



ANTHILL



ANTHILL RETAIL REVIEW

Reflections and Predictions from the Industry

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Anthill Retail Review – Reflections and Predictions from the Industry report.

As we all know, perhaps too well by now, 2020 caused a great deal of uncertainty and anxiety for all businesses.

What was previously assumed as the “done thing” was radically turned on its head and companies were left scrambling to find alternative ways of working to ensure they survived the tumult of the pandemic.

Thankfully, many did and lived to see another day.

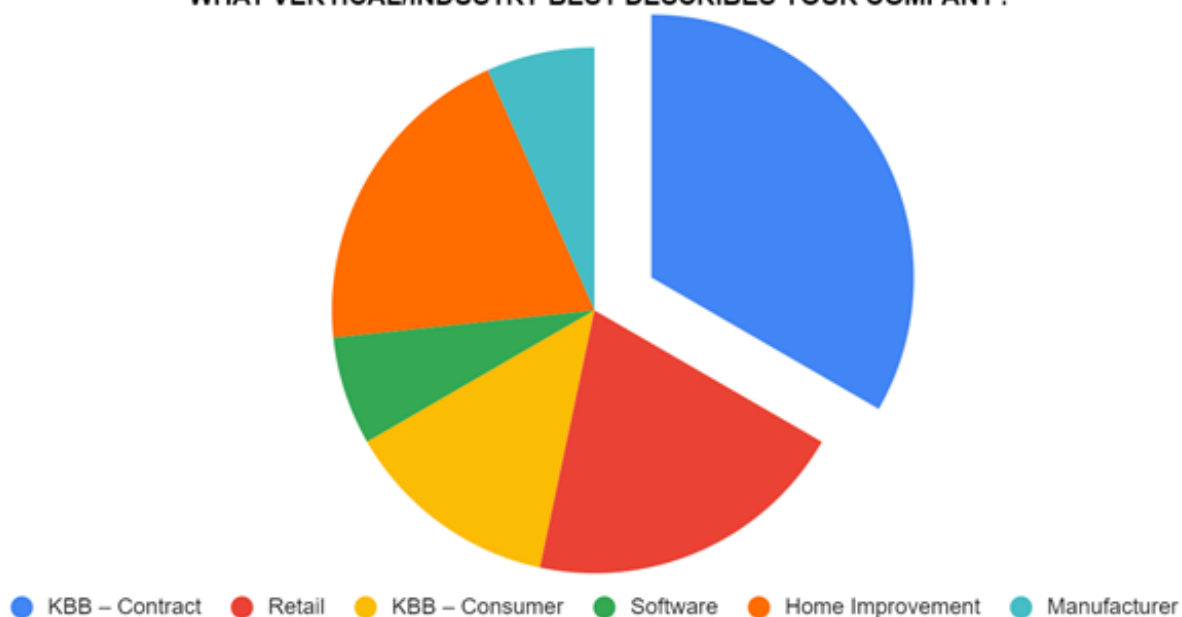
In order to aid the transition from surviving in 2020 to thriving in 2021, Anthill decided to take action and open the floor to the industry, providing a platform to share key takeaways and learnings as well as tactics and predictions for the year to come.

This is where you came in!

A massive thanks to all those who participated in the survey and helped to facilitate a discussion, through your insights and expertise we can together improve the industry and drive the community forward.

Respondents came from across the industry, providing a wide-ranging insight from a variety of sectors, roles, business sizes and departments.

WHAT VERTICAL/INDUSTRY BEST DESCRIBES YOUR COMPANY?



This helped generate a broad picture from across the industry ensuring that all takeaways contained within the report are rooted in a significant volume of experience.

The findings from the report will be divided into two main sections: the first tackling Reflections and Key Lessons with the second looking to the future with Predictions on challenges and tactics for success in 2021.

On to the results...

REFLECTIONS & LESSONS

Beginning with Reflections, revenue growth provided a unanimous indicator for relative prosperity across the industry and showed an almost even split.

Whilst 47% of respondents recorded no rise in turnover, 40% shared that 2020 had in fact resulted in an increase to the bottom line for their organisations. This in of itself helps form a cause for optimism that even in 2020, the industry was able to showcase real resilience to continue an upward trend of growth.

DID YOUR BUSINESS REVENUE GROW IN 2020?



Covid-19 naturally dominated the year with two thirds of participants citing a negative impact upon their businesses although 60% also reported that a move to a remote approach had minimal effect on their operation again proving the adaptability of many organisations across retail.

Sadly, 50% attested to redundancies being made in response to the pandemic indicating that despite a cause for optimism, the reality for many was the loss of staff.

Diving into the specifics of challenges faced and adaptations made, there was a real breadth in responses to the standout roadblocks.



As can be seen from the chart above, there was a plethora of issues to be tackled with two stand out challenges coming in the form of “manufacturing, sourcing or importing product” and “reduced demand or economic factors”.

With any luck, the latter will rebalance in the near future as the UK heads toward a return to normality whilst the former should be taken note of, especially as businesses re-evaluate supply chains as previous partners may no longer be in operation.

If 2020 taught the industry anything, it is to have a solid plan B.

Arguably the most illuminating insight of the Reflections section of the survey came by virtue of the final question, “what changes did your business make throughout 2020 to adapt to the new normal?”

Aside from the required government guideline alterations, several participants cited:

“improvement of virtual communications” and “investment in social media and marketing channels”.

as successful changes that were made by their business.

Circumstances forced both employees and customers online, and with this shift, the need to facilitate effective virtual communication increased drastically.

In an ever more digital world, the pandemic accelerated the need for organisations to have a strong online presence and those that saw success despite the situation were often those that made this transition most effectively.

The move online also meant that many businesses had to rethink their targeting strategies so as to reach their customers where they were now spending their time. In the context of increased marketing and social investment, this required constant tracking of spend, from first contact through to sale, to understand what was working and importantly, what wasn't, to ensure resource weren't wasted.

By investing in online marketing and social media, companies were able to continue interacting with their potential market ensuring that despite the lack of face-to-face contact, they still remained front of mind.

PREDICTIONS

Turning toward Predictions for 2021 and beyond, the outstanding takeaway was that across all responses, there was an undeniably positive tone.

Alongside this, there was a real sense of hopeful optimism that the worst of the storm had been weathered and that organisations were in fact more ready to cope with what the future threw at them than ever before.

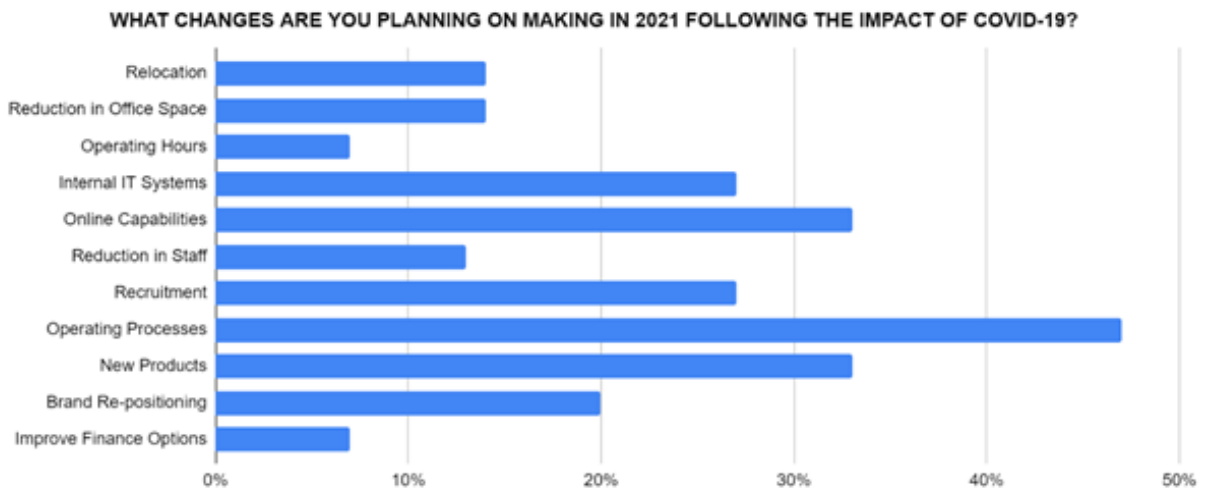
Despite over 50% of respondents anticipating Covid-19 to have a continuing negative effect on their operations, almost 70% are expecting to see turnover grow across the next 12 months.

DO YOU FORECAST YOUR BUSINESS TURNOVER INCREASING IN 2021?



Approaches to securing this increase in turnover were varied yet the common occurrences covered improving operational procedures, investing in online capabilities, and broadening their products and services.

Not for the first time, the digital shift and widening of the customer funnel shone through as key concepts for businesses looking to the future.



Alongside Covid-19, Brexit will also be an unmistakable feature in the context of 2021, however there was generally less certainty on the potential economic impacts with 40% of survey respondents unsure of how leaving the EU will affect their businesses.

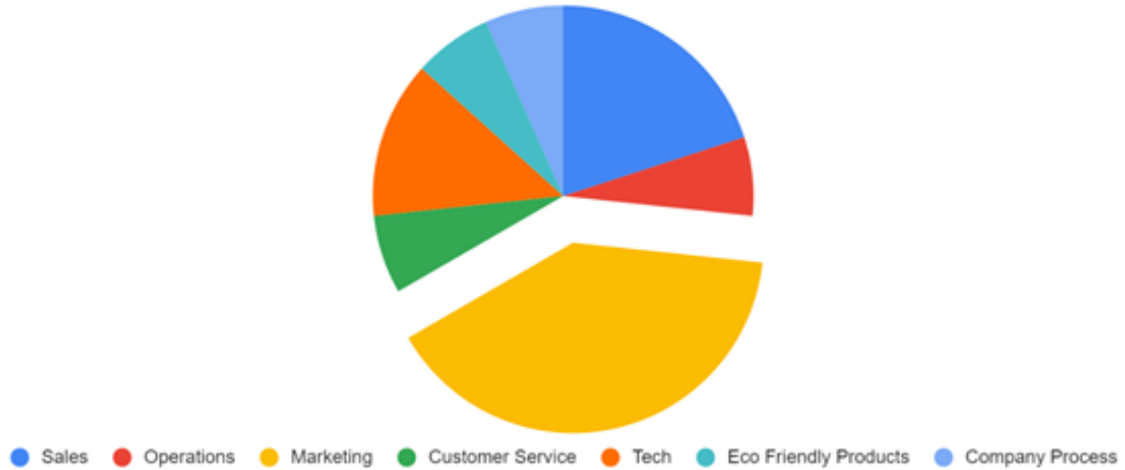
In this light, collective experiences of 2020 should prepare businesses to manoeuvre quickly to negate any potential fallout of outside issues such as Brexit should it prove to be a challenge to operations.

Interestingly, these external factors, although not entirely unrelated, were not anticipated to be the most significant challenges passing across the desks of organisations next year.

35% of participants cited reduced demand and economic factors as their major concern whilst a requirement for operational change was the next largest issue with 20% acknowledging the need for adaptation. Making sure any major operational changes are conducted as smoothly as possible therefore appears to be more important than ever.

For 40% of respondents, the main area of investment for tackling the year ahead was in marketing; followed by sales indicating that perhaps as budgets become tighter, competition for those customers still in circulation will become even more fierce than before.

WHICH AREA WILL YOU BE INVESTING IN MOST HEAVILY IN 2021 TO ENSURE SUCCESS?



The final question posed in the survey was in relation to the outlook for 2021 which, happily, indicated that the vast majority of respondents are upbeat about the year ahead and can look back on 2020 with pride at their resilience and use the experience to better prepare their organisations for the challenges to come.

HOW DO YOU SEE THE OUTLOOK FOR 2021?



CONCLUSION

2020 undoubtedly brought challenges for us all. Ultimately though, it is our responsibility to identify the lessons learned and implement the changes to fuel future success.

By coming together, sharing experiences, and listening to one another, it becomes possible to curate a stronger community that can leverage the expertise of others to overcome and, hopefully, avoid any crippling events.

So once again, a sincere thank you to all respondents, it is through the sharing of your insight that everyone can collectively improve.

Above anything else, the Retail Review Survey has showcased the following areas to be critical in achieving success in 2021:

- Procedural resilience. Without a robust, efficient process a company simply cannot operate to it's full potential.
- Critical reflections. Having information at your fingertips to evaluate your whole operation, especially the customer journey, is vital for identifying areas for improvement.
- Wise investment. Whether in Marketing, Sales or Technology, ensuring your precious resources are distributed effectively aids in protecting your organisation against unforeseen circumstances.

By harnessing the knowledge of those in your sector shared throughout the report, you can evolve your own organisation to push on from 2020's challenges and make the new year your most lucrative yet.



Anthill's mission is to help companies provide a consistent Customer Experience across teams, channels and locations.

Designed for workforce synergy, Anthill helps you plan your unique Customer Journey into customisable workflow streams, then monitor performance via live and interactive role-based dashboards.

Improve efficiency, drive productivity, refine operations and increase sales.

To find out if your company would benefit from Anthill, request a free process review from our team of specialists by visiting www.anthill.co.uk

Streamline your process, make smarter decisions, and accelerate growth
www.anthill.co.uk