



In normal times, June is marked (and marketed) internationally, as Pride month.

As mass public gatherings, many Pride 2020 events have been cancelled. And with retailers big and small only just re-opening, many 'well meaning' brands and retailers are likely to be left with a glut of stock adorned with rainbow stripes that simply does not sell. The devout will not mourn.

Recent events in the US have seen brands and retailers wake up (and in increasingly non 'woke' ways) to the fact that more honest and sincere dialogue is what's needed to connect with consumers. There have been many examples of brands coming forward to make their position clear, standing alongside and supporting the Black Lives Matter campaign, even shrugging off instances of vandalism, looting and extreme public disorder which have affected their own property and retail stores. The sentiment being that goods and services can be replaced but human life can't, with Designer Marc Jacobs posting to his Instagram account "A life cannot be replaced. Black Lives Matter."

Recent research indicates that almost a third of consumers say they buy into brands with political and social values that align with their own, and about a quarter of consumers boycott brands that don't. Beyond everything, shoppers want products to be sincere in their origin, composition, values, and marketing...

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Retail Opinion

## Great British Reboot

As we enter the next phase of the government's post-pandemic strategy, the easing of restrictions for general retailers has been accompanied by a raft of new ways of working and general health guidance to do business, and shop, safely. One thing is confirmed: shopping instore will never be the same again.

Aside from physical restrictions, human psychology has likely erected some powerful barriers within shoppers, leading to fundamental behavioural changes. The result will likely see both footfall and sales volumes instore subdued for the many months to come. Everyone in the industry knows that difficult times still lie ahead. And retailers are going to have to work hard at every level.

This is all still a very long way off from 'business as usual'. Retailers will have to quickly reorganise themselves as socially distanced stores with leaner, more versatile operations.

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Podcast Series

## The Retail Exchange

Launching this week, we have an exclusive interview with Pooja Agarwal, chief operating officer of US-beauty subscription box brand, Birchbox. The brainchild of two friends with a desire to create a better way to shop for beauty products online, the brand was founded a decade ago. Today it has more than 4 million subscribers and customers around the world.

We caught up with the brand's COO in New York to hear first hand about the brand's evolution, and look ahead to what lies in store as it embarks on its next exciting chapter.

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