

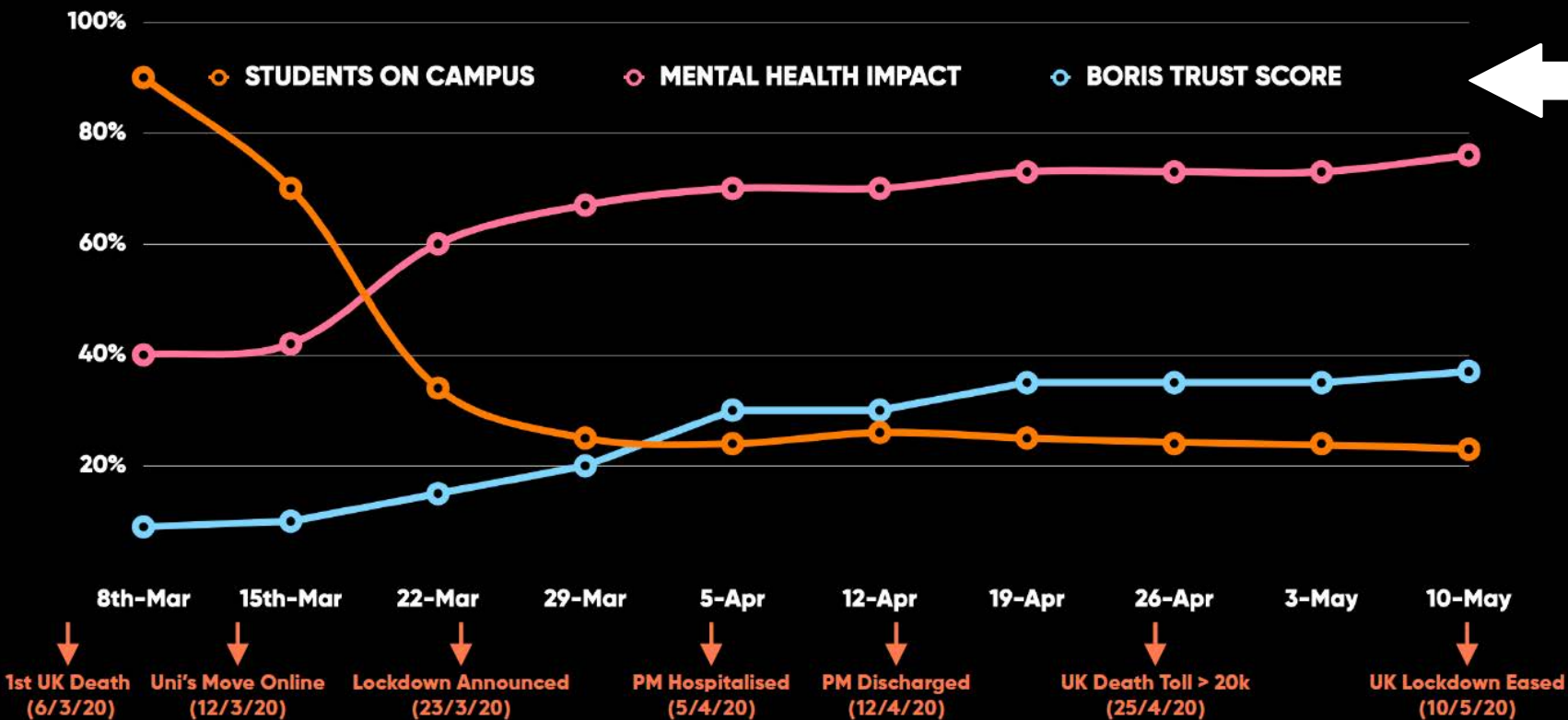
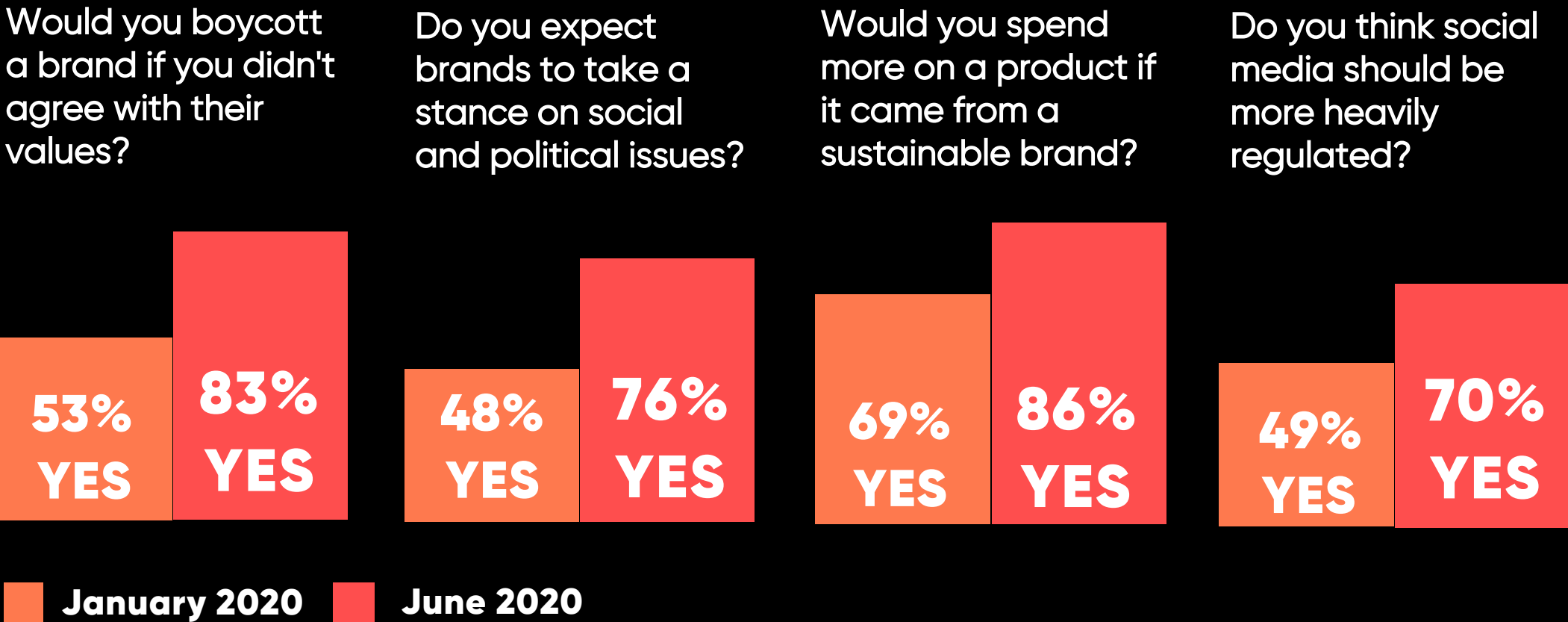
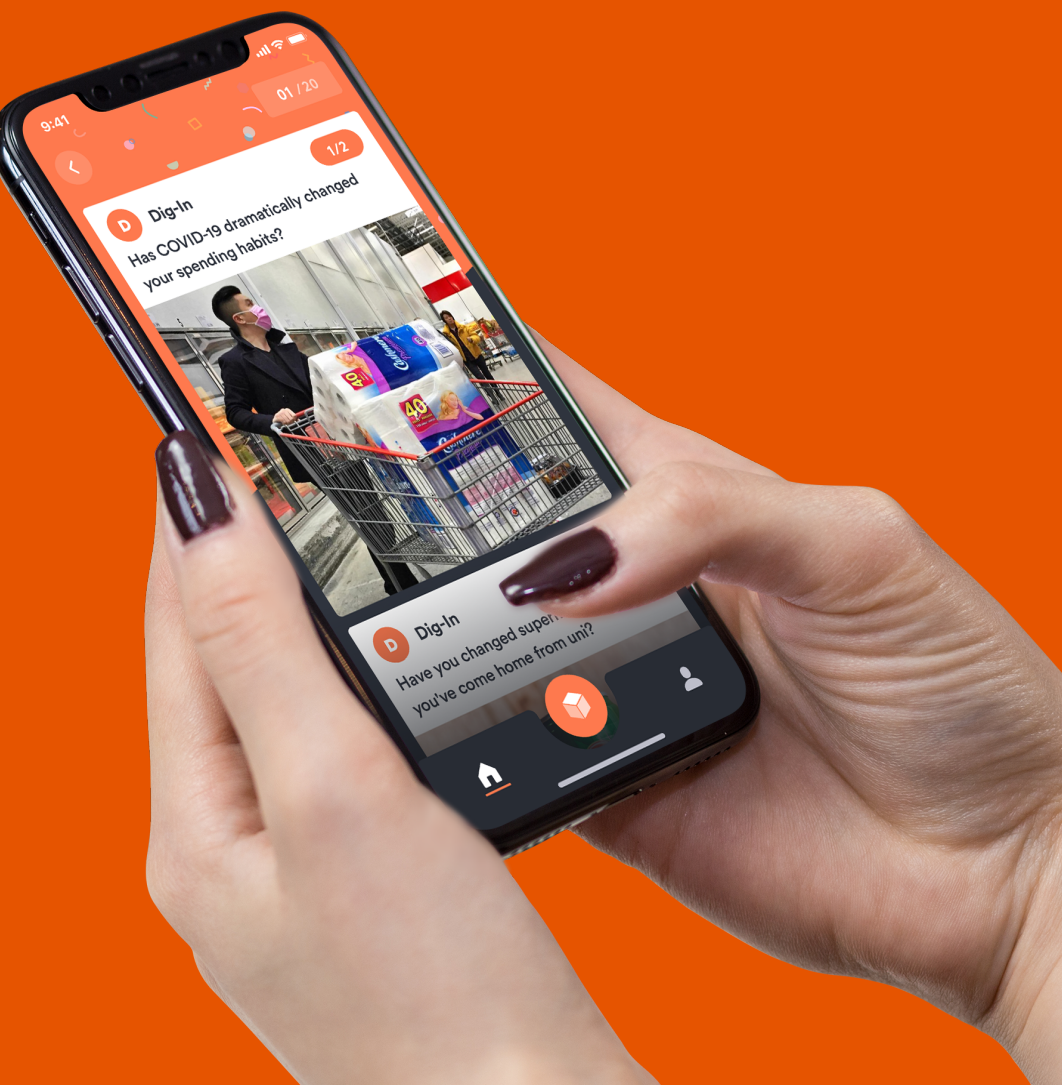
The importance of brand ethics and identity amongst students has accelerated tenfold and this is what you need to do about it.



Rachael :)

"Hi I'm Rachael, Dig In's Campaign Manager. When I'm not sipping on an Aperol Spritz on my holidays, I'm working closely with brands consulting on and creating effective long-term student strategies. Over the past few months Dig-In's student tracking has revealed some startling changes in purchasing behaviour. Here are my thoughts..."

In March we applied a patch to The Dig-In App allowing us to track student trends and attitudes through Covid-19. The acceleration of brand ethics has been extraordinary to see in the space of just a few months.



Tracking student movements, mental health impact and trust in the Prime Minister



What does this mean?

Brand ethics have always been important to students who are socially and environmentally driven consumers like the rest of their Gen Z peers. The importance of ethical values to students has steadily been increasing over the past three years. Now in the space of just a few months these driving factors have shot up which I believe will shape marketing strategy forever.

Not only has the world collectively suffered a global pandemic which has no doubt been the single most life-altering event students have experienced to date, there's also been huge support for the Black Lives Matter movement after the tragic killing of George Floyd. Not to mention the recent boycotting of Facebook and certain online fashion brands.

Being the pioneers of tomorrow's trends, it's clear to see that this generation's attitude and willingness to take action is changing everything. Students not only expect but demand companies take a stance on social, political, and cultural issues. These attitudes are here to stay and brands who want to engage with students must work hard to earn their custom.

Rules of engagement.

1 Be authentic.

Whilst it's important for brands to align themselves with a cause, students quickly see through any false attempts and appreciate honesty even if a brand isn't fully there.

DIG-IN STAT: 80% of students appreciate transparency from brands

2 Don't be a one hit wonder.

Launching a campaign on its own isn't good enough, it must be consistent within your wider brand purpose.

DIG-IN STAT: 59% of students think one marketing campaign alone isn't enough to cement a brand as socially responsible

3 Honour your commitments.

Students are naturally sceptical and expect to witness CSR in brands corporate culture and business model.

DIG-IN STAT: 75% of students don't believe brands have a real commitment to their values

4 Focus on why.

Brand purpose is getting personal. Dig-In's research shows that students are more driven by why companies exist over what they sell.

DIG-IN STAT: 74% of students say brand principles are more important than the product itself



We practice what we preach.

Dig-In exists to improve the University experience and support these institutions and students alike. By ensuring this core principle drives every decision we make we are creating a valued, ethical and commercially successful business.

Giving students a voice.

Through the Dig-In App students share their real-time opinions on political, social and cultural matters. The opinion of today's students influences tomorrow's society. Together we'll ensure students make a noise that can't be ignored.

Making the right choices.

Dig-In respects our influence and access into this marketplace. The endorsement of 167 higher educational institutions comes with a significant responsibility. We have an ongoing drive towards a more sustainable operation. We align ourselves with like-minded brands who look to build relationships with students rather than simply monetize them.

Student wellbeing.

Most students are affected by mental health in the UK. Dig-In's mental health study is ongoing and, with 77,000 students participating so far, it is the largest of its kind. Dig-In also educates and brings the awareness of students to sexual consent, health and drinking responsibly.



Create a brand identity that students can align themselves with, then you can start to build a meaningful relationship.

Once you've built your brand identity through the practice of making ethical choices and backing worthy causes, it's time to connect with this group of consumers and earn their long-term loyalty.

Brands have found themselves operating in a discount culture which is inevitably leading to shrinking margins and many businesses not being able to compete. Dig-In knows that students crave genuine relationships with the brands they align themselves with. 86% of students told us they remain loyal to brands they feel they have a real connection with.

As well as behaviours and trends, the Dig-In App enables us to track and measure the sentiment students have towards our brand partners through various touchpoints in the year. The effectiveness of the engagements we facilitate for them can be measured, and this prepares us to ensure that next year's campaign is even more successful. Working closely with our partners and utilising the unique insights we derive from our data, we create bespoke campaigns tailored to meet brand objectives.

In this current climate Dig-In understands the importance of value driven activity and we deliver clear proofs of ROI which brings our customers back year after year.

Give students an experience and create brand memories.

Interact directly with students and let them experience your brand in a tangible way. Share a meaningful connection they'll remember you by creating love and affinity for your brand.

Human decisions are driven by emotion. Don't stop at one, engage as many emotions and senses as you can. Students can see, feel, smell, and even hear and taste the Dig-In Box. A multi-sensory engagement.

Who doesn't remember their first day of University? A huge transition which brings with it excitement but also fear and uncertainty. In a new city, surrounded by new faces half a million students every year find Dig-In and our brand partners are there to welcome them in their bedrooms.

DIG-IN STAT: 98% of students said the Dig-In Box improved their welcome experience



81% of students
are willing to try new
brands when they start
University

77% of students
have never bought their
own household products
before arriving at
university

80% of students
buy different brands to
their parents at home

86% of students
stay loyal to brands they
like

Timing is everything.

Gen Z are the most impactful shopping demographic as they pioneer the way for new trends which the rest of us will follow.

Students arrive at University as brand new consumers yet to form meaningful brand relationships. Our research tells us there are many products students will be buying for the first time. This is when they make their first and lasting brand choices.

So many brands invest money in trying to win business from their competitors. Why not make sure your brand is the one who reaches them first?

Knowing what makes this generation tick and reaching them before your competitors do gains early loyalty on which brands can build lasting relationships with the student market.

