

How Brands Can Help Frontline Superheroes

By Jason Ten-Pow, President and Lead Strategist, OnR

Every story has a hero. Ours are hospital staff across the world, working tirelessly to help patients and, at the same time, keep their families safe. They have been forced to make themselves prepared and ready for this enormous challenge in an unbelievably short period. As much as we may fantasize about suddenly, fortuitously acquiring 'superhero' powers (who doesn't?), our heroes are well-grounded in reality and have chosen to fight on in cities around the world.

Today's brands must join the fight and support each other and our heroes to subdue this pandemic. So which brands have jumped into the fire to support our heroes so far?

GM and Ford are making ventilators. These firms have worked lightning-fast to secure suppliers, learn how the products work, and make space in their manufacturing plant. You can't get much faster than that," said Kaitlin Wowak, a professor at the University of Notre Dame who focuses on industrial supply chains.

Gap, Zara, Canada Goose, Eddie Bauer, and other apparel companies are making and delivering masks, gowns, and scrubs for healthcare workers.

Apple was one of the first brands to close all retail stores. In addition, the company allowed hourly employees, including retail workers, to take unlimited sick leave should they have coronavirus-like symptoms, and many brands followed suit.

Dollar General, Target, Walmart, Whole Foods, Kroger, and more have announced special hours for older shoppers, the most at-risk group to severe complications from COVID-19.

What can all brands do?

Take Action. It isn't enough for brands to send broadcast emails with platitudes, well wishes, and promises. They must be specific about their intentions and communicate with regular reassuring messaging. And, more importantly, they need to take action that follows through on the promises they made to help slow the spread of this virus, and that will support the work of our superheroes.

Thank You. A special thank you to those brands that decided in the early days of this pandemic to have their employees work from home. Companies that took this action before government mandates exemplify the principles that are at the core of building lasting relationships. Also, customers that immediately responded to requests for self-quarantine and social distancing; thank you for helping brands keep their employees safe.

Stay safe. Brands and customers alike, let's work together to protect each other during this difficult time.

Since 2001 OnR has been helping brands establish and maintain unbreakable customer relationships.

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