



CREATIVE MESSAGING DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION GIVEN COVID-19

The ANA surveyed our members to understand if/how creative messaging has been developed and how work is getting produced, given the COVID-19 crisis. Members were surveyed March 30–31; there were 196 respondents. Key findings follow.

MARKETERS HAVE BEEN AGILE TO ADJUST CREATIVE; FOR MANY, ADJUSTMENTS HAVE BEEN SUBSTANTIAL

Ninety-two percent have adjusted creative messaging for marketing since mid-March, when COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization.

For 46 percent of respondents, those adjustments have been substantial; for 42 percent adjustments were moderate; for 12 percent they were minimal (among those who have adjusted creative messaging).

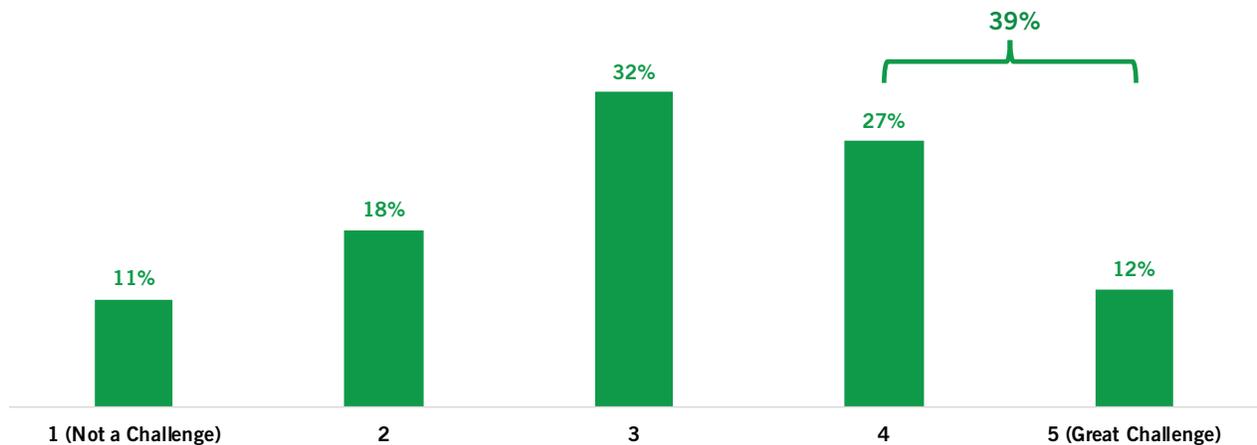
Representative verbatim descriptions among those with substantial adjustments:

- Refocused messaging to speak to the empathy of what our communities are facing, showing how we are here to help.
- Pulled most price/item messaging and changed to “we’re here for you” message.
- Created new ads from old footage to be culturally relevant and eliminated creative executions we didn’t feel represented the times.
- 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.
- Our messaging has pivoted from marketing to providing essential/helpful information to all audiences.
- We changed from product-based, volume/equity-driving messaging to more situation-based messaging focused on how hard our employees are working to return product to the shelves.
- Backed off lifestyle imagery, particularly around travel, spring break, and gathering in large groups. Also had to pull back on purchase messaging because of people stockpiling and inventory running low.

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.”

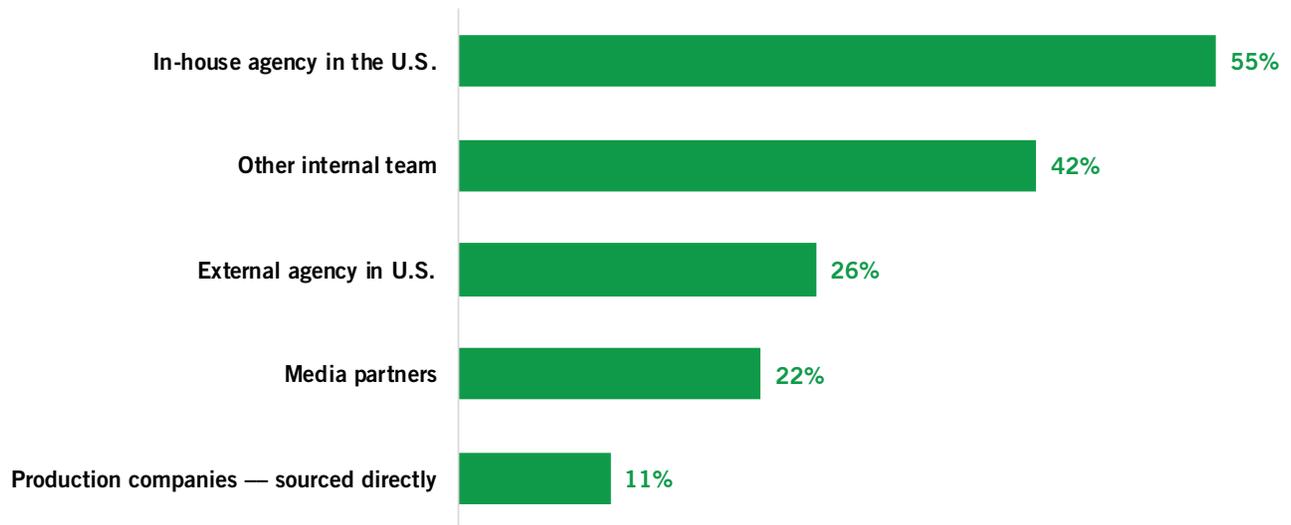


Among those who answered that producing new creative assets has been a challenge (top-2 box), representative reasons were:

- 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. We have a large in-house agency so we are fortunate to have assets to leverage.
- Everyone is working remotely but all new assets are due immediately.
- Cannot do new photoshoots the traditional way; have developed new ways to get footage while respecting social distancing and the care for our agency partners.
- It's fast and furious right now. We don't have time to think/create — we simply have to get information out the door. Not much time for creativity.

GETTING THE WORK DONE: IN-HOUSE TEAMS PLAYING KEY ROLES

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:



When asked to “describe how you are producing new work,” representative responses were:

- Editing existing/historical film and using stock imagery where necessary to fill gaps. Recording new VO and re-mixing music.
- We are looking at current assets that can be repurposed.
- Our work has shifted from producing/shooting new work to leveraging existing assets and sourcing additional as needed via stock assets.
- Re-purposing existing work for some brands. In-studio production for a couple of brands.
- Fast-tracking without normal testing and vetting of content.
- DIY — repurposing existing content, and getting user-generated content to work for us. Also using animation.

CREATIVE MESSAGING WILL BE ADJUSTED GOING FORWARD

Eighty-nine percent plan on adjusting the creative messaging for marketing going forward in view of the current environment.

When asked to “briefly explain the adjustments you plan to make in the creative messaging for your marketing going forward” representative responses were:

- Plan to make creative messaging that is empathetic with current situation and relevant for brand.
- Adjustments to language for sensitivity purposes, removing some messaging altogether if it seems inappropriate, changing any lifestyle images that depict people in close proximity at events, etc.
- More comforting, less promotional messaging.
- Continue to adjust tone to be reflective of current environment and to be relevant to consumer needs.
- From now on, with no timeline in mind, we are balancing customer support/business resources with product/promotional, and really shifting to what products are relevant to this new virtual world.
- Lean into “how can we help” messages and lean away from overt “what can we sell you” messages. Adjust images as needed (staying away from images of large crowds, handshaking, sports, etc.).

April 6, 2020

The logo consists of the letters 'A', 'N', and 'A' in a bold, green, sans-serif font. The letters are spaced out significantly, with the 'A' on the left, the 'N' in the middle, and the 'A' on the right. The 'N' is positioned between the two 'A's, but there is a large gap between the 'A' and 'N', and another large gap between the 'N' and the final 'A'.

To show support for the Ad Council’s **#AloneTogether** pandemic crisis messaging, the ANA has put some space between the letters of our logo. We need to keep our distance and be **Alone Together**.