

How the Pandemic Changed Consumer Behavior

In March 2020 COVID-19 turned consumer behavior upside down. Panic buying and hoarding became commonplace overnight as governors issued emergency stay at home orders. Supermarket shelves were emptied. Item limits for essentials like paper products, milk and meat were posted in supermarkets, if you could find them. Stores reduced hours, or closed altogether. Masks, physical distancing, limited capacity, enhanced sanitizing, curbside delivery and plexiglass barriers became the norm. Grocery shopping became a daunting task- avoiding other shoppers, finding the items needed, buying enough to last to avoid unnecessary trips, and coming home to painstakingly disinfect the groceries.

American consumers quickly changed buying habits. According to eMarketer, e-commerce increased by 27.6% worldwide in 2020. Many shoppers turned to online shopping instead of venturing out into the big box store or supermarket, as they feared exposure to Covid. As many small retailers and other businesses, like clothing and houseware stores, deemed “non-essential” by local government were forced to shutter their doors, consumers had no alternative but online shopping for certain goods. Shopping for leisure or browsing became a thing of the past. Analysts at Google found that impulse buying gave way to prioritizing essentials.

Localities around the nation are fully reopening and most stores are now operating without capacity limits or distancing requirements. Google recently conducted research to learn about current consumer behavior and future shopping habits. Retailers are getting a clearer picture of which pandemic induced changes are here to stay, including which changes consumers would like to remain in place. It’s important to recognize the changes in your customers’ behavior and take these into account when planning your marketing strategy.

Some of the changes that Covid brought on will stay, such as enhanced sanitizing in stores, easy curbside pickup, or a streamlined e-commerce experience. Google’s consumer behavior studies determined that businesses should focus on providing customers the ability to shop when, where and how they prefer, making the shopping experience seamless and pleasant to keep the customer coming back, no matter what the situation is.

To learn about how Engage Media can help your business, please visit www.engagemedia.com or email us at info@engagemedia.com. Our team of professionals is ready to assist you with all your digital and traditional media needs.

Source: <https://www.emarketer.com/content/global-ecommerce-update-2021>