

MILLS Advertising



AUTOMOTIVE AFTERMARKET MEDIA SURVEY
THIS SURVEY HAS BEEN CONDUCTED BY MILLS ADVERTISING



The survey

Journalists, editors and sales managers of both automotive aftermarket websites and magazines were asked to answer questions regarding their advertisers' behaviour, online statistics and their attitude towards press releases and PR during COVID-19. This survey was conducted from the 9th of April until the 22nd of April.

In order to find out whether COVID-19 has had an impact on the industry, Mills compared March 2019 data with March 2020. Although these figures could partially be also explained by other events, this study assumes that the overall difference is explained by the impact of COVID-19.

The questionnaire has been completed by 80 respondents, covering 22 countries: Australia, Belgium, Czech, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom.



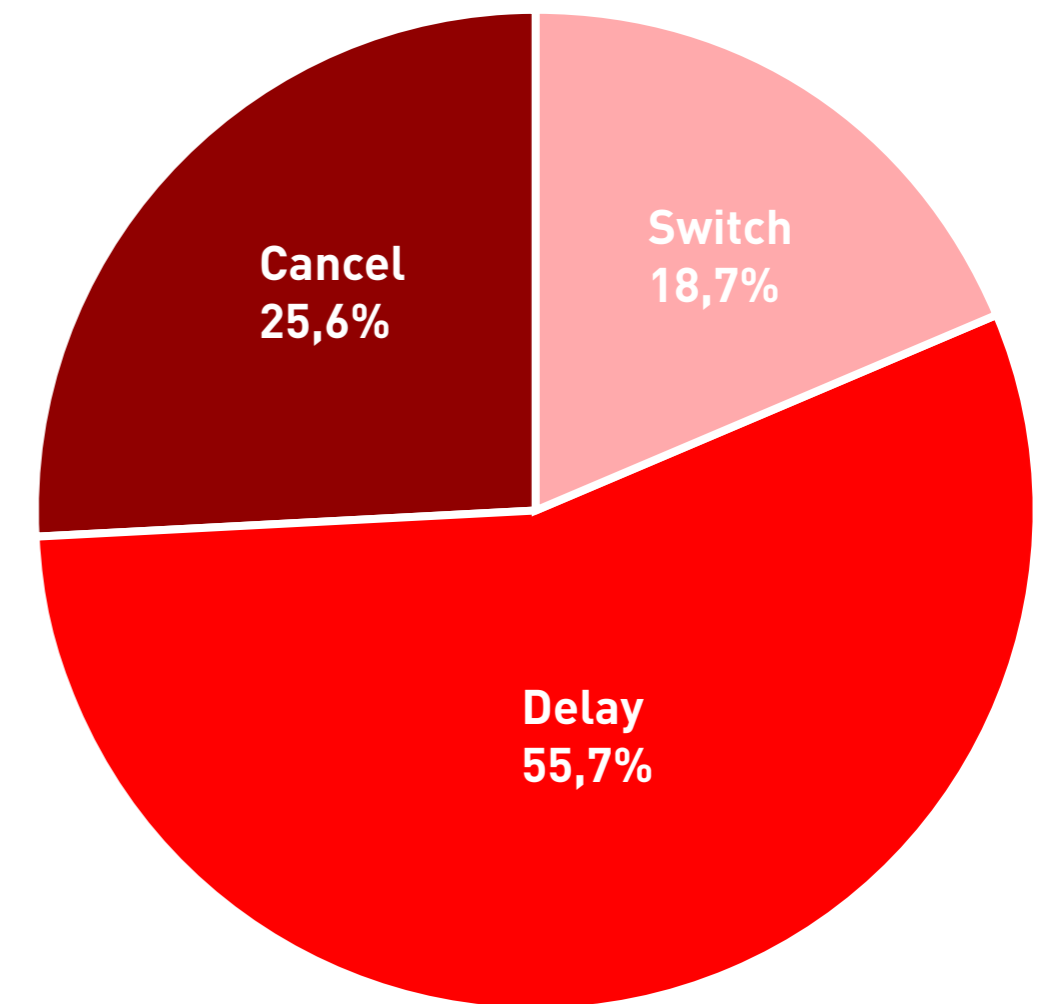
Advertising turnover

Comparing the advertising figures from March 2019 and March 2020, most aftermarket print media (83,3%) are experiencing less advertisers in their magazine now. All aftermarket media showed a decrease in their turnover statistics. The largest group of aftermarket media (60%) shows 10-50% decrease of their turnover, while 26,7% noted to lose more than half of their turnover. 13,3% showed less than 10% decrease of their volume of business.

Looking at the actions of their advertisers who did not want to continue their campaign as planned, most of them wanted to delay campaigns (55,7%), rather than completely cancelling (25,6%) or switching to digital channels (18,7%).

The country of origin does not seem to affect the results however Sweden, Poland and Turkey seem to be least affected by this crisis so far.

“How do your advertisers respond?”



Actions taken by publishers

Just over a quarter (26,9%) of the aftermarket media, like in the Netherlands, continue to print their magazines, however some of them now put more focus on their digital content.

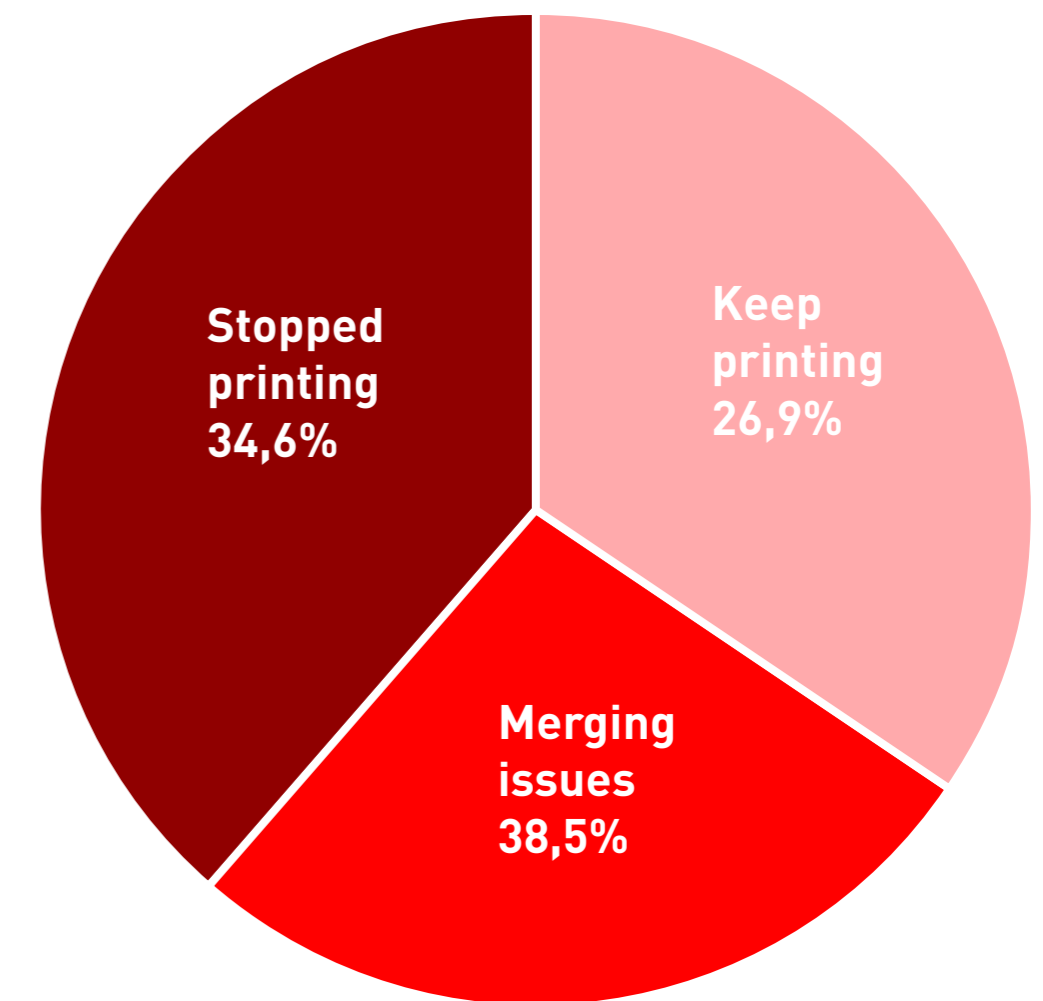
However, most magazines (73,1%), had to take more severe measures like in Portugal, United Kingdom, Russia and Spain. They have stopped printing for the time being. Some of them specifically mentioned that they had to go completely digital, while others are merging issues, thus delaying their publication dates. In order to increase their turnover, half (50%) of the aftermarket media outlets try and sell special deals during COVID-19. Some of them mentioned they include smaller advertisements for smaller budgets, while others have specific 1 + 1 for free. Others mentioned they really try and sell tailor-made packages in order to try to meet the needs of their clients - now more than ever. Digital packages include videos, banners or advertorials in newsletters or on the websites and are sold with reduced rates now.



When the COVID-19 finishes, the market will remember those who have accompanied it. It is important to reinforce the message now and be with them when they start businesses again.



“What measures have media taken?”



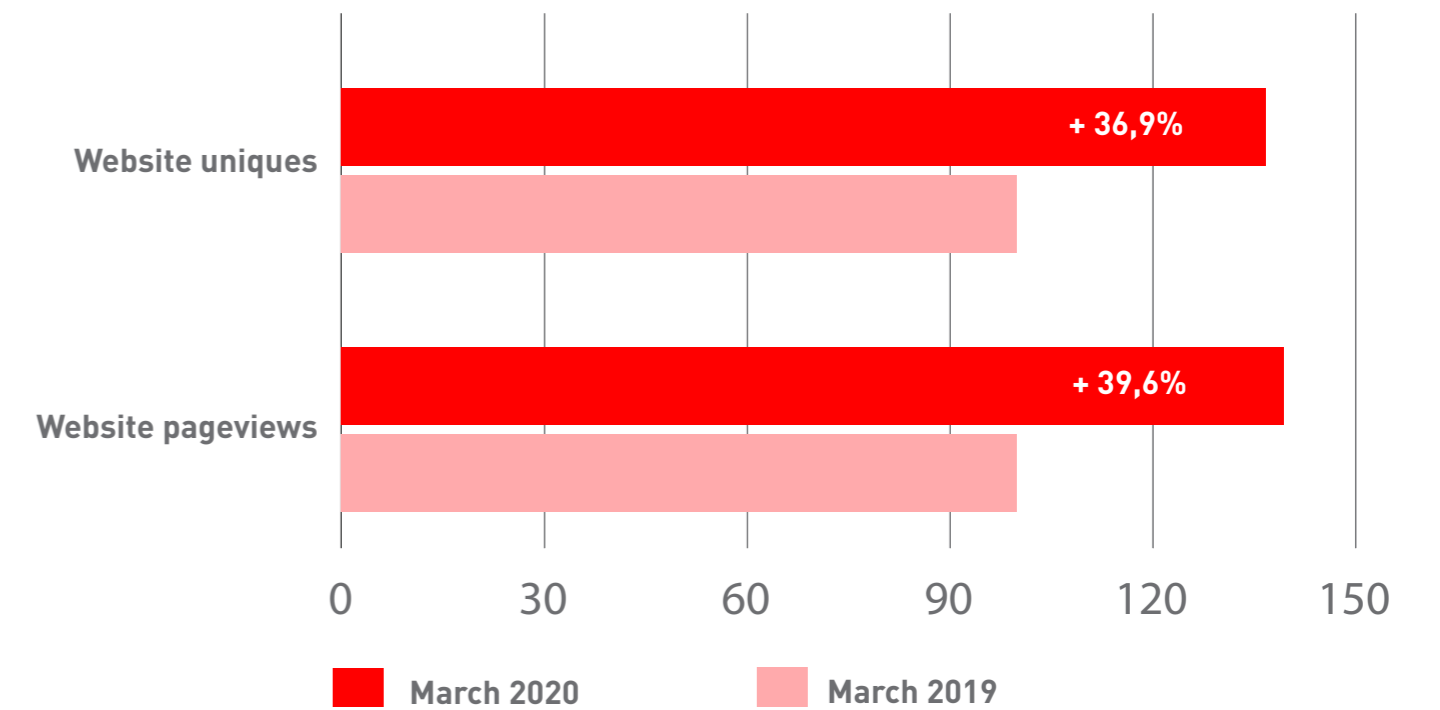


Digital statistics

Of those aftermarket media who do have a digital magazine, 75% showed an increase of unique visitors between March 2019 and March 2020 figures. 40% even saw their digital magazine figures more than doubling! Also the website stats of aftermarket media showed increased results. 72% show an increase in their unique visitors and number of pageviews. The average increase was 36,9% for the unique visitors and 39,6% for the pageviews.

Newsletters are showing better results in March 2020 compared to March 2019. Opening rates are increasing, on average, by 23,2% The country of origin does not seem to affect the results significantly, so it appears that rather the actions taken by the media outlet are affecting these results.

Websites statistics compared



“ Now is the time to get your message across.
Use it as an opportunity. ”



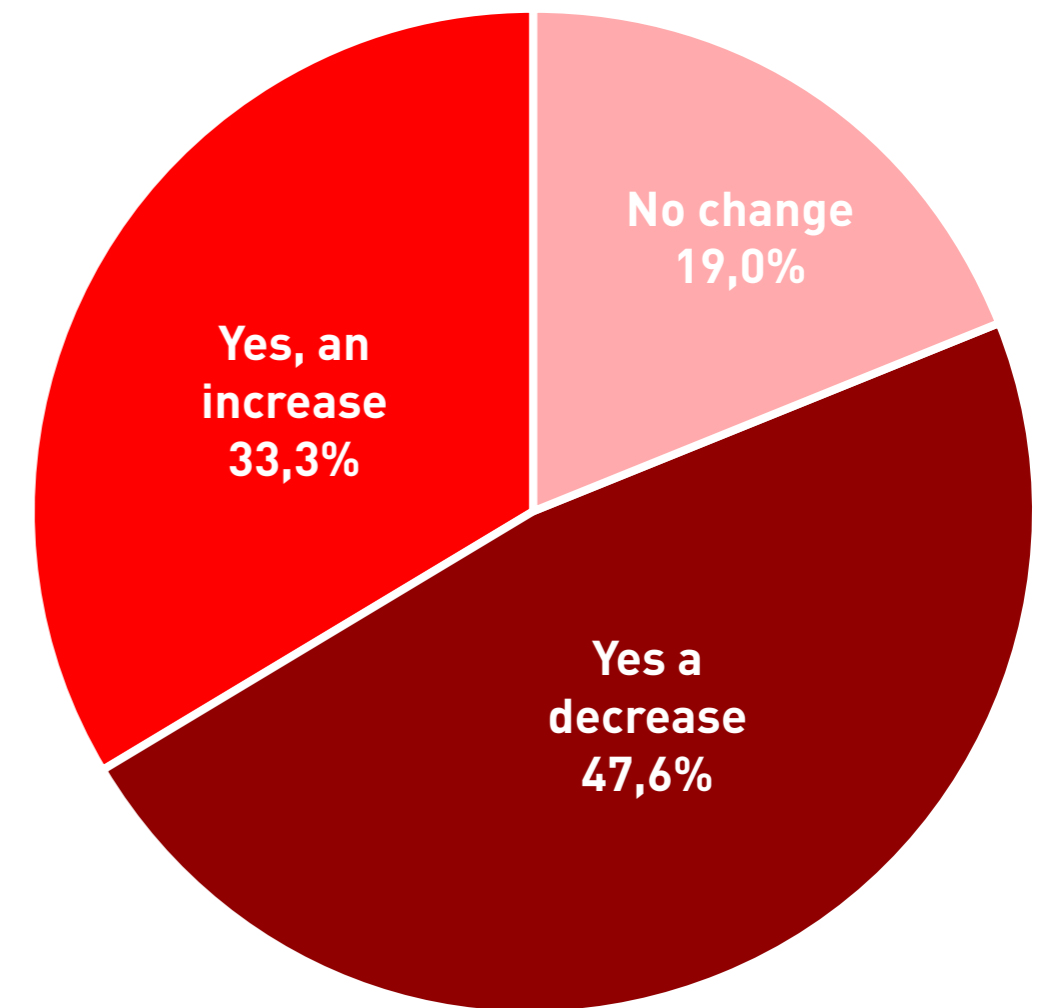
Public Relations

The majority of the aftermarket media are experiencing a change in the number of press releases they receive, due to COVID-19. Almost half of the respondents (58,8%) experience a decrease, whilst 41,2% experience the opposite: an increase in amount of press releases received. Looking at country-specific responses, it is assumed that companies in France and Turkey are sending out more press releases, whilst there has been a decrease in Ireland, Italy, Poland, Romania and Russia. Other countries show contrasting findings, so there are still a lot of differences between publishers.

Journalists and editors were also asked how they wish to receive news. Press releases via email are still the easiest option to gather news, although it was specifically mentioned that high-resolution pictures need to be sent with them. Journalists in Belgium, Kazakhstan and Romania specifically noted they are not interested in other ways to receive news.

“**Now is the time to get your message across.
Use it as an opportunity.**”

“Do you experience a change in number of press releases?”





Public Relations

Setting up personal, digital interviews and digital press conferences were however still appreciated by over 40% of the journalists. Especially in Czech, Germany, the Netherlands, Russia, Sweden and Turkey. Virtual factory tours are welcomed by 29,3% of the respondents, in particular by aftermarket media based in Czech, Greece, the Netherlands and Sweden.

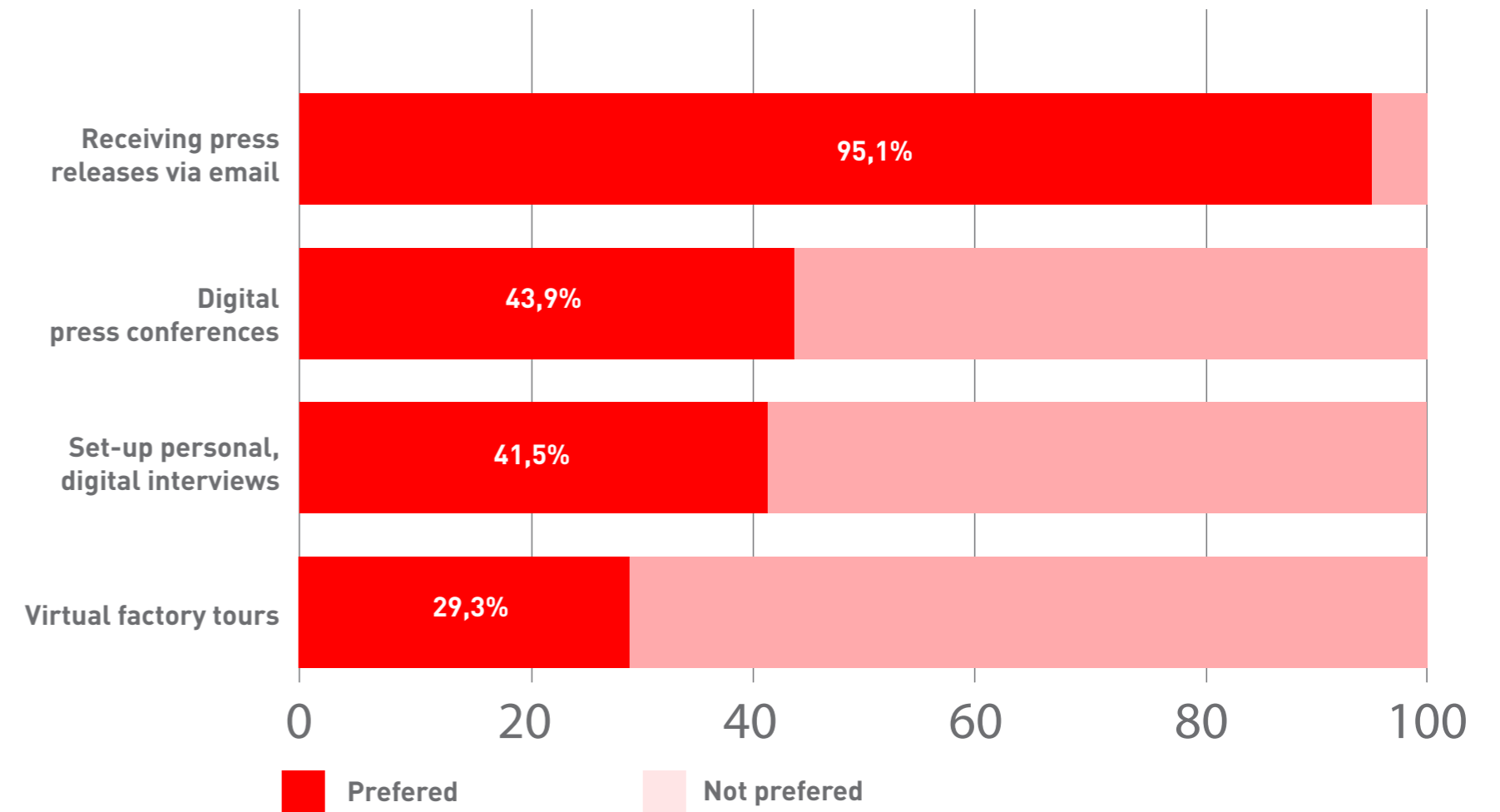
When looking at the type of news, it seems there is a large need of technical and product-related articles: practical news that can help the garages and workshops. Next to that, case studies seem to be appreciated as well. Although COVID-19 status updates are perceived as "good-to-be-informed", they are not the most valuable type of information during the crisis.



Change your message. Be there for the customer in good times and in bad times.



"How do you prefer to receive information?"





Quotes from the media

“ Don't stop communicating: The more the customers remember you in bad times, the better they treat you in good times! ”

“ Now more than ever people have the time to read and analyze the articles in trade magazines. ”

“ Change your message. Be there for the customer in good times and in bad times. ”

“ When all of them stop advertising, they will kill us. If they let us die now, there won't be a magazine to start a marketing campaign when they want to start communication again. ”



Implications: the Outlook

Thus, it is important for media to continuously receive advertising revenues so they can report on the market during and after the crisis. It is also an excellent opportunity for companies to benefit from the relative silence in the advertising scene. Advertising now doesn't harm the brand image of the advertisers. However ads need to be streamlined to match the new reality.

Inform your customers of what you are doing now, and don't hold back any product launches. It's great news when you have things to say and you share information about your activities with the market. Now is the time to get your message out there.



If they let us die now, there won't be a magazine to start a marketing campaign when they want to start communication again.



Implications: the Outlook

Journalists are hungry for your news. Now that plenty of B2C and B2B exhibitions have been cancelled and more may still be cancelled, important face-to-face meetings and press conferences are being missed. The only way to keep contact with each other is via digital. So do that! Don't be afraid of the market reaction. Some markets might be in a stricter lockdown than others, so be active in the ones where you know trade is slow but has not stopped and delay launches in the countries where there's little movement.

“Only if you keep communication, you can stay top-of-mind in the industry.”

“**Now more than ever people have the time to read.**”



Key takeaways

Do not stop communicating because:

- You show you're going strong and are here to stay
- Customers want to know what you're doing now
 - o R&D / product launches
 - o manufacturing
 - o distribution
 - o availability of your sales team
- Media needs your support
 - o Advertising budgets to cover their operational costs
 - o News to fill their pages
 - o You will need the media's support later in the year too
- Gain competitive advantage by being present when others are not

How to communicate?

Advertise with a special COVID-19 advertisement which:

- Is adapted to the situation
- Has the community as main message
- Focuses on branding
- Informs customers about products

Continue doing PR as before because media need news from the market

- About production and delivery deadlines (reassurance)
- About your product range, product availability
- Don't hesitate to launch products (as long as their distribution is guaranteed)
- Make use of video calls to keep contact with journalists

Mills Advertising is fully operational and ready to guide you through the planning and creation of your COVID-19 strategy and PR/advertising campaign.

GREAT AUTOMOTIVE ADVERTISING BEGINS WITH A POWERFUL IDEA...

...BUT IT DOESN'T STOP THERE.

Mills Advertising has decades of experience in automotive marketing; we know the industry like your mechanic knows your engine. From creative ads to cross-continental media campaigns, our clients are on board because we know what it takes to drive the message through right to the finish. That includes follow-up reporting and analysis, press clippings and as many charts & graphs as our clients need. Find out why other successful companies work with Mills - talk to the bright sparks in automotive advertising today.



It is a time of uncertainty for everyone and usually people tend to freeze. Understandable but my personal opinion is to go counterclockwise. Now is the time to go digital and get your message across. Don't ignore the new reality but accept it as a given and deal with it. Use it as an opportunity.



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