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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

APAC Consumer Sentiment Remains Positive as Brands Adapt Strategies to Meet New Business Reality – Adobe Report

Singapore — July 24, 2020 — Despite COVID-19 induced lockdown restrictions now being lifted in many parts of the world, the extended time spent confined to the home has had a significant impact on consumers' shopping habits and their interactions with brands, according to research released today by Adobe.

The survey was released on the sidelines of [Adobe Experience Makers Live](#), a virtual event to help brands adapt to the digital world. Aside from Adobe leaders, brands such as Singapore Tourism Board, MediaCorp and DBS Bank shared insights and learnings for continued customer engagement and recovery.

Simon Dale, Managing Director, Southeast Asia, Adobe, commented, "The outbreak of COVID-19 has accelerated a broad shift in APAC consumer behaviors and attitudes that have been in the making for some time. It is clear from the results of the study that brands that are nimble in pivoting to this digital 'new norm' will be able to create deep and enduring brand resonance while helping their customers feel truly supported. Marketers will need to pay close attention to their customers and ensure that they adapt their CX strategy to address different groups with relevant messages, more so now than ever."

Consumer priorities and concerns during lockdown

COVID-19 has impacted consumers' everyday lives and habits. More than three fifths of consumers (67%) expressed concern about the overall impact of the pandemic. Chief amongst these concerns are personal health (73%), job vulnerability (40%) and the economy (36%). Millennials (72%) typically expressed greater concern compared to Gen Z (58%), Boomers (62%), and Traditionalists (48%).

While almost all consumers surveyed (95%) are willing to wait out the continued restrictions, only 61% agree with the continued lockdown measures, signaling an eagerness to resume life per normal. Chinese consumers cited the least

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disagreement with the continued restrictions. Overall, APAC consumers were more willing to wait out restrictions, a stark contrast from consumer sentiment in Japan and the United States (US).

The rise of socially and ethically conscious consumers

The survey found a growing social consciousness reflected in the importance consumers placed on staff treatment (77%). Despite this, brands have some way to go - only slightly over half (54%) of consumers agree that brands are doing enough to ensure staff wellbeing. Among the younger generation, attitudes are polarized on this issue - Gen Z typically ascribed less importance while Millennials ascribed more importance to treatment of staff.

Nearly three in four consumers (73%) found it important for brands to mirror the state of the world in their marketing collaterals in response to COVID-19. China (80%) and India (83%) consumers were more likely to agree with this sentiment. Furthermore, there is a general sense that brands have a duty to proactively offer help or provide special offers to customers at this time. This sense of duty among marketers is strongest in China (94%) and India (94%), and weakest in Australia (82%). In the US, close to four fifths (78%) of marketers surveyed say brands have this duty.

Not the end of brick and mortar

During the lockdown, 58% of consumers increased their online shopping frequency while three quarters (74%) cited an intention to change their future shopping habits - with Indian and Singaporean consumers reporting the strongest intention. Unsurprisingly, younger generations were more likely to cite an intention to change future shopping habits while older generations preferred to maintain status quo.

Despite COVID-19, close to three quarters (70%) of consumers reported a preference for purchasing grocery items in person, while around half also opted for home delivery (47%), and 17% relied on curbside pick-up. Across all product categories, younger generations and urban residents preferred home delivery while the older generation preferred in-person shopping, with the exception of media for the latter. Amongst all countries surveyed, Australian consumers were more likely to favor in-person shopping across all product categories.

Sending the right message at the right time

It appears that marketers have done a good job at keeping brand sentiment relatively positive during this time - the vast majority of marketers feel that organizational communications have been authentic (94%) and have resonated with customers (92%). Over half (55%) of consumers found utility in brand-related COVID-19 updates they were sent, with 69% requesting said updates in the future.

Frequency of messaging and ensuring that specific groups of consumers receive messages they need, when they need them was a crucial part of this. Two-thirds of consumers agree that brands are communicating just the right amount, while interestingly, nearly one in five (16%) believe that brands are not communicating enough. Younger consumers were more likely to unsubscribe from emailers, highlighting the importance of taking a personalized approach to keep different groups engaged.

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Making plans for the long term

To respond to these nuances in customer preference, majority of organizations are transforming their long-term strategy in case this period lasts for more than a year (79%), and are also changing their approach to future marketing efforts (82%). In fact, marketers in APAC organizations indicated a greater inclination to make long-term changes compared to their counterparts in the US. Changes include shifting to different marketing channels (75%), changing prioritized audiences (58%) and reallocating resources across different regions (47%).

The intrinsic value of brands directly addressing COVID-19 in external communications is apparent with almost three quarters (71%) of marketers report having a COVID-19 task force to manage messaging and campaigns. Those in Australia (55%) and Singapore (67%) are less likely to have a task force, while those in China (81%) and India (80%) are more likely. In contrast, less than half of marketers in Japan and the US report having specific teams for that. The positive outcome of aligning closely with a COVID-19 task force is that the vast majority of marketers in APAC feel that organizational marketing/ communications have been both authentic (94%) and have resonated with customers (92%).

Conducted by Advanis, a research firm, for Adobe, the study surveyed 4,001 consumers in selected Asia Pacific (APAC) countries – Australia, China, India and Singapore and 1,200 marketers across China, India, Singapore and Australia between 1 – 17 June 2020.

You may download the full reports on the Adobe website – [Consumer Report](#) | [Marketer Report](#).

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