CES WRAP-UP:
THE 2021 DIGITAL EVENT, FROM ALL ANGLES

FAST FORWARD
IN WELLNESS
INNOVATION

U.S.-EUROPE RETAILING:
COVID AS THE GREAT EQUALIZER

ECOMMERCE GOES HOME

DEALERSCOPE

EXCEPTIONAL TECH:
IMPACT
AWARDS | 2021

DEALERSCOPE
CES Had Great Content – and Our Awards Made an IMPACT

The All-Digital CES has passed, and as we move into 2021, with a vaccination schedule in place, there is light at the end of the tunnel. Just like you I am hopeful that our industry will get to the point where we can all expect a more “normal” day-to-day business environment soon.

In the meantime, our wonderful editorial staff was busy covering all the fabulous new technology at the virtual show. I was very impressed with many things – among them, a home robot that will do your housework, and a contact lens that will assist with your vision problems and will even play content. No doubt about it, the future is here. Please make sure you see all our great content, to check out what you may have missed.

I also want to congratulate all the Dealerscope 2021 IMPACT Award winners this year. These are some of the best products that are at retail or will soon be. In this issue, we also have in-depth coverage on all manner of related categories, including IoT, connected car tech, TV, health & wellness innovations, and much more.

Our contributing editors are covering subjects such as how ecommerce call centers are moving to home call centers during the pandemic. This month, our international perspective turns toward looking at how we do business in the U.S. compared with Europe. We have also covered two other shows that occurred last month: the NRF (National Retail Federation) event and Retail Innovation Week.

In addition, in this issue, we are launching a new column, “Retail on the Run,” where we visit a retailer and conduct an informative interview on how that dealer’s business model is unique, and how they achieve success. This month, we sent our contributing editor to HiDEF Lifestyle in Harrisburg, Pa.

Check out this great segment that we will be offering to our readers monthly.

The February Unboxed column features an assessment of the LG Stick CordZero Vacuum, which was put to the test in a real-world environment. In addition, we have added a Summary Box feature to our articles, so you can review the main points of our stories in thumbnails before delving deeper into the content.

As ever, please send us your feedback. We want to hear from you.

Tony Monteleone, Publisher
Trends that Define 2021 Health Tech

A Lens on the Newest Products
Navigating Around Digital CES
Spotlighting IoT at CES
Digital CES’s Success – What it Means

Dealerscope Podcast: In its 50th year, CES looks back on how touchscreen innovations have come in the way of retail and how COVID has reshaped and even accelerated some of its adoption.

ことが多いのアクセス。Auston DECA Division describe how the COVID-19 pandemic had accelerated the brand's development as consumers look for ways to improve content streaming and power management in style.

What Lies Ahead for CES 2022?

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COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped and even accelerated some of its adoption. The cream of the crop in product innovations is showcased in this annual program, whose honorees were determined by an esteemed panel of industry tech experts who brought their unique expertise to the voting process.

The 2021 Digital Event, From All Angles

Bluetooth: Back in the show will return to the web with a lineup of product ists, industry updates, roundtable discussions, and virtual social hours thematically ‘Doubled Down’ on multichannel initiatives.

50 STAT SHOT

COOL PRODUCTS AT CES

The annual program, whose honorees were determined by an esteemed panel of industry tech experts who brought their unique expertise to the voting process.

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“If it isn’t on Google, it doesn’t exist.”

Jimmy Wales

When the reality that COVID-19 and the havoc it was wreaking to lives, families, and livelihoods started sinking in around the end of last February, it became increasingly clear to the management personnel of trade shows of all sizes and stripes in the consumer technology arena that some fast thinking was in order. However, fast thinking, it turned out, couldn’t outrun the rapidly morphing circumstances affecting the rules of safe congregation and air travel. Those kept changing by the week, the day and the minute.

Count the Consumer Technology Association (CTA), producer of the annual January International CES, as having been fortunate enough to start some ultra-early research into transitional moves relating to the “virtualization” of the January 2021 CES.

“We began in February and March look at digital, looked at every off-the-shelf package, and decided we had to do something special,” said Gary Shapiro, CTA president and CEO, in June, when the new format was unveiled. He added that the goal was to preserve “the serendipity, the joy of learning” that characterizes the traditional face-to-face CES. So CTA pulled the trigger in July, deciding to forego hopes of doing a physical show, “letting us focus on making this happen.”

Having just experienced the result – achieved with the partnership of Microsoft, the engine whose software infrastructure powered the show’s events and pacing, we have to tip our hat to a challenge that was well met. No, it wasn’t Vegas. There was no elbow-rubbing at receptions, and none of the annual “catching-up-with” schmoozing that characterizes the considerable social aspects of a typical CES.

What it did have going for it was a relatively seamless platform by which business-doers and vendors could connect. And that is saying a lot.

As for next year, the world will move forward with the hope that 2022 will see the end of this horrific pandemic.

However, COVID-19 and the ruptures in the fabric of people’s lives have also inalterably “changed the pace and arc” of technology, he pointed out – and would also have its affect on future CESes. With a new Convention Center building added to help welcome back CES visitors in the flesh in 2022, should that be possible, Shapiro stated, “Vegas is ready for us.” That said, Shapiro added that the 2022 CES would likely shape up as both a physical event and a hybrid event, both digital and physical,” combining elements of “hugs and handshakes – and masks.”

And that is the stuff you still can’t do yet over a computer screen.

Nancy Klosek
The Internet of Things (IoT) has been a frequent topic at CES for many years, going back to the time when such technology was more theoretical than real. Back in 2015, The New York Times reported that IoT tech had “hit home,” but the phrase existed, at least as a buzzword, even before that. At 2021’s virtual CES, held the second week of January, “5G and the Internet of Things” was listed as one of 11 major “topics” for the event, with four things — 5G, resilient smart cities, and sustainability — listed as subtopics.

Three dedicated IoT products received CES Innovation Awards. Hyundai Telecom’s Smart Home product was described as “a home IoT lighting bell that is installed on the surface of the wall of the house and is developed to easily communicate the status of the situation to users through visual information of color lighting.” Also honored was the open IoT platform from Security and Safety Things, which “does for security cameras what Android has done for smartphones.” And the third honoree was the SARA-R5 LTE-M modules with IoT Security-as-a-Service, from u-blox.

One of the biggest names at CES, Samsung, in its CES keynote announced an update to its Galaxy Upcycling program, called Galaxy Upcycling at Home. The new program, Samsung said, “reimagines the lifecycle of an older Galaxy phone and offers consumers options on how they might be able to repurpose their device to create a variety of convenient IoT tools.” The software to make that possible will arrive later this year.

Bosch, in its presentation by CTO Michael Bolle, introduced a concept that they called AIoT, the marrying of AI and the Internet of Things. “To improve people’s health and to protect our planet, Bosch is counting on AIoT, taking advantage of the possibilities offered by data, artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things to benefit people and the environment with technical solutions,” the company said in a statement.

Another company that illustrated IoT solutions at CES was a nontraditional one: The tractor manufacturer John Deere. Appearing at CES for the third time, Deere & Company’s chief technology officer, Jahmy Hindman, took part in a session called “Feeding The World With Precision Tech.” In an interview with Michael Josh Villanueva of Gadget Match, Hindman said: “Agriculture is a high-tech industry,” noting that Deere has had a version of self-driving equipment for nearly 20 years. “Let’s start with connectivity,” he added. “Both of these two machines [tractor and planter] behind me are connected to the cloud; they’re connected with a cellular connection so they’re pushing data into the cloud, into what we call the John Deere Operations Center, where each grower can have access to that information.”

In addition to 4G LTE and GPS connections, Hindman said, “we also have connectivity between machines,” and the different machines are connected by Wi-Fi. He added that they are “super-excited about 5G.”

Another IoT product that got a positive reception at CES was Lutron’s Outdoor Smart Plug, which in addition to offering other features typical of smart plug — including compatibility with Amazon Alexa, Google Assistant, and Apple HomeKit — is also weatherproof.
Multiple Cleaning Options with Extra Power

In these unusual times of home schooling and home office work, household appliances are being tasked to perform above and beyond their normal use cycles to meet changing consumer requirements. Quick cleanups, in between all that needs to be taken care of in these times, is rather impractical with a corded vacuum cleaner. A great solution: A cord-free vacuum to bridge the gap between a portable handheld and traditional tethered vacuums. The LG CordZero A9 Kompressor is an ambitious offering, with its great convenience, usability, and easy maintenance. But let’s have a look at the details.

Multiple Cleaning Options with Extra Power

One main advantage of the LG CordZero A9 Kompressor is its versatility through its various accessories, a freestanding charging base and the extra battery. This model covers all the bases as a carpet, hardwood and furniture cleaner. The freestanding charging and accessory-storing base makes the LG outstanding. You don’t have to wall-mount it. Not only does it charge the vacuum while it is attached, it also charges the extra battery. This makes available an extra round of vacuuming without interruption for charging. In normal mode, as a stick vacuum – up to 60 minutes each battery. You can see that LG spent time on the charging base design, given all the attention it has paid to details. For example, there are the clamps to better manage the charging cable – it simply looks better.

Good Suction, Large Dust Bin

The Universal Nozzle can be used for hardwoods and carpet. With its three suction levels (Normal, Power, Turbo) the LG CordZero A9 Kompressor is doing a great job with smaller and finer pieces of dirt. Only for larger pieces I had to lift the vacuum because it doesn’t have a wide opening. The Kompressor in its name means that you can compress the dust-bin simply by using the lever, which results in a capacity of 33.8 ounces and makes it easier to empty.

Easy Maintenance and Maneuverability

Throughout and including its washable components and filters, the LG CordZero A9 Kompressor is designed for minimal upkeep. It offers more maneuverability than most upright vacuums and more flexibility when used as a handheld. On top of that, the LG CordZero is lightweight and runs easily around tight spaces, corners and furniture.

Power Mop

Hard floors get their finishing touch with the Power Mop. Simply fill tap water into the integrated tank in the mop attachment and floors can be mopped with two different humidity settings. No chemicals are needed.

The LG CordZero A9 Kompressor is a standout cordless vacuum cleaner at the high-end level. It is a clear recommendation as a solution for home cleaning during these home schooling-home working times, if your customer is looking for:

• A large dustbin through compressing
• A great cleaning performance with a versatile set of attachments – attention paid to handling large debris
• Interchangeable batteries for an uninterrupted cleaning experience
• Easy maintenance – washable filters, washable cyclone, slide-out brushroll and multi-use docking station

The contents of the box are as follows:

• LG CordZero A9 Kompressor stick vacuum
• Telescopic wand
• 2 rechargeable batteries: 60-minute run time per battery
• Washable parts: easy clean filters and cyclone
• Docking station: can be wall-mounted or standalone upright
• Universal power nozzle: spiral brushroll for carpet or hard surface flooring
• Combination tool: bristles, for gently dust surfaces or a wide-mouth crevice tool
• Crevice tool: for tight spaces
• Power Mop Nozzle, 2 sets of reusable mop pads, water fill cup, detachable stand for mop nozzle and pad storage

By Philip Schmalzl
We all long for the days of a "normal" CES where most of us found it understandable to head out to CES, make a road trip to CES made perfect sense – especially for tech-savvy individuals who have the comfort and infotainment of a modern vehicle, and have most of the driving left to semi-autonomous systems, which can help keep the safety of all vehicle occupants. "Audio bubbles could soon become a reality in vehicle interiors. Private-zoned audio environments are not just for private-zoned audio. Companies have demonstrated we can create a listening environment that the person sitting next to you does not hear. But I think you can take it to extra lengths that will be interesting, such as 'whisper agent' where you can have navigation prompts directed to the driver and the rest of the passengers. This allows for a new form of interactivity that the customer feedback of the first [A-Class] MBUX generation and asked ourselves: 'What do people need and how do they interact in the car?' The goal was a concept without distraction of the driver or complicated operation. And it had to be able to learn thanks to artificial intelligence. The MBUX Hyperscreen gets to know the customer better and better, providing a personalized, personalized infotainment and operating offer before the passenger has to click anything. We didn't want to build the biggest screen ever in a car. Instead, we have developed special screens with a perfect ratio of size and functionality for maximum user-friendliness. This is our customer orientation and digital thinking 2022!"
Alpine Also Going Slim

Alpine also introduced a slim head unit to help counteract the installation challenges of shallow dashboard cavities. The Alpine iLX-X407 features Android Auto, Apple CarPlay and Bluetooth in the small mech-less unit. One notable feature is the ability of the unit to easily hook up to Alpine’s Power Stack small amplifiers that can power a small subwoofer system. These little amps bolt right up to the back of the iLX-X407 head unit so if the install has room for a traditional double-DIN, Mike Anderson, VP of Alpine notes, “Following the success of the tremendously popular iLX-W650, we sought to create a solution that captured everything the customer loved about the iLX-W650, with even more features. The features, along with the price point, will solidify the iLX-407 as one of the most impactful audio upgrades on the market.”

Operation Ground & Pound with Kicker

Even as autonomous and infotainment tech grows, there is still a desire for old-school car audio and fidelity. It is great to see new designs for subwoofers. At CES, Kicker showed off its Innovation Awards subwoofer, the Solo X L7X. It was a ground-up reimagina-
tion of the original and radical Solo X square-shaped woofer. Kicker wanted to set world-class levels of mechanical excursion and musicality. Steve Intz, president and founder of Kicker, notes, “We’re very happy to win the Innovations award. This is a radically improved version of the original Solo X, and to be recog-
nized for the amount of work and creativity we’ve put into making it a reality feels really good.” It will be offered in 10-, 12- and 15-inch versions for those who want to strike fear into the hearts of innocent pedestrians. “The con-
cept of the new Solo X is to take it to the next level,” Intz said. “It is designed with very tight tolerances. It has more power, more stroke, more Xmax, and still has a field-replaceable cone. The new design allows the Solo X to be extremely loud, but also extremely musi-
cal.” The no-glue reconing system uses a unique surround compression system and bolt-on spider landing, and is designed specifi-
cally to make speaker repair possible in only a few minutes time. This system comes from Kicker’s participation in SPL sound-off events where woofers are pushed to the limit, and the ability to repair them in between rounds can be essential to win competitions.

Even though we were not able to connect in person at CES 2021, it remained a viable launch pad for new OEM and aftermarket vehicle technologies. Perhaps in time for CES 2022 we will have an electric vehicle with self-driving capabilities shuttle us to Vegas. All we need is some aftermarket infotainment and audio up-
grades for the ultimate ride back to the show.

This year’s CES event lacked the reach-out-and-touch-it-ness of years prior; having everything at your disposal from a web browser made it easier to navigate. Perhaps next year, if we return to an in-person visit to Vegas, a hybrid model of booths and this extensive online presence would be a nice touch.

Most of the major imaging exhibitors were absent. Nikon, Canon, and Pana-
sonic/Lumix had plenty to offer, but Hasselblad, Leica, and third-party lens manufacturers like Sigma, Tamron, and Tokina were absent. Though there weren’t a lot of new product announcements in the imaging arena, the four major players — Sony, Panasonic, Nikon, and Canon — had brought overviews of their current offerings, along with some exciting video content. If anything, the main theme here was the convergence of video and still camera hardware, with a solid emphasis on the video capabilities of cur-
cent cameras.

Nikon builds on its Z series mirrorless cameras with the slightly dated 250 and a pair of DX zoom lenses offering a stunning range of capture from 14-50mm to 55-250mm for just under $1,300, with the body only com-
ing in at $860. The smaller, 20MP DX format sensor body is still compatible from 16-50mm to 50-250mm for just under $1,300, with the body only com-
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Sony was concentrating more on integrating creative platforms, and men-
tion of their latest Xperia 5II phone, released in fall of 2020, featuring Zeiss optics with a maximum aperture of f/1.7. As of this time, Verizon is hinting that you can get one on their network, but this Android-based phone is more popular in the rest of the world (which makes me want one all the more).

Perhaps the most exciting Imaging product at the show was the new Pana-
asonic Lumix BGH1 “cinema box camera” aimed at video content creators. It features a 10 MP sensor and an architecture designed from the ground up to be a video camera first and a still camera as an afterthought. Thanks to the Lumix Telephoto App, multiple BGH1s can be connected and controlled via an Ethernet network, making major production values at your fingertips for a fraction of what it used to cost. Using the micro 4/3 lens system puts a plethora of new and legacy glass at your disposal for a wide range of cine-
matic effects. And, at an affordable price of $1,999.99, shop.panasonic.com.

With all this capturing going on, you'll need a way to get it all to your work-
station, and Kingston's new Workflow Station offers four bays that can be customized to the memory cards of your choice. These removable adaptors all plug into the Workflow Station, and attach to your computer via a single USB-C cable. Thanks to using the current USB 3.2 spec, Kingston claims that you can download from four readers in the dock simultaneously, pro-
viding a tremendous boost to what is usually a workflow bottleneck. The Workflow Station by itself is $159.20 and the card reader modules are $36.40 each. www.kingston.com.
CES 2021 has come and gone, and while this year it was virtual, it was still the most exciting place to see more and newer technologies and their conceptual and near-life implementations than at any other show. As we ‘walked’ this virtual show, it did not disappoint. We are always on the lookout for the ‘next big thing’ – for what is groundbreaking innovation, what’s a fad, or for what portends a new trend with unlimited fresh and dynamic new channel/business/revenue opportunities.

Sharp’s Alexa enabled Countertop Microwave Oven

The ‘hero’ of CES 2021 was digital health – and it is the ‘next big thing.’ HealthTech is becoming consumerized and offers retail channels unlimited fresh and dynamic new channel opportunities. In this new climate, channels need to start to think out of the box and along multiple dimensions – as overlapping marketplaces are demanding similar products. Consider what your local or regional opportunities are within this context (e.g., some mainstream verticals include assisted living facilities, gerontology practices, businesses that self-insure, etc.).

Consumers are spending more time at home – and consumer tech devices have become necessities. More than any other CES, the 2021 event reflected the influence of the pandemic on our lifestyle, how we work and how our children learn – since we are spending more time at home. HealthTech innovations from brand names as well as HealthTech entrepreneurs and startups abounded, with several companies on the lookout for distribution partners.

People were homebound. Demand surged for broadband connected entertainment, including gaming devices, and for larger screens for streaming and TV. At CES 2021, we saw lines of beautiful upgraded TVs with new technologies and form factors coming in 4K and 8K. Also, products with services for the smart home are getting particularly attractive, with meaningful functions.

CES 2021 Product Roundup: Manifestation of 5 Trends

This past year changed everything – but it is also propelling a massive market expansion, and tremendous channel opportunities. In this new climate, channels need to start to think out of the box and along multiple dimensions – as overlapping marketplaces are demanding similar products. Consider what your local or regional opportunities are within this context (e.g., some mainstream verticals include assisted living facilities, gerontology practices, businesses that self-insure, etc.).

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Staying Fit and Well, and the Digital Consumer – During these tumultuous times, personal wellbeing took on a whole new meaning. Overnight, consumers were ordering new devices, appliances and ingredients to bake and cook as never before. While gyms were closed, people bought the gym home – resulting in an uptick in sales of Peloton, Echelon and other stationary exercise bikes and home fitness equipment.

Samsung introduced its new Smart Trainer feature on the Health platform for its 2021 TV models. The feature transforms the home into a personal gym and tracks and analyzes posture in real time, like a personal trainer. It also provides feedback on form, counts reps and estimates calories burned during exercise. The feature can be voice controlled.

Sharp offers a full product lineup across various relevant sectors – but countertop convection microwave ovens are still big business, as people spend much more time at home – including working from home – and want to quickly warm up water for tea or steam veggies for a healthy snack. Among new models are the company’s Alexa-enabled countertop ovens.

A Focus on Health and Home Cleanliness – The pandemic heightened consumer awareness of home cleanliness and the air we breathe. The show was filled with lots of new devices, gadgets and disinfecting robots along those lines. Samsung demonstrated an artificial intelligence (AI)-powered robotic vacuum cleaner that uses sensors, including Lidar, to clean around toys, pets and other items.

Clean Air Zone (CAZ) introduced its air purification system using advanced microbiotic and enzyme green technology to capture and destroy airborne contaminants including COVID-19, viruses, mold, odors, chemical fumes and gases – without the use of filters or harmful by-products. It earned two awards at the show, and captured the 2021 CES Editors’ Choice Award from Renewed, USA Today’s consumer product reviews division under the Cleaning category. CAZ also earned a Techlicious Top Picks of CES 2021 Award in the Health & Beauty category. Look for it to be available later this year for $1495.

LG announced new products featuring ‘air-management technology,’ including portable air purifiers and purifiers with new HEPA filters. In addition, the brand’s washing machines have a new allergen-cycle feature, which LG claims removes 95 percent of household allergens. LG also announced a robot that uses UV light to sanitize hotel rooms. Other products due for introduction include disinfecting robots, UV-sanitizers, and more.

Tech at the Center

As we started to see at CES 2021, AI and IoT are going to be embedded in everything, and the data generated is expected to more accurately predict one’s wellness. It will also increase the demand for a growing range of appliances, consumer electronics, devices and wearables. In addition, the reality of 5G is coming closer to realization, and it is going to enable most of these applications to happen.

Additional opportunities for the computer-abundant HealthTech category is also changing the wellness and fitness paradigm, with adjacent categories gaining momentum. This includes new applications for a range of robotics, air filtration systems, new categories of IoT wearable devices, and other devices with software that personalize the experience – and so much more.

HD Medical announced the HealthyU – a cardiac monitoring device that can track seven biometrics at home.

Samsung JetBot-90-AI powered robotic vacuum

Samsung introduced its new Smart Trainer feature on the Health platform for its 2021 TV models. The feature transforms the home into a personal gym and tracks and analyzes posture in real time, like a personal trainer. It also provides feedback on form, counts reps and estimates calories burned during exercise. The feature can be voice controlled.
Technology Continues to Improve Everyday Health & Wellness – Mindful self-awareness is a growing category, and a growing range of products were shown at CES and elsewhere. Touchpoint devices fall into this category. Also, robotic caretakers is going to be a category expected to grow in popularity particularly as people choose to age in place safely, ensuring they are less isolated and cared for happily since they are connected to their family, friends, caretakers and to ongoing external activities – all in the convenience of their homes.

CareClever introduced Cutii – an autonomous voice-command mobile robot companion for seniors. Cutii uses AI to learn the user’s behaviors and preferences – and as the user speaks, Cutii responds and moves as needed. Consumers can also use its voice commands, for example, to ask Cutii to come to them or to dictate and send a message to a friend. The robot can remind users of appointments or other events, such as family birthdays, according to CareClever. Users can enjoy virtual visits with family and friends. Caregivers can use their cell phones to communicate with seniors, by video, voice, or message via Cutii. Loved ones can make video calls and can even ask Cutii to move to better accommodate users in their homes – something a tablet or smart speaker can’t do. The robot can also call emergency contact numbers. Simply by saying “Cutii, help!” the senior will be attended to without needing to struggle to find a button. And with Cutii, entertaining brain exercises are just a command away. Cutii offers a calendar of real-world activities such as cooking or yoga classes, museum tours, and quizzes that seniors can participate in from the comfort of their homes. In addition, Cutii allows remote patient monitoring (RPM) through telehealth consultations which can be scheduled and conducted from the home. It also includes privacy safeguards and does not rely on major technology companies’ services such as Amazon Alexa. No personal data will be sold to marketers or other third parties, said the company. Cutii is currently available and has been deployed in homes as well as in senior living communities.

HD Medical announced the HealthyU – a cardiac monitoring device that can track seven biometrics at home. The COVID-19 pandemic stripped hospitals of resources and kept many medically vulnerable patients at home. But even in healthier times, patients that lived far away from specialists traveled long distances to visit their doctors for frequent follow-up appointments. This especially applies to patients with cardiovascular disease. If symptoms come and go, it’s very easy for a clinician to miss them. Constant monitoring is key. HealthyU has a seven-lead ECG and can also monitor blood pressure, respiratory rate, lung sounds, heart sounds, heart rate, SpO2, and temperature. HD Medical expects FDA clearance by Q2 2021. Last July, the FDA cleared HD Medical’s flagship product, the HD Stethotic, a smartphone-enabled stethoscope. HealthyU is already being used in clinicalevaluations, and the company is currently in talks with partners in the wellness and professional sports fields. Now you won’t have to wake up five hours in advance of an appointment, just to have a doctor listen for a few minutes and declare that “all is well.”

What else is coming? New ‘brains’ to drive transformation, and new products for you to sell! Ordinary wearables may soon track blood pressure and other vital signs. While you might not recognize Valencell as a brand name, it’s likely that you are familiar with its sensor technology. If you’ve worn a Scosche armband, Ibrab or Bose headphones, or a Suunto sport watch. The North Carolina-based company is introducing its expanded blood pressure sensor kit for wrist-based wearables and those worn on the finger. This goes beyond its 2020 introduction of sensors that were designed primarily for ear-based devices. This enhanced capability is based on its new blood pressure sensors that measure heart rate and oxygen uptake. There’s also a software component that allows for personalization based on a person’s height, weight, age, and gender to enable accurate estimations of blood pressure, and more. The company expects FDA clearance in early 2021.

Concern About Being in Public Spaces, Masks Everywhere – In the age of COVID-19, face coverings are going tech. They have become not only a medical gadget but also the latest wearable fashion accessory. And there was no shortage at CES 2021.

Razer, a company most known for its gamer products, made a somewhat unusual product introduction with its “Project Hazel”—a smart mask that’s transparent and features active ventilation to circulate and filter the air. It also contains a built-in microphone and amp to make speech clearer. Plus, it lights up in 16.8 million different colors.

AirPop announced a face wearable called the Active+. It’s a cloth mask with a unique sensor that monitors breathing patterns from inside the mask — and it provides information on air quality from outside the mask. It was expected to start shipping in mid-February at $149; it will be selling via Amazon, and is looking for distribution.

Newvo, a HealthTech company, announced a face mask called Breeze (BP1) that’s transparent to show off the wearer’s smile. It has two silent fans that both circulate and filter the air; and a UV light to automatically disinfect the mask while it’s charging.

If we learned anything in 2020, it’s that consumers play a pivotal role in their own health and wellness. In 2021, Satya Nadella, Microsoft CEO, said: “With the state of the world, every company is a software company.” In that vein, at CES 2021, we observed the trend that many CE and tech companies are now also HealthTech companies. The pandemic has been a catalyst for change – changing the way people work, socialize and unwind. Consequently, consumer reactions, habits, work, lifestyle and other needs are fueling spending and demand for HealthTech products. HealthTech is growing into a big business – with tremendous potential for sector and channel growth. Retailers’ job is to identify the products and/or categories best suited for their customers, and that will also offer new business development opportunities in the mainstream as well as in other vertical regional or local business segments, including with employers that self-insure, or senior facilities.

How will you be a beneficiary of this new transformation? What’s your strategy? What’s your game plan? Many companies stopped up to deliver new product offerings that are here, emerging or are looking to enter our marketplace. We will be tracking these developments in upcoming columns. Stay tuned!

To continue the conversation, Schreiner may be reached at susan@C4trends.com.
An online conference was held the week of Jan. 11-15 that offered many key lessons for CE retailers to note in 2021—and it wasn’t International CES.

Retail Innovation Week, hosted by the “retail think tank” known as PSFK and its founder, Piers Fawkes, was held for the third time. The conference normally takes place in New York, but this time it happened virtually, on a platform called Hopin.

Fawkes, in a video previewing the show, said that “we’ve researched the main themes and the most important ideas that are developing in retail and along the customer experience journey, and we’ve invited some of the world’s most progressive experts to come share their ideas and share tips and talk to our community about how we should respond to this moment and how we should build business going forward.”

### Themed Days

Each day of the conference had a specific theme. Day 1 was “Next-Gen Digital Commerce,” the second day was “The New Role of the Store,” the third was “Retailing with Purpose,” the second day was “The New Role of Commerce,” and the fourth was “Winning the Modern Store.”

### RETAIL INNOVATION WEEK LOOKS BACK – AND FORWARD

**BY STEPHEN SILVER**

As part of the event, the conference released a series of reports, one of which was connected to the Day 2 presentation on “The New Role of the Store.”

“To better balance safety and convenience and offer greater personalization and flexibility, retailers are integrating technology and data into their physical stores, empowering both shoppers and associates with mobile-activated experiences and expanding access to value-add services like in-store appointments and BOPIS (Buy Online Pickup In Stores),” Fawkes wrote in the introduction to that report.

That report contained such advice as “tolding fulfillment capabilities spanning in-store warehousing, ship from store and curbside pickup into their physical footprint, further blinding the online-offline shopping experience.” This trend includes everything from turning closed retail locations into fulfillment centers, to shifting the store’s “purpose” to serving multichannel customers. The report also cited data from Shopify showing that more than half of consumers are “more comfortable making in-store purchases with digital or contactless payments.”

### Physical retail will always be important, but it’s changing.

“Physical retail will always be important, but it’s changing. Part of the reason department stores have struggled is because a lot of them just put product out on the shelf and hope it sells. That’s not the future of physical retail. It’s about personalization and building connections with customers,” Sophia Chen, founder of New York-based retail company Bobblehaus, said in the report.

### Rethinking the Retail Space

One panel, titled “Recalibrating Your Physical Retail Presence to be Faster, Smaller and Nearer,” offered advice on rethinking the retail space. It was conducted by the three co-founders of the consumer engagement firm YourStudio.

The panelists asked “hypothetical questions” about how retail will work. For “Taster,” the question was, “How can retail become a live feedback loop to listen and evolve?” For “smaller,” it was, “What are the most powerful new formats as retail footprints condense?” And for “nearer,” it was, “How do we use store locations to reach out to and support neighborhoods?”

“It’s no longer enough to respond to the pace of change of the brand,” YourStudio’s Danny Newman said. “At YourStudio, we talk about moving at the pace of culture, and that really helps build resilience into your retail experience, to ensure we’re not just keeping up with the consumer, but we’re also staying ahead.”

Another report issued as part of Retail Innovation Week, created in partnership with Avalara, was titled “Marketplace and the Next-Gen Digital Experience: Developing an Omnichannel Digital Experience,” and tied in with the fourth day of the event. That report included six key strategies: SEO discovery and research; product page experience checkout and payments merchandising and fulfillment; backend optimization; and analytics and reporting.

One of the people participating in Retail Innovation Week actually has some experience in CE retail. Ron Thurston formerly ran a series of live feedback loop to listen and evolve?” For “Taster,” the question was, “How can retail become a live feedback loop to listen and evolve?” For “smaller,” it was, “What are the most powerful new formats as retail footprints condense?” And for “nearer,” it was, “How do we use store locations to reach out to and support neighborhoods?”

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One of the people participating in Retail Innovation Week actually has some experience in CE retail. Ron Thurston formerly ran a series of Apple Stores in the Houston area, and went on to author a book called “Retail Pride: The Guide to Celebrating Your Accidental Career,” which was released last October.

Interviewed by Fawkes, Thurston said he wrote the book because he was “defensive of my industry,” and he wrote the book “to celebrate this industry, and people who work in it, and to be proud of it.”

Thurston’s book lists three of what he calls “pillars of retail success,” which apply across all retail industries: “Empathy, curiosity, and focus. Those things, working side by side, can set people up for success in this industry, and I think many others,” he said.

### Lessons Learned

Even when there were technical difficulties on the show’s second day, and the start of the main live stream was delayed by more than a half hour, the organizers drew lessons from it.

“Speaking of tech challenges, this is one of the things we continually talk about at PSFK,” Scott Lachut, a partner at PSFK, said in a chat window, as participants waited for the program to continue. “So much is discussed around bringing tech into the store experience, but if it doesn’t work or add value, it can negatively impact the customer experience... As we troubleshoot, this reminds me of the challenge of customer service for so many companies today.”

Most of the key sessions held at Retail Innovation Week have been archived at the event’s YouTube channel.

### SUMMARY

- **Retail Innovation Week**: An online conference held the same week as CES in early January, looked back at lessons from the pandemic—and what retailers can learn from them going forward.
- **The event, held for the third time, was presented by the retail think tank known as PSFK, and featured talks with a couple of dozen retail industry leaders**.
- **The consumer electronics field wasn’t particularly well-represented, but the event nevertheless offered lessons for CE retailers.**
A year ago, we told you about the arrival of the survey that showed just how different consumer retail behavior was between North America and Europe. A report late in 2019 by the retail management solutions firm iVend Retail by Citrixsys found that a gap had formed between North American and European shoppers when it came to whether they preferred shopping online or in person.

The 2019 survey revealed that 71 percent of North American consumers found online shopping more convenient than shopping in brick-and-mortar stores, while only 50 percent of those in Europe felt the same way. Also in that survey, 72 percent of European responders said they did all or most of their shopping in physical stores, while only 57 percent of North Americans said the same thing. And North American shoppers were more likely to say they had researched a product online before going to a store, with 73 percent of American shoppers engaging in that practice, while just 68 percent of European shoppers said the same thing. There were many reasons for the changes, including North America being more geographically dispersed, and that European countries are more densely populated. But, like everything else in the last year, those trends have been changed by the pandemic.

What a Difference a Year Makes

A study from McKinsey, released in August, found that American consumers were more likely to buy online, although 66 percent of those surveyed were buying online prior to the pandemic. As for Europe, a report by InternetRetailing.net, released shortly after the start of the pandemic last spring, found that coronavirus “will speed up the shift from physical retail to e-commerce, which is now happening at a faster pace than previous forecasts.”

Behaviors that Promise to Persist, Post-Pandemic

That report found that the share of consumers doing more than half of their business online “has increased dramatically on all three of Europe’s biggest e-commerce markets. Six out of 10 consumers say that they will continue to buy as much online as they do today after the pandemic has passed.” That report cited data from Kantar and Detail Online, of Europe’s three largest markets for e-commerce, France, Germany and the U.K., which found that “the share of consumers that do more than half of their total purchases online has increased between 25 and 80 percent since the outbreak of COVID-19.”

Detail Online Founder Joakim Gavelin said in that report: “During lockdown, focus is on the main essentials, but this report indicates that all the major e-commerce categories will bounce back to even higher levels when the epidemic has passed. And when they do it’s essential that brand owners have the bare essentials in place to meet the demand.”

For consumer electronics, American consumers were only 10 percent more likely to buy online prior to the pandemic. As for Europe, an early-December report from Moody’s Investor Service predicted that e-commerce on the continent would be worth 717 billion euros by the end of 2020—a 12.7 percent increase over the year before. That report also said that while Western Europe is the most developed e-commerce market in Europe, Romania and Bulgaria have shown strength of late.

The Lithuanian tech company Searchnode, meanwhile, released a survey in January of nearly 100 eCommerce decision-makers from Europe and North America, which found that over 90 percent of e-commerce businesses saw an increase of revenues over the course of the spring lockdown period.

What Can We Expect for Retail in the New Year?

In the U.S., according to a forecast issued last fall by eMarketer and Insider Intelligence, retail sales will rise 2.3 percent in 2021 to a total of $5.63 trillion. Following a pandemic-driven increase of 12.4 percent growth in e-commerce sales in 2020, that sales category is seen growing by just 6.1 percent, while brick-and-mortar sales are forecast to rise 1.4 percent, after falling 3.2 percent in 2020. That report added that important trends in brick-and-mortar retail will include “stick and collect, cashierless checkout, contactless payment, and digital signage.”

As for Europe, an early-December report from Moody’s Investor Service predicted a “stable” European retail sector for 2021. The report also said that in Europe, “digitalization trends will accelerate changes across the retail sector. The rising share of online sales is cannibalizing in-store sales, eroding margins for bricks-and-mortar-focused retailers.”

“Our outlook for the retail sector across Europe for next year aligns with our expectations for continued sector sales volume and profit recovery, although they will still stay below 2019 levels,” Francesco Bozzone, vice president – senior analyst, at Moody’s Investors Service, said in that report’s release. “That said, recovery will be much slower for retailers exposed to sectors like tourism and travel.”

Forecasts for 2021 see e-commerce sales continuing to rise in both North America and Europe.
While forming connections digitally vs. in person is certainly a huge concern, digital events have enabled opportunities for connecting with an often larger and more diverse audience because there are little barriers for entry. There is no scheduling a flight, booking a hotel, or re-arranging life at home; it’s as simple as filling out a registration form and clicking a link on the day of the event. For event hosts, that means new leads, better data collection, and more opportunities for content discovery. For attendees, that means more flexibility in when, where, and how they attend the show, which is why it is important for virtual events to be seamless across multiple devices.

Event hosts need to keep in mind that they are likely going to be competing for attention more than they are used to. At in-person events, attendees are more engaged because they have to be. You don’t typically see people get up and leave during a press conference or walk away from a booth mid-conversation, but with virtual events, this happens a lot. Creating a sense of urgency and fostering communication between attendees is key. Many virtual events allow users to create a schedule and receive notifications for meetings and sessions. There have also been events that offer rewards for those who engage. Whatever the approach, there needs to be some give and take from the host and attendee sides for a successful show.

The consumer electronics industry just wrapped up one of its biggest shows of the year – CES 2021, but for many, it likely wasn’t the first (or the last) virtual show they’ll attend. As anyone in the event industry will attest, planning these things can take upwards of a year, so the fact that so many companies were able completely reconfigure their shows in just a few months is truly admirable. But like all things in life, there is always room for improvement, and on top of that, there remains the question of what events will look like in the future.

Next Level Distribution, formerly Audio America, is elevating inventory solutions. Better product availability means better business. For top performance you need customized inventory that meets your budget, on your time, to give your customers what they need. Next Level Distribution makes this possible.

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How and when did your retail store start? How many stores do you have? You also have an online store. What is the main difference between your online shop and your local showroom?

Sholtis: The first store was started in 2004 as an online store. Then we started the retail showroom. The online store has the exact type of client as the showroom client: one who appreciates and has knowledge about audio. In the retail store, we have various clients, and over the years we have cultivated a staff trained to develop and maintain customer relationships and answer their every need.

What makes your retail business unique from others?

Sholtis: One asset is our showroom size and location. We are two-and-a-half hours from D.C. and three hours from Pittsburgh. We are relatively short driving distance from the Mid-Atlantic metropolitan cities. And, as you have seen from the size of our showroom, if we were within these cities, there would be no way for us to have a 26,000-square-foot building. We are able to showcase many more brands and technologies vs. some of our competitors. We call it a destination showroom, because we pull from all these metropolitan areas and we are able to attract customers to make the trip and drive to us to see everything in our location.

One of our biggest benefits has always been our online business. We have been a serious player in the online world for almost 17 years now. We started online vs. most of our competitors, who started in the reverse order. Outside of that, we have developed a social media presence, and we produce content for YouTube. All these things drive traffic due to our website, but also locally in the market as well.

What are the top three things that you have done that have contributed most to your success?

Sholtis: We started in a reverse way from most of our competitors; we started online before breaking into customer retailing, and that’s certainly unique. It always made us more integrated than some of our competitors. Secondly, I think the biggest triumph for us has been the relationships that we cultivated over the last 17 years. Relationships and your reputation are the most valuable things a company can have. We treat those with the utmost importance.

And then, one of my favorite sayings is that the minute you stop growing, the minute you start dying. You cannot plan that somebody else is not going to come along and do what you do better than yourself. We never, ever are satisfied with how we do, whether it is a customer or a vendor or even our shipping suppliers. Your relationships and your reputation are the most valuable things a company can have. We treat those with the utmost importance.

Are you looking to expand in any way or sell other categories? Which categories?

Sholtis: We are also looking to continue our growth in our Canadian online operations. It has been very healthy and growing for us there. In addition, we are always looking for new categories — you know, all the new healthcare and air quality control systems are very interesting to us, and something we might look into, as well as continuing to explore lighting categories as well.

Is there anything in the building of your business that might have not gone the way you liked, and you learned from?

Sholtis: We spent 2019 recovering from a theft from a financial controller that I hired and not only was there a theft; there was a total disruption of our financial records. So, you know, every day, you learn lessons in business and life, and that was a huge lesson for us to learn from. So we have been able to get everything back in line, and have checks and balances to better protect ourselves. That, on top of COVID, made 2020 a very challenging year for us. But with that, we have grown as a team and as a company, and our abilities have grown. So we are looking at 2021 to be a very, very big year for us.

What is your favorite corner of the store? Can you show me?

Sholtis: Well, honestly no — look, we sell product categories for cars, to audio, to TVs, to other technology. It is all so much fun, and changing so fast, I think that the rate of change is really what drives me, whether it is in the cars we build out, or the audio we design; constantly reinventing those things is really what our passion is about.

How do you overcome the obstacles of the pandemic in the customer experience? What is your strategy?

Sholtis: COVID has certainly changed how we are thinking about retail. We are looking to redesign to be more service- and technology-showcasing vs. product showcasing. We are looking to set up a system where our showrooms are event-based, meaning every 30 to 60 days we will have a new event to promote to clients so they can see new technology from one of our vendors or from many of our vendors. We want there to be a reason for recurring traffic to come in. I think this is going to be important for us and for others in the future — to do more education-based selling.

On top of that, we have invested in opening our West Coast shipping location, where hopefully a retail showroom will open as well. Getting products quickly when customers are shopping online — having access quickly is extremely important. For us, expanding our capabilities this way is extremely important.

What are your goals this year?

Sholtis: We are also looking to continue our growth in our Canadian online operations. It has been very healthy and growing for us there. In addition, we are always looking for new categories — you know, all the new healthcare and air quality control systems are very interesting to us, and something we might look into, as well as continuing to explore lighting categories as well.

What have you done to overcome the obstacles of the pandemic in the customer experience? The store is closed, and available by appointment only.

Sholtis: It has been difficult and challenging, with the showroom being affected. We have all seen over the last year that demand from customers has increased, with everyone staying at home, in home office, work from home, things like networking — new audio products have been extremely hard to keep in stock and to deliver. So while people do not want to go out and spend time in a showroom as much as they did, they do want the technology and they do want the knowledge. It increased the importance of social media and it increased the drive for installation and design services as well. And we are starting to see the showrooms start to turn around as well. We expect that will continue in 2021.

How does Dealerscope help you in your everyday business?

Sholtis: Well, obviously we need to stay abreast of what is going on in the industry, and we have lots of great relationships with manufacturers. But there are lots of things that happen that we do not know about, so staying in touch with all that is key, and our relationship with Dealerscope, for many, many years now, has been wonderful, and helps keep our name out there in the industry as well.
CHIPing Away at the Fragmented Smart Home Market  

BY PATRICK MccARTHY

There’s an interesting oxymoron unfolding in the “smart” home arena, and it is underscored by simply put, dumb devices.

The market for smart devices is saturated. Everything from toasters to toilets can earn its badge and be marketed as ‘the device of the future.’ However, the same venture into the smart space feels much like the odd trend of adding “I” in front of every device, allowing manufacturers to re-produce a consumer’s emotional response to Apple-branded products. Tuned to the same key, adding “smart” to a device only further fragments an industry currently navigating through its own identity crisis.

So that begs the question: How should we define the smart home? If you were to ask technology giants Google, Apple, Amazon and Zigbee, they would tell you the future is CHIP, or “Connected Home over IP.”

Project CHIP is one of the most complex projects in the smart home Industry. Google, Amazon, Apple, and Zigbee want to tackle how devices work with each other and elevate the smart home offering for all consumers.

Launched in late 2019, the connectedhomeip.com website states that “the goal of the Connected Home over IP project is to simplify development for manufacturers and increase compatibility for consumers.” It states the project as a “shared belief that smart home devices should be secure, reliable, and seamless to use.”

A CHIP on the Smart Home Should

The expansive list is exciting. We are finally sifting through the noise to produce a full image of what the smart home should be. The picture begins painted of window shades opening in the morning, lights turning off at night, and look forwarding to Wi-Fi.

However, Project CHIP still has a long way to go to undo its own mistakes. Suppose you use the recently concluded virtually held Consumer Electronics Show as a benchmark to the future. In that case, the average consumer is still looking at smart locks and speakers as the future, as noted in the show producers’ “Emerging Tech That Is Shaping the Industry” article.[3] Taking a step back, the view starts to come together on what a smart home should be, and just how we got to this position. Interoperability, functionality, and privacy still sit as the critical components for what should drive my vision of the smart home market - with project CHIP only solving one piece of that puzzle. If they spend all their time building a highway for devices to talk to each other but still lack genuine capabilities to create innovation, it may feel like one step forward and two steps backward.

Forstall, highlights the modest beginning of Apple’s Senior VP A CHIP on the Smart Home Shoulde...
Dealerscope’s annual IMPACT Awards were designed to recognize exceptional products in the consumer electronics industry that are innovative, practical and helping to drive sales on the showroom floor and online.

Instead of deciding solely amongst ourselves, the Dealerscope team decided to put the power of this year’s IMPACT Awards in the hands of three highly esteemed professionals: Steve Greenberg, award-winning author, TV personality and expert on innovation and technology; Robin Raskin, American writer, author, publisher, TV personality and conference and events creator; and Josh Christian, CEO of the Home Technology Association. The trio brought unique perspectives to the voting process. The editorial team also reviewed the products up for recognition this year to arrive at three Edi-

**Presenting the IMPACT Awards 2021**

**01. August Wi-Fi Smart Lock**
Spicing up remote design, August Wi-Fi Smart Lock is the smallest, most advanced smart lock on the market and other homeowners and renters alike the ability to remotely control their door and have convenient, secure access to their home.

**02. Crestron Home**
Crestron Home has been engineered as a powerful and responsive smart home platform that seamlessly manages all devices in the technology-driven homes of today.

**03. AssuredAir AX-ANC**
The AssuredAir AX-ANC ear-use headphones incorporate plasma magnetic technology designed to provide superior resolution at the mid and upper frequencies.

**04. Denon Home 350**
The new Denon Home 350 allows music wirelessly in stereo with the reference quality expected from Denon products. Listeners can group other products with HEOS Built-in such as A/V receivers, sound bars and speakers to fill their homes with detailed, expansive sound.

**05. Equator 38” Built-in Induction Cooktop**
Equator 38” is a new take on the Cooktop. Its sleek design with black glass will instantly add a modern look to your kitchen.

**06. LG 48CX OLED TV - OLED w/NVIDIA**
LG Electronics brings the picture quality of LG OLED to an all-new screen size - 48 inches - with a focus on customers who want a mid-size TV that fits their living space, or are looking for a second TV without compromising picture quality.

**07. LG 75NANO99 8K TV**
LG 75NANO99 is the premier model in LG’s 2020 LCD TV lineup, featuring the best technology and delivering the ultimate usability and design through a combination of 8K resolution, AI-based picture and audio processing technology, and 4K TV functionality with voice recognition.

**08. LG gram 17 (2020)**
As a CES 2020 Innovation Award winner, the flagship LG gram ‘17’ is the ultimate solution for anyone looking for maximum productivity in a portable form factor.

**09. LG Indoor Garden**
LG Indoor Garden, a breathtaking indoor gardening appliance, employs advanced light, temperature and water control, convenient all-in-one seed packages and a growth-monitoring app to help users easily cultivate nutrient-rich and flavorful greens inside their own homes.

**10. LG InstaView Electric Range**
The InstaView Series features a light that allows users to seamlessly check the oven’s interior as they cook by giving them a clear view of the inside, when they give its glass door two quick knocks.

**11. LG InstallView Door-in-Door Refrigerator**
The LG InstallView Door-in-Door Refrigerator features door panels that can be replaced to match any design taste. With the iconic InstaView panel, users can knock twice on the window to illuminate the interior to view what’s inside, decreasing energy usage.

**12. LG PuriCare Wearable Air Purifier**
The LG PuriCare Wearable Air Purifier resolves the inconsistencies of conventional face masks, air leakage around the nose and chin, uncomfortable fit, breathing difficulties, fogged-up glasses, and the environmental pollution associated with mask disposal.

**13. LG UltraGear 27GN950**
LG’s 27-inch UltraGear 4K monitor is the world’s first IPS 1 millisecond Gray-to-Gray gaming monitor. The UltraGear delivers a 1ms Nano IPS display with a refresh rate of 144Hz – the ultimate game-winning combination.

**14. LG WING 5G**
LG WING 5G, the first device of the LG Explorer Project, features a first-of-its-kind form factor – the entire front of the phone can swivel clockwise, rotating 90 degrees to reveal a second 3.9-inch screen, allowing users to seamlessly switch between two usability modes: Basic Mode and Swivel Mode.

**15. Samsung 11” MicroLED TV**
With standard-size MicroLED modules and a black matrix-free bezel design, Samsung’s 11” MicroLED TV delivers never-before-seen picture quality on an ultra-large TV through innovative technologies.

**FEATURE | IMPACT AWARDS**
FEATURE | IMPACT AWARDS

16 Samsung Frame TV
The 2021 version of the Frame builds on its innovative legacy of design and technology, offering a more customizable experience in a smaller form factor. With just 21.9mm thin, the Frame is thinner than ever—mirroring the depth of a traditional picture frame.

17 Samsung Neo QLED Q900
Samsung’s BT-210 Neo QLED TV combines the company’s advancements in picture quality with the new quantum processor to deliver exemplary picture quality, smart features and design.

18 Samsung Odyssey G9
Samsung’s Odyssey G9 monitor is a gaming monitor, immersive experience, with tons of horsepower in an eye-catching package. Offering exceptional performance and thoughtful design, G9 is a first-of-its-kind 240Hz (1ms) Brilliance panel with high-speed gaming that includes a new rear glowing core design and the most immersive display core available (1920x).

19 Samsung 8K TV
Samsung’s 8K TV is the world’s first 8K TV with Quantum Matrix Technology, creating a three-dimensional audio experience. The Dual Quad HD display (3840x) offers a 32:9 aspect ratio for a wider field of view.

20 WISA Soundbar
WISA Soundbar works with all smart TVs with HDMI ARC/eARC or optical connections to transmit up to eight channels of high-fidelity audio to WISA Certified speakers from global brands like Klipsch, Harman, Savant, Dynaudio, B&O, Enclave Audio and more.

21 Samsung QLED TV
Samsung’s QLED TV line is the world’s first 8K TV with Quantum Matrix Technology, creating a three-dimensional audio experience. The Dual Quad HD display (3840x) offers a 32:9 aspect ratio for a wider field of view.

22 Samsung T7 Touch SSD
Samsung’s T7 Touch portable SSD, an external storage drive, delivers industry-leading transfer speeds and, for the first time, a built-in fingerprint sensor for improved security.

23 Samsung The Terrace TV
The Terrace features enhanced brightness and space that are optimized to make outdoor viewing as immersive as the indoor experience. It comes equipped with Samsung’s QLED picture quality, offering the full array of features available with Samsung’s indoor TVs, including HDR10+, screen mirroring, A/B playing and brilliant viewing with Adaptive Sound.

24 Samsung The Premiers LSPYF
With precise color accuracy and incredible contrast on a maximum 81 inch screen space, the Premiers is the world’s first WiSA-certified projector for realistic, brilliant viewing.

25 SANSUS In-Wall Power Kit for Soundbar + Mounted TV
The SANUS In-Wall Power Kit for Soundbar + Mounted TV allows installers to safely extend power to soundbars and A/V components while neatly concealing power and A/V cables inside the wall for a clean and professional look.

26 Sony VPL-VW-91ES
Sony’s 8K Model Z9H Model 3D Smart LED TV provides the discriminating viewer the cachet of 8K television ownership—and much more. This set, which draws from Sony’s X1 Ultimate picture processor, delivers full package of picture quality, future-forward image quality along with audio that measures up to the display in every way. Noteworthy among its many benefits is Ambient Optimization technology, which dial up or down picture settings so that the set performs at its peak within the area the TV is situated. It also features Sony’s signature TRILUMINOS Display, and supports both Dolby Vision and Dolby Atmos. The Z9H is also WiSA-compatible, making it ideal for gaming needs. And its two-position stand, part of the chassis design, gives great placement flexibility.

27 Signature Kitchen Suite
Signature Kitchen Suite has taken the innovation, trailblazing new product and design technology to new heights. This kitchen suite with SpaceKnobs is a first-of-its-kind 240Hz 1ms Quad HD gaming monitor that includes a new rear glowing core design and the most immersive display core available (1920x).

28 Spiek Presidio ClickFlip
Standing out in Speck’s Presidio ClickFlip for AirPods Pro is the locking mechanism that helps keep AirPods in place in addition to the matte material and grip texture. Also a highlight is the convenience of both wireless and wired charging.

29 Signature Kitchen Suite
Signature Kitchen Suite has taken the innovation, trailblazing new product and design technology to new heights. This kitchen suite with SpaceKnobs is a first-of-its-kind 240Hz 1ms Quad HD gaming monitor that includes a new rear glowing core design and the most immersive display core available (1920x).

30 Yale Assure Lever
Available with Wi-Fi and Bluetooth, the Assure Lever can be controlled from anywhere using the Yale Access or August App. Users can grant access to people they trust, lock and unlock the door and monitor activity—no matter where they are.
The all-digital CES 2021: Close-up

The first-ever all-digital CES, which took place Jan. 9-15, attracted nearly 1,500 companies that showed off their latest “brownfield” computer screens, a slate of next-generation products, and various other innovations. It launched its ilk provided a forum for keynote from global industry leaders, live entertainment from Hollywood and more than 100 hours of conference programming. “The all-digital CES 2021 engaged the global tech community in an experience of innovation, make connections and conduct business. CES showed how the pandemic accelerated the air of innovation and illuminated the resilience and innovative spirit of our industry,” offered Gary Shapiro, president, and CEO of the Consumer Technology Association.

Hisense announced more improvements and an even deeper commitment to its laser TV technology. Fisher VP of Hisense and President of Hisense Visual Technology, said the company would launch a full range of ‘TriChroma laser’ TVs with varying ultra-large screen sizes starting at 75 inches. The 2020 pandemic and its flooding of stay-at-home habits, he offered, has created a wave of “people of the screen” consumers who will be on the front for larger screen sizes. He re- emphasized the company’s investment over $25 million dollar display products globally in 2020, and maintained what he saw as a pivot in the industry: “The richness of content and the richness of the viewing experience is in the content, and the content is going to be more and more the driving force in the market.”

Sony offered up to virtually viewers a well-rounded portfolio of products, technologies and market positioning at the all-digital CES, showcasing its emphasis on entertainment and personalization, and moved them closer to the Shanghai’s IFA. The company’s technology can be experienced through Sony headquaters models such as the V9300/4000 series, which Sony showed at the all-digital CES, and beginning in the Spring, via 360 Reality Audio-concept

LG OLED EVO AMONG INTROS

LG focused its tech innovations in the contexts of safety, convenience, and an improved entertainment experience. Its Third platform has evolved "into a lifestyle platform. We’re bringing a whole range of services to help you get even more out of our products," said a panel featuring professionals such as the VR 3000A40K, which sorts digital noise sensor technology as well as being 3D Live 3D vision, and beginning in the Spring, via 360 Reality Audio-concept

TCL makes all with super-sized TVs

TCL is buying out all on the ultra-large screen TV market — a coincidence, it seems, that the market for the COVID-19 hyper-demand consumer is also the fiscal industry moves into 2021. TCL had also held earlier global press event where it showcased its own "framing" motion compensation technology (March availability); it also features 4Vue technology (March availability) that will come out first 85-inch 4K 4-Series Roku TV. nickel and broadcast channels easier. LG’s focus is on “encourage adoption of intelligent lifestyles” with the TV as the hub of the home, said the presenter, Sebastian Seung, president, and CEO of the Consumer Technology Association. And plans to get even more out of our products,” said the presenter, Sebastian Seung, president, and CEO of the Consumer Technology Association.
### Bosch’s Focus: Sustainable Solutions

The first-ever virtual CES gave Bosch the opportunity to showcase a mission it has always fol-
lowed: using technology to improve people's well-
being in terms of efficiency and sustainability. In our core mobility business, our wide variety of so-
tools featuring intelligent power management tech-
chimes that help with water conservation; and power
washers equipped with
save 2.5 tons of CO2 annually in Germany alone; dish-
washers equipped with
Bosch security cameras can be useful in fighting the virus as well. A new camera solution with integrated
intelligent video analysis features body temperature
without contact, and anonymously, with a maximum deviation of half a degree. Using a software solution for the open camera plat-
form of the Bosch startup See Safety and Security, these
cameras can detect whether the number of people in a shop or train car complies with the pre-
vailing coronavirus restrictions. In addition to the COVID-related innovations, Bosch has extended its focus on en-
vironmentally friendly products that, when employed, can have no neg-
footprint. Here, we're working toward a vision of mo-

tion and AIoT (where AI meets the Internet of Things).

### ORBIX Emphasizes Health Care at CES 2021

ORBIX’s healthcare division showcased its remote patient monitoring service at CES 2021, along with new digi-
tal health tools to boost patient-to-physician commu-
nication and uncover more actionable insights from the patient’s health status. Within the last three years it has
introduced the first wearable blood pressure monitor and the first blood pressure monitor with built-in EKG, and is continuing to transform the global health heart health marketplaces and advance the company’s mission of “saving for zero” heart attacks and strokes. “We’ve ap-
plied over 40 years of category leadership, research, development, consumer feedback, and physician in-
sights to the innovations ORBIX has introduced here.

### Best Buy’s Corie Barry Details Her COVID-19 Strategies

In her first year as CEO of Best Buy, Corie Barry was tasked with navigating some extremely uncharted waters. Since becoming CEO of Best Buy in September, she has
embraced the use of AI and other advanced technologies to
in healthcare, particularly
added artificial intelligence to portable devices. It helps
them recognize and record any changes in their behavioral
pattern that is based on repetitive, cyclical patterns. It utilizes AI to analyze the sensor on its own. Latency and
power consumption are minimized, and user data remains
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### CES Wrap-Up

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Schneider Electric’s AIC: Creating Smart, Sustainable Homes

Schneider Electric’s purpose is rooted in sustainability and energy efficiency. Its goal is to enable global access and efficiency for all, everywhere, said Martin Pant, CEO and executive vice president for Home and Distribution Business. “Our vision is to ensure that homes are not only smart but also sustainable,” Pant continued. “We help homeowners maximize energy to save money on bills and reduce carbon emissions.” While Pant asserts that the concept of the smart and sustainable home is not new, he notes that energy management solutions are a global priority, considering the increased amount of time the world’s population is staying at home, consuming more energy than ever. “Our homes have four main challenges: Pant explained. Sustainability, Resilience, Efficiency and Personalization. Energy consumption has skyrocketed during the pandemic, with homes becoming work and entertainment hubs. Add to that, the increased popularity of electric vehicles, and the stressors on the grid only worsen. “Our homes are expected to become the single largest greenhouse gas emitters over the next decade,” said Pant. “As consumers equip their homes with more connected devices, the ability to control and manage home energy consumption will become increasingly necessary. A secure, interoperable power management system is key to ensuring consumers live sustainably even at home, by keeping energy costs and CO₂ emissions to a minimum. Our new product empowers consumers to make better energy choices, and to take active control over their energy needs.”

The Philips panel, l. to r.: Tas, Khanna, Stolze

PHILIPS TALKS HEALTH & WELLNESS

Philips offered a “Therese chat”-style conversation during CES 2021 that touched on a topic that is especially germane during COVID-19: the company’s myriad solutions in the health-and-wellness arena, where it plays a dominant role that includes but also extends well beyond consumer-related products. The discussion was chaired by Jim Stolze, with Philips’ Despina Khanna, consumer & patient care chief, and Jensen Tae, chief innovation and strategy officer, as participants. “It has been a tragic year,” reflected Tae about the pandemic, “but we have seen the best innovations used at scale to change healthcare systems for the better.” It has been a challenging year, even for those who are healthy, added Tae, “as well as an acceleration of ‘shutdowns’ for everyone from education to gym lessons. Health is at the forefront of consciousness. Citing Philips’ leading stance in telehealth care innovations, Tae noted the growth in importance in virtual communication with doctors “with cameras at the bedside” to help guide frontline medical workers in their tasks. He also noted the rise in medical information sharing and how that has helped in collaborative treatment of multiple health issues among consumers.

Khanna spoke of the recent rise in a corollary to telehealthcare: teleeducation. She pointed to the “smart” product innovation that the company believes can assist consumers in managing their dental care in these times: the Sonicare ProResults Prestige, which was just introduced at CES. Through Artificial Intelligence (AI), the device learns a user’s dental care habits and creates a dental care plan for them, complete with customized brushing duration. Energy monitoring is available on all Wi-Fi and Z-Wave connected devices. Schneider Electric also introduced the Square D connected light switches and outlets, the K and XD Series. The XD Series gives a nod to the style-conscious consumer with its fully flush design, matte finishes, metallic color choices, and quick-changing design. Other features include side pressure plates, quick wire ground screws, large near-cord for wide slots on receptacles, and well-grounding clip. Energy monitoring is available on all Wi-Fi and Z-Wave connected devices. Schneider Electric was also honored with a CES Innovation Award for its AirTouch Active, which helps homeowners prevent electrical mishaps and power disruptions.

HOME CHEF 4-in-1 Countertop Multi-Oven in the hands of Keith Habersberger, Ned Fulmer and Eugene Lee Yang of The Try Guys

Panasonic at the 2021 CES addressed the unusual nature of this year’s show and the desire to return to a sense of normalcy. Despite the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, Panasonic was able to create a plethora of new product offerings—many of which provide solutions for preventing the spread of the virus—and give back to the community in a number of ways. The press event covered several different topics ranging from the 2021 Olympics (scheduled for July 2021 in Tokyo), the connected car, contactless retail, and health tech.

The year 2020 marked the first time since 1946 that the Olympics were cancelled, which also meant the first time in over 30 years that Panasonic was not helping to power the games. But rest assured, they are making their return this summer in Tokyo and Panasonic will be playing a major part in their return with their audio and visual elements throughout The Olympic Games. The four athletes that were introduced at CES 2020 as part of Team Panasonic have been working towards creating opportunities for the next generation of athletes and giving back to their communities. Swimmer Kaito Yamada has been passionate about facilitating inspiring message “Adapting. Giving back. And continuously moving forward.”

The company also detailed its ClearConnect Restaurant Technology, which minimizes contact with customers while maximizing speed and efficiency of service. ClearConnect offers point-of-sale devices, self-ordering kiosks and drive-through systems (with/without curbside). Customers can continue serving customers under new regulations. Panasonic’s smart lockers create a safer alternative to food pickup that also allows food to remain hot or cold in a locked enclosure. Customers receive a QR code that they scan upon arrival, the locker opens, and they’re good to go.

Panasonic has spread its talents across a number of entertainment categories from gaming to cooking. Panasonic announced the SoundBlaster Gaming Speaker (SB-HT60) that provides full audio immersion in a player’s favorite games. Panasonic’s Luma camcorder has the ability to capture a scene’s broadest moments like drone shots and gimbals as well as live streaming content. The Technics True Wireless headphones let users enjoy immersive audio through its best-class noise cancellation in the home and on the go. Our cars have become our second homes during COVID-19 and like the adaptations we’ve made to our homes for safety and entertainment, vehicles deserve the same attention. On the safety front, Panasonic has introduced Augmented Reality (AR) Head Up Display (HUD), which in the event of an accident, the driver can remain seated to render near-field and far-field content for vehicle information including speed, object and pedestrian detection, and mapping and route guidance. On the entertainment side, Panasonic has partnered with major brands, including Sharp, Dolby Atmos Music, to bring an immersive technology-driven sound performance experience.
Maintaining sales while right-sizing real estate

Profit:

Planet:

Reversing damage and developing sustainable systems

People:

need to address the three Ps, says Ancketill:

Stores certainly have evolved, but in order to ensure longevity, they will be secure and optimized – like mastering curbside pickup, for example.”

He continued, “Now that the panic is over, retailers need to go back and review the processes that they implemented out of necessity and make sure their stores are places where customers want to come. This could not be more true today, Szanger admitted. “As consumers remain fearful to go out, we need to look for new ways to service them.”

Andy Szanger, director of Corporate Sales for CDW, recollected a sentiment that was shared at last year’s NRF show, which stated that retailers need to make sure their stores are places where customers want to come. This could not be more true today, Szanger admitted. “As consumers remain fearful to go out, we need to look for new ways to service them.”

“We need to keep our digital presence in front of the consumer, to keep them engaged,” Szanger said. “We need to keep things going virtually.”

In the case of today’s retail environment, this observation surely applies. While there were great losses through the pandemic, we also saw tremendous resilience and reinvention through these unprecedented times.

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“In the next six months, retailers will need to be dynamic in their decisions,” said David Dobson, director of Retail Hospitality and Consumer Electronics for Intel. “They will need to leverage their physical stores to become e-commerce fulfillment locations and create an exciting environment for social spaces at these destination locations.”

SUMMARY:

One big takeaway from this virtual event for retailers: while there were great losses through the pandemic, there was also tremendous resilience and reinvention.

While stores have been swift to adapt to COVID’s challenges, they must pay attention to improving fulfillment, developing sustainable systems and right-sizing their real estate.

Once restrictions ease, online shopping will continue for Millennials and Gen Z, but will reduce for Baby Boomers and Gen X, as they place higher value on the ability to assess look and feel as well as the option of bringing items home right away, EIU’s Noronha explained. Balancing this omni-channel presence, providing seamless experiences both online and offline, will have a profound impact on brands and retailers.

Adapting quickly to omni-channel methods is a must for business to thrive going forward, in addition to mastering the “last mile” in the purchasing process, explains Kerry Lin, EVP, Strategic Innovation, for Kinaxis. This last mile, where goods are transported from the retailer/manufacturer/distributor to the consumers’ hands, is crucial. If handled poorly, consumers will find other places to shop.

Automation & 5G’s Impact

The future lies in the smart city. The conversion of 5G and AI will encapsulate this smart city and then it will move to the smart home. “IoT utilities in home will lead to an explosion in auto-replenishment of consumables,” predicts Ancketill. “Drierless, personal mobility combined with smart grid ‘come-to-me’ retail can work in both cities and rural communities.”

The impact of the smart city will give retailers the opportunity to offer 3D virtual stores. AR and VR will mean that visits to a physical store are not necessary, and people will continue to work at home, but together. Further, drone deliveries will improve last-mile fulfillment without clogging the streets.

Brick-and-mortar stores will remain, but they will serve as a remote viewing centers; direct-to-consumer auto replenishment will explode; and AI will be key for smarter and greener logistics.

With the surge in online shopping, retailers need to balance their physical locations as well, as provide e-commerce. In fact, research shows a growth in online sales for non-essentials like clothing and consumer electronics, reported Melanie Noronha, senior editor, the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).

A physical store today is more of a window to online sales, a research center and a community center—a location in 5G territory, where virtual tours will be key to being part of the community.

“You will spend money on a physical space where you will leverage virtual experiences,” advises Ancketill.

“In the next six months, retailers will need to be dynamic in their decisions,” said David Dobson, director of Retail Hospitality and Consumer Electronics for Intel. “They will need to leverage their physical stores to become e-commerce fulfillment locations and create an exciting environment for social spaces at these destination locations.”

Retail Evolution: Thriving virtually anywhere

By Stephanie Adamow

Transforming Brick & Mortar

Stores certainly have evolved, but in order to ensure longevity, they will need to address the three Ps, says Ancketill.

People:

Improving fulfillment, bringing convenience and conversation

Planet:

Reversing damage and developing sustainable systems

Profit:

Maintaining sales while right-sizing real estate
E-commerce has faced unprecedented disruptive growth during the bumpy span of the pandemic, and the surge is here to stay – beyond a vaccine and the return of brick-and-mortar retail. The U.S. Census Bureau predicts e-commerce will continue to steadily gain an average 1% share of the total retail market per year. This pattern has held for several years, reflecting a gradual and predictable shift in overall buying habits.

Last year, however, was an outlier and acutely distorting the retail environment. A global outpouring of online goods is expected to achieve by over 60%. That trajectory does not seem the way customer support continuity for many businesses. Some centers opted to send a portion of their agents to work from home. The globally dispersed nature of a homesourced workforce enables flexible scheduling based on call arrival patterns and large-scale ramping during seasonal spikes. This gives customer support providers the ability to easily pivot as a retailer’s needs change, increasing or decreasing staffing as people adjust to a reopening society.

The homesourcing model dynamically captures financial and operational efficiencies for retailers, while delivering superior customer experiences from a team that thrives in a fully remote environment. A mature homesourced organization hires agents with the personality, work style, and typically prepare by expanding support hours with more outsourced agents. There is no precedent for the way customer support needs grew during the pandemic, and looking forward, no clear model for how and when they will ebb.

The customer support industry has faced operational challenges and limitations when trying to accommodate the increased demand. During the onset of COVID-19, many U.S.-based and international brick-and-mortar call centers were forced to temporarily close altogether, disrupting customer service continuity for many businesses when they needed it most. Other centers found ways to continue operating by implementing social distancing policies and managing alternating shifts for on-site employees. Some centers opted to send a portion of their agents to work from home (WFH) and attempted to adjust operations accordingly, with varying levels of success.

Complications & Challenges Facing the Customer Support Industry

COVID-19 created a sudden and profound growth in the demand for customer support – much greater in magnitude than the seasonal increases to which customer support teams are accustomed. Teams know to anticipate temporary seasonal surges and typically prepare by expanding support hours with more outsourced agents. There is no precedent for the way customer support needs grew during the pandemic, and looking forward, no clear model for how and when they will ebb. The customer support industry has faced operational challenges and limitations when trying to accommodate the increased demand. During the onset of COVID-19, many U.S.-based and international brick-and-mortar call centers were forced to temporarily close altogether, disrupting customer service continuity for many businesses when they needed it most. Other centers found ways to continue operating by implementing social distancing policies and managing alternating shifts for on-site employees. Some centers opted to send a portion of their agents to work from home (WFH) and attempted to adjust operations accordingly, with varying levels of success.

Traditional call centers lack the capacity to deal with the pace of change – innovative new models are needed.

Homesourced customer support solves not only surge and long-term business continuity problems, but results in superior customer experiences delivered by people, processes, and platforms tailored to the home-based environment.

SUMMARY:
The pandemic has permanently shifted consumer buying habits toward e-commerce, causing unprecedented demand for flexible customer support services.

Homesourcing: A Better Solution to E-commerce Demands

The temporary measures forced by the pandemic were not sufficient to address customer support needs in 2020, and businesses are challenged to find a more sustainable solution to these ongoing e-commerce trends. In the first stages of the crisis, lapses in customer support levels were frustrating, but understandable. Now, it is past time to move towards a long-term model that can provide continuous customer support. One solution that retailers should consider is homesourcing – both disaster-proof and realistic. Homesourcing requires that all of a company’s processes, platforms, tools, and culture are redesigned to support work delivered from home. The homesourcing model enables outsourced work to be delivered by remote employees anywhere in the world, while maintaining or even improving productivity and performance.

All of these methods resulted in lost or reduced blood centers at the worst possible time. The need for blood centers will remain high. By leveraging a homesourced model, retailers can activate the customer support resources they need at any time – up to three times faster than hybrid or traditional call centers. The globally dispersed nature of a homesourced workforce enables flexible scheduling based on call arrival patterns and large-scale ramping during seasonal spikes. This gives customer support providers the ability to easily pivot as a retailer’s needs change, increasing or decreasing staffing as people adjust to a reopening society.

The homesourcing model dynamically captures financial and operational efficiencies for retailers, while delivering superior customer experiences from a team that thrives in a fully remote environment. A mature homesourced organization hires agents with the personality, work style, and time management skills suited for remote work. Without the typical geographic constraints faced by traditional call centers, a homesourced customer support vendor can rapidly recruit and onboard custom-profiled experts to meet a retailer’s specific skill set, experience, or efficiency requirements. Homesourcing enables hiring exactly the right people quickly, wherever they are.

Hiring is only the first step in supporting a home-sourced model – all training and resources must also be optimized for the remote environment. By investing in ongoing virtual learning, homesourced customer support providers can diversify their employees’ areas of expertise and increase overall speed to competency, providing agents with everything they need to resolve even complex issues swiftly and competently, with minimal holds and transfers, regardless of industry or specialty.

The homesourcing model is uniquely positioned to meet ongoing e-commerce customer service demands in 2021 and beyond, efficiently addressing modern customer support challenges across vertical markets that are likely to remain in a post-COVID world.
Some of the notable items that caught our editors’ attention at the digital show

**COOL PRODUCTS AT CES**

**KOHLER**

Kohler Drench 60" x 60" is a representation of a Japanese soaking bath. The 60×60 Kohler Drench evokes light fog and aromatherapy. The bath’s infinity overflow feature sends water into the hinoki wood moat. Full specification using SenseIQ technology to track and detect pressure applied, cleaning motions and coverage achieved.

**LG**

LG’s refrigerator may be opened via voice control, making trips with groceries easier and more convenient. It tracks and analyzes posture in real-time, provides feedback on form, helps users adjust their brushing technique, through AI, helps consumers adjust their brushing technique, through AI, helps consumers adjust their brushing technique, through AI, helps consumers adjust their brushing technique, through AI, helps consumers adjust their brushing technique, through AI, helps consumers adjust their brushing technique.

**RAZER**

Razer’s high-tech N95 face mask, coined Project Hazel, features a clear visor, live streaming stereo ventilation, and a charger that can be attached to the mask. Project Hazel has high potential for users, dopamine, mentioned sense, users, dopamine, mentioned sense, users, dopamine, mentioned sense, users, dopamine, mentioned sense.

**SKYWORTH**

SKYWORTH has unveiled five upcoming series of TVs: TC6200, UC6200, UC7500, UC8500, and 07500, powered by the broadcast TV OS. Features include 700,000+ movies and shows from across streaming services, Google search control functionality to control the TV, get recommendations on what to watch and more, a 4K camera to provide the ability to stream photos, videos, and controls from what devices in your TV.

**SAMSUNG**

SAMSUNG has unveiled its latest version of the Infinity Game Table. Arcade1Up partnered with Hasbro to create this touch-screen gaming table that features Monopoly, Scrabble, Candyland, Yahtzee as well as classic, online versions of games. In addition to playing games, the table can be used to display a logo or turn it into a game head by removing the legs.

**SONY**

SONY MOTORS

SONY MOTORS is a product of the same source as the market which is targeted to the world’s top four market leaders in the automotive industry. The device will be available in three colors: black, white and chrome.

**ARCADE1UP**

ARCADE1UP

Arcade1up new Bluetooth shower speaker, designed to carry Sony’s Alpha full-frame mirrorless cameras; it’s due for release sometime in Spring. The device will be available in three colors: black, white and chrome.

**MASKFONE**

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**PHILIPS**

PHILIPS

The Philips OneBlade Pro Prestige’s [smart] technology through a single configuration adjust that animal care by providing a “Loaded,” personalized shaving experience. Detecting the user’s learning style and adapting to that, during the shaving session using forward technology to track and direct pressure applied, shaving motions and coverage achieved.

**CUZEN**

CUZEN

If you haven’t whipped up a cup of hot chocolate recently, you should. We all know the benefits of high cocoa. While many cocoa drinks can be found in the store, those cocoa drinks don’t have a [trippy] effect, and instead will hit you at the perfect point, you don’t have to go to god to be in a universe of coffee, chocolate, or a universe of chocolate, chocolate, chocolate.

**AMPERE**

AMPERE

Amperé’s new Bluetooth shower speaker, designed to carry Sony’s Alpha full-frame mirrorless cameras; it’s due for release sometime in Spring. The device will be available in three colors: black, white and chrome.

**JBL**

JBL

JBL has released a new [Bluetooth] shower speaker that also acts as a disinfectant through UV sanitization. This mask solves two major problems: it eliminates waste and caters to a large population of people who rely on a mask for their health needs.

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**CUZEN**

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If you haven’t whipped up a cup of hot chocolate recently, you should. We all know the benefits of high cocoa. While many cocoa drinks can be found in the store, those cocoa drinks don’t have a [trippy] effect, and instead will hit you at the perfect point, you don’t have to go to god to be in a universe of coffee, chocolate, or a universe of chocolate, chocolate, chocolate.
WELLNESS INNOVATIONS SURGE TO MEET CONSUMER DEMAND

This shift in focus on health and wellness can be seen in most every place in the tech industry, from wearables and apps to the smart home. It all points to consumers’ heightened awareness of preventive health. From wearing health monitors to introducing technology into the home, wellness innovations will only surge in the coming years. Here’s a look at some.

**The SleepScore app** uses Senar Sensor Technology to track your breathing and body movement through each sleep stage. This data, combined with the user’s profile and lifestyle information, provides insights into your unique sleep patterns as well as actionable, customized advice that’s delivered through the Sleep Guide. In addition, users can access sleep history and receive sleep solutions in the form of product recommendations based on sleep needs.

**With Omron’s HeartGuide blood pressure monitor**, users can track heart data and learn how your behaviors impact heart health. With its HeartAdvisor app, users can not only monitor blood pressure, but also activity and sleep quality; track trends over time with color-coded health graphs; access a dashboard health history, reminders and settings; and get daily actionable insights based on your personalized data.

**TOTO’s Wellness Toilet** is in the works, to be released in the next few years. It uses multiple sensing technologies to support consumers’ wellness by tracking and analyzing their mental and physical status. Each time the individual sits on the Wellness Toilet, it scans their body and its key outputs, then provides recommendations to improve their wellness. Users will see their current wellness status and receive wellness-improvement recommendations on a dashboard in an app on their smartphones.

**The Oura Ring** delivers personalized sleep and overall health insights daily in its app, which can be linked to Apple Health or Google Fit. During the day, the Ring monitors activity level, calories, steps, inactive times, and naps. Measured during sleep are: Resting Heart Rate, Heart Rate Variability (HRV), Respiratory Rate, Body Temperature, Light, Deep and REM Sleep, Nighttime Movement, Sleep Timing and Quality. The user also receives scores for Readiness, Sleep and Activity.

### CONSUMER DEMAND

**By Stephanie Adamow**

**WELLNESS CARE SHIFTS FROM REACTIVE TO PROACTIVE**

Because the pulse signal in the finger is 100 times stronger than the wrist, where most wearables are, Chapp says, the Ring can create a clear image of pulse. From that, it can more accurately calculate resting heart rate, heart rate variability (HRV) and respiratory rate. With cardiovascular disease, diabetes and dementia so prevalent in our society, “the future is being able to identify when these diseases occur” before a catastrophic event.

Consumers want to play a more interactive role in their healthcare.

Sleep monitoring is near the top of the consumer desires list for health-and-wellness tracking.

The wish for tracking and monitoring vital signs is being addressed with vigor by vendors.

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**Innovation**

This period of reflection around COVID-19 has shown huge shifts in innovation that happened rapidly and have accelerated the future of health. For example, some of these innovations can be found in wearables that target blood pressure monitoring. Omron has developed HeartGuide, which is, reportedly, the first, clinically accurate, wearable blood pressure monitor.

**Sleep as the Fifth Vital Sign**

The sleep monitoring portion of wearables is becoming increasingly prevalent. “Sleep affects your immune system,” says Sterrett. “We need consistent, omnipresent, always-on systems that will gather data and lead to consumer action. I feel this period of reflection around COVID-19 has shown huge shifts in innovation that happened rapidly and have accelerated the future of health.” For example, some of these innovations can be found in wearables that target blood pressure monitoring. Omron has developed HeartGuide, which is, reportedly, the first, clinically accurate, wearable blood pressure monitor.

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STAT SHOT | CE INDUSTRY BY THE NUMBERS

According to Parks Associates, more than three quarters of paid-TV subscribers have at least one over-the-top (OTT) media service. Among households that have any OTT services, the average number of services is 3.8.

The latest consumer spending data from NRF and Prosper Insights & Analytics’ 2021 Super Bowl survey found that 186.6 million U.S. adults say they plan to tune in to the big game, and 86 percent of those viewers are also planning to make purchases to mark the occasion. While food and drinks lead the way as the most popular add-ons, TVs make up 9% of the estimated $13.9 billion total spend for the U.S.

The Veteran’s Health Administration has shown the positive impacts connected health technologies can have on patient outcomes. Its remote patient monitoring program involving more than 43,000 veterans with conditions including hypertension, congestive heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, depression and PTSD resulted in a 25% reduction in days of inpatient care and a 19% reduction in hospital admissions over a three-year period spanning 2019 through 2023.

The NPD Group’s 2020 Evolution of Entertainment report shows video-game engagement in the U.S. grew significantly in 2020 in terms of participation, time, and spend. The number of consumers playing video games in the U.S. increased 6 points to 79%. Total time spent gaming increased 26% and total spend increased 33%.

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