

# What's next? Life after lockdown.

BLAZE HAS OUTLINED 8 TRENDS WE SEE INFLUENCING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN A POST-QUARANTINE WORLD:

## 1 An increased need and desire to belong

After a long period of physical isolation, more people will have a need to feel connected in safe and responsible ways. Clubs, brands, families and friend groups will take on an even larger role in peoples' lives. How can consumers connect with your brand and your products? How can you create a sense of community and belonging?

## 2 An increased need to feel safe

We will gravitate to products and brands that we trust and those that will help us feel secure. Consumers may be reluctant to try untested or unknown brands without a compelling reason or connection. If your brand is known, double down on what makes you a safe choice. If you are unknown, how can you reduce the risk for a new consumer?

## 3 An increased focus on health and wellness

Clearly COVID-19 impacts older demographics, but a surprising number of younger people have been negatively impacted because of underlying conditions or poor health choices like smoking, vaping etc. Additionally, long periods of isolation have created a greater focus on mental health and we have a renewed appreciation for the role that nature plays in our wellness journey. Physical and mental health will become a more urgent need and brands need to respond accordingly.

## 4 Normalizing of imperfections

Virtual life has given us a literal peek behind the curtain in many ways. We've seen our co-workers unshowered and unshaven. We know what Chris Cuomo's basement looks like. There will be a greater openness to letting people in and a stronger desire to see real life and all of its imperfections. We predict a movement away from airbrushed and photoshopped photography, an evolution in the role (and importance) of brand ambassadors and a greater interest in behind the scenes content of all sorts.

## 5 Strategic investment in key items

Less is more. Given the increased appreciation for the impact that small businesses have on our communities, AND a reduction in discretionary spending for many people, Americans will be more strategic in how they spend their money. Ultimately, we have less to spend coupled with a more mindful approach to spending what we have. Our purchases will also become more practical, focusing on what we need and what will last vs. what we want. We will also be considering how our investments impact our local communities. Fast fashion was already dying, this will be another nail in the coffin.

## 6 Greater adoption of technology

Whether they were ready or not, people across the globe were thrown into a virtual world, virtually overnight. Zoom birthday parties, happy hours and trivia nights have become staples in our daily lives. Companies are hosting global meetings with hundreds - or thousands - of employees using video-conference. We predict a lasting adoption of technology as a means of connecting those who can't physically be together. This presents an opportunity for brands to evolve the way they communicate with consumers and the way they distribute products and services.

## 7 Greater awareness of supply chains

Scarcity has never been a top concern for the modern American consumer. The hoarding and subsequent lack of essential items like toilet paper has forced us to think about supply chains and consumer demand in different ways. This global pandemic has put a spotlight on the risks of our global supply chain. We predict a greater appreciation of domestic manufacturing and--finally--the willingness to pay more for it. We also predict an increased focus on sustainability. How can your brand provide greater transparency of your supply chain and manufacturing processes? How does this help (or potentially hurt) your brand story?

## 8 Nostalgia

In a time of crisis and uncertainty about what the future holds, people will long for perceived happier, simpler times. We were already yearning for times past as we flocked to 80s and 90s sitcom reboots. As we emerge from this era, how can your brand evoke feelings of "the good old days"?