

PEOPLE Insiders Panel Reveals Shifting Consumer Patterns During COVID-19 Pandemic

89 Percent Are Monitoring Companies' Behavior Re:

Treatment of Employees - Layoffs, Paid Sick Days, Giving Back - with 65 Percent Saying This Will Likely Impact Future Purchasing Decisions

Shortages on Store Shelves Lead to Sampling New Brands:

- 81 Percent Are Open to Buying Brands They Have Never Tried Before

- 65 Percent Are Buying Brands They Don't Typically Purchase

- 54 Percent Welcome Humorous and Entertaining Ads

NEW YORK, March 26, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- American consumers are shifting their purchasing attitudes towards companies and brands during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a survey of more than 500 participants over a two-day period* released by *PEOPLE Insiders Panel*, which is comprised of PEOPLE brand enthusiasts. Among the key findings: More than 89 percent are monitoring the treatment of employees by the companies they work for during these difficult times – watching whether corporations lay off workers, offer paid sick days, give back to their communities, etc. Sixty-five percent of consumers expect that company actions during this time will likely impact which brands they decide to purchase in the future. For example:

"I am paying very close attention to how companies are treating their employees (how much time off they are providing, are they making them use sick days or not, etc.), what offers they are giving consumers (e.g. something for free, discounts), how they are giving back to communities (free products for moms or elderly people, free meals, sending supplies to hospitals, etc.)"

Most everyone nationwide has witnessed hoarding of everyday household items during the pandemic. Ninety-two percent of those surveyed have personally encountered empty store shelves and are not surprised that their favorite brands are absent or products that they regularly use are in low supply. However, 81 percent reveal that due to these shortages, they are more open to sampling new brands and products than ever before. In fact, 65 percent are purchasing brands that are new to them or ones that they don't typically buy. For example:

"I've been buying more expensive or luxury brands because other economical ones are sold out. It's been kind of nice to be pampered! Food items have been more international, and it has been nice to have new flavors" and "I've recently tried a new brand of snack pepperoni, which I only noticed because everything else on the shelf was already gone. I actually like it and plan on it being a regular part of my snacking routine."

Also, because the news has been worrisome, consumers are more receptive to advertisements that are warm and comforting rather than current. Fifty-four percent would welcome ads with a humorous and entertaining tone to help take their minds off the pandemic. For example:

"I like it when ads have a sense of humor. So much of the news (political, economic, and climate change) is so negative. I want to be uplifted and reassured that everything will be better in the

future" and "Humor is always good, especially during these trying times."

Participants are concerned less about their own personal wellness and more about the impact of this pandemic on the United States, the economy, and their local communities. They are also anxious about their families and finances, with 86 percent concerned about the availability of essential items that they regularly use. For example:

"I am paying attention to ads more than ever because a lot of my usual brands are disappearing off the shelves, and I want to be more cognizant of other stuff to look for."

**Source: PEOPLE Insiders Panel Study – Fielded March 23-24, 2020 with 510 Participants Surveyed*

About PEOPLE Insiders Panel

Formed more than a decade ago and comprised of 14,000 PEOPLE consumers who are recruited with invitations from the brand via print, website, and social media platforms, these PEOPLE enthusiasts participate in surveys, forum discussions, and special events. Seventy-six percent surveyed trust the brands and advertisers featured in PEOPLE – a magazine they find credible and trustworthy. Eighty-six percent trust PEOPLE to curate and spotlight the best new products, discounts, and special offers from brands and advertisers. Sixty-four percent say that brands advertised in PEOPLE are typically ones they use or want to learn more about.*

PEOPLE.com has produced 1,029 pieces of content since its coverage of COVID-19 began with traffic totaling more than 21.5MM sessions and 50.6MM pageviews. Coverage spans nearly every PEOPLE vertical including health, human interest, celebrity, parents, food, travel, crime, pets, style & beauty, royals, and sports – from breaking news to straightforward health explainers, personal accounts to inspirational stories, myth debunking to service for parents. (source: GA)

SOURCE PEOPLE Insiders Panel

For further information: Marnie Perez, Julie Farin 212 522 6300

<https://news.people.inc/2020-03-26-PEOPLE-Insiders-Panel-Reveals-Shifting-Consumer-Patterns-During-COVID-19-Pandemic>