HOW WE SHOP, LIVE AND LOOK 2020
2020

THE YEAR THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

There’s no question, 2020 will be remembered as the year that changed everything. The global Covid-19 pandemic has transformed every aspect of our lives: how we shop, live, socialise and work.

It has been a year in which people’s homes truly became their castles. We couldn’t venture out into the world, so we brought the world into our homes. We’ve stayed in, hunkered down, decked out and spruced up our living spaces.

As well as reconfiguring our living spaces as offices, schools and gyms, we’ve treated ourselves to new technology, from coffee machines to TVs. We’ve rediscovered forgotten pleasures such as letter writing. And we’ve freed ourselves from the tyranny of the waistband by embracing comfortable clothing.

No one chose to have the year we’ve had. But we’ve accepted these changes with pragmatism and humour. We’ve brought holiday vibes to our gardens by buying pizza ovens and paddling pools. And the lockdowns have caused what we’re calling the Netflix Effect. Sales of chess sets soared as lockdowns began. Sales of confetti filled balloons. And the lockdowns have caused what we’re calling the Netflix Effect. Sales of chess sets soared as lockdowns began. Sales of confetti filled balloons.

As the country began to adapt to life post-lockdown, we saw a surge in customers looking to revamp their homes and wardrobes with bookings for home design and personal styling appointments soaring at John Lewis.

Simon Coble
Trading Director for John Lewis

DATE NIGHT?

Date night in a fancy restaurant was off the agenda for this year’s Valentine’s Day with many using it as an excuse to throw a party. Valentine’s themed decorations were up 23% including Valentine’s heart bunting and heart-shaped confetti filled balloons.

FREED OURSELVES FROM THE TYRANNY OF THE WAISTBAND

We freed ourselves from the tyranny of the waistband and we became comfortable keeping it casual. With many of us working from home, sales of loungewear and jeans grew by 1,310% compared to May 2019.

2020: YEAR OF THE RAINBOW

Bright colours dominated homes and wardrobes across the country as Brits embraced the rainbow as a sign of resilience and hope in support of our NHS and key workers. Sales of women’s fashion lines featuring rainbow doubled at John Lewis while rainbow crafting kits to keep kids entertained flew off the shelves and sales of rainbow jigsaw puzzles were up 373%.

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This year, we have had to make the most of many a night spent ‘in’, from making these more enjoyable with homemade feasts or treating ourselves to new cushions for the sofa, our living areas have become our sanctuaries.

We spent hours binge-watching our favourite shows on Netflix and 2020 saw chess sets jump 121% as the Queen’s Gambit encouraged check mate, while sales of berets soared 65%, a firm favourite of Emily in Paris. The release of the new series of The Crown saw sales of chintzy floral curtains and patterned upholstery up 20% since mid-November.

"This has been the year that we’ve seen customers opting for the ‘classics’ with high demand for Monopoly and Scrabble as we sought for ways to keep busy during the lockdowns. The release of the Queen’s Gambit in October saw many of us inspired to brush up our checkmate skills and demand for Chess Sets soared with over double the sales in comparison to the same time last year.”

NICOLETTE KELLEHER
Assistant Buyer, Toys, John Lewis

20%+

PATTERNED UPHOLSTERY
Chintzy floral curtains and patterned upholstery sales were up 20% in November, following the launch of Series 4 of The Crown.

20%+

CHESS SETS
2020 saw chess sets jump 121% as the Queen’s Gambit encouraged check mate.

65%+

BERETS
Sales of berets soared 65%, a firm favourite of Emily in Paris.

60-70%*

Online Sales at John Lewis

55%*

Mobile and desktop traffic

40%*

Before pandemic

41%*

Tablet traffic down

We have been shopping online more this year and online sales at John Lewis now accounts for 60-70% of sales, before the pandemic it was 40%.

We have been using our mobiles and desktops more for online shopping this year with traffic up 53% and tablet traffic down 41% compared to last year.

As the daily commute has become a distant memory, online orders on Johnlewis.com are now spread throughout the day from 11am - 4pm compared to last year when orders were mainly placed between 7pm - 10pm.

More orders being delivered to our front doors than 2019

55%+

We all gave a little love from afar this year and 55% more online orders were sent as a gift compared to 2019.

25%+

Online orders are now spread from 11am-4pm

8pm-10pm

Most popular browsing time

2020 also saw a surge in online food shopping and weekly Waitrose.com deliveries have almost quadrupled since the start of the year.

11am-4pm

Last year orders were mainly placed between 7pm-10pm

8pm-10pm

Most popular browsing time
WHAT FLEW OFF THE SHELVES

FITNESS TRACKERS
Keeping fit and getting active at home saw athleisure sales and workout equipment soar and sales of fitness trackers and smart watches are up 64% compared to 2019. We also launched Peloton concessions in John Lewis shops in response to this trend.

64% +

COFFEE MACHINES
At home baristas brewed up a storm with coffee shops closed across the country. Sales of coffee machines were up 22% at John Lewis and Waitrose also reported sales of barista style alternative milks were up 64% from the beginning of the year to early July led by oat milk (+113%) and soya (+26%).

22% +

BREAKFAST ITEMS
Breakfast became one of the most important meals of 2020, as families took the time to sit down and enjoy the first meal of the day together. Honey drizzlers and toast tongs flew off the shelves and cereal bowl sales are up 36% this year as this trend has stayed with us. Waitrose has reported ‘Morning Goods’ are up 61% this year compared to 2019, driven by sales of crumpets and muffins which are up 29%. Roast and ground coffee sales are also up +7.6% and tea sales are up 7%.

TVS AND PROJECTORS
Staying in became the new going out and sales of TVs were up 45% since March.

45% +

RENTED FURNITURE
Following a successful launch with furniture rental service Fat Llama, 86% of the products were rented out in the first 48 hours.

86% +

SAD LAMPS
Taking care of ourselves has become a key priority for many this year and John Lewis has seen SAD lamp sales up 81% since January.

81% +

BEAUTY TECH
This year, we took our beauty regime into our own hands and John Lewis saw sales of the MZ Skin Light-Therapy Golden Facial Treatment Device were up 178% in November compared to October.

178% +

SHEER UNDERWEAR AND BODYSUITS
While the nation opted for pyjamas and loungewear, it was what was underneath that mattered, with customers treating themselves to sheer underwear and all-in-one bodysuits.

NOSTALGIC TOYS
We sought for new ways to keep the kids entertained and introduced them to the toys of our childhood. Sales of Scalextric were up 100% in November compared to October.

100% +

HAND CREAM
Hand sanitisers dried out the nations hands and nourishing hand creams sales were up 17% compared to March 2020.

17% +

SLIPPERS
Keeping cosy was top of the agenda for many in 2020 and sales of slippers grew 48%.

48% +
WHAT WE STOPPED BUYING

GOING “OUT OUT” HANDBAGS 56%
As staying in became the new going out, clutches and small party bags sales fell 56% this year.

HIGH HEELS 62%
Customers opted for comfortable footwear such as slippers and trainers during extended periods spent at home and sales of court shoes have fallen 62% since February.

LIPSTICK 54%
Government guidance to wear face coverings saw sales of lipstick down 54% but saw sales of mascara lift.

ALARM CLOCKS 38%
Lockdown saw many of us putting our rigid daily schedules aside and sales of alarm clocks fell 38% at John Lewis as we adapted to a more relaxed routine.

CAMERAS 31%
With travel and special occasions put on the back burner for 2020, sales of cameras fell 31%, with many relying on their phones to capture their lockdown memories.

SUITCASES 69%
The ongoing pandemic put many holiday plans on hold and demand for suitcases dropped 69% this year.

IRONING BOARDS 26%
With the nation told to work from home, the need to look smart fell by the wayside and sales of ironing boards fell 26% in March alone.

LUNCHBOXES 20%
Working from home saw us spending more time making homemade lunches and sitting down to enjoy a meal at home. Lunchbox sales are down 20% this year.

FORMAL BRACES 58%
Keeping it casual saw sales of formalwear topple with cummerbunds down -83%, braces -58% and arm bands -60%.
COLOUR SPLASH
Splashes of colour are set to dominate our wardrobes, homes and even makeup next year as many of us will continue to playfully use colour to lift the mood.

WHAT’S TO COME IN ’21?
A baby boom and more love and care for our homes, wellbeing and the planet.

CASUALISATION CONTINUES
Next year will see more fashion brands focusing on loungewear and athleisure as customers opt for more casual attire when it comes to their day-to-day wardrobe choices.

WFH FULL TIME
2020 saw most of the population trialling working from home for the first time and this trend is showing no sign of slowing for 2021. With many looking to create an optimised working environment, we expect to see more of us purchasing new office equipment as well as updating our existing technology and even creating new areas in their gardens to work from.

ALL ABOUT THE ZZZZS
Sleep is set to remain at the top of the wellness agenda with more brands entering the market and sleep assistants set to be big for 2021. We will continue to invest in bedding, pyjamas and our sleeping areas for the ultimate night’s kip.

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY
2020 saw a raised commitment from the John Lewis Partnership to build a truly inclusive business and work with brands which promote and celebrate diversity and inclusivity. John Lewis saw strong demand for hosiery brand Sheer Chemistry when it launched in November 2020 and there are plans in the pipeline to work with more brands which celebrate diversity, quality, value and authenticity for 2021.

WE’LL BE MORE INVESTED THAN EVER IN OUR PLANET
2020 has made us all more mindful of those around us and the planet we live on. With the circular economy set to continue, we expect reuse and recycle to remain top of the agenda. When the John Lewis Partnership asked a sample of customers about their priorities in summer 2020, a third said that when considering the ethical credentials of a purchase it’s most important the brand they’re buying from can demonstrate these across its whole business, a third said it’s more important the product being purchased meets their ethical standards.

2021 BABY BOOM
Searches for ‘new baby’ on johnlewis.com were up 274% in December as new parents have been preparing to welcome a new addition in 2021. November and December have also seen high demand for nursery appointments as parents-to-be have been getting their homes ready for their new arrivals.

EMBRACING SWEDISH STYLE LIVING
Our outdoor areas have never worked so hard for us and this trend will continue into 2021 as we embrace the Swedish style of living and utilise our outdoor spaces all year round. We’ll be entertaining in the garden more than ever next year with plans to launch outdoor TVs and expand the offering of gourmet cooking appliances.

John Lewis recently launched hot tubs due to overwhelming customer demand.

BIG SCREENS & LIFESTYLE TVS
2021 will see continued demand for 75”+ screens and projectors as people look to recreate the cinema experience and the delayed Euros and Olympics will see many hosting at home.

A baby boom and more love and care for our homes, wellbeing and the planet.
WANT TO KNOW MORE?

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