

Fashion Online: Inc Impact of COVID-19 - UK - November 2020

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This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 and the second national lockdown on the online fashion market.
- How consumers' online fashion shopping behaviour and attitudes have changed since COVID-19.
- Where people have bought fashion online in the last 12 months and the preferred devices when shopping.
- The most important factors when choosing one retailer over another when buying fashion online.
- The growing influence of social media both as an influencer and as a trading platform for fashion brands.

There has been a record growth in online fashion sales, with online consumer spending on clothing, footwear and accessories jumping by 26% in 2020 to £28 billion. COVID-19 has accentuated the shift towards shopping for fashion online and heightened online demand will be a legacy trend of the pandemic.

Mintel's research for this Report found that 42% of Gen Z and 38% of Younger Millennial online fashion shoppers have purchased fashion items directly from social media, compared with an average of 23%. The lockdowns have fuelled a rise in social media usage and this has led younger consumers in particular to follow more fashion brands on social media. With the pandemic accelerating the rollout of Facebook and Instagram Shops and a focus on small and independent sellers, this gives an opportunity for more niche fashion brands to grow their presence in a very competitive and challenging fashion market.

Fit remains a big issue when shopping online, with 49% of female online shoppers aged 16-34 and 45% of females aged 35-54 agreeing that they struggle to find clothes online that fit. Poor fit is the main reason consumers send back clothes they have purchased and this leads to unnecessary and costly returns for retailers. COVID-19 has served as a catalyst to drive retailers to invest in finding solutions to this ongoing problem by either partnering with



“COVID-19 has accentuated the shift towards shopping for fashion online and heightened online demand will be a legacy trend of the pandemic. It will also have served as a catalyst to drive fashion retailers to invest in finding digital solutions to the ongoing issue of fit when buying clothes and footwear online.” – **Tamara Sender Ceron, Senior Fashion Analyst**

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specialist fit technology companies as Zalando is doing or by adding augmented reality (AR) sizing tools to their apps as ASOS and Very have done.

While shopping for fashion online is convenient, it is not always enjoyable. Given that 55% of Younger Millennial females agree that it is worth paying more for clothes at a retailer that offers an enjoyable shopping experience and as this generation of younger consumers are increasingly shopping for fashion online via their smartphones, there are huge opportunities for fashion retailers to tap into this demand and use the latest digital tools such as screen sharing apps to make the online shopping experience more fun and sociable. Partnering with screen sharing apps can allow friends to meet and shop together virtually, recreating the social element of in-store clothes and footwear shopping.

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