

# UNPRECEDENTED?

How is Covid-19 changing  
the way we **get informed**?

## Who's on screen



**Mobbie Nazir**  
Global Chief  
Strategy Officer

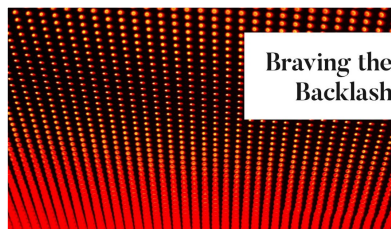
**Lore Oxford**  
Global Head of  
Cultural Insights



## Our thought leadership

Unprecedented? is the latest addition to our public facing research and thought leadership.

We aim to be the smartest social behaviour and culture experts in the world. This drives innovation, creativity and effectiveness in our ideas.



## Who we work with

The most pioneering global brands in the world.

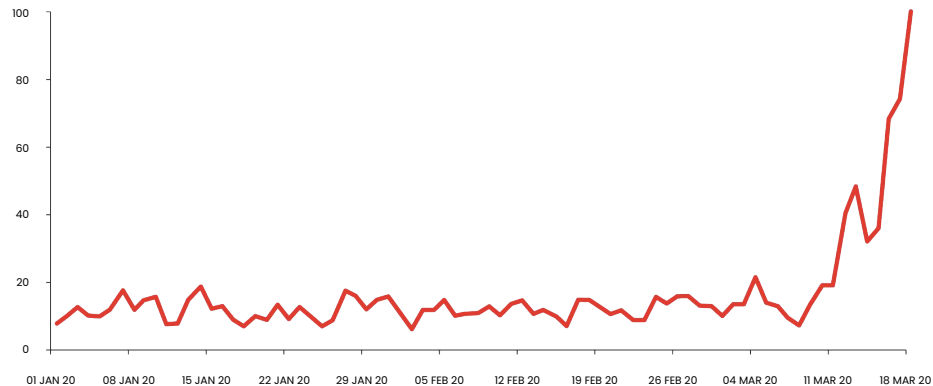
The logo for Activision, featuring the word "ACTIVISION" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.The Burberry logo, featuring the word "BURBERRY" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.The Google logo, featuring the word "Google" in its multi-colored, sans-serif font.The Amazon logo, featuring the word "amazon" in a lowercase, sans-serif font with a yellow arrow pointing from the 'a' to the 'z'.The Virgin Atlantic logo, featuring the words "virgin atlantic" in a lowercase, sans-serif font with a red and white globe icon.The Netflix logo, featuring the word "NETFLIX" in a bold, red, sans-serif font.The YouTube logo, featuring the words "You Tube" in white, sans-serif font on a red rounded rectangle background.The Mary Kay logo, featuring the words "MARY KAY" in a black, serif font.The Vodafone logo, featuring a red speech mark icon followed by the word "vodafone" in a lowercase, sans-serif font.The Guinness logo, featuring a gold harp icon above the word "GUINNESS" in a black, serif font.



# Introducing Unprecedented?

A series in which we explore how much Covid-19 has really changed the way we behave online – not just now, but in the long-term.

This year, there's been unprecedented use of the word 'unprecedented'



# Introducing **Unprecedented?**

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# 01

How is Covid-19  
changing the way we  
**connect?**

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# 01

How is Covid-19 changing the way we **connect**?

# 02

How is Covid-19 changing the way we stay **entertained**?

# Introducing Unprecedented?

A series in which we explore how much Covid-19 has really changed the way we behave online – not just now, but in the long-term.

# 01

How is Covid-19 changing the way we **connect**?

# 02

How is Covid-19 changing the way we stay **entertained**?

# 03

How is Covid-19 changing the way we get **informed**?



How is Covid-19 changing  
the way we **get informed**?

# Who contributed

We Are Social boasts a team of 800+ social experts spread across 15 offices globally, our global cultural knowledge is unmatched by most creative agencies.

Our **Social Spotting Network** is a core group of collaborators whose collective brain ensures we're keeping track of cultural shifts on a global scale.





# Who contributed



**Dr. Tunisha Singleton**  
Media Psychologist &  
Brand Consultant



**Whitney Coble**  
Global Social & Influencer  
Marketing Manager at Mary Kay

**Harvey Cossell**  
Group Head of Strategy, UK



**Werner Iucksch**  
Strategy Director, Singapore

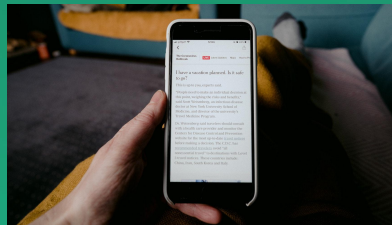


**Bruno Tecci**  
Head of Strategy, Italy



During Covid-19,  
social and  
digital have  
played **a**  
**central role in**  
**how we access**  
**information..**

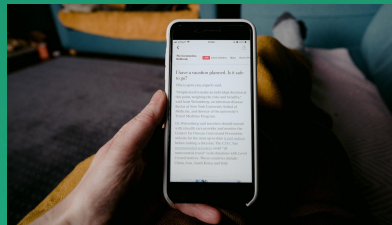
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## Keeping up with current affairs and the crisis

With 28% of 18 to 24s globally having used Instagram as a news source in the past week, social is playing a larger role in how we stay up to date

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## Keeping up with current affairs and the crisis

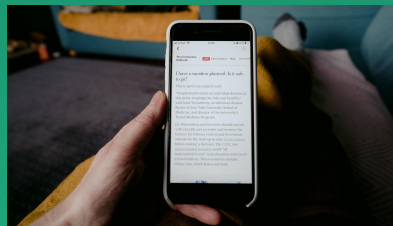
With 28% of 18 to 24s globally having used Instagram as a news source in the past week, social is playing a larger role in how we stay up to date.



## Personal progress, upskilling and learning

People watched 7.7 million hours of LinkedIn Learning courses globally in April – almost triple the amount watched in February.

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## Keeping up with current affairs and the crisis

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## Researching brands and products

During this time, social networks became the top choice amongst internet users aged 16 to 24 globally when it comes to brand research.



But while digital is democratising access to information, misinformation is rife.

**74% of the global population are concerned about fake news relating to Covid-19.**



In this environment, swathes of **new behaviours** have emerged.



We can't predict which will last, as **we're still operating in a unique environment.**

Even as economies reopen, for many, the coming months are still defined by uncertainty and anxiety.

**Florida shatters records with over 10,000 new COVID-19 cases in single day**



**Parts of Northern England banned from meeting others indoors after spike**



**Coronavirus: Another spike forces Spain into second local lockdown in 24 hours**

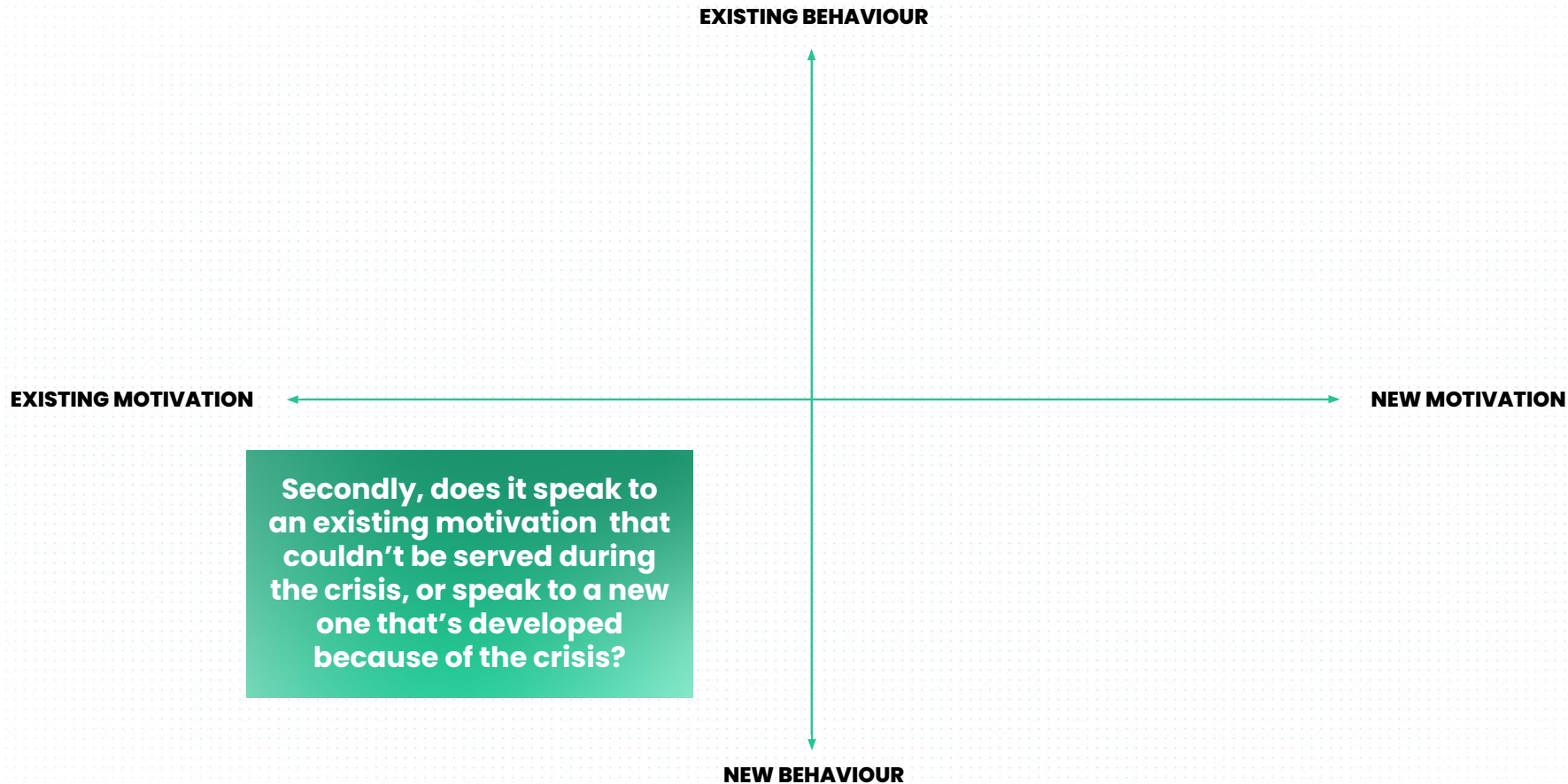


**EXISTING BEHAVIOUR**



**NEW BEHAVIOUR**

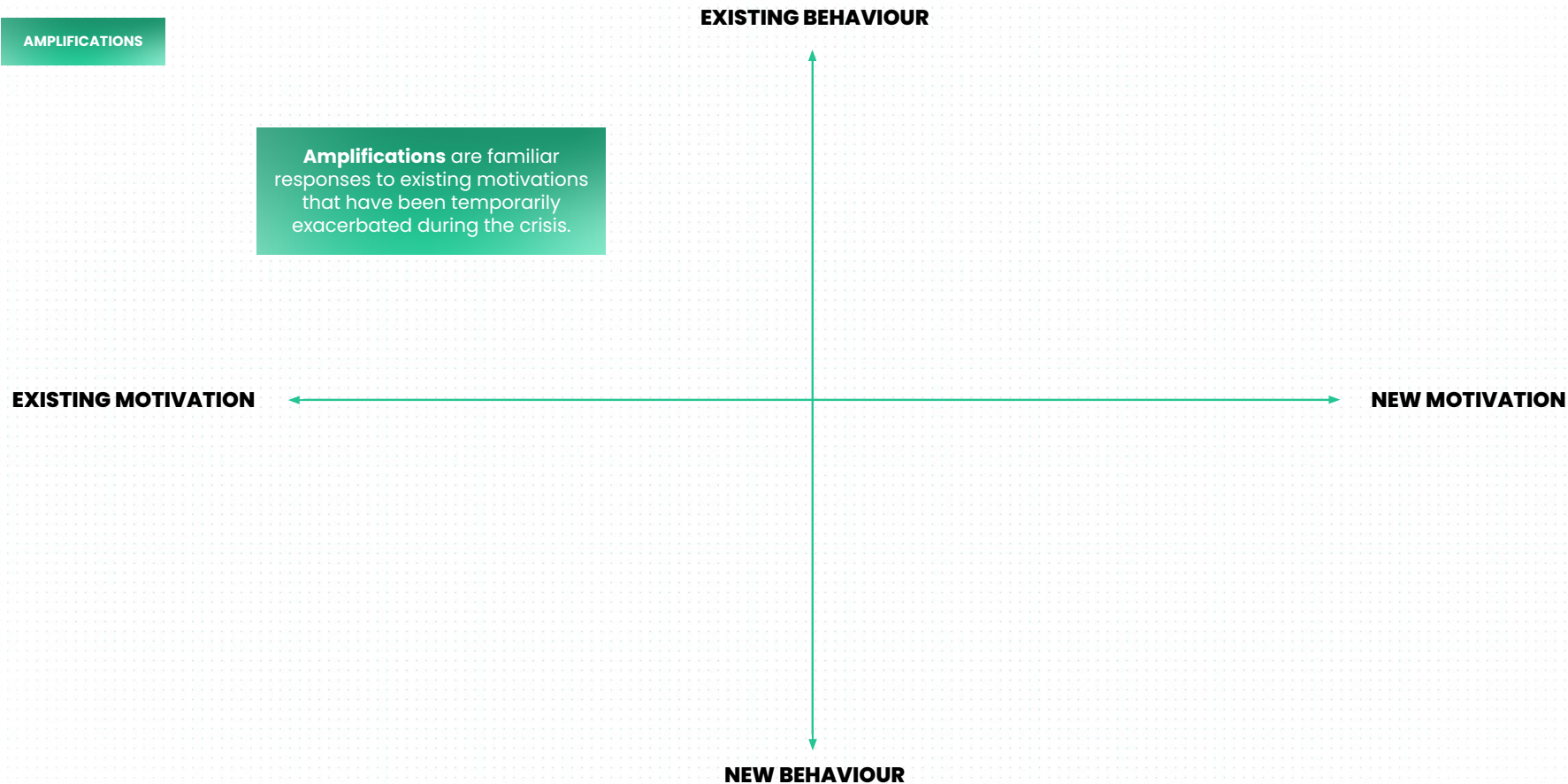
**Firstly, is it truly new,  
or is it part of an  
existing behaviour?**



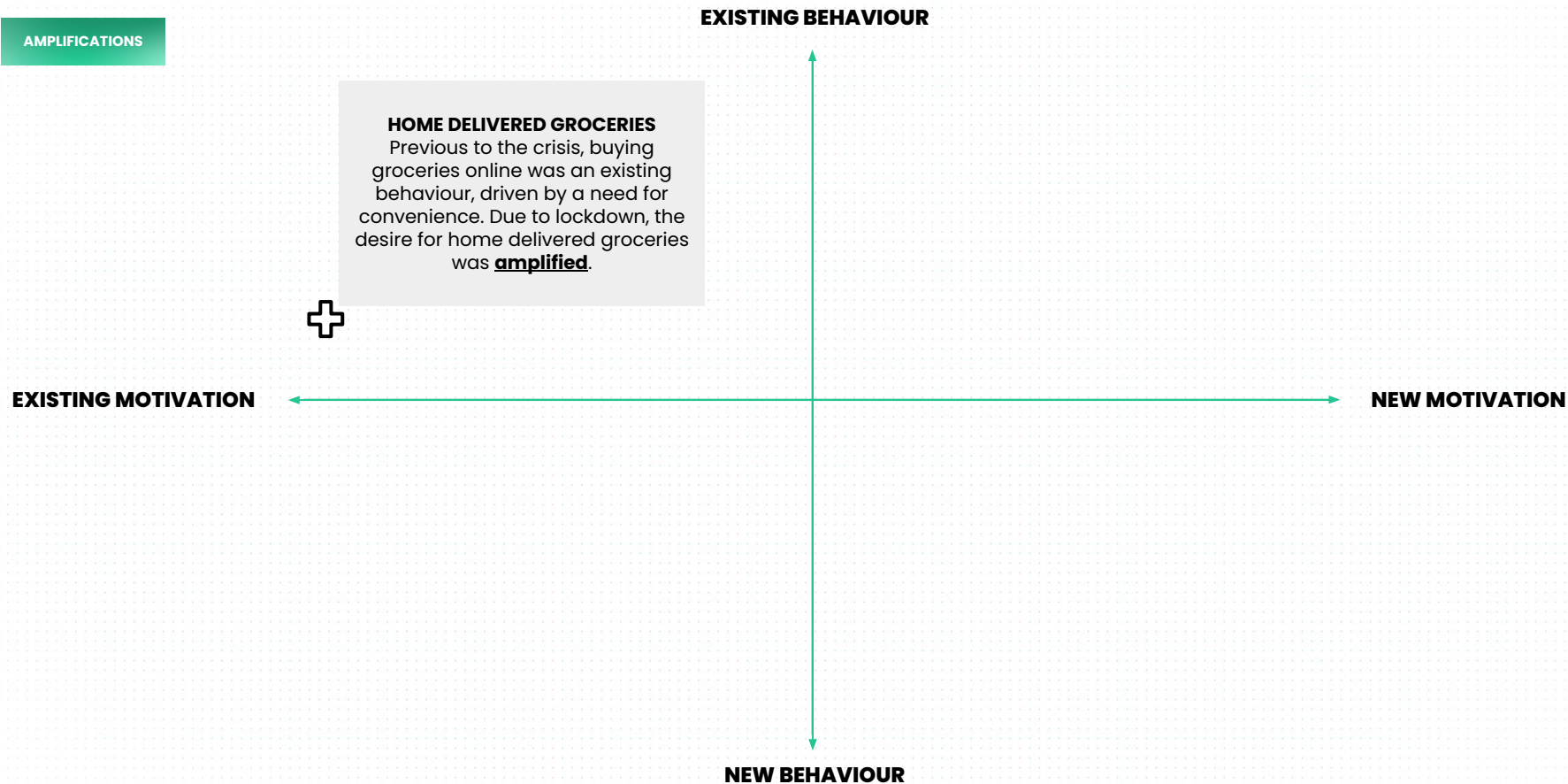


## AMPLIFICATIONS

**Amplifications** are familiar responses to existing motivations that have been temporarily exacerbated during the crisis.



## AMPLIFICATIONS





## AMPLIFICATIONS

## EXISTING BEHAVIOUR

**HOME DELIVERED GROCERIES**  
Previous to the crisis, buying groceries online was an existing behaviour, driven by a need for convenience. Due to lockdown, the desire for home delivered groceries was **amplified**.



## EXISTING MOTIVATION

## NEW MOTIVATION

**Substitutes** are new responses to the crisis that serve existing motivations and desires in the short-term.

## NEW BEHAVIOUR

## SUBSTITUTES

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## EXISTING BEHAVIOUR

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## EXISTING MOTIVATION

## NEW MOTIVATION

**DIGITAL SUPPER CLUBS**

During the crisis, people were trialling virtual food events – from supper clubs to wine tastings – a new behaviour to **substitute** the existing desire to eat out in social spaces.



## NEW BEHAVIOUR

## SUBSTITUTES

AMPLIFICATIONS

ADAPTATIONS

EXISTING BEHAVIOUR

**HOME DELIVERED GROCERIES**  
 Previous to the crisis, buying groceries online was an existing behaviour, driven by a need for convenience. Due to lockdown, the desire for home delivered groceries was **amplified**.

**Adaptations** are existing behaviours that serve new motivations in the wake of the crisis.



EXISTING MOTIVATION

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**IMMUNITY-BOOSTING FOODS**  
 People were buying health foods prior to the crisis. But in the wake of Covid-19, a desire for foods that boost immunity in particular has developed. This is an **adaptation** in line with the anxieties of the pandemic.

## EXISTING MOTIVATION

## NEW MOTIVATION

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NEW MOTIVATION

**DIGITAL SUPPER CLUBS**  
 During the crisis, people were trialling virtual food events – from supper clubs to wine tastings – a new behaviour to **substitute** the existing desire to eat out in social spaces.

**Deviations** are new responses to new motivations that could persist beyond the crisis.

SUBSTITUTES

DEVIATIONS

NEW BEHAVIOUR

AMPLIFICATIONS

ADAPTATIONS

## EXISTING BEHAVIOUR

**HOME DELIVERED GROCERIES**

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**DIGITAL SUPPER CLUBS**

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**RESTAURANT MEAL KITS**

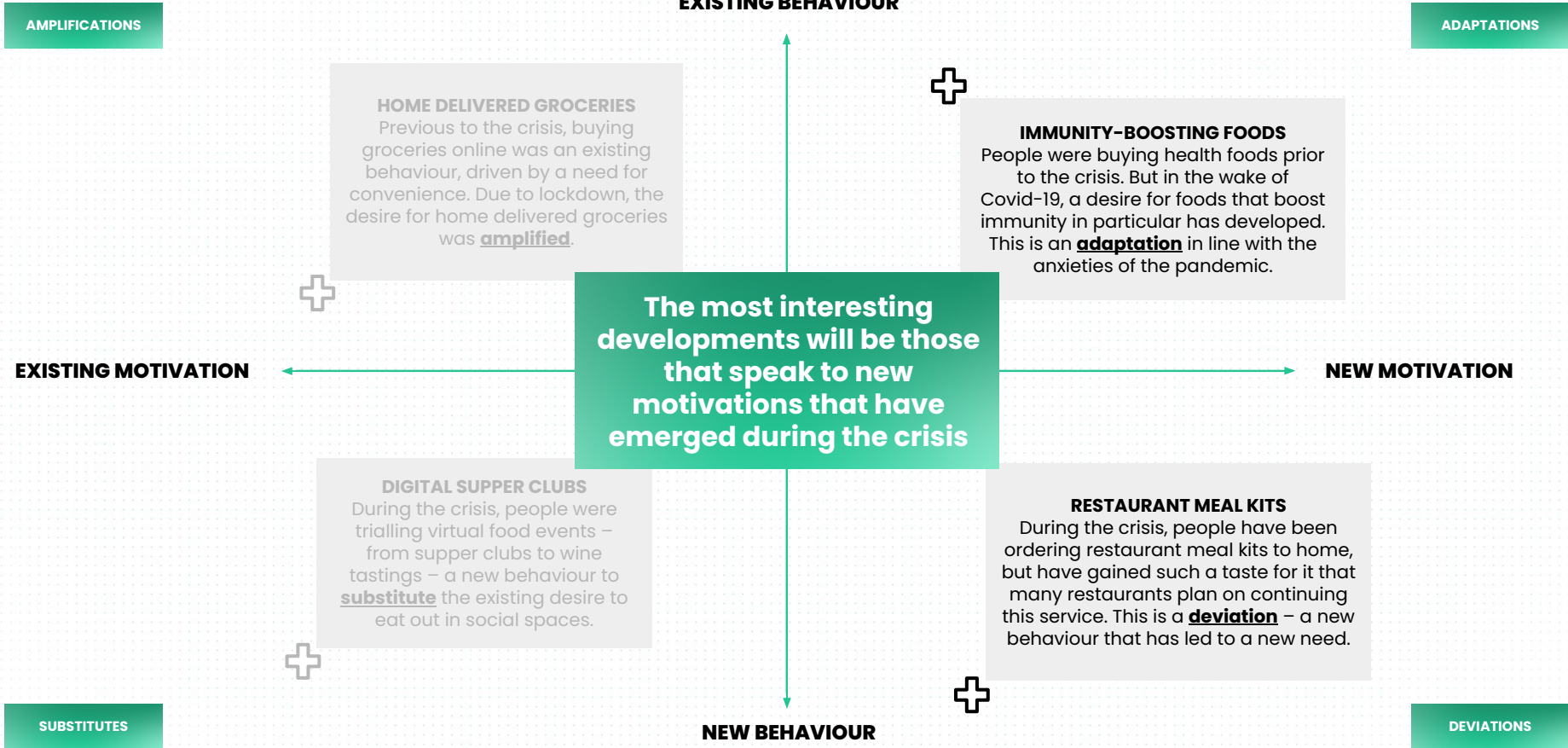
During the crisis, people have been ordering restaurant meal kits to home, but have gained such a taste for it that many restaurants plan on continuing this service. This is a **deviation** – a new behaviour that has led to a new need.

SUBSTITUTES

DEVIATIONS

## NEW BEHAVIOUR







So let's explore  
the key **behaviours**  
**defining the ways**  
**we've stayed**  
**informed** during  
Covid-19...

# 01

## Expert Influence

People are looking  
to influencers **with  
proven expertise**



# 01

## Expert Influence

People are looking to influencers **with proven expertise**

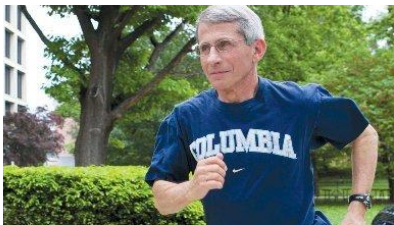
### Before Covid-19

Recent years have seen influencer economy – historically driven by aspiration and aesthetics, especially on platforms like Instagram – fall out of favour, perceived as shallow and brand-centric.

### During Covid-19

During lockdown, influencers have been under a microscope, with many coming under fire for everything from posting vacuous content in times of crisis to spreading misinformation. In this landscape, the figureheads that have thrived have been those that can offer genuine expertise.

# Where we've seen it?



**Dr. Fauci became an internet hero during the height of the first wave**

*US*



**Celebrities like Selena Gomez and Katie Couric gave anti-racism experts their platforms during BLM**

*Global*



**Dr. Ewoma Ukeleghe is a dermatologist who was posting skincare expertise during lockdown**

*UK*



**French fashion brand Sézane has been giving its platform on Instagram to Professor of Philosophy Marie Robert to help its following make sense of life in lockdown**

*France*



*Scientists and experts are so coveted right now. And people are turning to social media for candid discussions with [them]. Designers, artists, scientists, founders, who may have previously not been as active in social, are all popping up in Q&As*

**Whitney Coble Global Social & Influencer Marketing Manager at Mary Kay**



AMPLIFICATIONS

ADAPTATIONS

EXISTING BEHAVIOUR

EXPERT INFLUENCE



EXISTING MOTIVATION

NEW MOTIVATION

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NEW BEHAVIOUR

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EXISTING BEHAVIOUR

EXPERT INFLUENCE



*There's always been space for people who know what they're talking about online. Maybe not so much around healthcare – that's much stronger now, for obvious reasons – but if you look at any how-to video, usually you find people making these videos know what they're talking about*

**Werner Iucksch, Strategy Director, Singapore**

EXISTING MOTIVATION

NEW MOTIVATION

NEW BEHAVIOUR

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EXPERT INFLUENCE

EXISTING MOTIVATION

*We're redefining what should be behind a paywall and what shouldn't. Right now, people are so starved of answers – because of the lockdown, the pandemic and the sheer volume of information – that experts are stepping up to provide this insight in digital spaces*

*Dr. Tunisha Singleton, Media Psychologist & Brand Consultant*

NEW MOTIVATION

SUBSTITUTES

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NEW BEHAVIOUR



# What it means for brands

## In Q3 and Q4...

This will have huge implications on how influencer partners are chosen both in the short-term and the long-term.

Brands should be choosing reliable partners who can deliver opinion and insight around their products and services with authority.

## In the new normal...

Across industries – from fashion to food – there will continue to be a place for relatable content from ‘real people’, but more space will also open up for expertise to play a role.

We could also see long-term influencer partnerships become more common, in which the work of the creator is further legitimised by the length of the partnership.



# 02

## Everyday DIYers

People have been learning **how to recreate the little luxuries**



# 02

## Everyday DIYers

People have been learning **how to recreate the little luxuries**

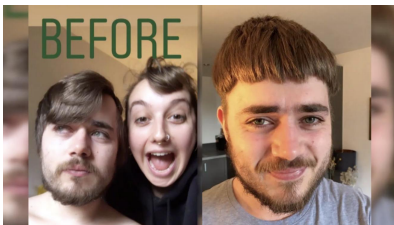
### Before Covid-19

There were so many aspects of everyday life – from getting your nails done to eating out at restaurants – that require the service of skilled professionals.

### During Covid-19

In lockdown, these aspects of life have been put on hold, and people are looking to digital channels to learn how to recreate the ones they miss the most from home.

# Where we've seen it?



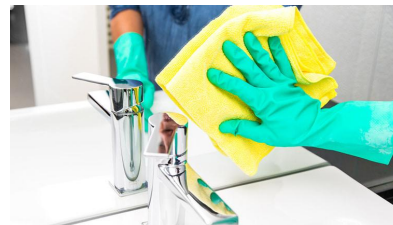
DIY haircuts and dye jobs went viral during the first few weeks of lockdown

*Global*



People have been using how-to videos across platforms to learn how to do home DIY, with more than half of Brits noticing jobs that need doing during lockdown

*UK / Global*



Fantastic Cleaners is an Australian cleaning company that's been providing how-tos and guides for people to conduct antiviral cleans on their homes

*Australia*



Uber Eats and Carrefour partnered with Burger King to launch a Whopper people could figure out how to make from home

*France*

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EXISTING MOTIVATION

NEW MOTIVATION



EVERYDAY DIYERS

NEW BEHAVIOUR

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ADAPTATIONS

**EXISTING BEHAVIOUR**

*In the short term, this has been about teaching people how to do things they want or need to do. It was born out of necessity*  
**Bruno Tecci, Head of Strategy, Italy**

**EXISTING MOTIVATION**

**NEW MOTIVATION**

**EVERYDAY DIYERS**



**NEW BEHAVIOUR**

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EXISTING BEHAVIOUR

*Once this is over, people will rush back to all of these experiences they've been recreating from home. But what they've invested time and cash into will still be there. We'll see people reap the benefits of the things they've done for themselves from home during this time*

**Dr. Tunisha Singleton, Media Psychologist & Brand Consultant**

EXISTING MOTIVATION

NEW MOTIVATION

EVERYDAY DIYERS



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# What it means for brands

## In Q3 and Q4...

In the short-term, there are so many ways for brands to help people recreate the little details of everyday life from home.

There's also an opportunity to educate consumers about products and services at a time when they're open to listening and learning.

## In the new normal...

For businesses that previously only offered out of home services, this period could serve as an opportunity to build out a more permanent space in the home for your brand.

Adapting so people can enjoy the experience of your product or service from home is a flexibility people will appreciate and remember. It could transform customers into brand advocates in the long-term.

# 03

## Reskill Now

People have been using this time to **pivot their prospects**



# 03

## Reskill Now

People have been using this time to **pivot their prospects**

### Before Covid-19

Contemporary culture praises productivity. And bolstered by uncertain economic prospects and a growing aversion to the conventional 9-to-5, side hustles, second jobs and always-on digital upskilling have become the norm.

### During Covid-19

With the weight of the crisis forcing us to reassess what's important to us – and many anxious for their livelihoods – people have been using the an abundance of time during lockdown to upskill and reskill through a range of digital channels.

# Where we've seen it?



The Federal Department of Education in Australia is working with education providers to develop six-month courses in subjects from teaching to engineering for people to reskill during lockdown

*Australia*



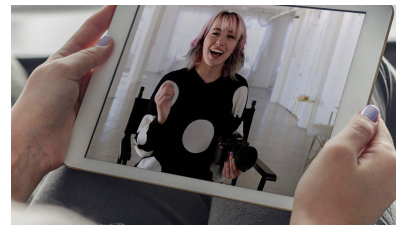
Gen Zers have been using time in lockdown to upcycle, customise and make their own clothes, with brands like Dickies offering tutorials on social to support them

*Global*



Dough It Yourself is a gourmet pizza kit business started by a property developer who was looking to diversify his career prospects during lockdown

*Dubai*



At the height of the first wave, Nikon its entire curriculum of online photography classes free

*Global*



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RESKILL NOW



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EXISTING MOTIVATION

*People have always looked online to learn, but now it's for a new reason. Some are bored and seeking purpose, others are anxious about job security and finding new skills to survive. They're at opposing ends of a spectrum, but right now, they're all flooding the same digital spaces to achieve very different things*

**Dr. Tunisha Singleton, Media Psychologist & Brand Consultant**

RESKILL NOW



NEW MOTIVATION

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# What it means for brands

## In Q3 and Q4...

There's a huge opportunity for knowledge sharing right now, as the economic situation continues to unfold.

Brands that have aggregated value through expertise – whether they're industry specialists or they have the best tech – have an opportunity to democratise access to their resources.

## In the new normal...

As life returns to normal, the desire – and time – for upskilling and reskilling will dwindle for many, but the desire to learn and to grow (which existed before the crisis) will remain.

Off the back of this time, we could see people's perception of social platforms shift. While YouTube's role in learning will persist, we could see platforms like Instagram and TikTok legitimised as educational resources.

04

# Virtual Showrooming

People are **trailing and researching** products online



# 04

## Virtual Showrooming

People are **trailing and researching** products online

### Before Covid-19

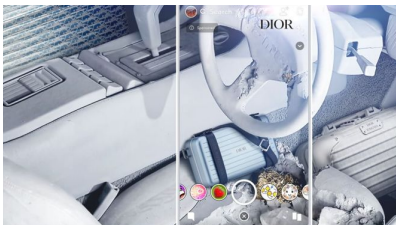
Retail innovation has seen an increase in virtual retail experiences, but data has long suggested people prefer offline shopping where possible, especially on big tickets items.

### During Covid-19

Lockdown saw e-commerce sales skyrocket and many brands have been forced to adapt. Without the ability to head to stores, people have been more open to virtual ways to research and experience products.

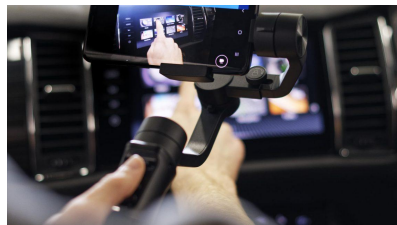


# Where we've seen it?



To announce a partnership with Rimowa, Dior launched three Snapchat lenses that let people visualise the collection in their world

*Global*



ŠKODA's Virtual Showroom service enables dedicated specialists to give customers live demonstrations and maintenance advice from their own driveways

*UK*



People are using virtual dressing rooms like Bold Metrics and Forma to try on clothes before buying

*Global*



Chinese e-commerce platform JD has seen a number of brands including Clarks, PHILIPS and Havaianas livestream new products to entice shoppers

*China*

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**EXISTING MOTIVATION**

**NEW MOTIVATION**

VIRTUAL SHOWROOMING



**NEW BEHAVIOUR**

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NEW MOTIVATION

*Every brand that has a physical showroom is investing very heavily in AR and other innovations right now, doing whatever they can to bring those experiences home. In the short-term, brands simply need to create options for people who want to experience their products. But once people can go back to physical stores, they will*

**Werner Iucksch, Strategy Director, Singapore**

VIRTUAL SHOWROOMING



NEW BEHAVIOUR

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**EXISTING BEHAVIOUR**

**EXISTING MOTIVATION**

**NEW MOTIVATION**

*This will pave the way to better online research for brands and products, before people head into a store. It's a precursor to the offline retail experience*

**Dr. Tunisha Singleton, Media Psychologist & Brand Consultant**

**VIRTUAL SHOWROOMING** 

**NEW BEHAVIOUR**

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# What it means for brands

## In Q3 and Q4...

Until there's a vaccine, brands will need to continue to adapt to consumer anxieties around physical retail spaces by taking advantage of emerging tech

With all audiences – even those who favour physical retail – shopping online, ensuring interfaces are inclusive will be integral to maintaining customers.

## In the new normal...

Some of these innovations point to more entertainment-based forms of e-commerce. In the long-term, we could see going shopping as a way to spend time become more normalised in digital spaces.

We'll also see the consumer journey become more seamless, and social platforms could soon start integrating more of these e-commerce functions for brands.



*We have various AR apps for trying on makeup or analyzing your skin to tailor product recommendations. They're a highly valuable, immersive branded experience. But we are also exploring how we can meet make-up lovers where they already are, by looking at AR options built into the social media experience – like on Instagram*

**Whitney Coble Global Social & Influencer Marketing Manager at Mary Kay**



# 05

## In-Feed Advocacy

People have been engaging with **practical political resources** on social



# 05

## In-Feed Advocacy

People have been engaging with **practical political resources** on social

### Before Covid-19

Social media has long been used as a source of information and education around current affairs – especially platforms like Twitter and YouTube – but has historically been a place for commentary and conversation.

### During Covid-19

During Covid-19, people have been spending more time creating reliable and actionable resources around socio political moments, ensuring people are not just scrolling past information in this space, but genuinely engaging with it.





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**EXISTING MOTIVATION**

**NEW MOTIVATION**

IN-FEED ADVOCACY



**NEW BEHAVIOUR**

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**EXISTING BEHAVIOUR**

*The issue of civil injustice isn't new, but this mode of response is very new. We're seeing new formats and spaces emerge to cater to these subjects, and as a result more people – and brands – are finding reason to enter these spaces. We're taking a more aggressive approach to consciousness and resource creation, finding actionable ways for people to learn and contribute*

**Dr. Tunisha Singleton, Media Psychologist & Brand Consultant**

**EXISTING MOTIVATION**

**NEW MOTIVATION**

**IN-FEED ADVOCACY** 

**NEW BEHAVIOUR**

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DEVIATIONS

# What it means for brands

## In Q3 and Q4...

This provides a huge opportunity for brands to use long-form content to be transparent and offer education.

We'll likely see more brands make commitments as a result of this shift. In an environment steeped in cynicism, ensuring those commitments are achievable will be important.

## In the new normal...

This behaviour points to the future of all social platforms as a legitimate resource for social justice and news. For industries where it makes sense, there's an opportunity to build out more hard-hitting feeds built around trustworthy information.

In this landscape, Likes and Saves will also become more important, with people using these functions to save important content to come back to when they have time.

*Previously we've steered away from text heavy images because Facebook's algorithms would penalize you for this kind of content. It will be interesting to see how the algorithms will change, and what the standards around how to promote things will look like as a result*

**Whitney Coble Global Social & Influencer Marketing Manager at Mary Kay**



# To recap



01

### Expert Influence

People are looking to influencers with proven expertise

02

### Everyday DIYers

People have been learning how to recreate the little luxuries

03

### Reskill Now

People have been using this time to pivot their prospects

04

### Virtual Showrooming

People have been trialling and researching products they want online

05

### In-Feed Advocacy

People have been engaging with practical political resources on social





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RESKILL NOW

EVERYDAY DIYERS

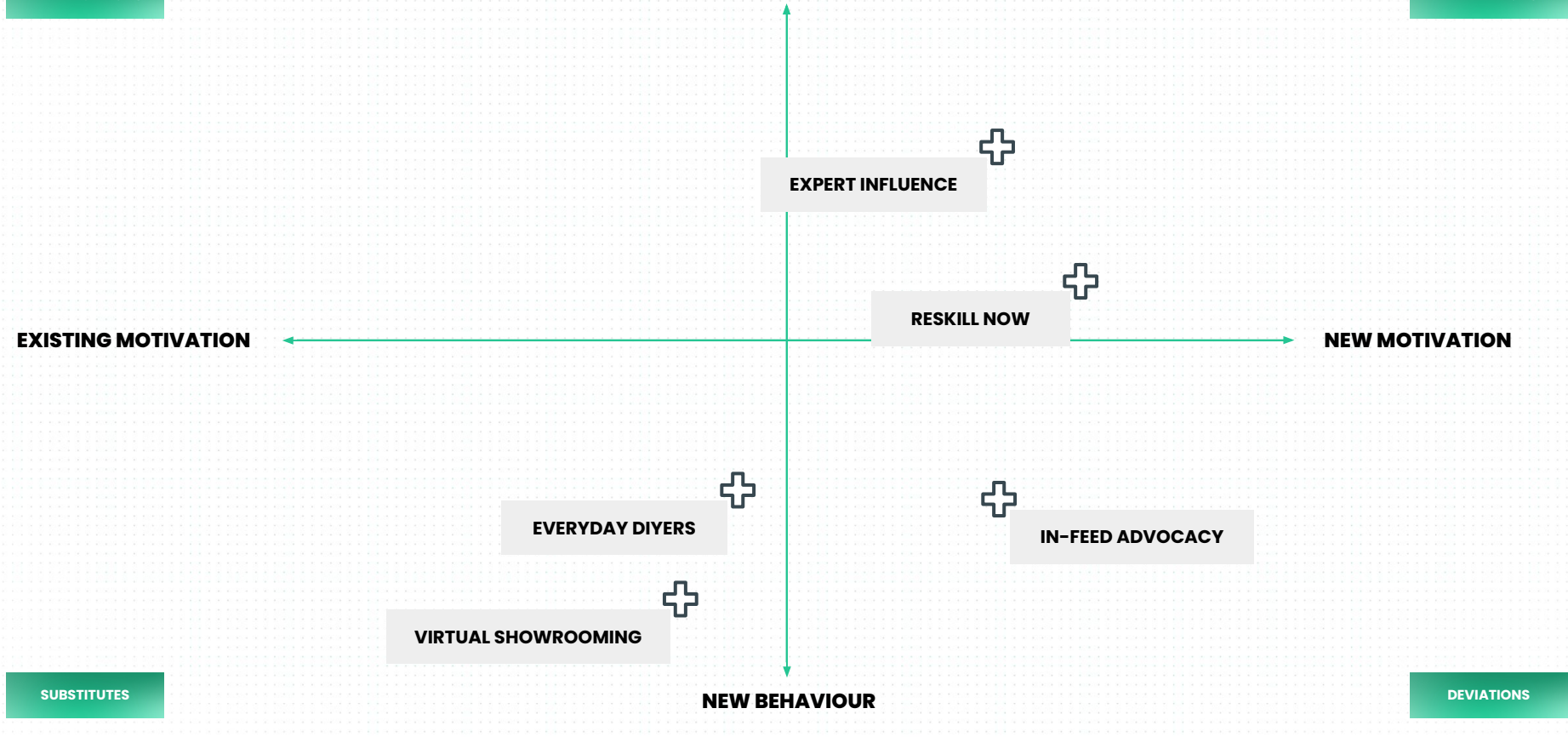
IN-FEED ADVOCACY

VIRTUAL SHOWROOMING

NEW BEHAVIOUR

SUBSTITUTES

DEVIATIONS





AMPLIFICATIONS

ADAPTATIONS

EXISTING BEHAVIOUR

EXISTING MOTIVATION

So what unites the three newest and most promising developments we're seeing in the way we find and consume information online?

NEW MOTIVATION

EXPERT INFLUENCE

RESKILL NOW

EVERYDAY DIYERS

IN-FEED ADVOCACY

VIRTUAL SHOWROOMING

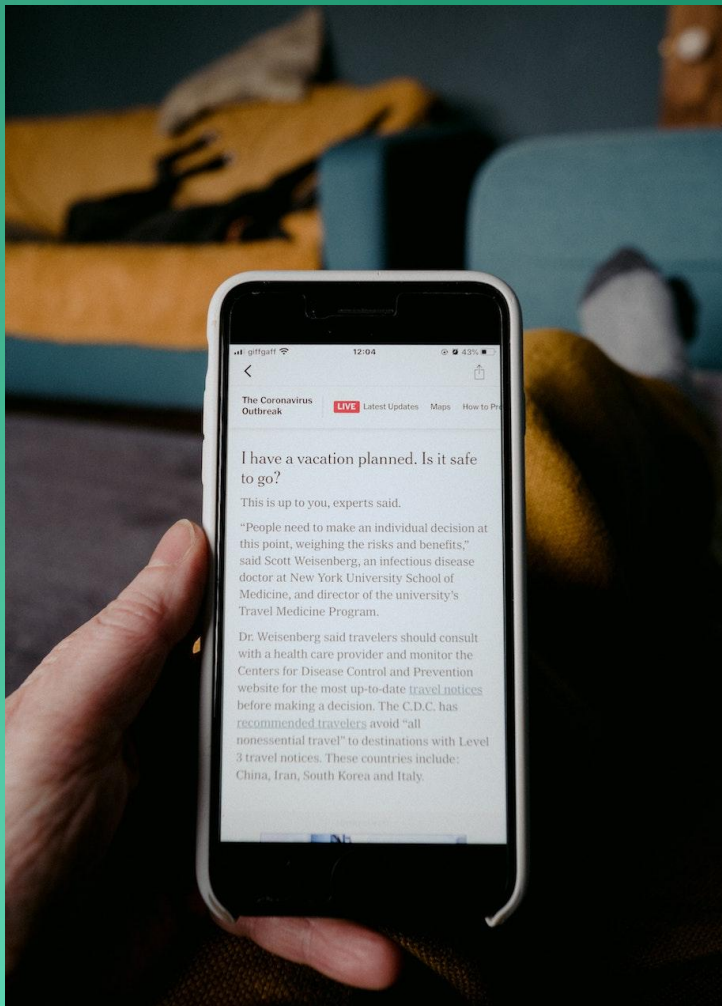
NEW BEHAVIOUR

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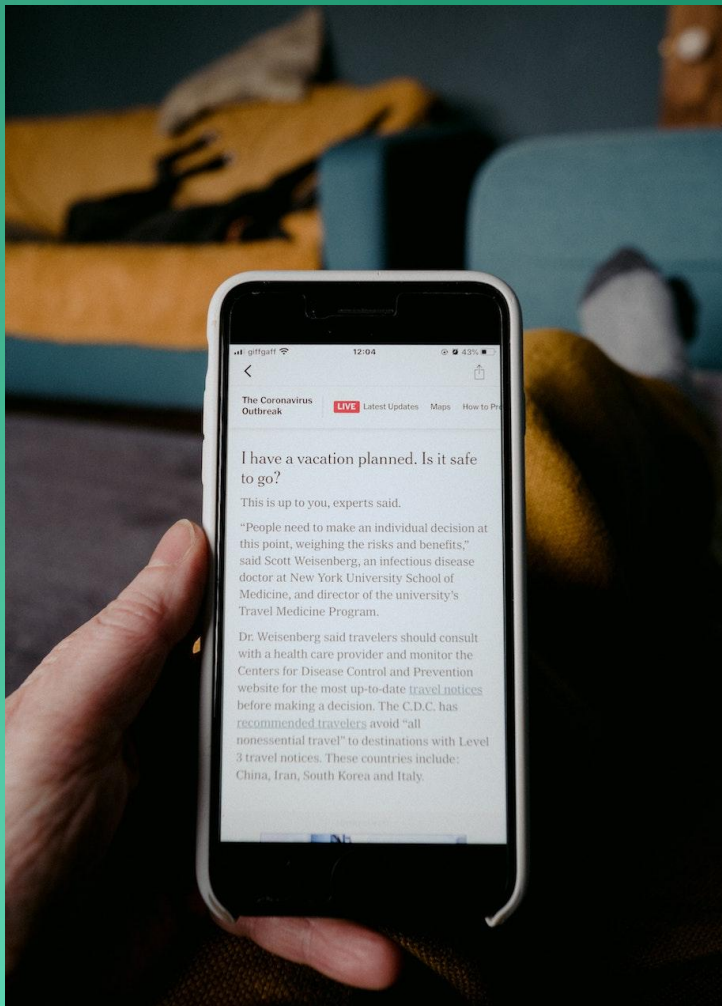
DEVIATIONS



The way we use our social channels is **diversifying**



Driven by a **fundamental shift in content needs** during the crisis, people are realising new purposes that social can serve.

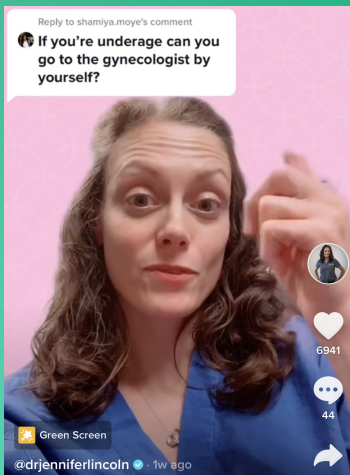


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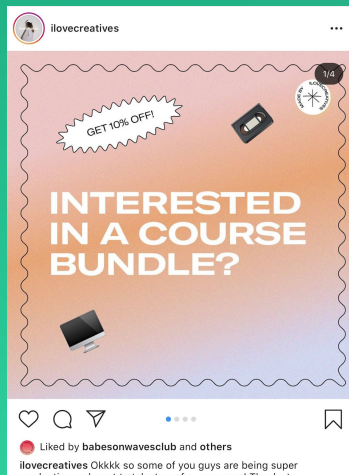
In this landscape, **legitimate sources of information** have found a place across platforms.

# It's a shift that each of these behaviours highlights...

**Expert Influence** sees a legitimisation of the figureheads and influencers that we follow.



**Reskill Now** sees people use social and digital channels to maximise their career prospects.



**In-Feed Advocacy** sees people educate themselves on political matters from within their feeds.





It points to a future in which **the way people engage with social will have to evolve** to accommodate these new needs

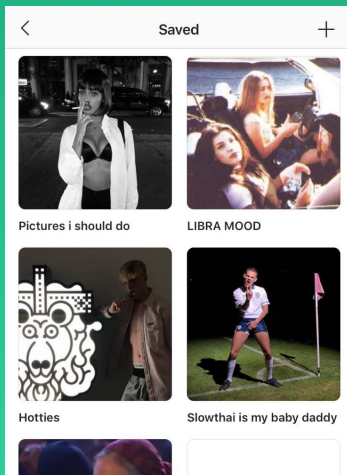


# We're already starting to see this shift unfold...

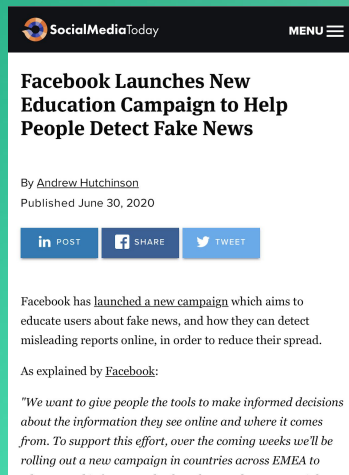
**TikTok hashtags like #algebra and #geometry** place social platforms at the heart of personal progression.



**The spiking use of Saves** on platforms like IG point to a shift in how people organise content they want to come back to.



**Platform-owned campaigns** are educating people on how to be more discerning about what they read in their feeds.



**ANY  
QUESTIONS?**

**we  
are.  
social**