Clothing Retailing: Inc Impact of COVID-19 - UK - October 2020

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This report looks at the following areas:

- **The impact of COVID-19 and the second national lockdown on the clothing market.**
- **How consumers' clothes shopping behaviours and attitudes have changed since COVID-19.**
- **Where people have bought clothes in the last 12 months in-store and online.**
- **How consumers have reacted to the reopening of fashion stores following the lockdown.**

Appetite for clothing has declined dramatically since the COVID-19 outbreak and fashion has been one of the hardest hit of all retail sectors. During the lockdown, with people working and spending most of their time at home, there was little need for people to update their wardrobes and demand was limited to mainly loungewear, sportswear and casual clothing.

The virus has forced many consumers to reprioritise spending and buying new fashion items has moved down the list of priorities and led people to focus on necessities. Indeed, 34% of clothes shoppers are wearing older items in their wardrobe since the start of COVID-19.

Younger generations are the most likely to have cut back on buying clothes in the last 12 months due to concerns about money. Financial instability created by furloughing schemes and widespread redundancies across different industries have hit young people hardest. Young consumers aged 16-34 have typically been the main clothes buyers, updating their wardrobes frequently due to changing fashion trends. However, around a third of Younger Millennials have become less interested in fashion trends since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A second national lockdown from 5 November 2020 will test the main learnings of the first lockdown, which highlighted the importance for all retailers to invest

"Appetite for clothing has dropped dramatically since the first lockdown and will be dealt a further blow with the second national lockdown during peak trading season, making it one of the hardest-hit retail sectors in 2020."
– Tamara Sender Ceron, Senior Fashion Analyst

in their online operations and to truly focus on connecting online and offline in order to create a seamless experience for the customer, giving them more flexibility in how they shop.

As consumers shop more online for fashion, combined with the ongoing closure of fitting rooms even when stores reopened, has accentuated the need for retailers to invest more heavily in more accurate online digital fit technology. This will help reduce the high rate of returns due to sizing issues and to improve the overall online shopping experience.

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Did you know?

This report is part of a series of reports, produced to provide you with a more holistic view of this market.

All Mintel 2020 reports contain specific COVID-19 related research and forecasts. The world's leading brands rely on Mintel reports for the most complete, objective and actionable market intelligence.

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