

Small Domestic Appliances: Inc Impact of COVID-19 - UK - December 2020

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This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on the small domestic appliances market.
- How this disruption will change demand in the short, medium and long-term.
- Opportunities for retailers amid this disruption and extended periods inside.
- The future of the purchasing journey for small domestic appliances.
- The growing role of online-only retailers.
- The growing opportunity for wellbeing in the market.
- How might the post-Brexit trade deal impact consumer spending.

COVID-19 disruption since March 2020 has seen the online channel gain in importance, as just 39% of consumers purchased in-store in 2020, down sharply from 49% in the previous year. As a result, online-only retailers have strengthened their hold on the market, with 46% of consumers purchasing from them in the past year. This was driven by Amazon (40%) – a standout winner from the COVID-19 disruption as it extended its lead in the market.

The market remained resilient, although growth slowed to 2.1% in 2020. However, alongside the fundamental shift in how consumers purchase appliances, this disruption has had a significant impact on the market. The announcement on 4 January 2021 of a national lockdown, is likely to see the continuation of the trends of the past year for, at least, the first few months of 2021.

Perhaps the biggest fallout has been in the polarisation of demand. The unequal impact of disruption has divided the market into those limited to essential purchases and those upgrading. Importantly, in the latter, this has been buoyed by redirected spending from other non-essential sectors. Moving forward, the disproportionate impact of this disruption will continue to polarise demand, squeezing those in the middle of the market and suppressing potential spend.



“The small domestic appliances market remained resilient in the face of COVID-19 uncertainty in the past year. Although the rate slowed slightly, spending grew again, aided by the market’s pre-existing maturity online and immediate opportunities amid extended periods inside, the uptake of new pastimes and a new focus on diet.”

- Marco Amasanti, Retail Analyst

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Nonetheless, amid this new landscape, there was also an increase in new demand. Usage of small domestic appliances increased, and the focus on appliances grew with extended periods inside, with a shift to working from home and the uptake of new hobbies, for example baking and cooking. This shift in behaviours will continue to open up new opportunities for growth, particularly as a recovery in consumer confidence slowly returns.

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