

Re-Establishing The Foundation of Your Brand

A Focus on Higher Education Recruitment and Retention in Times of Exponential Change



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Why Are We Talking About This?

- + Higher Ed, leading up to 2020, was already in the midst of significant disruption
 - Funding models
 - Declining enrollments
 - Modalities
 - Public scrutiny of higher ed value
- + Two seismic shifts, happening literally back to back, have forever changed the higher ed landscape

Why Are We Talking About This?

Shift #1

- + NACAC struck the following notable provisions from its code of ethics

“Colleges must not offer **incentives exclusive to students applying or admitted** under an early decision application plan.”

“Colleges will not knowingly recruit or offer **enrollment incentives to students who are already enrolled, registered, have declared their intent** or submitted contractual deposits to other institutions.”

“Colleges must not **solicit transfer applications** from a previous year’s applicant or prospect pool unless the students have themselves initiated a transfer inquiry.”

- + In a nutshell, we’re in a whole new era of recruitment

- Poaching
- Rise of consumerism
- Incentives and appeals to traditionally untouched students
- Earlier decisions
- Motivations to transfer

Why Are We Talking About This?

Shift #2

- + COVID-19 changed the world in 2020 and beyond
- + The novel coronavirus has caused about one out of six high-school seniors to rethink their decision to enroll full time in a bachelor's degree program in fall 2020

21%

of those students said their “first-choice school may no longer be affordable for my family” because of coronavirus

12%

said either they or a family member had health concerns that required them to change their plans

The Time Has Come to ***Reassess our Value Proposition***



Values reset based on **cultural value shift** in current and prospective students

Is this the new normal?
What does this mean for **traditional higher education learning models**?

Understanding key audience insights to drive **revised strategies and key tactics** for recruitment and retention



Shifting Values in a Period of Disruption

Values in the age of disruption:

Wellness

Control

Empathy

Optimism



Wellness

(n): the state of being in good health; a dynamic process of making decisions and changes toward this goal.



The quest for wellbeing moved beyond physiological. From possibility, to control, identity and progress.

BOOMERS



Possibility
and purpose

GEN X



Control

MILLENNIALS



Social identity

CENTENNIALS



Progress

Adjacent values surfacing in response:

Safety

Protection

Wellness

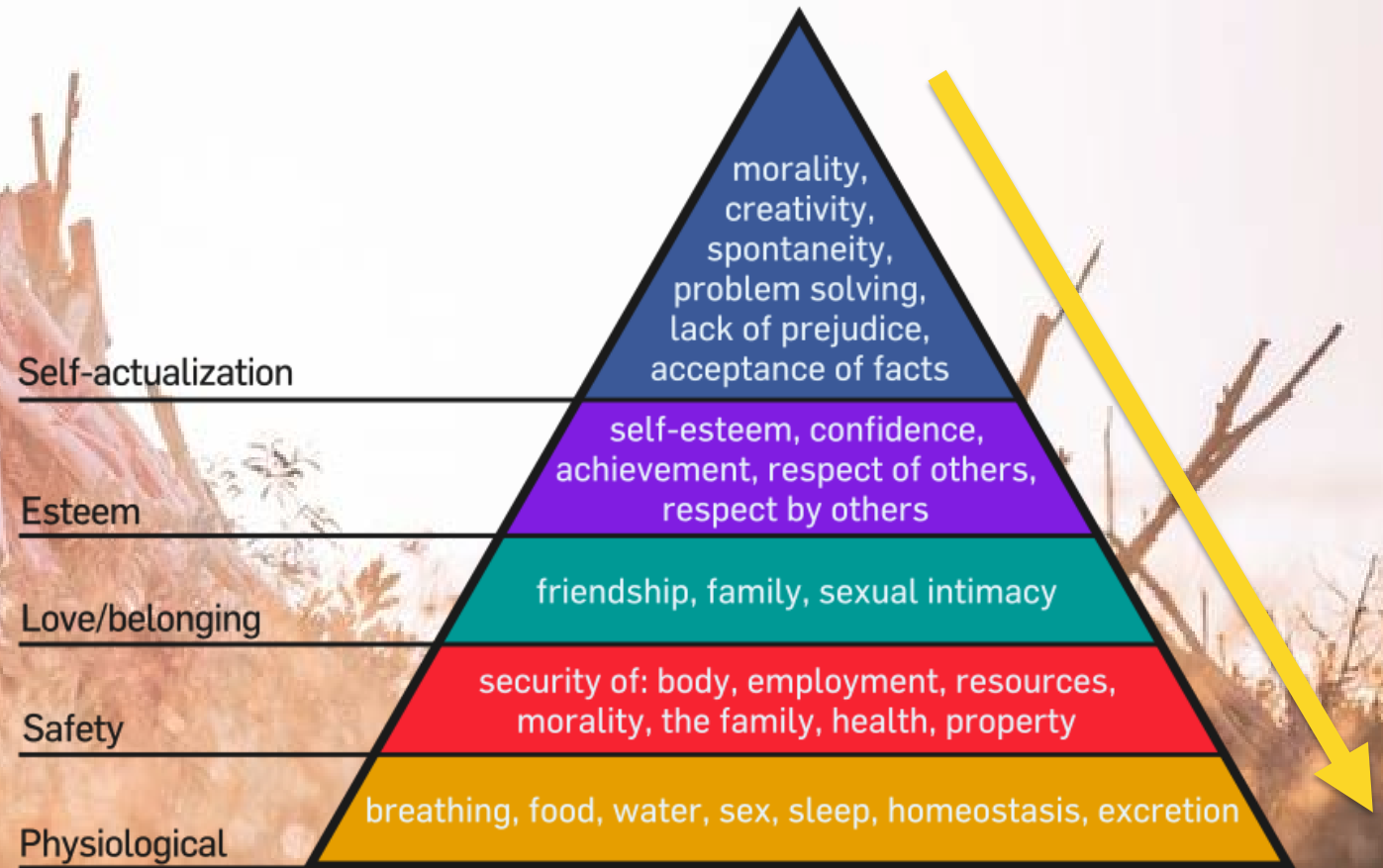
Security

Shelter



Disruptions like COVID-19 has brought it back down to the most basic level, triggering our most primal instincts.

The remaining values can be attributed to the flip of Maslow's Hierarchy of Need and our emotional response as a result.



A person with curly hair and glasses is sitting at a desk, working on a laptop. The desk is cluttered with various items, including a desk lamp, a potted plant, and some papers. A large yellow heart is superimposed over the center of the image, containing the word "Control".

Control

(n): Able to influence one's self and surroundings as desired. Able to predict, manage, and successfully react to the occurrence of stressful events.

The age of social media plus increasing confidence of younger generations had led to shifts in power and control.

“I feel I can make a difference to the world through the choices I make and the actions I take”

70%
of Centennials



Adjacent values surfacing in response:

Contribution

Autonomy

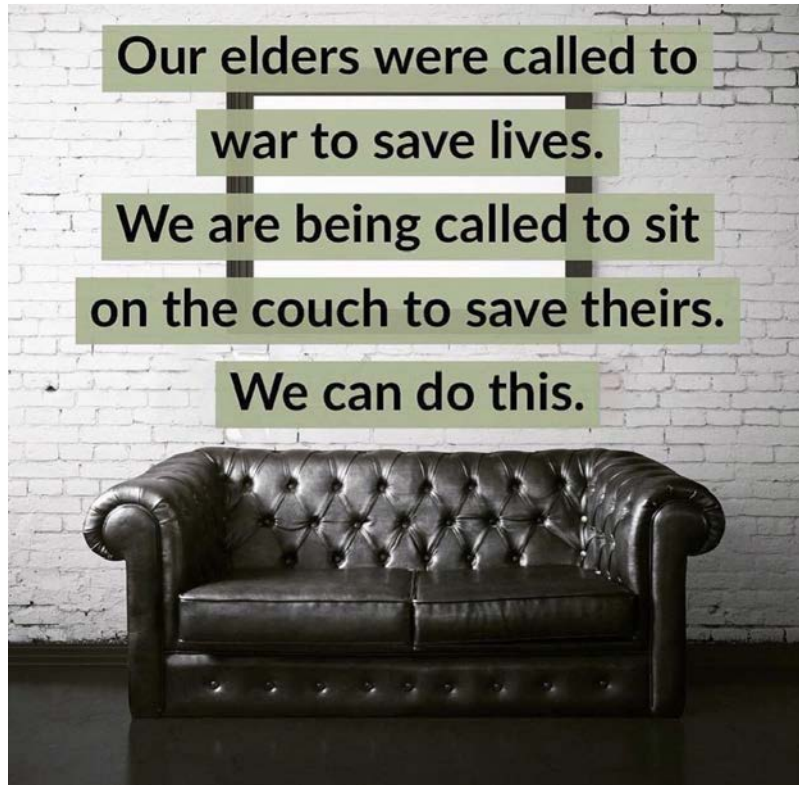
Control

Adaptability

Accomplishment



Our human values in response have not been to retreat or cower but to rise up and contribute from the couch.

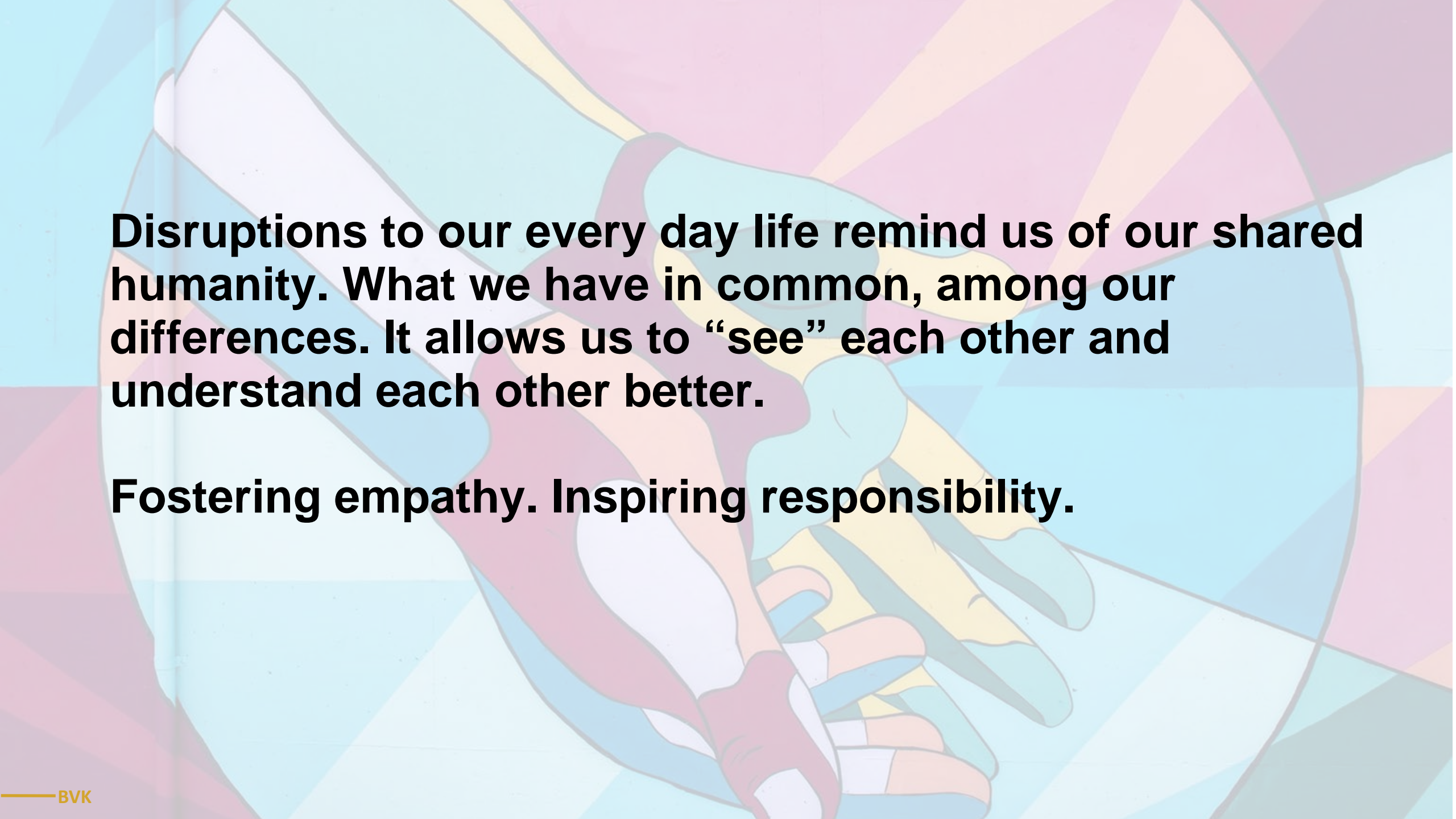


For brands, now is the time to spotlight the delight in things you can control today.



Empathy

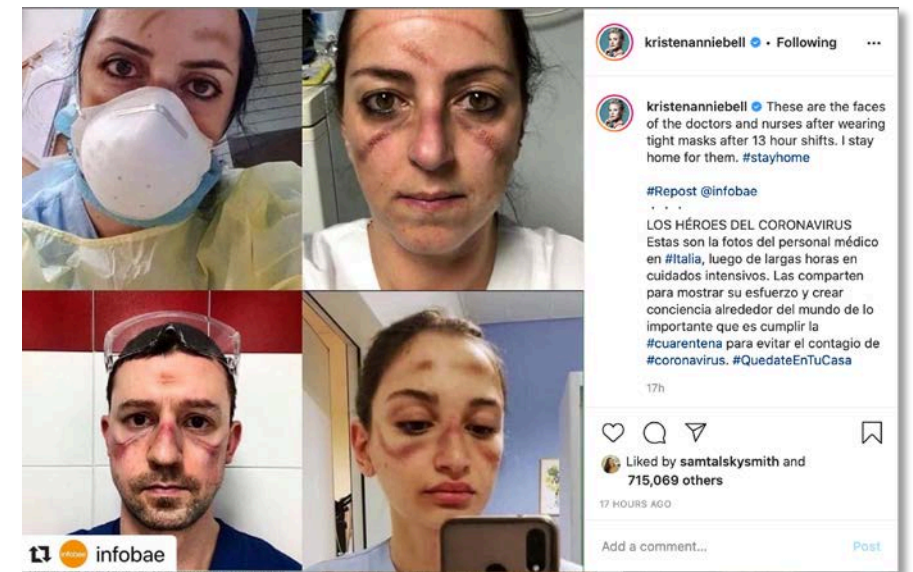
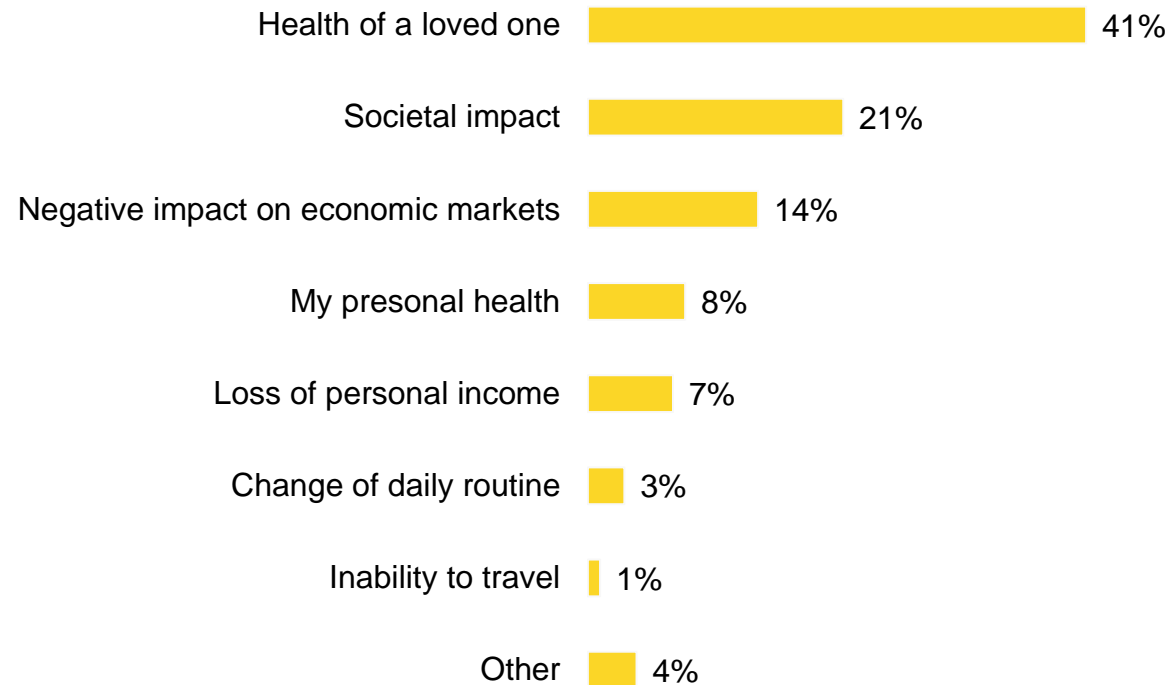
(n): the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person.

An illustration of two hands, one light blue and one light yellow, holding each other. The background is a vibrant, abstract geometric pattern with various shades of blue, pink, and yellow. The text is overlaid on the image in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

Disruptions to our every day life remind us of our shared humanity. What we have in common, among our differences. It allows us to “see” each other and understand each other better.

Fostering empathy. Inspiring responsibility.

In the age of COVID-19, empathy is even more important as we enter into a shared global narrative. We're beginning to put others We're all in this together. Even if we are apart.



Adjacent values surfacing in response:

Realness

Connection

Empathy

Genuineness

Responsibility



Technology was a tool for empathy deficit and now is one of our our greatest allies. Tech companies are stepping up to help students and adults alike continue to learn while away from traditional classrooms.



Adobe Enables Distance Learning Globally for Schools Impacted by COVID-19

Free Creative Cloud tools offered to students through
May 31, 2020

A photograph of a man and a woman standing on balconies of a building. The man is on the left, leaning on a decorative metal railing, looking out. The woman is on the right, also leaning on a railing, looking out. A large, bright yellow heart is superimposed over the center of the image, containing the word 'Optimism'.

Optimism

(n): Hopefulness and confidence about the future or the successful outcome of something



Despite the current circumstances, Americans still remain optimistic about their life after pandemic.

Thinking about the next five years...

Very/somewhat optimistic about the future of the country

66%

Very/somewhat optimism about own personal future

78%

Adjacent values surfacing in response:

Hope

Opportunity

Optimism

Gratitude

Creativity



We are choosing to celebrate the good, and look forward to what's to come.



And the optimism shines when asked about the positives of this situation:

“[It] reaffirms our interconnectedness”

“[I’m] constant contact with my family, and so appreciative of them.”

“These situations really do bring out the innovative side of people”

“As a society, my hope is that we come out the other side better.”

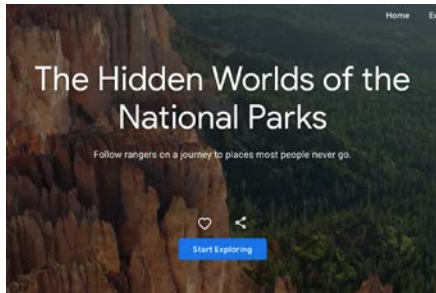
Looking to What's Next

A sneak peak into emerging values and cravings.



Control To Escape

Escape will come in various forms: virtually & physically. From normalcy (restaurants and hugs) to a world away. People will increasingly crave a way out.



Wellness To Cleanliness

People will worry more about what goes on body than what goes in to it. "Clean" will broaden from food to surfaces and we might see a shift in forgoing eco-friendly for chemicals.



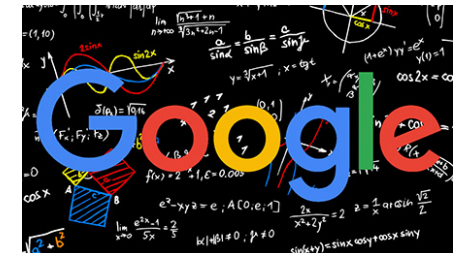
Empathy To Unity

In early 2020, we were more divided than ever. With a common enemy in COVID19, we may see a resurgence of a common narrative and putting aside differences. Community will prosper.



Optimism To Progress

Optimism shifts to actionable purpose. Brands will live by a purpose imperative not just for consumer self actualization but public good. A "Loss-Leader" position will thrive.



Insights into Gen Z

Today's Prospects and Current Undergraduate Students

Who is Gen Z?

- + Born between 1981 and 2004
- + Largest generation globally but not nationally (100 Millennials for every 73 Gen Z)
- + Grit seen as key to success; pick themselves up when things don't go as planned
- + Attuned to social, political and economic realities, they have a hopeful yet level-headed view
- + Growing up with search engines as their personal librarians
- + In their lifetimes, self-directed, online learning gaining popularity
 - Innovative learning platforms (MasterClass/Skillshare) are shaping how they understand the learning process
- + Previous generations looked to business/colleges to create solutions but this generation creates their own solutions
 - Less likely to see educational institutions as the authority on anything

In Addition, They Are:



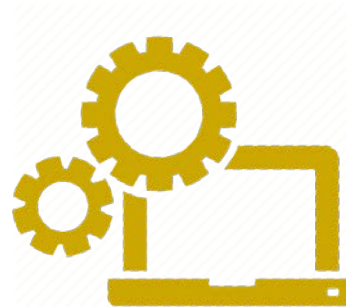
Global minded



Independent



Craving personalization and
high-touch engagement



True digital technology natives



Eager to make a
change in the world

As a result,
Higher Education Needs To

Redefine value propositions

Reassure target audiences

Recommit to student success

THE NEW 3 R'S IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Focus on Enrollment Management

Focus on Enrollment Management

NACAC Opportunities

| Opportunity 1 | Opportunity 2 | Opportunity 3 |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Incentives offered on early decisions | Recruit students who have already committed elsewhere | Recruit students already enrolled elsewhere |

Focus on Enrollment Management

Opportunities for Marketing

- + Increased engagement with students higher in the funnel
 - Greater investment on more mass awareness tactics
- + Communicate more at the admit-offer stage
 - No longer is this a tactic reserved for the most highly selective universities
 - All schools looking at more aggressive recruitment should consider engagement opportunities during consideration
 - Infuse elements of consumer appeals: Act Now! Save X%!
- + Encourage engagement deeper than we traditionally have during enrollment phase to solidify student decisions and mitigate poaching
 - Allow students earlier access to scheduling and advisor contacts
 - Earlier decisions on housing arrangements
 - More summer onboarding communications

Focus on Enrollment Management

Opportunities for Marketing

- + Communicate understanding of, and appeal to, more prevalent non-traditional student scenarios:
 - Gap year
 - Part-time to full-time transition
 - Full-time workers while in undergrad
- + Get ready to go on the attack, AND the defensive!
 - In addition to your university's tactics, how will you counter the vultures?

Focus on Enrollment Management

Opportunities for Operations

- + Extending admissions deadlines/application procedures
- + Evaluate new strategies for enrollment shortfall gaps
 - Intense focus on adult and transfer students
- + Reset expectations on out-of-state pull
 - 2020+ will see students staying closer to home and paying much greater attention to pragmatic matters (proximity to family, cost, ROI)
- + Offer valuable in-person information typically acquired during campus visits
 - Go virtual
 - Build community
 - Create access opportunities
- + Allocate dollars to winning back withdrawals

Focus on Enrollment Management

Communications Insights

- + Marketing and Admissions partnering more closely to increase awareness and retargeting efforts to those who show interest
- + Explore more personal ways to reach Gen Z beyond email, texts and calls
- + Revise messaging to be more personal and to be more reassuring based on prospective student interests and concerns
- + Investment in organic social/influencer campaigns featuring current students as the voice of the university
- + Augment volume-driving and lead-nurturing campaigns with the CRM
- + Create more virtual experiences, outside of merely a tour

Focus on Retention

Focus on Retention

| Opportunity 1 | Opportunity 2 | Opportunity 3 |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Commitment to community | Increased commitment to mental health | Personalize using various data sources |

Focus on Retention

Opportunities for Marketing

- + Advisor-based, personal communications
 - Addressing those who have not yet registered
 - Leverage data to personalize
 - Uncovering (relatively) minor issues that serve as obstacles to registration
- + Defend when it matters most
 - Most students will be targeted by other universities during freshman and sophomore years; double down on retention communications then
- + Build affinity
 - Promote deeply-regarded traditions
 - If you don't have them, now is the right time to make them
- + Promote resources
 - Student Affairs, counseling, campus safety & crisis readiness
 - Talk to students and parents

Focus on Retention

Opportunities for Operations

- + Extending admissions deadlines/application procedures
- + Prioritize student success measures
- + Make registration seamless
 - Audit existing process
 - What are minor obstacles that can be removed or revised?
 - > EX: registration holds as a result of insignificant balance with bursar's office
- + Partner with Student Affairs to create communication matrix and timeline and develop “red flag” scenarios

Focus on Retention

Communications Insights

- + Messaging should be digital and real-time
 - Gen Z are constant users of social media
- + Use messaging apps and tactics that feel more personal to the students and their needs
- + Reassure that they can make a difference in the world in their unique way
- + Create communities within university for more one-on-one exchanges

We're Here To Help!