



BUSINESS SCHOOL
BESIGHEIDSKOOL
SEKOLO SA KGWEBO



SOLEMN DECLARATION - GROUP ASSIGNMENT

Solemn declaration by students

Module: **Marketing**
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We hereby declare that the assignment which we herewith submit to the North-West University as partial completion of the requirements set for the MBA degree, is our own work.

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DATE **7 September 2020**

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Instructions

Note that you are required to do proper research on the Internet and elsewhere and then answer the questions about each case study. Each case study should consist of a proper introduction to the company, the answers to the questions and a conclusion. You are welcome to make use of graphs, pictures and other material to better state your case.

The details of the case studies can be found on the module's eFundi site – see the “Case studies” heading.

Case Study 2: Changing consumer trends in a Corona business environment

The year 2020 has probably the worst economic figures and forecast since the great depression in the beginning of the previous century. However, come hell or high water, companies must do all they can to survive this severe economic downfall. All the well-known consumer behavioural attributes abruptly changed, and what business used to do to attract customers and realise sales, now seems obsolete. Their consumer knowledge slate is now wiped clean. All of a sudden business are faced with a situation where their competitive advantage of "know you customer" is now largely eradicated. A new way to business is surely the only way to survive, but what is that "new" way. The words "new normal" is common business language, yet nobody seems to really know what they are actually speaking about when uttering these words. One way to try and determine a business course of action is to determine just that - what is the "new normal". Also, surely this "new normal" does not equally apply to all industries. Study the reports uploaded on efundi as a point of departure and then consult other sources to solve this new business dilemma.

1. Study the changes in consumer behaviour and determine what new trends are developing in the consumer market.
2. Select three different industries and contrast the differential consumer behaviour between these industries. Show clearly how the consumers in these industries are behaving differently. Also point out if there are generic similarities of similar behaviour across industries.

3. Choose one of the selected industries in your answer in 2, and provide this industry with a plan of action to improve their sales in this difficult Covid market
4. Identify at least 3 new business opportunities that developed as a result of the pesty virus and render a verdict if each of these opportunities are worthy to take.

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Case Study 2: Changing consumer trends in a Corona business environment

Question 1

1. Changes in consumer behaviour and new trends that has developed in the consumer market

On 31st December 2019 the World Health Organization (WHO) announced the outbreak of a new disease caused by the Corona virus and on the 11th of March 2020 the outbreak was declared as a pandemic. China was the first country to institute lockdown measures during January 2020. Most countries only started implementing lockdown measures during the month of March 2020. On 15th of March, South Africa declared a national state of disaster and lockdown of all non-essential services (level 5) started on the 26th of March 2020. On the 4th of May South Africa moved to a level 4 with most of the industries still closed or only to function at minimum capacity. South Africa moved to level 3 on the 31st of May 2020 which still didn't allow the opening of certain industries but allowed increase in capacity of already opened industries. During level 3 restriction we saw the lifting and the re-institution of the alcohol ban with detrimental effects on the industry but also the amendment of the regulations allowing the beauty and hair industry to reassume activities. On the 18th of August, South Africa moved to a level 2 status' with some industries still not running at full capacity.

Globally there was a huge shift in consumer behaviour which led to new business trends. According to Boumphrey (2020) **one of the biggest drivers in consumer behaviour is the increase of unemployment and decrease in earnings.** Consumers started to re-evaluate their priorities. Many of the behavioural shifts included **more focus on family, community, health and digital solutions** (Boumphrey, 2020).

Kholi *et al.* (2020), in an article by McKinsey & Company has identified eight areas where consumer behaviour has changed. Many of these are accelerations of past behaviours.

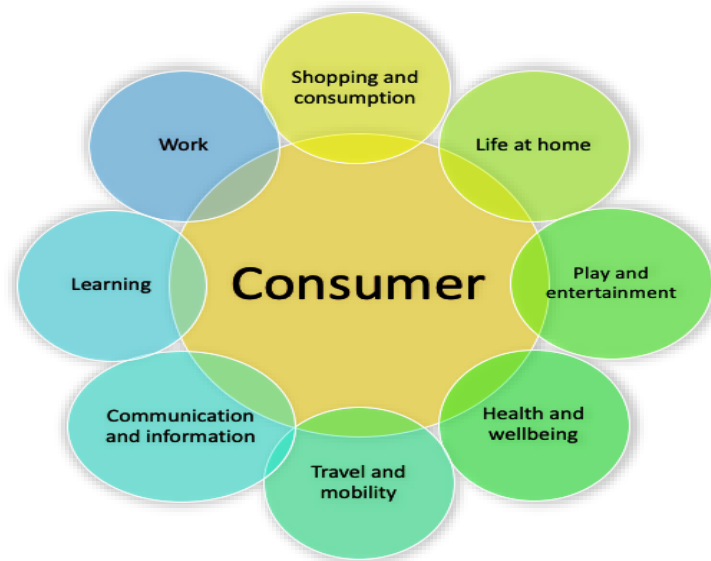


Figure 1: The new consumer by McKinsey & Company

Source: Kholi et al. (2020)

1.1. Shopping

An **increase in e-commerce** was observed with a preference for trusted brands. Online purchase achieved 10 years' worth of sales in only 8 weeks. Consumers opted for bigger basket with decrease in shopping frequency. A notable **decrease in discretionary spending** was observed. Consumers also now prefer to support stores closer to home.

1.2. Life at home

Home is recast as the new coffee shop and entertainment centrum. **By spending so much time at home some consumers developed a new found love for cooking**. This trend was facilitated by surge of free online cooking classes (Boumphrey,2020). There was also an **increase in sales of DIY and home improvement goods** (Wood,2020).

1.3. Play and Entertainment

Due to the lack of regular sporting events an **increase in e-sports** was recorded. The trend of digital pastime was enhanced by **additional game time** available. Toy

companies are repositioning themselves as entertainment companies expecting digitalisation of playtime to further enhance (Kholi et al.,2020).

1.4. Health and Wellbeing

COVID-19 brought a huge focus on health and hygiene. The industry saw a huge increase in e-pharmacy and e-doctors. Telemedicine has shown a tenfold increase in 15 days. Consumer started to opt for organic and natural fresh produce. With most brick and mortar gyms being closed consumers turned to online fitness classes. Suppliers of fitness equipment recorded 170% sales during lockdown (Research and Markets, 2020).

1.5. Travel and mobility

A massive 80% reduction in international travel was recorded. Even though there was an increase in domestic travel there was still a **decrease in tourist expenditure** (Kholi et al.,2020).

1.6. Communication and information

There was a shift in media consumption. Various platforms were used during lockdown period as means of communication. This was due to social distancing that led to a decline to in-person engagement.

1.7. Learning

Remote learning became the new norm and according to Kholi et al. (2020) 35% of Netflix subscribers use it for its educational content. In China 250 million students went online in 2-week period. According to Duncan (2020) 67% of higher education institutions adopted online learning. The accessibility of data in South Africa seems to play a major role in the full adoption of remote learning.

1.8. Work

With most of the globe's workforce house bound alternative ways of running a business came vital. **Remote working became the norm and a 20% increase in daily zoom participants was recorded.** Remote working has caused a relaxation of traditional rules and professional presentation. The major negative effect of the

lockdown is the significant rise in unemployment due to closure of small businesses (Kholi et al.,2020). There are of course many other emerging trends, of which to discuss, but for now the focus is on these eight areas that makeup the new consumer.

Question 2

2. The different consumer behaviours between industries

Most organisations have reduced spending due to the uncertainties posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the process of which deprives them of potential investment opportunities. The world has experienced the worst depression since the 1930s and this has resulted in different prioritisation by the consumers and companies. The impact on the industry is different from one sector to another and it will be misleading to assume that the combined economic slowdown of a nation reflects what is happening in every organisation in that country (Plastow, 2020; Shen, Fu, Pan, Yu, & Chen, 2020). The performance of three industries is going to be evaluated and comparisons made to reflect how the consumer trends have changed since the outbreak of the pandemic.

2.1. Coffee and Beverages

The hot drinks industry has seen a boom in the consumer's consumption due to the change in people's lifestyles as a result of lockdown regulations in different countries. **The consumption of coffee beans has been observed to be on an upward trend since the outbreak of COVID-19.** The directors of Dash rosters in the USA have witnessed a **high demand of their coffee beans through their online marketing strategy and selling (DeWitte, 2020).** A market survey in Australia has shown a boom in the coffee sales which is a positive trend that will help resuscitate the economy. The retail turnover reported an increase of 3.3 percent at some stage during level three in the outskirts of Victoria where customers are said to be flocking the coffee shops. The revenue from the coffee industry is expected to reach \$5 billion in Australia in 2020 (Plastow, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic might have affected the raw materials supply and the farming or production process, but the demand surpasses these aspects and hence

positive growth is still expected. A market survey by 360 research reports published in August 2020 has projected that the market for instant coffee will grow by 4.2 percent in 2024 (More, 2020).

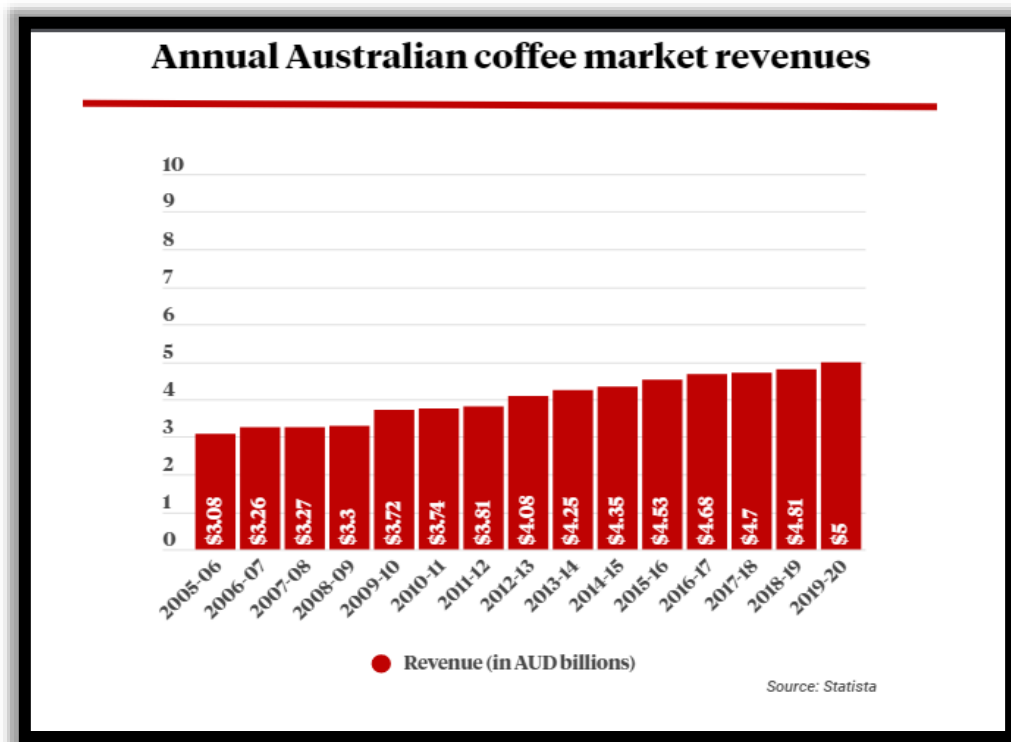


Figure 2: Revenue in the Australian coffee market from 2005 to 2020

Source: (Plastow, 2020)

2.2. Tourism

The **tourism sector is the most-hard-hit industry** by the effects of the COVID-19, most jobs have been lost and most airlines have reported losses in revenue with an estimated over \$300 billion in the United States alone. People are opting for long drives instead of flying and on the other hand the holiday trips has either been cancelled or postponed by most consumers globally (Boggs, 2020).

Most consumers have learnt to adjust to an indoors lifestyle which requires digitally-savvy people. One of the benefits observed by analysts is the benefits of learning how to live with technology more especially for the Baby Boomers age generation group. These consumers will learn to buy their travel itineraries using technology instead on relying on counter services at the shop outlets (Grönroos, Konttinen, & Holmberg,

2020). Marketers in the tourism sector are presented with a challenge in that it won't make sense for the consumers to be encouraged to travel or visit holiday destinations during the risky times of the COVID-19. Some of the marketing strategies that has been adopted in the tourism sector are social distancing campaigns and the provision of sanitisation in their facilities which is a way of rest assuring their clients that they are prioritising their wellbeing (GlobalData, 2020).

2.3. Telecommunications

The introduction of the 5G technology is expected to boost the revenues in the telecommunications industry. The 5G infrastructure is expected to yield \$ 4.2 billion in 2020 which is a positive growth of 89% given the current circumstances. Unlike the tourism industry people will embrace technology regardless of the COVID-19 pandemic since this is something that is used in gadgets that are personal (Westcott, 2020).

Internet connection infrastructure has been improved to cater for the large number of people who are using 'lots of data' (e.g. Metadata). An exponential rise in the application of the Internet of things which is facilitated by the machine and human interaction is expected to also rise from 6 to 50 billion users. Most of the analysts of technology in 2020 make no mention of the COVID-19 when analysing the consumers and the growth of the sector which is a good indication that there are no threats of this pandemic on the industry unlike the sensitive tourism sectors (Solutions, 2020).

Question 3

3. Improvement plan for the tourism industry

3.1. Introduction

Technology is currently revolutionising the tourism industry and business strategies need to be adapted in order to stay competitive. Since the COVID-19 outbreak around the world it has been extremely challenging for famous tourist destinations to find new or other methods in attracting people (Voronkova, 2018:10). They had to reconsider the factors influencing customer behaviour who are now restricted or constrained by the COVID-19 virus. The most important factor that is currently influencing the tourism

industry and one that will also determine the continued survival of tourism is technology (Huang, 2019:62). The Fourth Industrial Revolution has brought the importance of using technology to the foreground but it has been COVID-19 that will ultimately make that a reality. It is debatable whether The Fourth Industrial Revolution or COVID-19 will have the greatest impact on the tourism industry. The methods or strategies that were applied will in fact not be sustainable enough due to the fact that the power has now shifted to the consumer, and marketing management for example will have to redesign or rethink best practices to target and attract their audience (Schwab, 2016:51). This means that there are now new pull and push forces that play a role in this paradigm-shift in behaviours (Saayman, 2000:33). The focus will therefore need to be on user experience and how technology can be integrated to facilitate the interaction between the 'Home Traveller' and new media platforms (Buhalis, 2019:1). It is hereby important to be aware that The Fourth Industrial Revolution is now seen as the motivator whereas as COVID-19 is the initiator in consumer markets.

3.2. Virtual technology as a source of disruption

According to Klaus Schwab's (2016) book on "*The Fourth Industrial Revolution*", there are multiple sources of disruption that trigger different forms of business impact. From the supply sector for example, many organisations are seeing how new technologies create entirely new ways of serving existing needs. It is sometimes necessary for supply chains and industries to be disrupted by technology in order for them to advance and be better producers or service providers (Schwab, 2016:51). **The emergence of technologies such as Augmented Reality (or AR) and Virtual Reality (or VR) have accelerated the shift in consumer behaviour to do most of their activities from home** (Huang, 2019:62). It is now generally referred to as a 'decentralized target market' (Ridder & Mey, 2020:8) and is considered to have the following pull and push forces as shown in Figure 1:

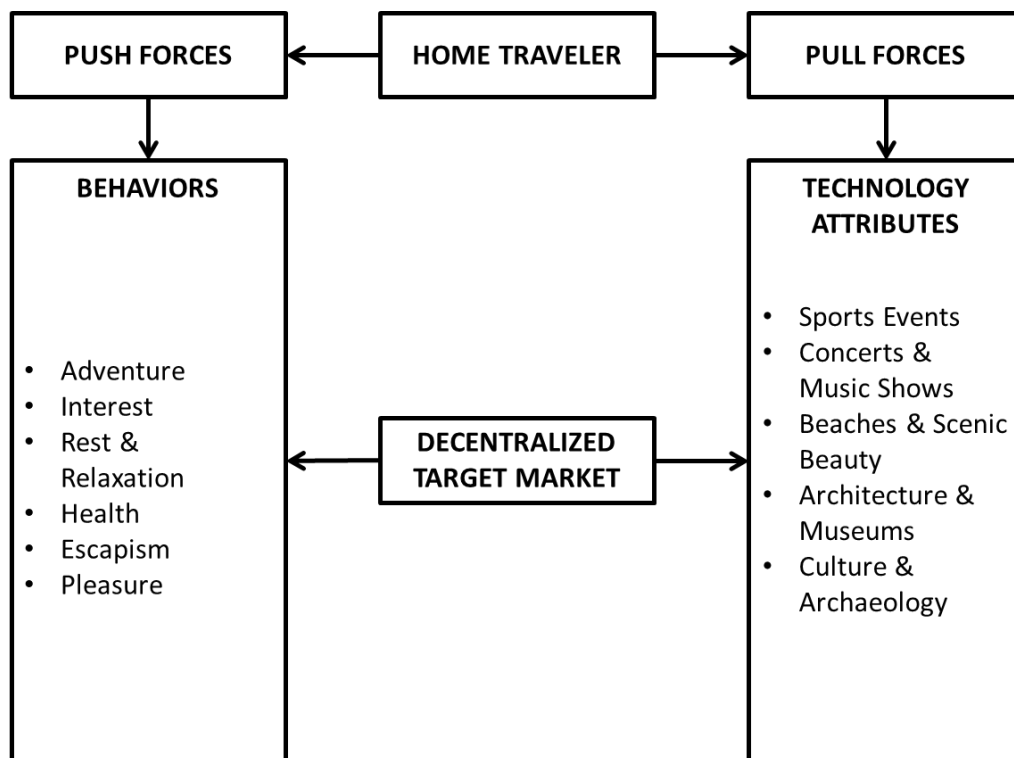


Figure 3: Example of the decentralized target market in the tourism industry

Source: (Saayman, 2000)

The increase in demand for Augmented Reality (or AR) and Virtual Reality (or VR) coupled with 3D tours that consumers can enjoy from their homes is steadily forcing businesses to decentralise their target markets and move towards a user-experience economy (Schwab, 2016:52). This is important because as the COVID-19 pandemic shifted the buying power to the consumers, the only accessible method by which to reach the target market is by means of virtual consumer engagement. As such, the tourism industry need to focus on the concept referred to as the 'Home Traveller' (Marceux, 2020:13). This particular consumer is classified as a very flexible but specific consumer who are competent in technology, that enjoys working from home, does most of his or her shopping online, who have an interest in personal health and fitness, and who has nostalgic taste (Marceux, 2020:15).

During the COVID-19 outbreak many businesses in tourism had to shut down important functions that generate income. Most of these functions were related to social contact between the service provider and the customer (Boumphrey, 2020:6). However, now that most of the restrictions have been lifted, many businesses will

unfortunately get left behind, especially in the tourism sector because their business strategies or approaches that were used to deliver and market their Unique Selling Proposition (or USP) were not adapted during the lockdown period (Boumphrey, 2020:8).

This will without a doubt get much worse as The Fourth Industrial Revolution is forcing organisations and businesses to change. According to Simon Mair's (2020) work on "*How will coronavirus change the world?*". The focus is no longer on developing entirely new markets that are more costly, but rather on utilising technology and adapting it what is currently being offered to the market. It is thus more realistic to be aware or take note of the restrictions imposed by the government in the tourism sector, and then do short-term planning on existing channels to maximise reach and / or networks.

3.3. The connected home as the tourism market

The most significant impact according to Klaus Schwab (2016) that many businesses will encounter in the coming years is what he refers to as *The Connected Home*. According to Klaus Schwab (2016), this will drive marketing in the future, because most of the financial resources will go to personal online consumption (Schwab, 2016:140). *The Connected Home* concept is surely now becoming a reality due to the COVID-19 pandemic and what this means is that consumer behaviour revolves around internet consumption. Most of the internet consumption in the tourism industry is spent on (1) communication, (2) site research, (3) entertainment, (4) information exchange, and (5) e-commerce (Ridder & Mey, 2020:10). Furthermore, there are very fast changes occurring in home automation, which allows the consumer to not only control specific devices with minimal effort, but to also get what they are looking for much faster. Some of the most popular technologies in home automation today are (1) wearable internet glasses, (2) wearable Augmented Reality (or AR) and Virtual Reality (or VR) smart-glasses, (3) voice-activation lights, (4) automated text recording, and (5) audio or video books (Schwab, 2016:127, 140). The additional positive benefits that it will add in the tourism industry are as follows:

- Comfort;

- Home sharing;
- Access control;
- Remote home control at extra benefits;
- Safety / or security and detection of instructions;
- Resource efficiency (lower energy use and cost);
- Reduces costs of travel and environmental pollution;
- Ability to learn independently (e.g. young, old, and disabled); and
- Increased targeted advertising and overall impact on creating brand awareness.

The negative impact that it will create in the tourism industry are as follows:

- Invasion of privacy;
- Loosing iconic heritage;
- Cyber-attacks, crime, and surveillance;
- Unemployment (e.g. no need for tour guides or operators);

3.4. The new trend in the tourism industry

As more businesses in tourism will be looking to offer virtual tours for their customers, there is an important distinction to be made between e-Tourism and Smart Tourism. Both are important and can be used to reach the desired target market by means of virtual consumer engagement (Huang, 2019:62). As e-Tourism mainly explores more convenient technological advances in virtual consumer engagement, such as (1) e-Airlines, (2) e-Hospitality, (3) e-Tour Operators, (4) e-Travel agencies, and (5) e-Destinations. Smart Tourism on the other hand focuses on integrating these technologies to offer decentralised target markets personalised, meaningful, and memorable touring experiences (Huang, 2019:66). As such, Smart Tourism has made considerable advances in specific areas such as culture and archaeology. The archaeologists for that matter were very early on encouraged by the benefits of Smart Tourism. They officially began using it in educational tours for students and soon became popular under museum enthusiasts. Smart Tourism therefore provides businesses the luxury to reach a much wider audience without spending any additional

costs (Huang, 2011:20). The major challenge though is to create awareness by initiating digital and / or online marketing campaigns for virtual tours. Since the COVID-19 outbreak it seems that the **museums have led the way in both e-Tourism and Smart Tourism across the tourism industry (Huang, 2011:21). The museums have offered a number of services from Augmented Reality (or AR) and Virtual Reality (or VR) to fixed projections of museum artefacts and / or objects, as well as screen overlays of famous paintings from well-known artists.**

The barriers that have emerged as a result of COVID-19 were considered to be outside the scope of tourism. But what has transpired surprised and shook everyone's behaviour to become more self-aware on how their choices and actions affect other people. It has now become a repetitive process in consumer behaviour, and is now known as *The Feedback Loop of a Low Touch Economy* where a series of pandemic-control measures trigger a behaviour shift in the consumer and then causes economic disruption, leading to a fairly unpredictable system. This particular scenario is shown in Figure 2 and what it illustrates is that as health measures persist over longer periods, the more important the behavioural shifts become to disrupt the economy.

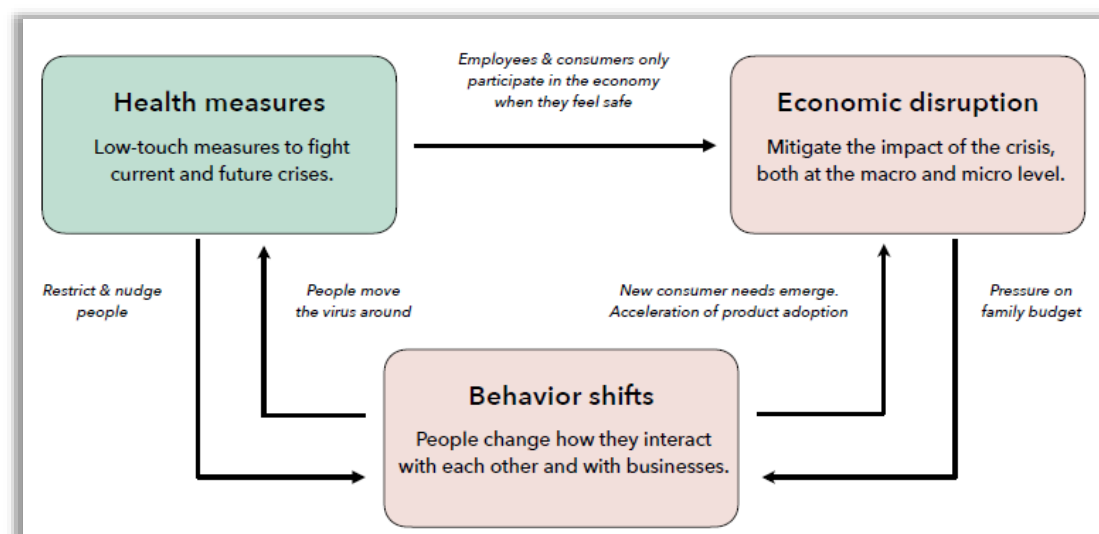


Figure 4: The Feedback Loop of a Low Touch Economy
Source: (Ridder & Mey, 2020)

Very few businesses in tourism have understood that technology presents major opportunities for tourism, in particular the new pull and push forces in 'decentralized target markets'. It can help them meet those intrinsic demands that are hard to

measure, such as communicating to diverse audiences about heritage and culture. **Virtual tours are thus for now the best way to engage, attract, and communicate with customers that exhibit the 'Home Traveller' qualities.**

Question 4

4. Three new business opportunities to lookout for.

The COVID-19 pandemic has come as a surprise to many businesses and created a weighty problem for the economy. The worldwide lockdown implemented by the different governments in their aim to combat the pandemic has left many businesses with little or no option but to close their doors (Pavel, 2020). Many of these problems were caused as a result of people not allowed to go out to go to their different workplaces. Some of the businesses that have survived have in fact reinvented their business strategies

3.1. Internet-based business opportunitites

Business was forced to look at alternative ways to continue operating under the lockdown conditions. Some of these alternatives included the **internet** for social contact, entertainment, shopping, and other purposes (Pavel, 2020). During this time **enormous growth were realised in the usage of the internet and an increase in digital engagement.** This was one area where the companies specialising in this area of business took complete advantage of the situation and developed programmes to address these issues.

While so many other businesses suffered greatly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, **85,000 businesses in the UK started online stores** (Alara, 2020). The 'New Normal' has placed an enormous amount of pressure on businesses to speed up their digital transformation in order to stay relevant in their respective industries. Indications are that the **online digital markets are growing even after the stringent lockdown has been lifted.**

However, the high take Internet business is traditionally a very competitive business. Computer programs on the Internet are simply copied and sold by the owner and does not have to be manufactured, as would be the case for physical products. Therefore millions of these codes can be produced in seconds and therefore while producers can easily supply the whole planet. Therefore it is not wise to go and compete against the likes of Microsoft, unless you have a product that can beat their products. However, it is highly unlikely that a start-up business can now develop new applications that will beat these giants. Therefore it is probably best to stay out of this business opportunity. However, if one already has a brick-and-mortar business in another field and you now want to take it online, covert 19 has created the ideal climate and therefore now is the time to go for it

3.2. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The COVID-19 virus are being transmitted through close contact with individuals already infected with the virus (Organization, 2020). It was therefore found that the preventative measures are as follows:

- Regular hand hygiene by means of an alcohol-based hand rub or washing of the hands with soap and water.
- Avoiding touching of nose, mouth and eyes as much as possible.
- Respiratory hygiene by sneezing or coughing into a bent elbow or into a tissue which has to be disposed of immediately thereafter.
- Wearing of a medical mask.
- Maintaining social distance at 1 metre distances.

These conditions have encouraged organisations and new entrants into the market to start their own **Personal Protective Equipment** (or PPE) supply businesses. The PPE has to comply with the requirements listed in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Recommended personnel PPE during the outbreak of COVID-19, according to the setting, personnel, and type of activity

Setting	Target personnel or patients	Activity	Type of PPE or procedure
Health care facilities			
Inpatient facilities			
Patient room	Health care workers	Providing direct care to COVID-19 patients	Medical mask Gown Gloves Eye protection (goggles or face shield)
		Aerosol-generating procedures performed on COVID-19 patients	Respirator N95 or FFP2 standard, or equivalent. Gown Gloves Eye protection Apron
	Cleaners	Entering the room of COVID-19 patients	Medical mask Gown Heavy duty gloves Eye protection (if risk of splash from organic material or chemicals) Boots or closed work shoes
	Visitors ^b	Entering the room of a COVID-19 patient	Medical mask Gown Gloves
Other areas of patient transit (e.g. wards, corridors).	All staff, including health care workers.	Any activity that does not involve contact with COVID-19 patients	No PPE required
Triage	Health care workers	Preliminary screening not involving direct contact ^c	Maintain spatial distance of at least 1 metre. No PPE required
	Patients with respiratory symptoms	Any	Maintain spatial distance of at least 1 metre. Provide medical mask if tolerated by patient.
	Patients without respiratory symptoms	Any	No PPE required
Laboratory	Lab technician	Manipulation of respiratory samples	Medical mask Gown Gloves Eye protection (if risk of splash)
Administrative areas	All staff, including health care workers.	Administrative tasks that do not involve contact with COVID-19 patients.	No PPE required

Source: (Organization, 2020)

Face shields

Face shields have a rich history and date back to the 6th century BC. In some countries it was used for example by servants serving food, for their breath not to impact the smell and taste of the food (Times, 2020). In modern times' businesses have become creative and invented face shields of different sorts in their aim to make profits. These face shields are worn to protect the eyes, mouth and nose from the virus. The quality has been relooked and improved as information impacted knowledge over the years. Below are two different face shields available in the current market.



Figure 5: Perspex® SA Face Shield 2.0

Flat Pack

Source: (Organization, 2020)

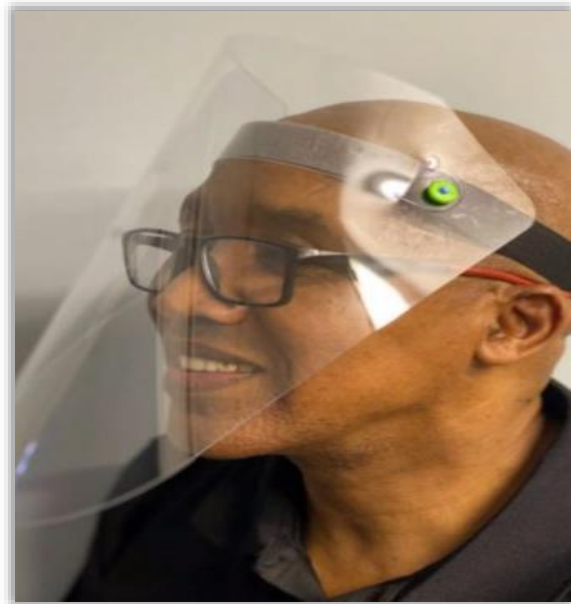


Figure 6: Perspex® SA Face Shield

Source: (Organization, 2020)

Furthermore, innovation has led to the development of **Perspex Shields or screens** for businesses where face-to-face customer interaction is part of their business functions. Perspex screens are made of acrylic (Plexiglas) or polycarbonate plastics and serve the same purpose as the face shield but cover a greater area than the face shield. It is also said to be more effective in areas where it is not possible to maintain social distancing of 2 metres (Angela, 2020). These physical barriers, recommended by Public Health Agency of Canada, US CDC, the World Health Organisation and others has become a valuable product in business today.



Figure 7: Two examples of the “new normal”

Source: (Organization, 2020)

Many organisations are using this as an opportunity combined with their innovative ideas to achieve their business goals. In Figure 5 are two examples of the use of these shields.

Setting up a factory to manufacture personal protective equipment, in response to the Covid 19 pandemic, is a highly risky strategy: welcome on a vaccine for covert 19 has progressed very far and it is quite likely that by April next year the pandemic will have been defeated by means of a vaccine. Therefore, to now build a factory that will probably only sell its products for a few months, only to then see its market disappear, is obviously not a wise strategy and, therefore, this should not be pursued.

5. Conclusion

Businesses are forced to comply with the required standards for their workplaces. These measures are recommended to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. That means on the reopening of the business, management should be obsessive about hygiene, they must strategize to have more of their sales done through online platforms if possible (Emily, 2020).

Recommendations are that business owners should plan for the long term as economies are in the process of recovering from the effects of the pandemic (Emily, 2020). This in short means that companies thinking of entering the business of selling

PPE will most probably not be the ideal choice for a business. Thinking long-term will without a doubt include the internet as part of the business strategy. This could simply mean going online with the selling of products and other crucial business activities.

What one is looking for is a market that will continue to grow exponentially over the next decade or so. So, while one should avoid these short-term fly-by-night opportunities that were created by the COVID-19 pandemic out of nothing and will disappear in a few months when the pandemic is tamed, one should rather look for long-term cultural and strategy changes brought about by the covert 19 pandemic. One such change is the switch from physical meetings to online meetings. The computer codes that facilitate this, such as Zoom, are already in place and, therefore, there is no point in trying to compete with the companies that supply those. What one would rather be looking out for is an opportunity to take one of your existing businesses to the next level by using this new online culture to streamline your own operations, including marketing and sales, in order to take your business to the next level. You are thus not looking for a business in one of these Internet technologies but rather an opportunity to use these business these new technologies to fast-track an existing business.

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