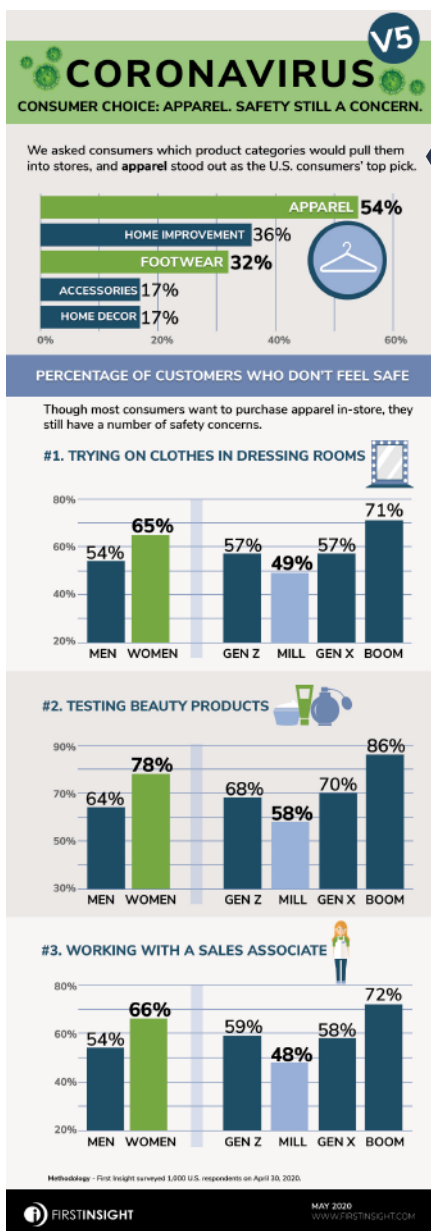


# Reopening Retail

## VIDEO FOR CUSTOMERS & EMPLOYEE SAFETY

With the return of retail we started researching various shopping malls and retail policies for reopening. This report covers meaningful statistics about in-store experience, consumer and employee health, and how video can improve the return of retail and flow of information as stores reopen.

On May 6, 2020 nearly 51% of USA stores were still closed. The hardest impacted sector for 2020 was apparel, with -25.5% growth YOY.



Brands will need to find their own 'new normal', one that looks and feels quite different from the pre COVID-19 shopping experience.

## What's Happening Now

Outlier reviewed the policies of 20 of the malls that have already opened in the United States: in Georgia, Ohio, and Indiana. Of these 20, we found that all had implemented **Centers for Disease Control (CDC)** guidelines for social distancing and implemented signage on doors, windows, and floors to encourage distancing.

Play spaces and water fountains remain closed in an effort to curb large group gatherings and minimize risk to mall employees and visitors. The goals behind these continued closures are clear:

- Find ways to reopen while minimizing risk to employees and shoppers
- Avoid negative publicity associated with the potential (real or perceived) of not taking proper steps to limit exposure.

Source:  
[firstinsight.com/white-papers-posts/coronavirus-apparel-safety-concerns](https://firstinsight.com/white-papers-posts/coronavirus-apparel-safety-concerns)

## 1 Compliance

Social Distancing  
Employee Training  
Updated Processes



## 2 Drive In-Store Traffic

Updated Store Policy Information  
Encouraging Shoppers  
Safety Information & Reassurance

## 3 In-Store Messaging

Welcome Customers Back  
Demonstrate Best Practices  
Deliver a Brand Experience

The first round of post-COVID communication will by necessity focus on compliance, as this is the deciding factor on whether stores are allowed to reopen. Once doors are open, effective communication about compliance will be crucial to maintaining and improving employee and customer safety.

Social distancing signage is crucial but barely scratches the surface of the many changes store managers will need to address with employees and customers.

Store staffing models will need to be adapted to increase distancing, as will the ways employees interface with consumers. Touch-free checkout technology will gain traction as stores work to reduce cash exchange and hand to hand contact. Shopping carts, dressing rooms, cash wraps and credit card/POS terminals will all require new operating procedures to ensure the safety of employees and consumers.<sup>1</sup> Even shopping return processes will change as holding periods are placed on returned merchandise before items can be returned to the floor.

## Preparing the Store

Prior to reopening, management must prepare the store from a health and safety perspective as well as more traditional retail activities. Management will be responsible for educating retail associates and helping them prepare to help consumers through a safe shopping experience.

Topics to address include health and safety guidelines for employees and guests, personal and store hygiene reminders, and rules for deliveries if applicable.<sup>2</sup>

***Employees need to feel it is safe to return to work. Ensuring they have access to and understand new policies is a crucial first step.***

Best practice dictates managers consider any special needs and provide space for employees to ask questions and provide feedback about new policies.

Finally, management and employees need to be ready to welcome consumers back and help them understand new operating guidelines to ensure a positive experience for all parties.

***95% of consumers want companies to implement physical protection and distancing measures to help keep them healthy.<sup>3</sup>***

## Driving Traffic to the Store

The second round of communication will take place outside of the store via social media and other brand channels.

This communication, directed towards consumers, must focus on:

1. Letting consumers know about mall and store openings
2. Encouraging shoppers to come into the store
3. Making shoppers feel informed and comfortable with new policies

## In-Store Messaging

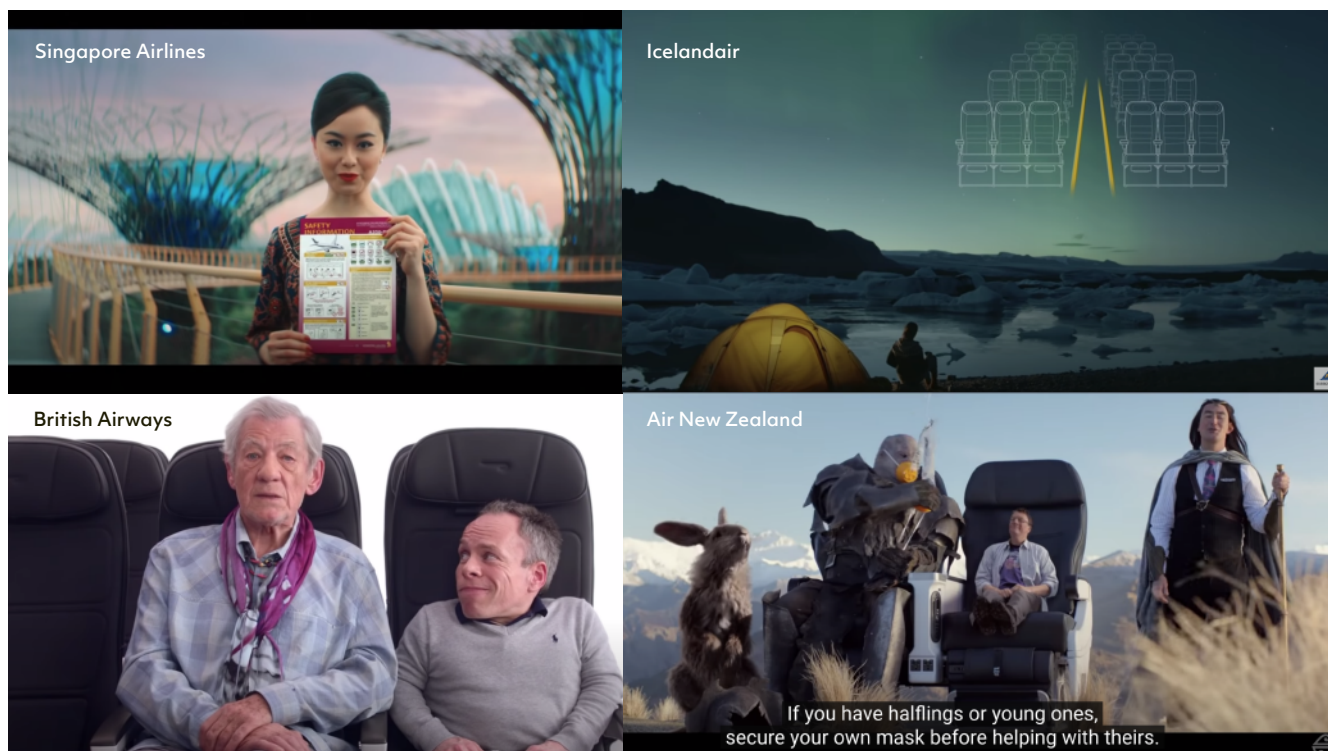
In-store messaging is needed to welcome consumers back to the store with information that puts the brand on full display.

The best mix of safety vs brand messaging will vary based on your physical location and the extent of changes being made. We do however caution against overly repetitive messaging that may be cause for shoppers to tune out to the larger message.

Rotating topics like employee health, safety, shopping experiences, and messages of ongoing solidarity is helpful. Don't focus solely on COVID-19 and compliance in your in-store messaging. Your customers took a calculated risk to re-enter the store because they wish to enjoy the experience your brand is known for. Don't be afraid to give them that experience.

It's important to realize even with the best of intentions, your policies may create conflict between customers and your staff.<sup>4</sup> This is a time to explore your brand values to find creative ways to make the process relatable and less frustrating for customers.

Airlines have given us an excellent example of the many different ways a brand can approach safety lessons.



## Why Video?

There are many reasons to choose video to assist with communicating with employees and customers.

Video allows you to share a lot of information in a short amount of time, provides clarity by showing how to perform tasks through demonstration, and improves engagement when delivered with accompanying materials.

Video allows you to clearly demonstrate best practices and show what new consumer interactions will look like to model real life experiences for employees and shoppers.

Stores are going from a high touch experience to very low touch interactions. Video allows you to create shared connections that are non-physical. To understand a person's emotions, you usually look at their facial expressions. At a time when most people in the store, both employees and customers, will be wearing face masks these cues are conspicuously absent.<sup>5</sup>

Video empowers you to communicate this emotional language to audiences safely. This, in addition to educating your team about positive body language, can help make up for some of the confusion created when facial expressions are covered.

***Most importantly, video allows you to create a brand experience.***

## Inspiration

Airports have been a part of the everyday experience to communicate rules, policies and procedures and adhere to public safety for decades. The biggest changes happened post 9/11. Today you'll find video screens on the approach to security, loudspeaker announcements, security guard announcements, as well as signage at the security checkpoints.

**Don't be the TSA. *Be your brand.***

- Use video to create messages that are relatable, NOT authoritarian
- Encourage people to come to your store in a personal way
- Create brand messages (that also happen to include health and safety information)
- Use people from your leadership team to show that you are taking a top down approach
- Depending on your store culture, adapt materials to the region and team when possible
- Use in-store personnel to show the friendly faces customers will find in the store
- Include animation for additional creative freedom

This is a serious time but that does not mean you can't have some fun with your messaging. Don't be afraid to be creative and let your brand shine.

## In-Store Video Solutions

1. Educate retail associates and prepare them to help consumers through a safe and low friction process.
2. Welcome consumers and help them understand what new operating guidelines exist and what their responsibilities are.

## How Video Can Help with Driving Store Traffic

1. News outlets are covering retail openings. Being creative with video can help you be unique in your reopening and drive more traffic to your store.
2. Educate consumers about which new policies will be in place to avoid any surprise, shame, or embarrassment that shoppers may experience not knowing what the new policies are going to be.
3. Given the phased opening approach many states are taking as well as the customer adoption process, we recommend stores utilize video to be transparent about how things are going. Use video to show consumers what's happening and let early adopters lead the way for those who have more of a 'wait and see' attitude.

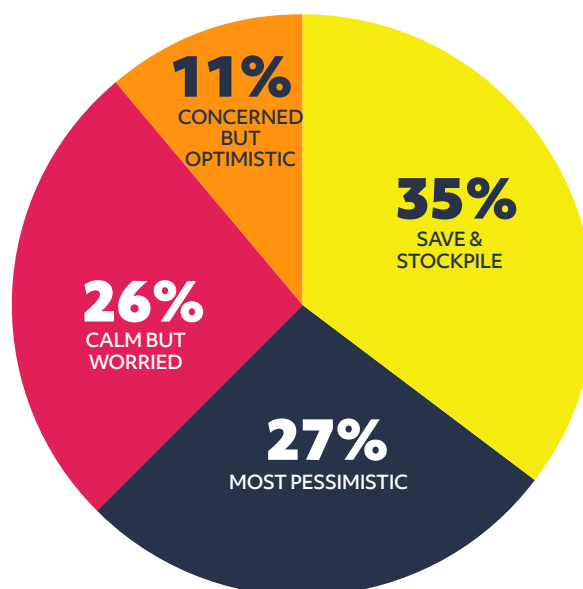
Four new consumer segments have emerged during the COVID-19 crisis.<sup>6</sup>

**35%** Not so concerned about pandemic, but worried for their families. Pessimistic about the long-term effects.

**27%** Hardest hit by the pandemic. Most pessimistic about the future. Spending less across all categories.

**26%** Not changing their spending habits. Not directly impacted by the pandemic. Worried that others are stockpiling.

**11%** Most concerned about the pandemic, but best positioned to deal with it. Optimistic for the future. Spending more across the board.



## Video Packets

- Depending on your store culture and brand, adapt materials to the region and team.
- Start with employee communication - even if you have sent PDFs, video will increase your chances of people seeing/reviewing the information.
- Do your best to ensure people are actually absorbing the training. Meet them at multiple channels.

# Contact Outlier

to see how video can help you:

Educate & train employees

Drive in-store traffic

Engage with customers to increase sales

## Get Started Now.

**Call us**  
971.533.7223

**Email us**  
betheoutlier@gmail.com



### Citations

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3) Customer Experience Mindset In A Post COVID-19 World

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5) 4 Ways to Communicate When You Can't See Someone's Face

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