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New Study from Ipsos finds that 61% of Consumers Are Still Delaying Brick-and-Mortar Retail for Fear of Getting Sick

Ipsos Mystery Shoppers conducted in-store visits of over 5700 retailers across the U.S. and learned which brands are successfully implementing health and safety measures and which ones are not.

Washington, DC, June 3, 2020 — Today, Ipsos, the global research firm, announced the launch of the *Consumer Health & Safety Index*: an ongoing health and safety benchmarking study that evaluates how retailers across seven industries are operating amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ipsos conducted a two-pronged study, first surveying 2,000 Americans to understand which health and safety attributes are most important to consumers in the current COVID-19 retail environment, followed by thousands of mystery shops that measured brand compliance to these health and safety attributes across 45 major U.S. brands.

“The ability to deliver on health and safety efforts is now the most important aspect of the customer experience, and it will be for some time”, said Nick Mercurio, executive vice president and service line head of U.S. Channel Performance at Ipsos. “We found that 62% of shoppers would stop shopping at a retailer not taking health and safety seriously. Ensuring protections are in place to keep consumers safe, healthy and loyal in the 6-foot economy is the primary driver that inspired our inaugural *Consumer Health & Safety* index.”

Key Findings:

When deciding to return to stores, American consumers consider certain health and safety practices more critical than others. These include the consistent use of company-issued face coverings, managing the number of customers entering stores, 6-foot social distancing markers at checkout, employees visibly wiping down high-traffic areas, and plexiglass dividers at checkout. Ipsos uncovered several glaring gaps between these consumer expectations and what was observed at the stores:

- Employees at 25% of the stores visited in the *Index* wore face coverings improperly or not at all inside the store.
- Employees at 51% of stores visited were not wearing gloves inside the stores.
- 77% of the stores visited did not provide any hand sanitizing or hand washing solution inside the entrance.
- 82% of the stores visited did not provide any hand sanitizing or hand washing solution at checkout.
- 64% of the stores visited had no staff actively cleaning interior high traffic areas, such as carts/baskets, counters, credit card readers, doors, and demos.
- 31% of the stores visited did not have plexiglass dividers at checkout.



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- 58% of the stores visited were not observed to be managing the number of customers entering stores.

While there is definitely room for improvement, a few brands stood out among the crowd and offered superior performance implementing the health and safety measures of the new economy.

Whole Foods stood out as the health and safety all-star and was the top performing retailer in the study. Whole Foods demonstrated near universal compliance with associates wearing face coverings inside (98%), respecting 6-foot boundaries in customer interactions inside (91%), providing plexiglass barriers at checkout (95%), and offering contactless payment (87%) at the stores visited.

Costco emerged as the #2 retailer on *Ipsos' Consumer Health & Safety Index*. Employees at 83% of Costco stores visited wore face coverings properly outside the store, and employees at 95% of the stores visited wore face coverings properly inside the store. 94% of the stores visited had social distancing markers present inside the store.

Rounding out the top three performers was **Trader Joe's** due to their consistency and attention to the most important health and safety factors to consumers. Consumer research conducted by Ipsos confirmed that active monitoring of traffic and guest occupancy is something consumers value significantly. Trader Joe's far surpasses all the other grocery retailers in this area, with 94% of stores visited actively managing this process at the entrance.

As the economy continues to reopen, brands must take steps to ensure consumers feel safe when shopping at their locations. For more information on Ipsos' Consumer Health & Safety index, visit [here](#).

About the Study

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As a leading market research and mystery shopping firm, Ipsos launched the Consumer Health & Safety Index: a health and safety benchmarking study that evaluates how retailers across 7 industries are operating amid the COVID 19 pandemic and, more importantly, how they are performing against consumers' health and safety expectations. The approach was 2-pronged:

- Step 1: Ipsos conducted a survey of 2,000 Americans to understand which health and safety attributes are most important to consumers in the current retail environment
- Step 2: Ipsos conducted mystery shops to measure brand compliance to these health and safety attributes across 45 major US brands in 7 key industries to report on their performance. A random sample of 125 locations per brand were visited 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.

For more information on this news release, please contact:

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About Ipsos

Ipsos is now the third largest market research company in the world, 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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