



PRESS RELEASE

New Study from Ipsos Shows 82% of Consumers Concerned that Relaxed Health & Safety Protocols at Brick-and-Mortar Retail will Lead to COVID-19 Resurgence

Ipsos Mystery Shoppers gearing up to conduct thousands of in-store visits at retailers across the U.S. — from Trader Joe’s to Walmart and 7-Eleven to Taco Bell — to gauge which brands are successfully implementing health and safety measures and which ones are not.

New York, NY, July 17, 2020 — Today, Ipsos, the global research firm, revealed new data from their *Consumer Health & Safety Index*: a health and safety benchmarking study introduced in May that evaluates how retailers across five industries are operating amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ipsos first surveyed 2,000 Americans in May to understand which health and safety attributes are most important to consumers in the current COVID-19 retail environment. Now, with spikes of cases happening across the country, Ipsos recommissioned the survey during the first week of July, with new data revealing that consumers are even more concerned about their safety than they were in May.

“Wave 1 of the *Consumer Health and Safety Index* revealed that brands could be doing more to keep Americans safe. For example, 82% of stores audited across 45 national brands did not have hand sanitizing options available at or near checkout,” said Nick Mercurio, Executive Vice President and service line head of U.S. Channel Performance at Ipsos.

“Consistent and visible execution of health and safety protocols drives consumers to return to stores. The second wave of our *Index* will help brands measure where they stand against evolving consumer expectations, benchmark against competition, and take action to ensure the health and safety of their customers and employees.

Key Findings from the July Consumer Study:

More than ever customers are eager to see visible efforts from retailers to implement health and safety protocols. As the pandemic reaches the six-month mark in the U.S., there has been a slight dip in confidence from customers, weary of how things will continue. But, customers who feel businesses are adhering to responsible precautions are willing to return, and – as long as retailers are consistently implementing those safety measures – consumers will eventually find their way back to pre-pandemic normalcy:

- Grocery remains the most trusted industry across those measured, with 25% of consumers saying they trust grocery retailers the most for its health and safety protocols.
- 29% of consumers would stop shopping a retailer altogether if they knew the brand was not implementing health and safety measures.



PRESS RELEASE

- 27% of consumers would pay up to 10% more for products at stores they feel are doing a superior job ensuring their customers' health and safety.
- 94% of consumers say that "stores that are doing a good job in health and safety compliance will earn my business."
- Trust is highest among retailers that are making visible efforts in their stores to implement health and safety protocols, including clear reminders and signage, employees actively cleaning, and clear investments from the brand including company issued employee safety equipment.
- While 25% of consumers say they trust the grocery industry the most, grocery also ranks highest in implementation with 32% of consumers ranking grocery as "best at implementing health and safety protocols."
- Pharmacy ranks second on trust, whereas wireless stores, quick service restaurants, and gas stations are ranked lowest by consumers on both trust and implementation.
- Health and safety protocols remain the most important factor for returning to a store, increasing in importance from 42% in May to 48% in early July.

Similar to the first installment of the *Consumer Health & Safety Index*, Ipsos will be conducting mystery shops that measure brand compliance to health and safety attributes across major U.S. brands, including but not limited to:

1. **Grocery:** Albertsons/Safeway, Kroger, Publix, ShopRite, Trader Joe's, Whole Foods
2. **Big Box:** Best Buy, Costco, Home Depot, Lowe's, Sam's Club, Target, Walmart
3. **Food & Beverage:** Burger King, Chipotle, Dunkin', McDonald's, Panda Express, Starbucks, Taco Bell, Wendy's
4. **Convenience Stores:** 7-Eleven, Circle K, Kwik Trip, QuikTrip, RaceTrac, Wawa

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 or to get your brand added to the Index, visit here.](#)



PRESS RELEASE

About the Study

As a leading market research and mystery shopping firm, Ipsos is launching the second wave of the *Consumer Health & Safety Index*: a health and safety benchmarking study that helps you:

- **Measure:** Measure your brand's performance against current consumer expectations via mystery shops.
- **Benchmark:** Benchmark your brand against industry & cross-industry standards.
- **Take Action:** Access your brand's site-level compliance data so you can take action and improve.

The study is designed in two stages:

- **Stage 1:** Ipsos has conducted a survey of 2,000 Americans between July 7th and 8th to understand which health and safety attributes are most important to consumers in the current retail environment.
- **Stage 2:** Ipsos will now conduct 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 125 locations per brand will be 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.





PRESS RELEASE

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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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