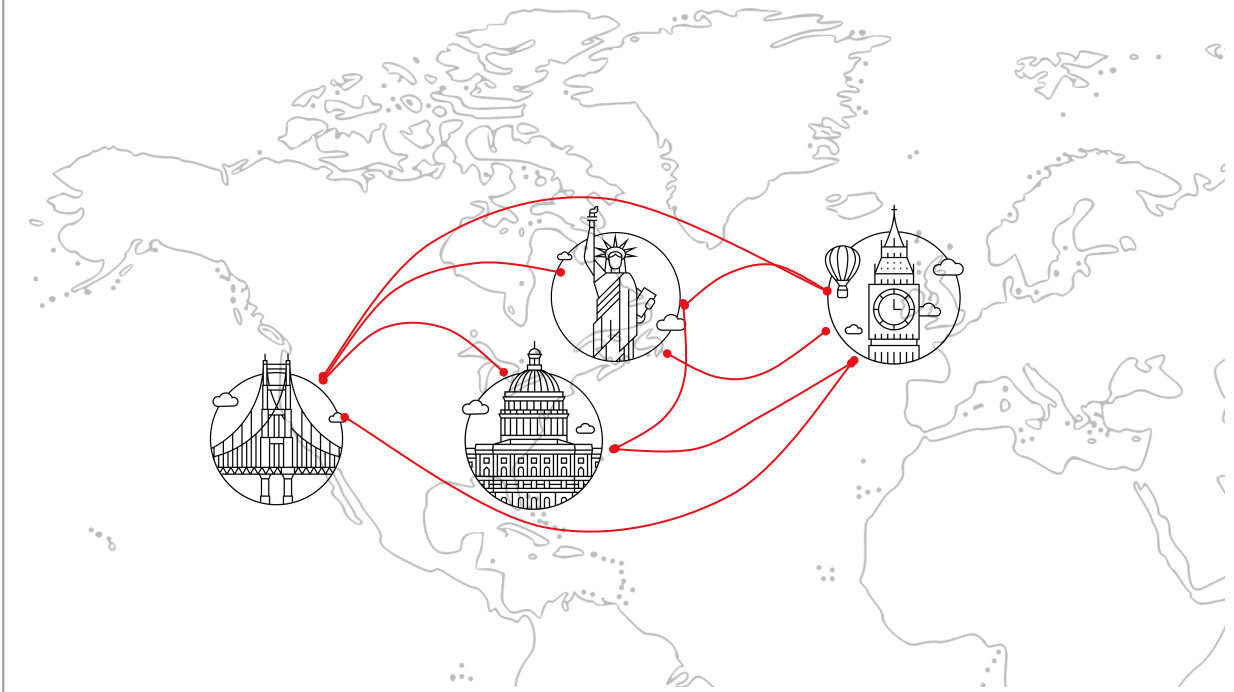


SCIENCE
Ed Yong



HEALTH
Olga Khazan

Be agile, over communicate.



The Atlantic's 150-person newsroom introduced a new weekly all-hands meeting to align as a group when typical roles and responsibilities are in flux.

Allstate: The Renewal Project

Strengths are still strengths.
How can you deploy them
in new and nimble ways?

Mission

Show how individuals and organizations
serve their communities

COVID Response

Enable individuals and organizations
to serve their communities


SURFACING ORGANIZATIONS IN NEED

MARCH 27, 2020

Nonprofits in need respond to our COVID-19 message board

Consider donating to one of these nonprofits in The Renewal Project community.

THE RENEWAL PROJECT



Nonprofits need support now more than ever. Below we are keeping a running list of community organizations in need. If you have a specific need, email our editor at margaret@therenewalproject.com.

As communities respond to the coronavirus pandemic, we decided to repurpose this space for you, our Renewal Project community. We created this virtual message board to amplify your nonprofit's specific needs during this time. If you want to be included, please send us a link to your nonprofit and your specific request to margaret@therenewalproject.com.

Subscribe to our newsletter to get this list emailed to you weekly.


— Margaret Myers, The Renewal Project editor

Urban Ministries of Wake County is the area's largest shelter for single, adult women experiencing homelessness. The nonprofit in Raleigh, North Carolina, also operates a food pantry and a clinic that treats uninsured adults with chronic conditions. Right now, many volunteers are staying home, and medical workers are using telemedicine when they can. With these new complications, resources are tight, says Urban Ministries communications specialist Carrie Pitts-Densmore. Donate to Urban Ministries [here](#).

SOLICITING HELP FROM SUBSCRIBERS

RENEWAL 365™

MADE POSSIBLE BY



During unprecedented times, leaning on the [support systems](#) in our communities is more vital than ever. Over the next few weeks, we will share mini profiles from the finalists of The Renewal Awards, a program of *The Atlantic* and Allstate. These nonprofits serve the folks who may be most in need in times of crisis—from migrant farmworkers to young people from disadvantaged communities.

We hope you enjoy learning about the people behind these exemplary organizations and consider donating to help them sustain their programming.

We will also be sharing links for organizations that serve some of the most vulnerable populations affected by the coronavirus outbreak. As always, please share your own stories with us: margaret@therenewalproject.com. What are the organizations lifting up your community right now?

— The Renewal Project Editor Margaret Myers

THE RENEWAL AWARDS

Meet five of the 15 finalists for the 2020 Renewal Awards—we are sharing their profiles over the coming weeks. Five winners from this group will receive \$40,000 each from *The Atlantic* and Allstate.

READER APPRECIATION

“Thank you for sharing the great work of other [nonprofits]. Please do keep these emails coming.”

“Observation: Has there ever been a more critical, appropriate time for an initiative such as yours?”

Three lessons from *The Atlantic's* response to COVID-19, and how to put them into action.

01

Match your mindset to your audience's mindset

1. Use trend data—search trends, digital analytics, audience sentiment—to inform decisions, but let good judgment rule the day.
2. Learn about your audience mindsets and needs through formal and informal surveys.
3. Let your audience guide your messaging, not your brand interests.
4. Create audience journeys to envision the path from introduction to loyalty.

02

Position your brand for service over commerce

1. Evaluate what you can sacrifice now to build trust and loyalty later.
2. Create a framework for service, or follow *The Atlantic*:
 - a. Original Idea
 - b. Credible Expertise
 - c. Emotional Alignment
3. Build credibility through action, not empty promises.

03

Be nimble now, for endurance later

1. Prioritize ideas and agility over process.
2. Let your most relevant experts and leaders shine, while encouraging others to flex into unfamiliar territory
3. Over-communicate! Put in measures to understand what everyone is doing and align around common goals.

Atlantic57