

June 2020

Hotlist

Re-opening to a new reality

Household



Introduction

As we enter June, lockdown is beginning to ease. However, we are re-entering a very different reality.

Customers' time during lockdown has created new needs, behaviours and mindsets, changing what they expect and how they engage with experiences.

In this month's Hotlist, we will explore the way brands have adapted to new customer needs as they begin to re-open their doors.



United Nations COVID-19 Response | Unsplash

Household

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Apple | Global (Image courtesy of Apple)

1. Safety at the Heart

Creating a holistic safety experience

As lockdown eases and stores re-open, brands are looking at how they can keep their customers safe to limit the spread of the virus. However, brands are recognising that safety isn't just a physical need, but an emotional one too.

Apple has ensured to place strict safety protocol throughout its entire experience. Masks are required to enter, temperature checks are taken and customers are advised to keep 2-metre distance from others throughout the store.

But the brand is caring for the emotional safety of its employees too, by making available a comprehensive list of mental health resources for its staff.

Household takeout:

Safety will become a holistic experience. Brands will create new products, initiatives and comms to ensure customers are physically and emotionally protected as they engage with experiences.

2. Intelligent Queueing

Pre-booking when and where to shop

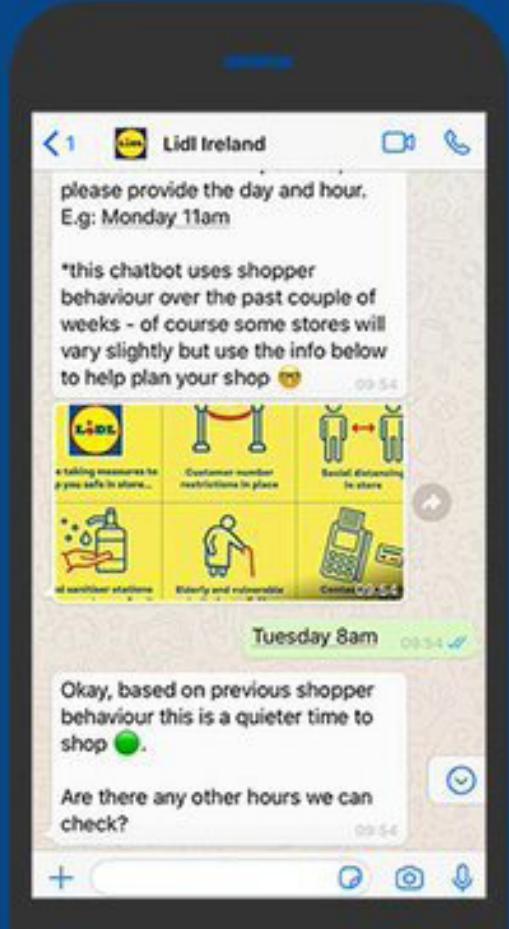
Social distancing has become a necessity to limit the spread of Covid-19. The grocery industry in particular has led the charge, introducing decals and queues to keep customers safe. But brands have been smart, learning how and when customers shop, employing tech to improve the social distancing process.

Lidl recently introduced a WhatsApp chatbot to help customers find the optimal time to visit stores. Users enter the time and day they want to visit, alongside the store.

The brand then uses real time data to determine if it's quiet or not. Traffic light emojis are used to indicate how busy the store is.

Household takeout:



As social distancing in retail environments becomes normal, brands will innovate the process using data and tech. They will learn how customers interact with the experience, and inform their community through everyday channels.



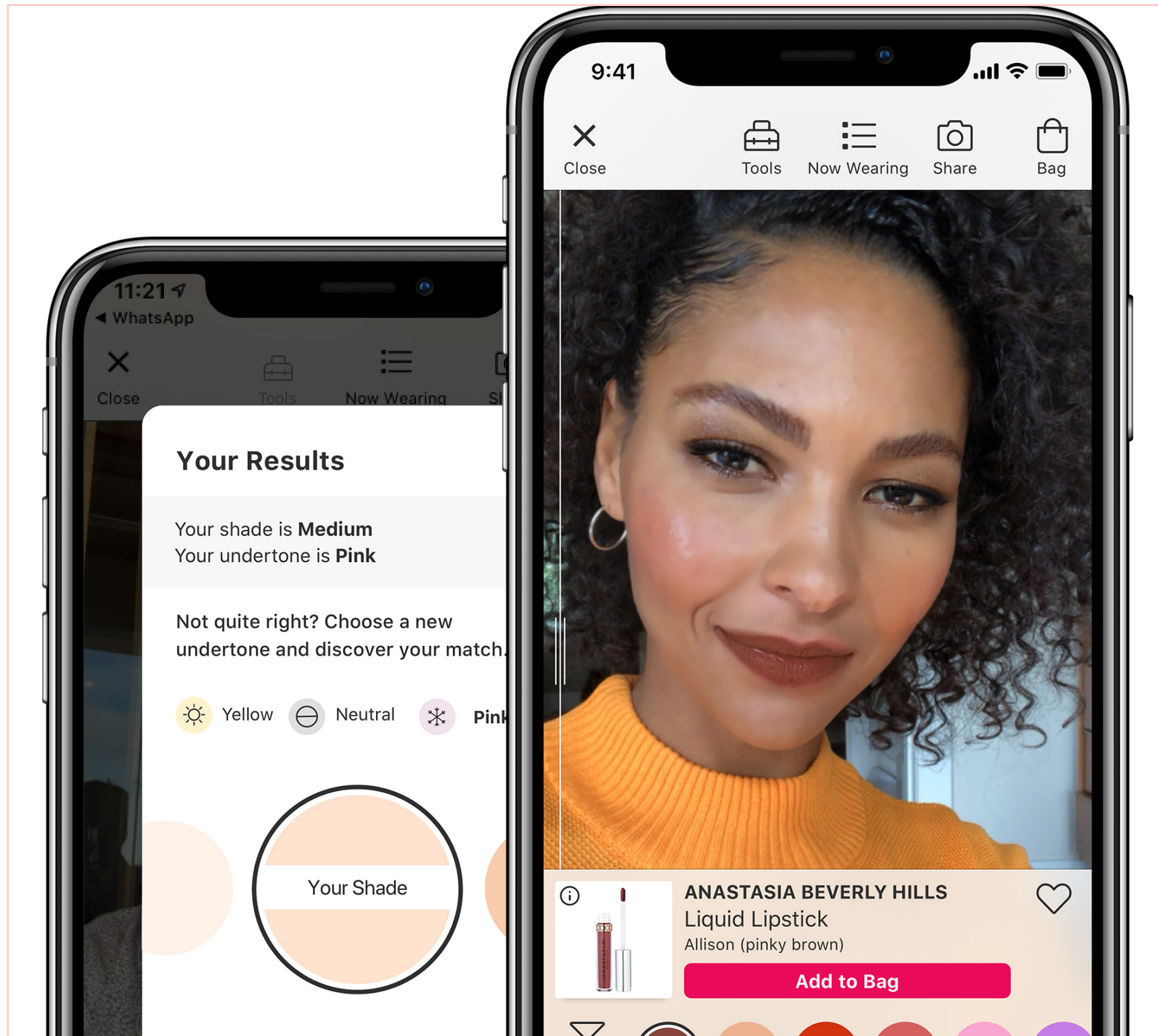
The screenshot shows a WhatsApp chat with 'Lidl Ireland'. The chatbot asks for the day and hour (e.g., Monday 11am) and explains it uses shopper behavior data. It then displays a grid of six icons representing different store features: Lidl logo, queueing system, social distancing, hand sanitizer, elderly and vulnerable, and contactless payment. The user responds with 'Tuesday 8am'. The chatbot replies with a green traffic light emoji, indicating it's a quieter time to shop, and asks if there are other hours to check.

**Plan ahead with our
Whatsapp Chatbot to find
the quietest time to shop...**

Send us the day and time you plan to visit and it will let you know if that's a quieter, average or busier time to shop!



Lidl | Ireland (Image courtesy of Lidl)



Ulta Beauty | USA (Image courtesy of Ulta Beauty)

3. Virtual Try-On

Innovating the product experience with tech

Even as stores open and lockdown eases, customers are still worried to interact in physical experiences. Brands are innovating, looking to bring the physical experience directly to them - virtually.

With 180 of its stores re-opening, Ulta Beauty has launched its virtual product try-on feature GlamLab as an alternative option to product testing in-store testing.

Customers are guided to download the Ulta Beauty app, and use the GlamLab feature in store or at home to test products at the moment.

Household takeout:

With heightened health and safety concerns, brands will leverage technology to virtualise the shopping experience. Brands can showcase products to customers in interactive ways, wherever they are, allowing them to make more confident purchasing decisions.

4. Re-defining Hospitality

Creating a 'touchless' stay for customers

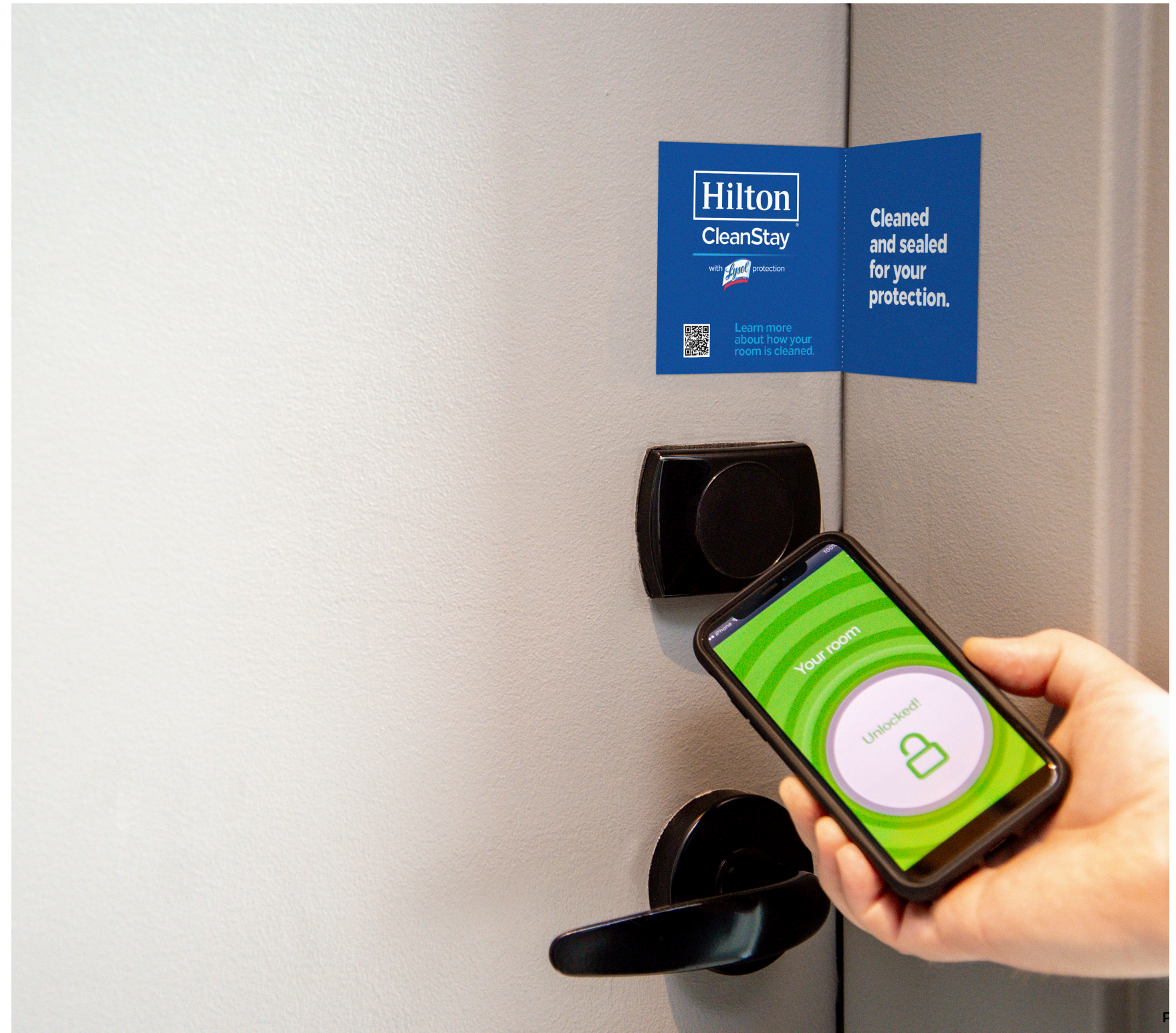
No industry has been harder hit than the hospitality and travel industry. But as lockdown eases and borders re-open, brands are rapidly adapting to the new shape of experience, creating a safe destination for everyone.

Hilton has unveiled a new cleaning programme called Hilton CleanStay. The new measures include: contactless check-in, disinfectant wipes at high traffic areas, room seals on doors and extra disinfectant in high-touch areas, aim to drive cleanliness throughout the guest experience.

The brand is also exploring new technologies such as disinfecting mist and sanitising surfaces using UV light.

Household takeout:

Technology will become a mainstay to drive a touchless experience. Brands will innovate and explore new ways to streamline the end-to-end experience. A touchless experience will change the role of colleagues, freeing up their time so they can focus on serving a greater role in helping customers during their stay.



Hilton | Global (Image courtesy of Hilton)



Acne Studios | Global (Image courtesy of Acne Studios)

5. Digitally connected shopping

Seamlessly blending the worlds of physical and digital

Customers have become digitally dependent in lockdown and have embraced e-commerce with open arms. As retail opens, customers expect digital to be a part of the physical experience, allowing them to effortlessly jump from online to offline.

Acne Studios has done just that. The fashion brand has launched kerbside pickup in three of its Californian stores. Customers select the fulfilment option when purchasing online, and must collect wearing a mask.

The brand is also offering virtual consultations, for customers to receive expert 1-2-1 product guidance, recommendations and styling advice.

Household takeout:

Experience is no longer limited to a single touchpoint. In a post-covid world, customers will fluidly jump from online to offline in an instance, and expect brands to be wherever they are. Staff's role in-store will no longer be limited to physical touchpoints, but transcend channels to connect with customers, wherever they are.

Here and helping

As the world re-opens its doors, we are working with our clients to help them shape their experiences to a new generation of customers.

If you would like to talk about the future of the customer experience journey, please get in touch.

Thank you,

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