



Is It Time For A Brand Pivot?

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Paul Garrison

Founder of Garrison Group and Professor of Marketing at Maastricht School of Management in The Netherlands

In times of stress and anxiety such as we are experiencing these days it is natural for brand marketers to hunker down to weather the storm. Consumers as well. We have all heard that the Chinese symbol for **crisis** is the same as for **opportunity** and that phrase: ‘*A crisis is a terrible thing to waste*’ that we first heard in response to the great recession of 2008/2009.

Understandably we hesitate to seize opportunities as we hear about businesses exploiting a tragic situation we are all facing. We don’t want to be seen as inappropriately opportunistic. However, there is another perspective to consider. In English we like to say the phrase; ‘*a friend in need is a friend indeed.*’ In Turkey they emphasize the importance

of being a '*bad day friend*'. As brand owners, we should look at customer relationships in the same way as we would a family or friendship relationship. You don't try to take advantage or exploit your friends during difficult times, but you don't disappear either. You want to be there to help them through it.

We are experiencing a watershed event - a dividing point, that fundamentally changes our world from what it was before to the reality of what is now. As business leaders we need to think in terms of developing two corresponding pivot strategies:

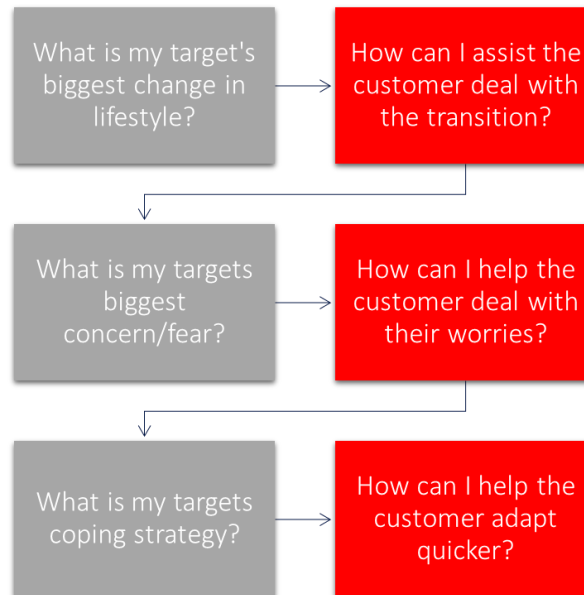
1. What do we communicate in a time of quarantine/lockdown?
2. What do we communicate to quickly and efficiently emerge from the crisis?

All marketing starts and ends with the customer. More than ever, it is important that you understand your customer in the broader sense as human beings with full lives. That shape their needs relative to your product category that has likely evolved in recent weeks and most importantly the tension points within their lives. As marketers we need to relook at our segmentation and recalibrate how this crisis has impacted their life.

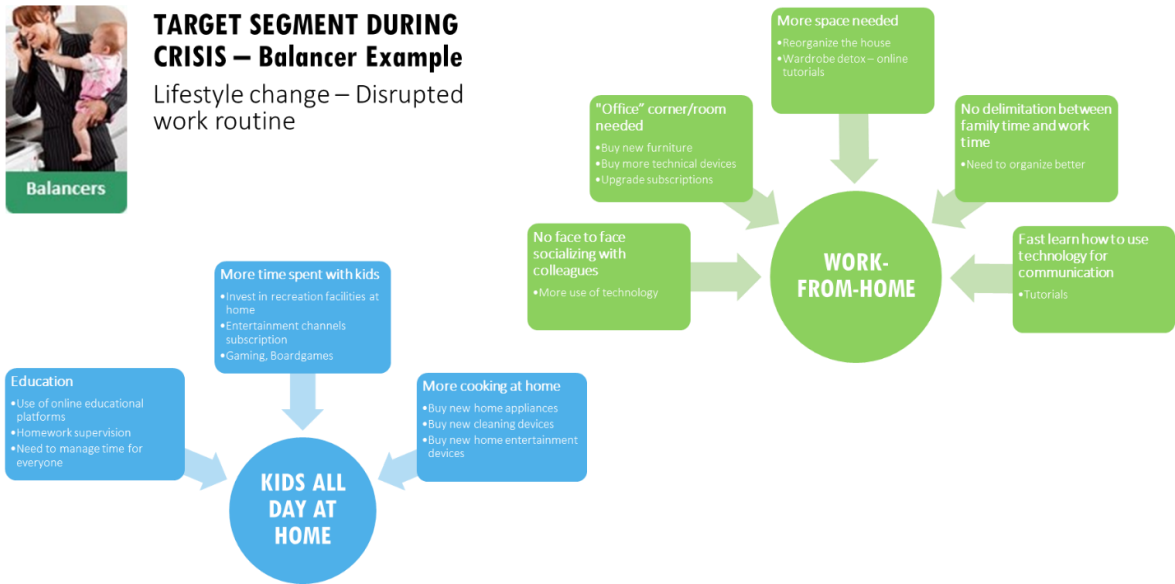
How a brand and product add value to customers' life today has significantly changed versus what it was before. They are more prone to bulk buying (combining purchases for cost saving and lasting value), crowd avoidance (buying on-line) and the need for cocooning and shared nurturing. But that society in general. Dig deeper to be more relevant to your core customer target. This is when a good *human centric segmentation* can really pay off because you would know enough about your customer to better

understand what they are going through and how you can be more relevant and meaningful to their life as it evolves – in this case a locked down at home situation.

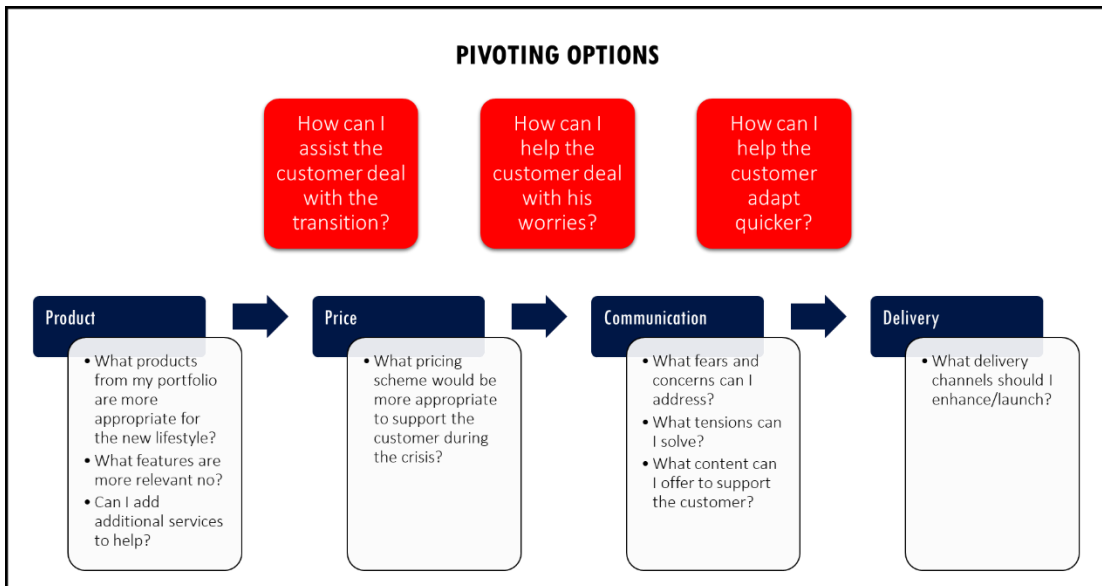
MY TARGET SEGMENT DURING CRISIS



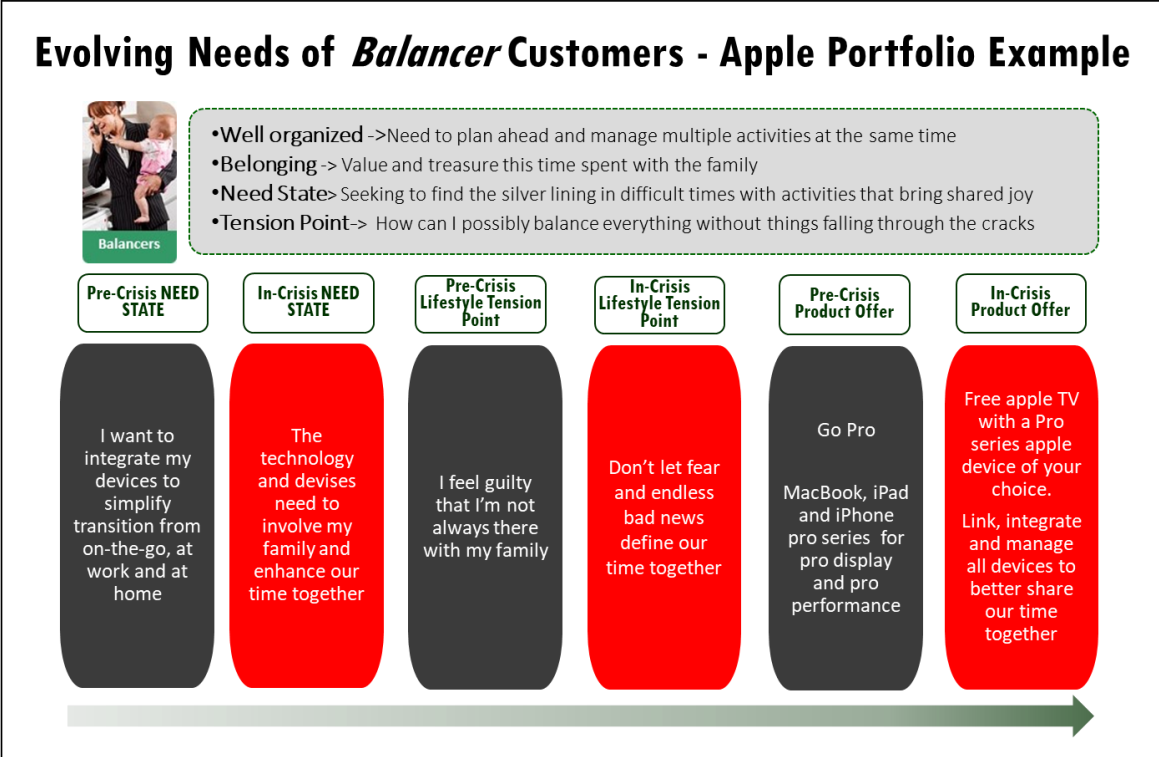
Let's look at the *Balancer* customer segment. These are parents that are striving to make the most out of the work and home lives. Consequently, they are overloaded trying to balance the needs of the successful career while still be the best parent they can be. They worry that they will somehow come up short either with their colleagues at work that depend on them, or their families. The COVID crisis has especially impacted them because of the drastic changes to their home and work life that have now so dramatically merged.



Knowing what they are going through, think in terms of how you can pivot you brand and products to better their needs. Think in term of what you offer, for what price and how you can make your product available.



Now let's add a brand as an example of how we can pivot our brand proposition to a specific customer segment (*Balancers*) with a brand and product portfolio that we all know - Apple.



As seen in the graphic above, Apple would have a unique opportunity to pivot their brand proposition to the *bad day friend* concept appropriate for this crisis to better leverage their full product portfolio which will further solidify their relationship with existing customers while giving a meaningful, deliverable and defensible reason to buy for new customers.