

# RETAIL RECOVERY

insights from

POINT



## Hygienic innovations, post-COVID-19 retail solutions, and the new normal for bricks-and-mortar stores



The retail industry has always been an exceedingly volatile one and has changed suddenly at many points throughout history. We are, at current, standing in the midst of one of those landmark crossroads that both retailers and consumers must adapt to and create a new normal.

While the uncertainty and anxiety surrounding COVID-19 looms upon us, we must be reminded that by nature, retailers are adaptive and resourceful.

The main obstacles that challenge today's world of retail may well last for some time to come, and the implications on consumer behaviour could last a lifetime.

The first step in adapting to the current market reality is to accept that it is unlikely to ever go completely back to our previous state, and to start investing in this 'new normal'.

The changes in consumer behaviour to which retailers will need to adapt to include:

- Increased concerns and anxiety about health and safety in public spaces,
- An increased time pressure when shopping due to social anxiety or imposed restrictions,
- Less likely to want to touch and feel products and samples in-store.

- Efforts to save money due to diminished income or job security,
- Changes in how people are spending their time shopping in-store and on-line,
- Adopting a more 'omni' approach to interacting with brands,
- Increased appetite for new and exciting ideas and ways to engage with brands.

As a sector that touches on most parts of society, diminishing health and safety concerns is something the retail world could have a large and positive impact on. While it is unsafe to reopen the retail world as it was before, a much more hygienic, re-designed version could be more safe. This is where adaptation and innovation is not only a method for the survival of a business, but a matter of corporate responsibility.

It is important to note that the adaptations and alternatives we as an industry develop will not be inherently worse than they were before. We need to focus on the key goal of improving, rather than the minimal requirement of surviving. The alternatives we create must be better than the original.

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The Retail Industry Leaders Association has developed a blueprint for successfully reopening physical retail spaces, called 'Shop Safe'. The blueprint provides a series of checkpoints for consideration. It includes plans for occupancy limits, disinfecting surfaces, use of protective clothing, gear and tools, contact-less payment and more. One factor that was not mentioned in the blueprint is how to safely sustain testing and sampling of products - one of the key motivations for shopping in-store as opposed to online.

The current standard for testing skincare and cosmetics in-store is actually unhygienic and unsafe, even before the COVID-19 pandemic. A study conducted by the Rowan University found that over half of the testers in a studied makeup store carried dangerous contaminants like staph and E. Coli bacteria from faecal matter. Just by using tester products, staff and customers can spread and contract illnesses and infections such as pink eye, herpes, and hepatitis, as well as Corona virus.

An innovation to safely improve on the sampling process is the Hygienic Tester with touch-free sensor technology, developed by PoINT Retail. An example of its application can be seen below with the hygienic skincare tester. With a seamless user experience it is both an exciting and safe way to sample product.

The versatile design can also work with liquids, creams or gel cosmetics, body lotions, treatments, hair care and more. The display un-boxes the key product benefits and features instantaneous product dispensing to avoid nasty spills. This innovation can be implemented across market sectors to help revive positive experiences in-store, restore customer confidence and rebuild the desire of shoppers to engage with brand destinations.

To see a video of it in action, follow the link below.

PoINT Retail Hygienic Tester



Hygienic Skincare Tester.

Sample product is stored in a discreet tank behind the back panel, and dispensed through the nozzle to the front when the motion sensor is activated.

The technology can be built into a small footprint counter unit or into an existing wall bay unit.

Easy to implement, simple and safe for shoppers to use, the Hygienic Tester can be implemented in-store across sectors and store formats.



# CASE STUDY: FRAGRANCE SAMPLING

How hygienic innovations can revive and improve upon fragrance purchasing and in-store experiences.

Consider the application of fragrance sampling. The qualities and characteristics present in fragrances are hard to communicate with words. In an article by the New York Times, it is pointed out that 'The way fragrance is introduced, advertised and sold to the world hasn't changed in nearly a century.... fragrances depend on an in-store experience that conjures these ideas and feelings through smell.' (Strugatz, R., 2020)

**THERE ARE SOME MARKET SECTORS, LIKE FRAGRANCE, THAT SIMPLY CANNOT HAVE THE SAME IMPACT WHEN ADVERTISED ONLINE, AND RELY ON BRAND DESTINATIONS FOR REVENUE.**

The article also begs the question of how fragrances will be hygienically sampled for the remainder of, and after, the COVID-19 pandemic.

PoINT Retail's hygienic fragrance tester bar solves this problem and improves upon previous sampling options. The product features a luxurious and enticing design relevant to the brand, followed by increased touch points of product education, such as ingredient displays and descriptions. The key innovation is a series of touch-free sensors, next to each displayed product. When shoppers wave their hands over the sensor, the chosen fragrance is atomised upward to land on the users wrist. This experience is not only more hygienic, but prompts more appropriate behaviours regarding fragrance shopping, such as eliminating over-sampling with too many sprays, and provides educational materials so shoppers know what to expect and what to try before needing to sample every fragrance in the store.

These innovations could revive bricks-and-mortar dependant market sectors, like fragrance, where the financial toll of COVID-19 is being felt significantly. In the U.S. alone, prestige fragrance sales were recorded in March as being 45% lower than they were a year ago.

Hygienic Fragrance Tester Bar

Designed with motion-sensor activated sampling and product education.

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Fragrance is not the only market sector to which this ground-breaking technology can be applied. Skincare, cosmetics, food and beverage could all benefit from automated, touch-free sampling and serving, while electronics could be tested in conjunction with motion-sensor activated power buttons and controls in store. Additionally, accessories could be 'tried on' with a conjunction of touch-free sensor activation and augmented reality. For instance, sunglasses can be displayed next to a screen that displays a real-time 'magic mirror' video, and be tried on with sensor activated selection that displays a 3D image of the chosen glasses to be overlayed onto the selfie video.

The new normal is fast approaching. The retail industry must start investing now in innovation if we plan for brand destinations and public spaces to thrive again.

**THE IDEAS AND ADAPTATIONS WE DEVELOP AS AN INDUSTRY, WHILE PROMPTED BY CRISIS, DO NOT NEED TO JUST BE ALTERNATIVES. WE NEED TO IMPLEMENT INNOVATIONS THAT ARE BETTER AND MORE EFFECTIVE THAN EVER.**

The retail industry has always been an exceedingly volatile one, but that doesn't have to be a bad thing. It is the reason why it has grown to the large scale industry it is today, and it is the reason why it is exciting and constantly evolving.

Out of the chaos of COVID-19, retail will adapt and evolve to an exciting new normal with innovative solutions to engage shoppers and build brand loyalty.



Redesigned Hygienic Sunglasses Tester  
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These technologies not only adapt to the new requirements of retail regarding hygiene, but also improve on the current systems. Testers could last longer, have fewer breakages or unsightly fingerprints, and generate a more seamless sampling experience that feels more luxurious than ever, exciting users to engage with the POS. They could also be sampled more effectively with increased control for the brand over the consumer experience.

Hygienic Electronics Play Table  
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## Sensory Whiskey Sampling Bay

With visual content triggered by motion sensors and played on screens, and no-touch technology scent exploration, the bay aims to provide maximum product education hygienically and without requiring a dedicated staff attendant.

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To enquire about hygienic testers, see contact information for PoINT Retail below.

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