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New Research from Bluedot and SeeLevel Finds Drive-Thru Visits Jumped Since April, Reveals Mobile Ordering Continues to Surge Amid the Pandemic

Second State of What Feeds Us Report also indicates speed and safety are critical to gaining market share with COVID on the rise

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Bluedot
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SAN FRANCISCO and ATLANTA, Aug. 5, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- Bluedot, which provides location technology for mobile apps to power meaningful interactions between brands and their customers, in partnership with market research agency SeeLevel HX, today released the second installment of State of What Feeds Us Report which examines consumer habits and behavior of restaurant and retail customers. The research, based on a survey of 1,501 American consumers, was completed last month. The findings offer critical insights to help brands navigate through the rising pandemic.

Highlights of the report include a major spike in mobile app usage, up to 64% from 51% since the first State of What Feeds Us Report released in April which also uncovered a sharp uptick in mobile app usage. Strikingly, fast food customers have substantially increased their visits to the drive-thru with a 43% jump since the first report three months into the pandemic. Nearly three out of four consumers are now visiting the drive-thru as often or more often than before. Consumers have also

increased their use of curbside pickup with 62% choosing the contactless option as much or more often over the last month.

"The latest findings further signal a dramatic shift in consumer habits as a result of the rising pandemic. There's even more data now to support prioritizing a mobile strategy with drive-thru and pickup options and significant safety precautions to both retain revenue and gain customers," said Emil Davityan, CEO and co-founder of Bluedot. "It's also critical to recognize the value of speed of service. Long wait times can not only negatively impact the overall customer experience, but are likely to turn away customers upon approach as well."

The report revealed the vast majority (81%) of consumers feel that waiting more than 10 minutes at the drive-thru is too long. Further, 4 out of 10 customers say wait time longer than 4 minutes for curbside pickup at a fast food restaurant is too long.

"There's no question service times have a direct impact on a store's revenue. Our annual QSR Drive-Thru Study indicates service times could be costing QSRs roughly \$36,397.80 per unit per year on average. That's hundreds of millions of dollars annually for major brands," said Lisa van Kesteren, SeeLevel HX CEO. "This new data further emphasizes how critical it is for QSRs to explore new strategies for improving efficiencies to both stay competitive and increase revenue."

Safety and sanitation also stood out as key factors with COVID cases continuing to rise throughout the country. Not only do consumers want to see staff wearing masks and gloves, they also want to see sanitation and safety information posted at the drive-thru (29%) as well as less or zero contact with staff (25%).

Key Findings

Mobile apps: Americans are continuing to download more mobile apps

The majority of consumers (88%) are using mobile apps to order food, groceries and other products the same amount or more often than before, up from 85% in April.

While 64% have downloaded at least one or more new apps to purchase food from restaurants, grocers and other essential stores, 49% have downloaded two or more apps compared to 45% in April.

Half are using mobile apps more often or much more often than before compared to 42% in April.

Drive-thru and curbside: Americans are still relying on fast food amid COVID

74% have visited the drive-thru the same amount or more often than usual. Additionally, 46% stated they're visiting more often than usual in the last month.

62% have used curbside pickup the same amount as before or more often than before. 40% have used it more often than usual compared to 27% in the first State of What Feeds Us.

Consumers feel most safe at the drive-thru followed by curbside pickup.

Wait time: Wait time impacts the bottom line

The majority (81%) feel that waiting more than 10 minutes at the drive-thru is too long.

Almost 4 out of 10 customers say wait time longer than 4 minutes for curbside pickup at a fast food restaurant is too long.

Safety: Safety is still top of mind, communication as important

Overwhelmingly, respondents rank both staff and customers wearing a mask as most important when it comes to safety precautions.

Sanitation and safety information posted at the drive-thru would make consumers feel safer (29%), followed closely by less contact or zero contact with staff (25%).

When using curbside pickup, consumers feel safest when they don't need to leave their car (27%), followed by staff meeting them with a mask and gloves (26%), and having minimal or zero contact with staff (22%).

Employees not wearing masks is by far the number one reason why consumers will not return to an establishment.

To learn more, the second installment of State of What Feeds Us e-book can be found [here](#).

Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted and completed by SeeLevel HX between June 23 - July 2, 2020, among a national sample of 1,501 American adults aged 18 and older. Qualified respondents were those who had visited a fast food drive-thru in the past month. Within the general population, the age groups were slightly balanced to be representative of the U.S. population.

About Bluedot

Bluedot's location technology for mobile apps powers meaningful interactions between brands and their customers across key industries including quick service restaurants, retail, and transportation. With pinpoint accuracy, Bluedot's easy-to-implement location technology can identify when a mobile app user arrives at a business, places mobile orders at drive-thrus, arrives at a curbside or pickup spot, or passes a toll location. Inherently compliant with GDPR and CCPA, Bluedot focuses on protecting end-user privacy and never shares or sells personal information.

Top global brands trust Bluedot for their location-based needs. For more information on Bluedot and its solutions, visit bluedot.io.

About SeeLevel HX

Founded in 2008 by a mystery shopping pioneer Lisa van Kesteren, SeeLevel HX supports the improvement of customer experience, brand reputation and brand loyalty through competitive intelligence, market research and secret shopping services. With over 55 years of combined industry experience, 792,000 secret shoppers and employees in every time zone across the nation, SeeLevel HX continues to be a leader in mystery shopping for the QSR and fast casual, retail, financial services and automotive industries. For more information or to see your business at the level of your customers, visit www.SeeLevelhx.com.

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