

US consumers anticipate muted holiday celebrations in 2020

In new GfK Consumer Pulse research, plans for upcoming holidays focus on staying local, buying online

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, September 24, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- If brands and retailers were counting on festive holidays in 2020, they may need to rethink those expectations. The latest [GfK](#) Consumer Pulse research shows that consumers' plans for the fall and winter holidays are muted at best.

The just-released study, based on surveys conducted from September 11 to 16, 2020, shows that only one-third (35%) of all US consumers say they will travel outside their communities to celebrate the upcoming holidays – and of those who are planning trips, 57% will be using their personal cars, while 35% will take a plane.

Over half (56%) of Americans anticipate keeping their holiday celebrations small, feeling “somewhat” or “very comfortable” with attending or hosting a holiday gathering of five people or less. On the flip side, a quarter (24%) say they would be “somewhat” or “very uncomfortable” going to a large holiday gathering of 20 people or more.

“While the pandemic has put a damper on certain types of socializing and spending, brands can still meet consumers halfway by keeping a close eye on their concerns and needs,” said Stacy Bereck, Managing Director of Marketing Consumer Insights at GfK. “Products and messaging that speak to a desire for comfort and the things consumers require for their largely home-focused celebrations will stand a stronger chance of success today. And retailers can do the same – provide the services their shoppers are looking for to build relationships for today and tomorrow.”

GfK also found that 44% of US consumers expect to buy exclusively online this holiday season, while just 17% say they will shop solely in brick-and-mortar outlets. Almost half (45%) report that they will buy items online and have them delivered at home, while 37% say they will purchase holiday items in stores. One-quarter (25%) plan to use online ordering with in-store delivery, and 19% will take advantage of curbside pickup.

Compared to young adults (ages 26 to 35), older consumers (ages 51 to 65) are twice as likely to

say that they will shop in stores – 57% versus 25%. But the two age groups were nearly identical in embracing online ordering with at-home delivery, with 48% of older consumers and 45% of young adults reporting that they would use this option.

In a potential sign of this year's economic troubles, one in five (19%) US consumers reported that they simply "will not be shopping" for the holidays. The no-shopping level among people with no children was nearly one-third (30%), but just 6% among those with at least one child under age 18.

GfK's Consumer Pulse research covers 30 countries, allowing brands and marketers to #MasterTheCrisis by understanding consumer attitudes, behavior, purchase intent, media consumption, and more – both now and in the future. The research reveals changes in demand for goods and services, as well as which sectors and channels present risks or opportunities, so that companies can respond with confidence and come out of the crisis stronger, better positioned, and closer to consumers than before.

As part of this research, GfK interviewed a representative sample of 999 US consumers (ages 16 to 65) during September 11th through 16th, 2020.

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David Stanton
GfK Custom Research
+ 19088759844
[email us here](#)

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