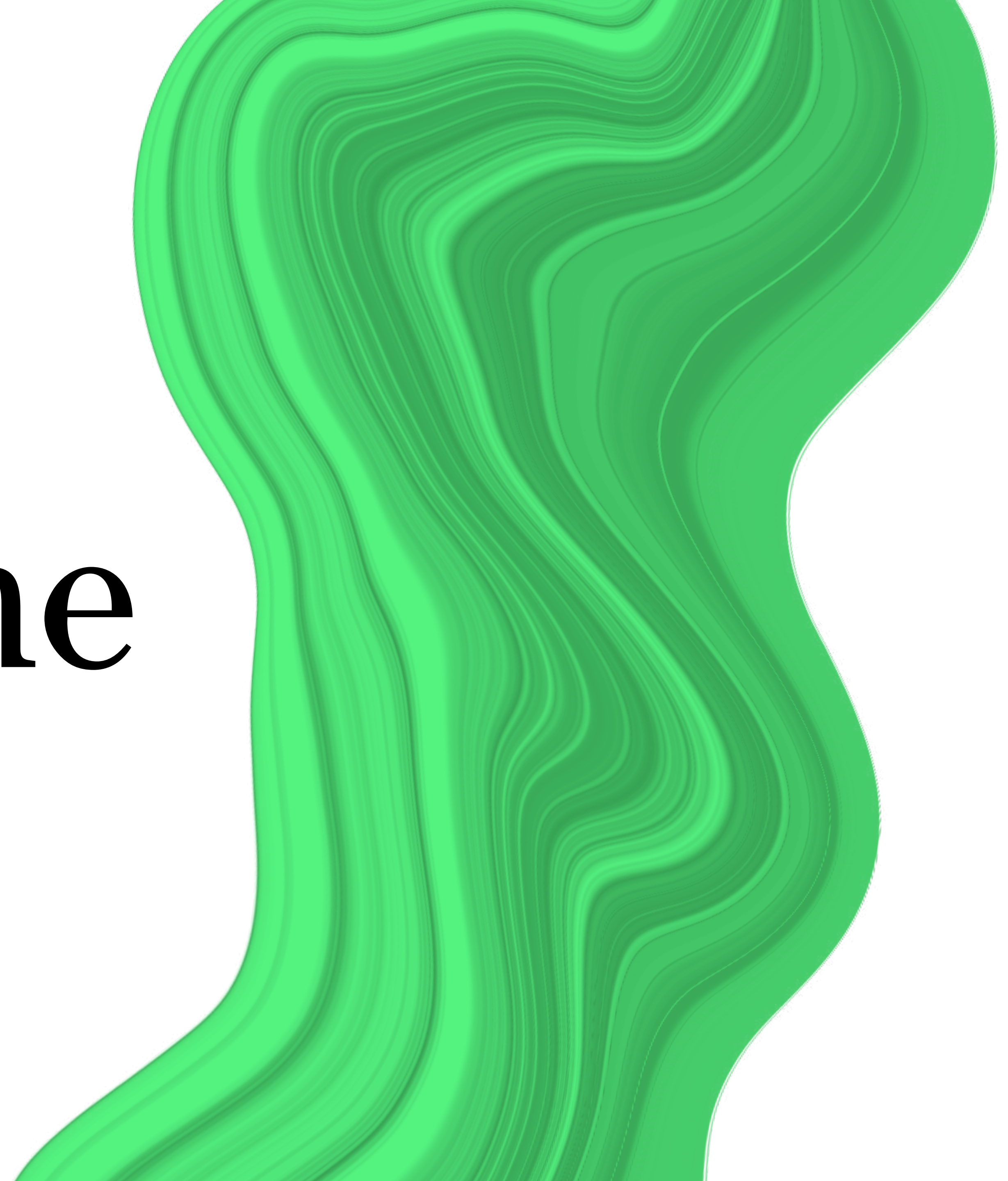




partner of McCANN

Go with the curve.

Coronavirus and Communication:
a common sense approach.



The Intro.

The crisis is here. It's affecting us all profoundly. Our thoughts go first to our employees, our families, the sick and all those who are putting their lives at risk to save ours and make it less painful.

The crisis also gives us food for thought. It even gives us time to think.

We've used it to reflect on the questions that our customers often ask us, and which are shared by many brands today: should we communicate? And if so, how should we do it? When? And to say what?

So, instead of publishing yet another paper on our industry, we decided to publish one of our most precious documents, and one of agencies' *best kept secrets*: our strategic thinking in times of crisis.

Go ahead, steal it, enrich it, and give us your feedback.

The Intro.

A totally new approach:

We are experiencing an unprecedented health crisis, and nothing compares to what we are going through.

We are not dramatizing: we are changing parameters.

We have moved from permanent consumption to *temporary containment*.

Before communicating again, brands have at least four reasons to change their approach.

1. If your brand decides to speak, it is likely to be suspected of commercial profiteering.
2. If your brand decides to remain silent, it is contributing to a loss of social ties. As confinement gets tougher for all our fellow citizens, it reinforces their isolation.

3. In recent years, agencies and brands have reiterated the mantra that they are there “to play a role in people’s lives”. But now they have a unique opportunity to do so, they are silent.

You should consider changing your approach to be heard during this crisis: choose the right tone of voice, in the right medium and at the right time. Face up to the risk of a backlash (bad buzz) that is likely to cost you even more than your silence.

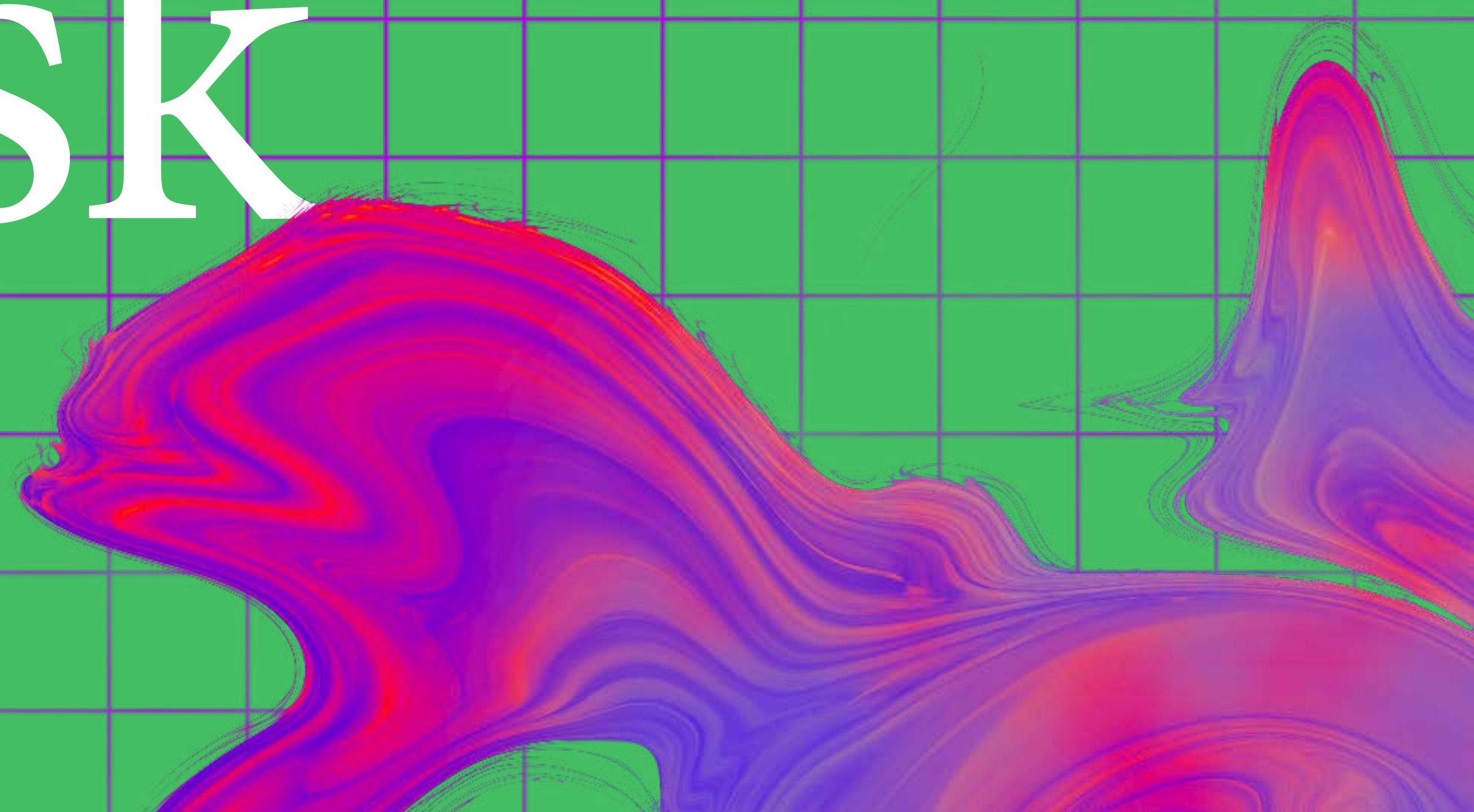
4. Brands will need to behave like humans. While the Coronavirus threatens, it takes courage to exist.

Now it's time to move from storytelling to storydoing.

The
Ask.

The

Ask



The
Ask.

How, when and
where should you
speak during a
health crisis?

The
Ask.

In other words

How do you evolve
from a simple
commercial brand to a
social instrument?

The
Objective.

The objec- tive

The
Objective.

Act correctly
and speak the
truth.

The
Objective.

Human behaviour is a key factor during the Coronavirus crisis. An understanding of the psychosocial factors that impact this behaviour is essential if you want to establish the right tone.

The
Problem.

The prob- lem

The
Problem.

It's not
business
time.

The
Problem.

There's confusion
everywhere:

What is ok?

What is not ok?

The
Dis-
claimer.

The discl- aimer

The
Dis-
claimer.

All attempts at
Corona-washing
will be severely
sanctioned.

The
Dis-
claimer.

CORONA-WASHING
WOKE-WASHING
TRUST-WASHING

Avoid stepping over the line.

Trust-washing or woke-washing is the sudden appropriation of a brand to a situation, a cause or a social movement, without the grounds or real actions to support the discussion.

In other words, lots of talk, and very little action. This tiresome attitude of yesterday has become unacceptable today:

- Communicating will be perceived as opportunistic, even cynical when the time is ripe for citizenship.
- The gap between the facts and what's being said is likely to create an almost unbearable cognitive dissonance for the audience.

The
Context.

The Con- text

The Context.

Confinement is not a picnic

The first stages of confinement are often idealized: it can become synonymous with “me-time”, and is an opportunity to have time for oneself and one’s loved ones.

What may be true for the first few weeks (provided you live in comfortable material conditions) will not last for months. Other symptoms will appear which will condition the experience of confinement and its release.

Like anxiety, loneliness is a source of stress. A chronic condition, stress produces a rise in cortisol, the famous “stress hormone”. This excess cortisol produces emotional, psychological or physiological disorders.

Dr. Laura Hawryluck examined the psychological effects on 129 patients quarantined during the SARS epidemic. She found that 28.9% of patients met the criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and 31.2% for clinical depression.

**Social distancing and
confinement can cause
long-term psychological
damage.**

The
Context.

...and post-confinement will not
be a gala dinner.

History shows that after the great pandemics, major social, economic and political upheavals occur.

We can expect protests that will disrupt the news and public spaces. Most in the line of fire: dysfunctions during the crisis, the commodification of the medical sector, and - by extension - capitalism, globalization, over consumption, itself already linked to climate change.

The Coronavirus crisis is a
health crisis + an economic
crisis + a social and political
crisis. Be ready!

The
Human
Obses-
sions.

The Hu- man Obsessions

The
Human
Obses-
sions.

Us or Me-I?

One question comes up fairly regularly in our business: should we use the altruism or self-centeredness of consumers as a lever in order to be heard in times of crisis?

Between a totally unselfish act and self preoccupation exacerbated by the crisis period we are living in, the polarization of these two profound human impulses is less fixed than their portrayal in the public space.

The fine line between altruism and self-centeredness is empathy. Empathy is this exceptional human quality which consists of sharing a strong emotional experience, whether it be citizens towards the medical profession for example, or brands towards citizens, or citizens towards small traders.

Thanks to empathy, when people with whom we identify are affected, we are able to project ourselves and experience a feeling almost similar to their own.

Only informed and systematic empathy will allow brands to adopt the right tone of voice during this time.

The
Human
Obses-
sions.

Warning: the digital bond can't replace the social bond.

Despite the online-drinks, the balcony sports classes, the 25 colleagues meeting on Zoom, on this or that app ... solitude is real.

From the beginning of the crisis, digital has allowed us to maintain a sort of continuity of social links. But be careful, it also creates the illusion of sociability.

An “offline” relationship is a reciprocal personal interaction. Through these interactions, two people end up sharing increasingly intimate information with each other (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Collins et Miller, 1994; Derlega et Chaikin, 1977). Their relationship develops as intimacy increases, and the sphere of intimacy is rarely digital. And too much privacy due to confinement can be harmful.

It is probable that friendships and relationships will not come out of this unscathed.

This makes it difficult to create new links, but the biggest risk is the deterioration of pre-existing relationships during the Coronavirus crisis.

The
Insight.

The ght Insi-

The
Insight.

Forget your marketing
agenda.

Synchronise your
communication with
the curve of the
epidemic.

The
Strategy.

The Strate- gy

The
Strategy.

A new line.

For the time being, and until things change, your communication should not follow a commercial, marketing or advertisement calendar. It should rather follow a medical one.

We recommend brands synchronize their communication with the curve of the epidemic.

It's quite simple and good common sense, except you just had to think of it.

But of course, to be heard, your communication should also meet the real needs of the moment. To the curve of the epidemic, we have therefore added the Maslow pyramid as a variable.

For several years already, we have been aiming to build "Meaningful brands".

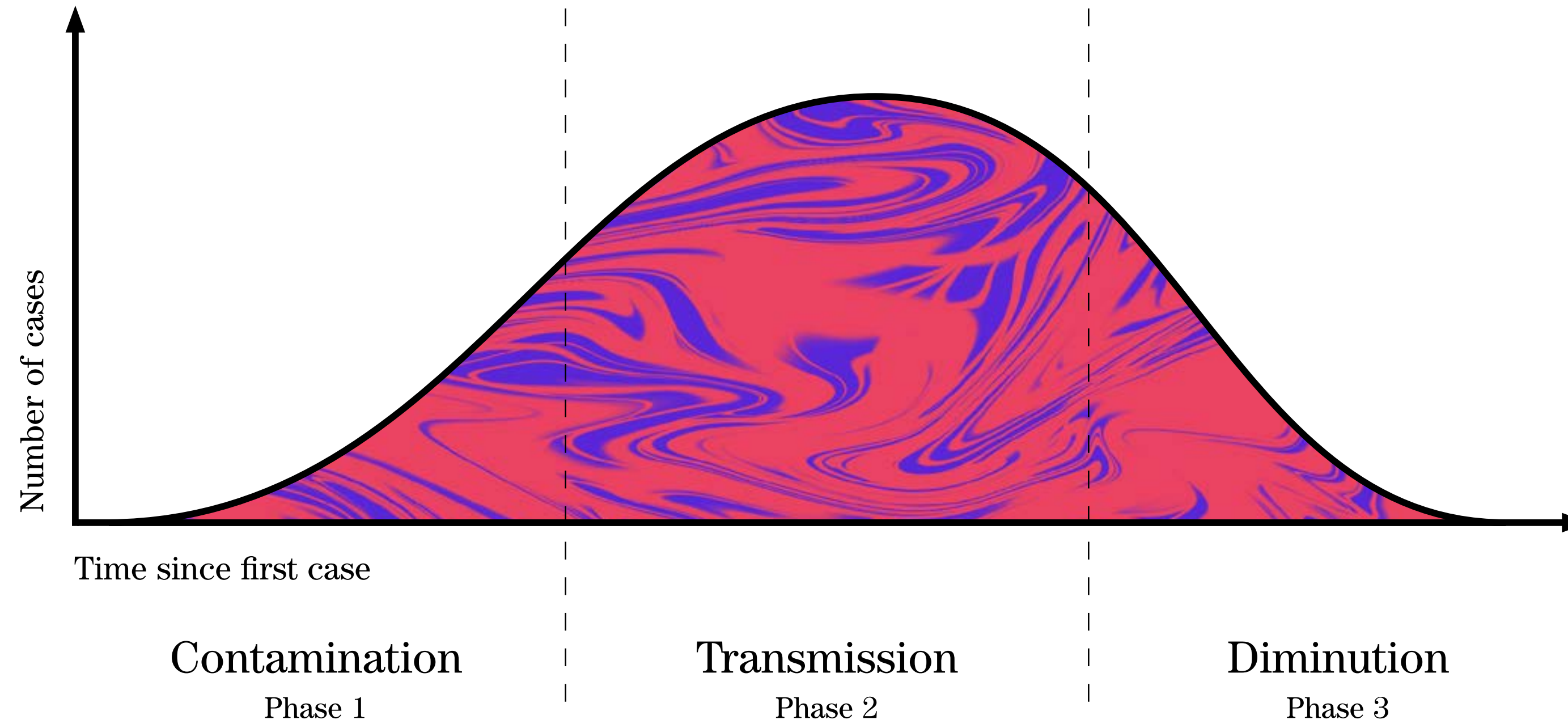
Today, every brand should look at this crisis as an opportunity to prove that it really has meaning and that it plays a role in people's lives.

The
Strategy.

The ad-epidemic curve during the Coronavirus crisis

The Strategy.

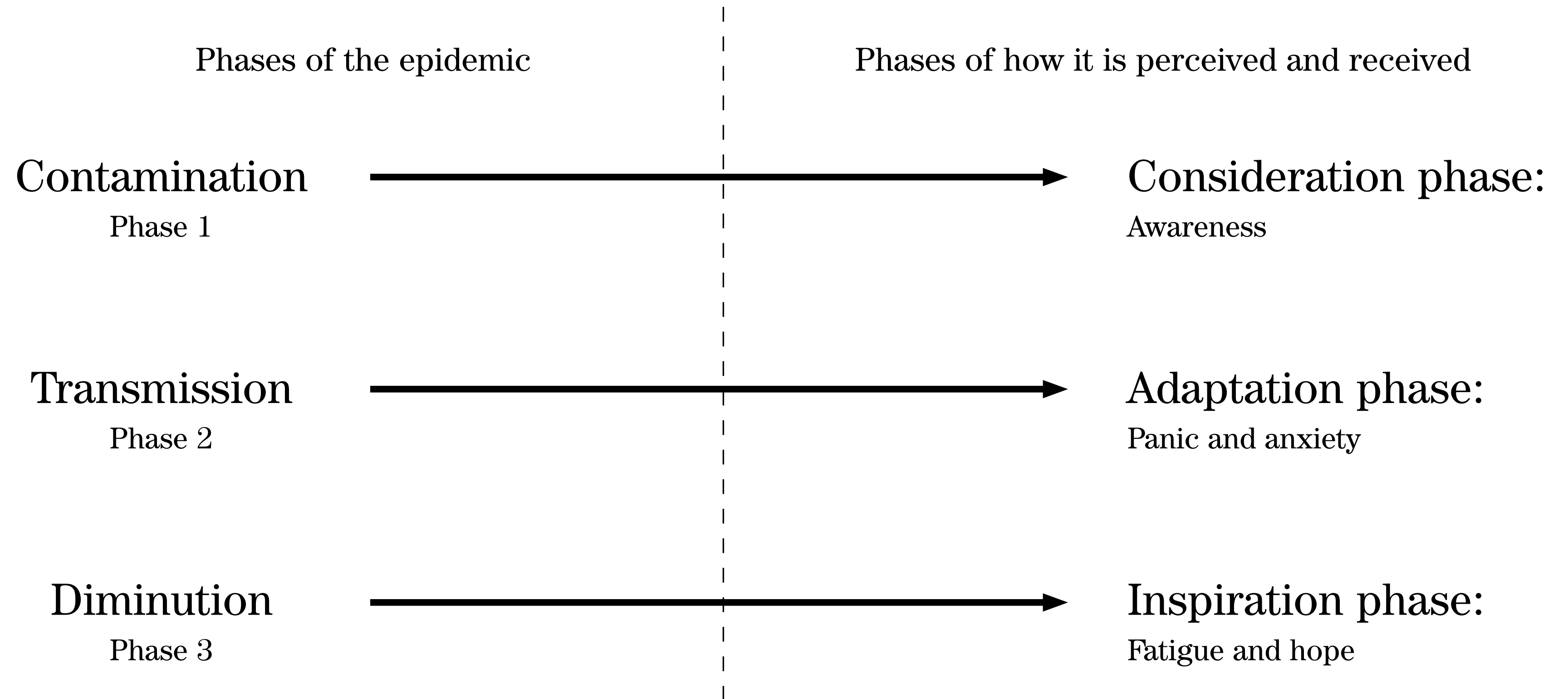
The ad-epidemic curve during the Coronavirus crisis.



The three phases of the curve represent the evolution of the Coronavirus epidemic. These 3 phases provide you with a global framework in which your brand communication will take place, and to move the cursors with full knowledge of the facts.

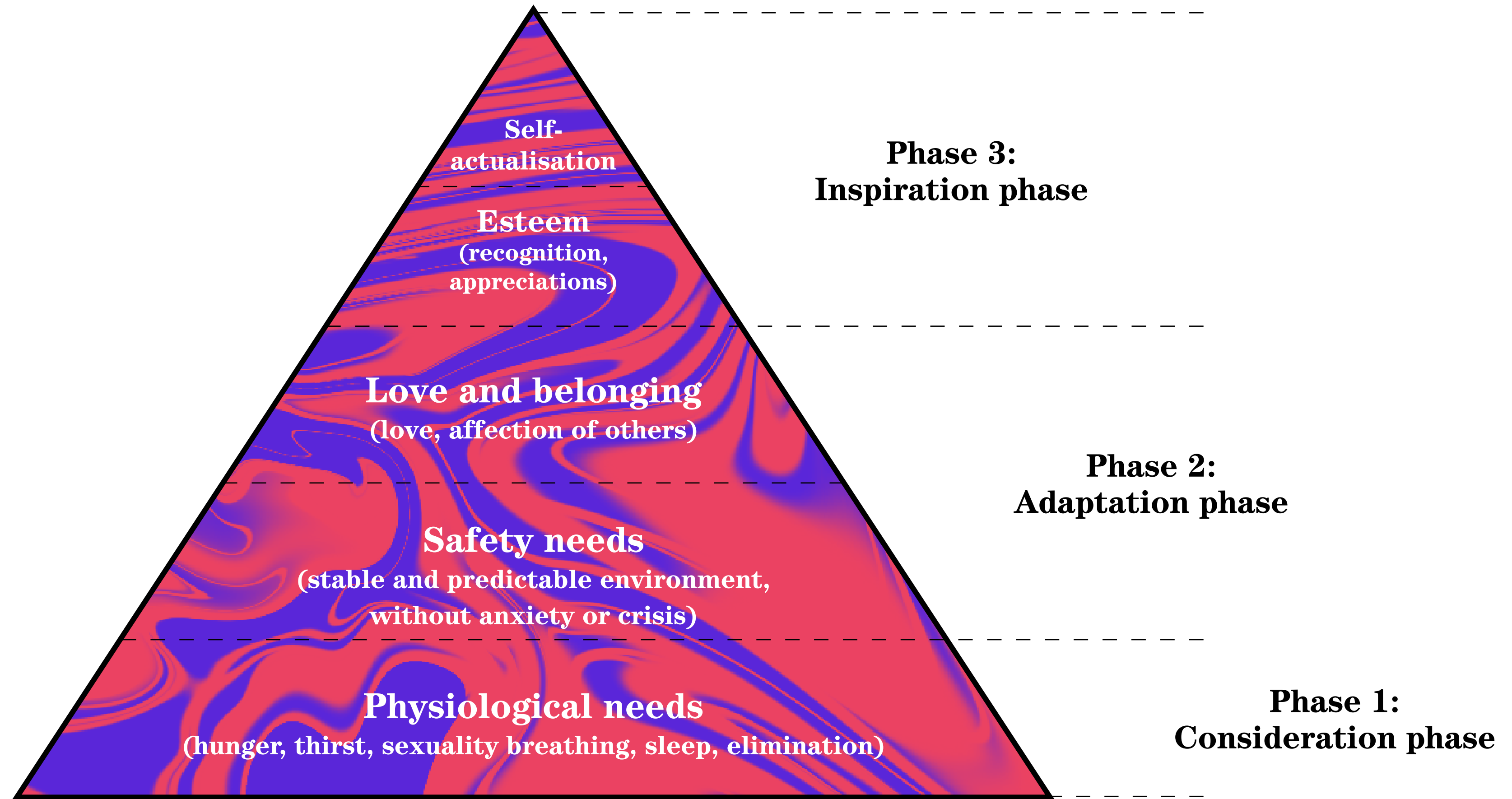
The Strategy.

The ad-epidemic curve during the Coronavirus crisis. The epidemic and how public opinion evolves — from when it was perceived and how it was received.



The Strategy.

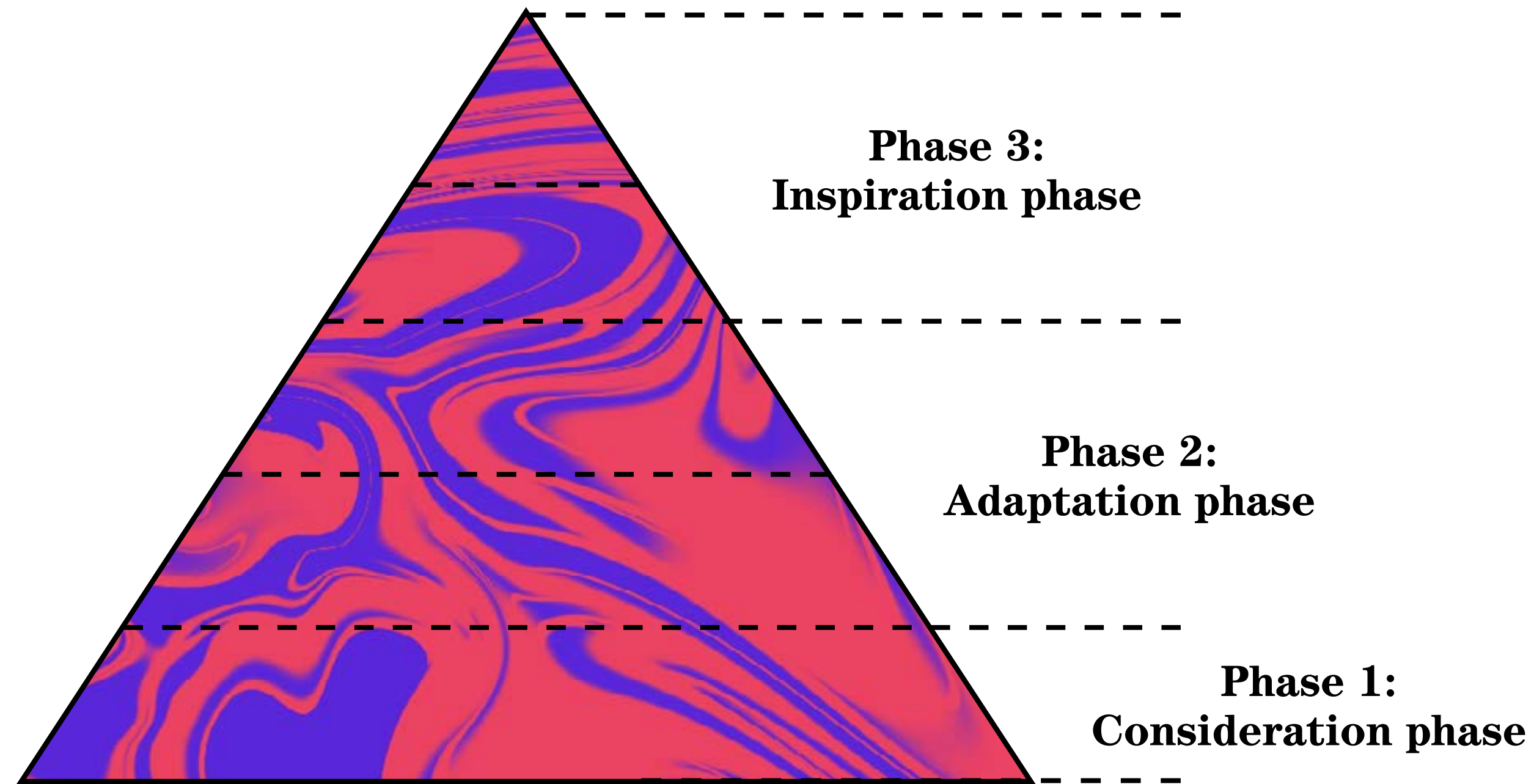
The ad-epidemic curve and Maslow's pyramid.



The evolution of communication from phase to phase should run in parallel with a consideration of the hierarchy of needs.

The
Strategy.

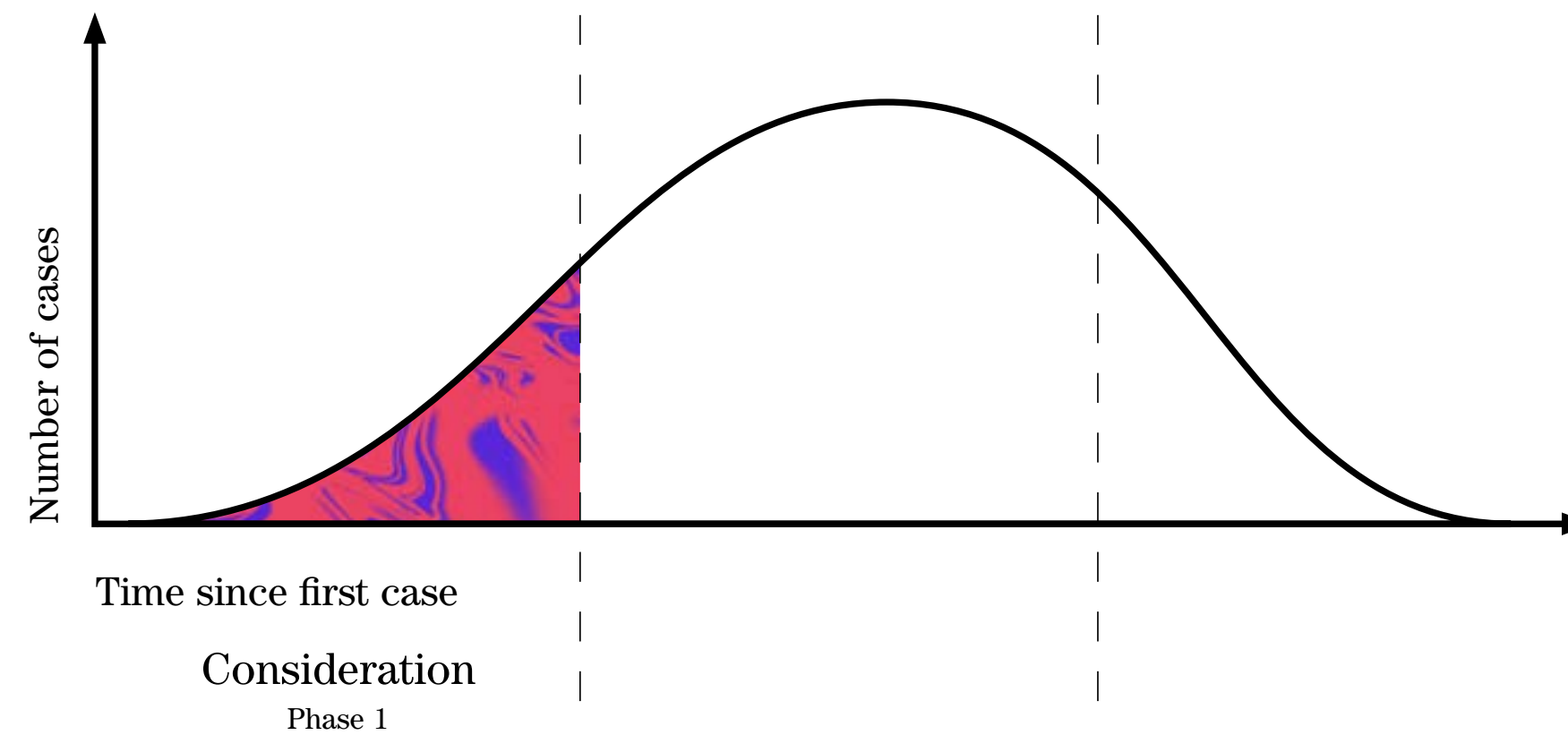
The ad-epidemic curve and Maslow's pyramid.



The curve of the epidemic won't only influence people's attitudes and feelings but also the hierarchy of their needs. To be efficient, the brand must communicate in function of the evolution of the virus, but also **according to the needs of the individual during the health crisis.**

The Strategy.

The ad-epidemic curve. Consideration phase.



Global sentiment:

Awareness and beginning of the worry phase. First acknowledgement of the risk and of the dangerous event that has just occurred.

Attitude:

Light and optimistic at first, but citizens are gradually reacting to the crisis by manifesting a certain tension.

The threat to basic needs (rush for pasta and toilet paper) and the problems of survival are felt with anxiety.

Needs:

Physiological needs.

Communication:

Responsible.

Message:

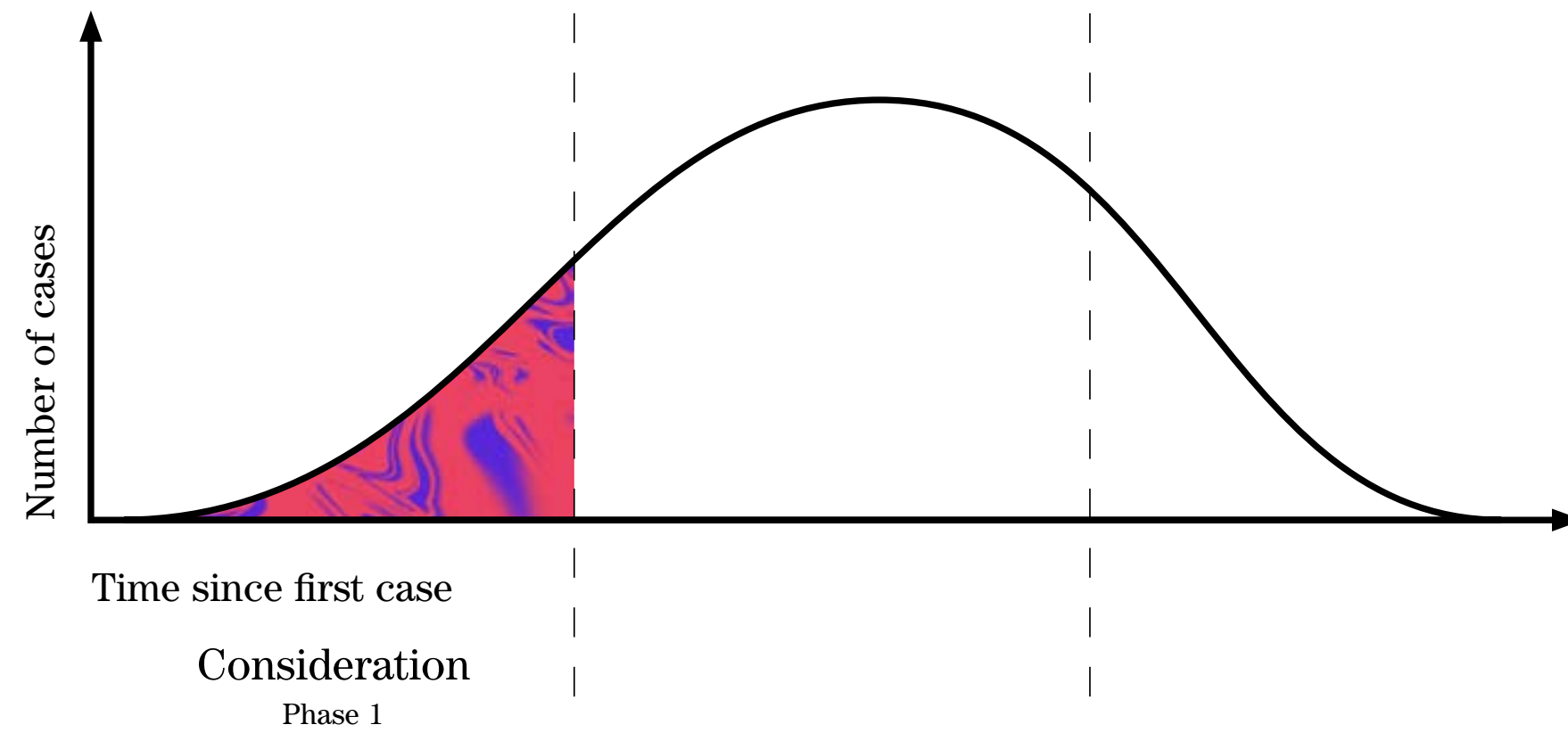
Your health above all else.

Actions:

Closing of non-essential businesses, relaying the message of confinement.

The Strategy.

The ad-epidemic curve. Consideration phase.




Brands like Nike pivot to encourage social distancing.

Nike has developed promotional messages that have more in common with public-service-announcements than the creative flair usually associated with their marketing.

**IF YOU EVER
DREAMED OF
PLAYING FOR
MILLIONS AROUND
THE WORLD,**

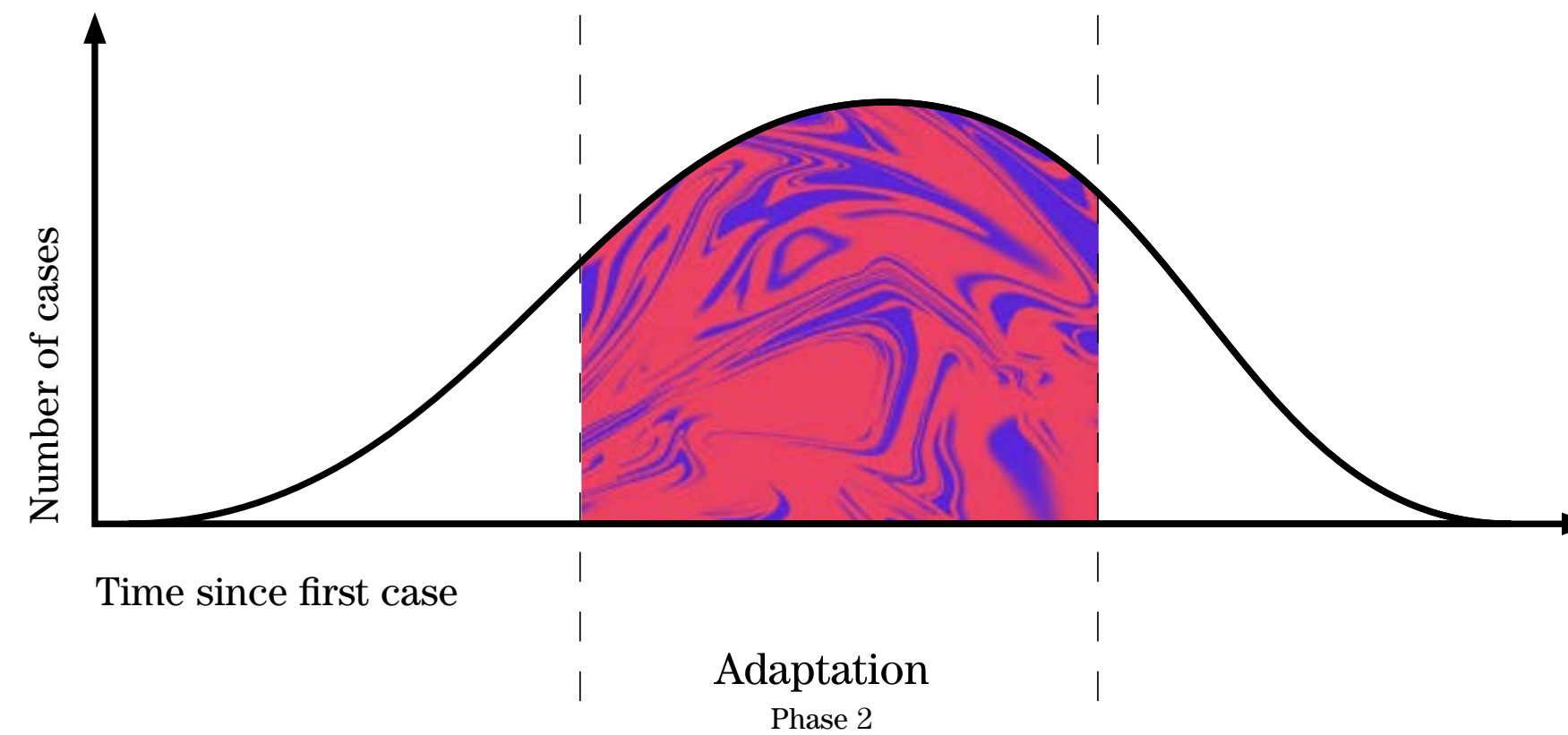
**NOW IS
YOUR CHANCE.**

Play inside, play for the world.



The Strategy.

The ad-epidemic curve. Adaptation phase.



Global sentiment:

Panic and anxiety. A global imbalance has set in leading to a general disorganisation on both personal and social levels. A feeling of powerlessness exasperates citizen, which leads to counterproductive behaviour (alcohol abuse, record sales of anxiety medication) aimed at reducing tension.

Attitude:

Confinement and mistrust. As the crisis goes on, the individual can no longer rely on their standard coping mechanisms. The people's world is completely overtaken by the Coronavirus. They struggle with feelings of anxiety, fear and powerlessness.

Needs:

Need for security and belonging.

Communication:

Engaged and solidarity.

Message:

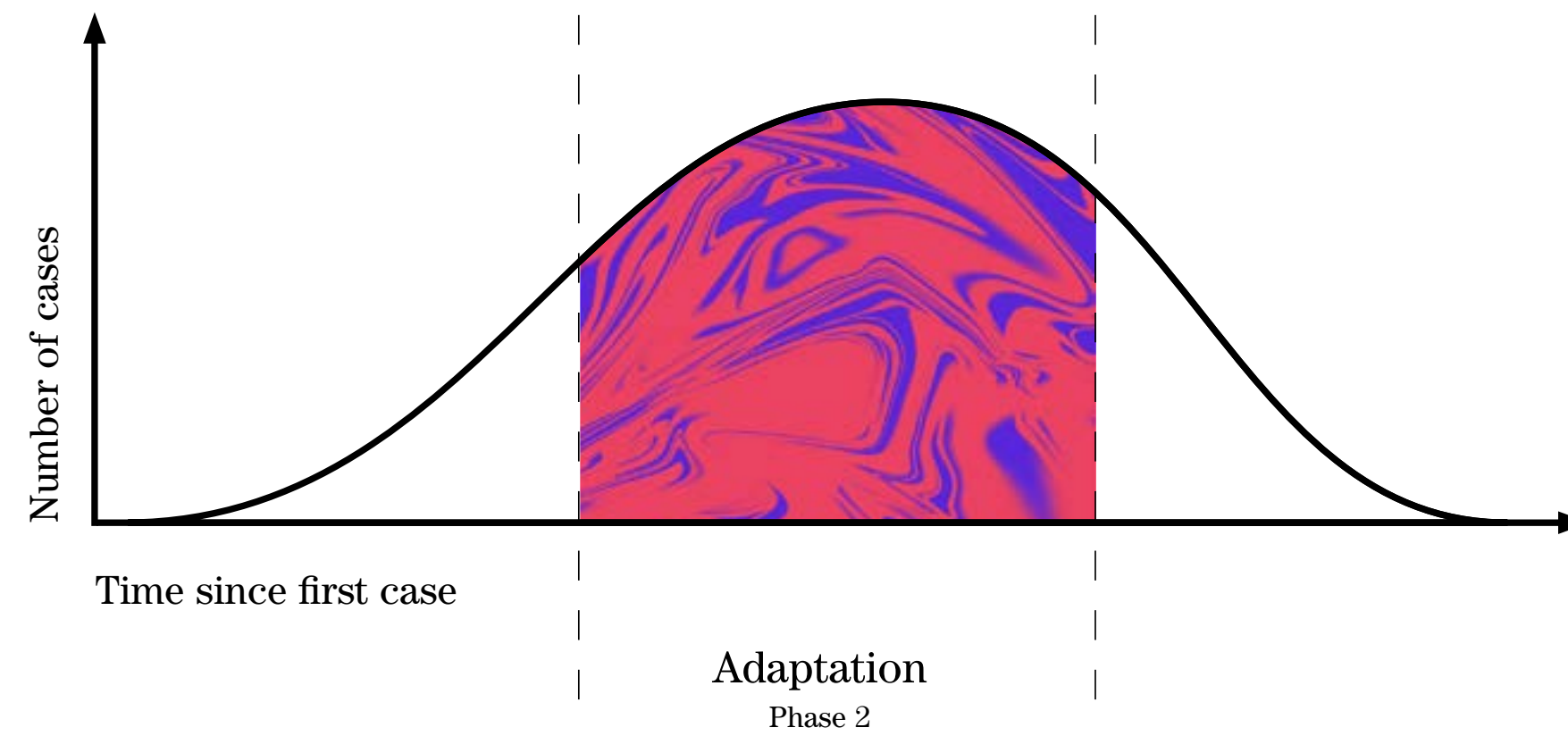
We help on the ground.

Actions:

Manufacturing of masks and protective gear to help medical personnel, food distribution, assistance in adapting and reorganising.

The Strategy.

The ad-epidemic curve. Adaptation phase.



The Walloon Road Safety Agency calls on Walloon citizens to drive responsibly, reminding them that front-line services (police, hospital emergency services) are busy enough.

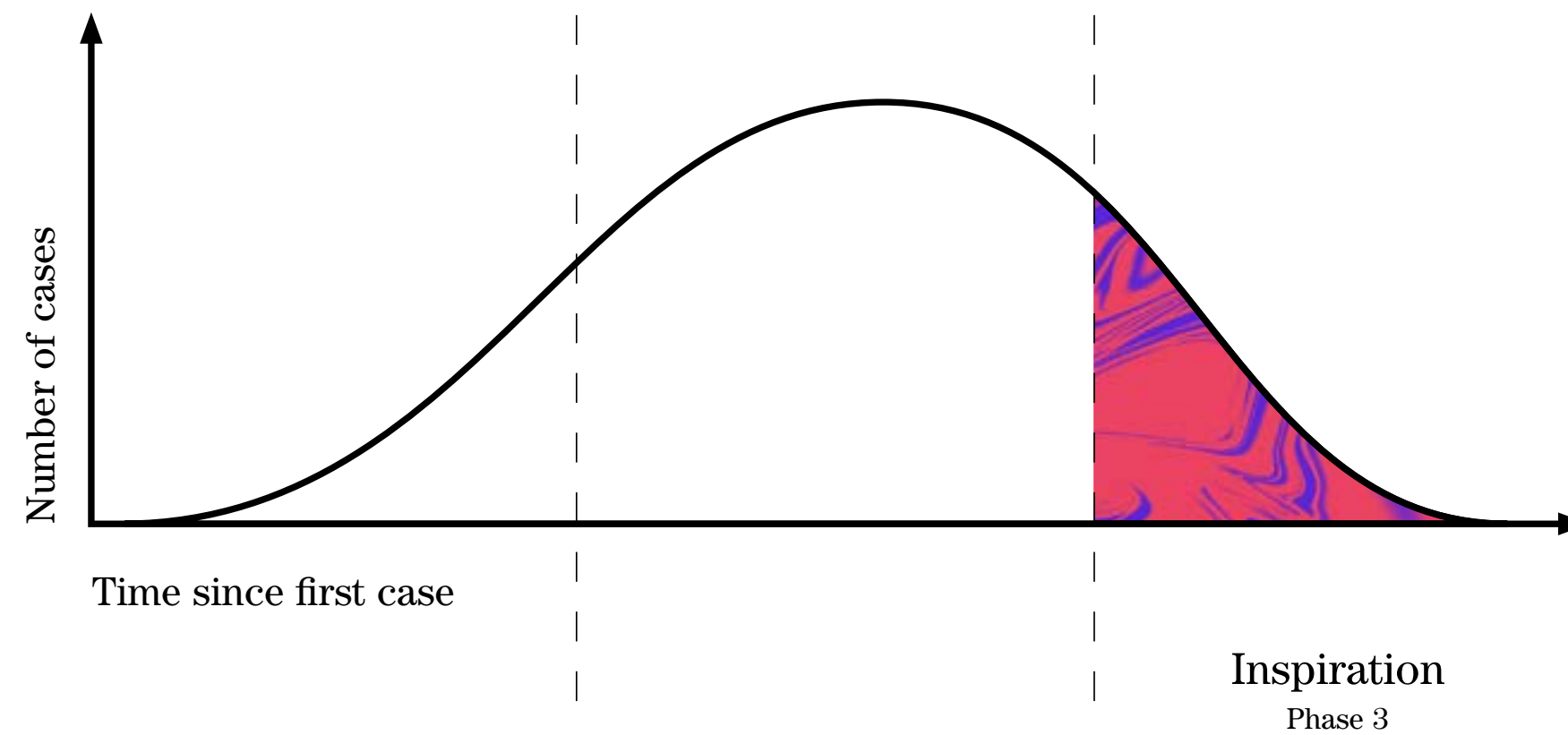
Les hôpitaux ont assez de boulot.
Pensez à ralentir.



The logo for Wallonie sécurité routière (AWSR) features a stylized rooster icon to the left of the text 'Wallonie sécurité routière' and 'AWSR' below it.

The Strategy.

The ad-epidemic curve. Inspiration phase.



Global sentiment:

Fatigue and hope. Progressively, people have learnt how to master their situation, which means accepting the feelings associated with the crisis, and breaking free from them. Progressively, the individual's feelings of mastery and self-esteem increase.

Attitude:

Impatience to get back to his/her life as before and start of the reorganisation. The perception of the Coronavirus crisis changes – it is coming back to real and non-exaggerated proportions. This attitude is the result of the efforts of the individual to increase their knowledge and understanding of the Coronavirus crisis.

Needs:

Need for esteem and accomplishment.

Communication:

Useful and inspiring.

Message:

Let's prepare a new start together.

Actions:

Inspiration, tutorials, advice.

Do's &
Don'ts.

The Do's & Don'ts

Do's & Don'ts.

Do's

- **Be aware of the evolution of feelings towards the crisis to 'Act correctly and speak the truth'** (e.g. the current glorification of the medical profession).
- Speak less (wisdom).
- Act before communicating. Don't promise anything.
- Try where possible to do things within the field of competence of the brand (e.g. LVMH produces sanitizer gel with the alcohol used for its perfumes).
- Go for action instead of gifts.
- Favour indirect channels: communication with employees on social media, relaying actions via the press ...
- Choose the off switch with journalists (no press releases).
- Inspire through emotional communication.
- Consider the apprehension a large part of the population will have towards how they will return to life defined as normal.

Do's &
Don'ts.

Don'ts

Communicating at the wrong time. To find out where we are, use our model.

Examples of counter productive communication:

- Communicating in a post-crisis tone of voice during the crisis. (Definition of opportunism).
- Communicating in a light-hearted and anachronistic way during the crisis.
- Communicating in an improvised way.
- Working on secondary needs before addressing primary needs relating to the

crisis.

- Getting lost in euphoria and exhilaration too quickly once the crisis is over.
- Broadcasting too many commercial messages just as confinement is over.

What's
next.

What's
next

What's
next.

We will publish a second memorandum pertaining to the post-crisis phase.

We need to be coherent: communicating about after the crisis during the crisis is a fundamental error.

But that hasn't stopped us having a few ideas (teaser).

What's
next.

The ad-epidemic curve after the crisis.

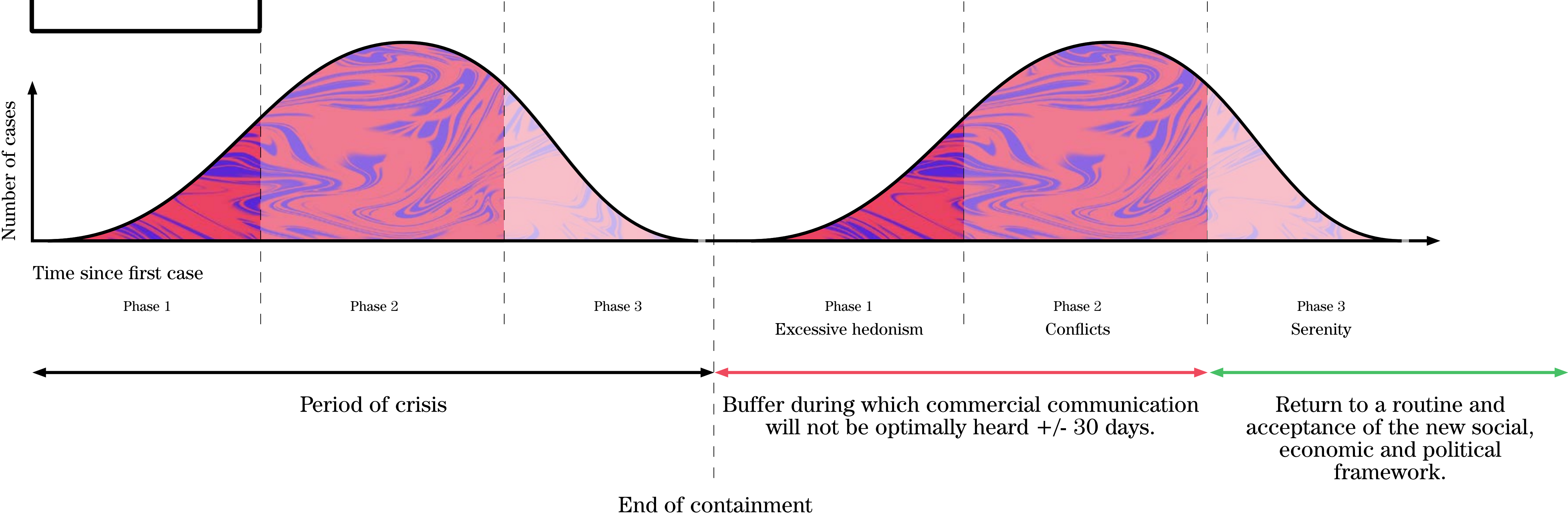
There will probably be a recovery in three steps:

1. A period of excessive hedonism: an impatience to get back to a “normal” life and the realisation of how hard the recovery is because of a long social break.
2. A period of conflict, fuelled by great social, economic and - above all - political arguments. Citizens will want accountability from governments and businesses.
3. Back to the routine and acceptance of a **new social, psychological and professional framework.**
Towards a new social contract?

This timeline is of course relative; it moves and changes as the news cycle and the situation changes.

The Ad-epidemic curve, after the crisis.

What's next.



Next
Trends.

Next Trends.

Next
Trends.

Trends.

E-lifestyle:

The context of this crisis and ensuing confinement has created a boom for e-commerce, but also for e-collaboration, e-sharing, e-drinking ... the e-lifestyle has been adopted even by those who opposed it before. Despite a return to the offline world, the end of the crisis won't be the end of the digital lifestyle.

Questioning the capitalist model:

Ultra-consumerism, already disparaged for some years, will be even more radically questioned after this health crisis resulting in both economic and political changes. It is perhaps premature to imagine long-term changes, even if some people aspire to them. Let's not forget 2008 where 'nothing would ever be the same again'. On the other hand, a real upheaval in the world of work is likely.

Firstly because of the very strong destabilization of companies (massive unemployment), then by a possible relocation of production to Europe, and therefore to Belgium. (It's not certain that China will remain the factory of the world). And finally by the discovery and adoption of remote teleworking.

Ecology and related aspects (climate change, biodiversity and decline in growth):

It will more than ever be at the centre of our discussions. The sudden "depollution" due to the lockdown — experienced as a 'live' test of a more sober lifestyle during the crisis — will no doubt have long-term consequences.



air

Go with the curve.

**This document exists to help
and encourage our industry and yours
to act now.**

Use it, enrich it, disseminate it and make the best
use of it.

If you want to talk about it with us:
gowiththecurve@aironair.com

But more than anything, stay safe, stay home.

aironair.com

