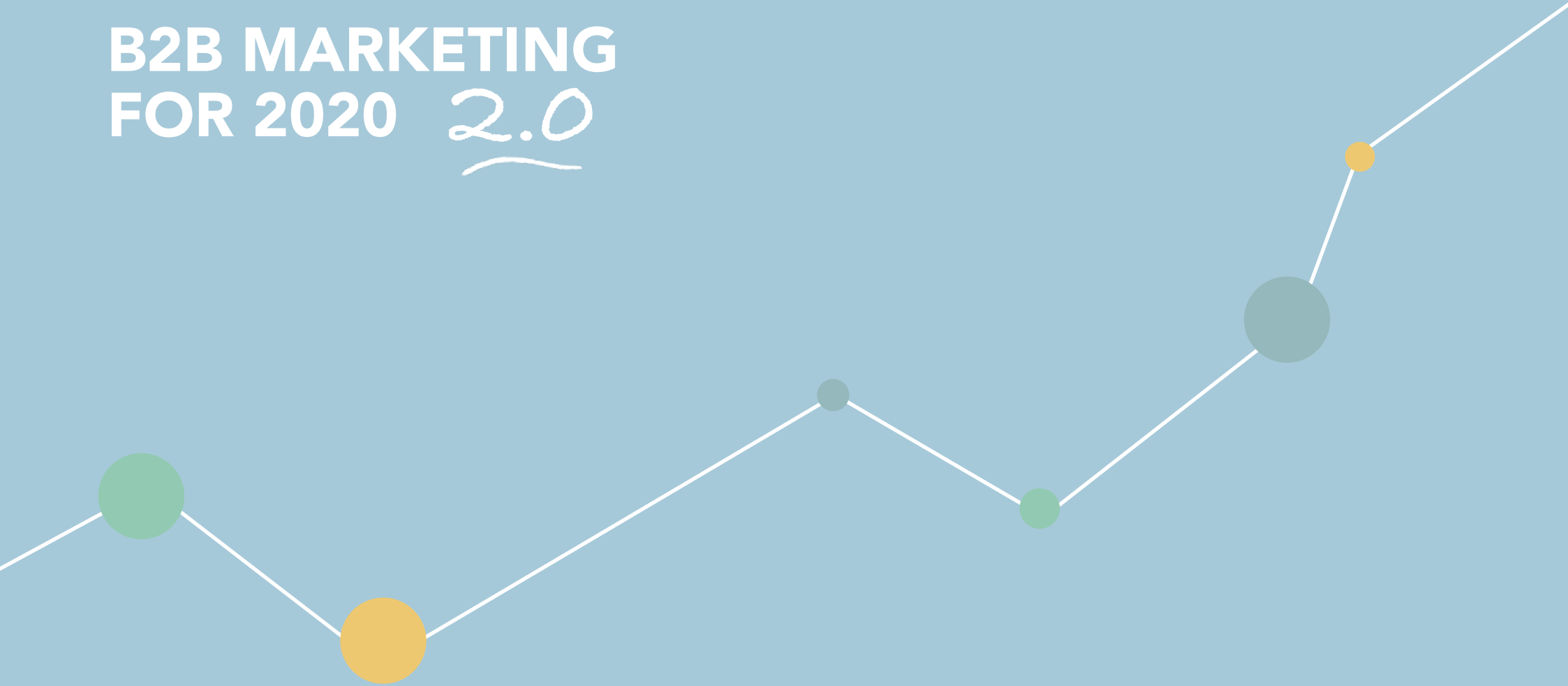


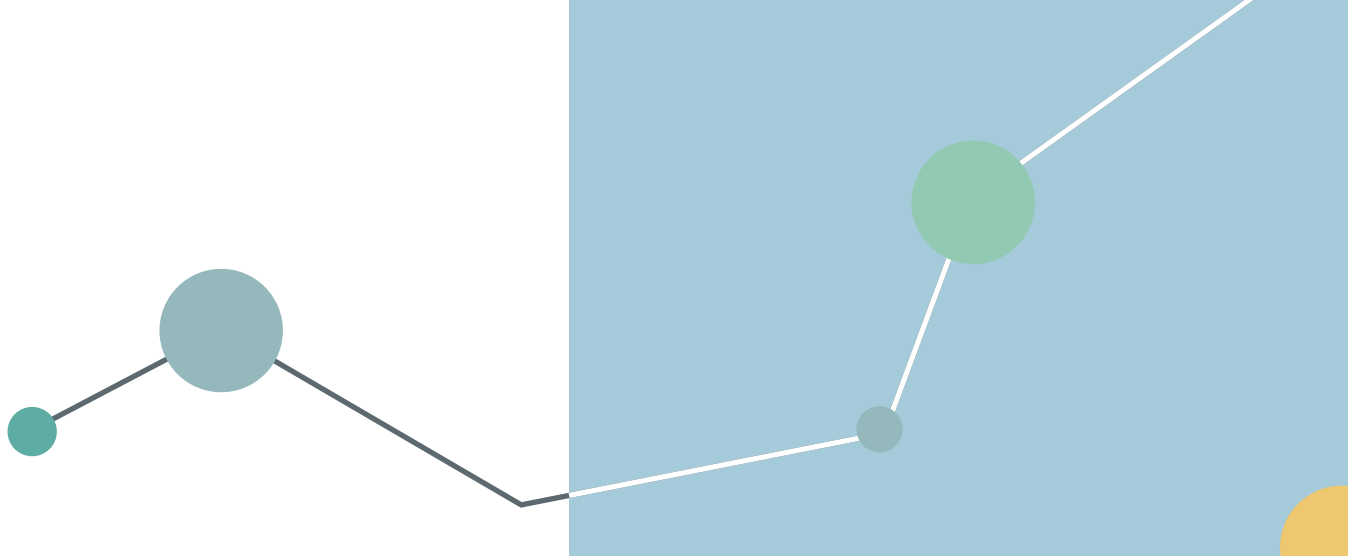
AGENCY INC INSIGHTS:

# B2B MARKETING FOR 2020 2.0



A GUIDE FOR SUCCESSFUL B2B MARKETERS ...to come back stronger

agency  
inc

An abstract line graphic consisting of several circles of varying sizes and colors (teal, green, yellow) connected by thin lines, spanning across the top of the page.

**The first half of 2020 was not written into plans. With face-to-face opportunities, events and travel all cancelled, B2B marketing had to not only be reframed, but reset, fast.**

No, our **B2B Marketing Trends for 2020\*** did not predict a global pandemic. But, as we reflect on the year so far, it's clear that the fundamentals behind the trends have not changed. They've only amplified. As limits to physical customer interactions continue, we must as B2B marketers find ways to do more. Be *more* human. Be *more* present. Be *more* agile. Be *more* prepared.

**So what does 2020 2.0 look like?**

**We revisit three of our trends and use recent B2B examples to show you that it's not about re-writing the rules. It's about applying them even better.**

even  
↑  
**BRING MORE HUMAN  
TO H2H**

agency  
inc



## Expect forward-thinking B2B marketers to feature their people in even more meaningful ways

As we know, an essential part of delivering an authentic brand experience is to show the people behind the brand.<sup>1</sup> And right now, the role of employee brand advocacy has never been so important. In times of hardship, demonstrating togetherness and community helps to build confidence,<sup>2</sup> both inside and outside the organisation.

B2B brands continue to present their people as ambassadors through digital content and social channels.

Showcasing genuine, human voices in the wider brand narrative can trigger a multiplier effect: it encourages staff at large to feel as if they share a purpose, and reassures customers that they're supported.<sup>3</sup>

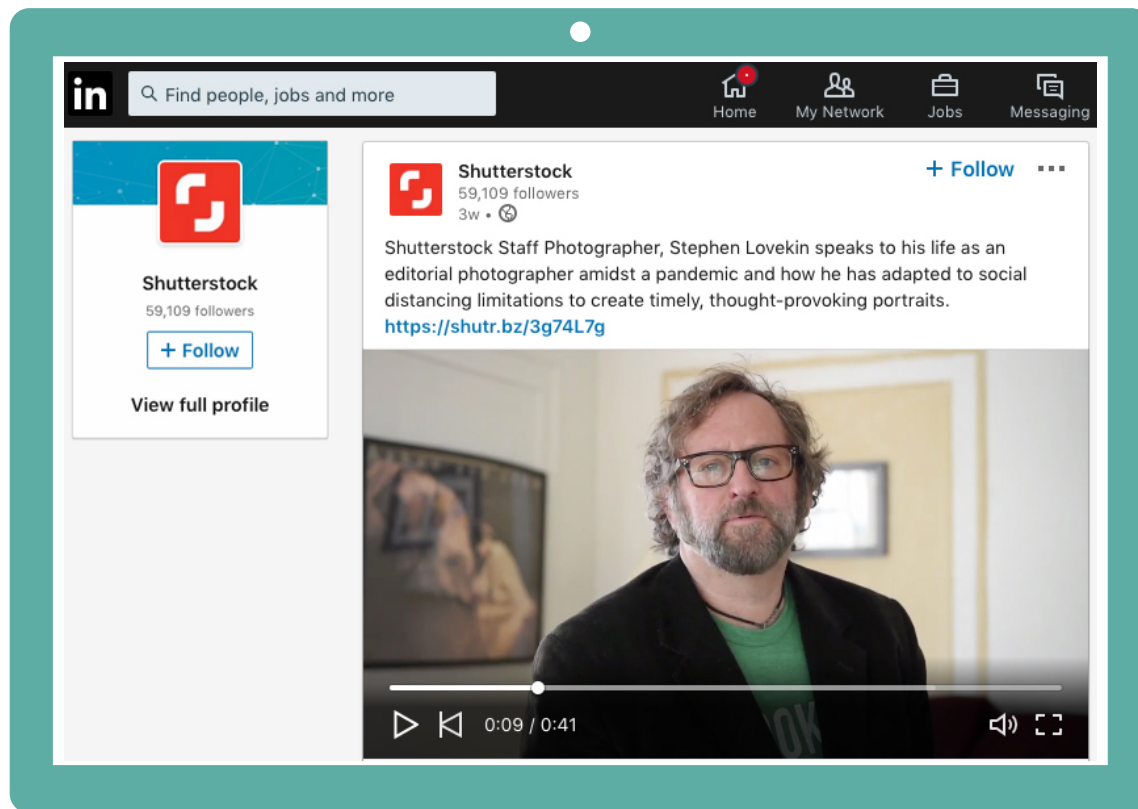
It's easy to understand why advertising based on human connection and community resonates better in today's world, than ads which focus on a 'hard sell'.<sup>2</sup>

The bottom line: It's all about empathy.

## Here are 5 ways to bring even more H2H to B2B marketing:



## Tip #1 SHOW YOUR STAFF AS SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS



Shutterstock

### TALKING HEADS FILM SERIES

'Questions At Home'

Figure 1. Shutterstock, 2020

even  
BRING MORE HUMAN TO H2H



## Tip #2 CONVEY YOUR CULTURE THROUGH YOUR PEOPLE

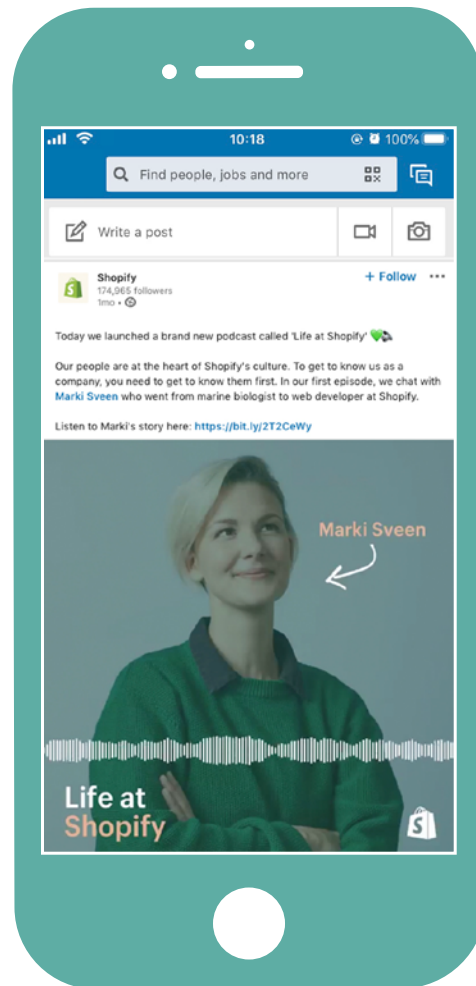


Figure 2. Shopify, 2020

Shopify  
**STAFF PODCAST  
SERIES**  
'Life at Shopify'



## Tip #3 SAY THANK YOU

AWS  
APPRECIATION POST  
#HereAtAWS

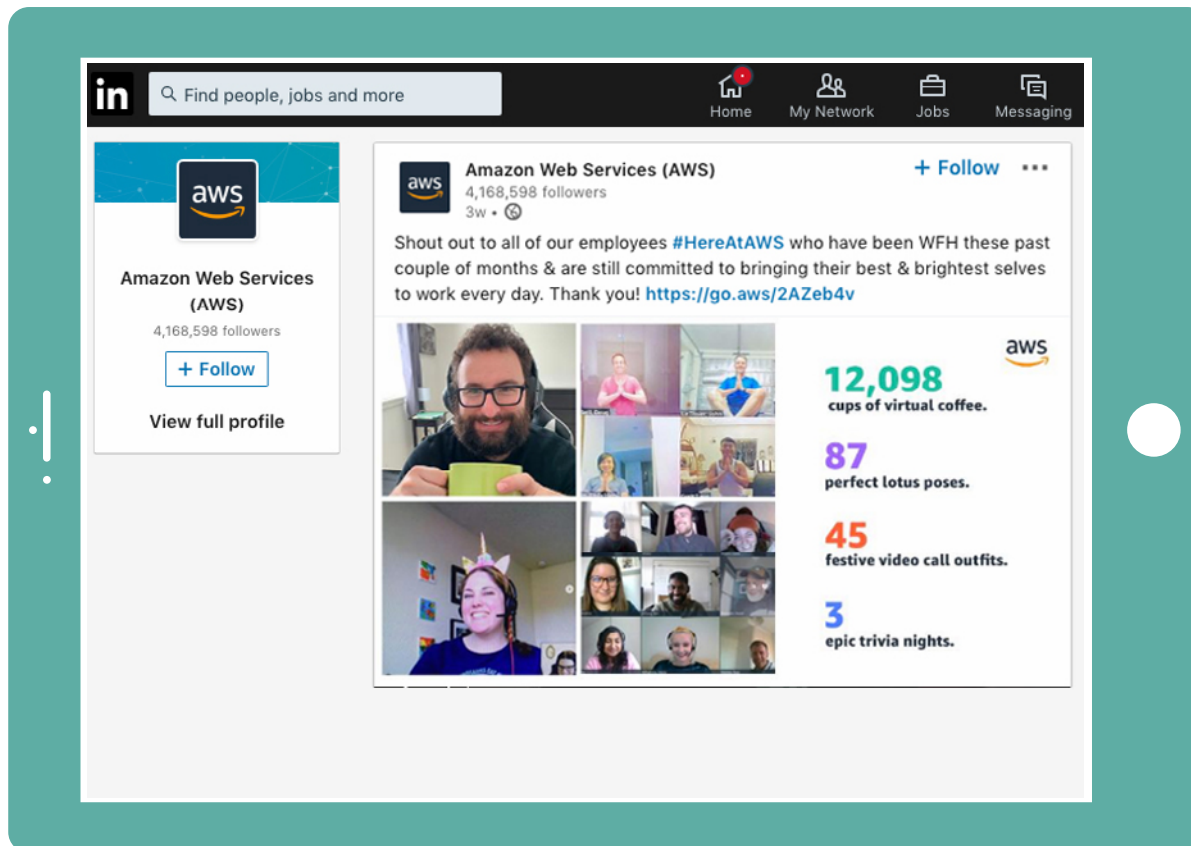
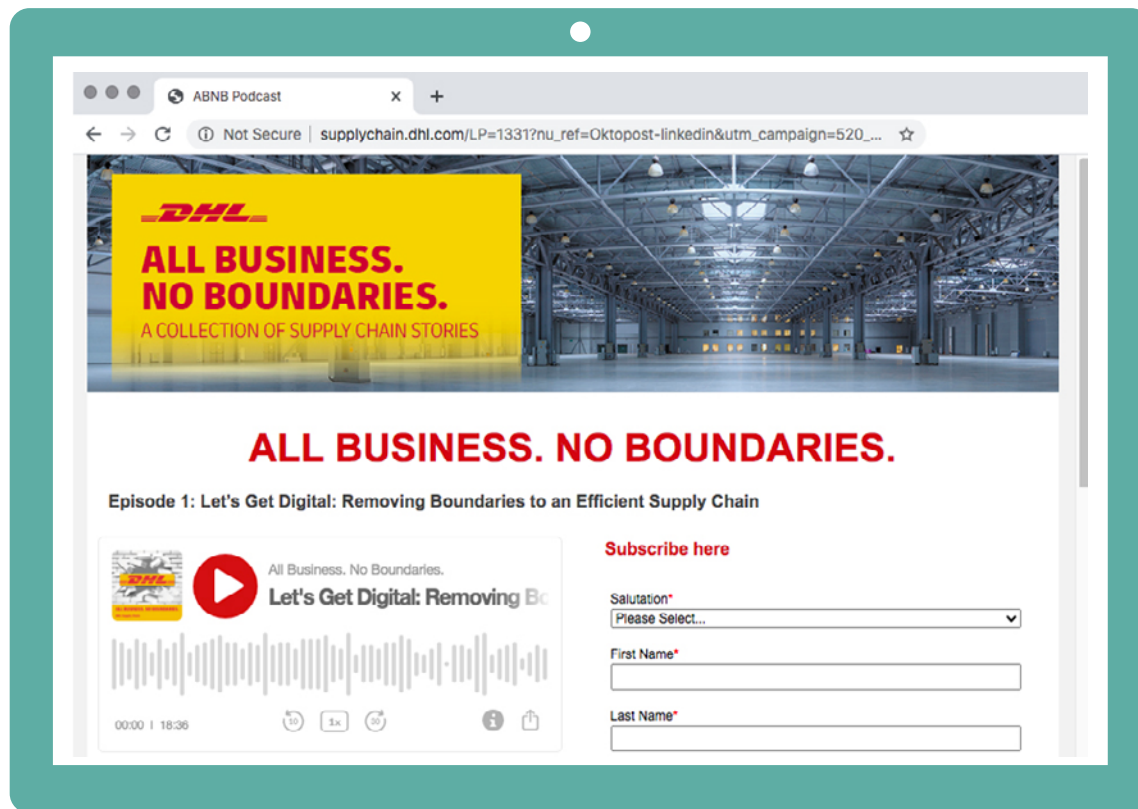


Figure 3. Amazon Web Services, 2020



## Tip #4 HELP YOUR CUSTOMERS WITH THEIR CHALLENGES



## DHL PODCAST SERIES

'All business.  
No boundaries.'

Figure 4. DHL, 2020

even  
BRING MORE HUMAN TO H2H





## Tip #5 SHOW YOU CARE FOR MORE THAN JUST BUSINESS

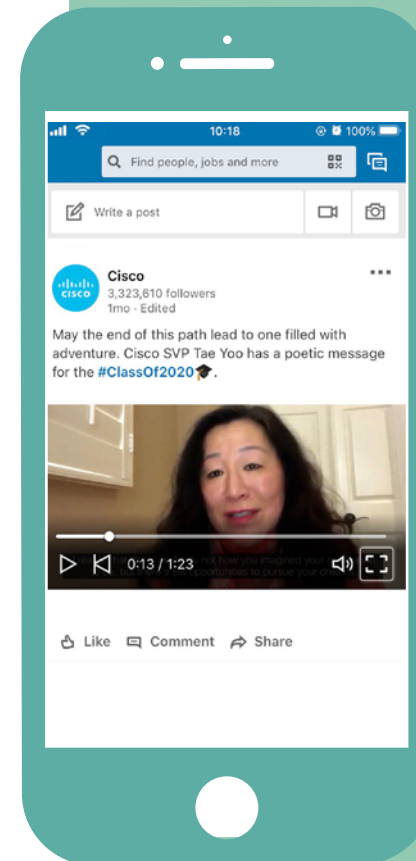
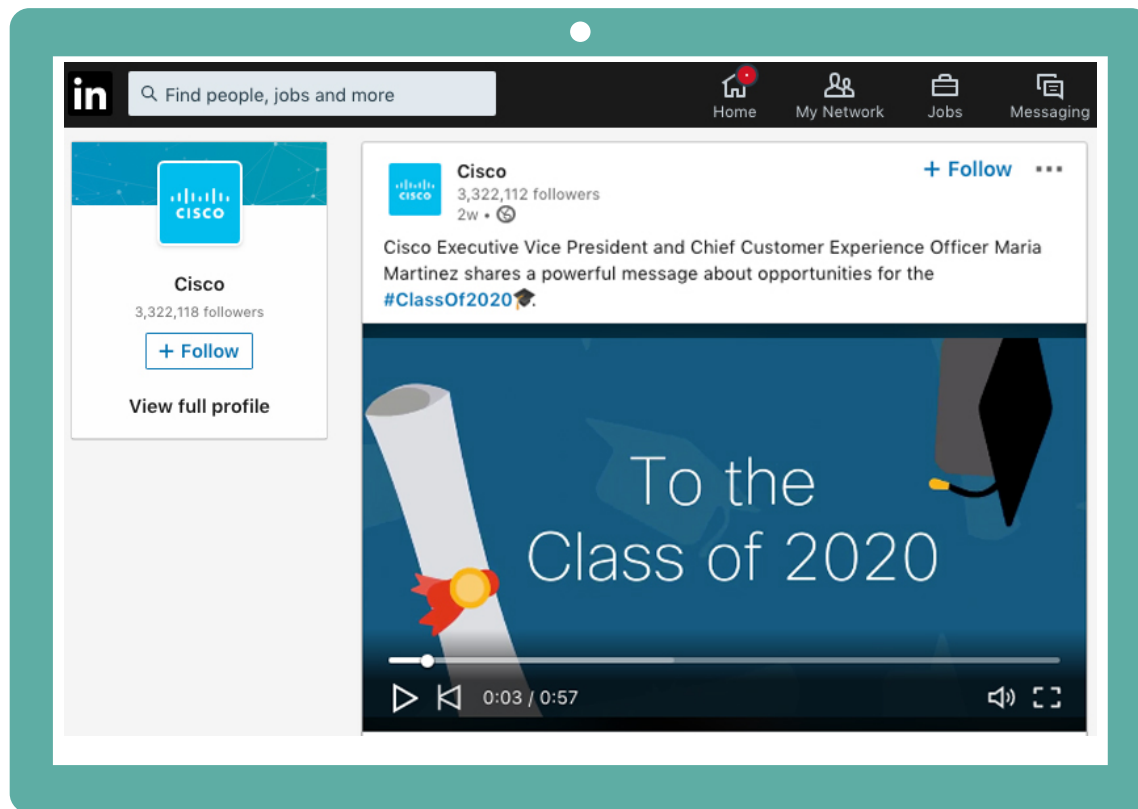


Figure 5b. Cisco, 2020

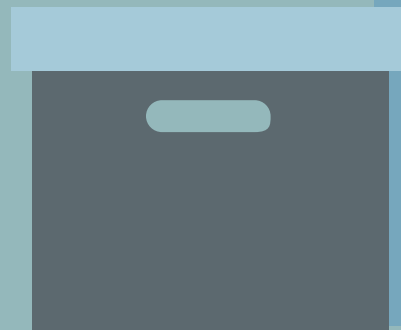
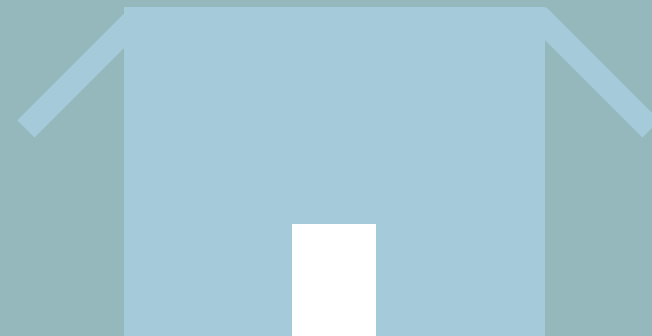
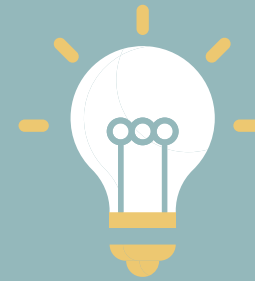
Cisco  
**TALKING HEADS  
FILM SERIES**  
#Classof2020

Figure 5a. Cisco, 2020

even  
BRING MORE HUMAN TO H2H



even  
↑  
**THINK MORE  
LIKE AMAZON**



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inc

## Expect B2B pure play brands to think and behave even more like consumer brands

As we know, big B2C players like Google and Amazon have entered B2B categories, raising the bar and driving buyer expectations to new consumer heights. And today's circumstances have only increased the urgency for businesses to think and behave more like B2C brands. Not just to stay competitive, but to remain relevant.

We've seen surprising collaborations with partners and influencers across everything from entertainment, to sports and activism. B2B brands have leveraged new platforms and audiences, in order

to stay visible and benefit from positive brand associations.<sup>4</sup> It's also a way to share more purpose-led messages, rather than directly sell products or services.

We already know that catching customers whilst 'off-duty' is proven to influence brand perceptions and buying behaviour.<sup>5</sup> This is particularly relevant now in the era of social distancing, offering more opportunities to engage B2B buyers through social media and online communities.<sup>6</sup>

**The bottom line: B2B buyers are consumers too.**

## Here are 5 ways to engage the off-duty, B2B consumer:

even  
THINK MORE LIKE AMAZON

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## Tip #1 PARTNER WITH A PURPOSE

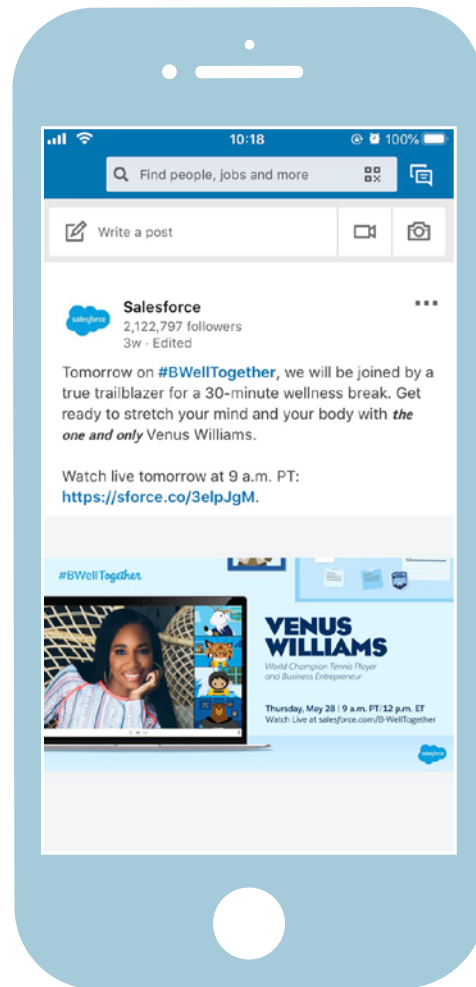
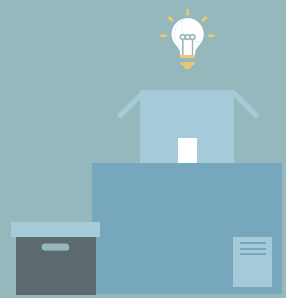


Figure 6. Salesforce, 2020

Salesforce  
**30-MIN WELLNESS  
BREAKS**

#BWellTogether



## Tip #2 CONNECT FANS WITH THEIR HEROES

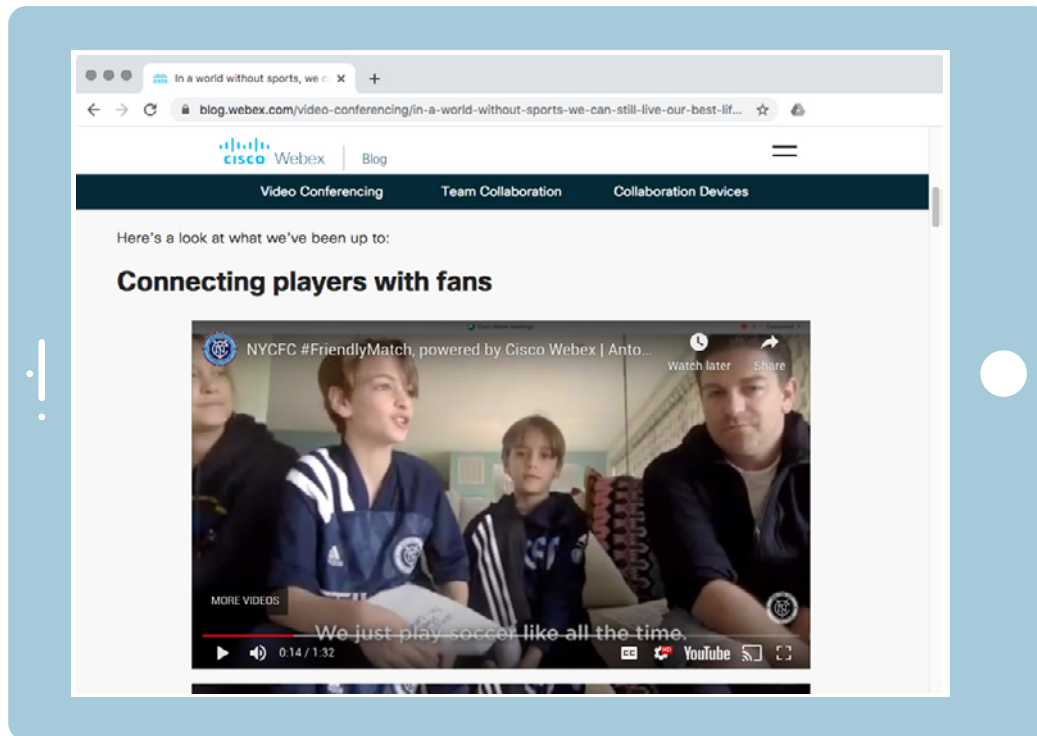


Figure 7. Eaton (Cisco Webex), 2020

even  
THINK MORE LIKE AMAZON

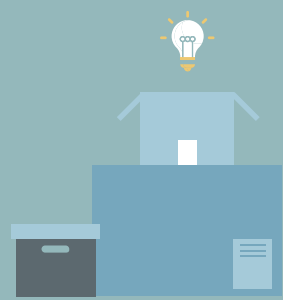


Salesforce  
**EXCLUSIVE LIVE SESSIONS**

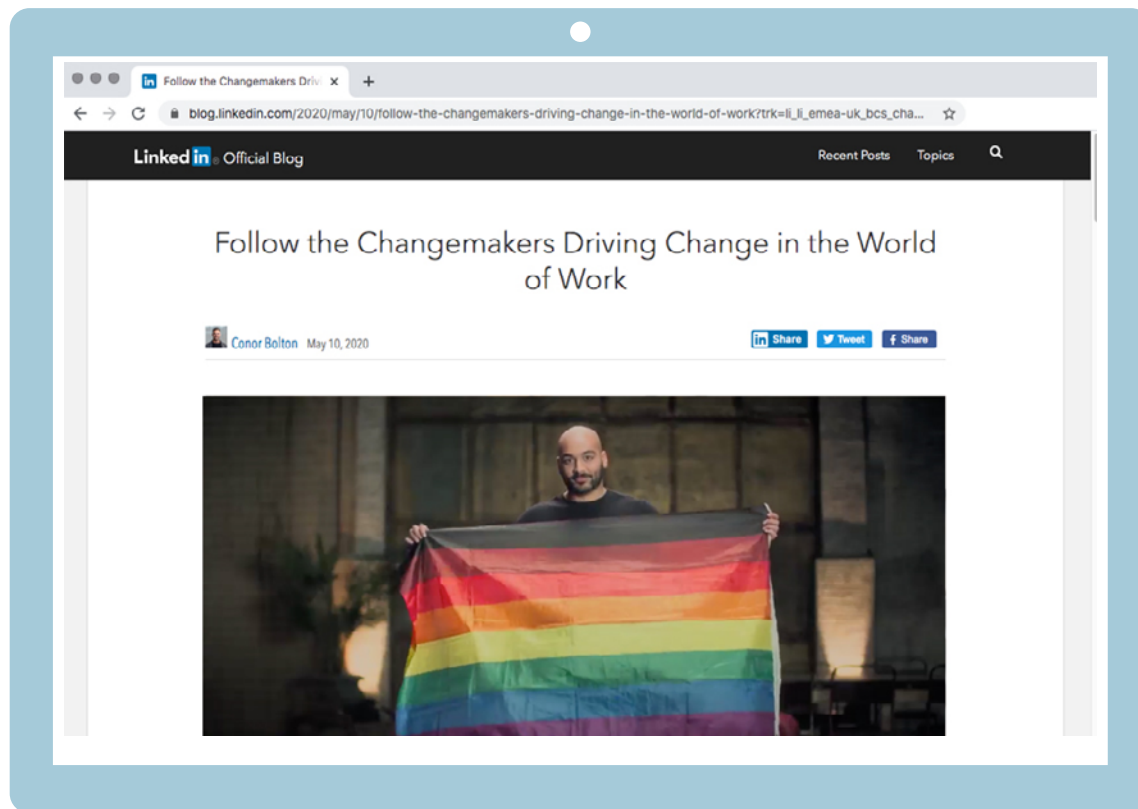
#SalesforceLive

Figure 8. Salesforce, 2020

Cisco Webex  
**CONNECTING FANS WITH SPORTS**  
#LifeonWebex



## Tip #3 CHAMPION A CAUSE THROUGH STORYTELLING



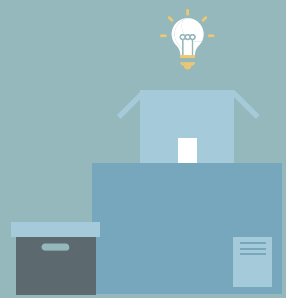
LinkedIn

**MEMBER PORTRAITS,  
FILM SERIES**

#Changemaker

Figure 9. Bolton (LinkedIn), 2020

even  
THINK MORE LIKE AMAZON



## Tip #4 RECOGNISE B2B BUYERS AS PARENTS TOO



Figure 10. Tableau Software, 2020

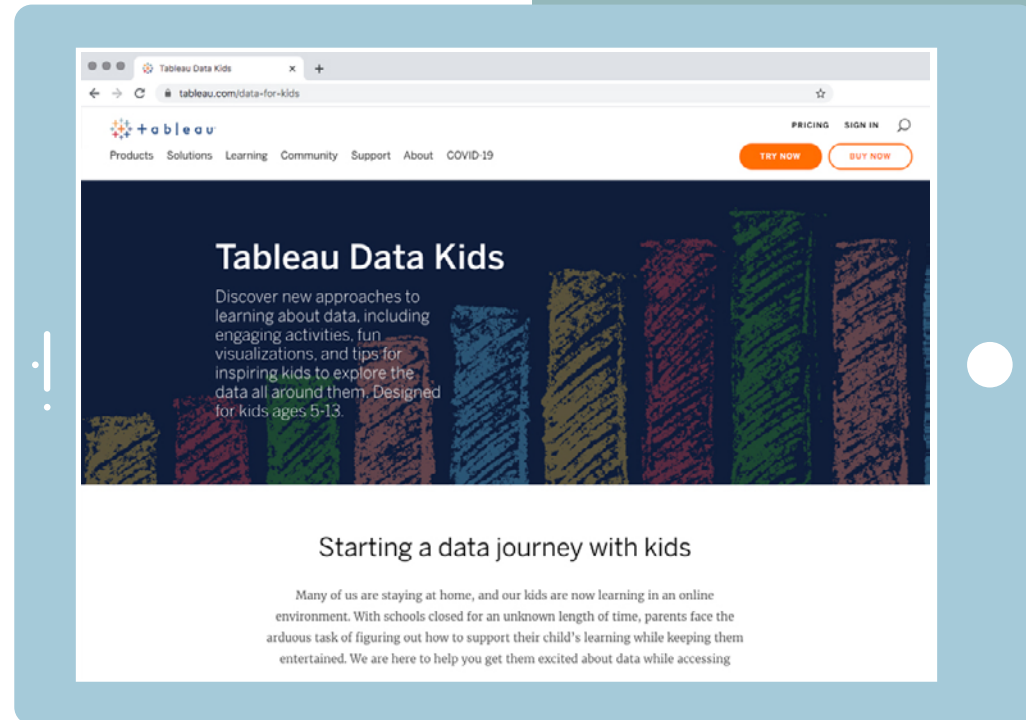
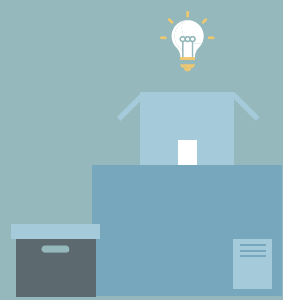


Figure 11. Tableau Software, 2020

Tableau Software  
**ACTIVITIES FOR  
KIDS USING DATA**  
'Data Kids'



## Tip #5 SHOW YOU CARE FOR MORE THAN JUST BUSINESS

CISCO

**FREE CHILD CARE  
FOR FRONTLINE  
WORKERS**

#FirstRespondersFirst

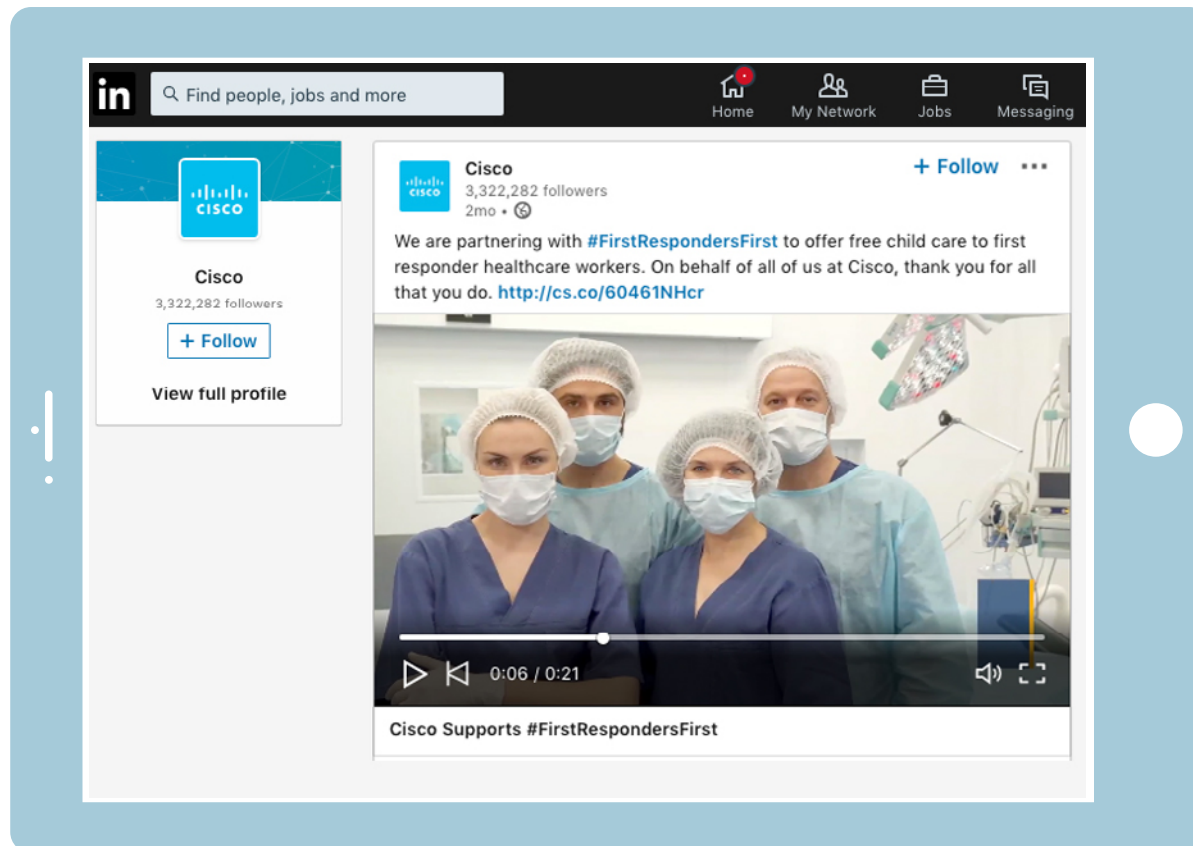
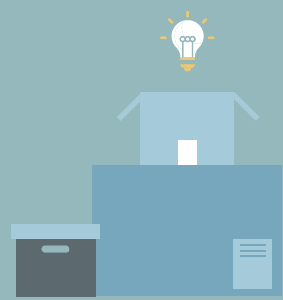


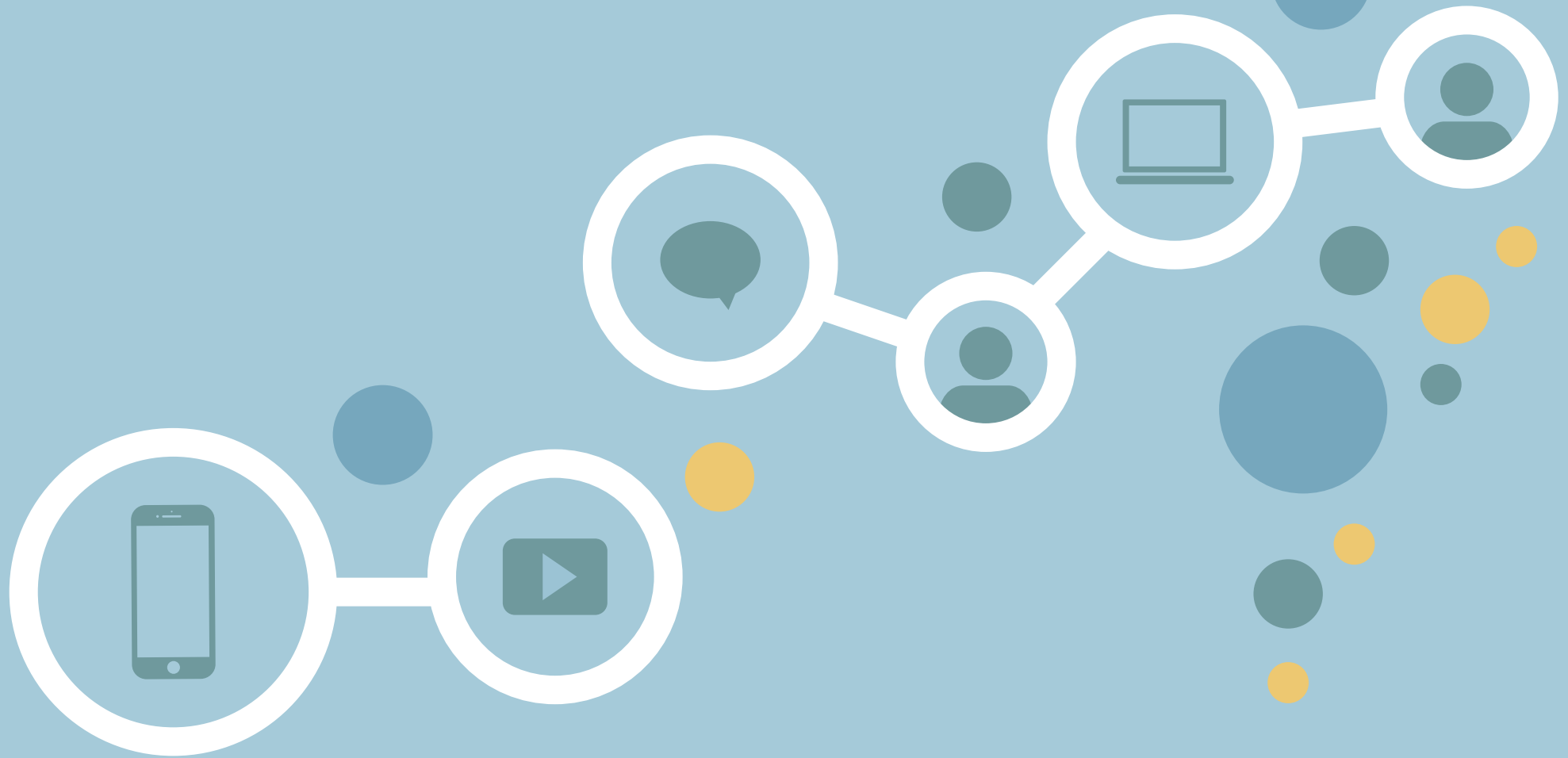
Figure 12. Cisco, 2020

even  
THINK MORE LIKE AMAZON





*even*  
*n* <sup>↑</sup>  
**BUILD A BETTER  
BRAND EXPERIENCE**



## Expect forward-thinking B2B marketers to not just aim for excellent CX, but excellent BX

Although we're in a very different kind of downturn, we know from previous recessions the importance of sustaining investment in brand advertising, and the long-term value that can have.<sup>7</sup> As in B2C, the B2B brands that thrive look beyond traditional communications, and focus more on delivering memorable, meaningful brand experiences.<sup>8</sup> And as we've said before, this must be anchored to authenticity and reflect the human side of the brand.

We've seen new levels of brand purpose, emotion, generosity and support represented in B2B marketing in recent months, and we hope this signals an enduring shift from product sales to brand building in times to come.

**The bottom line: It's important now more than ever to be a human B2B brand.**

## Here are 3 ways to deliver an excellent BX in order to help customers, not sell to them:

## Tip #1 OFFER AGILE SUPPORT

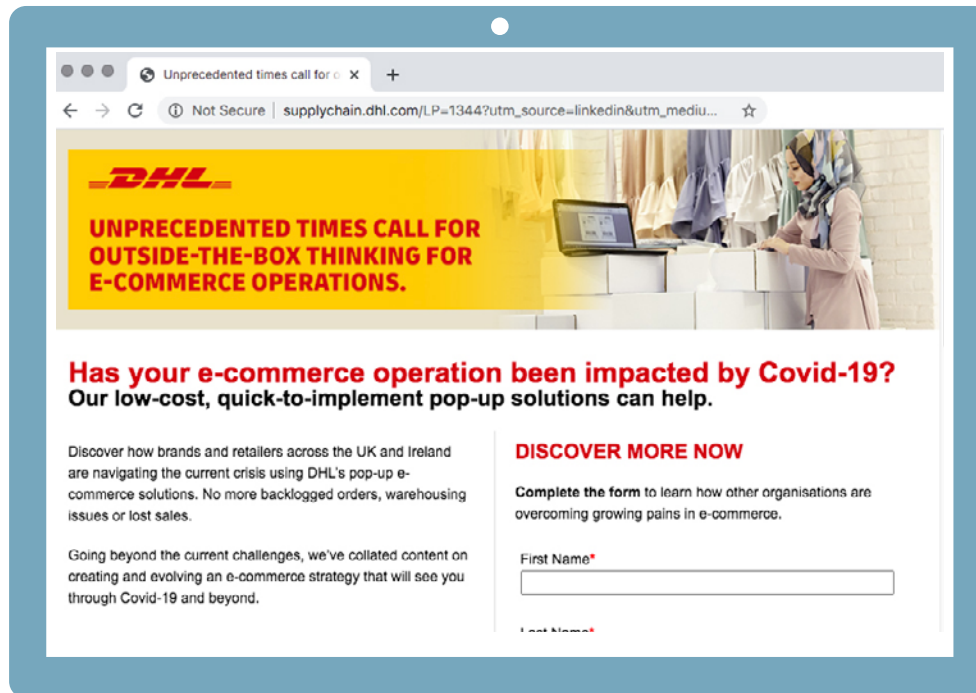


Figure 13. DHL, 2020

BUILD <sup>even</sup> A BETTER BRAND EXPERIENCE

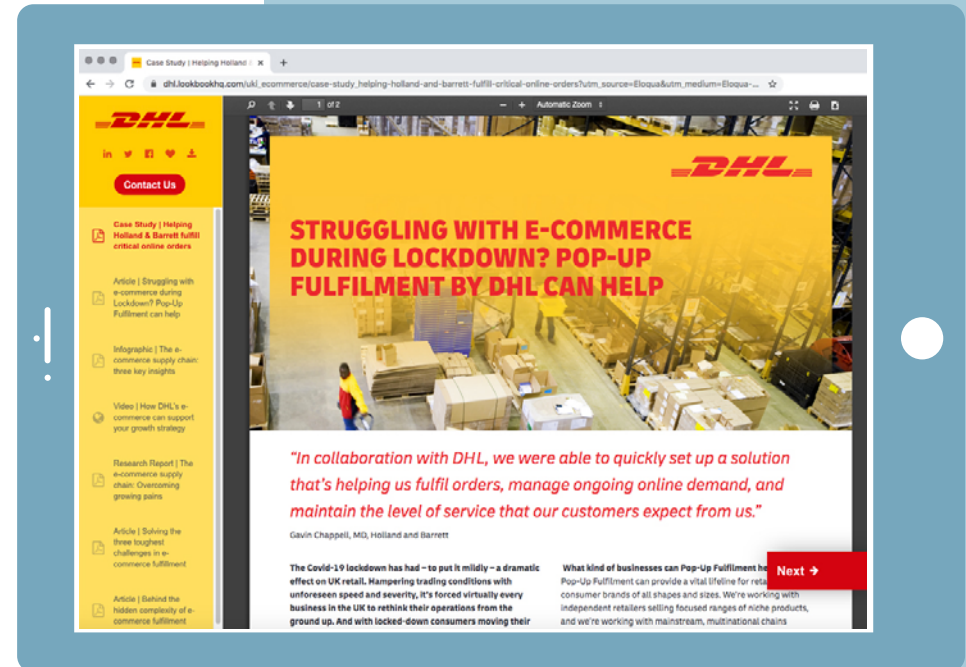


Figure 14. DHL, 2020

DHL  
CASE STUDIES,  
PRACTICAL  
TIPS, THOUGHT  
LEADERSHIP

Pop-up e-commerce  
solutions



## Tip #2 PROVIDE A RESOURCE HUB WITH ON-DEMAND ADVICE

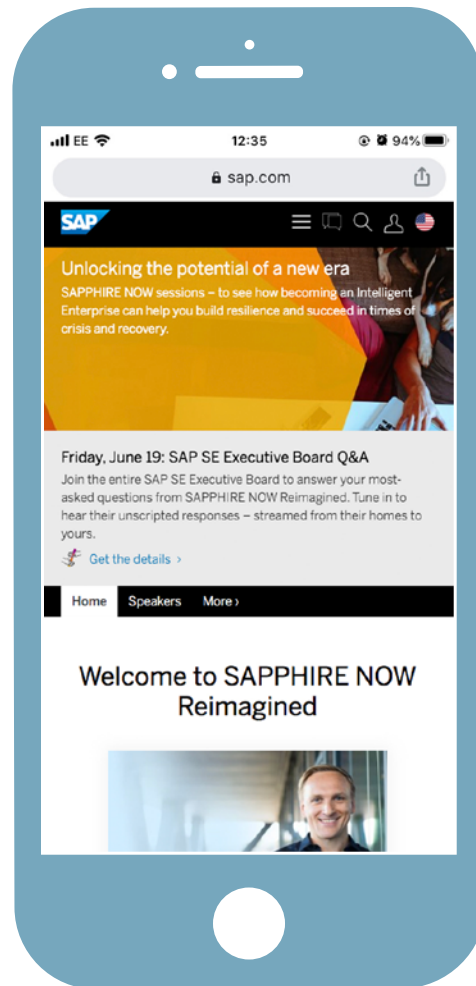


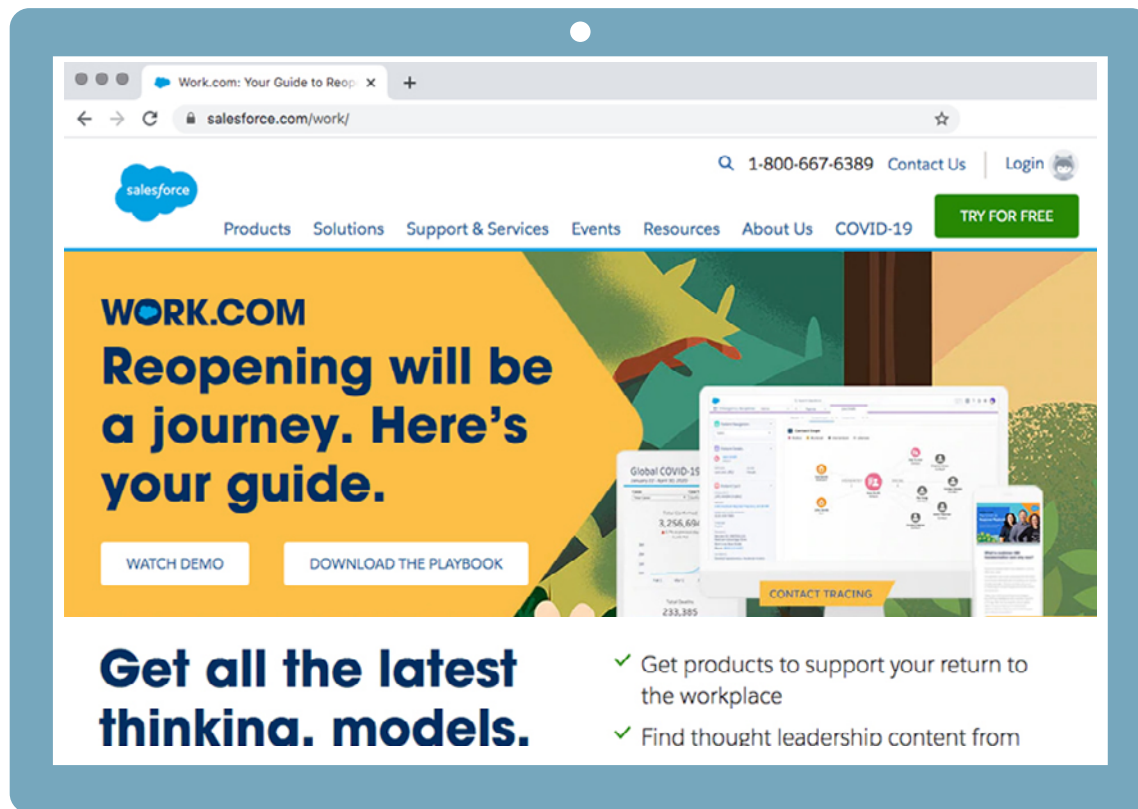
Figure 15. SAP, 2020

SAP  
ON-DEMAND  
CONTENT,  
WEBINARS, LIVE  
INTERACTIONS &  
EXPERT ADVICE

'Sapphire now  
converge'



## Tip #3 HELP CUSTOMERS TO COME BACK STRONGER



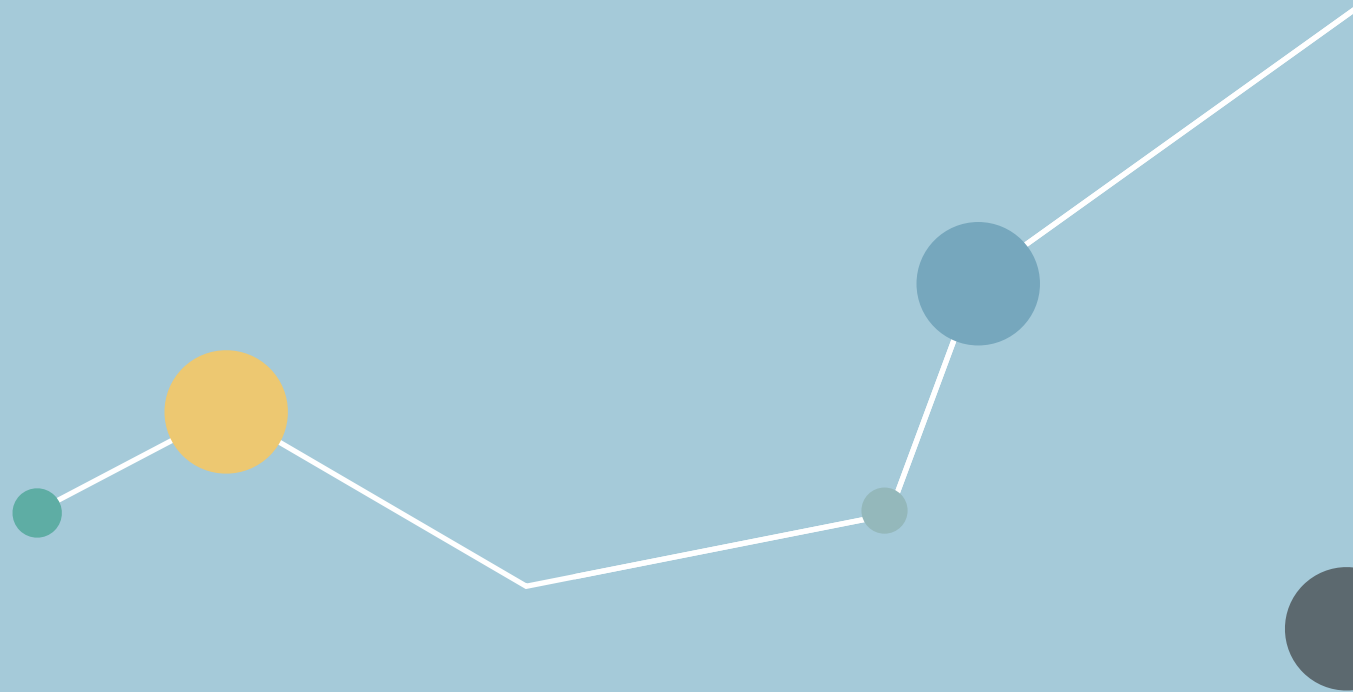
Salesforce  
**PLAYBOOK & TOOLS**  
work.com

Figure 16. Salesforce, 2020



The B2B marketing landscape is complex to navigate, and at this time, the outlook is unclear.

We hope this guide has helped you find some clarity for the period ahead, by making the complicated simple.



## MEET THE AUTHOR



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Strategy Partner

## ABOUT AGENCY INC

Agency Inc is an award-winning marketing agency, specialising in B2B. We partner with global clients to deliver strategic and creative solutions across brand, campaigns and content.

Download Agency Inc's  
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Trends for 2020 guide

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