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Nondurables Struggle, as 90% of Major Manufacturers Fail to Satisfy Customers, ACSI Data Show

Adidas, AB InBev, P&G, Hanes suffer big declines while Levi's, J&J, Henkel make improvements

ANN ARBOR, Mich., (January 26, 2021) – Customer satisfaction in the Manufacturing/Nondurables sector is not immune to the pandemic. Overall, the sector shrinks 1.5% to a score of 79.2 (out of 100), according to the [American Customer Satisfaction Index's \(ACSI®\) Nondurable Products Report 2019-2020](#).

“While consumers still view the Nondurables industries more favorably than others, the sector’s grip over the Index isn’t as tight as it once was,” says David VanAmburg, Managing Director at the ACSI. “Shopping patterns shifted almost overnight as customers stocked pantries during the early stages of the U.S. COVID-19 outbreak. The resulting supply chain issues and shortages led food processors and beverage makers alike to trim their product offerings and focus on core products to meet unprecedented demand. Unfortunately, they didn’t do enough to balance customer expectations.”

Of the six measured industries, only apparel improves. The remaining categories – food manufacturing, breweries, soft drinks, personal care and cleaning products, and athletic shoes – suffer significant customer satisfaction declines, with nearly 90% of major manufacturers undergoing year-over-year downturns in their ACSI scores.

Quaker now tops food manufacturers despite decline

After holding steady last year with an ACSI score of 82, customer satisfaction with food manufacturing stumbles 3.7% to 79. Among 11 major food processors, not one improves.

Despite dropping 2% year over year, Quaker sits atop the food manufacturing industry with an ACSI score of 82. Dole slips 2% but retains its second-place position at 81, tying Hershey and Mars with the former falling 4% and the latter down 1%.

Conagra slips 2% to 79, matching the industry average and tying the large group of smaller food manufacturers. The smaller food makers plummet 6%, suffering the largest satisfaction decline

in the industry.

The remaining companies all score below the industry average. Four companies score 78: General Mills (down 5%), Kellogg (down 3%), Ferrero (down 4%), and Tyson (down 3%). Campbell Soup and Kraft Heinz share the bottom spot, both sinking 5% to record-low scores of 77.

Keurig Dr Pepper and PepsiCo lead hotly contested soft drink industry

Customer satisfaction with soft drinks retreats 2.4% to an ACSI score of 80, just shy of the industry's all-time low.

Keurig Dr Pepper and PepsiCo each slide 1% yet share the top spot at 81. The large group of smaller soft drink makers slips 2% to a score of 80, while Coca-Cola lags slightly behind, down 2% to 79, matching its previous low ACSI score.

Beer makers take a hit, no longer alone at the top of the ACSI

Customer satisfaction with breweries takes a bigger hit than soft drinks, slumping 3.6% to an ACSI score of 81. Nevertheless, breweries remain at the top of the Index, albeit now tied with internet retail.

The group of smaller breweries – including brands like Modelo, Guinness, Yuengling, Samuel Adams, Heineken, and numerous craft labels – slips 1% to 84, yet still widens its lead.

Among the big brewers, Anheuser-Busch InBev stays ahead of Molson Coors, but both companies sustain significant downturns in customer satisfaction. For AB InBev, satisfaction diminishes 5% to 80, while Molson Coors slumps 4% to match its former low of 78.

Dirty reality for group of smaller cleaning products

Following two years of high and stable customer satisfaction, the personal care and cleaning products industry wanes 4.8% to an ACSI score of 79.

Despite a slight slip of 1%, Clorox regains the industry lead at 81. During the pandemic, consumer demand for disinfectants and bleach has exploded, with Clorox seeing fivefold spikes for some of its products in March 2020.

Just a point lower, Colgate-Palmolive drops 2% to 80. Procter & Gamble takes a greater hit, tumbling 5% to the same score. Both Henkel and Johnson & Johnson gain 3% to match the industry average at 79, tying them with the group of smaller manufacturers – including brands like Arm & Hammer, Sensodyne, and Bath & Body Works – which plummets 7% after holding the top spot in 2019.

At the bottom of the category, Unilever fades 3% to 78, marking its second straight year of customer satisfaction decline and first time below 80 in over two decades.

Satisfaction with apparel rises to the occasion

The apparel industry overall bucks the trend of declining customer satisfaction in the Manufacturing/Nondurables sector, climbing 2.6% to an ACSI score of 79.

The smaller clothing makers that represent the bulk of the category deserve the lion’s share of the credit. Producing casual clothes, sportswear, jeans, and basic items such as underwear and socks under countless labels like Fruit of the Loom, Victoria’s Secret, and Wrangler, the group of smaller clothing companies rises 3% to an ACSI score of 79.

Levi Strauss follows the industry trend, also up 3% to 79. The other larger clothing companies, however, weren’t so lucky.

VF, maker of The North Face, Timberland, and Vans, drops 3% to 77, while customer satisfaction with Hanesbrands retreats 5% to 76.

Athletic shoe manufacturers can’t run from their problems

For athletic shoes, customer satisfaction declines across the industry in 2020, receding 2.5% to an ACSI score of 77. For the first time in a decade, satisfaction with athletic shoes sits below apparel.

No athletic shoe producer shows a significant advantage in customer satisfaction. Nike, barely in first place, drops out of the 80s with a 4% decrease to 78. Adidas, however, experiences the biggest decline among major companies in the Nondurables sector, toppling 7% to land at 77. The large group of smaller athletic shoemakers – including brands like Skechers, New Balance, Fila, and Asics – slide 3% to 77 as well.

The ACSI Nondurable Products Report 2019-2020 is based on interviews with 13,168 customers, chosen at random and contacted via email between October 9, 2019, and September 25, 2020. Download the [full report](#), and follow the ACSI on [LinkedIn](#) and Twitter at [@theACSI](#).

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About the ACSI

The [American Customer Satisfaction Index](#) (ACSI®) has been a national economic indicator for 25 years. It measures and analyzes customer satisfaction with more than 400 companies

in 47 industries and 10 economic sectors, including various services of federal and local government agencies. Reported on a scale of 0 to 100, scores are based on data from interviews with roughly 500,000 customers annually. For more information, visit www.theacsi.org.

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