

# Grief, resilience and brands

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Successful, resilient brands have a strong brand personality, human attributes that make them relatable and encompass the essence of what they stand for. They convey an emotion or perception.

And, just as humans question our identity and our purpose through trying times, confusion often prevails and we may feel hopeless about the future, so too do brands trying to adjust during unprecedented events.

From a brand perspective, never before have we experienced such loss, separation, restriction. We've seen the invisible role they played, the people behind them, the families they supported, their essence, the way they made us feel, the way they were a part of our lives, our routines, our traditions, family gatherings, catch-ups with friends ... and then they weren't.

It makes sense then that we consider the grieving process from a brand's perspective and how we can assist them become increasingly resilient as we navigate through the coming months.

In other words, how do we make sense of the process and move from denying to accepting and brand storytelling that creates new meaning?

Stage one: Fight or flight - resistance or denial or retreating

Stage two: Frustration - irritation and blame

Stage three: Debilitation - overwhelmed unsure or what to do

Stage four: Normalisation/balance - rediscovering and identifying new opportunities

Stage five: Return to growth - redefining and creating new solutions

Stage six: New meaning and purpose - adjusted, hopeful and agile

In each of the above phases, various areas of critical response

are required from brands to transition toward agility and successful repositioning in the changing market. We can begin mapping out a strategy for returning to growth, meaning and purpose.

Take each of your brands and do a critical assessment based on the following. Analyse the following from the above-mentioned phases:

- The industry, category, business, brand, market
- The current consumer, potential newcomers, future consumers and emerging markets
- What is their current experience?
- How are they affected in the various phases?
- How have needs changed?
- How has behaviour changed?



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- Are there any gaps?
- What is a potential opportunity to add meaningful value, to make a difference?

Part of us wants to go back to 'normal' while another part of us wants nothing to go back to the way it was before. Businesses, brands and individuals have struggled through some debilitating changes, which have for some completely finished them and others opened up new opportunities they would never have anticipated.

The bottom line is creating and building or rebuilding brands with purpose, that consumers can truly relate to and connect with despite the circumstances.

A strong core purpose + meaningful narrative = sustainable and resilient brands.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lara-Anne Derbyshire is a Digital Strategist at Boomtown

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