



ONEMS  
MINUTE SILENCE



# **A COVID CHRISTMAS**

**DECEMBER 2020**



## OUR LOCKDOWN PANEL

11 familiar faces, from London, Bristol and Birmingham, from the original panel and 3 new members from Manchester

Fieldwork conducted during Lockdown 2 – before the announcement of new tiering arrangements and the Christmas bubbles

We enjoyed 4 days chatting with them about Christmas against a backdrop of Covid-19

## DIFFERENT ATTITUDES TO LOCKDOWN 2.0

**BETTER** PREPARATION

*I know what to expect this time – it doesn't feel as alien*

**LESS** TREPIDATION

*It feels easier to fill your time now we're used to it*

**MORE** NORMALITY

*I'm working now – that makes a massive difference. So much of life will be 'normal' even though it's lockdown*

**LOWER** CONFORMITY

*So many people aren't following the rules – they're making their own up to suit themselves*

**OVERALL A VERY DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE FROM THE LONGER, MORE  
RESTRICTIVE SPRING LOCKDOWN**



## A STRONG DESIRE FOR 'NORMALITY' AT CHRISTMAS



Whilst there is a clear acceptance that Christmas will not be normal, the festive season and all the rituals, traditions and behaviour which goes with it is providing a clear focus and a way of salvaging some positivity from a challenging year

*“I’m looking forward to it as much I can let myself. The Tesco advert has captured it perfectly for me, there is no naughty list this year so we want to have as fun a Christmas as we can as a family”*

### **BUT**

There are mixed feelings, with an undercurrent of uncertainty and apprehensiveness

*“I’m looking forward to a break, maybe not looking forward as much as I normally do - as things are still in a bit of limbo and I’m conscious of what may come after Xmas”*

# CHRISTMAS COMES EARLY IN 2020

## TWO FACTORS DRIVING AN EARLY START TO THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

### RATIONAL

Simply having something to do!



Getting ahead of the game with Christmas shopping – with a big move towards online

### EMOTIONAL

Extending the festive joy



Putting decorations up early to maximise the enjoyment of them



## SHARED EXPERIENCES ARE MISSED



Markets, carol services, parties and extended family gatherings are all key elements of a ‘normal’ Christmas – their absence has triggered different responses

### ACCEPTANCE

that this year is different, with no desire to attempt to replace specific experiences

*“I’ve got Zoom fatigue – I’d rather do without (parties) than try and re-create them”*

### FOCUS

on those in the immediate family/household – spending time in a small unit

*“We’re just hunkering down at home and enjoying each other’s company this year”*

## A CLEAR RETAIL STRATEGY EMERGES

### GIFTING



Starting early, planning well, and cutting back on presents (particularly for those they are unlikely to see or aren't close to)

### CHANNEL



A big reliance on online, with a desire to stick with known and trusted retailers  
Some appetite for 'shopping small' but not for the majority of shopping

### FOOD



'Trading up' to more premium supermarkets for additional treat food – no desire to cut back on festive goodies



## CHRISTMAS ADS HAVE A CLEAR ROLE

### TO ENTERTAIN

Viewers looking for humour, a light-hearted touch, but also appreciative of subtle hidden (or deeper) messages at this time of year

Expectations – formed by previous years' advertising are generally high, with viewers hoping that new ads will always be 'better' than previous years'

*"I think they (ads) should only be light hearted this year as there has been too much sadness already and maybe more to come. It should be about enjoying the festive seasonal cheer and all that involves"*

### REFLECTING THE MOOD

There is an acknowledgement that 2020 is not a normal year, and an expectation that big brands should recognise this in their advertising

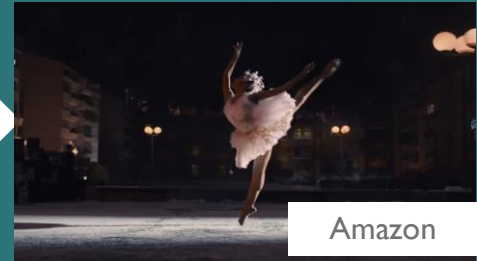
*"I think it's right that adverts are being altered to go with the current situation we're all in. I think everyone needs some kind of comfort and love this year as I'm sure there'll be a lot of lonely people out there"*

## 'BEACON' ADS LARGELY WELL RECEIVED

Whilst not as memorable (and lacking some of the impact of previous years), a fitting message for 2020 and a 'safe' approach which won't polarise



Tackling the pandemic, and circumstances around it, head on feels relevant – a heart-warming story grounded in human truth but with a clear link to the brand



Humour appreciated, but the 'Naughty List' story can feel twee and outdated. Overt references to negative behaviour at the start of the pandemic (stockpiling toilet roll) not always well received



A 'love it or hate it' ad : stands out for being different (and clearly grounded in strong insight), but some of the vignettes are unpleasant and feel inappropriate for a Christmas ad



## IN SUMMARY

In a difficult year, Christmas is proving to be a challenging time, but there is a desire to make the most of it, and treat it as unique (rather than try and replicate the norm)

More than ever, there is a reliance on brands, particularly retail, to deliver – whether that's food or gifts, and a heavy reliance on online : how brands behave in this space is likely to pave the way for future relationships

However, Christmas is giving people something to look forward to, with an extended season providing a welcome distraction and a focus of attention, away from what 2021 may bring...



## LOOKING INTO TO 2021 WITH A SENSE OF RELUCTANT ACCEPTANCE ...





We can facilitate thoughtful, agile research to help businesses navigate through uncertain times.

For more of our approaches, and our Lockdown outputs [www.one-ms.com](http://www.one-ms.com)



Annual Conference 2016  
Finalist Finalist  
Best Overall Contribution



AQR PROSPER RILEY-SMITH  
QUALITATIVE EXCELLENCE AWARD 2015  
FINALIST

