

RESEARCH

In-house agencies most important for producing new creative assets in shadow of COVID-19: survey

April 6, 2020

In-house agencies and other internal teams were identified as being most important for producing new creative assets, followed by external agencies and media partners. Respondents were asked, "What resources are currently important to you for producing new creative assets? Please rate on a scale of 1–5 where 1 = Not Important and 5 = Very Important." Identified as "Very Important" were:



Getting the work done: In-house teams playing key roles. Source: ANA creative messaging survey as marketers adjust to COVID-19 environment

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

A new survey from the Association of National Advertisers has found that 90 percent of respondents have adjusted their creative marketing messaging since mid-March when the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 coronavirus as a pandemic.

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Forty-six percent of respondents said those adjustments have been substantial, 42 percent said they were moderate and 12 percent indicated they were minimal. Respondents identified in-house agencies as being most important for producing new creative assets, followed by other internal teams, external agencies and media partners.

"This important new report shows that even in a time of severe crisis, our members are figuring out ways to get the job done, and fast," said ANA CEO Bob Liodice, in a statement.

"Marketers should be proud of the teams they have created, who have displayed remarkable skill and flexibility in their ability to meet the incredible creative challenges posed by the current pandemic," he said.

New York-based **ANA** is the leading trade organization in the United States for advertisers.

Message hits home

The online survey was conducted March 30/31 with 196 executives responding.

What emerged from the survey was the role of in-house agencies at the leading advertisers.

However, 26 percent of respondents said external agencies were very important in the development of new messaging, while 22 percent cited media partners as making very important contributions.

Verbatim comments from respondents who made substantial adjustments to their messaging were telling:

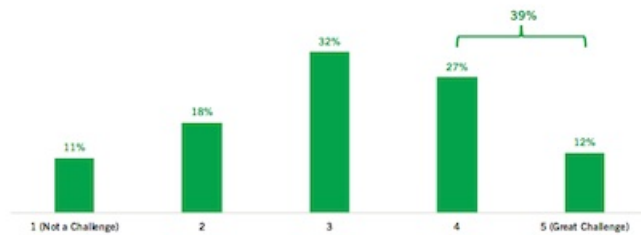
- *Our messaging has pivoted from marketing to providing essential/helpful information to all audiences*
- *More emotional messaging around social distancing and "we are here for you" vs. straight-up sales messages*

- *Messaging has changed to acknowledge schools closing and more social distancing has taken place. We wanted to make sure our marketing wasn't tone-deaf*
- *Refocused messaging to speak to the empathy of what our communities are facing, showing how we are here to help*
- *Backed off lifestyle imagery, particularly around travel, spring break, and gathering in large groups*

MARKETERS ARE RISING TO THE CHALLENGE OF PRODUCING NEW CREATIVE ASSETS

Producing new creative assets has been a challenge for only 39 percent of members. In other words, marketers are finding ways to get things done.

Respondents were asked, "Have you been challenged in producing new creative assets since mid-March? Please rate on a scale of 1–5 where 1 = Not a Challenge and 5 = Great Challenge."



Marketers are rising to the challenge of producing new creative assets. Source: ANA creative messaging survey March 2020

The ANA survey also showed that only 39 percent of respondents indicated that producing new creative assets posed a challenge. The reasons they cited were not surprising:

- *Producing any new assets is tough with sheltering-in-place rules*
- *No crews, studios, or talent. Limited to recuts of existing work, all done remotely from homes of agency or production company people*
- *Studios have been closed. Production crews aren't able to work*
- *Everyone is working remotely but all new assets are due immediately*

Per the survey, 89 percent of respondents said they plan to continue adjusting their messaging in light of the current environment.

The reasons cited for additional fine-tuning included plans to make messaging that is empathetic to the current situation, changing language for sensitivity purposes, and avoiding any lifestyle images depicting people in close proximity at events.

[Please click here to download the PDF of the ANA's creative messaging survey responding to COVID-19](#)