

# Change is inevitable, growth is deliberate



By [Leigh Tayler](#)

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The year 2020 will go down in history as one of the watershed moments in our collective history. The year the world was brought to an abrupt halt and life changed overnight, with no return to normal (whatever normal means going forward) in sight.



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The advertising industry, like most, was not immune to the pandemic.

According to Warc's State of The Industry 2020/21, the global advertising economy lost \$63bn and they predict it will take two years to fully recover.

If 2020 has taught us anything it is that change is inevitable, we cannot predict it and we certainly cannot control it. But what we can do is choose how we respond to it. We can choose to see change as an opportunity for growth, an opportunity to find better ways of doing things.

If we believe that growth feeds growth, the sooner we embrace the change that 2020 has forced upon us, the sooner we choose growth over being rooted to the spot, the sooner we can revive and remodel. This could be the opportunity we needed to reinvent and grow our industry and our brands into something better, stronger and more resilient.

Leslie Dwight, a writer/designer, penned something that gave me pause to think and reframe my view on 2020:

“ *What if 2020 isn't cancelled?*

*What if 2020 is the year we've been waiting for?*

*A year so uncomfortable, so painful, so scary, so raw—  
that it finally forces us to grow.*

*A year that screams so loud, finally awakening us  
from our ignorant slumber.*

*A year we finally accept the need for change.*

*Declare change. Work for change. Become the change.*

*A year we finally band together, instead of  
pushing each other further apart. 2020 isn't cancelled, but rather  
the most important year of them all. ”*

2020 was a watershed year. But I believe 2021 will be an even more pivotal year, as 2021 will be the year we choose how we respond to the change that has been wreaked by this maelstrom. 2021 will be the year when we either choose to grow and adapt or remain immobile and wither. And given all that the advertising and marketing industry has lost this year, how we choose to respond next year will be of great consequence.

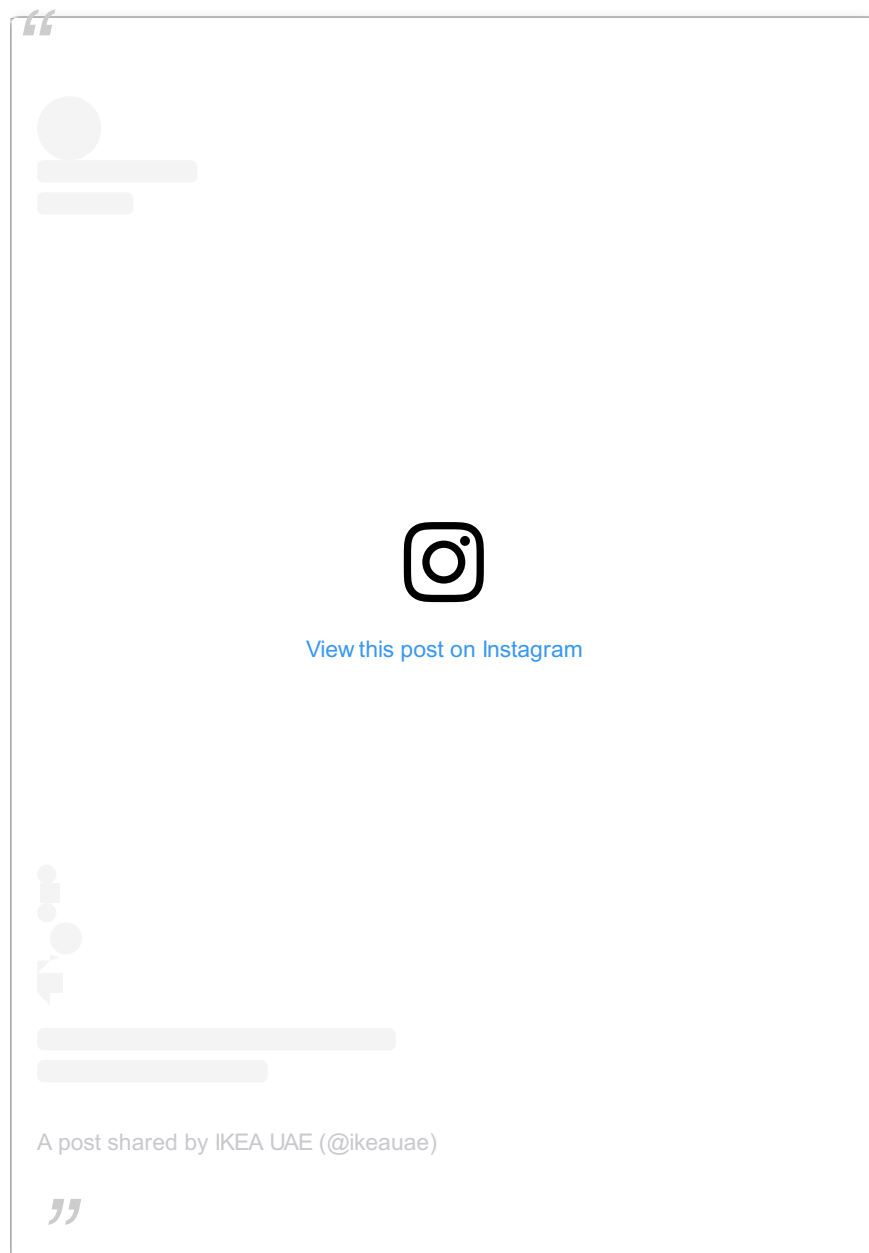
So, where is some room for growth when it comes to advertising and the brands we service?

## 1. Human touch

Emotion will be critical to connecting with consumers moving forward, especially as consumers remain emotionally volatile. Brands need empathy, they need to be helpful, they need to show they are in it with their consumers, they need to have local presence, not distant ivory towers. They need to be at their most human. Even going so far as to show this humanity above their business' interests.

## 2. Escapism

2021 will still see many consumers stuck at home, so brands need to consider how they support their consumers in their new lifestyle. Brands need to offer entertainment, excitement and new experiences to consumers to help break up the monotony of home life and also help them escape their current reality. Brands are already seeing the opportunity here, Ikea Dubai offered consumers 'Vacations in a Box' – recreating international travel experiences, such as Teatime in Tokyo.



## 3. Do more, talk less

Consumers are fatigued and frustrated, so brands need to make sure they are not just paying lip service to the current state of the world. Brands need to make meaningful and tangible contributions to making consumers' lives not only easier but more enjoyable. The pandemic has accelerated e-commerce growth, and this is unlikely to shift back, so brands need to consider their role in this new retail landscape. Consumers are quickly becoming accustomed to accessing their brands at any moment, at any touchpoint. Brands need to ensure a seamless brand experience in this omnichannel world. Brands also need to remember that their actions at this time are under scrutiny as consumers have the time and emotional volatility to publicly hold brands accountable to what they say they will do.

These are just three ways we as an industry can choose to respond to the change and to grow through the pandemic. But as has been true for all world altering events throughout history, the opportunities for growth, improvement and ingenuity are endless. And many have not even been thought of yet. Creativity is always needed when choosing to grow through

extreme change. So, who better to help grow and evolve brands and the world than the advertising industry?

## ABOUT LEIGH TAYLER

Leigh Tayler is the strategy director at Joe Public United. During her career of more than 13 years, she's worked in a plethora of categories and has fostered a well-rounded and instinctual approach to strategic thinking that she applies at every level, from big brand concepts to last-mile moments of truth.

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