

## PRISM AWARD SUBMISSION

**AGENCY:** BYDESIGN COMMUNICATIONS  
**CATEGORY:** FINANCIAL SERVICES  
**CLIENT:** TRANSUNION SOUTH AFRICA  
**CAMPAIGN:** FINANCIAL HARDSHIP STUDIES



### OPENING STATEMENT (100 words)

The COVID-19 pandemic hit South Africans hard, financially!

Soon after the lockdown in March 2020, there was speculation on upcoming credit payments defaults. No-one was sure of which provinces had been hit the hardest or which age group or how people were planning to pay their next set of bills while facing reduced working hours or a total loss of income.

Through a 37-week survey, Financial Hardship Studies, TransUnion provided a full picture of the financial impact of COVID-19 on South Africans.

Through our Financial Hardship Studies PR campaign, we made sure that the approximate 35million adult population had a full view of the financial impact of COVID-19 10 times in 9 months.





## STATEMENT OF CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY

### Challenge

- WHO's declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic in March 2020 and the subsequent lockdown created a new challenging reality for TransUnion. As a company that relies on data to service its clients in the auto, financial services, retail, insurance sectors and credit market in general, it was left blind by the lockdown. TransUnion could not see what South Africans of all income levels were spending, the financial challenges they were facing, and the support they needed.
- The credit market as a whole didn't have a full picture. And having a full picture is important as it guides both lenders and borrowers on how to proceed in either applying or granting access to credit.

### Opportunity

- TransUnion saw an opportunity to gather data and insights on the financial effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on South Africans through a weekly online survey called Financial Hardship Studies. It ran from the 6<sup>th</sup> of April until the 18<sup>th</sup> of December 2020 (37 weeks).
- ByDesign Communications was tasked with getting this information out and positioning TransUnion in the media as a provider of 'Information For Good'.

## RESEARCH

### Media outreach

- To have an understanding of the information the media needed, we reached out to top 20 mainstream news and consumer journalists – they indicated that they needed to see data, insights and possibly trends on the effects of COVID-19 on South Africans' finances from the lockdown until the country went back to some semblance of normal.
- They needed to have access to this information consistently.

### Desktop/ online research

- We also analysed the news agenda for a view of what TransUnion's competitors and the industry were saying about credit and the financial impact of COVID-19 on South Africans.
- We conducted an in-depth review of consumer-driven social media conversations to gauge popular sentiments and narrative.

### Key insights

- According to TransUnion's Financial Hardship Studies, financially, adult South Africans across all provinces had been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects such as the lockdown, deaths, job losses, etc.



- When the survey began in April, not a single brand in the country had provided insights on the effects of the pandemic from income lost, reduced working hours, or payment defaults across different adult age groups and provinces.
- Traditional media (print, online and broadcast) were looking for numbers on how badly South Africans had been hit by the pandemic, financially – they were the most effective channel to disseminate our Financial Hardship Studies campaign.

## PLANNING THE CAMPAIGN

### Objectives

To share the financial impact of COVID-19 on South Africans, we used our insights to create a Financial Hardship Studies campaign with the following key objectives:

- Create widespread talkability of the financial impact of COVID-19 on South Africans by reaching at least 35million (approximate adult population) people.
- Have a minimum of 50 000 people download the Financial Hardship Studies reports.
- Have at least 50 different media houses/platforms in South Africa use the data and insights from the Financial Hardship Studies in their stories.
- At least 50% of the journalists to use and publish the studies to be from tier 1 mainstream and consumer media.
- Showcase TransUnion’s expertise at providing useful financial information to the credit market and South Africans.

### Target Audience

- SEMs 7 – 10, 25+, all racial groups with a 50/50 split between male and female.

### Message Formulation

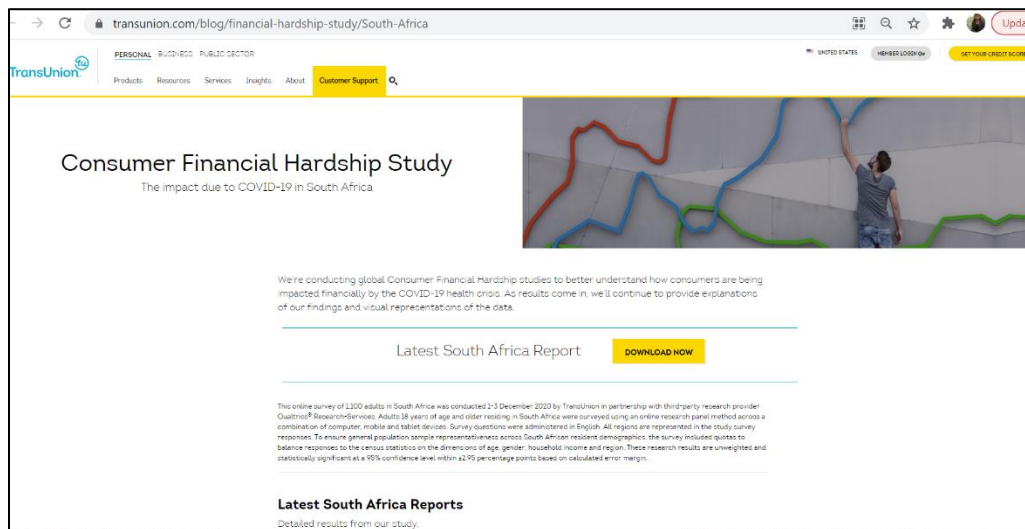
Our two overarching key messages;

- “Through our work (TransUnion), businesses and consumers can transact with confidence and achieve great things. We call this Information for Good®.”
- “We see information not just for what it can do, but for what it can help people achieve, and we believe that information can help people around the world access the opportunities that lead to a higher quality of life. We call this Information for Good®.”

To ensure that the Financial Hardship Studies findings got to our audiences consistently, we created a microsite within the TransUnion main website where the reports could be accessed any time. We shared the major findings with the media in the form of press releases. We added content on social media. We also encouraged the use of the insights at both internal and external auto, SMMEs, insurance, retail, banking and consumer financial events/webinars by TransUnion’s spokespeople.

**Microsite**

- Hosting of the 10 reports with respective infographics on an ongoing basis – the 10 weeks out of 37 were there significant shifts in the survey data and insights.
- We could track the number of people visiting the microsite as well as those downloading the reports.



*TransUnion South Africa Financial Hardship Studies Microsite*

**Media Relations**

Consistently reached out to the media with;

- Data reports
- Infographics
- Press releases
- Targeted media motivations
- Voice notes for news
- Interviews; virtual and voice



LOCKDOWN HARDSHIP

# More people are losing jobs due to coronavirus

Warren Thompson  
Financial Services Writer

TransUnion, considered to be the country's largest credit bureau, says many people are losing their jobs or experiencing a reduction in work hours as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdown.

The company's latest research on the economic effects of the pandemic, released on Thursday, reveals that the number of people losing their jobs increased from one in 10 in April to one in six in early May.

In addition, nearly four out of 10 (37%) of those negatively affected said that they had seen their work hours reduced because of the pandemic – up from the 32% reported in the first week of April.

"The pandemic is creating major economic and financial distress for consumers with many jobs in the SA economy already being impacted or at risk due to drastic demand shifts," said Lee Naik, CEO of TransUnion Africa.

TransUnion began conducting research on how the pandemic was affecting the income and financial position of consumers last month.

The research was conducted using an online, research-panel method across a combination of computer, mobile and tablet devices. The survey included quotas to balance responses to

the census statistics on age, gender, household income, race, and region.

The data suggested consumers were going to battle to meet their financial obligations, with the expected shortfall in the near future rising from R500 in April to R7500 in May.

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of consumers reported that household budget changes during the pandemic had involved cutting back on discretionary spending, which had extended to things such as subscriptions, memberships and digital services.

On average, consumers expected to begin defaulting on bills or loans in about seven weeks' time.

According to TransUnion, 44% of all consumers worried about paying their bills report that they would not be able to pay their rent; 39% would not be able to pay their personal loans; 37% would not be able to pay their cellphone bills; and 32% would not be able to pay their credit cards.

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**THE PANDEMIC IS CREATING MAJOR ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL DISTRESS FOR CONSUMERS WITH MANY JOBS IMPACTED OR AT RISK**

News24 | Careers24 | Property24 | AutoTrader | Superballist | OLX

fin24

HOME FOR SUBSCRIBERS COMPANIES ECONOMY MARKETS OPINION MONEY TECH

21 May 2020

### More SA job losses reported in May - survey

fin24 Londonie Butheke

More people reported losing their jobs after South Africa extended its lockdown in May, according to a survey carried out in the first week of May.

The poll, conducted by credit bureau TransUnion, found that 14% people reported job losses compared to 10% when the company conducted the same survey in early April, just after South Africa went on lockdown.

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The company, with help of a third-party research firm, conducted an online survey with 1005 adults in the week that ended on 11 May.

It said, based on three surveys it has conducted since the lockdown – two in April and one in early May – roughly one in six people now report that they have lost their jobs because of the

NEWS SPORT EDUCATION TECH BUSINESS ENTERTAINMENT LIFESTYLE MO

### South Africa's household income drastically decreased by Covid-19

By Edward West | Apr 17, 2020

CAPE TOWN – Almost eight in 10 South Africans say their household income has been cut by the Covid-19 pandemic, while one in ten has already lost their jobs, according to new research from consumer credit reporting agency TransUnion.

Almost eight in 10 South Africans say their household income has been cut by the Covid-19 pandemic, while one in ten has already lost their jobs, according to new research from consumer credit reporting agency TransUnion.

ONLINE RETAIL TRENDS

## 2020 holiday weekend e-commerce fraud 6.59% up over 2019

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GLOBAL information and insights company TransUnion research has found that suspected 2020 holiday weekend e-commerce fraud in South Africa rose by 6.59 percent compared with the same period in 2019.

TransUnion has released new findings around online retail trends during the start of the 2020 global holiday shopping season.

The findings were based on the online retail transactions TransUnion analysed for its e-commerce customers between November 26 and 30.

Heading into the holiday shopping season, the global TransUnion Financial Hardship Study conducted between November 1 and 3 found that 41 percent of 1 100 South African consumers said they had been targeted by digital fraud related to Covid-19, a 64 percent increase from the same survey the week of April 13.

Director of product at TransUnion Africa Keith Wickett said the research found that with the Covid-19 pandemic accelerating the move from



E-SHOPPERS are warned to treat carefully when shopping online.

offline to online transactions, detecting digital fraud attempts had become paramount for e-commerce providers. "To avoid cart abandonment with

all of these new sales opportunities, it is equally if not more important to ensure consumers are able to make friction-tight digital transactions,"

said Wardell. The research also found that suspected fraudulent e-commerce transactions in South Africa during the start of the holiday shopping season and entire year from 2018 to last year were 7.4 percent from November 26-30, 2020 and 18.55 percent so far in 2020, 6.94 percent from November 28 to December 2, 2019, and 5.32 percent in all of 2019.

It was also 3.49 percent from November 22 to 26, 2018 and 8.69 percent in all of 2018.

The days with the highest percent of suspected fraudulent transactions coming from South Africa during the start of the this year's holiday shopping season were Sunday, November 29, at 11.08 percent; Cyber Monday, November 30 at 9.42 percent; Saturday, November 28 at 6.94 percent, Thursday, November 26 at 6.63 percent and Black Friday, November 27 at 4.43 percent.

South African Banking Risk Information Centre (Sabric) chief executive Nischal Mewalal said unfortunately it was too early for them to make observations regarding this year's online shopping fraud trends, however, his-

toric trends showed that November and December showed an increase in the number of online fraud and credit card fraud incidents.

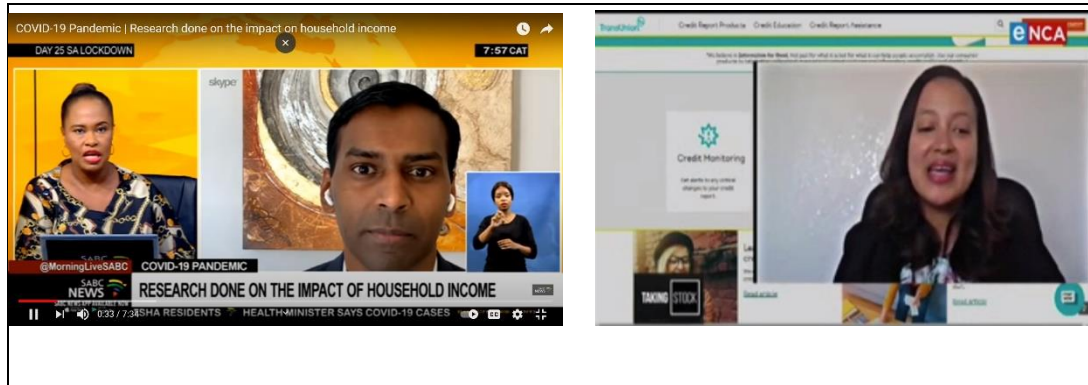
"For example, Card Not Present (CNP) fraud was a major contributor to fraud during 2019 and contributed to 8.7 percent of fraud reported, which is also commensurate with increases in spend," said Mewalal.

Sabric added that it was not unusual to see these spikes in online fraud as they are directly linked to increases in digital transactions related to peak shopping periods, as with the festive season.

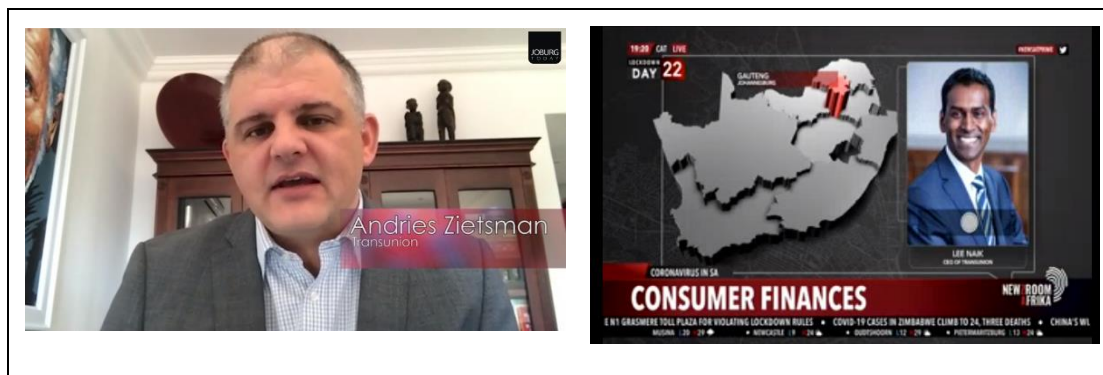
Alma Retail and Business Bank head of Fraud Risk Ulrich Janse van Rensburg said while they had seen an increase during the Black November (extended Black Friday), they had not seen such high increases in the amount of fraudulent incidents.

"We warn customers never to share their OTP unless they are transacting. They should also never approve transactions that they did not do. If consumers stick to this they will be safe online. All banks have real-time notifications," said Van Rensburg.

- TransUnion spokespeople from the CEO, head of Financial Services to Consumer Division vice president were interviewed on radio and TV (images overpage)



*Lee Naik, TransUnion CEO on SABC News, On Point and  
Carmen Williams, TransUnion director of research and consulting on ENCA*



*Andries Zietsman, TransUnion financial services head on Joburg Today and  
Lee Naik, TransUnion CEO on Newzroom Afrika*

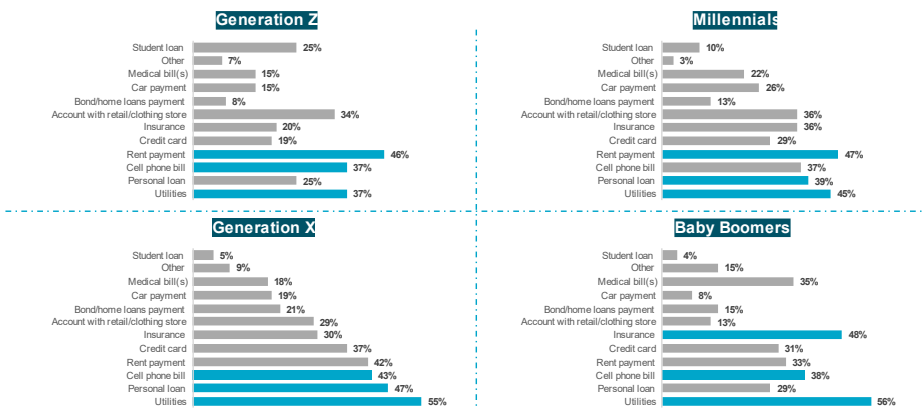
## Events

- TransUnion business unit heads incorporated Financial Hardship Studies insights into auto, insurance, SMMs, financial services, retail and banking webinars they hosted for their clients and media throughout 2020. They also shared the insights at external where they were given opportunities to speak, including JSE-led events for specific audiences such as HR Heads (images overpage)





**Consumers are prioritising utility services over financial services obligations during COVID -19**

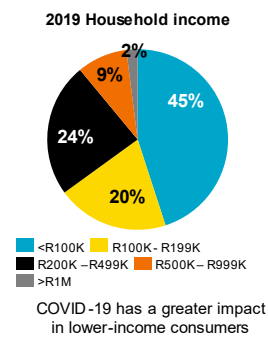


TransUnion Source: TransUnion Consumer Financial Hardship Study

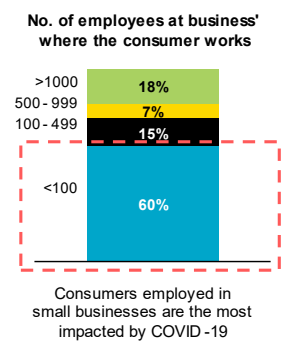
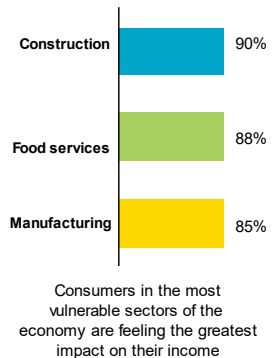
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**Impact effects**

Although the financial impact of COVID -19 is widespread, the effects are particularly felt by the most vulnerable consumers



TransUnion Source: TransUnion Consumer Financial Hardship Study, week 5

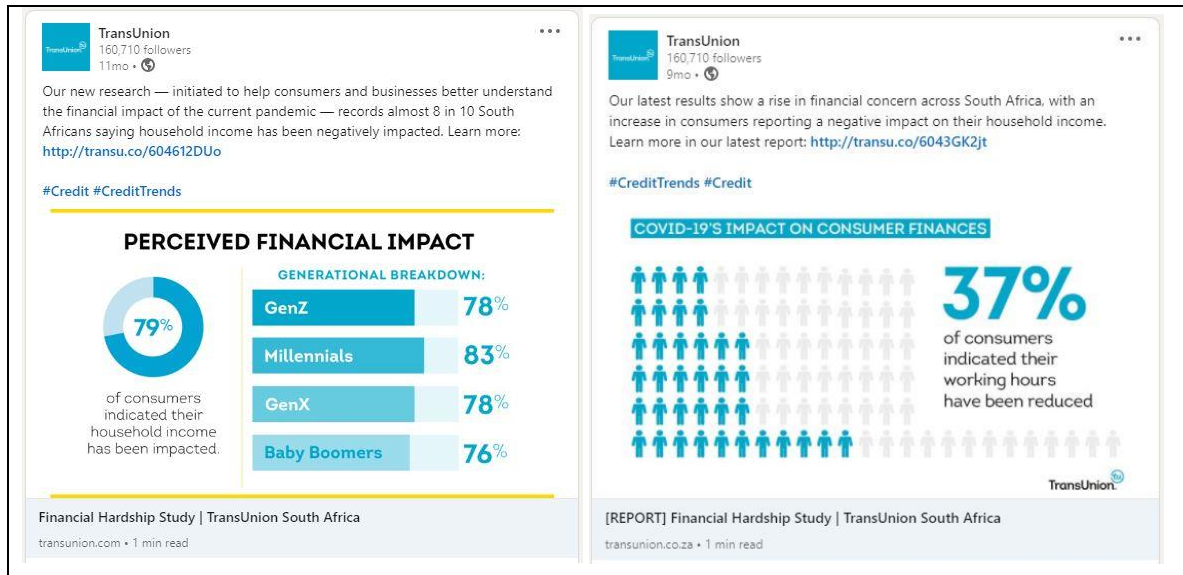


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*SMMEs and Financial Hardship Studies webinar presentations extracts*

**Social Media**

- Financial Hardship Studies findings were shared on Facebook and Twitter on an ongoing basis.
- Where possible, TransUnion’s business units’ heads shared the numbers in the form of sharegraphics or infographics on LinkedIn.



Social media posts

## EVALUATION / MEASUREMENT

- Create widespread talkability of the financial impact of COVID-19 on South Africans by reaching at least 35million (approximate adult population) South Africans.
  - ✓ **Exceeded:** Through a total of 261 clips of coverage in tier 1 media such as IOL News, Fin24, TimesLive, Mail & Guardian, Business Day and Business Report, the campaign reached just over 296million South Africans, i.e.: we reached the approximate adult population over 8 times. Journalists also used our data outside of the press releases we supplied, rather for their own stories continuing into 2021 with new data still to be released.
    - i. 67 525 people visited the Financial Hardship Studies microsite.
    - ii. 445 910 people were reached through social media with 2 964 engagements and 1 175 click throughs to the microsite.
- Have a minimum of 50 000 people download the Financial Hardship Studies reports.
  - ✓ **Exceeded:** 56 398 visitors to the microsite downloaded Financial Hardship Studies reports.
- Have at least 50 different media houses/platforms in South Africa use the data and insights from the Financial Hardship Studies in their stories.
  - ✓ **Exceeded:** 85 different media houses/platforms covered Financial Hardship Studies in 2020.
- At least 50% of the journalists to use the content to be from tier 1 mainstream and consumer media.





- ✓ **Exceeded:** 65% of the coverage received was from tier 1 mainstream and consumer media from Newzroom Afrika, Cape Talk, Talk Radio 702, SABC News, Kaya FM, SAFM, eNCA to Classic FM.
- Showcase TransUnion's expertise at providing useful financial information to the credit market.
  - ✓ TransUnion hosted 17 webinars with a total attendance of 4 800 credit market industry representatives.
  - ✓ Due to the high demand for these insights especially by the media, TransUnion is continuing the same research into 2021 but on a less frequent basis, quarterly and with a new name as lockdown conditions ease, Consumer Pulse Report.

Word count – 1 217 (excluding opening statement and headings)

Please see client letter of PRISM entry approval on the next page.



3 March 2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

**RE: 2021 PRISM AWARDS ENTRY**

This letter hereby certifies that I, Lisa Thomas, in my capacity as Senior marketing Director -Africa for TransUnion Africa, acknowledge and endorse ByDesign Communications use of work they did for TransUnion Africa in 2020 for submission into the PRISM Awards for 2021.

Should you have any queries, please contact the undersigned at TransUnion Africa.

Yours faithfully,

Lisa Thomas

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