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**THE EFFECT OF THE PANDEMIC COVID 19 ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR**

The pandemic COVID 19 largely known as the corona has not only been proven to be fatal but has also has drastic effects on all sectors of societal wellbeing all around the world. It has affected the economic, social, industrial and basically the health sectors of countries around the world. Our major aim today is examine and evaluate the level of effect of the coronavirus on consumer buying behavior. In order to do this we need to examine what consumers are buying and how they are buying it and what they are not buying and how long they feel this crisis will take to subside.

Research has shown that there is a massive decrease in the rate at which people purchase items such as homes, cars, trips tickets and luxury goods over the past weeks but rather increase has been noticed in the purchase of two tiers of consumable goods which are the survival and sanity tier.

There has also been changes in the places people go to purchase things. Due to the increase in fear of crowding and lack of inventory, a reduction has been noticed in the rate at which people shop from wholesale and big box retail outlets. There is also increase in the rate at which people use online shopping as malls and most shopping outlets have been closed down for the time been. In US, fast food joint have received an increase in the number of customers unlike the regular sit and eat restaurants.

There is increase in the purchase of items or products that maintain wellbeing and health. There is also the prioritization of product that can be used for the containment of the infection. People now have more interest in shelf-safe products. An increase in price in the prices of goods has been noticed in most countries as a result of restricted and limited supply.

As a result of the restrictions that has been placed on shopping, a lot of people have resulted to the use of online shopping especially in regards to health and essential items. Records have indicated that the younger generation has been the highest patronizes of online shopping but as a result of the pandemic the older generation now see online shopping as a safer and more effective way to obtain groceries.

With so many consumers entering restricted living situations, there has been a spike in other categories, especially in entertainment and media. That’s not surprising given that staying home increases the amount of content people watch by 60%. Video games and video game internet traffic have seen a 75% increase since restriction was imposed.

There have been various items that have been posted online as the remedy for the virus such as some local herbs so many people place priorities to having such items around for if worse comes to worse cases.

So, do these changes signal a shift into how consumers will behave in the long term? If the holidays are any indicator, even short-term adjustments in behavior can have long term effects. For example, during holidays, there’s an increase in the number of consumers purchasing online or on their mobile devices. We then see this behavior being sustained as new holiday seasons roll in, which means new habits have been established.

Despite the rise in e-commerce activities due to the pandemic, most retailers have a bleak outlook for the rest of the year. This is because e-commerce typically represents only about 16%**[7](https://www.digitalcommerce360.com/article/us-ecommerce-sales/)** of their sales revenue. With many stores shutting their doors, it is in the best interest of businesses to maintain and grow their e-commerce strategy.

As the population of most countries starts to move from quarantine preparations to restricted living, online fulfillment will be challenging due to strains in the supply chain. This has prompted many consumers to turn to Direct to Consumer manufacturers to order and receive goods within a normal timeframe.

These Direct to Consumer manufactures are a growing segment that caters directly to consumers by bypassing standard distribution channels, effectively gaining direct access to consumers. Several of these manufacturers have seen a significant boost in sales due to the pandemic. For example, Peach, a brand that manufactures high-end bath tissue saw new customers increase by 279% over the last two weeks compared to the two weeks prior.**[8](https://www.modernretail.co/startups/high-end-home-dtc-brands-are-seeing-a-coronavirus-lift/)**

Awareness of Direct to Consumer manufacturers has increased in the last few years, with almost 48% of manufacturers racing to build Direct to Consumrer channels, and 87% seeing these channels being relevant to their products and consumers.**[9](https://www.bringg.com/blog/industry-trends/cutting-the-middleman-the-growth-of-direct-to-consumer/)** Initially boosted by younger audiences, Direct to Consumer manufacturers have found success by focusing on specific target audiences and catering to their needs and identities. This Direct to consumer trend is expected to continue, and perhaps accelerate, as manufacturers that are still on the fence might finally see the benefits of Direct to Consumer and make themselves directly available to consumers

However, even Direct to Consumer manufactures that have found themselves positively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic will be affected by supply chain issues as consumers start living in quarantine. This means they can’t afford to stand idly by and must find a way to maintain their e-commerce growth once the pandemic is over as well.

The task of continuing to entice consumers to shop online, for both retailers and Direct to Consumer manufacturers, is grounded on trust in order to foster lasting loyalty. However, building trust, especially in these extreme situations, means more than meeting expectations, but exceeding them. To do so, here are some important approaches to keep in mind:

**/ Ease the transition.** Make it as seamless as possible for consumers to switch to online shopping. For example, by providing flexibility with payment options and making it easy for them to easily find what they need. This is especially true for consumers who are moving to emerging e-commerce categories, such as groceries, for the first time.

**/ Manage expectations.** Display accurate stock level information especially for sought-after goods. This includes communicating realistic estimates for delivery and even re-evaluating display ads so that consumers don’t feel misled by services you can’t provide.

**/ Foster comfort.** Ensure that customers feel confident that their goods will be delivered on time. Encourage them to sign up for subscription services, whether through preferential pricing or other promos to help them feel safe that they will receive their products without delays.

**/ Leverage promos and loyalty programs.** In times of crisis, consumers are not very price sensitive. However, making price discounts and promotions available, like free shipping, helps nurture goodwill. Increasing loyalty points and rewards programs encourages customers to stay long term.

**/ Prioritize customer care.** Increase communication to foster a relationship with your customers, as they may feel isolated at this time. Set up a hotline to address any questions or concerns, as well as make sure their comments or reviews online are heard, to maintain a lasting positive image with consumers. Remember that consumers are spending more time online and rely on reviews to make purchasing decisions.

It’s still too early to tell how much consumer behavior will change due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We’ll learn more and more about the immediate impact on stores and e-commerce as soon as additional countries move through the different stages and into restrictive living. However, it will be a while until we know if these changes in consumer behavior will be long term. In the meantime, retailers and Direct to Consumer manufacturers should strive to maintain higher levels of e-commerce sales to mitigate the impact of store closures. Manufacturers that haven’t yet adopted a Direct to Consumer approach must carefully follow how all this is unfolding. They must decide now whether to jump in and create Direct to Consumer channels to lessen the impact of the pandemic on their sales before it’s too late.

In the recent weeks, research has shown that 33% of consumers have largely changed their purchasing behavior. It also shows that there have been over 59% of school closures, travel bans and series of celebrity announcements that they have been affected by corona virus and this has also added to the urgency of the situations and influenced the shopping behavior of many citizens.

Nigerians been very extra in their actions tend to purchase in bulk materials such as face masks, hand gloves and hand sanitizers in this period mostly as there has been restriction of movement and supply and the fact that they don’t know how long this pandemic may take before it is resolved.