

Marketing & Sales Blueprint for Recovery

8 Game-Changers to Reactivate Demand



An aerial, long-exposure photograph of a multi-level highway interchange at night. The image captures the complex curves and overpasses of the road system, with numerous light trails from vehicles creating a sense of motion. The warm, golden-yellow light from the headlights and taillights contrasts sharply with the dark, silhouetted landscape and the deep blue of the night sky. The overall composition is dynamic and geometric, emphasizing the flow of traffic and the infrastructure of modern transportation.

A Defining Demand Moment



Demand is the Problem— and the Solution

The global economy is facing a demand crisis.

What began as a public health crisis earlier this year morphed quickly into a demand crisis as countries around the world instituted sweeping lockdowns to combat the spread of the coronavirus, temporarily shuttering roughly one-third of the global economy. This watershed moment affected categories and companies in different ways. For most, demand stalled. For a few, demand ticked up because of shifts in occasions, timing, solutions and channels. For all, though, demand changed shape. In one way or another, every business has been affected by this defining moment.

Economies are beginning to reopen, but demand will not bounce back readily nor will it take the same form. A genuine recovery will not catch hold until demand is reactivated. To do so, companies will have to act decisively in several key areas, ranging from information to strategy to organization.

- The foundation of market knowledge has been upended.

Demand has changed.

Consumers are rattled. Channels and brands have been challenged. Crosscurrents are shaping the future. For example, even with digital at higher levels than ever, Kantar global tracking finds that reconnecting with friends, family and live events is what people want most after lockdowns end. Similarly, while financial worries are growing worldwide, overall concern about the coronavirus situation dropped from 51 percent in early April to 38 percent in mid-June. Adding to all of this is a long overdue global reckoning with racial equality that, pandemic notwithstanding, has brought millions of protestors into city streets across the world. Kantar surveys in the U.S. implicate brands in this, finding year after year that African-Americans and Latinos experience discrimination most frequently while shopping and at work or school. There is little about the marketplace any longer that is settled, which has pushed insights organizations to the fore in guiding companies through the successive waves of this disruption.

- Marketing and sales strategies are being restitched.

Demand must be won in new ways.

What informed business plans before the pandemic is no longer relevant, so brands and retailers are revamping strategies full speed ahead. Portfolios, formats and business models are being adapted to fit changing needs, occasions and buying power. Omnichannel and e-commerce are surging. Trade pressure is mounting. Supply chains are strained, particularly from a pushback against globalism. In China, 87 percent of consumers report more interest now in local brands; 54 percent say so in the U.S. Shopping habits, brand relevance, usage occasions, entertainment pastimes and even payment methods are changing. Fears about health and hygiene are showing up in many ways including worries about touching paper currency, which have significantly reduced the volume of cash transactions and accelerated the shift to cash alternatives. Companies are under pressure to support diversity, sustainability and community. Across the board, strategic positions are being updated to fit the new contours of the marketplace.

- Organizations are refashioning the enablers of success.

Reactivating demand requires new ways of operating.

Digital transformation is being fast-tracked. Improvements in organizational learning and teaching new skills have gone from important to imperative. The unexpected success of remote working has sparked a wide-ranging reevaluation of the workplace. One-quarter of consumers in over four dozen countries surveyed by Kantar agreed that working from home will be a permanent change. Many companies are making exceptions to hiring freezes in order to tap into the unusually rich talent pool that has been created by redundancies in vulnerable sectors or by weakened competitors. Fresh approaches are being taken to improve KPIs, to speed up planning and market response, to bring together marketing and sales, and to building a better society. Business leaders are anticipating a drawn-out recovery that will require deep-seated changes to ways of working and larger investments in organizational performance.

Even with the challenges of today's turmoil, bold, forward-looking companies will win. Winning companies will put first priority on reactivating demand as the pathway to success. They will move aggressively in their categories to act faster and better. They will use this moment as an opportunity to challenge established competitive positions, to upend category norms and to invest in change and growth.

Winning companies will commit to an integrated and innovative demand-led blueprint for recovery.

The Kantar Blueprint for Recovery

Winning companies will make reactivating demand their overriding focus. They will shift resources and energy in this direction. They will put it at the center of all decisions.

The Kantar Blueprint for Recovery is a priority list of must-do imperatives for reactivating demand. Within the areas of foundation, strategy and enablers, there are eight critical steps that winning companies will take.

The competitive landscape of the recovery will be dominated by companies that take action against these eight imperatives for reactivating demand.



8 Things Winning Companies Will Do Differently

1

Winning companies will elevate insights, foresight and intelligence into mission control for the business.

Foundation: Insights–Foresight–Intelligence

Winning companies will act quickly to reconfirm what they know and then update that continuously. They will remap and resize the evolving contingencies of a marketplace adapting to new demand spaces. They will seek to understand what will be different and what will be the same. They will deepen their commitment to learning about racial justice and sustainability. They will shift spending into understanding the signals and triggers of reactivating demand.

2

Winning companies will reprioritize their brand portfolios to match the new demand spaces of the rapidly changing marketplace.

Marketing Strategy: Portfolio

Existing portfolio structures have been built on a mix of needs, target groups and retail channels that have been turned upside down. Changes in consideration sets, brand perceptions and supply chain capacities require that all elements of a portfolio be remixed, from revenue management to pack and price architecture to the braiding together of brands and sub-brands.

3

Winning companies will reexamine a brand's promise and value proposition to ensure a continuing fit with the shifting culture of consumer lifestyles.

Marketing Strategy: Brand

Cultural changes are inevitable, but different parts of culture are changing at different speeds and to different degrees. To sustain relevance, brands must find fresh connections that tether them tightly to evolving needs and aspirations. In particular, issues of diversity and sustainability must be front and center. Additionally, globalism is under pressure, making local culture more relevant. And a new culture of hygiene is emerging, so effective signaling of hygiene will be essential.

4

Winning companies will make a bold commitment to disruptive innovation, particularly in the areas of hygiene, safety and experiences.

Marketing Strategy: Innovation

Innovation during times of turmoil and disruption has always been a winning strategy. Winning companies will move with marketplace shifts to introduce breakthrough innovation and creative new solutions. Innovation with hygiene at the core will be the new digital. Aggressive investments in the near-term will put pressure on slower-moving competitors that will face higher investments later to catch up.

5

Winning companies will redefine success with category plans that reflect an expanded understanding of shopping patterns, retail channels and consumer expectations.

Sales Strategy: Category & Shopper

A refreshed forecast of the future retail landscape will enable winning companies to shift resources to new formats and new retail business models. This will include special attention on assortment and shelf space as retailers reset their stores to fit the needs and budgets of consumers who are adjusting their shopping missions and journeys. A new understanding of touchpoints, triggers, barriers and experiences as well as a new vision of category growth will be essential for securing demand conversion.

6

Winning companies will invest more in omnichannel strategies, especially technology and data for real-time responsiveness.

Sales Strategy: Omnichannel

Winning companies will look to consolidate gains in online channels by doubling down on e-commerce and investing more in last-mile delivery solutions. New business models will be implemented, especially social commerce and direct-to-consumer channels.

7

Winning companies will be ready with customer management solutions as trade pressure builds in the second half of 2020 to reset terms and incentives.

Sales Strategy: Customer Management

Retail partners are facing costs growing ahead of volume and they will seek to pass those costs back into the value chain. Winning companies will be prepared to reset joint business plans with top customers by reprioritizing second-half activities and terms. Winning companies will collaborate with their retail partners on an updated vision of category growth covering the full range of issues from assortment and supply chain to promotions and touchpoints.

8

Winning companies will remake their organizations and skill sets to fit a virtual world of working and shopping.

Enablers: Organizational Performance

Fast growing shifts in culture, commerce and competition require new skill sets and improved organizational learning systems. Winning companies will look aggressively to hire top talent that is newly available in the job market. A more diverse mix of leaders and recruitment is essential. Winning companies will utilize dynamic planning approaches that facilitate reactive, adaptive responses to the marketplace. They will embed that into KPIs and they will act on new learning at speed. They will embrace a one-demand mindset that brings marketing and sales together with one view of how to reactivate demand.





Reactivate Demand

The Kantar Blueprint for Recovery is a priority list of the most important things for companies to do in order to reactivate demand. It is not an exhaustive list of everything that companies should or could do. Rather, it is the core set of levers that marketing and sales directors must use to reactivate demand. These are the game-changing things to do.

There are clear, definitive priorities in this blueprint that will differentiate winners from losers in the recovery marketplace. Many things are competing for the attention of marketing and sales directors. At winning companies, first priority will be given to the imperatives identified here.

Each imperative in the Kantar Blueprint or Recovery is a lever that marketing and sales directors must use now, next and in the future — now as an immediate priority, or as a checklist of steps that should be taken right away; next as a near-term priority, or what to do as marketplace activity picks up; and in the future as a systemic, long-term reorientation and reorganization of marketing and sales around a shared, end-to-end view of reactivating demand.

The call to action is both clear-cut and urgent: In this defining moment, demand is the problem and the solution, so winning companies will make it a priority to pull the levers that reactivate demand.



1 FOUNDATION

Insights–Foresight–Intelligence

Elevate into corporate ‘mission control’

At winning companies, insights teams are the eyes and ears of the organization. The coronavirus pandemic has underlined the importance of the insights function as mission control. Rapid and ongoing shifts in demand and in the drivers of growth make it imperative for strategic initiatives to be piloted by fresh, timely information and insights.

Now

- **Quantify the reset in demand.** Re-profile and resize demand spaces, shopper missions, drivers of choice, and the retail landscape. Ensure the entire organization understands new sources of demand and changes in consumption, e.g., impact on consumer groups, in-home vs. out-of-home, and new occasions.
- **Understand value beyond price.** In particular, for different household budgets and socio-economic situations, clarify what value means, e.g., price/value for lower income vs. quality/value for higher income. Sustainability and societal contribution must be front and center.

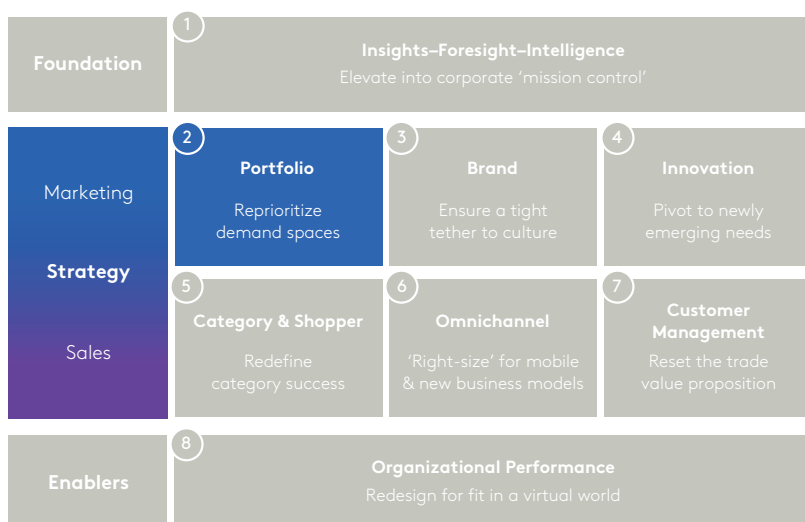
Next

- **Identify and prioritize changes that will stick.** Undertake a matrix assessment of which new consumer attitudes and behaviors—both shopping and consumption—will be enduring vs. short-lived.

Future

- **Embed an updated forward-looking view.** Rebalance budget to build a new vision of category growth while maintaining business-critical tracking of market signals and triggers of demand.
- **Re-estimate shopper ROI.** Re-gauge shopper ROI for new classes of trade and for new sources of category growth.

Critical resource: Updated ‘map’ of demand



2 STRATEGY: MARKETING Portfolio

Reprioritize demand spaces

Winning companies will simplify and streamline their brand and item portfolios in order to prioritize resources and marketing focus for durable demand spaces with continuing strength in the near-term and for new demand spaces that can drive growth over the long-term.

Now

- **Prioritize the core.** Pivot hard toward demand spaces showing current consumption and sales growth. In partnership with sales, adjust item and pack assortments to fit shifts in demand and retail shopping. Identify where occasions now will be served or delivered.
- **Hedge within the portfolio.** Manage items within the portfolio in a complementary way to minimize loss and adjust towards demand shifts.
- **Watch out for the trade-down trap.** Don’t assume all shopping and sub-categories are vulnerable to trading down. Look for opportunities with quality-driven propositions.

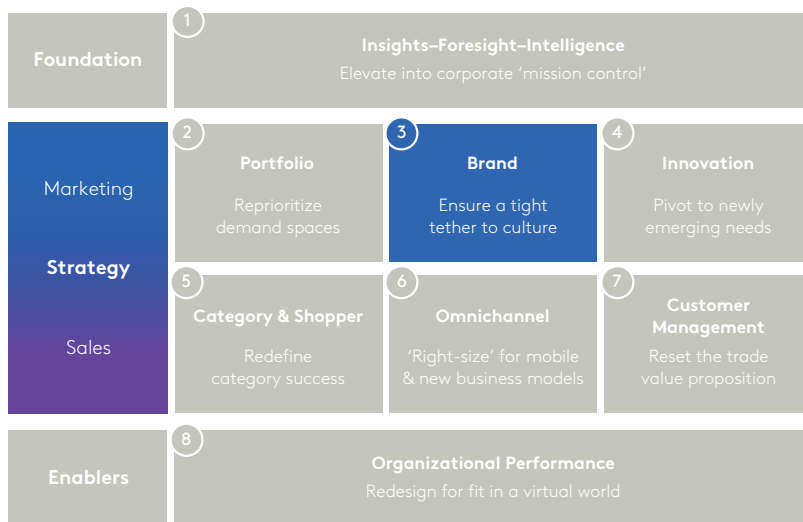
Next

- **Streamline for growth.** Ruthlessly update and revise offerings based on reforecasts of the shifts in consumption and channels.

Future

- **Monitor change continuously not periodically.** Replace point-in-time studies with agile insights dashboards that can track and remix a brand’s portfolio in real-time.

Critical resource: Reforecast of growth opportunities



3 STRATEGY: MARKETING Brand

Ensure a tight tether to culture

Disruptions lead to cultural shifts, both big and small. But not every part of culture changes. Winning companies will adapt brand strategies to behavioral changes where they occur as well as be cognizant of which shifts will be big enough to affect saliency and relevance.

Now

- **Allay consumer concerns.** Across all communications pillars, send clear and reassuring signals and messages about safety, hygiene, social responsibility, and value.
- **Step forward on social issues.** Take a stance and invest more in a public role that contributes to a better society.

Next

- **Finetune brand roles and purpose.** Reinvent, rethink or jettison brands that have become less relevant due to a shifting demand landscape.
- **Reassess productivity.** Focus less on topline and more on real returns.
- **Move to a new kind of brand leadership.** Act in ways that are more networked, more collaborative, more transparent, more local, more engaged with consumers, and more willing to make sacrifices for the public good.

Future

- **Walk the talk.** Reassess brand purpose to ensure that it remains rooted in a relevant human insight. Amplify social impact and relevance and by acting upon, not simply talking about, brand values and societal responsibilities.
- **Build back better.** Make purpose the epicenter of commercial success. Embrace this opportunity to put a commitment to all stakeholders in place.

Critical resource: Refreshed mission and brand purpose



4 STRATEGY: MARKETING Innovation

Pivot to newly emerging needs

Winning companies will accelerate the introduction of significant, value-accretive innovations that deliver against emerging needs, especially hygiene, safety, experiences, value, and ease of access.

Now

- **Reassess the pipeline.** Be hardnosed in assessing which initiatives need to be deprioritized or paused and which can continue or should be accelerated.
- **Identify high-opportunity gaps.** Make an immediate push into areas with the biggest needs-gaps, especially hygiene, safety, and experiences.

Next

- **Go bold for breakthroughs.** Work cross-functionally to identify and make big bets in category-disruptive ideas.
- **Be ready for resumption of trends.** Don't abandon plans related to underlying shifts in category fundamentals and resume plans as soon as the disruption hiccup begins to pass.

Future

- **Get comfortable with the uncomfortable.** Undertake all changes needed to fast-track initiatives and shorten time-to-market. Get used to operating in 'beta mode.'

Critical resource: New innovation roadmap



5 STRATEGY: SALES Category & Shopper

Redefine category success

Increased awareness of hygiene is accelerating shopper demands for contactless experiences. Channels are changing from layout to digitization, and the deployment of automation and service-based store investments is growing. Winning companies will rebuild category plans based on an updated understanding of shopper missions, occasions, experiences and expectations. Category plans that deliver joint value creation will be critical.

Now

- **Real-time forecasting.** Account-level models to identify and prevent out-of-stocks.
- **Manage supply across channels.** Respond more quickly to demand shifts across channels.
- **Relearn shopper touchpoints.** Implement updated solutions that reflect new triggers and new barriers to purchase.

Next

- **Build a category growth plan focused on reactivation.** Customize recovery plans for top customers.
- **Win the reset of demand.** Revise and adapt customer-specific assortment recommendations based on real-time shopper insights and recessionary behaviors.

Future

- **Create a new shopper conversion playbook.** Identify and target the new mix of demand drivers along the post-pandemic path to purchase.

Critical resource: Updated touchpoints and path to purchase



6 STRATEGY: SALES Omnichannel

‘Right-size’ for mobile & new business models

Winning companies will create a new omni-commerce scorecard of success that can be used collaboratively with customers to objectively address demand surges and the rising costs of last-mile delivery platforms. Sales teams will increase usage of mobile technologies to target and convert shoppers in the growing channels of convenience and discount stores.

Now

- **Deliver with consistency.** Execute the ‘perfect store’ online and then quickly fill gaps in-store.

Next

- **Reinvent channel strategy.** Shift spending to invest more in retail channels that are doing better within the context of new headwinds and tailwinds.

Future

- **Introduce new business models.** Test-and-learn new models to capture growth in growing market channels such as social commerce and direct-to-consumer.

Critical resource: Fully integrated omnichannel strategic plan



7 STRATEGY: SALES

Customer Management

Reset the trade value proposition

All elements of the retail P&L are being challenged. Winning companies will react fast and definitively in terms of offer (e.g., assortment, pack, price, promotions) and trade (e.g., service and trade terms) to strengthen their positions, while simultaneously adding capabilities to execute in the face of increased margin and cashflow requests.

Now

- **Fulfill the now.** Prioritize assortment against short-term shopper demands and retailer needs.
- **Stress test the value proposition.** Reconfirm value proposition against short- and medium-term activity calendars, including price and promotion plans.

Next

- **Make it a triple win.** Optimize pack architecture, pricing, and promotion choices to maximize the combination of shopper value, retailer margin, and profit mix.
- **Make speed of RTM a competitive advantage.** Explore variable RTM solutions and advanced data solutions to enable decision-making at speed.

Future

- **Define a new value equation.** Reset the shopper value proposition of price and promotion and the retailer value proposition of trade incentives to reflect new consumer and customer value equations.
- **Enable change.** Prioritize supply chain and capability investments to support the new RTM with a single commercial agenda across sales and marketing.
- **Reallocate, don't add.** Repurpose investments in trade spend and other resources against new growth drivers, e.g., from big box to digital.

Critical resource: A recalibrated retail P&L



8 ENABLERS

Organizational Performance

Redesign for fit in a virtual world

Winning companies will add the new capabilities and skills needed to capture shifting and newly emerging growth opportunities. These capabilities will have companies revisit established processes, tools, cultures, and competencies. ‘Virtual first’ will be the way in which winning companies reinvent ways of working and organizational learning.

Now

- **Hire the best talent from the pool now available.** Get the best from the talent let go.
- **Equip for reset.** Immediately add sales competencies—e.g., joint business planning, buying groups—to be ready to respond to a second-half reset by customers of terms and working arrangements.
- **Enable fast learning.** Adopt real-time, iterative planning processes. Build capabilities at speed by revisiting existing training calendar and protocols to deliver virtual blended learning experiences.

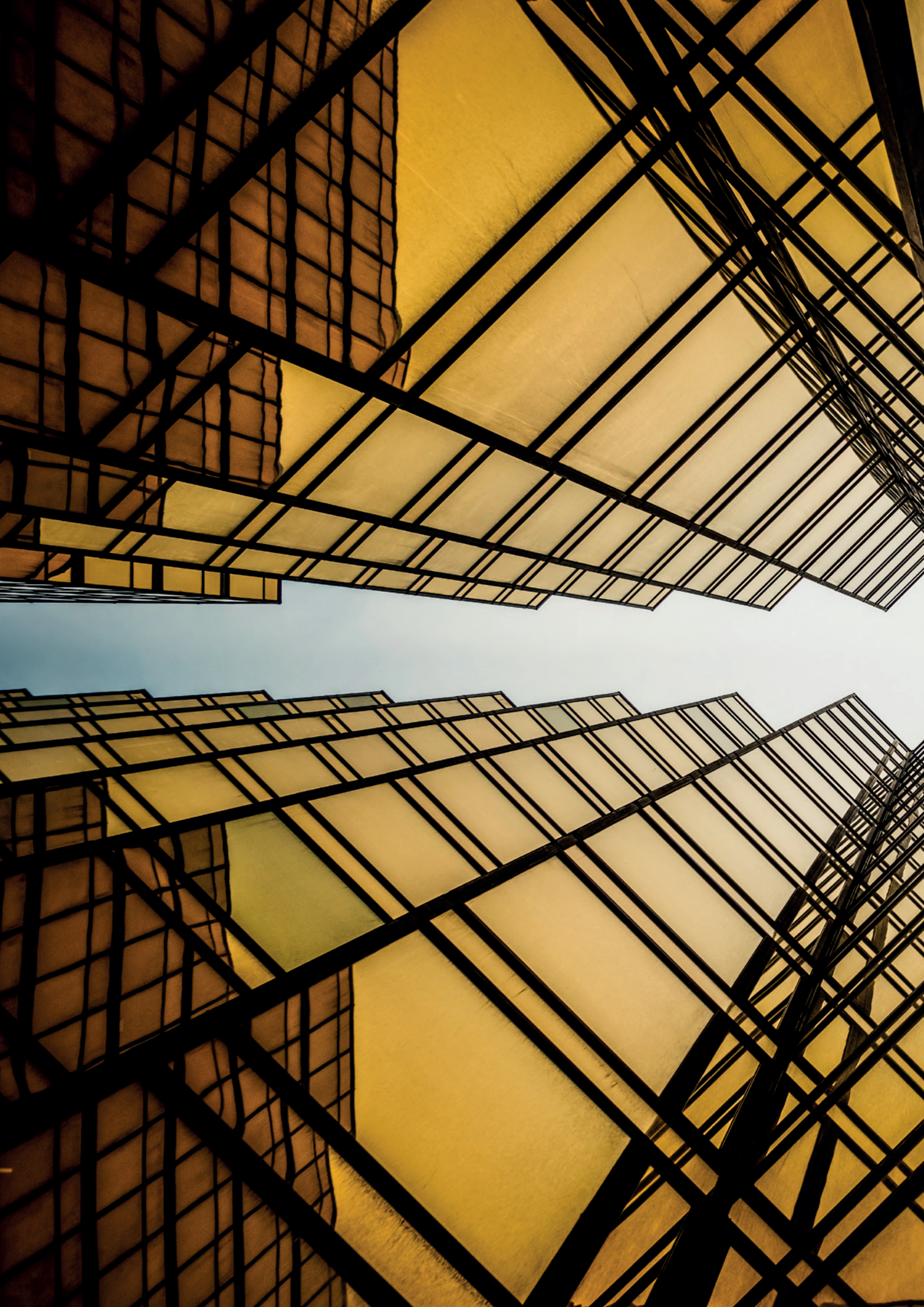
Next

- **Make sure structure follows strategy.** Reset operating model to be reactive to analytics and data about real-time market shifts. Establish more agile go-to-market solutions, such as distributors, that require smaller fixed costs.
- **Create a learning loop.** Build continuous learning by systematically collecting, codifying, teaching, and scaling best practices.

Future

- **Break siloes.** Integrate marketing and sales to create cross-functional one-demand teams.
- **Invest for impact.** Reallocate resources and investments to provide more support to priority functions like insights, e-commerce, and revenue management.

Critical resource: An organizational improvement plan





Additional Kantar thought-leadership on COVID-19 includes:

Insights–Foresight–Intelligence

[Beyond COVID-19: What Consumer Behaviors Are Likely to be Maintained?](#)

[Future-Ready: Planning for Life in Asia After COVID-19](#)

[COVID-19 Barometer: Finding Growth in the Post-Pandemic Recession](#)

[What are People Looking Forward to Most, Post-Pandemic?](#)

[What People Are Looking Forward to Most, Post-Pandemic \(part 2\)](#)

[Will the Disinfectant Boom in China Continue After the COVID-19 Pandemic?](#)

Webinars:

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[COVID-19 Checklist for Brands](#)

[China's First Shopping Spree After COVID-19: How Do Brands Break Through the Crisis](#)

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[How Brands Can Survive, and Then Thrive, During a COVID-19-Triggered Recession](#)

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[Retail Briefing Guide: Readjusting Planning for COVID-19 Seismic Shift](#)

[COVID-19 Purchase Behavior Shifts: Assortment and Portfolio Implications](#)

[Shopping, Consumption and Coronavirus: For Better or Worse](#)

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Webinar:

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Organizational Performance

[Reframe, Reskill, Reset: How to Win Over the Next 24 Months](#)

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