

ISONATION

COVID-19 BUSINESS REACTION REPORT



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FOUNDING PARTNERS

IsoNation aims to support, motivate and inspire like-minded professionals throughout the lockdown period and beyond.

By sharing our evolving strategies, we want to keep both ourselves and our companies thriving by keeping you and your business informed, fit and mentally sound.



WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

WHAT'S IN HERE THEN?

- Where are we now?
- Business insight:
 - Motivation & Wellbeing
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HELPING UK BUSINESSES SURVIVE AND THRIVE



When the UK's lockdown was announced, a band of business leaders who understood the immediate and long-term implications joined forces.

It was agreed that by sharing our knowledge, expertise, insight and opinion, we might help other businesses not only survive the lockdown period, but thrive during it.

On Monday 23 March, IsoNation was launched.

Since then the IsoNation network has grown as we've heard from leaders in F&B, finance, franchise, marketing, construction and wellbeing sectors.

This e-book is a culmination of all we've learned so far. If you'd like to see more, you can watch our interviews on Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube - just search 'IsoNation'.





WHERE ARE WE NOW?

ISONATION IS HELPING BUSINESSES ACROSS THE UK

IsoNation has broadcast live QnAs across Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn and reached nearly a quarter-of-a-million business professionals since lockdown began.



25,000+
engagements



50,000+
Total video



225,000+
business professionals
reached



700+
social followers

“

I'm so proud to be part of IsoNation. It's incredible what we've already achieved and the people we've reached in this short time. Nifty Communications have done a ground-breaking job in engaging, promoting and establishing IsoNation as a credible source of industry-leading insight.

- **Nick Baxter**
founding partner
Baxter Williams, MD





BUSINESS IMPACT SURVEY

THE ISONATION SURVEY RAN THROUGH APRIL

More than 100 business leaders took part in the survey, which ran throughout April. We've broken down our key findings here.

54% of businesses have furloughed staff...

...and those businesses are only expecting to

reactivate **60%** of those furloughed.

“

Thanks to everyone who took part in the survey. It's hugely important we understand the current environment if we're to move forward and every bit of information helps. We'll be running another survey soon.

- Rachel Collison
Head of Operations,
Nifty Communications

90% of businesses have experienced a **drop in income...**

... including **23%** who have **stopped trading...**

... while nearly **10%** have been **busier than ever.**



think it will take 2-3 years to recover.



think it will take up to 5 years.

72%

of businesses leaders listed 'a clear exit strategy' as their top priority.

70%

believe marketing will play an important role after lockdown.



MOTIVATION & WELLBEING

As the pandemic brings physical ailment, the lockdown may have heightened mental health issues as well. Social isolation presents a challenge, as does working from home. That's why IsoNation spoke to Graham Mitchell and Jo Min.



If you keep sight of your long-term goals, your day-to-day tasks will have more meaning and accomplishing these can be a real source of motivation.

If we fall into the trap of feeling like there's nothing we can do and subsequently not doing anything, we will fulfil our own prophecy.

We need to think about our major objectives and the supporting tasks that drive those objectives. If you actually walk through your days and weeks, you'll likely be amazed by how much of it you can still do.

Graham Mitchell M.A.B.P.
Business Psychologist, T2i



Not being able to do fundraising and training limits how we provide our services, grow the organisation, reach more people and look at development and research.

Everyone is facing a lot of struggles but it's important to focus on the positives. Spend your time doing things you've never done before or never had time to do, make some goals and make plans for when this is all over.

Jo Min
Deputy Chief Executive, Springfield



Graham is a business psychologist while Jo is deputy chief executive of mental health charity, Springfield Mind.

Graham called on his experience of guiding businesses through the 2008 financial crash to help organisations move in the right direction, while Jo told of how Springfield Mind have adapted their services despite fundraising opportunities now being virtually non-existent.



FINANCIAL SERVICES

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January 2021 is going to be tough for businesses with deferred taxes and VAT becoming due. When you're thinking about cash flow forecasts or you're thinking about deferring things, make sure you're thinking about the future.



You'll need to consider things like the Christmas period - are you likely to be busy or quiet? If you're one of those that could have a quiet Christmas, you could be prolonging the pain.

Angie Preece
Development Manager, BCRS

The economic impact of COVID-19 is under constant review and this will continue for some time. With the financial landscape evolving day-by-day, IsoNation caught up with two experts in business finance to help answer our community's queries.

“

You have to make these decisions as soon as possible because we're realistically looking at this situation continuing for the next few months to a degree and, to a lesser extent, into next year.

You need to start planning and mitigating for the worst-case scenarios so that you're still here next year and able to weather the storm. Part of that is looking at your team, working out who can work and who needs to work.

James Thomas
Commercial Manager, D&T



We spoke to Angie Preece from BCRS and James Thomas from D&T Accountants. They both explained why cashflow forecasts are key right now but also offered some stark warnings, particularly around funding for already-struggling businesses.

If you have any queries around your business finances and the available options, be sure to catch up on these two Leaders' Insights interviews on Facebook, LinkedIn or YouTube.



RECRUITMENT

STRENGTHENING TEAM RESOLVE

In the inaugural Leaders' Insights interview, Nifty Communications' MD, Christian Collison spoke to Baxter Williams founder Nick Baxter.

Baxter Williams is a founding partner of IsoNation and a recruitment firm that prides itself on connecting exceptional people.



A lot of mental health issues generally arise from people feeling isolated. The biggest issue will be recognition around our mental health.

I think this will allow people to really value the relationships we have with our staff and will recognise that without them, we don't have businesses.

Nick Baxter
Managing Director, Baxter Williams



After sharing his insight in the first Leaders' Insights interview, Nick took hold of the baton to become a co-host of IsoNation's primary show.

Since then, Nick has spoken to industry-leading experts across the country about the impact of this pandemic.



KEYWORKERS

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We support emergency services such as London Ambulance Service so we've been keen to carry on our maintenance work. We've also been asked to do some emergency installs of extra tank storage to support them in ramping up ambulance numbers.

The NHS had been bringing in extra ambulances from other sources such as the army. If you need more fuel, you need more dispensers, so we've been able to help them there.



When the lockdown was first introduced, everybody was ringing around to find out if we had spare PPE we could donate to hospitals and hospices – everybody was trying to see what they could do, which was a really nice feeling. We all want to contribute however we can.

Henry Simpson
Managing Director, TSG



The UK has rallied around the key workers keeping the country going during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are some that have continued to operate almost unnoticed in the background, such as TSG.

TSG is the world's leading equipment and services provider for the energy distribution industry, covering a wide range of transport from cars and buses to rail and ships, as well as working with the military.

Like many businesses, lockdown has significantly affected the work TSG can carry out, resulting in staff being furloughed. They have endeavoured to continue any essential work they can safely do, including supporting the emergency services.



FOOD & BEVERAGE

The IsoNation Business Impact survey predicted the F&B industry to be the most-impacted sector from the pandemic. It's clear to see why. With forced closures across the country, pubs, restaurants, cafes and bars saw an instant end to their income.



The High Streets are going to be a different beast after this – change was happening anyway but this pandemic will definitely speed things up. This industry is so resilient – it always fights to come back stronger and there's already some innovative ideas surfacing.



I think we will see a rise in so-called 'dark kitchens' where you can have a small pop-up with a larger kitchen off-site. It's a great way to offer a fantastic menu at a reduced cost as well as providing the option for easier deliveries and opening up geography that may not be viable for a 'standard' retail outlet.

Tobias Collison
Hospitality Consultant, Fourth

Meanwhile, supermarkets struggled to keep up with demand, which fluctuated across regions and products, as the situation unfolded towards lockdown. Since then, dramatic measures have been put in place to adhere to social distancing rules.

IsoNation heard from Tobias Collison, Hospitality Consultant, Fourth and Richard Mills, MD of Haygrove Growing Systems, about the challenges facing the industry.



This situation will have a long-lasting impact on the food & beverage industry. People will have a better appreciation of where their food comes from and how that food gets there.

We've been used to cheap food for a long time rather than being worried about how or where it's produced and I think this will present a reset around that.

More people have been buying from butchers and local stores and I think there will be a greater acknowledgement of the many more options with how you can feed yourself.

Richard Mills
Managing Director, Haygrove
Growing Systems





FRANCHISES

“

We've had to provide a completely different service for our members. By offering classes on Zoom, members have been able to do classes as and when it suits them. People love the flexibility and we've had feedback from members asking if we can continue this in the future.

We only have franchises in the south of England, but since doing the classes virtually we've gained members across the UK and from other countries such as France, Malta and the Netherlands!

Julie Clabby
Founder, Busylizzy Family



Lockdown threatens few industries more than health and fitness. IsoNation heard from the founders of the Busylizzy Family Club and One Element franchises about the changes they've had to make in order to survive.

One Element is an outdoor social fitness franchise based on the very social interaction that lockdown prevents, bringing members together in outdoor spaces to take part in high intensity fitness training, building a community feel which has seen lasting friendships formed and even marriages and children born.

Pregnancy and postnatal fitness classes provided by Busylizzy, as well as their baby and toddler activity sessions, have also been unable to take place as normal. Both businesses have taken to providing sessions digitally - with great success.

“

We've used this as an opportunity to step up and show what we can do and we've devised a load of new sessions, offering things like yoga, pilates and mindfulness sessions which we'd never done before.

We've got a strong community feel here and I think fitness companies with strong networks and communities, like CrossFit and F45, have more loyal memberships and this is what will get them through in the long run.

Tom Marien
Founder, One Element





MARKETING & COMMS

Lockdown has forced dramatic changes in working environments, processes, strategies - in fact, everything - including marketing.

IsoNation caught up with two leading experts – Christian Collison and Neil Harvey - in brands and communications to understand where businesses could capitalise on their digital activities during this time.



“ The lockdown's forced everyone to focus on digital and implement plans that have been brewing for a while. It's great to see but I think there are going to be more shifts to come as we spend more time at home. There'll be continued innovation in digital but we'll see a return to more traditional practices too.

Christian Collison
Managing Director
Nifty Comunciations

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The world now knows that profit, growth, consumerism and capitalism is the driving force for lots of organisations. Some that have been in the headlines recently, however, are almost exclusively that.

They get all that buttoned up irrespective of culture, brand, employer reputation and all of that good stuff- the stuff that we would normally want to promote first and put the commerciality behind.

Neil Harvey
Board Advisor &
Non-Executive Director
Media Fusion



There were even tips for small business owners as Christian began hosting his own show, Quiz Christian.

If you are a small business owner and have questions around your marketing strategies, head over to Facebook now.



WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED?

IsoNation was launched at the beginning of lockdown. In the last seven weeks, our QnAs have been watched by more than 55,000 professionals across the UK.

We'd like to thank everyone who shared our message and helped our community access the insight of business leaders across the country.

6.1%
CTR

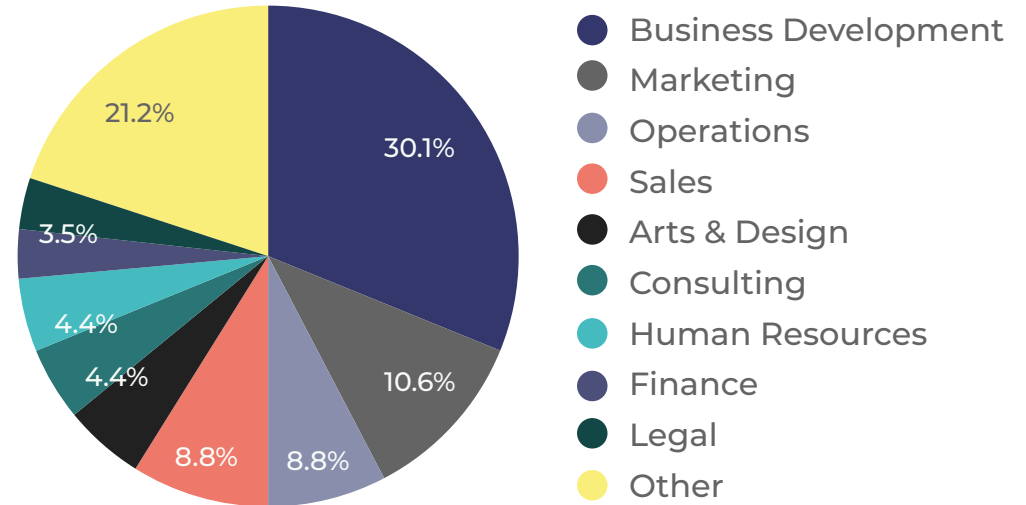
4.4%
engagement rate


25,000+
engagements


50,000+
Total video


225,000+
business professionals
reached


700+
social followers



Most common job roles:

CXO/ Director/ Owner/ Manager/ Partner / Senior / VP

Best performing videos:

16.4k

11.5k

11.2k





FOUNDING PARTNERS



Nifty Communications is an integrated marketing agency, delivering campaigns which utilise all forms of communication such as PR, social media and digital marketing to deliver tangible results for businesses of all sizes and industries across the UK.



Baxter Williams are a recruitment consultancy with the credibility and capability to support companies of all sizes, from SMEs to PLCs. They have a simple ethos, to connect exceptional people, which they do by building lasting relationships based on results and trust.



Ometis are the UK's leading Qlik consultancy and data specialists, offering services such as Qlik training, Qlik support and Qlik development.



We're proud to be founding members of such an important movement within British business. I'm personally delighted to see the wealth of experience, knowledge and understanding that has already been shared through this innovative programme.

- Andy Patrick
Ometis, MD



JOIN THE ISONATION NETWORK TODAY

By sharing our evolving strategies, we want to keep both ourselves and our companies thriving.

We're all in this together and it's never been easier to share our unique expertise and opinions. If you'd like to support IsoNation, get in touch today.



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