

*For Immediate use - Press Release - July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020*

## Mind The Gap: UK businesses missing opportunities to make customers feel Covid-safe

Businesses across the UK are struggling to meet customer expectations in relation to safety measures, which could negatively impact footfall and hit profits hard. This is the overarching finding of a recent survey carried out by MSPA Europe/Africa during July as lockdown measures continue to ease across the country.

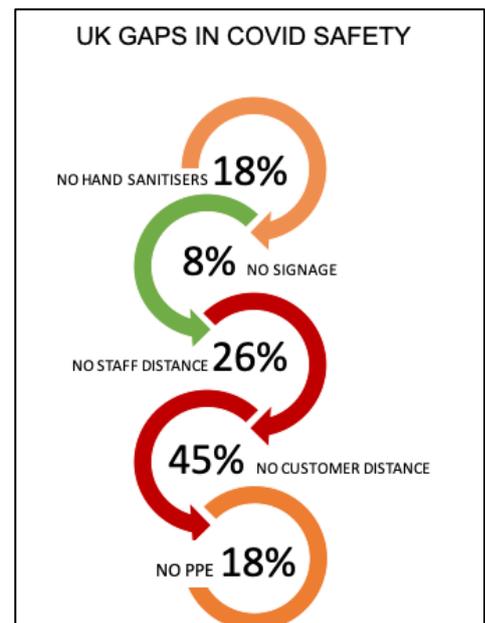
The survey evaluated the experiences of members of the general public when visiting 3,200 locations ranging from fashion & general retail stores, supermarkets, car dealers and fast food to dining establishments. Based on the principles of Covid-19 transmission prevention, findings were split out into performance on sanitisation, signage, staff and customer social distancing and PPE. 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, **3 out of 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 supermarkets were the biggest offenders.

Almost **one fifth of locations failed to provide hand sanitiser** and a similar number were not providing sufficient PPE for staff. The food & beverage sector were a particular concern in this regard, with a quarter of staff members not wearing PPE, thus making customers feel unsafe in the environment and less likely to visit again.

When all the safety protocols are in place, the customer 'likely to return' rate was at 92%. However, when they're not this figure declines markedly to 57%, 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 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 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](http://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 7 to 21 July 2020, achieved representative samples in 12 markets and over 7,000 evaluations. Plans are underway to repeat the survey later in 2020.

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