



19 DISRUPTIVE TRENDS

Even before the novel coronavirus pandemic hits its peak, many consumers and communities have already changed their behavior in ways that will have lasting implications for brands. After digging into the statistics and research, CLM has singled out the following 19 top trends.

COVID TREND #1: DIGITALLY, WE'RE NOT GOING BACK.

"People have become more comfortable with digital offerings...Once they fall into the new routine, and get used to the ease of delivery at their door, such shoppers may be hard-pressed to return to brick-and-mortar, experts say."

Adrienne Pasquarelli, Ad Age

It takes a lot to get people to change their habits. Enter: a LOT. Nearly 40% of current online grocery shoppers made their first purchase in March 2020. With more and more people, even older demographics, embracing digitally enabled journeys and experiences, it's a virtual transformation with staying power.

COVID TREND #2: INNOVATION WILL TAKE OFF.

"When dystopian thinking and transformational thinking collide, great things can happen. We are about to enter the most innovative period in all history. When people have time to think and reflect, they also have time to innovate."

Thomas Frey, award-winning IBM engineer & futurist

Great disruption leads to massive change and creation. Frey anticipates that, "Millions of new businesses will be created, millions of new products launched, millions of new services transformed."

COVID TREND #3: TIME-TESTED BRANDS WILL SHINE.

"The older brands that have been around a long time and have the benefit of traditional print and TV advertising have built emotional brand equity up over generations, and they have an advantage."

Noel Murray, consumer psychology expert

Trust goes a long way. Especially in times of trouble, people gravitate to things they know and feel good about. Emotional brand equity is paying off.

COVID TREND #4: NEW INITIATIVES WILL TAKE OFF.

"Some will view this as a great time to switch careers, while others will think about starting their own business."

Bernhard Schroeder, Forbes

Everyone's life is disrupted. Layoffs are mounting. But radical change begets radical change. The business landscape looks different now, and new enterprises will emerge from it.

COVID TREND #5: DIY IS GAINING GROUND.

"You're seeing more people being more self-reliant."

Paul Marsden, consumer psychologist - University of Arts, London

More time at home means more time to learn new skills. People are baking, knitting, cooking, sewing, the list goes on. These newfound self-reliant abilities won't disappear when the virus does.

COVID TREND #6: AIRLINE TRAVEL WILL SHIFT LONG-TERM.

"Once businesses realize they can survive with a lot fewer face-to-face interactions, any proposed travel expenses will receive far more scrutiny."

Thomas Frey, award-winning IBM engineer & futurist

One business upside to a worldwide pandemic? Dramatically lower travel expenses. As people grow more familiar with Zoom and video conferencing, future travel expenses will be scrutinized and seem less necessary.

COVID TREND #7: SUPPLY CHAINS WILL DIVERSIFY.

"There is a sharp need for a more distributed, coordinated and trackable supply of components across multiple geographies and vendors while maintaining economies of scale."

Hamza Mudassir, Entrepreneur magazine

The old wives tale about not putting all your eggs in one basket? It makes serious business sense. It's now a concentration risk to go for the cheapest supply option centered on one geographical location like China. Companies will seek to minimize supply impacts by diversifying where they source products.

COVID TREND #8: RETAIL WILL TRANSFORM.

"Moving forward, traditional retail storefronts will be even more challenged in competing with their online counterparts."

Thomas Frey, award-winning IBM engineer & futurist

Brick and mortar retail was already in a state of flux, and this pandemic only accelerates that change. Some stores, like Costco, are clearing off shelves. Other retail centers are ghost towns. Purchasing power is going online. Do you have enough firepower, virtually?

COVID TREND #9: FOR DELIVERY BUSINESSES, IT'S TIME TO SHINE.

"Delivery people are in huge demand, and the entire delivery industry is one of the few bright spots in the freelance and employment world."

Thomas Frey, award-winning IBM engineer & futurist

Install a new delivery app lately? You're not alone. Companies like DoorDash, Grubhub, Instacart, and Uber Eats are swamped with orders.

COVID TREND #10: EDUCATION IS GOING VIRTUAL.

"We are now seeing the digital classroom being implemented on a global scale."

Thomas Frey, award-winning IBM engineer & futurist

With no other options, teachers resistant to online approaches have had to toss those preconceptions out. In the future, there'll likely be more toggling between digital and physical classrooms.

COVID TREND #11: HEALTHCARE IS BEING REINVENTED.

"The coronavirus will force a number of major improvements in healthcare."

Thomas Frey, award-winning IBM engineer & futurist

It's too early to tell exactly how, but pre-coronavirus healthcare will look different than post-coronavirus healthcare. This pandemic will force a number of major healthcare improvements, including in bio-medicine.

COVID TREND #12: SMART CITIES WILL RISE.

"Investment will shift in favor of smart cities as it will be critical to have them in order to better manage the next black swan event."

Hamza Mudassir, Entrepreneur magazine

What's a smart city? An urban area that uses the Internet of Things to collect data, then utilizes that insight to manage assets, resources and services efficiently. For example, major cities in South Korea used smartphones to tag the movement of the infected and alert the non-infected. Instant access to real-time data is critical in critical times.

COVID TREND #13: WORK WILL GROW MORE FLEXIBLE.

"Employers might benefit because employees are spending less time to travel and have more time to work—they'll be less stressed."

Simon Moore - CEO of Innovation Bubble

With more Americans working from home, employers are realizing it's not necessary to have everyone in an office to get things done. The move toward more remote offices will likely continue as employers find more ways to reduce overhead and ramp up productivity. Flexibility is everything.

COVID TREND #14: NEED FOR HUMAN TOUCH WILL GROW.

"What will happen once a majority of the knowledge workforce needs to work together remotely, indefinitely? It is likely that this shift will impact morale, productivity and mental health of workers throughout the globe and businesses need to prepare for it."

Hamza Mudassir, Entrepreneur magazine

As remote working and education become more common, the human touch grows more vital. Companies will look to add it digitally. A handful of companies like Humu, Github, and Automattic are leading the way on remote collaboration models. They may productize their insights and capabilities to help other companies.

**COVID TREND #15:
COMING AGE OF FLEXIBILITY, ADAPTABILITY & RESILIENCE.**

"As we dip into survival mode, we will all need to hone our skills in the area of flexibility, adaptability, and resilience."

Thomas Frey, award-winning IBM engineer & futurist

Some things are not easy to teach or to learn. But flexibility, adaptability, and resilience are the key skill sets employers will soon prioritize as they're hiring..

**COVID TREND #16:
SAFETY WINS OVER PRIVACY.**

"While consumers have grown more protective of their privacy and personal data in recent years, experts say that is changing during the current crisis."

Adrienne Pasquarelli, Ad Age

Even if it means giving up personal privacy, many are deferring to the government and leadership to keep them safe.

**COVID TREND #17:
THE NEW CONTAGION RULE BOOK.**

"We now have a new rulebook in place for dealing with future contagions. At the same time, setting the stage for future problems."

Thomas Frey, award-winning IBM engineer & futurist

Like it or not, this is our new worldwide emergency protocol in the face of a contagion. Is it the rulebook we want to play by?

**COVID TREND #18:
MIGRATION TO LESS DENSE CITIES WILL ACCELERATE.**

"If there was ever a moment where living in a major city becomes too much, it's this moment."

Aaron Bolzle, executive director of Tulsa Remote

Skyrocketing rents, lifestyle constrictions, and changes in the labor market have already lessened the appeal of major urban centers. Now, the rapid spread of the virus in tightly packed populations—and the increased effectiveness and acceptance of working remotely—make them even less desirable.

**COVID TREND #19:
THE HANDSHAKE IS DEAD.**

"One of our most sacred business practices, of 'sealing a deal with a handshake,' has been permanently tarnished."

Thomas Frey, award-winning IBM engineer & futurist

In many ways, this virus has suppressed human instincts developed over the course of millennia. What will take the handshake's place?

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