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New Nationwide Study Uncovers Best and Safest Brands to Shop Curbside Ahead of the Holidays

Walmart, Target, Nordstrom, and Kohl's deliver best and safest customer experience among the retailers expected to be busiest this shopping season.

New York, NY, December 16, 2020 — Today, Ipsos, the global research firm, released the second wave of its industry-leading E-Commerce Experience Report: a mystery shopping study on holiday curbside offerings of major brands nationwide. As holiday shopping reaches a fever pitch and COVID-19 cases reach all-time highs, many consumers are looking for high-quality, contactless shopping experiences. Using the Ipsos' Mystery Shoppers' findings, this new report reflects how major U.S. retailers have continued to adapt to the pandemic and invest in their e-commerce infrastructure – specifically their curbside pickup offerings – as holiday shopping surges.

Surveying major retailers across the country, leading up to and shortly after the Black Friday holiday rush, Ipsos Mystery Shoppers unveiled which brands are excelling and providing a seamless end-to-end customer experience – from browsing online to purchasing and picking up curbside.

“Retailers, like every other industry, are hard at work trying to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic. What used to be a relatively common weekend activity for some, shopping in malls or large stores is no longer as appealing,” said Carlos Aragon, Vice President of U.S. Channel Performance at Ipsos. “In addition to speed and accuracy, it’s clear that customers’ health and safety is top of mind for every brand right now as we head into the holidays. Those that prioritize curbside pickup while making their customers feel safe, will subsequently continue to see more loyalty down the line. They recognize the gravity of this moment and are rising to meet the challenge.”

Key Findings

Some of the top brands in curbside pickup were as follows:

- **Walmart** ranks number one overall as it continues to perform above the industry average, offering designated parking for curbside pickup to customers accompanied by clear pickup instructions.
- **Target** is the fastest retailer at bringing out curbside orders with wait times less than half the overall average.
- **Nordstrom** ranks number one for contactless handoffs, prioritizing customers' health and safety.
- **Kohl's** is best for having items in-stock and available for pickup.
- **Dick's Sporting Goods** is also fast, with the second shortest wait time, while Cabela's/Bass Pro Shops are doing very well at having designated curbside pickup locations.



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Key considerations and opportunities for improvement

Despite the successes of some brands, the retail industry has room for growth toward a truly seamless, COVID-19-safe shopping experience for its customers. Even in the months following the holiday season, consumers will still be shopping – the COVID-19 pandemic has created a heightened demand for goods as America's access to services has become more limited. Creating a high-quality curbside shopping experience will be key to ensuring customers' loyalty in the months ahead. Ipsos' survey identified a few areas for improvement that retailers would do well to improve upon.

Out-of-stock items remain a significant problem: Retailers should clearly communicate what shortages they are experiencing and when they expect those items to be back on the shelves and available to customers. Roughly 23% of items were out of stock.

Wait times have increased: This study found that average wait times have increased by nearly 25% from a previous assessment, likely due to increased holiday shopping demand.

Contactless handoff happens less frequently than it should: Despite the strides many retailers made in offering safer shopping experiences, many shoppers still reported an inability to purchase goods without coming into contact with a store employee. Only 51% of pickup encounters were contactless.

For more information on Ipsos' E-Commerce Experience Report, visit [here](#).

About the Study

The E-Commerce Experience Report measures and ranks the end-to-end curbside experiences at major brands across the U.S. and reports on KPIs such as user-experience, likelihood to recommend service, and ease of use. Our approach: using data from 100 mystery shops per brand, we measure how well each brand is performing on KPIs. Our Drivers Analysis determined which curbside and delivery attributes are table stakes, which are key differentiators, and which are unimportant. Using this data, the Report weights and ranks the mystery shopping results according to what consumers value most.

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About Ipsos

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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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