

Editorial: *To Make the First Step in the Necessary New Journey, Harmonizing Efficiency and Resiliency... and Not Only*

There is a real need of creativity in these times of interminable unpredictability. As we know, the novel and useful ideas are considered creative, but sometime when forecasting the potential creativity of their initial ideas creators are exhibiting myopia (overlooking some of their most promising initial ideas), that is why it is important to make the difference between the most promising initial ideas (selecting which initial idea to pursue on the basis of the first instinct, moderating the creative final idea accordingly), and going after one of the more abstract ideas (resisting deliberately the attraction of concrete initial ideas), assuming the possibility of rejecting some of the best initial ideas without ever knowing it (not forgetting about motivation's role in driving the expected results, the difference between the novelty's role and the usefulness role in forecasting potential creativity, and so on). (Berg, 2019) Where are you ideas' creators to thank you for your contribution to the future of society by identifying the direction we are moving to, being better? We really need to make that first step in a necessary long journey.

At the end of June this year a Sr. Digital Marketing and Brands Manager at a staffing and recruiting software company from U.S. showed in an article – entitled “*There is No Going Back to Normal: How Jobs & the Workplace will be Affected Permanently*” – how companies and their way of operation was disrupted by COVID-19 pandemic, and referred to some of the shifts at the workplace. One of the aspects approached within this framework was, for instance, on the job medical screening, before entering a workplace, being given some examples (such as Amazon, Walmart, Home Depot and Starbucks), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control encouraging employers (who are legally permitted) to check the temperature of (all) their employees. (Roeslmeier, 2020)

Very recently, Gartner's representatives confirmed the persistence of the volatility and uncertainty within the context of market' shift << *from the “recovery” to “renewal” phases of the pandemic* >>, and underlined the imperative of considering this instability (by CMOs) and focusing on flexible and adaptive plans accordingly. (Blum, 2020) They showed how – within the context of the major changes in consumer buying habits prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic – brands need to adapt accordingly (*by updating their fulfillment strategies, refocusing their ad spend and using insights from category differences*). (Ramaswami, 2020) On the other hand, a new CB Insights report underlined: the major supply chain disruptions caused by Covid-19 in the global economy, showing that in order to address current market uncertainty there is a real need of supply chain resilience which is promoted by a rising ecosystem of technology-focused trends and solutions; how they used the NExTT (Necessary, Experimental, Transitory, or Threatening) framework in order to analyze the industry adoption and market strength of the emerging supply chain and logistics tech trends. This CB Insights report focused in the first place on retail and consumer product supply chains (emerging trends such as: autonomous drones and

vehicles providing efficient and contactless last-mile delivery for retailers; robotic fulfillment solutions to meet the growing demand for speedy online order fulfillment etc.).

It was also interesting to note another new CB Insights report with regard to the fight to secure sellers for the online platforms made more shoppable thanks to the different models (like more tailored marketplaces, social platforms etc.), and this within the more intense growing of the competition for e-commerce shoppers. This report examined how (Canada-based) Shopify (e-commerce software provider leading the market for SMBs, and being ranked second behind Amazon according to its estimates concerning the powering of the e-commerce sales in the US) is expanding its offers (as shown in the figure below) in marketing and sales channels, order transaction, and order fulfillment.



Figure no. 1: Shopify's approach of expanding its offers

Source: *How The Leading E-Commerce Platform For Small Businesses Is Expanding Its Retail Footprint*, CB Insights, July 9, 2020 (work cited)

Also very recently, the Eglobalis managing director highlighted companies' need of taking a faster pathway toward their digital transformation, considering the radically customer behavior's shift toward online purchases, making reference within this framework to a recent AfterPay Insights' survey of customers in Germany, The Netherlands, and Norway, which revealed that the primary motivator to buy groceries online are now safety and health concerns. (Saltz Gulko, 2020) AfterPay Insights' research confirmed on June 16, 2020 that *"Food and Grocery e-commerce booms and growth is driven by digital-savvy consumers' necessities rather than desires"*, making differences between different the first period of time (when lockdowns within the COVID-19 pandemic were strict; consumers' orders out of bare necessity) and the second (when restrictions were gradually eased and worries were reduced; both coming back to the routine of visiting physical stores, and realizing the convenience of online Food and Grocery shopping, acting accordingly). Analyzing these consumers' recent reasons to buy Food and Groceries online (seeing them as *very rational, more or less forced upon them, and less sustainable*), they underlined the merchants' growth opportunity to attract new consumers, and keep them coming back by attaching more inspirational and emotional values to their shopping experience (see in the picture below what drives consumers to buy Food and Groceries online versus other categories, considering both the importance for purchases in general, and the

importance for Food and Groceries purchases). Just a few days later (Amsterdam, June 22, 2020), they announced that “Consumers state that they have made fewer e-commerce purchases in June, slowing down overall growth rates since mid-March” (on the basis of responses from more than 19.000 consumers in The Netherlands, Germany and Norway over a period of three months). (MarketScreener, 2020)

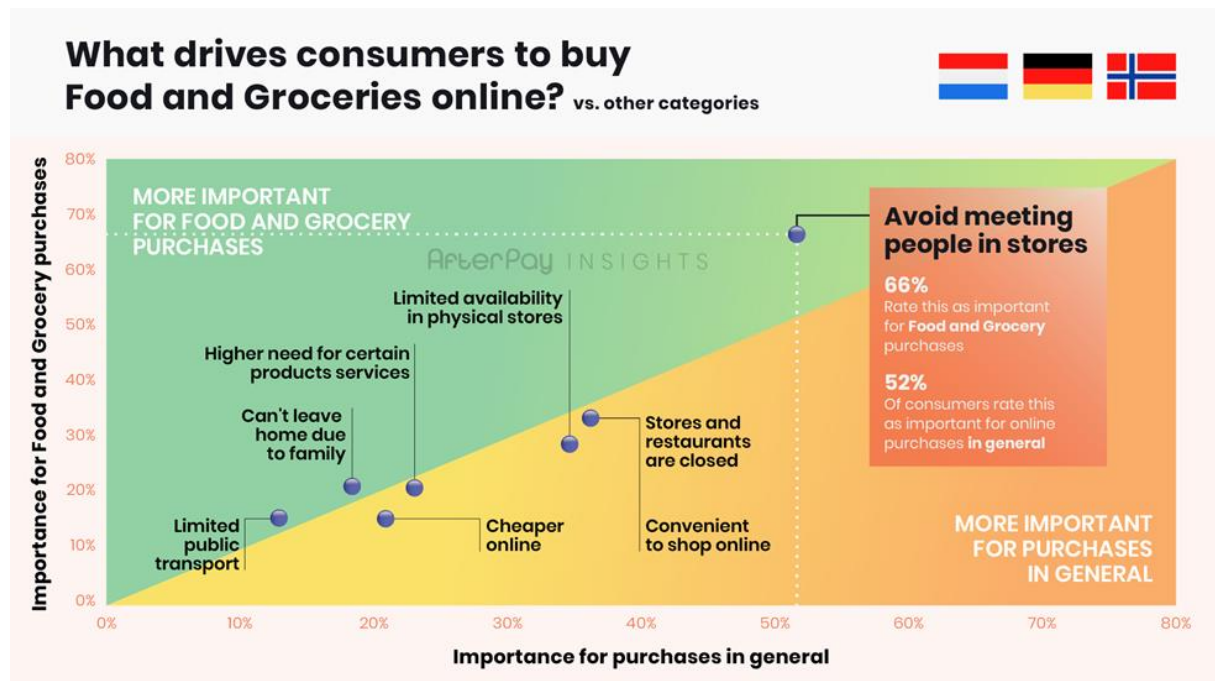


Figure no. 2: What drives consumers to buy Food and Groceries online versus other categories

Source: Food and Grocery e-commerce booms and growth is driven by digital-savvy consumers' necessities rather than desires, AfterPay Insights, June 16, 2020, updated on June 19, 2020 (work cited)

According to the “YPO Chief Executive COVID-19 Global Survey”, June 4, 2020 (YPO being a global leadership community of more than 29,000 chief executives in 130 countries; their organizations combined contributing USD9 trillion in annual revenue), the changes in consumer behavior was identified as the second greatest obstacle (44% of respondents) to their business's viability, while the supply chain disruptions (21% of respondents) were identified as the fifth greatest obstacle. The first identified greatest obstacle was the diminished demand for their company's products and services (50 % of respondents), while other identified greatest obstacles were as follows: operating restrictions from government (32% of respondents), cash flow issues (28% of respondents), ability to ensure employee health and physical safety (17% of respondents), decreased access to capital (13% of respondents), difficulty in getting employees back to work (12% of respondents), and other (6% of respondents). (Dolan, 2020)

As McKinsey's representatives highlighted in June this year: “The world is looking not just for new things but also for new ways of doing things (especially on the people side, where we need new behaviors, long-term rather than short-term), capabilities, and work ethics... The

reality is that many or even most business leaders made choices over the past decades that traded resilience for a perceived increase in shareholder value. Now may be the moment to consider that the era of chipping away at organizational resilience in the name of greater efficiency may have reached its limits. This is not to say that there are no efficiencies to be sought or found, but more that the tradeoff between efficiency and resiliency needs to be defined far more clearly than it has been in recent years”. (Levy et al., 2020) Without doubt, they have perfectly right.

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