

The background is a solid red color. Scattered across it are several stylized, light red virus particles. Each particle is roughly spherical with several protruding spikes or legs. In the center of the page, a large, bold, white number '5' is prominently displayed.

# 5

**TIPS TO PREPARE FOR**  
**THE FUTURE**  
**OF RETAIL**

**Your guide to Coronavirus effects  
on Retail and Brands**

**ADCOCK**  
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# 1



## Different store choice criteria

Just a few months ago, shoppers chose their preferred supermarket based on aspects such as convenience, value and familiarity (how well they understood the layout, adjacencies, etc.). But as we've seen during the Covid-19 crisis, there are new aspects at the forefront of shopper's minds. How clean do they perceive different stores to be? What is the likelihood of coming into contact with the virus in a particular store? How confident can shoppers be regarding their physical well-being in any particular store?

What we don't know yet, but need to ascertain as soon as possible, is the new store choice hierarchy. Will shoppers pay more for personal wellbeing? If so, how much value do they put on cleanliness in-store? Will specific brands suffer because they are sold in store chains that have less than optimal public hygiene perceptions? Dirty trolleys, rubbish in the car parks and all sorts of minor triggers and cues could play a part.

# 2



## New heuristics will form

Before Covid-19, shoppers had too much choice to mentally manage. As a result, they used shortcuts in their purchase decision-making: Heuristics. Often the heuristic is simply the special offers on shelf. If there are 120 coffees to choose from, how do you decide? Firstly, look at the 6 on offer and then if one of those is suitable, buy it. By adopting this process, your brain has turned a 120-product choice into a 6-product comparison - much simpler and less mentally demanding. But most special offers have now gone.

If they don't return (and many shouldn't in my opinion) what new heuristics will shoppers use? Will it be colour, shape, a sub-category, or something else? One thing I am certain of is that brands need to recognise and be part of the new habits if they are to prosper or in some cases even survive.

# 3



## Shopping will be more System 2

Before Covid-19, shoppers could efficiently shop much of their preferred supermarket on 'autopilot', relying on System 1 to do much of the mentally heavy lifting. But after the end of the lockdown, many of us will literally have forgotten how to 'System 1' shop our local supermarket. Going to your local grocery store will, for many, be like going to a completely alien store, in a different Country - mentally, much harder to shop. We need to identify and remove as much friction from the purchase process as possible.

Imagine putting your UK brand into a supermarket where the shoppers are less familiar with it. How do you think it would fare? Quite simply, I believe brands need to focus on 1 clear reason why shoppers should buy their product. If you are a brand, what is the overarching reason why a shopper should buy you? The harder it is for you to provide that clear reason, the harder it is for shoppers to mentally decide to buy you.

# 4

## New purchase repertoires

For much of the Covid-19 crisis, shoppers' mind-sets have been shifted from which brand to choose, to what is available. Brand loyalties have been eroded and due, in part, to the ways brands and retailers have stepped up during the crisis, shopper emotional engagement will have changed. It's a well-known fact that a lot of purchases are made emotionally, and then merely justified using the rational part of our brain.

Before the crisis, brands understood consumer and shopper perceptions. Unfortunately, relying on historic data

post Covid-19 may not prove to be all that reliable. In my opinion, it will be essential for brands to understand where they stand emotionally as we emerge from this global pandemic. It's going to take new research, new interpretation and probably a fresh approach to understand what shoppers really think about specific brands and retailers. How have their brand values changed and more specifically, why? By 'why', I mean the real 'why?' not any rationalised platitude.



# 5

## An opportunity to ‘go back and start again’

After the hustle and bustle of shopping in grocery stores since the 1930s, we are now experiencing a period of reflection. During their rapid development over the last 90 years, grocery stores have seen dramatic changes, from self-selection of products to self-checkouts and click and collect. But this development has been very much a kluge (Definition: something that, while inelegant, inefficient, clumsy, or patched together, succeeds in solving a specific problem or performing a particular task). For the first time in supermarket history, we have the opportunity to take stock and

redesign grocery shopping, for the better: Better for shoppers, brands and retailers alike.

The challenge right now is, what do shoppers really want? What do brands really want? And what do retailers really want? Once we have the answers to those 3 questions, we can start to reset grocery retail for good.

# In Summary

To begin with, retailers and brands alike can benefit from understanding shopping habits, emotions and brand loyalty, (from a System1, System 2 perspective). We need to start looking at how new habits are evolving and what that means to our brands, categories, and stores.

We need to understand that habits form by making things easier for our brains and taking away any friction from the purchase

process. Simply put, you are much more likely to become the preferred, habitual repeat purchase if you are the mentally easiest to buy.

Not for a very long time have we had the opportunity to develop and nurture new and better shopping habits - for shoppers, for brands and for retailers too.

What an opportunity!

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## ARE YOU READY FOR THE 'RETAIL TOMORROW'?

**Because 'retail yesterday' isn't coming back any time soon!**

*Phillip Adcock*

**Let's talk**

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**If you think these 5 tips  
can improve performance,  
there's another 1,400. Let's talk.**

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