

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought new challenges to every business, including Adobe. We're sharing the lessons we've learned in this six-part series.

Lesson #3

People need human connection, especially right now.

As humans, we crave connection. Yet with so many of us isolated at home, we miss the sense of community we had with our workplace.

The Adobe field marketing team learned that all too quickly. They normally do 300 in-person, one-to-one account-based marketing events a quarter. So, with COVID-19, they had to figure out how to keep that community alive. That meant reinventing their high-touch, VIP-centric and often celebrity-driven events. Overnight.

The team's number one priority was to show customers they genuinely cared about how they were doing. Empathy was key — this was not a time to be salesy. So, using direct mail and AI technology, they created a targeted wellness campaign for marketers that included a gift that they could claim, trade for a different one or donate.

Next, they looked for ways to connect without meeting in person. Working with event agencies, they reinvented their local happy hours into experiences customers could enjoy from the comfort of their own homes. They also did cooking-experience gatherings, sending ingredients for a cooking class to the audience so they could all be cooking and socialising together online.

But soon they realised a lot of things were out of their control. Not everyone was on the same stay-at-home orders, vendors were closing down and some people weren't comfortable receiving packages. So the team pivoted again, sending out Instacart gift certificates and an ingredient list.





It's essential to stay connected to your community. And you can do that in number of ways. But no matter how you do it, show you genuinely care about them as a person."



Caroline Hull

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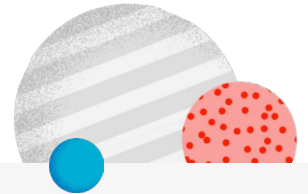
We also discovered some unexpected benefits from having to adapt. For example, by doing these events virtually, we could expand the size and scope, making them more accessible.

There are many ways you can build community in a time of social distancing. Focus on educational content that will really help your customers. Offer more value-added services. Bring critical innovation to those in need. Foster fellowship through global community support, like the Adobe #HonorHeroes campaign, which invited artists from all over the world to submit artwork of local COVID heroes. Find ways for your employees to help in your community. And encourage your employees to care for themselves and their families. Not only is this essential for their well-being, it helps them care more authentically for your customers. The Adobe global marketing team was given a "guilt-free day off" — a much-needed respite after working harder than ever to adapt during the pandemic.

To foster connections in their community, [Vitamix](#) turned to food's ability to bring people together. With millions of people now cooking more, they put more emphasis on engaging current and potential blender owners with new recipes, healthy eating alternatives and ways to have fun. They're doing cooking demonstrations, offering tips and tricks, even sharing how to make the best use of limited trips to the grocery store. And they're awarding loyalty points every time someone engages with their content.

To help parents working from home, Disney+ released *Frozen 2* three months early. To keep audiences and donors engaged, New York's Public Theater and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., have asked professional playwrights to create short dramas for people to perform at home. And The Berlin Philharmonic had a Facebook contest where winners were treated to a one-on-one performance in the empty Berlin airport.

With creative thinking, the possibilities are endless. At the end of the day, you'll be remembered for how you genuinely cared about your employees and customers. And for the experiences you share together.



KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Create ways to show your customers and employees you genuinely care about them.
- Use event companies, direct mail and online collaboration platforms to strengthen human connection.
- Offer more value-added services and educational content that will help during this time.
- Foster fellowship through community support.
- Do what you do best as marketers — be wildly creative.

[Explore](#) the whole playbook.



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