

What Has COVID-19 Taught Us About Consumer Behavior?



Authors: Greg Stucky & Dave Lundahl, PhD

In this white paper, we take close look at shifting sentiments, shopping patterns, emotional impacts, and motivations during the unprecedented times of 2020—and we discuss ways to move forward successfully as we enter into 2021.

Table of Contents



Introduction

Page 3



Framework to Understand Shopping Motivations

Page 5



A Macro View: Outbreak & Response

Page 7



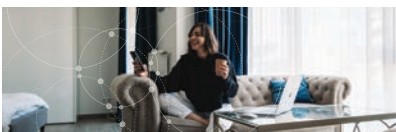
COVID-19 & Consumer Purchasing Patterns

Page 9



Using Consumer Emotions to Predict Behavior

Page 14



Adjustment to Acceptance to Recovery

Page 17



Moving Forward

Page 20

Introduction

COVID-19 has been a disruption unlike anything we have seen in our lifetimes. In fact, if you watch the news regularly, you might think that the world has never experienced a disruption quite like this. Stories and statistics about COVID-19 have dominated the news, all conversations, and impacted the way daily lives are lived.

In 2020, some of the ways people have adjusted day-to-day living include remaining at home, foregoing activities, and helping kids navigate the new experience of distance learning. Social interactions have largely been limited to remote methods like Zoom meetings or video chats with friends and family.

One activity that has been greatly impacted is shopping. With the outbreak of COVID-19, stores have changed their hours, limited the number of people allowed inside at any one time and have experienced unexpected product shortages—leading to dramatic

shifts in consumer shopping behaviors. It has been a chaotic time across the board, with twists and turns at every corner. However, it has taught us a lot about human behavior during significant disruptions.

InsightsNow has been gathering data from a trend-setting, forward-thinking set of shoppers called Clean Label Enthusiasts® (CLE) since 2016. In 2017, we formed a proprietary community of CLE shoppers and have been tracking their behaviors and implicit reactions to products, ingredients and claims since. This community has been an excellent resource to track changes in shopping routines and other behavioral reactions in response to the outbreak of the virus during 2020.

“...the outbreak of COVID-19... has taught us a lot about human behavior during significant disruptions.”



Using Clean Label Enthusiasts to Uncover Trends

InsightsNow's proprietary community of Clean Label Enthusiasts® consists of consumers who regularly inspect the label of every product they consider to buy to make sure that it is a clean product, and they have distinct points of view about ingredients, claims and brands. Generally, that means that they prefer natural products as opposed to something that uses a lot of chemicals and preservatives and can be considered harmful to the environment or people.



Clean Label Enthusiasts (CLE) represent a segment of one in three primary shoppers in the U.S.—and as much as half of primary shoppers in other parts of the world. They are the primary drivers for the mega trend in growth of clean label products. With a disruption like COVID-19, we asked ourselves whether CLE shoppers might change their behaviors in response to this pandemic?

To forecast changes in behavior due to the virus, we realized that we needed to go beyond tracking what these shoppers buy to measure the underlying causes (the whys) in behavioral change. This led to the design of our COVID-19 tracker to help us predict changes in behaviors as shopper (and consumer) emotions and motivations change in response to the great disruption of COVID-19.

Methodology

We conducted weekly engagements from 500 members of our CLE Community to gather ongoing quantitative and qualitative knowledge of the behavior changes and underlying motivations in response to the COVID-19 outbreak during 2020.

Framework to Understand Shopping Motivations

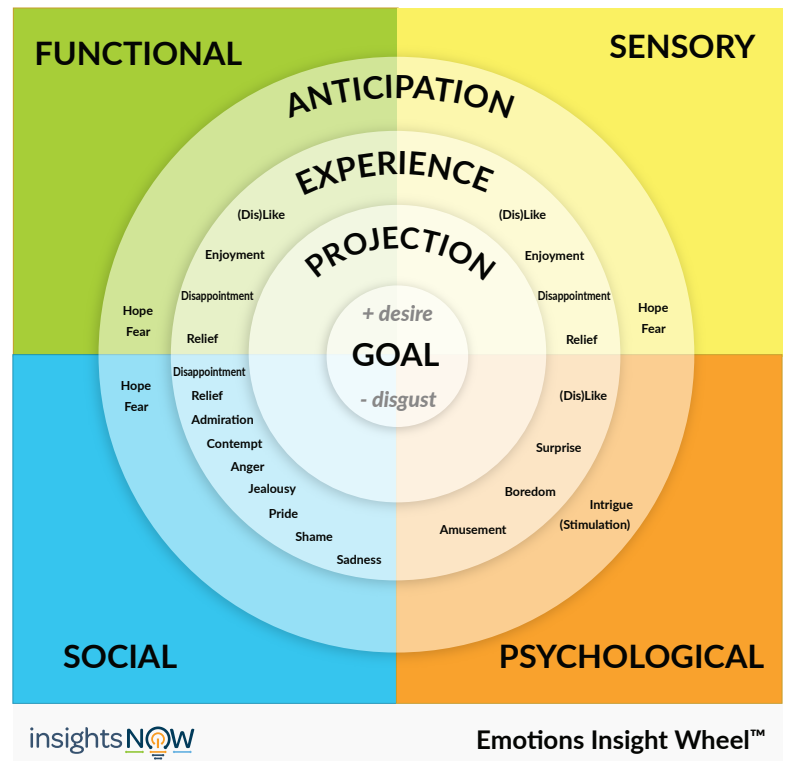
To improve our capability to apply the quantitative and qualitative to forecast future trends, we designed the research questions and interpreted findings by applying a proprietary behavioral framework we call the **Emotions Insight Wheel™** (see image below). What drove consumers to buy products when they bought them? We divided the behavioral motivators into four categories to help us understand the behaviors of our participants—and predict the changes that are still to come in response to this and future societal disruptions.

Functional

Functional motivators are best understood as basic human needs such as health and safety. In terms of Maslow's hierarchy, functional motivators provide the base. Behaviors borne of functional motivation are basically done out of self-preservation.

Social

Social motivators affect relationships with family and peers, and feelings about self. While functional motivators are done out of some primal physical



need, social motivators speak to the need for human contact and interaction and our beliefs on what will please others or ourselves.

Sensory

Sensory motivators, in relation to COVID-19 and other events, help people cope with the disruption created by the virus and the societal response to it. These can best be understood as impacting choices to enhance our comfort, create excitement and to feel better while managing through the fears and frustrations throughout the spread of the virus and all of the changes that have come with it.



Psychological

Psychological motivators help people to achieve balance in their lives. Psychological motivators are closely tied to mood, the most poignant example for COVID-19 times are the motivations driving the choices which help people alleviate the boredom which arises from extended time at home and limited interactions.

Working Hypothesis to Predict Changes in Shopping Behaviors

The Emotions Insight Wheel™ framework resulted in a working hypothesis for what we expected would be the underlying motivations of observed COVID-19 behavioral change. This working hypothesis drove the questions asked as we progressed from initial outbreak and response, through the present time where we are experiencing waves of virus outbreaks. This working hypothesis enabled us to learn, and refine our working hypothesis about what we can expect about future shopping behavior and how companies might best innovate to help shoppers and consumers cope in the face of market disruptions continuing into 2021.

A Macro View: Outbreak & Response

In general, the initial response to the outbreak of COVID-19 was psychological (as it would be with any such disruption). As the virus officially reached the United States specifically, people here were forced to confront the idea that this mysterious virus could affect them personally and everyone in their lives. Media outlets and news coverage was grave, with a constant barrage of terrifying stories and statistics. This had a tremendous psychological effect on people.

In fact, the news had a lot to do with the next human motivation response to the virus, which was fueled by functional motivators.

The chief emotion displayed was that of fear—the virus was new and mysterious, and mystery was not removed by media outlets that frequently gave conflicting information.

All the while, media outlets gave the message that people needed to stay indoors and clean hands frequently because the virus was so easily transferable. As a result, people became fearful not only of the virus, but also of social settings and other people who may be carrying the virus without even knowing it.

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In the beginning...

At the very beginning of the outbreak in the United States, our Clean Label Enthusiasts® (CLE) research community already reported on changes to their behaviors. As the virus started to spread and the public started to learn more



about it, roughly a third of CLE reported a change in buying behavior. Not surprisingly, they bought vitamins and supplements to boost immunity as they would for an outbreak of the flu, as the virus at first was portrayed as similar to a strain of the flu—and CLE tend to be proactive when it comes to health and wellness. It also makes sense that they did this before the orders to shelter in place were given. At this point, they were not yet confined to their homes with stay-at-home restrictions, and it's easy to imagine the thought process to boost immunity if one is going to be around people who may be sick.



After some time, our subjects realized that the “ounce of prevention” approach would not be enough. The virus continued to spread, and with it came images of people waiting in long lines at stores with empty shelves. People stocked up when they realized that they would be staying at home for a while. In fact, some people moved beyond stocking up to hoarding, which caused the shelves to be empty for other shoppers. This is part of the functionally-motivated response that CLE reported, with fear being the primary emotion that drove their purchases. The fear was felt in a variety of areas. People felt fear about going out among a crowd, about whether the shelves at any store would be stocked at all, and whether the products they ordered would be covered in COVID-19 germs and need to be disinfected. Everyone was being driven by the same fear of this unknown virus, and as a result, the primary goal in shopping was to make sure households were secure.

This phenomenon of stocking up revealed some interesting tendencies among our CLE—they reported buying more shelf-stable items, like pasta and canned vegetables. Stocking up on such items meant that people would be able to remain comfortably at home without having to venture to a store whose shelves might have been empty anyway.

Cleaning products became popular items because they were seen as effective in killing the virus. It's not surprising CLE reported stocking up on cleaning products, desiring to be proactive in fighting the spread of COVID-19. What was surprising was that CLE diverted from their normal practices. While they usually seek out natural products that are seen as good for the environment and people, they started buying more harsh chemical based cleaners and reported seeing natural cleaning products still available on the shelves. CLE themselves were staying away from the natural cleaning products, a large part due to media outlets reporting that only the harsher chemicals could kill the virus. Since fear was their new more important driver of choice, they favored disinfecting products that had ingredients reported to be effective in killing the virus.

COVID-19 & Consumer Purchasing Patterns

Changes in shopping behavior occurred for a variety of reasons and a variety of ways in 2020. Some of the changes were due to the availability (or lack thereof) of items, while other changes in behavior were a direct response to the spread of the virus and the recommendations of the governments to stay at home.

Purchasing

Clean Label Enthusiasts® (CLE) reported that they initially stocked up on items like meat, eggs and bread. It's interesting to note that even after the initial surge to stock up, CLE continued to buy these items during every shopping trip. The explanation for this is pretty simple. With the entire family being at home and more meals being prepared in the home, they simply were using an unexpectedly large amount of the "staple" foods and thus continually replenished the supply of these items.

It was a bit surprising that CLE also admitted to repeatedly buying salty snacks and sweets. This seems to run counter to the idea of buying healthier and cleaner products, but this is another facet of the functional motivators. With everyone being home indefinitely, buying more of the salty snacks and sweets enjoyed by the people in the home means fewer trips to the store. So while the products themselves aren't as healthy as their prior buying behavior, we infer from our CLEs that the more important health safeguard here was avoiding crowded stores. This is also understandable due to the fact that the entire family is stuck at home.

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Product Availability

For a period of time, it seemed like the shelves of stores were void of almost everything that people use regularly—and this led to a marked change in reported shopping behaviors throughout 2020. Many had the experience of walking into a store and seeing many of the shelves barren, and had to adjust to the situation. Motivated by images on the news and by the need to survive and protect our families, people had the urge to buy products that seemed most useful not only in



combating the virus but also in allowing them to remain comfortably, and indefinitely, at home. So how did CLE deal with this dearth of items on store shelves? Some of our findings are a bit surprising considering the tendencies of Clean Label Enthusiasts, while other findings simply fall in line with the population at large.

Paper products of course were some of the hardest items to find. People had stocked up on toilet paper, making it virtually impossible to find in any store or even online. So how did our CLE deal with the absence of paper products? Frankly, they dealt with it the same way everyone else did—by finding alternative products or alternative outlets to find paper products.

One of the big surprises was in the produce that CLE bought. Under normal circumstances, CLE seek out fresh produce. Someone who is interested in clean label generally seeks out organic produce untreated by pesticides. When the shelves at stores were bare or more shelf life was needed, CLE had to find some other way to get the nutrients usually derived from fresh vegetables. In this case, they turned more toward canned vegetables, to get the nutrients they seek in some form. Thus the move of Clean Label Enthusiasts to canned and frozen fruits and vegetables during this time.

Another way they dealt with the lack of stock at stores was to adopt a pioneering spirit and make their own goods. Specifically, our CLE turned toward making their own bread and their own hand sanitizer. Making bread at home not only allowed these consumers to avoid going to the store, but also to control what they put into their bread and keep it as healthy as possible. The same philosophy led to making hand sanitizer. News reports constantly put forth the message that cleaning and sanitizing one's hands is critical to fighting the virus. That, of course, provided stories of people who went to every nearby pharmacy and cleaned out the stock of hand sanitizer. However, with an online recipe and sufficient materials on hand, it is easy enough to create one's own hand sanitizer, and that is exactly what our Clean Label Enthusiasts did.

Beyond the Store: Social Changes in Behavior

It was not only shopping behaviors that changed among Clean Label Enthusiasts® once the outbreak of COVID-19 in the United States. They also reported the following changes in behavior.



- **A reduction or elimination of news consumption.** Without question, the news can be a source of anxiety. People felt enough anxiety with going to the store and trying to avoid contact with others who may have the virus. They didn't feel it necessary to subject themselves to more anxiety by watching the news.
- **An increase in verification of shared information.** Throughout our experience with COVID-19, it has been hard to separate fact from fiction. You could hear one report about the virus that was immediately countered by another report on another outlet. CLE didn't want to feel like they were adding to the anxiety surrounding the virus, and so they decided to start verifying information before sharing it with others.
- **Behavioral changes due to shelter-in-place order.** Suddenly people had to remain at home, which meant no one could go to the gym or a restaurant, or other places people might frequent. One of the behavioral changes was an increase in outdoor exercise. Since people couldn't go to a gym and had to deal with remaining at home, they found other outlets for exercise like walking or biking.
- **Shifting social behaviors.** Following the shelter-in-place guidelines has also led to a change in social behaviors. Socially CLE, and beyond, realized that they would not be able to see friends and family members due to the orders to shelter in place. As a result, they found new behaviors like Zoom meetings or video chat to keep in touch with family and friends from a safe distance.
- **Decrease in store trips.** As we have seen from the data on stocking up, another behavior that changed was going to the store less frequently. CLE reported shopping less frequently because they wanted to avoid the shopping experience that had changed so drastically. We will discuss the emotional response to the changes in the shopping experience later in this white paper.
- **Stocking behaviors.** In alignment with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, CLE reported stocking their homes with food and goods so that remaining in place would be easier. However, once they felt they had their own homes in order, their thoughts turned toward shopping for and helping others deal with the pandemic.

Shifting Shopping Methods

We asked Clean Label Enthusiasts® (CLE) for their primary method of shopping. Prior to COVID-19, 86% of study participants answered that shopping in a store was their primary method of buying items. It didn't take long to see a significant shift toward shopping online during the events of 2020. At some point, a little more than a third of CLE answered that they had moved to online options (either with delivery or pick-up at the store) as the primary shopping method. Even within those that shopped online, there was a shift toward ordering online and picking up at the store. There are several possible explanations for this.



- In many cases, picking up the shopping order at the store allowed CLE to get the items faster than online delivery, which became hard to schedule as it increased in demand.
- It also allowed CLE to support their local economy by ordering items from a nearby store and picking them up there.

Grocery delivery can be expensive. With so many people being out of work, budgets became tighter, and grocery delivery became a luxury that people couldn't afford.

As shopping in a store became a more frustrating ordeal (and there is really no other word for it), CLE faced another potential change. Before the outbreak, 86% of the CLE reported that they shopped in a store. After the outbreak of the virus, 45% of CLE admitted to an increase in frustration and worry with the shopping experience and this led to exploring other options for buying groceries.

In the first two weeks of April, the data show an increase in online orders both to be delivered to home and picked up in the store. From the first week of April to the second week, the amount of CLE shopping online with home delivery increased from 14% to 22%. For online orders

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to be picked up at the store, the percentage jumped from 4% to 13%. This can largely be explained by the functional motivators that had spurred behavioral changes since the outbreak of the virus.

Ordering online helped CLE feel more secure in a couple of ways. First, online ordering allowed them to know exactly what they were getting. Second, online ordering provided the comfort of less contamination. Going to the store involved putting on a mask, avoiding other customers, and then decontaminating everything back at home.



Nothing like a Home-Cooked Meal

The changes we see are not just in shopping habits in 2020, CLE also reported a change in eating habits in the home. Sheltering at home has led to a return to family meals, something that may have proved more difficult when family members were involved with heavily scheduled activities. CLE reported a return to home-cooked meals—often for each meal during the day. As a result, they began seeking out new recipes, and, in conjunction, they shifted focus toward buying local products. That could mean buying products from local farms and dairies or ordering the occasional meal for pickup from a local restaurant. While CLE want to remain safe at home, they also want to support the local businesses so the businesses will still be there once everything returns to whatever is the new normal.

Using Consumer Emotions to Predict Behavior

After a month of remaining at home, Clean Label Enthusiasts® (CLE) reported some significant changes in the motivation for buying products. While functional and social motivators remained static, our data show a significant increase in purchases triggered by sensory and psychological motivators. In fact, CLE showed a four-fold increase in purchases motivated by psychological factors. This tells us people are seeking comfort after the stay-at-home period of living in fear and uncertainty.

Emotional Responses to COVID-19

Throughout our research, we asked CLE about their emotions during 2020's events. Here we specifically highlight their emotions regarding the shopping experience both before and after the outbreak of the virus. They provided us with the following data about their emotional response to this new world that includes COVID-19.

Frustrated

CLE related an immediate spike in frustration—from 9% pre-COVID to 45% in the first week of April. Part of the frustration was due to the disruption of the shopping routine with stores changing their hours, their shopper capacities and product shortages. It took nearly a month of the new routine for people to get closer to baseline numbers in the data, but then there was another, smaller spike at the beginning of May. This was likely due to another depletion of products. Shoppers had stocked up, and after a month, the stock of items in the home had decreased. As a result, people had to return to the store, which led to another reported spike in frustration among CLE.

Part of this frustration can be explained by the online shopping experience as well. Shoppers were finding items unavailable online. In addition, grocery deliveries required more time than they did before the virus. Prior to the



outbreak, many places had a two-day lead time for home grocery delivery. That lead time became significantly longer as more people turned toward online shopping and home delivery. Basically everything about the shopping routine had changed, and that led to a significant increase in frustration.

Rushed

Before the outbreak of the virus, only 6% of CLE reported feeling rushed in their shopping experience. In the first week of April, that number jumped to 34%. Many stores limited the number of customers allowed inside. Sometimes this meant that people had to wait just to enter the store, and therefore felt rushed to finish their shopping so there would be room for those who still waited to enter the store. Another facet of this is that people just didn't feel safe in a public setting and wanted to spend as little time in the store (and potentially exposed to the virus) as possible.



Worried

Worry, like the other emotions, spiked among CLE in the first week of April. The biggest difference is that worry did not return close to the baseline like the other emotions did, but remained fairly high. We specifically asked CLE about worry in regard to shopping and found that worry is a prevailing emotion in part because of the communication we receive daily from media outlets. It's hard to be anything but worried when one is constantly being told how horrible things are. Worry was also tied to the new guidelines for social distancing and wearing a mask. Whereas previously you wouldn't spend much time thinking about other people while you shopped, now people were looking at other shoppers as something of a threat to their health and well-being.

"...worry did not return close to the baseline like the other emotions did, but remained fairly high."

Relaxed

When defining the baseline for feeling relaxed while shopping, we found that half of CLE were relaxed with their shopping experience. This is, after all, part of the routine for primary shoppers. In the first week of April, only 9% of the CLE answered that they felt relaxed in the store where they do their shopping due to the guidelines for social

distancing—and also to the visual cues triggered by the new guidelines, both in the store and in the media. CLE reported that they found it difficult to relax while seeing the stickers on the floor telling them where to stand. On top of that, everyone wore a mask, which is an unsettling visual. Everything about the shopping experience sent the message about the need to be alert, and, on top of that, media outlets repeatedly delivered the message that everything needed to be sanitized from a store. It's difficult to feel relaxed when everything around is communicating caution. Over time, more of CLE admitted to feeling relaxed in the store once they became accustomed to the new rhythm, but the number did not rise to the baseline level.



Satisfied

Our baseline for feeling satisfied with the shopping experience was an impressive 52%. That tells us that CLE were finding things they needed and generally just being content with their usual stores and routines. In the first week of April, that dropped to 12%. More than other emotions, the feeling of satisfaction rebounded pretty quickly as stores adjusted hours and restocked their shelves.

Acting on the Emotions of Consumers

Looking at our timeline, we find that once consumers move past the feeling of dissatisfaction, there will be a period of relief. This is a great time for businesses to innovate. Specifically, this is a good time to move to introducing extensions of product lines. People may not be ready for a completely new product because they are still being driven by functional motivators. However, that feeling of relief means they might be ready for a new angle on an existing product with which they are already comfortable. People will want the comfort and security of buying a known product while being open to something different than they have bought in the months since the outbreak.

That being said, your brand should be looking at new products during entry into the recovery phase, whenever that might be. At that point in the timeline, consumers will be motivated by hope and intrigue. That period motivated by hope will be a good time to launch innovations.

Adjustment to Acceptance to Recovery

After the initial psychological response, the response to the outbreak of the virus was largely the result of functional motivators. That is what led people to stock up on staple items and to buy the usual items in greater quantities. Following the emotional motivations model, we saw the core motivators shift as people started making more psychological and sensorial motivated purchases. This was primarily driven by the negative experiences people had by using products that were not their “typical” products because those were out of stock and they needed to use something else. Once the initial fears subsided and functional needs were met (and people felt well stocked up), Clean Label Enthusiasts® (CLE) shifted into a balanced of functional, social, sensorial and psychological motivators.

As CLE got into the rhythm of having the basics available and realizing they were cooking at home a lot more than usual, they started to become more and more bored with their options and began to seek out more uplifting experiences and thus psychological motivators became the dominant driver of product purchases. As

the new experiences relieved their boredom, they started to seek out new and more exciting sensory experiences including new flavors and line extensions to their favorite product lines.

Due to COVID-19 being socially transmitted, the social motivators stay at a low and fairly even rate—even through the typical summer gathering times as they were highly limited in nature. As we shift into the holidays, and people become more comfortable with creating shared social experiences remotely, we see the social motivators on the rise again.

“[CLE] began to seek out more uplifting experiences and thus psychological motivators became the dominant driver of product purchases.”



This cycle of shifting motivations is highly predictable and will repeat in similar (but faster sequence) with each subsequent set of closures/stay at home orders, and reopening sequences.

As we approach the one year mark of inception and the ninth month since the first big shutdown in the United States, we are still a long way from recovery. We will continue to see fast cycles as we experience more shutdowns and re-openings and added focus on keeping people safe.



Recommendations for Product Innovation Success

During challenging times, innovation is still the key to successful business. Companies who are able to adjust to the quickly shifting (yet predictable) buying motivations will see more success than those who are less nimble.

Address Consumer Motivators

We have seen the various areas that motivate action on the behalf of the consumer, and can get a sense of how they will move as the world continues to deal with a disruption. Address those motivators in both marketing communication and product and service innovations. If your consumers are dealing with fear and uncertainty, what can you do to provide some solace? If your consumers are experiencing a feeling of relief, they will start to seek out sensorial and psychological changes, what new ways can your products uplift yet continue to provide the comfort they expect? As social limitations are in flux, creative ways to make longed for social interactions possible in a safe yet creative way will drive new people to your brand.

Prepare for Recovery

It may not seem like it now, but we will recover from this, just as we have recovered from other crises in the past. COVID-19 is a part of our existence now, for better or worse. We have to accept that and focus on how to keep the innovation engines in our companies going in a strong yet smart manner.

- **Monitor changes in consumer**

motivation. When you know what is motivating your consumer, you can align your products and services to their motivations. When you have insight into what's coming next, you are in a better position to place your products to address the motivators as we move through the timeline. Meeting your customers where they are at any given time is always important, but it is perhaps more important when the customers are dealing with something as specific as a pandemic.



- **Prioritize short-term innovations and communications.** When you understand your consumer's motivations, you can quickly respond to address the changes by adjusting your messaging, marketing and products. These motivation changes will cycle through a similar sequence each time we experience spikes in COVID-19 cases. Therefore, being prepared for making quick shifts in communication will serve to always ensure your products are aligned with the current core motivation.
- **Treat the current fluctuations as the “new normal.”** No one really knows what the long term ‘new normal’ will look like. However, we do know a few things that will be changed for the extended near future; wearing masks—not just for protection, but as a integrated part of our daily fashion. Masks are intimately tied to our self social identification, and their presence or absence will cue concern and fear based on the context. Therefore understanding how and when to integrate the use of masks into your messaging will be important to help you connect with people in an authentic manner.
- **Heightened health concerns.** Focus on health and wellness will continue to see a strong focus in life and now more than ever people are willing to try new ways to improve and protect their health. This means we will see continues growth in all health and wellness categories like plant based meats and clean label products..
- **Social pushback.** As more and more people are affected and more cycles of government led restrictions are put in place, the desire for greater social interaction will become more common. Because of the strong lack of trust, we will see surges in groups of people looking to non-government groups for answers—finding new groups and companies to trust. Providing an avenue for constructive conversation will lead to new insights and help to fuel behavioral whitespace discovery. Now more than ever people want to talk about what isn't working and what they need. Harnessing this desire to have a voice, will provide an incredible depth of insights.

Moving Forward

Our Clean Label Enthusiasts have provided us with a lot of usable insights about emotions and their response to COVID-19. The question then is how best to use the data to help your brand move forward in 2021 and beyond through disruption like this one. No doubt your business has been greatly affected by this virus, but knowing how people have responded to this disruption will help you know how to move forward whenever the next disruption occurs.

Leverage Functional Motivators

As we have seen, functional motivators have driven behaviors ever since the outbreak of the virus and the subsequent social changes. People will focus on basic needs until the fears subside—which will take a while. It is important that you use that in your marketing communications. Specifically, highlight the health and wellness aspects of your product, whether that be vitamins and minerals in your product or the health and wellness benefits your product provides. If people feel that your product will help them stay well even as vast numbers of people fall ill, they will be more likely to choose your product over your competitors' products.

Highlight Comfort Products

It's no surprise that people have sought out comfort products—especially foods, throughout this whole process. After all, they have remained at home for months, and they have the psychological need for products that are familiar and provide some sense of the way things used to be. While it's only been a matter of months, it feels like a long time since the way things used to be. As a result, people seek products that provide some comfort and some sense of normalcy. In whatever area your product is, it is important to provide some comfort to your customers who have dealt with the psychological aspects of the virus for so long.



Leverage Nature-Related Contexts

Our data show us that people will be more open to outdoor activities once everything opens up again. They have an underlying fear of remaining in an enclosed space for an extended period of time. In response to this fear, we have seen restaurants add patio dining to their space. Other businesses, like nail salons, have found a way to move their business outside to accommodate their customers. Open spaces provide some relief while enclosed areas provide anxiety.



Prepare Product-Line Extensions for Sensory-Motivated Purchases

As people make more purchases based on sensory motivators, the message they send is that they continue to want what is comfortable and familiar. After all, we're all still in something of a survival mode with purchases being driven by functional motivators. However, since consumers are increasing their sensory-motivated purchases, they are sending the message that they're ready to move beyond strictly functional purchases to things that bring pleasure. While they may not be ready to purchase a new product or a new brand, this tells us that they want to remain with a known brand, but seek out a variation of a known product. This is where you need to position yourself with a product-line innovation to meet the needs of the consumer as they move through the timeline.

Start Innovating

Starting innovations with the next great societal disruption will be tricky. When a good percentage of the population is affected by something like a virus, it may be hard to think about product innovation. However, you really want to start innovating as soon as the disruption occurs. Clean Label Enthusiasts have shown us a great deal from the long duration with COVID-19. Ultimately, the world will approach something like normalcy. Consumers will move beyond all the emotions that they felt initially and shift toward feelings of intrigue and hope, which indicates a willingness to try new products. Whatever your innovation is, you want to be ready to release it when consumer purchases indicate a move toward hope and intrigue.

Conclusion

While dealing with COVID-19 in 2020, the news coverage and the restrictions have brought a lot of negativity into our lives. Our research of Clean Label Enthusiasts® has taught us a lot about how people deal with a disruption. It is truly vast in scope. We have learned what emotions motivate consumers and, as a result, we have learned how best to position products to address consumers where they are in a disruption timeline. While we certainly do not wish for another disruption, we know another one will come in the future. The next disruption will affect your brand, but using predictive insights into consumer behavior based on key motivators will help you be more ready to deal with disruption—and meet your consumers where they want to be met with your products and services in 2021 and beyond.

Understanding consumer motivations in the face of disruption is key to your product's success.

Learn more: info@insightsnow.com, 541.757.1404

About Author Dr. David Lundahl, CEO & Founder, InsightsNow

Dr. Dave Lundahl is passionate about fostering innovation to create a cleaner, healthier, happier world. He is an entrepreneur—founding companies that follow this passion by providing consumer insights for faster and more successful innovation. Dave has held many industry leadership positions, written for various publications, and is sought for speaking engagements on topics that align with his passions. He served as a professor working in food product innovation at Oregon State University before starting InsightsNow in 2003. Dave holds a Master of Science degree in Statistics and a Doctorate in Food Science & Technology.

About Author Greg Stucky, CRO, InsightsNow

Greg Stucky has focused his career on the development of new methods, techniques and services for research innovations. His deep experience in the application of consumer behavior to product innovation has garnered industry attention and awards, with work featured in Harvard Business Review, the LA Times, ESOMAR World, and other industry publications. Greg has pioneered cue signals research, an approach where identifying product cues which motivate specific behaviors helps develop successful new products and brands. At InsightsNow, he is responsible for the growth of new business initiatives. Greg holds a Master of Science degree in Food Science & Technology from Oregon State University.

About InsightsNow

InsightsNow, an award-winning behavioral research firm, partners with companies across a wide array of industry verticals to accelerate marketing, branding and product development decisions for disruptive innovations achieving a cleaner, healthier, happier world. Insights are provided via custom solutions and assisted DIY tools based on proprietary behavioral frameworks to help find answers faster, improving your speed-to and success-in market.