

Covid-19 and its impact on the coffee business

By [Stacey Moss](#)

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The coffee industry has seen a number of changes and challenges over the years but, not on the scale and magnitude of the Covid-19 pandemic which, has had a profound impact on coffee culture. The harsh reality is that the ramifications stretch far into the future, and it may be months or even years before the market normalises.



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As people were forced to stay at home, online sales saw a boom especially in the coffee space where end-users were able to access a variety of blends and flavour profiles from a number of different roasters and coffee houses.

This opened up opportunities for coffee companies that originally played in the B2B space to innovate and, as a result, we witnessed a number of roasters entering the online retail realm. Those that were quick to respond were the ones that benefitted from brand awareness in the digital space.

Impact on hospitality and corporate sectors

While online coffee sales for home use grew, the hospitality sector was one of the worst affected and this has had and will continue to have a major impact on restaurants, hotels and fast food outlets who were unable to trade at the beginning of lockdown. Even when government unlocked food deliveries at Level 4, those who offered coffee excluded this in their delivery service because of the difficulty in transporting hot beverages.

It will be interesting to see how consumer behaviour changes during Level 3. Social media shows that people have missed the experience of going to their favourite spot to get a cup of coffee, but on the other hand, people are concerned about their safety and so I believe that coffee consumption habits will shift and many will be looking at solutions that give them quality coffee in the comfort of their homes.

Corporate and office canteens have also felt the pinch as they have remained closed up until this point. More and more businesses will look to keep their employees working from home and therefore the demand for coffee will be considerably less.



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Alternative brewing methods

All of this doesn't change the fact that people still want their daily caffeine fix and so I predict that consumers will start aggressively exploring alternative brewing methods as well as look at having bean-to-cup and traditional espresso machine options at home.

With no definitive timeframe for when things will start returning back to usual, coffee has changed and while there is so much uncertainty, this is an exciting time for innovation and creativity and I look forward to seeing how this will shape the industry we've come to know.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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