



Microsoft Advertising + Suzy

2021 Consumer Retail Trends

HEALTHY HESITATION

Consumers have a cautious optimism in 2021. They see the light at the end of the tunnel but understand that they need to have a healthy amount of hesitation along the way. How consumers see retail and ecommerce has shifted with the new landscape.

There's no surprise that digital adoption was the star of 2020. This newfound comfort level with blended experiences opened the door to the virtual world in ways we haven't seen before. With adoption comes new conflict and struggles against what used to be societal norms. The world we live in hasn't changed drastically, but consumers' views on parts of it have shifted or become more concrete. Income inequality, health and safety, privacy, and sustainability are just a few of the subjects where trend dichotomies have started to form. All of these culminate together to create consumers' healthy hesitation. Consumers want to ensure that as the year progresses, they are protecting themselves, their families, their health, and their finances, while maintaining connection and equality.

As we move into 2021, let's dive into the state of these retail trends and see where they are taking us.

RETAIL

THE END OF MORE. THE MOVE TO LOW
IMPACT CONSUMERISM IS HERE TO
STAY.

Retail

The end of more. The move to low impact consumerism is here to stay.

New Makers Market

Buy Nothing Movement

Small Business More Than Saturday

Liquid Expectations

Responsible & Value Driven Retail

THE END OF MORE. THE MOVE TO LOW IMPACT CONSUMERISM IS HERE TO STAY.

Consumers are moving toward minimalism and making sure that anything they do purchase is sustainable and has low impact.

The convenience of big box retailers conflicting with a desire to support small businesses.

CONSUMER FEEDBACK

27% of respondents said their shopping through independent, local, small businesses increased since March 2020.

35% more consumers are likely to spend money on home improvements or renovations in the future.

“Retail” is no longer limited to the typical staples we shop for – clothes, makeup, furniture, decor, etc. Building materials and home improvement have been added to that list, expanding to the masses. Our research shows that this new “I can do it” attitude isn’t going away anytime soon. Instead, do-it-yourself behavior will only increase, and consumers will gain confidence in their abilities to improve their living spaces in new and creative ways. Goal oriented search strategies that help you become discovered by customers will only amplify this trend moving throughout 2021.

NEW MAKERS MARKET

During the pandemic, sectors of society had time to fill. This led to an uptick in consumers experimenting with do-it-yourself projects and life hacks. Whether that manifested in personal joy, home improvement, crafts, or up-cycling, this trend is here to stay in 2021. Consumers see the value in doing it themselves and now know they can. And it all starts with a search.

BUY NOTHING MOVEMENT

Consumers are starting to seek resale and recycled solutions, which has led to a popular movement within affluent to middle-class demographics to form communities that share goods at no cost or sell used goods at low cost. This movement limits consumption, avoids unnecessary costs, and creates a hyper-local community.

SMALL BUSINESS MORE THAN SATURDAY

We used to shop only on Saturdays at a small business. With digital storefronts, we can do this every day of the week. In 2020 local businesses suffered, and consumers saw this and sought a way to help – the solution became to buy local whenever you can. It highlighted the importance of supporting your community and brought new awareness to consumers. This reversion to older patterns of behavior is going to be here to stay in 2021 as consumers continue to show support for local.

LIQUID EXPECTATIONS

During the pandemic, retail had to rise to the occasion and meet consumer needs in new ways. This led to some brands standing out from the crowd and excelling in the new landscape through superior digital experiences. But with exceptional customer-centric website or app design from some retailers, consumers' expectations increased causing a tidal wave effect. Soon people expect instant gratification and a seamless experience from every and all retailers.

RESPONSIBLE

&

VALUE

DRIVEN

Social good was in the limelight in 2020, and it won't be going away. With social good comes responsible retail, whether that's buying to support a cause, making sustainable purchases, doing more upcycling or buying used and vintage. Consumers are wanting to take a stand and are using their wallets to do so.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR AN ADVERTISER?

Overall, companies will need to strategically implement their new digital experiences and messaging to ensure their business stays relevant and meets consumers' needs.

An example of a brand leveraging retail trends is the UK's B&Q, whose "You don't buy a life. You build one." campaign recognized consumers' increased desire for DIY projects. Their campaign demonstrated how they could help consumers do exactly that – build the home they want. They utilized a direct messaging strategy, to make it clear to consumers exactly what benefits they offered and create an emotional response. Overall, with the right messaging strategy, visual approach, and timing, they created an impactful campaign.

CREATORS OF THIS REPORT



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ABOUT MICROSOFT ADVERTISING

Bing powers 37.5% of U.S. desktop searches¹ and 13.9 billion monthly searches around the globe², plus connects you with 44.2 million searchers that Google can't reach.

In fact, 27 percent of our clicks come from searches that are exclusive to the Microsoft Search Network³.

In the U.S., the Microsoft Search Network has 138 million unique searchers.

Learn more about [Microsoft Advertising](#).

1. Comscore qSearch, Explicit Core Search (custom), September 2020, United States, desktop traffic only.

2. Comscore qSearch (custom), September 2020, Worldwide, desktop traffic only.

3. U.S. click data from Microsoft internal data, July 2017.

ABOUT SUZY

Suzy: The Voice of Consumers.

A decade ago, we built the first social media companies to help organizations create value for consumers through meaningful content and transformative ideas.

Since then, the collective voice of consumers has spawned unicorns and crippled industries — rewarding companies who put customers first and destroying those who don't.

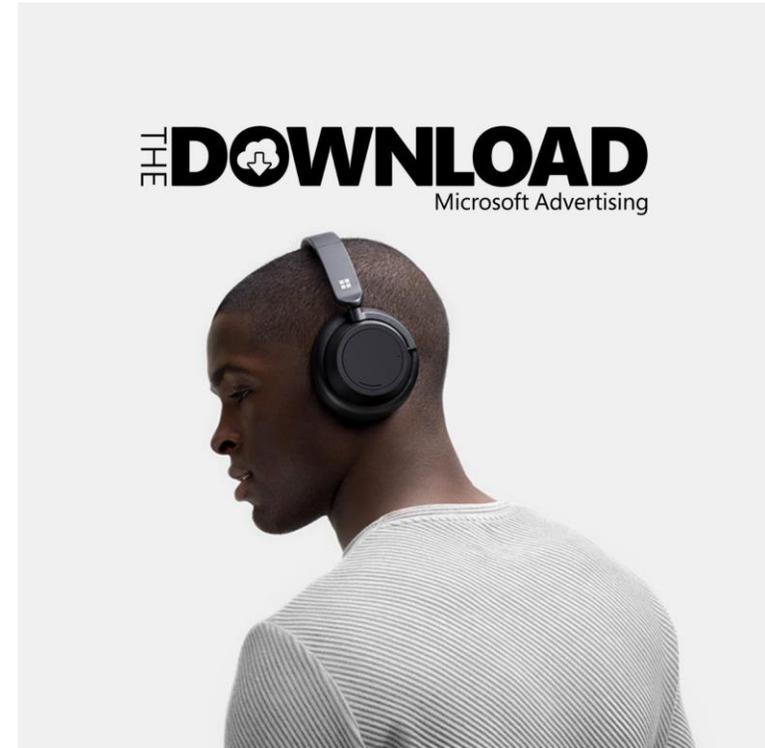
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