

COVID-19 QSR RESTART PLAYBOOK

Brand planning for
changing times

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With the current situation and with e-commerce growth nowadays, delivery and mobile payments almost seem to be more digital by nature. So what I would expect to see is an increase, at least in percentage terms, of digital spend across the board, especially for my category of QSR. And in our case, we are adjusting media plans.

Fernando Machado, Burger King, Global CMO

The pandemic created a huge opportunity for the QSR industry to shine. In March, drive-throughs generated \$8.3 billion across the fast-food industry, according to data from the NPD Group.

With many food industry experts predicting an uncertain future for restaurants that rely exclusively on in-dining patrons, QSR brands like McDonald's, Taco Bell, Wendy's, and Burger King, among so many more, are expected to continue their upward revenue trajectory. This places added pressure on QSR brands to dial-up their engagement strategies, get inventive with messaging, and implement creative marketing tactics that directly respond to the changing needs and interests of consumers as they adjust to the new reality of a post-pandemic world.

This QSR Playbook offers a series of steps for re-launching your marketing and media plan so you can exercise a first-mover advantage through every phase of the post-Covid reset.



Reassess your audience



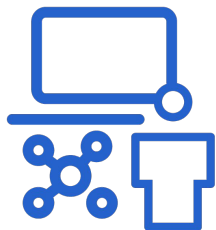
Craft your messaging



Realign your media plan

CHECKLIST

1 REASSESS YOUR AUDIENCE



How has the pandemic affected your audience and segmentation?

- ❑ Have the disposable income and product interests of your audience changed?
- ❑ How have your audiences been impacted in different areas of the country?
- ❑ Is the mindset and experience of your audience targets still changing? Are they evolving week-to-week? (frequently the answer to this is Yes)
- ❑ Are you looking to defend existing market share or push to win new share?
- ❑ Should your propensity scores be revised?

2 CRAFT YOUR MESSAGING



Should your messaging be updated?

- ❑ How has consumer sentiment shifted toward your brand and competitors in the context of the crisis?
- ❑ Are you driving brand awareness for share-shift or lower-funnel purchase intent?
- ❑ Does the tone of your messaging align with consumer experience and stress levels during this time?
- ❑ Are you facing any supply chain constraints that may require different messaging by region?

3

REALIGN YOUR MEDIA PLAN



What strategic adjustments will help you adapt to a U.S. economic restart?

- ❑ How has your audience's media consumption changed?
- ❑ Can you first test your audience and messaging insights in email or other owned media?
- ❑ How has your audience distribution across TV and digital changed post Covid-19?
- ❑ With the TV Upfronts evolving, are you using real-time viewership data to help evaluate a new way to invest? Are you leveraging technology to help with flexibility, strategic audiences, and ADU's?

A dark blue, out-of-focus background image of a microscope, showing the eyepiece, objective lenses, and stage.

EXAMPLES & INSIGHTS

REASSESS YOUR AUDIENCE

Finding new and innovative ways to reach and engage audiences can be a challenge for any marketer, especially during and after a global crisis. A lack of timely and meaningful audience insights for cross-screen targeting intelligence can severely limit effective planning and campaign execution.

Now more than ever as the economy restarts, brands and agencies need to get ahead of real-time data about trends, topics, behaviors, interests, and sentiment so they can better assess shifts in consumer behavior and unlock new planning opportunities across all screens.



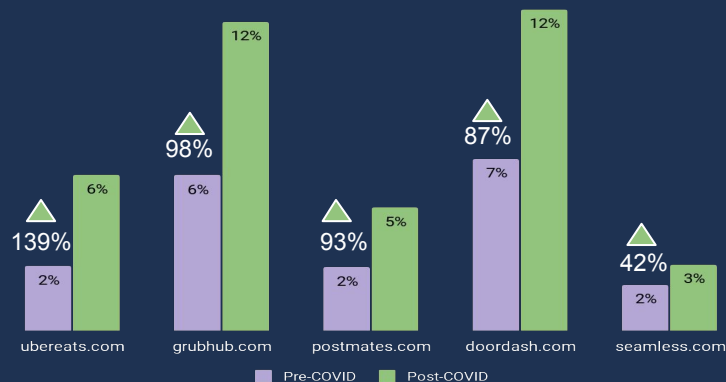
FOLLOW SHIFTING DATA TRENDS

Key audiences turned to fast food

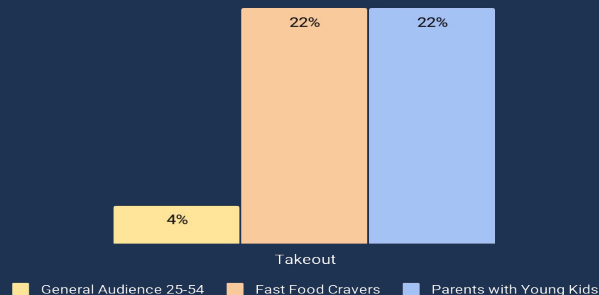
While shelter-in-place posed new challenges for families with young children, it also created ample opportunities for QSR brand marketers to focus on energy- and time-strapped parents looking for quick and affordable meal options. The data here shows that parents with young kids dramatically changed how they relate to food delivery websites pre- and post-Covid-19. This promising new target demographic almost doubled its interest during the pandemic in Grubhub and Doordash, and engagement with Uber Eats jumped by as much as 139%. Additionally, families with young children were focused on the same amount of take-out related content online as firmly entrenched fast food eaters known as “fast food cravers.” Both groups’ QSR content interests spiked by 22% during the global crisis.

Identifying New Key Audiences: Parents with Young Kids

Parents with Young Kids | Change in Food Delivery Website Visitation | Pre vs. Post-COVID



Consumption of Takeout-Related Content



ACTIVATE AGAINST AUDIENCE INSIGHTS

The industry has been moving toward the convergence of TV and digital, but in this era of Covid-19, it's happening at a much faster pace and with greater importance. With **Amobee Brand Intelligence**, marketers can unlock the power of unrivaled audience insights to take advantage of new planning opportunities across TV, connected TV, desktop, mobile, and social media. Amobee BI tools provide answers that solve for marketer's most critical objectives:

- Transform audience and contextual insights into empowered media activation based on historical trends.
- Gain a deeper understanding of the interests, topics, considerations, and trending content that is top-of-mind for your audience.
- Measure and analyze organic interests across your brands and audience over time to identify key industry, economic, and audience changes.
- Break down the competitive landscape by brand or product to fully comprehend how your solutions measure up in-market.



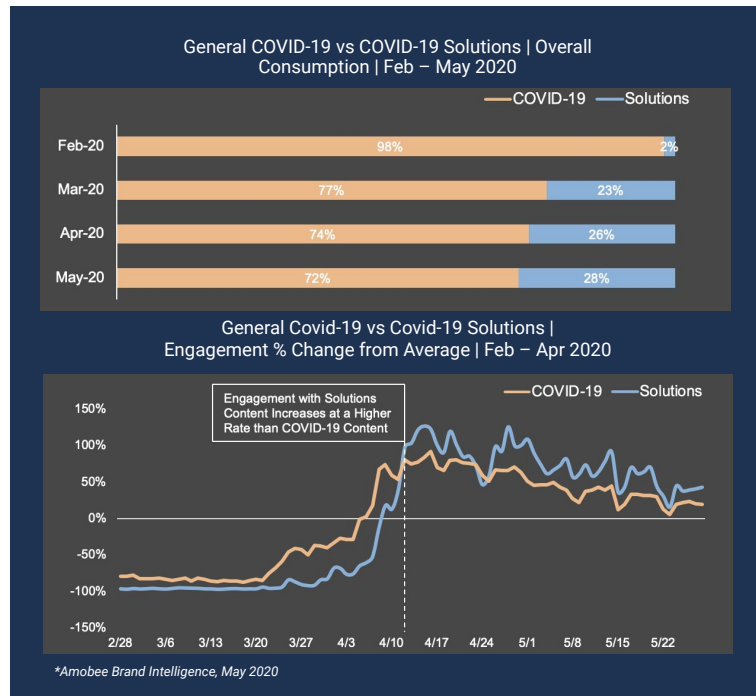
CRAFT YOUR MESSAGING



Brands that are locked in legacy campaign strategy and lack self-aware insights on how consumer sentiment has shifted over the last 90 days run the risk of coming across as tone deaf in communications to new and existing customers.

Market data indicates that consumers are quickly pivoting as they look for new product and service solutions. While many brands' initial Covid-19 response focused on conveying empathy to consumers during social distancing restrictions, a leading-edge creative strategy two weeks ago has quickly become outdated.

Media messaging that speaks specifically to new behaviors taking shape will likely have a significant market advantage.



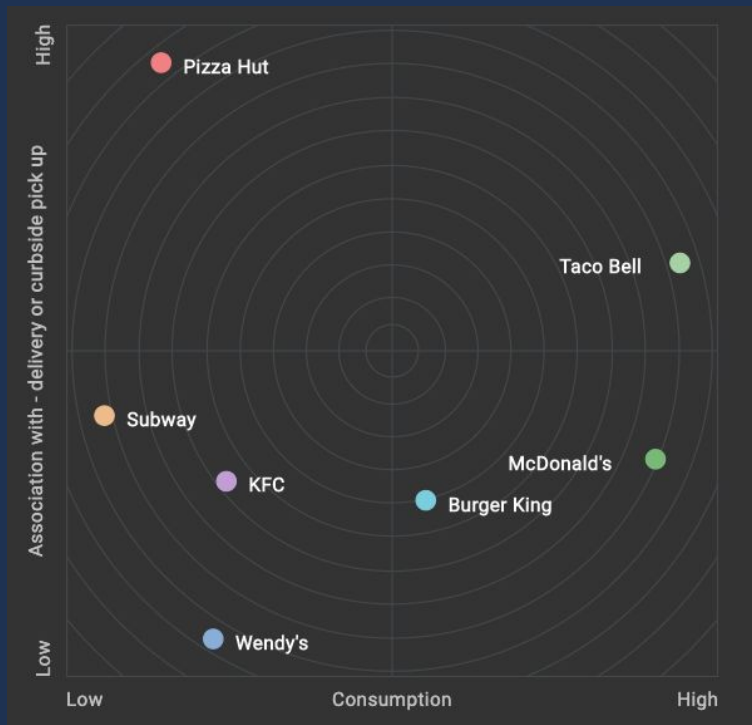
FOCUS ON ENGAGEMENT

Consumers demanded more takeout

Looking at the QSR category specifically, consumer preference during the pandemic shifted to curbside pickup and takeout. While McDonalds is so far the winner of this messaging opportunity after investing significantly in its Uber Eats partnership and contactless drive-through campaigns, recent data shows the competitive landscape among some of today's top brands, such as Subway, Burger King, Wendy's, Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, and KFC, and how they revised creative strategy to maintain consumer engagement and support growing demand for new delivery and pickup options.

Once you have new messaging insights directing your creative, the first thing to consider is A/B testing revised creative. The best place to efficiently test new messaging is in owned and operated media, like your website and email channels.

Competitive Landscape | Top 7 QSR Brands | Dining Content | May 2020

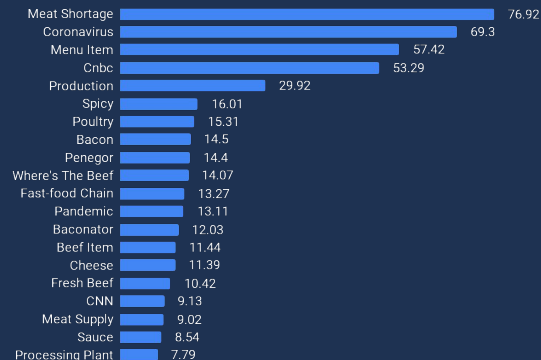


BE PROACTIVE IN CRISIS AND OFFER SOLUTIONS

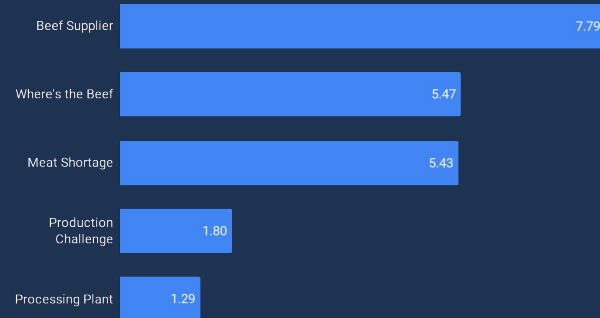
Proof-Point: Wendy's took the lead in a high-risk moment

The recent beef shortage due to rising Covid infection rates created an unprecedented opportunity for QSR brands to speak directly to consumers and offer solutions. The data shows that Wendy's was a standout in terms of its quick messaging response to address concerns about the chain's meat supply in certain areas of the country and communicate how the shortage would impact menu offerings. The data shows that Wendy's site visitors are now more likely to engage with the QSR on meat shortage-related topics than the average consumer, suggesting that site visitors may be hoping to learn more about the shortage from Wendy's itself, find out if their local Wendy's location has been affected, and/or explore alternative menu items.

Top Wendy's Topics



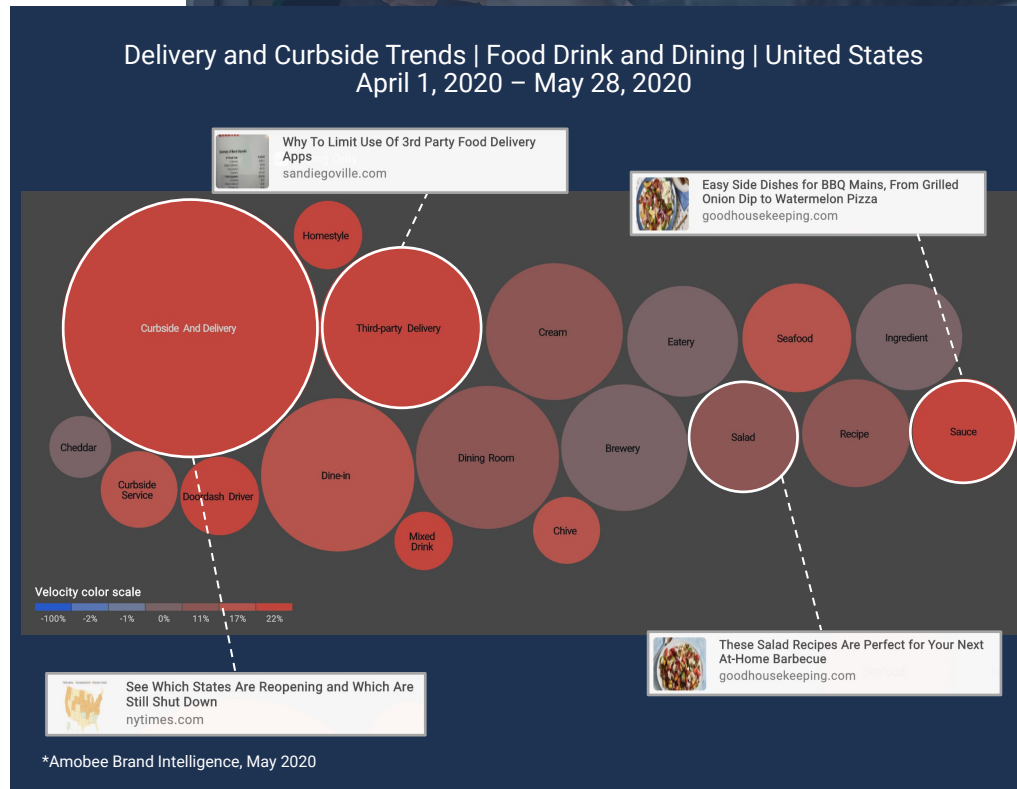
Wendys.com Visitors Engagement with
Meat Shortage-Related Topics



FOLLOW SEASONAL DELIVERY DESIRES

Grilling season spiked demand for side dishes

As the weather grew warmer in some parts of the U.S. during the crisis, delivery and curbside trends indicated an increased interest in cheesy and saucy dishes, seafood, and alcohol. Side dishes such as salads also increased in interest given the start of the grilling season. Consider using contextual targeting to create custom segments that dynamically align with key trending conversations to remain relevant and highly engaged with these shifting food preferences.

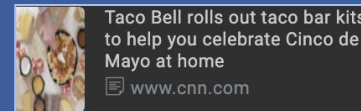
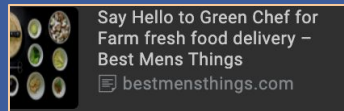
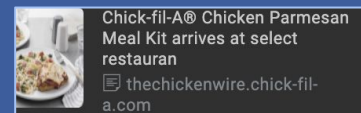
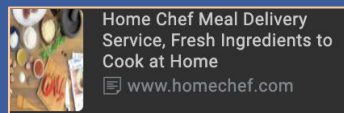
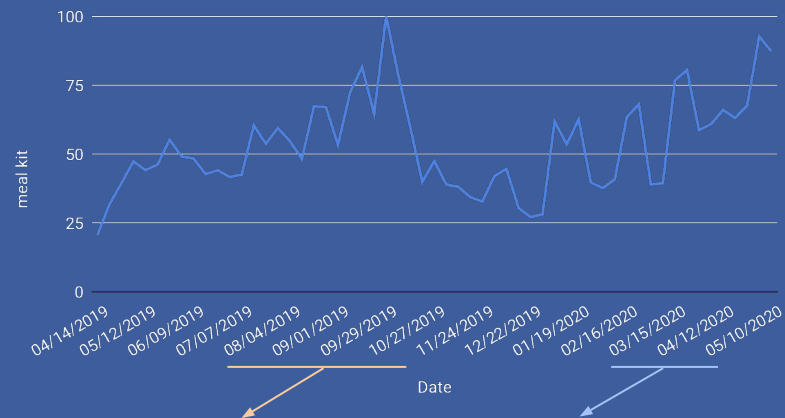


CONNECT WITH NEW CONSUMERS

Millennials rebounded on meal kits

In another example of brand messaging that closely follows shifts in consumer behavior, a year before the pandemic, millennials were highly engaged with fresh-ingredient home delivery meal kits such as Home Chef and Green Chef. That engagement dropped precipitously over the holiday season but then spiked back up during the pandemic as shelter-in-place orders took hold and consumers were eager to engage with meal kits and delivery from brands such as Chick-fil-A and Taco Bell. In this scenario, positioning your messaging to complement home cooking trends can help you better connect with your intended audience and even expand into new consumer demographics.

Meal Kit Trends Among Millennials

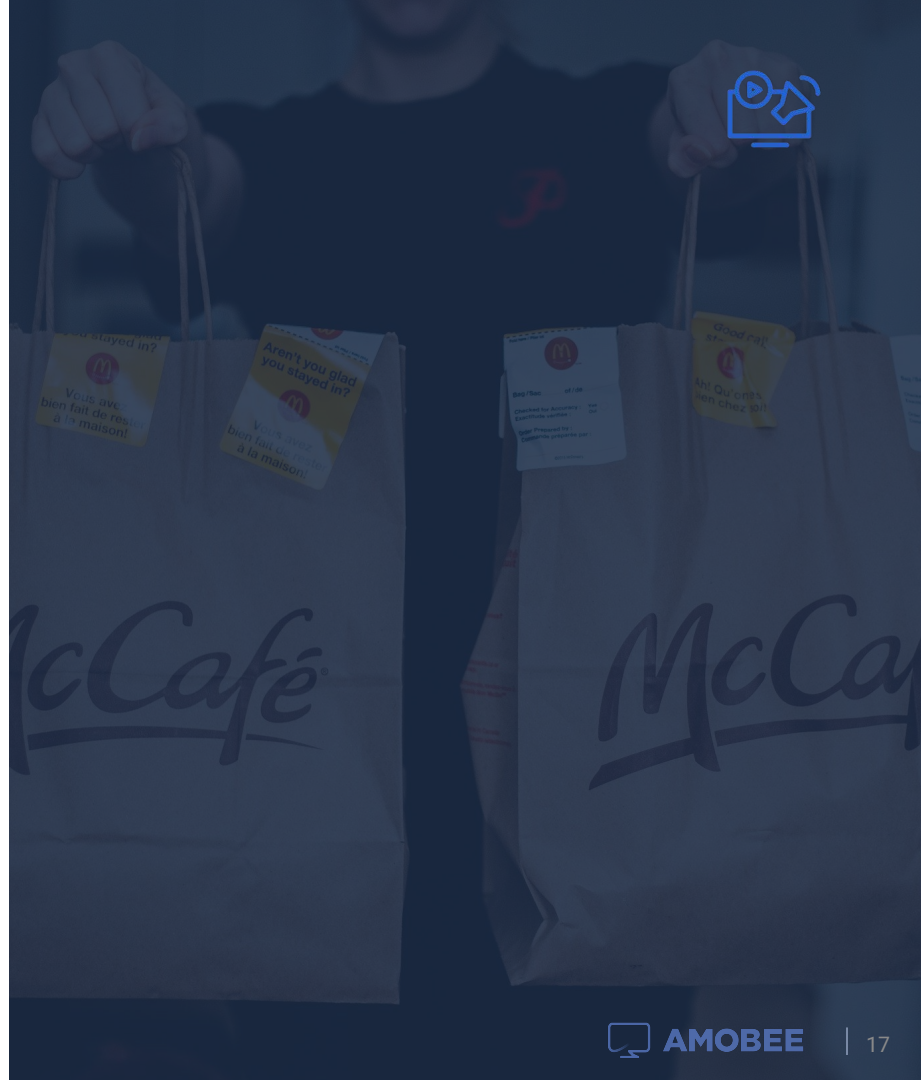


REALIGN YOUR MEDIA PLAN

Now that you have revised and tested **who** your target audience is and **what** you need to say to them in your restart strategy, the last imperative is to re-plan **where** to most effectively communicate with them through paid channels.

There are three vectors that you should consider:

- Content
- Channel
- Location



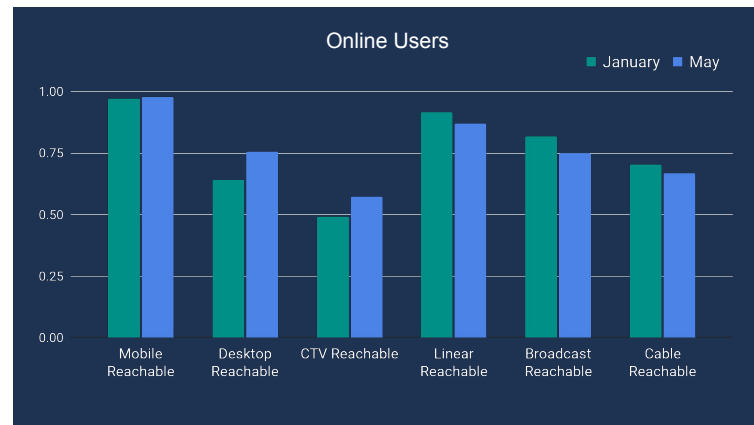
OPTIMIZE YOUR REACH ACROSS ALL SCREENS

The next big shift in consumer behavior is channel consumption. Home isolation has accelerated consumer time and financial investment in streaming products like Hulu, Sling, Tubi, Pluto, and Roku, which create increased scale for time-shifted TV experiences.

With a substantial increase in news consumption paired with a corresponding drop in live sports, advertisers need to take a hard look at their existing network and daypart mixes in broadcast TV. According to eMarketer, TV ad spend is expected to drop by up to 29% in the first quarter of this year. Luckily, with a rise in addressable inventory on the biggest screen in the home, there are ample opportunities to fill in the delivery gaps of any adversely affected TV commitment.

The data here shows how addressable audiences have evolved across all screens and channels before Covid-19 to now. This example shows the shifts with respect to audience availability in

mobile, desktop, CTV, broadcast, and cable channels between January and May of this year. While mobile remained flat, we see gains of 11% in desktop and 9% on CTV, as well as a drop of 5%, 7% and 4% on TV, broadcast and cable respectively.

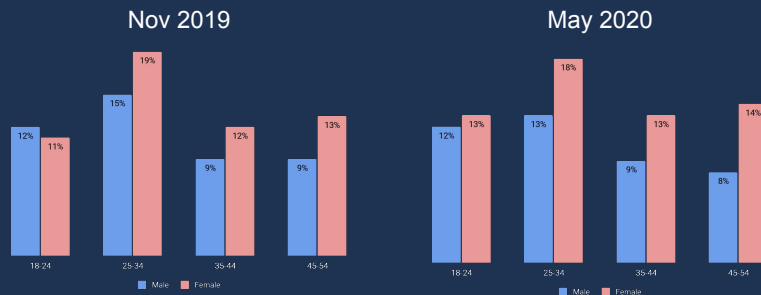


BE PART OF THE CONVERSATION

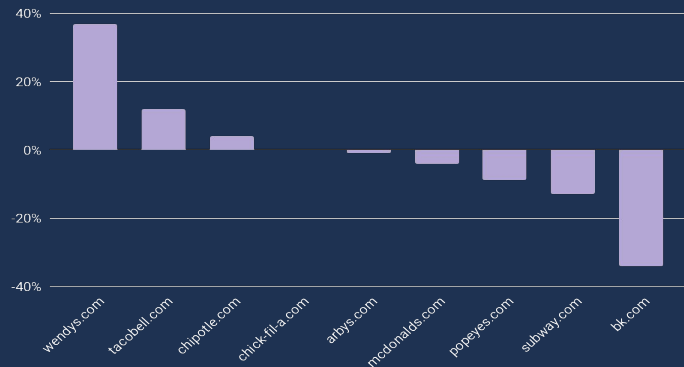
Fast food cravers stayed hungry

The demographic profile known as “fast food cravers,” ages 18-54, has remained surprisingly unchanged from last year right up to Covid-19, suggesting that age and gender targeting strategies pre-pandemic can successfully carry over with this important audience segment to post-Covid planning. While their profiles remain steady, interest in QSR web content in general has increased during and post-Covid. Visitation to Wendys.com by fast food cravers jumped 34% from November 2019 to May 2020, and Tacobell.com registered a 12% increase, while Chipotle.com garnered a 4% increase. This shows that even with a demographic profile as consistent as fast foodies, there are still opportunities to insert your messaging into this online conversation to further engage and entice this QSR-loving segment.

Demographic Profile | Fast Food Cravers A18-54



Change in Website Visitation Among Fast Food Cravers A18-54

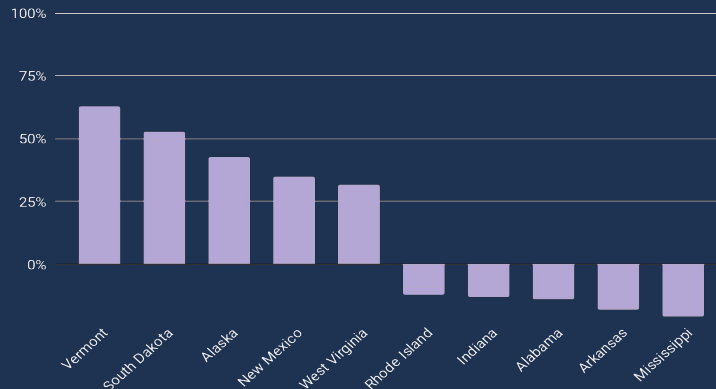


APPLY NUANCED TARGETING STRATEGIES

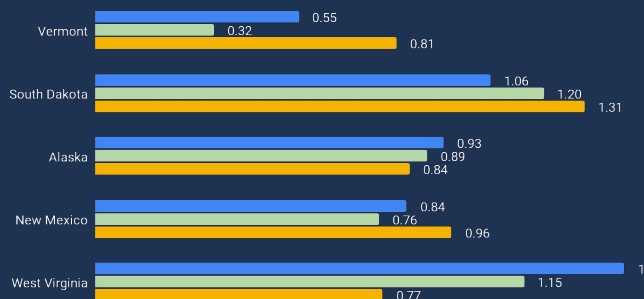
Engagement shifted in rural states

During the crisis, data shows that several rural states saw a notable increase in fast food-related content consumption compared to pre-pandemic engagement. These states included Vermont, South Dakota, Alaska, New Mexico, and West Virginia. This data was compared to states that experienced a decreased interest in online fast-food content during Covid, such as Rhode Island, Indiana, Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi. However, a few of the states that increased interest in QSR content during the pandemic, like Vermont, Alaska, and New Mexico, also appeared to diverge from those popular chains that experienced an uptick in overall website visitations during Covid, among them Wendy's, Taco Bell, and Chipotle. This interest gap indicates that food intenders vary by state and by brand and require nuanced targeting strategies that address regionally influenced brand perception and more limited access to certain QSR locations.

States With Greatest Change in Fast Food-Related Content Consumption | Pre vs. Post COVID



Engagement with Wendy's, Taco Bell, and Chipotle Content | Post COVID



FIND YOUR AUDIENCE WHEREVER THEY ARE

Consumers are streaming at high rates and engaging with content related to personal finance, health, tech, home & garden, food & drink, entertainment, and gaming. To keep up, brands must realign media plans and inventory strategies to changing consumer habits. Amobee provides access to a variety of Covid-relevant premium publishers and platforms, as well as tailored insights based on real-time digital content engagement trends.

QSRs can **defend and gain market share** by adjusting their media plans to focus on inventory that aligns with at-home consumption trends. Using Brand Intelligence insights and Amobee's strong inventory partnerships, QSRs can **execute turnkey activation on premium media aligned with these audiences**. A sample of premium publishers and platforms available are shown here.

Contact your Account Team or solutions@amobee.com to secure insights-based publisher recs and verticalized inventory packages.

Access premium publishers and platforms aligned to at-home inventory consumption

hulu

COOKING
CHANNEL

Spotify

Discovery
COMMUNICATIONS

div
network

sling

meredith

pandora

TASTEMADE

**animal
planet**

**AT&T tv
NOW**

twitch

**food
network**

BuzzFeed

zynga

fubo^{TV}

SAMSUNG

ESPN

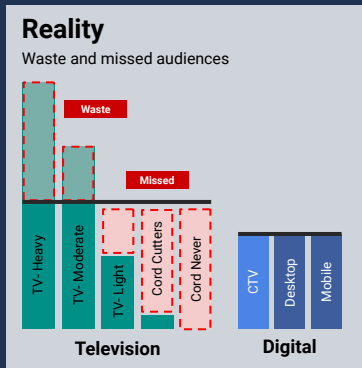
**ACTIVISION
BLIZZARD**

STAY FLEXIBLE ON MEDIA COMMITMENTS

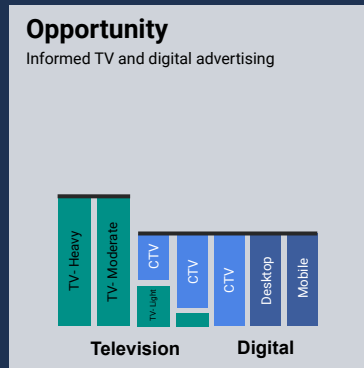
If you're in the process of reassessing commitments made in the 2019 upfronts, your best bet is to ensure that new digital buys complement any TV strategies that offer you little to no flexibility. To achieve this, we offer our flagship TV Amplifier solution, which makes it easy to optimize your reach and frequency across all screens, including TV, CTV, digital, and social media.

Amobee's integrations with Nielsen and Inscope enable advertisers to find under-exposed or unexposed audiences and complement traditional TV buys by targeting these audiences on digital devices (desktop, mobile, and CTV).

TV Amplifier



VS



MASTER THESE KEY RESTART REALITIES

- No matter what vertical you're in, your audience has changed over the last 90 days and your propensity modelling needs to change with them.
- People that were in-market for your product may not be now, or you're faced with an entirely new audience that you need to adjust your messaging for.
- To survive and thrive in a post-pandemic world, you need to know who your audience is, where they are, and how you can most effectively communicate with them.





GET STARTED

COVID RESTART: TURNKEY ACTIVATION WITH AMOBEE

For qualified campaigns, Amobee can provide the following analytic and activation solutions:

Audience & messaging tools

Covid sentiment and market trends analysis	Weekly	Customized Covid-19 analytics pack tracks changes in consumer engagement and sentiment for your brand, competitors, and pandemic topics of your choice.
Pre/post Covid audience analysis	Monthly	Analyze your existing audiences for changes in income demographics, product interests and brand sentiment from March to current time period.
TV-aware digital plan	One-time	Plan across screens with a reach curve analysis of your Linear TV schedule coupled with an omnichannel programmatic forecast of proprietary TV Amplifier segments.

Media tools

Contextual brand safety filters for pandemic topics	Unlimited	Dynamically suppress non brand safe content, with filters that optimize away pandemic related topics as they evolve throughout the flight of the campaign.
In-flight brand-specific covid association and trend report	Monthly	Ongoing consumer engagement, sentiment and pandemic trends analysis packs to drive optimization of messaging and media in-flight.
In-flight cross screen reach report	Monthly	Household and person based reach and frequency across TV, CTV, Desktop and Mobile.
In-flight media waste report	One-time	Media cost waterfall analyses to measure and optimize working media over campaign flight.
Campaign management services	Available	All aspects of analytic services, media planning and campaign execution can be fully managed by Amobee on behalf of your brand.

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How has the pandemic affected your audience and segmentation? Write your responses below on the right.

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Thank you.





AMOBEE