



NAVIGATING 2021 FOR BRANDS



TAILWINDS
by **HERE BE DRAGONS**

INTRO



The 2020s have seen economies being re-shaped; consumer spending and habits overturned; a shifting populous, moving away from offices and cities; and diversity finally taking centre stage.

Life has been stranger than fiction. In 2020, unbelievable moments came to pass, such as rapper, record producer and fashion designer, Kanye West, announcing he would run for US President; students being incarcerated in halls of residence during the pandemic; and football growing a conscience - as UK Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, was forced to make U-turns on free school meals after a campaign by Manchester United star, Marcus Rashford, MBE.

Suddenly there was a leadership vortex, created by the inertia of traditional power bases, but readily filled by the emergence of new characters; epitomised by

Dolly Parton's noble funding of the US vaccine, John Boyega's profound rallying cry for social justice and Marcus Rashford's determination not to forget where he came from.

In the UK, it appeared, at times, that the government was governing by decree rather than democracy, with key officials saying one thing and then doing another. As trust in institutions was called into question - and A-Level students whose exams had been cancelled protested outside 10 Downing Street - it was clear that consumers were assessing brands carefully when it came to their Coronavirus and diversity track record, too.

We wanted to assess how seismic societal upheaval is changing the way consumers view their relationship with brands, and so we undertook a study to shed light on some of the key shifts.

**WHAT DID OUR
RESEARCH TELL US?**

HERE'S WHAT OUR RESEARCH UNCOVERED*

GET THE BASICS RIGHT

DESIRE FOR TRUST, SERVICE AND VALUE

→ The importance of function: When thinking about purchasing from new brands, Brits are most likely to find customer service (61%), rapid and reliable delivery (46%), and a responsible supply chain (27%) to be the most important factors. They want the basics done brilliantly: Trust, customer service and value for money are key.

→ When asked which themes brands should base their actions around, Brits' top responses included saving consumers money (50%) and time (30%).

BRAND PURPOSE MATTERS

AS DOES HOW YOU TREAT YOUR STAFF

→ Assuming your trust, service and value for money are in place, then your purpose matters, too: 52% would stop using a brand if it didn't reflect their stance on societal issues. Clearly, this can close the deal.

→ More than half (52%) are also concerned about how employers are treating their staff during this unpredictable period.

DESIRE FOR CREATIVITY

AND AN APPETITE FOR INSPIRATION

→ Lockdowns saw social media usage sky-rocket, with 42% increasing their use of this type of media more than before; with the biggest increases seen on TikTok, at 66% and Twitch, up 50%.

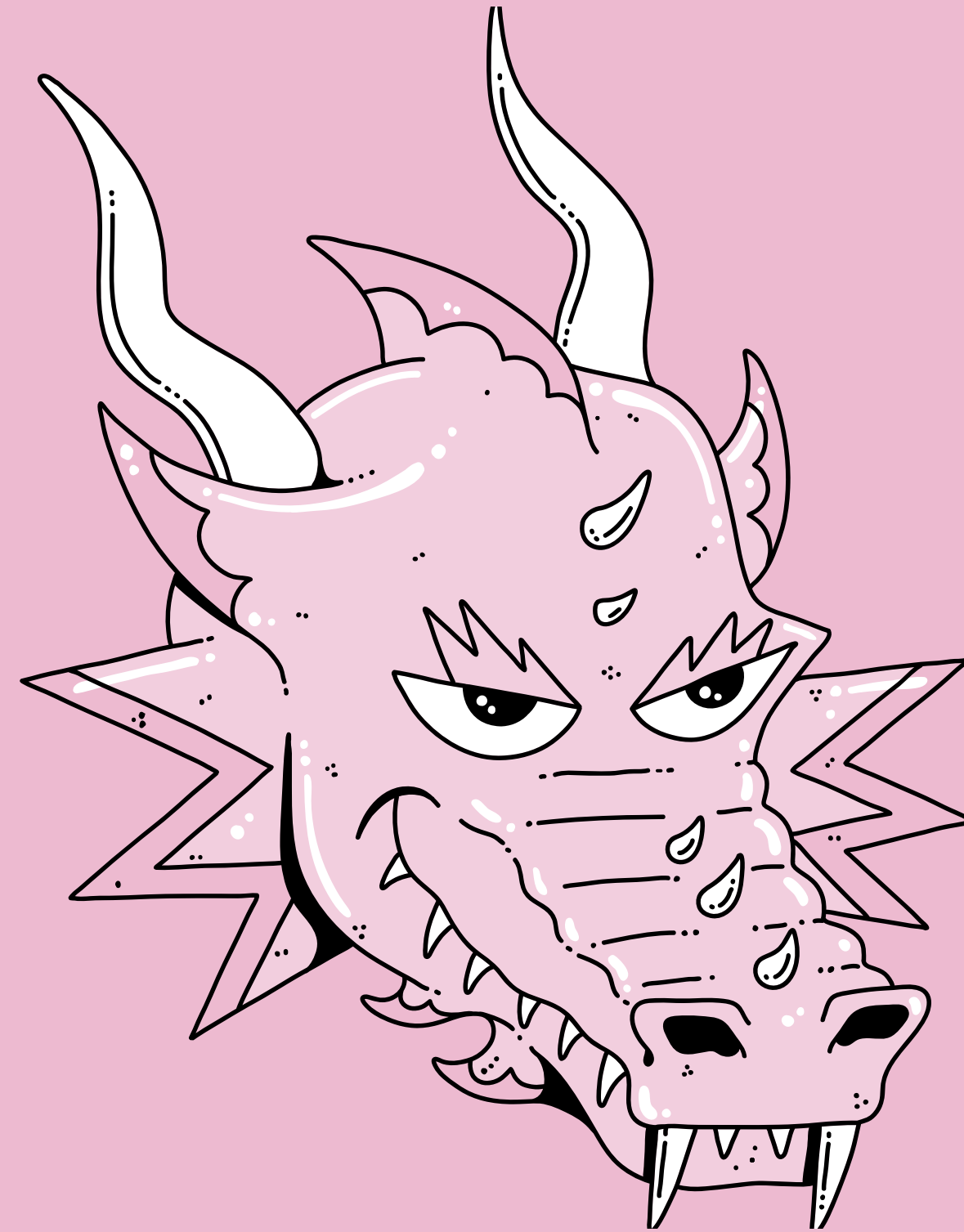
→ Despite this, the role of brands and influencers in inspiring their audiences to get creative fell wide of the mark, with 93% saying that brands or influencers did not inspire them in this tumultuous time.

HOW TO CREATE A BRAND THAT IS FIT FOR PURPOSE

The key is to have a great product. It seems obvious, but bear with us. Put your product or service at the centre of your communications. As our research shows, a decent product or service offering is a must-have; ahead even of wider brand considerations. Remember, above all else, Brits want brands to save them money (50%) or time (30%).

It's important to remember that, despite the undeniable impact of recent events, change has always existed and will always exist. Furthermore, change can bring new, fresh hope and positive impact; it is the businesses, brands and services that are able to recognise this - and that successfully respond - that will form the future companies we want to have relationships with.

HOW TO CREATE A BRAND THAT IS FIT FOR PURPOSE



INTRODUCING HERE BE DRAGONS

Here Be Dragons exists to uncover opportunities to innovate and evolve, to see opportunity while others flounder, to find creativity in constraints, and to value forward motion over standing still. We help brands ride change and plant flags in brave new lands. Working alongside you, we map the direction of travel for your brand, and deliver insights into the cultural headwinds and tailwinds that surround your own, unique brief.

HOW TO CREATE A BRAND THAT IS FIT FOR PURPOSE

Inspired by our research, here are three sequential action-based learnings that brands should take on board into 2021, along with some examples of how to activate them in culture.

**01. UNLOCK YOUR PURPOSE AND
FIND YOUR INNER COMPASS**

**02. TAKE ACTION: DISCOVER
UNCHARTED TERRITORY
TO MAKE AN IMPACT**

**03. TELL A STORY THAT
PEOPLE WANT TO SHARE**

01. **UNLOCK YOUR
PURPOSE...**

**...AND FIND
YOUR INNER
COMPASS**

01. UNLOCK YOUR PURPOSE AND FIND YOUR INNER COMPASS

We help to unpick how your products and services, your brand purpose and your actions align, bearing in mind that employees are stakeholders, too; always influencing brands and companies from within.



Indeed, internal comms matter. Our research showed that **52% are worried about how employers are treating their staff** at this time. The pandemic and resultant shift to remote work has also resulted in a renewed focus on employment policies, including sick pay. Dealing with a global health crisis has left many with feelings of anxiety, with companies expected to support staff in any way they can.

This period has been described by Harvard Business Review as ‘the most significant social experiment of the future of work’. Further significant shifts are likely to increase demand for purpose-led brands, as indicated by our research study – with organisations boasting supportive cultures and a focus on community, sustainability and transparency set to fare better than those without a clear, internal compass.

24%[↑]

THERE HAS BEEN A 24% INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE AVOIDING UNETHICAL BRANDS, ACCORDING TO THE IPA.

02. TAKE ACTION:

**DISCOVER
UNCHARTED
TERRITORY...**

**...TO MAKE
AN IMPACT**

02. TAKE ACTION: DISCOVER UNCHARTED TERRITORY TO MAKE AN IMPACT

2021 will be a year of action, not words. It will be the year to leverage the power of creativity and discover uncharted territories and opportunities – whether in new media, technology, community or even physical space.

By being brave with ideas, and seeing opportunity to take action where others do not, we navigate new frontiers for brands, and even categories. Our work with **Beavertown Brewery**, for instance, turned the cultural moment of the lockdown queue into a fresh, new media space – a re-invented media canvas for a socially-distanced audience (see case study).

It's also important always to look ahead: What some refer to as the Fourth Industrial Revolution – built on emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and robotics, as well as cloud computing – will likely be accelerated by the pandemic. These technologies are already present, and, in this climate, innovation, evolution and creativity can represent the best way for brands to differentiate themselves.

According to the IPA's The Future of Marketing and Agencies Report, agencies 'need to broaden their definition of creativity' and 'gain a deeper understanding of their clients' businesses'. And, as Ivan Pollard, CMO, General Mills, says, "data plus creativity is the future." Indeed, It is critical to embed relevant insights into creative output when working on client campaigns.

Our work for **NHS Charities Together** in 2020 fused data and creativity to generate significant impact. We created a Digital Out of Home campaign which tracked the outpouring of thanks for the NHS and key workers on Twitter and created a live 'clap-counter'; a website and paid media campaign which displayed the total number of thanks in real-time; with the latter displayed on bus-stops directly outside of hospitals. We also used data to identify which hospitals had the fullest ICU wards and what time shift change was for key workers, allowing us to super-target this audience at the exact time they needed it most - daily at 7am and 7pm. The website created hundreds of extra donations for the charity, while the media campaign gave a moment of levity and thanks to key workers at a time of great stress.

It's clear that data combined with creativity equals impact. Let's consider what this looks like for your brand.

“WE USED OUR TIME IN LOCKDOWNS TO ASSESS HOW WE CAN FUTURE-PROOF AND HELP OUR CLIENTS POSITION THEMSELVES OPTIMALLY AROUND THE RAPID CHANGE THAT IS HAPPENING ALL AROUND US.

HERE BE DRAGONS IS THE CULMINATION OF A TWO-YEAR GROWTH PERIOD FOR THE AGENCY IN WHICH WE HAVE PRODUCED BRAVER, MORE INTEGRATED WORK. 2021 WILL SEE MORE UPHEAVAL. WE ARE HERE TO HELP.”

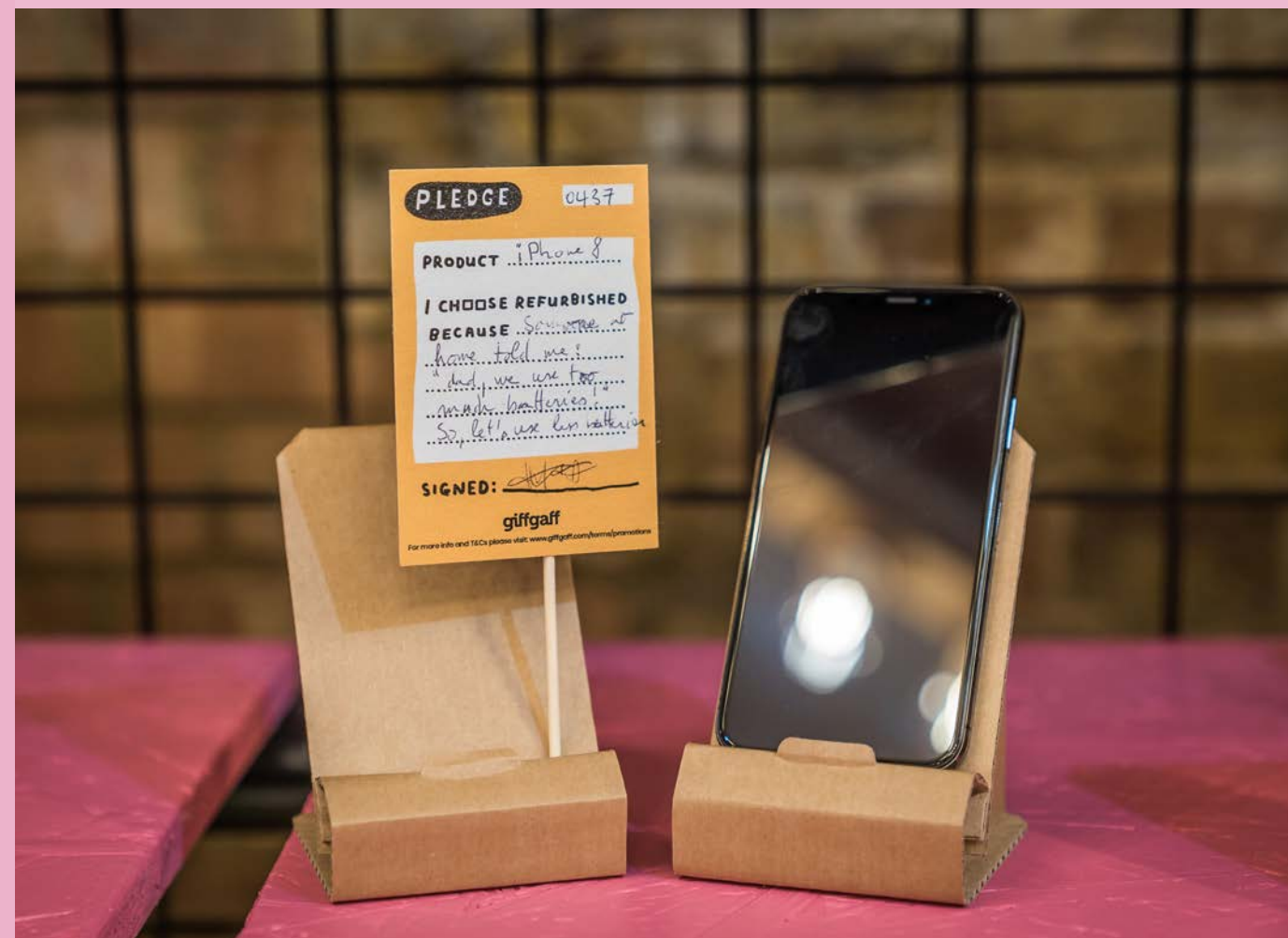
– Paul McEntee, CEO, Here Be Dragons

03. **TELL A STORY...**

**...THAT PEOPLE
WANT TO SHARE**

03. TELL A STORY THAT PEOPLE WANT TO SHARE

We use the power of earned media to tell your story. This is the most powerful force for getting your ideas into the market – cost effectively and with third-party endorsement. Take our Black Friday campaign for **giffgaff** – involving a unique, pop up store where ‘Nothing Was For Sale’ – gifting only refurbished items to those who made a pledge, and reaching an online readership of 900 million (see case study).



Over the past ten years, we’ve seen a shift towards campaigns with shareable ideas at their core such as this one. As budgets are squeezed, earned media will continue to rise up the list of priorities for client campaigns. In this climate, effective, multi-channel PR can survive and thrive – in no small part thanks to its ability to communicate the importance of brand ethics and purpose.

At the same time, the COVID-19 crisis has led to significant budget cuts in the advertising industry, while marketing and PR has grown to encompass a greater array of disciplines than ever before. Despite the fact that a huge proportion of the global online ad market is already controlled by the biggest players, such as Google and Facebook, the small guys can still make an impact by leveraging the platforms that matter.

Create an opportunity to be heard: **89% of multinational businesses deferred advertising spend due to the pandemic**, according to the World Federation of Advertisers. Fortunately, earned media can deliver the most powerful brand storytelling.

Indeed, Jeff Bezos, Founder of Amazon, famously declared:

**“ADVERTISING IS
THE PRICE YOU
PAY FOR HAVING
AN UNREMARKABLE
PRODUCT OR
SERVICE.”**



**WHY
HERE BE DRAGONS?**



WHY HERE BE DRAGONS?

Here Be Dragons is a reference to old medieval maps, in which the phrase was used to mark a spot considered dangerous for explorers, when in fact it was just the unknown – uncharted waters that had not yet been discovered. Our aim is to use creative bravery to navigate such waters, delivering for our clients something new, somewhere exciting – a brave new land.

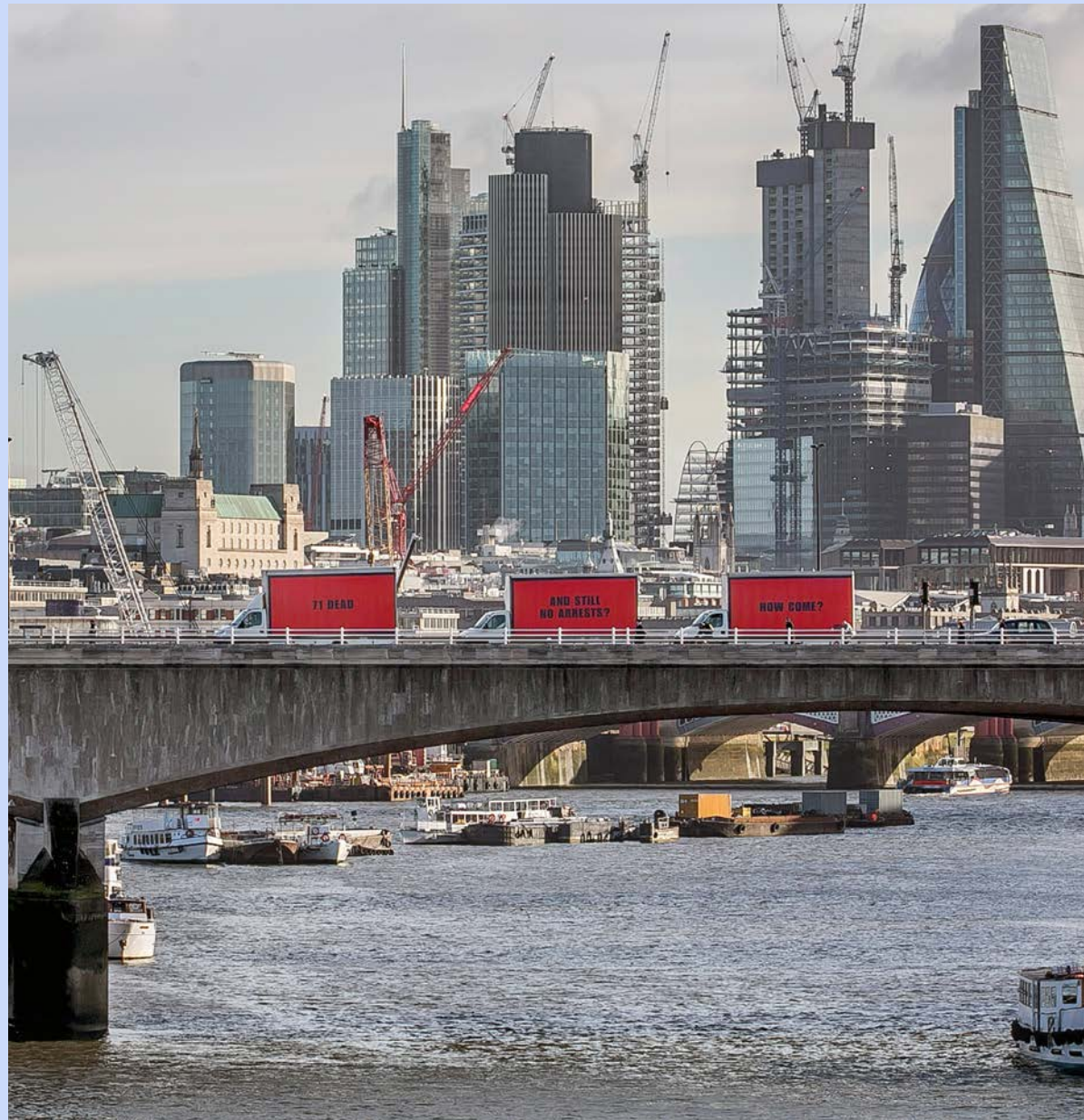
We take inspiration from the world of navigation. Pinpointing a place of departure, we seek a place of arrival, and we consider what will help us get there, and the winds that may go with us or against us.

Our approach to our work starts with the compass, by which we chart your mission: Why you exist; the direction of travel; who you rally against; who you're bringing with you; and the assets you have that can help on your journey. We also consider the rising trends and prevailing tailwinds that can help you accelerate, or throw you off course, as well as causes we can champion, and challenges that must be circumnavigated.

OUR SERVICES

HERE BE DRAGONS OFFERS A RANGE OF SERVICES FROM PR AND PRESS OFFICE; BRAND STRATEGY; SEO; SOCIAL CONTENT; AND EXPERIENTIAL CAMPAIGNS. IN TANDEM, WE LEVERAGE A UNIQUE CREATIVE AND PRODUCTION STUDIO WHICH MAKES CONTENT AND PRODUCTS FOR CLIENTS; AND TAILWINDS, A TRENDS FORECASTING SERVICE THAT UNDERTAKES RESEARCH PROJECTS. THIS OFFERS COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE: BOTH TREND FORECAST AND PUBLISHING TOOL, IT IS CAREFULLY FORMULATED VIA OUR NETWORK OF ACADEMICS, WRITERS AND CULTURAL CHANGE-MAKERS, ENABLING US TO BETTER UNDERSTAND MACRO AND MICRO SHIFTS.

STRATEGIC MEDIA COMMUNICATION IS AT THE HEART OF WHAT WE DO – VIA MULTI-CHANNEL CAMPAIGNS, WHICH INCLUDE SOCIAL PURPOSE, AS WELL AS GROUND-BREAKING DIGITAL AND OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES.

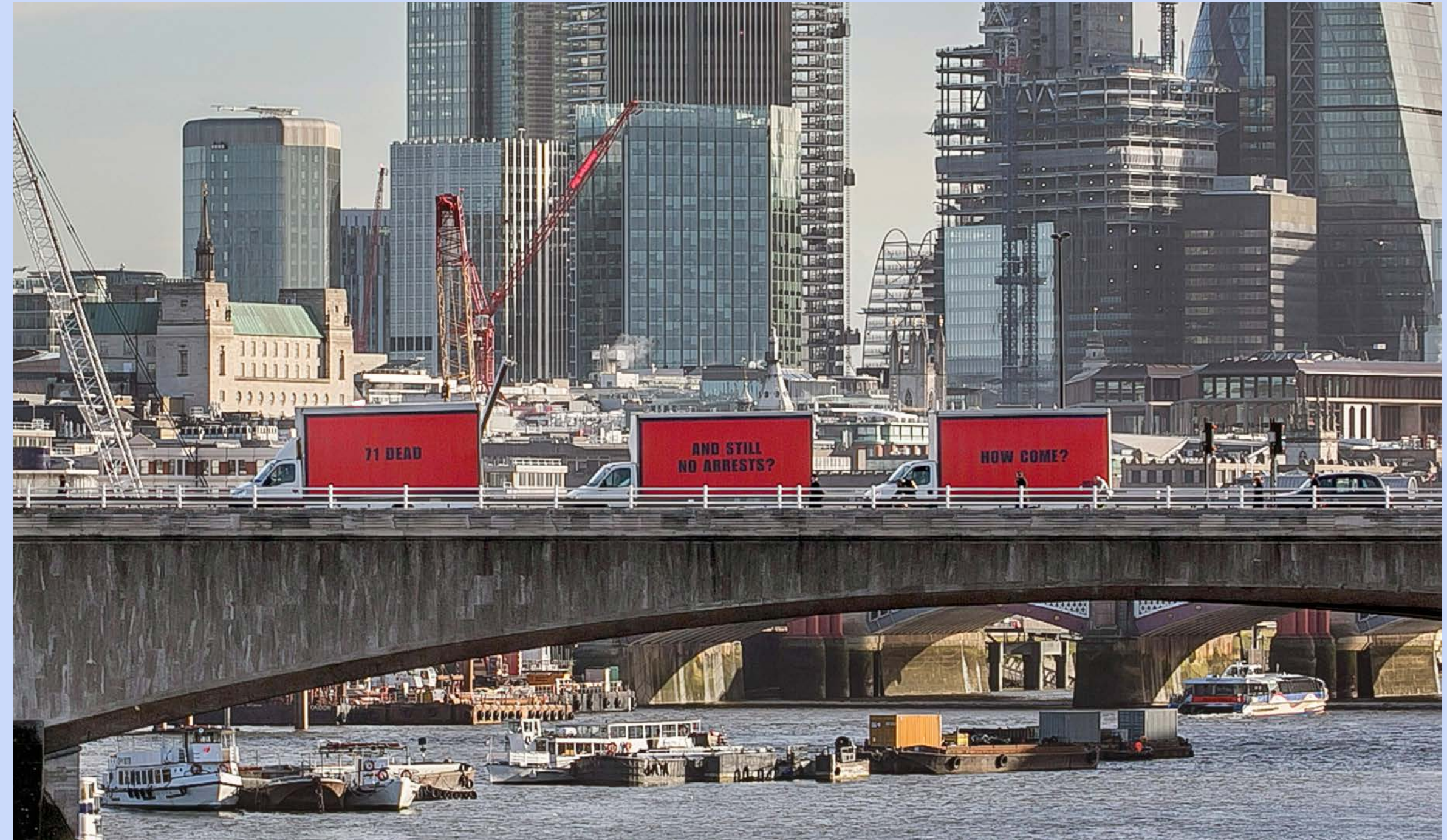


CASE STUDIES

JUSTICE4GRENFELL THREE BILLBOARDS

PR / SOCIAL / CREATIVE

Here Be Dragons partnered with **Justice4Grenfell** to help shine a light on the lack of progress after the Grenfell Tower tragedy. The aim was to prevent a similar tragedy from happening again in one of the hundreds of other buildings in the UK bearing the same flammable cladding thought to be at fault.



A key part of the campaign was a stunt using the iconic film 'Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri' as inspiration, with three mobile billboards being driven past the Houses of Parliament before reaching Grenfell. At the time the campaign was conceived, the film – written, directed and produced by Martin McDonagh – had won six Golden Globes and was nominated for nine Baftas and eight Oscars. Our approach was to hijack the media attention of this film by creating our own 'Three Billboards outside Grenfell Tower'.

Careful timing saw the billboards appearing in front of London landmarks throughout the day as we strategically mapped PR to create the most impact at specific moments. Coverage began to cascade across lifestyle press, blogs and social media - first in the UK and then globally, ending with a live spot on the BBC London News.

Within 12 hours of the billboards arriving at Grenfell, 140 global news publications had run the story, with the £5,000 campaign generating 6.5 billion impressions, and high-profile figures praising its effectiveness.

GIFFGAFF BLACK FRIDAY: PURPOSEFUL PR

STRATEGY / CREATIVE / PR / EXPERIENTIAL

Mobile network **giffgaff** began as a small SIM-only business and is now challenging the big networks. In true giffgaff fashion, the brand wanted to challenge the status quo by turning a day known for consumerism on its head.



Here Be Dragons helped to pin the brand's social purpose credentials to its mast on the most commercial day of the year - Black Friday - by highlighting that refurbished is a savvy choice. Our research had found that people were open to considering refurbished items. Using this as an initial media hook, we generated buzz that drove people to want to visit the brand's unique pop up store in Covent Garden – selling only refurbished items on Black Friday.

We engaged with influencers, media and bloggers and ran competitions on social media. All items in the shop were pre-loved, with visitors

taking home everything from bicycles and phones to handsets, paid for with a pledge to choose refurbished where possible.

Over 450 people visited the store, while significant coverage reached an online readership of over 900 million. All this activity pushed giffgaff's Black Friday deals page onto page one of Google. To date, giffgaff is the only mobile network to have executed an activation focused on refurbished. It was awarded both 'Best Integrated Campaign' at the 2019 Drum Awards and The Drum Marketing award 2020 for 'Best B2C Integrated Campaign'.

BEAVERTOWN BREWERY THE ART OF THE QUEUE

PR / SOCIAL / CREATIVE / EXPERIENTIAL

As the pubs began to plan their reopening on 4th July, following the end of the first lockdown, **Beavertown Brewery** challenged Here Be Dragons to come up with a campaign that would place it at the heart of conversation. 'Super Saturday', as it became known, was going to be a crowded space - with every beer brand, pub and venue that could reopen looking for a piece of the action.



Talk of the pubs reopening swiftly moved to negative conversations around how binge drinking would continue the spread of the virus, however, and we did not want Beavertown to become part of these conversations.

Our solution was to target the moment of the queue itself, by partnering with poet Tim Key to inject some responsible fun. Tim created a poem that was a 'love letter' to British pubs and captured the anticipation and excitement so many of us had for the first pint after a lengthy absence. We placed the poems on the pavement, two metres apart, to help keep pub

goers entertained while they queued. In this way, the campaign created a new media canvas with a captive, socially-distanced audience.

Beavertown Brewery also used this iconic moment to issue a rallying cry to the UK to get behind their locals. This activity was amplified on Beavertown's owned channels, with significant earned media sell-in, including profiling of CEO and founder Logan Plant in media such as The Independent, key London listings and lifestyle titles, BBC Radio London, Morning Advertiser and City AM.

HERE BE DRAGONS

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