

Experiential Online Shopping Has Its Covid-19 Moment

How the realities of work-from-home and shop-from-home have raised the bar for matching online product expectations to in-real-life experiences.

BY
Jack O'Farrell

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In the US alone, 62% of consumers said they're shopping more online now than pre-Covid-19.

BAZAARVOICE (2020)

Consumers still spent a record \$10.8 billion on Cyber Monday 2020.

CNBC (2020)

22.6% of all web searches in the US are Google Image searches.

FIRST SITE GUIDE (2021)



Perspective

Covid-19 has upended many of the cadences of everyday life for individuals, families, and communities. Household routines for shopping and buying goods, services, and perishables were upended. From contactless payments to pre-order pickups to valet deliveries, how we prefer to be served has re-shaped where we shop and how we buy. The character of the commerce experience is evolving toward what The Board of Innovation calls a "Low Touch Economy."

The pandemic is creating new rules for retail choreography. It is also heightening the importance of digital visual merchandising as shopping experiences closer to where people feel safe.

Retail has had a reset.

Shopping in a Low Touch Economy has come to mean a near-zero degree of physical interaction with the product. But social distancing is the opposite of shopping distancing. Clever retailers are struggling to translate their brick-and-mortar realities for a point-and-shoot world. But even after Covid-19 becomes more manageable, experts say, retail routines will have a decidedly different feel.



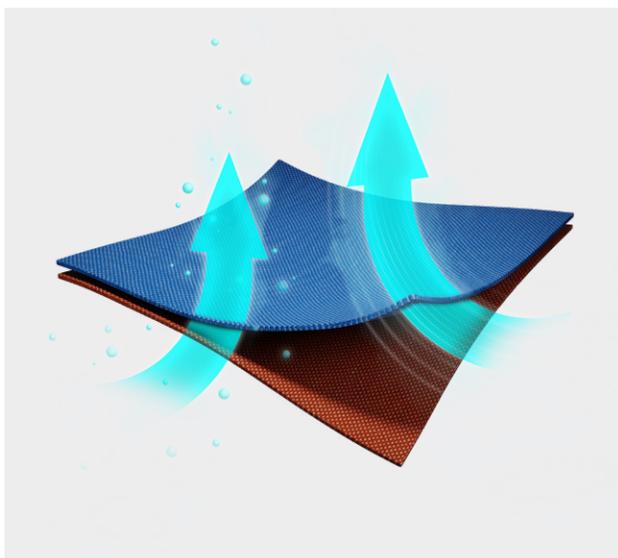
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Covid-19 pushed go-slow retailers online.

For retailers with a limited online presence, the pandemic accelerated the move to online channels. Some landed softly at e-commerce marketplaces like Amazon, Walmart, and others. Others developed their own online storefronts, using new commerce platforms like Shopify to create their own online

shopping experience. With over 1 million online businesses, Shopify helped many businesses who'd buckled under the lockdown retain or recover lost sales revenue without moving to Amazon. According to Shopify, their retailers who were able to provide curbside pickup and offer delivery options when their stores went dark made up nearly 94% of their former sales volumes online.

“ 83% say that product images are the most influential factor in their purchase decision.”



CGI is a step change tool for catching up.

Visually translating the vibe of a retail offer to an online marketplace is simpler in our CGI moment. CGI is built for speed and flexibility. It is designed to manage many assets and many variants so that marketers have rich choices for telling a product story. Think of it as digital visual

Many brands found their visuals lacking.

The transition was a challenge for retailers without online-ready visual assets. Legacy shots for catalogs or circulars or POS lacked the verve that established brands rely on to sell in online marketplaces. In a low touch market, where online shoppers expect to see variants in size or style or color or texture, static or dated images fall flat. While consumers are always picky, research suggests that online consumers are *pickier* still. Most expect to see an average of 8 images of any product they consider. And 83% say that product images are *the* most influential factor in their purchase decision.

merchandising. Just like retail merchandising, it equips sellers to capture the imagination of browsers and shoppers. But in this store, you are turning heads 24/7 and worldwide. The process also amasses a CGI asset library that will well support the visual design needs of new hybrid retail experiences that emerge when the reset resets.