

Paris, 22 March 2021

DPDgroup analyses pandemic-influenced e-shopping behaviour in Europe.

Given drastic shifts in product category preferences, greater momentum in conscious consumerism and 15 million new e-shoppers in 2020 vs 2019, Covid-19 has transformed e-commerce, offering new opportunities to retailers and e-tailers.

Key take-aways:

- **Food, formerly a niche product, has dethroned fashion and shoes** as the category that e-shoppers purchase the most often. In response to strict lockdown and quarantine measures, consumers turned to e-commerce for groceries as well as ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat meals.
- **An omnichannel approach has become an essential ingredient in the success of e-tailers**, obliging them to develop an online offering and appropriate delivery methods (e.g. Click & Collect) to continue selling their merchandise during the health crisis.
- **The desire to set a time for delivery is very important to buyers**, as it meets new needs in post-pandemic lifestyles such as home office life. Next-day delivery continues to grow in popularity, especially for perishables. Contactless delivery as well as multiple delivery choices are also key.
- **Among the recent adopters of online buying is a new e-shopper persona, the senior e-shopper**, whose rise creates what DPDgroup has dubbed “super stretch e-commerce,” i.e. the remarkable differences in shopper profiles that the industry must stretch itself to serve, from millennials to seniors, experts to novices.
- **Sustainability must be an active constant for all e-commerce players** as e-shoppers continue to seek eco-friendly products and services while expecting e-commerce websites and brands to do their part in reducing their carbon footprint.

“Every year since 2016, the DPDgroup e-shopper barometer report has offered significant insight into the evolving e-commerce industry, revealing market trends and shedding light on the latest tastes and behaviours of Europeans who buy online. Faced with the Covid-19 health crisis, which radically altered the daily lives and habits of billions of people around the world,

DPDgroup took a close look at the sweeping effects that the crisis had on e-tailers and e-shoppers alike.”

Jean-Claude Sonet, DPDgroup’s Executive Vice-President in charge Marketing, Communication and CSR Director, DPDgroup.

Surging demand has taken the food category to new heights, dethroning fashion

The profound disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic, compounded by the widespread implementation of strict containment measures, left consumers with little choice other than e-commerce to obtain essential and non-essential items conveniently and safely. The result was an unprecedented surge in online retail, which left many e-tailers struggling to keep up. Category demand, however, was far from homogenous. Fashion, a long-time favourite online category worldwide, declined significantly in 2020, and while other categories such as high-tech, cosmetics, home furnishing/DIY, and sports equipment all showed impressive growth, the true king of 2020 was the grocery category. Driven by consumers eating far more often at home, online purchase volumes of groceries reached remarkable levels worldwide, with grocery stores experiencing a 95% increase in transactions between March and December¹.

“E-commerce was among the fortunate few sectors to develop a positive momentum in 2020; with health restrictions and lockdowns limiting, if not closing, access to traditional retail stores, Covid-19 fast-forwarded e-commerce across the globe three to five years ahead of what the industry was prepared for. In the EU alone, 15 million new e-shoppers² appeared in 2020 vs 2019. “

Jean-Claude Sonet, DPDgroup’s Executive Vice-President in charge Marketing, Communication and CSR Director, DPDgroup.

E-shoppers’ new habits and expectations require an omnichannel approach

Against the backdrop of the health crisis, overall online purchase frequency increased across a wide variety of retail categories, and as shoppers became accustomed to buying more things online, they showed a greater willingness to discover unfamiliar online brands and retailers. Trusted brands and platforms still enjoyed the lion’s share of purchases, but there also appeared to be a growing interest in local and national online shops, as well as a certain open-mindedness to new e-commerce businesses of all sizes. Delivery methods were affected by the crisis as well; with many parcel shops closed, home delivery experienced an

¹ Source: Contentsquare

² Source: Europe 2020 Ecommerce Region Report, Ecommerce Europe and Euro Commerce, July 2020.

unprecedented demand, as did locker delivery in some European countries, regardless of product category. Innovations such as contactless deliveries were introduced and met with immediate popularity, while flexible delivery options such as the ability to select a delivery date and time were particularly appreciated. The willingness shown by consumers to rely on e-commerce to help them weather the pandemic further illustrates the imperative that e-tailers embrace an omnichannel approach. Even during periods of reprieve from lockdown, these new buying behaviours persisted to a certain degree and were arguably reinforced by the second wave of lockdowns in autumn 2020. Moreover, studies show that over 70% of consumers plan to continue their new shopping habits post-pandemic. In light of the health and economic context, as well as the uninterrupted growth of e-commerce sales worldwide, there is little reason for e-shoppers to abandon the convenience, diversity and attractive prices that they find online.

Senior e-shoppers bring further diversity to the existing range of e-shopper profiles

One unexpected result of the health crisis was the sudden rise of the “senior e-shopper” profile. Aged 55 and older, this group existed prior to the Covid-19 pandemic as indicated in the 2019 DPDgroup e-shopper barometer but was far less noticeable prior to this year. Driven to e-commerce more out of necessity than desire, senior e-shoppers exhibit many of the behaviours associated with novice e-shoppers, such as website patronage based on trust and a tendency to be less demanding in terms of delivery options than are more experienced e-shoppers. With a clear preference for desktop/laptop buying as opposed to mobile devices, they are overall less likely to use social media than younger digital shoppers and are thus far less susceptible to social media’s influence on purchasing decisions. In general, senior e-shoppers have a traditional style of shopping and paying (i.e., using price comparison tools, reading product descriptions, preferring credit cards to digital wallets) that suggests a certain wariness of e-commerce. Nevertheless, senior e-shoppers are generally satisfied with the online shopping experience, which, coupled with their purchasing power, justifies e-tailers’ investment in their onboarding and positive overall experience.

Sustainability and eco-responsibility remain important issues for e-shoppers

While the 2019 DPDgroup e-shopper barometer highlighted a marked demand among European regular e-shoppers that brands and companies be environmentally responsible, the appeal of green options and sustainable solutions became even more evident this year, due to a heightened awareness of global issues sparked by the pandemic, as well as to the multiplication of product offers with differing claims and positioning. Furthermore, the unavailability of brick-and-mortar shops caused many e-shoppers to reassess their shopping habits and environmental impact, resulting in greater eco-awareness in terms of health,

product safety, food waste, and climate action. This increasing conscious consumerism translated into strong growth for the second-hand market, higher demand for eco-friendly delivery options, and greater attention to product recyclability, demonstrating once again the importance for all e-commerce players to accord sustainability the attention it clearly deserves.

“Building on the findings from our four previous e-shopper barometers, in addition to our deep understanding of European online shopping trends and our first-hand experience on the front lines of the delivery industry in the exceptional context of the Covid-19 pandemic, we are pleased to share our discoveries and analysis as well as our optimism about the future of e-commerce, which is certain to be bright.”

Jean-Claude Sonet, DPDgroup’s Executive Vice-President in charge Marketing, Communication and CSR Director, DPDgroup.

To discover more about the 2020 findings, follow this link:
<https://www.dpd.com/group/en/expertise/e-shoppers-in-europe/>

The 2020 e-shopper barometer is based on data from previous DPDgroup e-shopper barometer studies and third-party sources.

About DPDgroup

DPDgroup is the largest parcel delivery network in Europe.

We combine innovative technology and local knowledge to provide a flexible and user-friendly service for both shippers and shoppers. With our industry-leading Predict service, we are setting a new standard for convenience by keeping our customers in close contact with their delivery.

With 97,000 delivery experts and a network of more than 58,000 Pickup points, we deliver 7.5 million parcels each day – 1.9 billion parcels per year – through the brands DPD, Chronopost, SEUR and BRT.

At DPDgroup we aim to be a reference in sustainable delivery and become a leading enabler of e-commerce acceleration.

DPDgroup is the parcel delivery network of GeoPost, which posted sales of €11 billion in 2020. GeoPost is a holding company owned by Le Groupe La Poste.

For more information,

Our website: <https://www.dpd.com/group/en/expertise/e-shoppers-in-europe/>

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