

# In Focus: Business Insights

## E-COMMERCE

### EShopWorld Identifies Where Brands Are Finding Global Audiences

- The company's global apparel and footwear e-commerce sales saw an over 120 percent increase in early June.

BY ALEXANDRA PASTORE

For companies that have invested in global e-commerce, sales only continue to grow. In May, data showed U.S. e-commerce had experienced as much growth over eight weeks as it had over the last 10 years. Now, new data from eShopWorld shows its brands have experienced still rising growth in the first weeks of June.

Data from the company found 77 percent growth in order volume in April

year-over-year, compared to a 113 percent increase in overall growth in May and 106 percent increase in overall growth from June 1 to June 15.

"Our data show that brands that have been able to pivot away from physical stores and double down on digital channels have been able to find significant growth amid the COVID-19 outbreak," said Tommy Kelly, chief executive officer of eShopWorld. "In June so far, cross-border apparel and footwear sales have seen significant growth, and our May overall sales volumes were above those seen during the peak pre-holiday Black Friday period. We expect this strong growth to continue as consumers around the world keep shopping from home due to concerns about the ongoing pandemic."

EShopWorld also identified the countries in which its U.S. brands are finding new revenue growth in May year-over-year. Malaysia topped the company's list finding a 359 percent volume growth followed by Singapore with 284 percent volume growth, and Chile with 237 percent volume growth. For the first weeks of June, top markets were Chile, Mexico and the Russian Federation.

Chile was also included on eShopWorld's list of top 10 countries consumer U.S. brands in April year-over-year alongside Israel, Ireland, New Zealand, Canada, United Arab Emirates, Australia, Belgium, Switzerland and France.

The company's data also found U.S. brand key growth categories in May to be apparel with an increase of 98.4 percent;

sporting equipment with a 96.2 percent increase, and footwear with a 60.2 percent increase. And further, between June 1 and June 15, eShopWorld's U.S. brands experienced a 121 percent increase in apparel sales, a 33 percent increase in sporting equipment, and a 122 percent increase in footwear.



EShopWorld has seen its strong volume growth in early 2020 accelerate due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

## RETAIL

### Consumers Resume Activities

- Findings from Coresight Research point to a slowdown in online grocery shopping and an uptick in online shopping for apparel.

BY TRACEY MEYERS

"Life beyond lockdown" looks a lot like it did before the coronavirus pandemic – barring that consumers are now more interested in shopping online for apparel and acutely aware of overall health and wellbeing while they're out and about, according to a new report by Coresight Research.

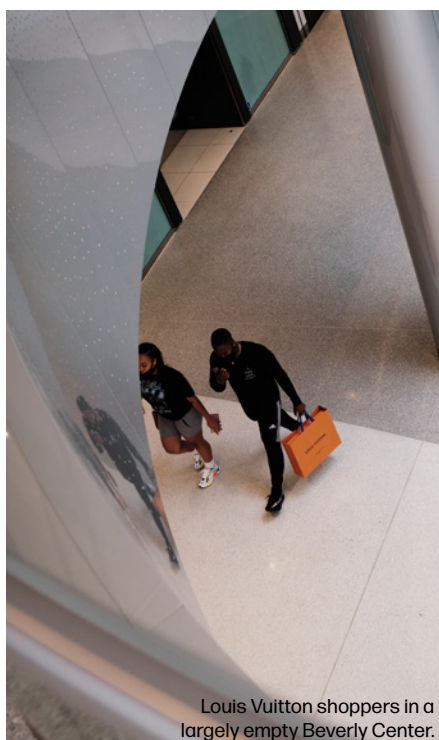
In its weekly report, online purchases of apparel remained the top option among the activities specifically related to spending in the past two weeks, while approximately one-fifth of survey respondents said they have bought apparel in a store in the past two weeks.

And though this figure is lower than the number of consumers who bought apparel online, it represents a six-percentage-point increase week-over-week, authors of the report noted, which may mean that shoppers could be back in stores sooner than anticipated.

Newly coveted activities, such as dining in a restaurant, jumped into the top four activities that consumers have done in the past two weeks, "with almost one-quarter reporting that they have done so, versus one-fifth when we asked the question last week," according to the report.

As far as buying beauty products or visiting open-air shopping centers, the data suggests that fewer consumers expect to do these activities in the upcoming two weeks than the proportion that had done them in the past two weeks, the report said.

Finally, there appears to be a slowdown in the online grocery market: The proportion of respondents who have bought groceries online in the past two weeks declined from 31 percent last week to 29 percent this week. The authors of the report added that expectations to buy



Louis Vuitton shoppers in a largely empty Beverly Center.

groceries online are down by around four percentage points versus actual behavior in the past two weeks.

Interestingly, responses about retaining behaviors from the crisis period appear to have softened. "Each week, we ask respondents which, if any, behaviors they will retain from the crisis period. This week, around six in 10 respondents expect to retain some changed behaviors over the long terms, down from two-thirds last week."

And as consumers head back to workplaces and prepare to be out in public more frequently, there is a higher regard for health and safety. "We have seen consistent or near-consistent upward trends in expectations to focus more on health and wellbeing and wear masks/gloves in the past couple of weeks, with around one-third of respondents expecting to do each this week."

"In addition, we saw slight decreases in expectations to shop less overall and shop more online [although the changes are both within the margin of error]. Around one-fifth of respondents expect to shop less overall, versus one-quarter last week. Some 27 percent of respondents expect to switch their shopping to the e-commerce channel, compared to one in three last week."

## TECHNOLOGY

### RetailNext Rolls Out ShopSafe Initiative

- The effort includes making store occupancy data available for consumers via an app.

BY WWD STAFF

With consumer and worker safety in mind, RetailNext has formed a collaboration aimed at aiding retailers who are reopening stores with data-driven technology.

"RetailNext, with support from a consortium of private enterprise companies, retailers, and property owners, has created ShopSafe – a not-for-profit enterprise focused on getting American retail businesses open again with infrastructure to deliver real-time occupancy data for shoppers to better understand precautionary measures in place," the company said in a statement today. "This free framework delivers transparency to crucial occupancy metrics to help guide safer experiences in physical stores."

The metrics include traffic per square foot, occupancy per square foot and average time inside a retail venue, among other data.

The collaborators include Qualcomm Technologies Inc., Intel, Foursquare and LiveRamp. Participating mall operators and retailers include Easton Town Center, Ulta Beauty, B8ta, Ted Baker and Neighborhood Goods. RetailNext said launch partners include Yoobic, MishiPay and Radius8 with "each delivering a differentiated solution for the ShopSafe retail participants." Activant Capital, an investor in RetailNext, is also a partner.

RetailNext said ShopSafe's real-time and consumer-facing data includes "occupancy and indications of thresholds as well as average time spent inside a given venue. The data will also be made available to those looking to integrate information into consumer-facing apps so consumers can more confidently plan their shopping trips."

The company noted that the data can be "readily used to understand capacity at consumers' favorite retailers in real time." RetailNext said the retail partners involved in the initiative plan to "deploy the

technology in a variety of ways, including integrations into the retailers' consumer-facing apps as well as other consumer apps that share store location details."

The impetus behind the non-profit effort, which includes the launch of a dedicated web site, is based on the impact of COVID-19 on the retail industry. "A vast majority of retailers have needed to close doors, leaving many unemployed or furloughed while sales stalled," RetailNext noted. "As the country begins to reopen, the retail industry is looking to stabilize and welcome shoppers back safely."

Alexei Agratchev, chief executive officer and cofounder of RetailNext, said as "America and the rest of the world adapts to the 'new normal' in the wake of COVID-19, retailers need a source of reliable consumer information now more than ever."

Agratchev said ShopSafe provides benefits "to everyone involved in the retail industry, giving peace of mind to consumers, employees, venue operators and retailers themselves during this period of gradual reopening and beyond."

For Ulta Beauty, the technology will be used by guests to check store occupancy. "As we reopen our stores across the country, we're excited to empower our guests with the best, most transparent data available," said Prama Bhatt, chief digital officer of Ulta Beauty. "For safety reasons, our stores will limit occupancy and we also know guests have individual comfort levels related to crowds. This initiative allows us to share occupancy levels with guests directly, enhancing our transparency in safety and ensuring guests feel most comfortable when coming to shop at Ulta Beauty."

RetailNext said retail venues included in the ShopSafe initiative "will identify as such, and consumers will have ready access to occupancy related information for the locations they plan to visit." The company said the technology infrastructure will launch at shopping locations, "but can be expanded to include other public venues such as sports and entertainment arenas, transportation hubs, museums and more."