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Corporate Partnerships HAILEY CAVILL-JASPERS

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE CORPORATE SECTOR THIS YEAR?

Many corporates stepped up in Q1 to donate to bushfire relief and recovery. I imagine that this may have exhausted some philanthropic reserves. In Q2 and Q3, corporates (indeed the entire business world, large and small, public and private) were distracted with basic survival, adapting to remote working and pivoting, like many of us.

KPMG research from July 2020 (*Consumers and the New Reality*) reveals four industry predictions. Companies that will surge: online retail, food delivery, tele-medicine, pharmaceutical, interaction platforms, streaming media. Companies that will recover: Banking, consumer goods, agriculture, and transport. The transformers: travel and leisure, manufacturing, professional services, insurance, healthcare, real estate, and construction. Those permanently damaged: airlines, bricks and mortar retail, higher education, energy, hotels, restaurants and entertainment.

I believe that most existing partnerships continued; my sense is that companies didn't abandon their nonprofit partners during the crisis. Some new high-profile partnerships emerged that were directly related to the pandemic such as Glen 20/Meals on Wheels, Kit Kat/RU OK? and Lifeline partnered with numerous companies that donated ad space to promote their message.

WHAT SURPRISED YOU THE MOST ABOUT THIS YEAR?

After this year, nothing surprises me! In attempting to understand

whether corporates will have an appetite to partner in 2021, I've spent most of this year reading and analysing consumer data and conducting my own research.

If you want to know what corporates will do, you must look first at how consumer needs and

purchase behaviour have changed. What surprised me is how much they had changed. I was concerned that COVID-19 had killed off the conscious consumer movement — those consumers that are demanding products be more sustainable, give back to society, and align to their values and ethics. I was wrong. This niche movement, once the domain of millennials, is now mainstream.

This was a pleasant surprise and is excellent news for corporate partnerships because when three in four Australians say that corporates should partner with charities to solve social problems in the coming year, one in four have actively switched to a brand that supports a charity in the past year, and one in two say they will switch brands in the coming year to support a charity, you know corporates will listen and hopefully take action. My research (*The Conscious Consumer Era Arrives. Finally.* October 2020) indicates that COVID-19 has afforded consumers an opportunity to stop and reflect on what's important to them and what kind of world they want to live in. They've realised that they can effect social change through their everyday purchases.

WHAT SHOULD CORPORATE PARTNERSHIP MANAGERS BE DOING IN 2020?

Corporate partnership and fundraising managers can educate their board and management, who might think that in a recession corporates "won't have any money". Perhaps there may not be as much corporate philanthropy as before, but based on consumer demand, I anticipate there will be a strong desire for mutually beneficial partnerships. Corporates, businesses, and brands will be looking for innovative, professional, and adaptable nonprofits to partner with, to fulfil on their societal obligations and meet the shifting consumer demand. Nonprofits need to upskill and be ready or there's a risk that corporates will become frustrated and create their own social program. I'd be focused on the industries that did well or transformed during this year as they'll have resources, including cash, to invest. There's also a growing trend for consumers to buy local, so cast your net broader than just corporates and look to private and medium-sized companies. **F&P**

