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### Panda Express, Whole Foods, Best Buy Top Ipsos Ranking on COVID-19 Safety Measures

Ipsos Mystery Shoppers provide an exclusive guide to companies that are successfully implementing health precautions for employees and customers.

**April 22, 2021** — Ipsos, a leading global research firm, today announced the winners of **Ipsos' Health and Safety Best Brand Awards** based on the results of the latest Consumer Health & Safety Index, an in-store benchmarking study that evaluates how retailers are operating more than a year into the pandemic.

This is the third time Ipsos has conducted its landmark study. In spring 2021, Ipsos surveyed 2,000 Americans to understand which health and safety attributes are most important to consumers in the current COVID-19 retail environment. Ipsos then conducted mystery shops to measure brand compliance on health and safety attributes across more than 25 brands in four key industries.

Ipsos Mystery Shoppers visited nearly 3500 individual locations and assessed each brand's compliance with key Health and Safety measures. These included areas such as social distancing, mask compliance, cleaning, and the availability of hand sanitizer. Top performing brands were awarded Ipsos Health & Safety Awards for their overall performance. Awards were also given by category to highlight the individual nature of the marketplace in which these brands compete.

"The brands receiving Ipsos' Health & Safety Awards are being recognized for their responsiveness, diligence and excellence in creating safe in-store experiences for both customers and employees," said Shohini Banerjee, Senior Vice President, US Channel Performance, Ipsos. "They have each made monumental strides over the past year to adhere to and consistently implement the health & safety policies that build consumer trust - something that will last long after the pandemic subsides."

*Among the brands consumers, and therefore Ipsos, recognized for strong performances:*

#### **Quick Serve Restaurants Awards:**

**Panda Express** emerged as the strongest performer in the QSR industry, winning the *Best in Industry* Panda Express's strong performance was due to high marks for social-distancing measures, store cleanliness and employee mask-wearing where they were the top scoring brand within QSR.

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**Krispy Kreme** ranked second in the QSR industry with strong performance across the board, winning the *Best in Category* award for the presence of sanitizers at various touch points within the store.

**McDonald's** ranked third in the QSR industry, demonstrating strong performance in all areas. The fast-food giant outperformed competition in ensuring restrooms are safe to use, winning the *Best in Category* award for restroom cleanliness.

### Grocery Awards:

**Whole Foods and Food Lion** led the grocery industry, with Whole Foods retaining its No. 1 spot from previous Ipsos studies and winning the *Best in Industry*. Food Lion ranked No. 3 in the grocery industry but emerged as a *Best in Category* winner for the presence of sanitizers at various points in stores, including at entrances, checkouts and in restrooms.

### Big Box Retail Awards:

**Best Buy** retained its spot as the top performer in the big-box industry, winning the *Best in Industry*. Best Buy also led the big-box cohort across several categories, including social distancing measures, sanitizer offerings and employees wearing masks and gloves.

**Target** showed improvement in its focus on health & safety, ranking second in the big-box industry and winning the *Best in Category* award for cleanliness.

**Costco** has consistently demonstrated strong performance across several waves of the Index and came in at No. 3 in the industry. Costco went on to win the *Best in Category* award for restrooms and barriers to enforce distancing.

### Consumer Banking Awards:

**Citibank** won the *Best in Industry* award for financial services, along with winning the *Best in Category* award in the signage, sanitizers, and wearables (employees wearing masks and gloves) categories.

**Wells Fargo and Bank of America** tied for No. 2 in the financial services industry, and tied for the *Best in Category* award for maintaining safety protocols in the exteriors of their locations. In addition, Bank of America won the *Best in Category* award for implementing distancing protocols.





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**Chase Bank** won the *Best in Category* award in the industry for cleanliness, jointly with Citibank. Both banks ensured high-touch surfaces are visibly cleaned by employees on a regular basis.

**US Bank** won the *Best in Category* award in the restroom category. In addition, US Bank won the *Best in Category* award for barriers, jointly with Citibank.

### Best Overall Brand Award Winners:

In addition to winning Industry and Category awards, **Whole Foods, Best Buy, Target, and Costco** emerged as the *Best Overall Brand* award winners. These brands demonstrated strong performance through the end-to-end customer journey, setting them apart from the rest of the 24 participating brands in the Index.

More than half of all American adults have now received at least one vaccine dose as of April 18, 2021, according to the CDC. As vaccination efforts proceed and more stores reopen, brands must continue to ensure consumers feel safe when shopping at their locations. For more information on *Ipsos' Consumer Health & Safety index*, contact [Stephanie.Thayer@ipsos.com](mailto:Stephanie.Thayer@ipsos.com).

### About the Study

Ipsos conducted mystery shops to measure brand compliance to these health and safety attributes across 25+ brands in 4 key industries to report on their performance. A random sample of 75-125 locations per brand were audited during this study, while ensuring geographical representation and a margin of error of 5-7%.

While the results presented in the study have a 90% confidence level, observations contrary to the findings reported in the study may be found at individual locations and should be used as an opportunity to further improve the customer experience at these locations.

### About the Ipsos Consumer Health & Safety Best Brand Awards

Each brand included in Wave 3 of Ipsos' Consumer Health & Safety Index received scores for their compliance to each of the health and safety policies observed by mystery shoppers. These policies were determined – and weighted – in accordance with Ipsos Bayes Nets (IBN) drivers analysis, which determined the COVID-19 in-store safeguards that drive consumer confidence and increase return visits.





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Each brand received an overall score derived from the weighted average of each policy compliance score.

**Best Overall Brand Award:** Ipsos calculated each brand's overall score as well as the mean and standard deviation for the set of scores across all participating brands. Any brand with an overall score greater than the mean + one standard deviation qualified for the Best Overall Brand Award.

**Best in Industry Award:** Ipsos calculated each brand's overall score as well as the mean and standard deviation for the set of scores across participating brands in the industry. Any brand with an overall score greater than the mean + one standard deviation qualified for the Best in Industry Award.

**Best in Category Award:** Within each industry, Ipsos calculated each brand's overall score for 9 categories: Exterior, Interior, Restroom, Signage, Distancing, Cleanliness, Wearables, Barriers and Sanitizer. The brand with the highest overall score in a category within an industry qualified for the Best In Category Award.

**For more information on this news release, please contact:**

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### About Ipsos

Ipsos is the world's third largest Insights and Analytics company, present in 90 markets and employing more than 18,000 people.

Our research professionals, analysts and scientists have built unique multi-specialist capabilities that provide powerful insights into the actions, opinions and motivations of citizens, consumers, patients, customers or employees. Our 75 business solutions are based on primary data coming from our surveys, social media monitoring, and qualitative or observational techniques.

“Game Changers” – our tagline – summarizes our ambition to help our 5,000 clients to navigate more easily our deeply changing world.

Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos is listed on the Euronext Paris since July 1st, 1999. The company is part of the SBF 120 and the Mid-60 index and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).

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The publication of these findings abides by local rules and regulations.

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