

# Customer Journey for the Home - UK - 2021

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## This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on home retail.
- How has the pandemic changed how consumers shop for the home?
- What are the longer-lasting implications of this?
- What do consumers do when researching a home project?
- How can stores regain footfall after 18 months of disruption?

Nearly two years on from the initial COVID-19 outbreak, three quarters of home product buyers purchased online in the past year; attracted by the convenience and cost savings. Unsurprisingly, this came largely at the expense of bricks-and-mortar, as just under half of those engaged in the market bought in-store with a notable drop-off in traditional users, as many older consumers remained online in this period due to the pandemic and lockdown restrictions.

This shift has already seen a legacy boost online. At a topline level, growing confidence, both in audience and an upscaling of expenditure, has paved the way for a net-long-term benefit in the channel. Indeed, 48% of consumers expect to purchase items for the home online more in the future. But it has also seen a consolidation in mobile purchasing, and perhaps worryingly for multichannel retailers, in purchasing from online-only retailers.

This trend will prove challenging for the multichannel specialists, the likes of which will have to be proactive in regaining footfall. There is likely to be a rebalancing of store networks to reflect the change in purchasing behaviours and smaller retailers are likely to suffer the most.

Nonetheless, there remains a clear role and demand for stores as many consumers are still expected to return to normal shopping behaviours. The focus, then, will turn to how stores can evolve to recover and regain their appeal. There is no shortage of opportunities here, in the short term, there is a more immediate need to allay concerns, through COVID-19 guarantees or financial incentives. However, in the longer term, the key will be in moving



“The impact of the pandemic is clear in the way that consumers shop for the home. Nearly two years on from the initial COVID-19 outbreak, a great deal of demand remains online, a shift which has already seen a legacy boost in the channel.”

– Marco Amasanti, Retail Analyst, December 2021

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beyond the obvious and re-investing in traditional USPs, such as service using new technologies. Specialists must also provide new and exciting in-store experiences tapping into new emerging trends, for example, conscious consumption habits.

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