HOW IS CORONAVIRUS (PANDEMIC) AFFECTING CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR

What is the coronavirus

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that cause diseases in animal and are rarely humans. According to the world health organization (WHO), Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an infectious disease which affects the respiratory system.

 The reality of this new pandemic took the world by surprise. People worldwide are still trying to adapt to the idea of prolonged indoor stays. So, now that we are all trying to avoid going out to shop in brick and mortar stores, how has this changed our approach in purchasing goods? Furthermore, will these adjustments establish new and lasting habits?

**Symptoms of COVID-19**

Early symptoms include:

* Fever
* Dry cough
* Fatigue
* Trouble breathing or shortness of breath
* Ongoing chest pain or pressure
* New confusion
* Can’t wake up fully
* Bluish lips or face

The virus can lead to pneumonia, respiratory failure, septic shock, and death. If you notice the following severe symptoms in yourself or a loved one, get medical help right away.

The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is to be well informed about the COVID-19 virus, the disease it causes and how it spreads. Protect yourself and others from infection by washing your hands under running tap or using an alcohol based sanitizer to rub the hand frequently and not touching mouth, ear and nose. The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it’s important that you also practice respiratory etiquette (for example, by coughing into a flexed elbow).

Presently,there are no specific vaccines or treatments for COVID-19. However, there are many ongoing clinical trials and evaluating potential treatments. WHO has continue to provide updated information as soon as clinical findings are available become.

What is consumer behavior?

Consumer behavior is the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and all the activities associated with the purchase, use and disposal of goods and services, including the consumer's emotional, mental and behavioral responses that precede or follow these activities. Consumer behavior emerged in the 1940s and 50s as a distinct sub-discipline in the marketing area (wiki).

Consumer behavior is an inter-disciplinary social science that blends elements from psychology, sociology, social anthropology, anthropology, ethnography, marketing and economics, especially behavioral economics. It examines how emotions, attitudes and preferences affect buying behavior. Characteristics of individual consumers such as demographics, personality lifestyles and behavioral variables such as usage rates, usage occasion, loyalty, brand advocacy, willingness to provide referrals, in an attempt to understand people's wants and consumption are all investigated in formal studies of consumer behavior. The study of consumer behavior also investigates the influences, on the consumer, from groups such as family, friends, sports, reference groups, and society in general.

 Coronavirus presents a number of challenges to brands and policy makers. As consumers take protective actions against the virus, their health/financial concerns and behavioral adjustments will continue to have an enormous social and economic impact. In affected areas, we are already observing drastic changes in consumer behavior such as bulk-buying, a surge in low contact commerce, and crowd avoidance/cocooning.

Social distancing measures and self-isolation have created a similar environment prioritizing the bulk-buying of products deemed essential. Already, we are seeing the beginnings of cannabis consumers looking to bulk-buy their usual products from dispensaries, or turning to e-commerce and cannabis deliveries where these businesses have been affected by shutdowns. Additionally, consumers might pivot away from the cannabis brands which are perceived as high-end or more luxury, and towards cheaper product offerings.

Now most consumers worldwide have shifted to online buying. Consumer’s interaction with company can trigger an immediate and lingering effect on his or her sense of trust and loyalty. As millions are furloughed and retreat into isolation, a primary barometer of their customer experience will be how the businesses they frequent and depend upon deliver experiences and services that meets their new needs with empathy, care and concern. Other effects of the coronavirus on consumer behavior are

• Savings of ordinary people have gone down because people are spending their money on food and grocery.

* Consumers have moved to e marketing.
* Consumers have turned to e-commerce to purchase their items
* There is an increase in the exchange rate of currency which have greatly affected consumer because buying of necessity like (hand sanitizer, hand gloves and masks) have substantially risen up.
* Reduction of income, since people are forced to stay at home, paying actives have gone down. Especially in Nigeria, People that are paid wages are greatly affected.
* This has prompted many consumers to turn to Direct to Consumer (D2C) manufacturers to order and receive goods within a normal timeframe.
* Consumer needs for medical attention has skyrocketed because pharmaceutical stores are always getting sold out and hospitals are always filled.
* Consumers focus on fundamental care and connection. Now more than ever people need extra information, guidance and support to navigate a novel of set of challenges, from keeping their family safe to helping their kids learn when schools are shut down.
* If product are out of stock in stores consumers will consider less familiar brands.
* Consumers have become more discreet when buying good. The rate at which consumers buy luxury good such as jewelries and cars have really gone down.
* Consumer are buying more cleaning product.
* E-learning has been deemed essential for consumers.
* Consumers are buying more internet facilities for example Nigeria. In Nigeria telecommunication company like GLO,MTN,AIRTEL and 9MOBLIE are having high demand for data network.
* Pantry preparation: Higher purchases of shelf-safe products and increased store visits.
* Flights have been cancelled which has caused a delay in deliveries of goods to consumers.
* Restricted living: Possible price gouging due to limited supplies and deterred online fulfillment.
* Consumer are heavly relying on manufacturer to produce more commodity so the can buy

 How Coronavirus has affected businesses?

1. The clearest and most immediate business impact of the coronavirus pandemic has been a major disruption to supply chains. Having originated in China, the region was hit hard as a large number of citizens contracted the disease and many were forced into quarantine. This led to partial and full shutdowns of plants and factories, some of which were being used by prominent technology companies to manufacture their goods and products. For example, Apple experienced shortages on its iPhone supply as a result of the company's primary manufacturer, Foxconn, shutting down much of its production in China. Ultimately for Apple, this will lead to a significantly reduced forecast in iPhone shipments through Q1—by as much as 10%, according to estimates by Apple analyst Ming-Chi Kuo cited by MacRumors. And while companies often have contingency plans, which revolve around ramping up production in a region that isn't impacted, the rapid spread of the coronavirus across the globe makes it very difficult to pinpoint which regions would be least affected. Even then, the momentum and resources of the Chinese economy will not be easily replicated—"Made in China" initiatives have seen the government invest billions in advanced manufacturing sectors, including telecommunications equipment and semiconductors.

2. The spread of the coronavirus has caused several of the most important tech conferences to be canceled, likely resulting in numerous missed partnership opportunities. Most notably, Mobile World Congress (MWC), which was set to take place February 24-27 in Barcelona, was canceled due to concerns over the virus. MWC is a cornerstone event in the connectivity industry, as it brings together the most important companies in the space to network, share innovations and forge new business partnerships. Several companies rescheduled the events they had planned for MWC, but the continued presence of the coronavirus led others to cancel them entirely. Beyond MWC, Facebook canceled its F8 developer conference and Global Marketing Summit; Google shifted its Google Cloud Next event to online only; and IBM likewise had to livestream its developer's conference, which last year hosted over 30,000 attendees. Altogether, the cancellation of major tech events has incurred over $1 billion in direct economic losses, according to estimates from PredictHQ cited by Recode.

Online alternatives have helped limit the fallout from canceled conferences, but tech industries will likely still suffer a period of stifled innovation due to forgone in-person business opportunities. Conference attendees do not have the same opportunities to network via live streaming as they do attending in-person events. It would be harder for marketers to casually share best practices over the live streamed Facebook Global Marketing Summit, for instance, than it would be if the event actually took place. Though it is difficult to quantify the value of these chance encounters or informal network sessions, the effects will undoubtedly be felt throughout the impacted industries.

**RETAIlER**

The 2019-20 coronavirus pandemic has impacted the retail sector. Retail stores across the world have seen product demand exceeding supply for many consumables, resulting in empty retail shelves. In Australia, the pandemic has provided a new opportunity for daigou shoppers to re-sell into the China market. "The virus crisis, while frightening, has a silver lining”. Some retailers are looking at contactless home delivery.

Small-scale farmers have been embracing digital technologies as a way to directly sell produce, and community-supported agriculture and direct-sell delivery systems are on the rise.

Shopping centers around the world responded by reducing hours or closing down temporarily in response. As of 18 March 2020, the footfall to shopping centers fell by up-to 30%, with significant impact in every continent. Simon Property Group became the first major US-based mall operator to close all centers on 18 March, with government mandated closures in UAE, Italy, Germany, Spain, Brazil and Austria as of 23 March.

In light of the public health situation in which includes afflicted regions where retail sectors deemed non-essential have been ordered closed for the interim, Diamond Comic Distributors announced on March 24, 2020 a full suspension of distributing published material and related merchandise as April 1, 2020 until further notice. As Diamond has a near-monopoly on printed comic book distribution, this is described as an "extinction-level event" that threatens to drive the entire specialized comic book retail sector out of business with that one move.[82] As a result, publishers like IDW Publishing and Dark Horse Comics have suspended publication of their periodicals while DC Comics is exploring distribution alternatives including an increased focus on online retail of digital material.

Restaurant sector

The 2019-20 coronavirus pandemic has impacted the restaurant business. In the beginning of March 2020, some major cities in the US announced that bars and restaurants would be closed to sit-down dinners and limited to takeout orders and delivery. Some employees were fired, and more employees lacked sick leave in the sector compared to similar sectors.[85][86] With only carry-out and delivery services, most servers and bartenders were laid off, prompting these employees creating "virtual tip jars" across 23 U.S. cities.

**References**

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