

Meijer Reveals Unique Shopping Trends One Year into Pandemic Living

Retailer finds work-from-home pillows, Grab n' Go sushi, and Shop & Scan usage the most surprising trends for how customers have adapted their habits

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., April 7, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- As the one-year mark into pandemic living has officially passed, Grand Rapids, Mich.-based retailer Meijer reveals some of the most surprising shopping trends from the height of the shutdown to the ongoing changes in home and work lifestyles across the Midwest.

While home delivery and pickup services doubled at Meijer stores over the last 12 months, customers used the retailer's *Shop & Scan* technology more than 100 million times as they shopped and bagged while practicing social distancing to shorten time spent in the store. Additionally, customers also ate more grab n' go sushi, purchased more citrus produce and supplements, added [hand weights](#) to home gyms and purchased decorative pillows to enhance backgrounds for video calls or to work more comfortably from home while in bed.

"We continue to applaud our store teams that worked diligently throughout the pandemic to find solutions that would help our customers find the products they needed while keeping their families safe. It was a year rife with challenge, and although it's not yet over, we see a light at the end of the tunnel," said Peter Whitsett, Executive Vice President of Merchandising and Marketing. "As communities have begun to re-open, we're continuing to find new ways to be flexible as customers reshape their shopping habits for the warmer weather of a new year."

Other notable customer shopping trends include:

Crushing boredom: As shutdowns continued, customers turned to new video game hardware and accessories, board games and puzzles to keep themselves busy and entertained. Notably, Meijer sold more bikes, pools and grills than past years and saw more than a 60 percent increase in fishing pole and gear sales as an estimated 9 million new anglers picked up the hobby to fill their time.

Easy meal choices on the rise: As wait times for restaurant take-out increased, stores saw a dramatic increase in grab n' go and easy meal offerings for families to eat together at home. Some of the most popular choices continue to include rotisserie chicken, with more than 500,000 sold over the last month. Premade meals from local restaurants that Meijer partners with has been another quick meal option during the pandemic for some local communities.

Bulk purchases: Rather than buying each piece of fruit separately, more customers leaned into stocking up on potatoes, tomatoes and apples in bagged quantities. Additionally, shoppers focused on boosting their immunity, adding oranges, lemons, grapefruit and supplements to their shopping lists.

Catching the health bug: As local gyms and fitness centers shut down, staying healthy at home became the trend. Fitness items like yoga mats, exercise straps, curl bars and hand weights became hot sellers at the start of the pandemic with more than a 300 percent increase in demand.

Making their beds: While Meijer sold more than 1 million bed pillows in 2020 and opted for white goods with antimicrobial properties to ensure clean spaces to sleep through the night, customers added pillows to make keeping up with email more comfy while streaming their favorite series. Even though work from home is expected to eventually transition, Meijer anticipates the double-digit growth of bedrest pillows to continue this year.

Adding comfort to home offices: Thermal curtains and weighted blankets grew more than 50 percent compared to last year as shoppers sought to keep heating bills down and block light in their home offices. Adding a variety of scents and ambiance to workspaces, spa-themed candles increased in popularity as the year progressed, resulting in a 160 percent increase since the beginning of the pandemic.

Squeaky clean and orderly: While it was no surprise that masks, hand sanitizer and surface cleaners were top sellers throughout 2020, disposable dishes, aluminum foil, baking paper, and food storage also saw large increases as more meals, breads and other viral cooking challenges were prepared in homes than ever before. Most recently, shoppers are focusing on home organizing and adding more environmentally safe cleaning solutions to their supply closets.

Finally, *Meijer Express* locations, which saw an expected decrease in gas sales due to less commuting, became de facto destinations for customers seeking quick trips as shutdowns reduced retailer hours. In addition to late-night snacks and beverages, 24-hour *Meijer Express* locations saw double digit growth in firewood and propane


sales for backyard gatherings and camping trips.

With most customers ready to trade in 2020, one trend offered the revealing insight of hope. Lottery ticket sales not only continued, but scratch-off and weekly lottery sales were up more than 25 percent at Meijer stores and *Meijer Express* locations during the past 12 months.

About Meijer: Meijer is a Grand Rapids, Mich.-based retailer that operates 256 supercenters and grocery stores throughout Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and Wisconsin. A privately-owned and family-operated company since 1934, Meijer pioneered the "one-stop shopping" concept and has evolved through the years to include expanded fresh produce and meat departments, as well as pharmacies, comprehensive apparel departments, pet departments, garden centers, toys and electronics. For additional information on Meijer, please visit www.meijer.com. Follow Meijer on Twitter at twitter.com/Meijer and twitter.com/MeijerPR or become a fan at www.facebook.com/meijer.

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For further information: Joe Hirschmugl, 616-791-3943, Joseph.Hirschmugl@meijer.com

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