

For Immediate use - Press Release - November 12th, 2020

Mind The Gap: UK businesses continue to miss opportunities to make customers feel Covid-safe

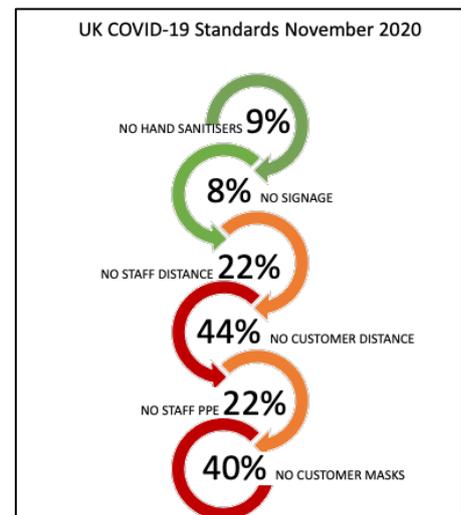
Businesses and customers continue to struggle to meet Covid-19 safety protocols which negatively impact safety and sales. This is the continued findings of a follow up survey carried out by MSPA Europe/Africa during July and repeated in November 2020.

The survey evaluated the experiences of members of the general public when visiting locations 3,200 in July and over 2,000 in November ranging from fashion & general retail stores, supermarkets, car dealers and fast food to dining establishments. Based on the principles of Covid-19 transmission prevention, findings were split out into performance on sanitisation, signage, staff and customer social distancing and PPE. In the second phase we added customer mask wearing as this now is recommended. Respondents were asked about their resultant feeling of safety and likelihood to return to the places they visited.

The findings show obvious gaps in compliance to government guidelines with a potential health impact and a definite impact on consumer confidence and advocacy levels.

Despite good use of signage **2 in 10 staff failed to adhere to social distancing guidelines**, with supermarket staff least likely to be compliant. **Customers too were found to be ignoring safety measures in almost half the locations visited** – again customers supermarkets were the biggest offenders.

Of most concern is that we see failure for customers to socially distance and not wear masks in 40% of location visited.



There is no real change on figures from July to November in the UK, and behaviour remains unchanged from both a frontline employee and a customer perspective.

When all the safety protocols are in place, the customer 'likely to recommend' rate was at 9.2 out of 10. However, when they are not this figure declines markedly to 3.7, showing just how much customers value these safety measures.

Stefaan Vandroogenboeck, President of MSPA Europe/Africa commented: "All these measures are directly within in the control of businesses and customers so efforts must be increased to ensure customers feel safe in their locations. This can only be achieved by training those in the frontline and regularly monitoring every location. Safety is still the number one customer priority for the foreseeable future, and companies that ignore these warnings will struggle to weather this storm".

For more information about the survey, visit our website at www.mspa-ea.org

Ends.

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The MSPA is the representative Trade Association for companies participating in the Mystery Shopping industry. The Association operates on a regional basis and has over 500 member companies worldwide. Member companies unite as a common body for the purpose of strengthening the Mystery Shopping industry through combined efforts and actions. Mystery Shopping is used by organisations all over the world to monitor business performance at the point of customer contact, improve areas of weakness and recognise areas of strength.

The survey above operated from 26th October to 11th November 2020, and achieved representative samples in 15 international markets.

Contact Information:

Mystery Shopping Professionals Association Europe/Africa

Nikky Alkemade

Executive Director

info@mspa-ea.org

europe@mysteryshop.org

www.mspa-ea.org