

# **STRANGE DAYS FOR COMMUNICATORS— AND THE WORLD**

Marian  
Salzman May  
2020

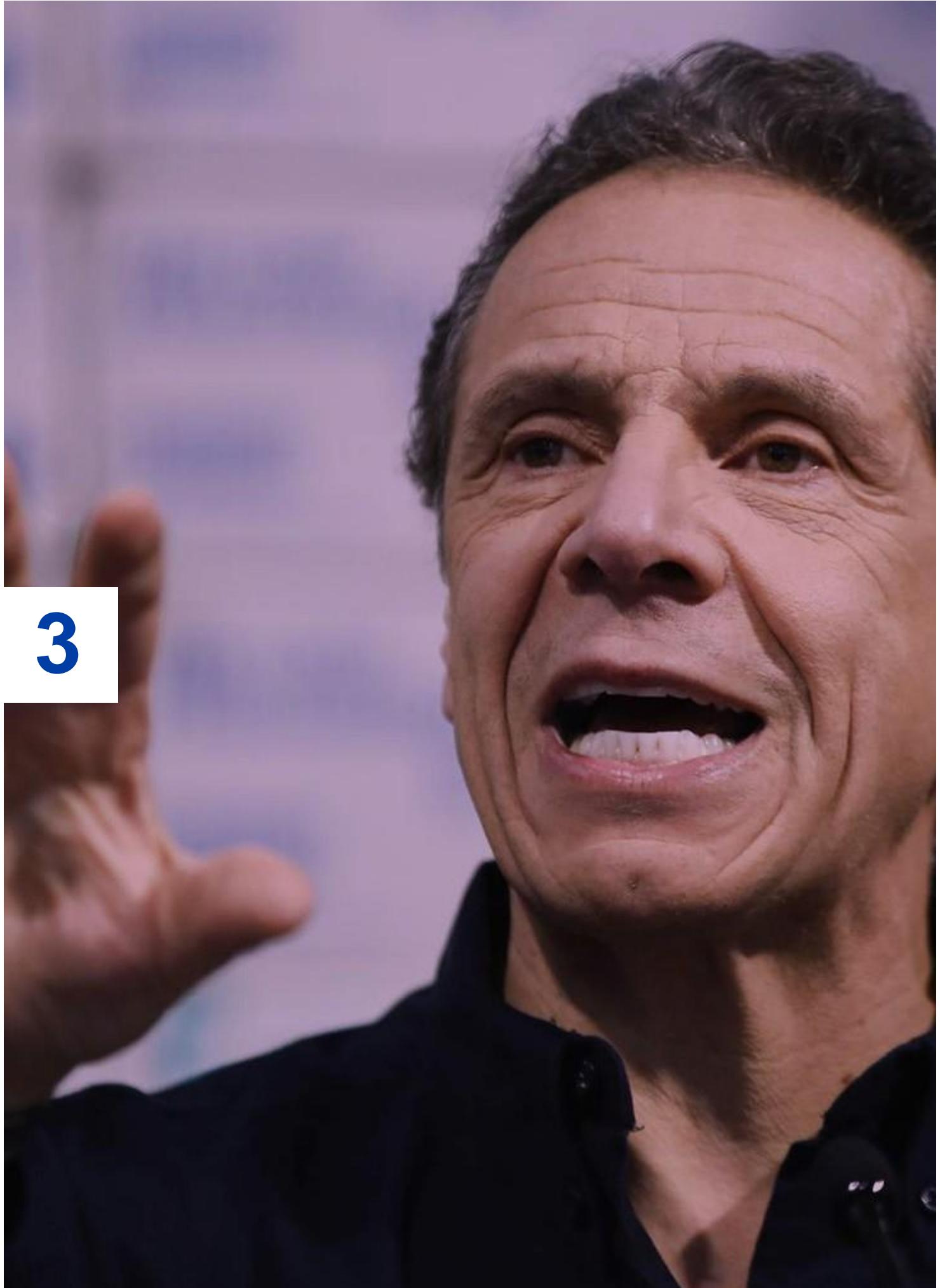


## **IN EVERY CRISIS LIES THE BLUEPRINT OF THE FUTURE**

This pandemic took us all by surprise.

There's a growing sense that life will never again be the same—and that we have even less control over our futures than we had imagined.

It's now life "before COVID-19" and life "post- COVID-19"—or PC19.



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## WE'VE COME TO EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED—AND IT'S NOT ALL BAD

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who isn't exactly known for being warm and fuzzy, had these words to share in March:

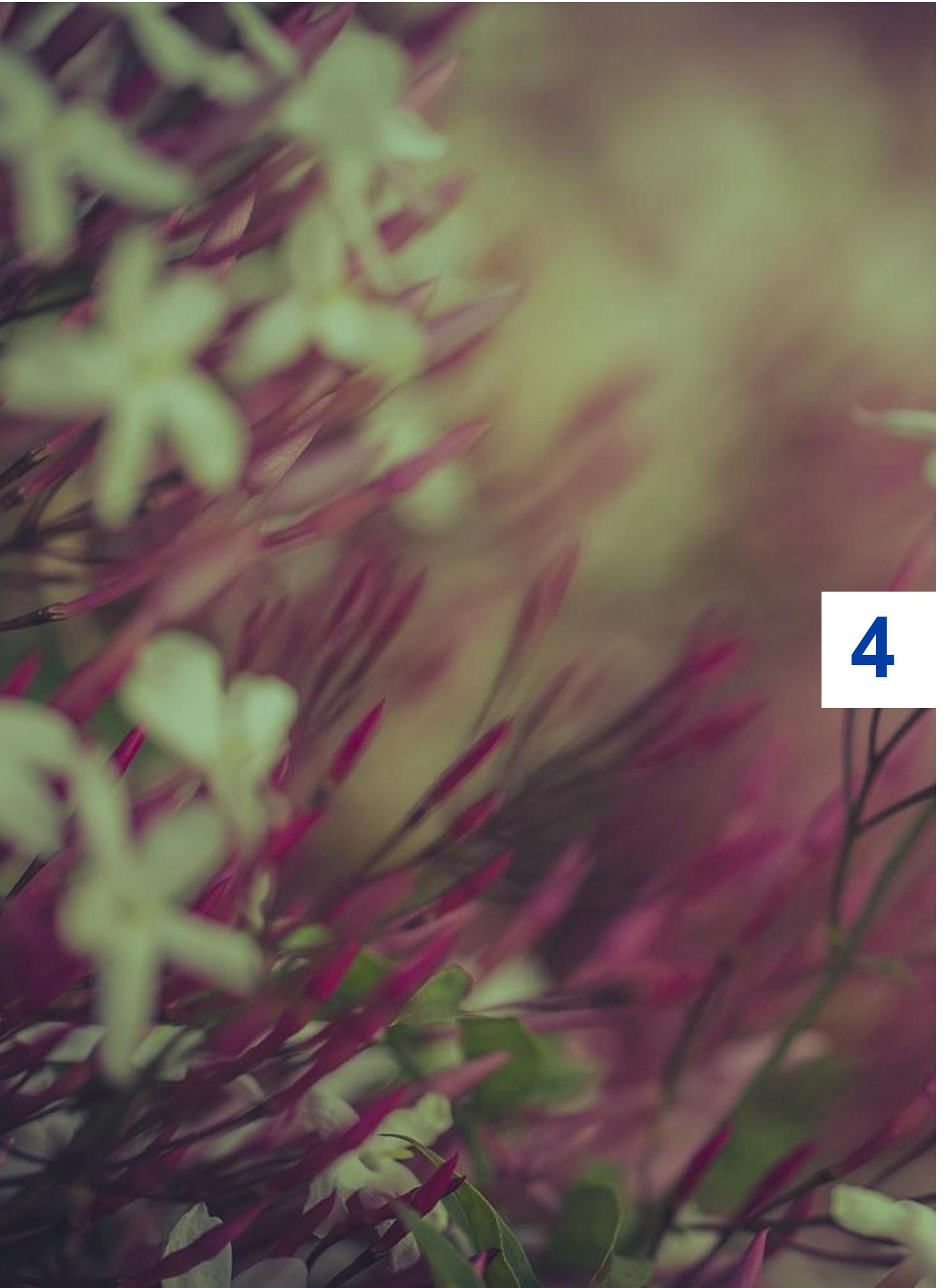
*“Be a little bit more sensitive, understand the stress, understand the fear, be a little bit more loving, a little bit more compassionate, a little bit more comforting, a little bit more cooperative ... We are going to get through it, and we are going to get through it together.”*

# DARE WE HOPE

We're seeing promising harbingers of what could lie ahead—if we are able to hold on to our current sense of togetherness:

- **Growth of the sharing/P2P economy**
- **Less hyper-partisanship**
- **Less unbridled hate**
- **Less tolerance for the wealth/income divide**
- **More support for living wages—and for those low-paid workers we all now recognize as “essential”**
- **More meaningful brand outreach**

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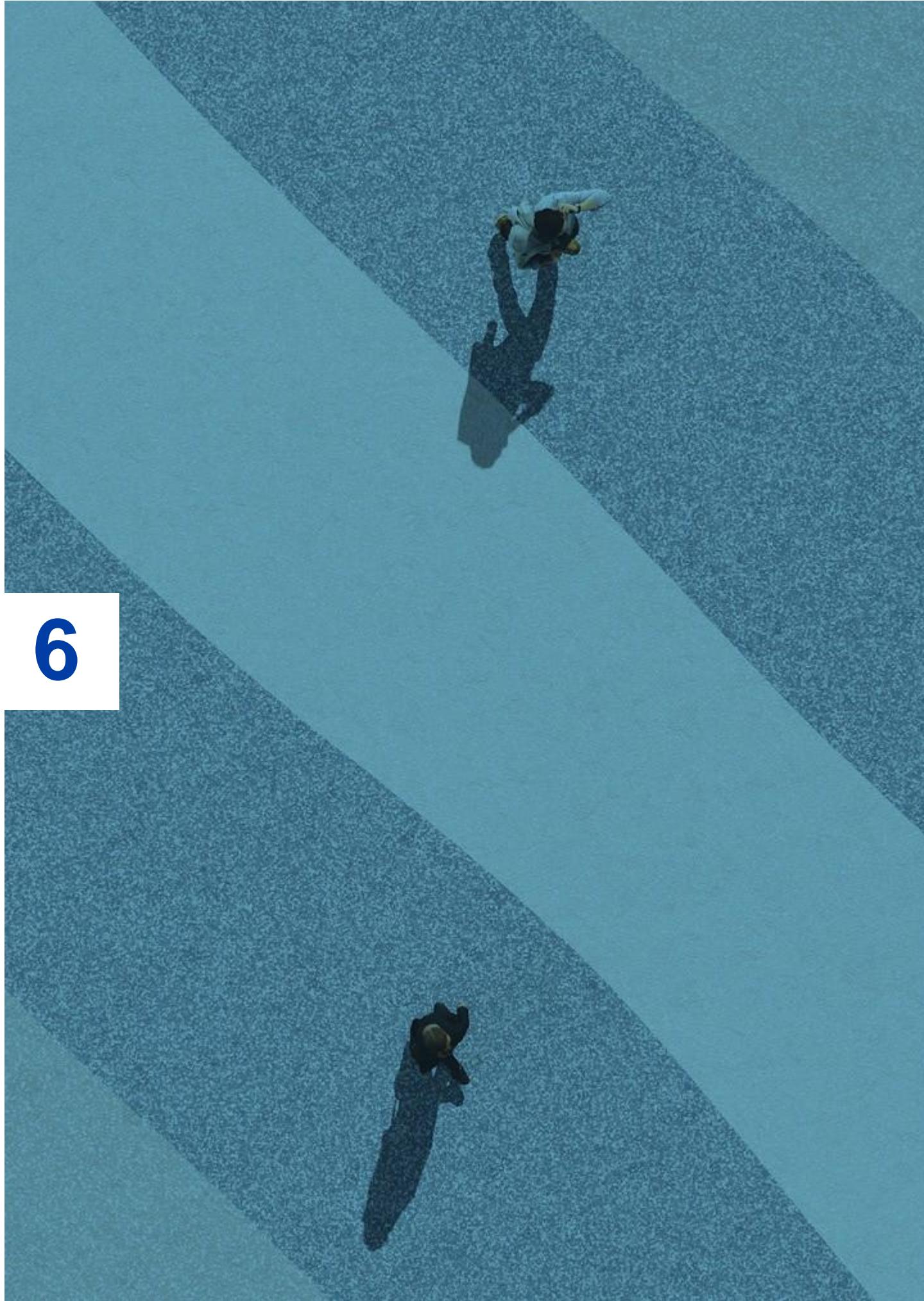


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## **SAY HELLO TO SOME OLD FRIENDS: THE NEW 4 Cs**

There is promise that, for all its devastation, this global pandemic might serve as a sort of reset—shepherding in a new era marked by the new 4 Cs:

- **Compassion**
- **Camaraderie**
- **Civility**
- **Community**



## VIRTUAL IS NOW VITAL

Who knew social distancing could be so social?

Downloads of the Houseparty video chat app increased from 24,795 on February 15 to 651,694 on March 25 [Apptopia].

We're getting together (digitally) for family celebrations, cloud raves, wine tastings, pub trivia nights, iRacing, and more.

The internet is now our workplace/school, therapist/doctor office, house of worship, lifeline, entertainment, supply chain.

# MEDIA CONSUMPTION IS ALL-CONSUMING

In lockdown—expectedly—we are watching/playing/ consuming far more than before.

Celebrity-fronted YouTube shows are growing in popularity.

Netflix added 15MM subscribers in Q1 2020—but warned investors the lockdown surge will likely mean a slowdown in organic growth post-pandemic.

And there's the rub: Once we've settled into our new normal (whatever that may be), will we see a



# **ACTS OF KINDNESS ARE NO LONGER SO RANDOM**

Neighbors are pulling together—sharing essential supplies, organizing birthday and anniversary parades.

Communities are rallying around local businesses.

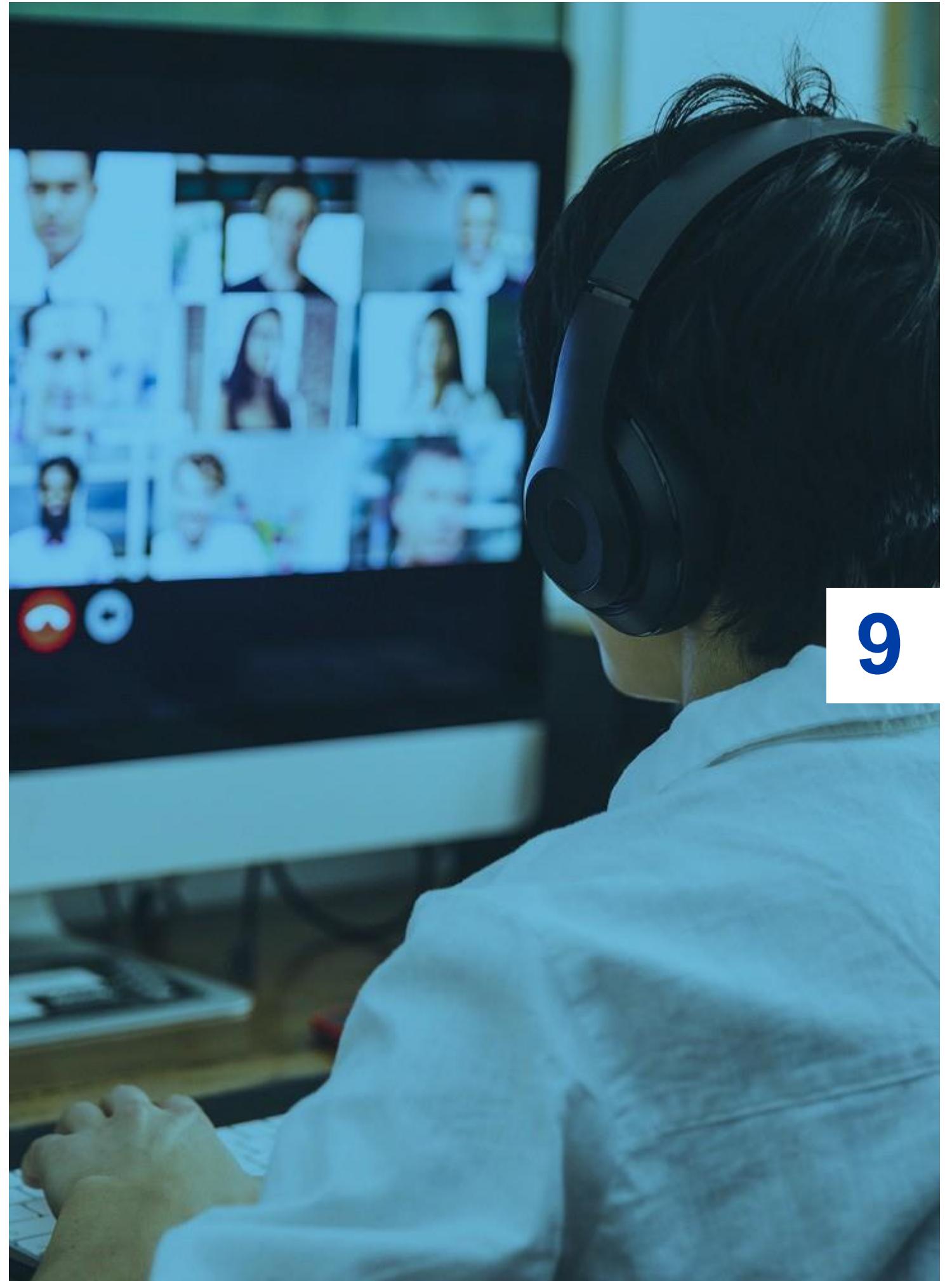
Corporations are mobilizing to support workers and ease isolation.



# WE'RE FINDING INNOVATIVE WAYS TO REACH OUT

My friend and colleague Aaron Sherinian and his son, Adam, launched Quarantine Academy (QA). It's a genius way for as many as 300 people at once to Zoom in and learn about worthwhile topics from a variety of experts.

Celebrities are sharing their talents, humor, and support from their living rooms.





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## **NOTE TO COMPANIES AND BRANDS: DON'T SPEAK UP, STEP UP**

At the start of this pandemic, far too many marketers felt compelled to fill a communications void that didn't exist.

What should brands be doing instead?

We want to see you behaving in ways that show you're concerned about protecting your employees/ customers/ communities from the pandemic and the economic tsunami it's generating.

# **WE NEED TO KNOW YOU'RE “IN IT”**

Marketers need to be thinking about creative and personal ways to contribute:

- Supporting struggling businesses and the unemployed
- Lifting people's spirits and giving them hope
- Offering opportunities to join community efforts and help those in need

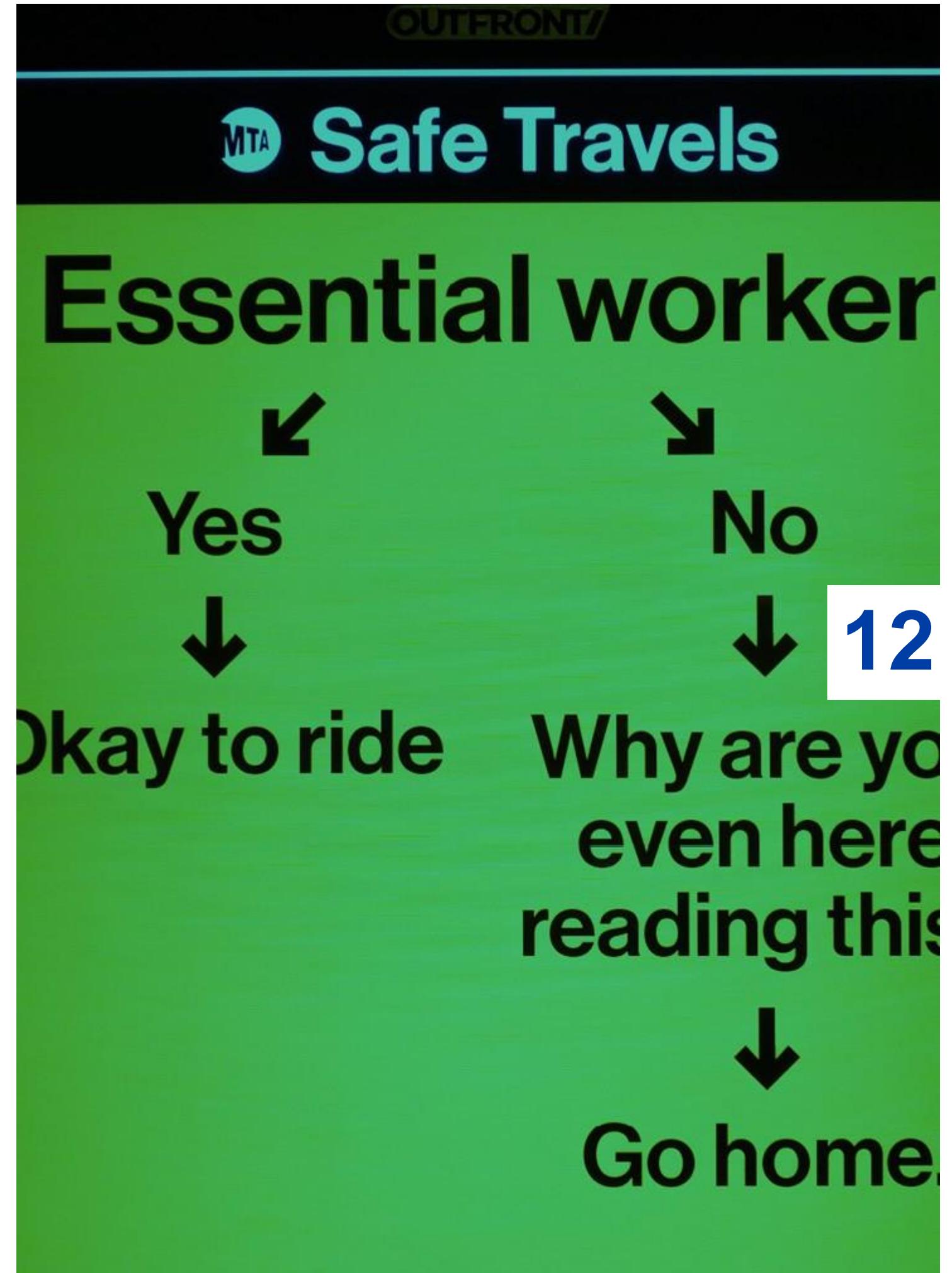


# 1. PROTECT AND SUPPORT EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS

This is the baseline response.

We want to know our brand partners are putting people first, implementing measures (well before government mandates) to enable remote work and support social distancing.

We want to know businesses are doing all they can to protect jobs and salaries during and beyond the crisis.





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## **2. BE THE BUSINESS WE NEED YOU TO BE**

I've been a casual fan of LVMH for a long time.

Now? I'm a devotee.

The moment I heard they were converting three of their perfume manufacturing facilities to make hand sanitizer (long before others), I began to think about them in an entirely different—and far more admiring—way.

### **3. CHANNEL RESOURCES TO THOSE WHO CAN HELP**

Fighting the spread of this pandemic—including by developing medicines/vaccines at superspeed—is a hugely expensive proposition.

We'll get through it faster—and at lower human and financial cost—if the largest organizations help to shoulder the burden.





## LEADING IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC

I can speak to my firsthand experience here.

PMI has been actively working against this pandemic since its outbreak, with initiatives in more than 60 countries in which our employees live and work.

Beyond its community initiatives, PMI has established a set of guiding principles to ensure employees' job security and peace of mind.

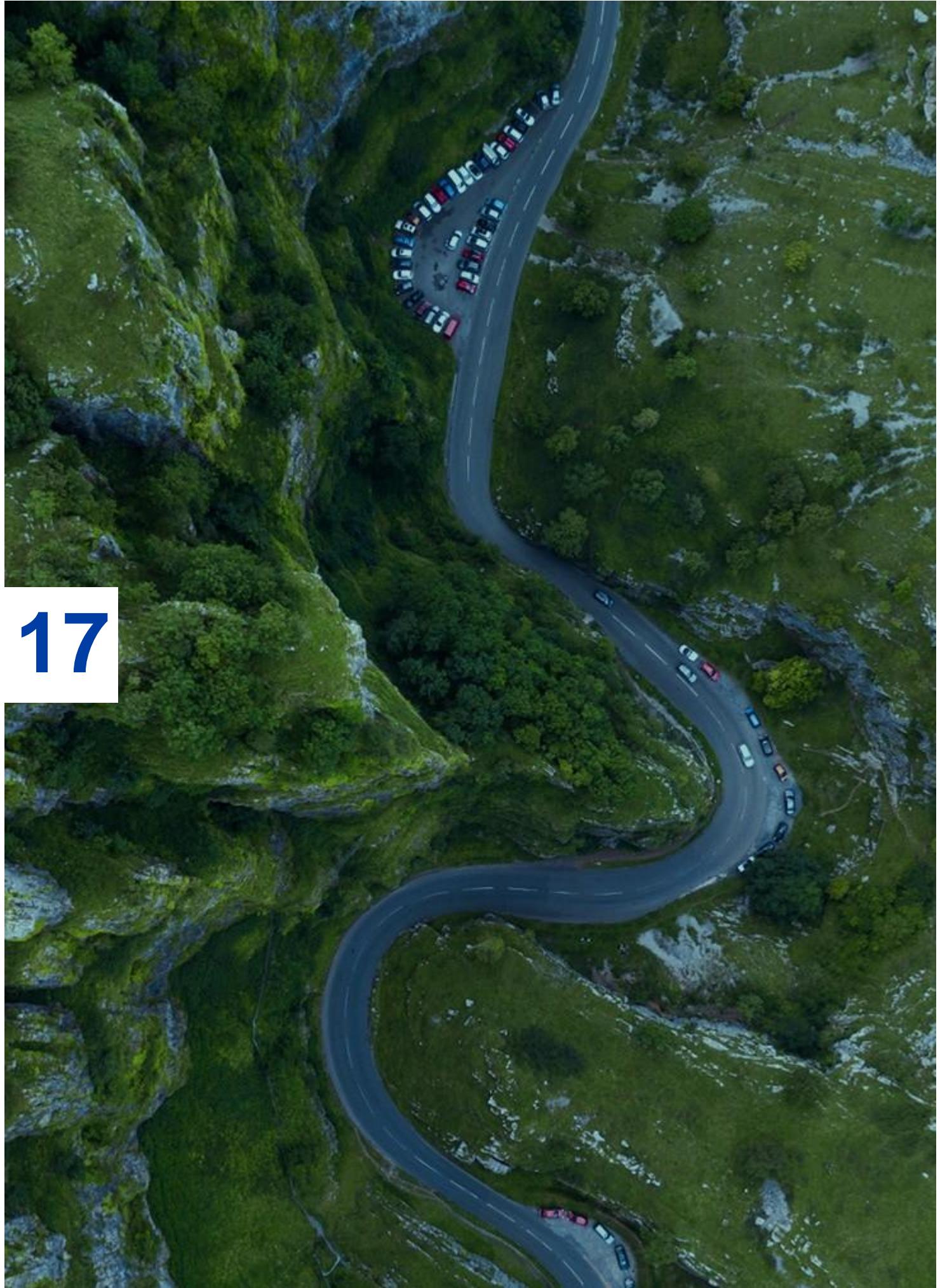


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## IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL

Our community initiatives incorporate both monetary and in-kind donations, as well as volunteerism:

- **Using factories and labs to produce hand sanitizer, masks, and face shields**
- **Delivering essential goods to at-risk populations**
- **Offering facilities to crisis response teams**
- **Sourcing and donating scarce equipment such as ventilators and N95 masks**



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## **WHAT'S THE POINT OF YOUR BEING HERE?**

There has been no better time for brands to step into the spotlight and show what they are made of— and how they're contributing to the greater good.

**Think: Action over words**

**Think: People over short-term  
profits** **Think: Vision over self-  
interest**

**WHAT ARE YOU  
WAITING FOR?**

# THANK YOU