

# How Covid-19 changed the consumer shopping experience

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More than eight months after South Africa went into lockdown, consumers continue to be impacted by the effects of Covid-19.



*Photo by Arturo Rey on Unsplash*

[East Coast Radio](#) and [Jacaranda FM](#) listeners, like many consumers, have been tactical about where they shop, how they shop and how much they spend.

Jacaranda FM is one of the biggest independent radio stations in South Africa and broadcasts in English and Afrikaans to 1,120,000 listeners across Gauteng, North West, Limpopo and Mpumalanga.

The station's affluent listeners have an average household income of R26,962.

East Coast Radio is KwaZulu-Natal's number one hit music station and the province's leading English commercial radio station. The average listener has a household income of around R23,658.

Surveys conducted by both stations have revealed interesting insights about their listeners' shopping behaviours in 2020.

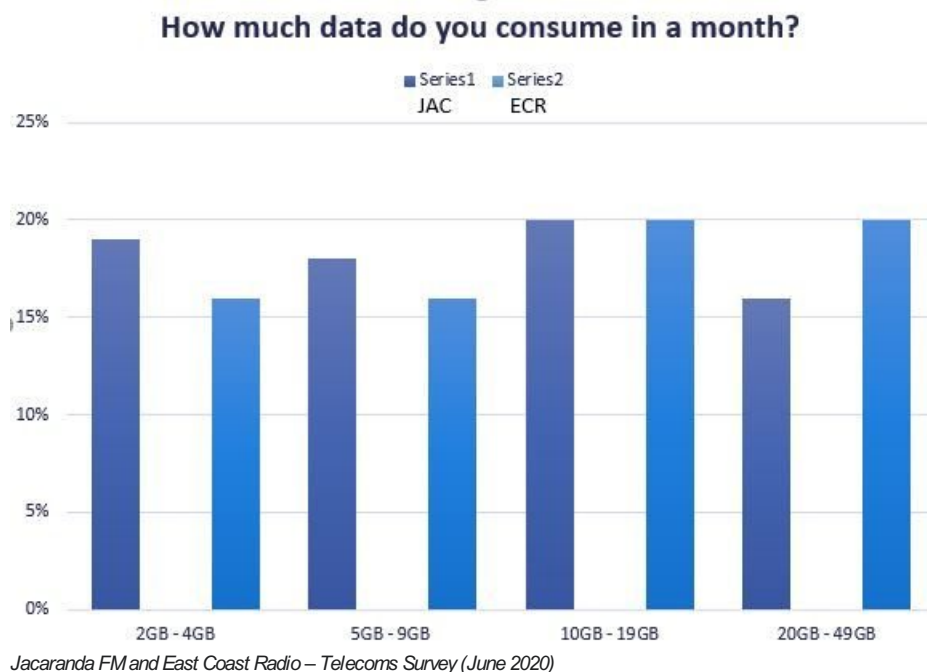
## **Working from home**

Scores of South Africans began working from home in late March. Many families also added homeschooling to their weekday routines. Due to this, data affordability, network coverage and speed became important factors for consumers.

Respondents in a June survey indicated that they were likely to buy Wi-Fi routers, laptops and printers to help them adjust to their 'new normal'. More than half of the East Coast Radio audience revealed that they used their mobile data to access the internet at home, while 32% used a wireless router. At least 58% of Jacaranda FM's listeners used their mobile data to access the internet at home, compared to 27% who used a wireless router.

Data usage also increased, with over a third of East Coast Radio respondents using 10 – 49GB of data a month, compared to 36% of Jacaranda FM's listeners.

Over 60% of both audiences spent an average of R500 or less on data monthly. While many people have since returned to work, some companies continue to allow staff to work from home.



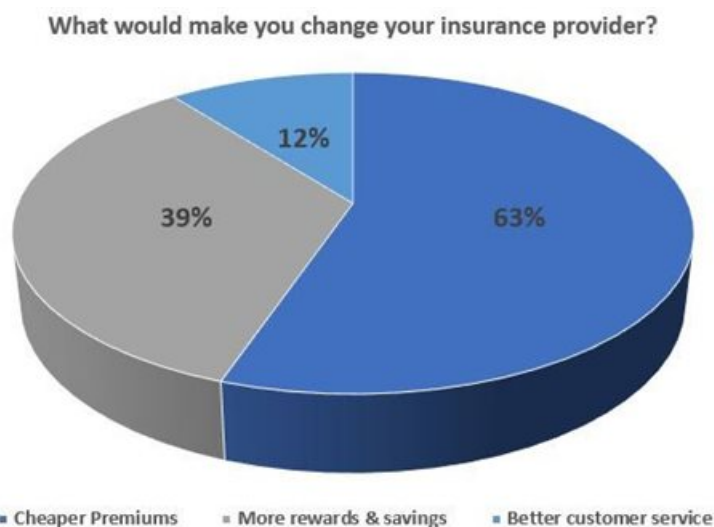
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### Consumers still need assurance their possessions are protected

Despite spending more hours at home and less time on the road, short-term insurance remained a priority for consumers. At least 77% of Jacaranda FM's audience polled in July said that they had not cancelled their short-term insurance in the time of Covid-19, compared to 74% of the East Coast Radio audience.

A third of Jacaranda FM's audience indicated that they spent up to R1,000 per month on car and household insurance, compared to 27% of East Coast Radio's listeners.

More than 60% of both audiences said they were willing to change their insurance providers for better value, rewards and savings.



*Jacaranda FM - Short-Term Insurance Survey (Colony Live): July 2020*

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The long periods spent at home also allowed listeners to focus more on their personal care and well-being.

A survey conducted in August showed that maintaining a good skin and hair care regimen is important, with 60% of Jacaranda FM's listeners saying they were comfortable going to a hair salon, while 44% wanted to purchase a spa treatment.

At least 42% also saw themselves using more skincare products over the next six months, while 47% would buy more haircare products.

The battle of the lockdown bulge saw many looking for ways to increase their fitness levels. A total of 84% of Jacaranda FM's audience agreed that wearable tech and devices that measure exercise routines can assist with weight loss.

### In-store vs online shopping

Despite fears about the Covid-19 pandemic, a survey conducted in May found that both Jacaranda FM (72%) and East Coast Radio (67%) audiences still preferred in-store shopping to online.

But that changed as the lockdown continued. Interest in online shopping increased as consumers adjusted to life under lockdown.

Food retailers, such as Pick n Pay, Checkers and Woolworths, saw a big spike in website/app traffic volumes. The OneCart grocery service, which offers delivery from multiple stores, reported a 700% increase in web traffic.

By August, East Coast Radio listeners indicated they were likely to shop online more for clothes (42%), food (36%) and toiletries (22%) during the lockdown.

Jacaranda FM's listeners produced similar results, with clothes (32%), food (31%) and toiletries (21%) also at the top of their online shopping list.

While 35% of East Coast Radio's audience still preferred in-store shopping over online, 31% said they used both methods.

At least 44% of Jac shoppers still preferred in-store shopping, while 34% preferred both methods.



*East Coast Radio - lockdown Level 2 Survey (Colony Live): August 2020*

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As the levels of the lockdown decreased, so too did consumers' fear of leaving their homes. At least 76% of the East Coast Radio audience said they were visiting a hairdresser, compared to 81% of Jac's listeners.

Many also indicated that they were considering visiting a nail technician, the cinema, and the gym or spa.

Uncertainty about Covid-19, coupled with job security fears, made consumers a lot more cautious about how they spent their money in 2020.

Jacaranda FM listeners who participated in an October survey said clearing all debt (35%) and buying a home (23%) were at the top of their long-term financial goals. Personal loans (25%), home loans (17%), vehicle loans (13%) and credit cards (11%) made up their biggest debt commitments.

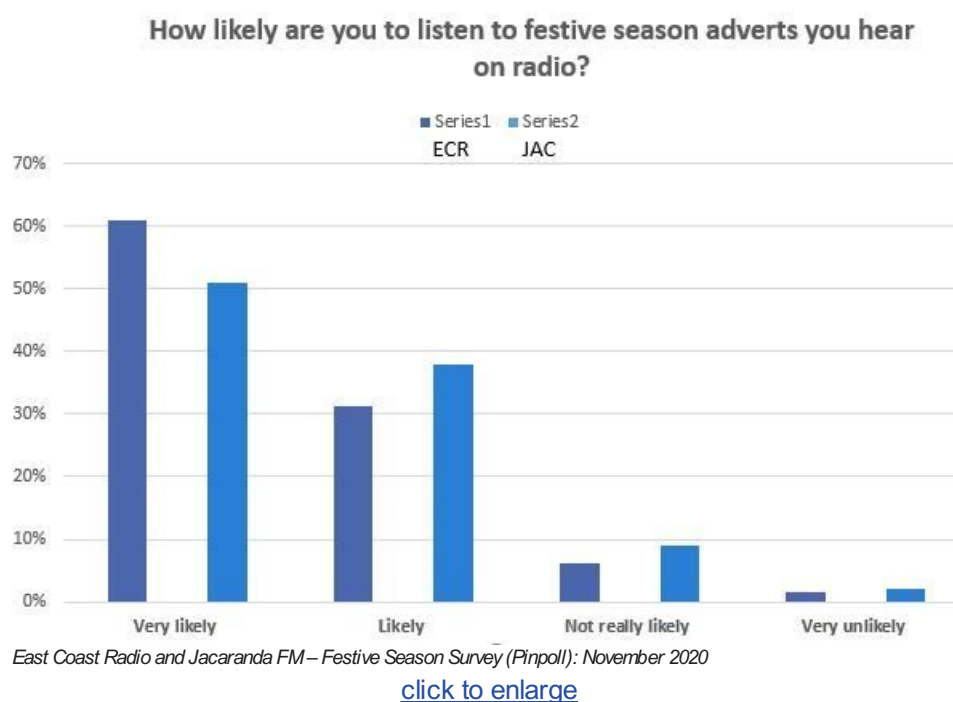
### Outlook for December, January

The festive season will be a little different in 2020. Social distancing rules are still in place and the government has only allowed for small gatherings to take place. A poll carried out by both East Coast Radio and Jacaranda FM showed that over 70% of consumers are opting for staycations this year. Those who are going away will travel domestically.

This is good news for local business owners who are hoping to recover some of their losses following a difficult lockdown period. The festive season shutdown during the slower, late December and early January period is a thing of the past. At least 70% of Jacaranda FM's listeners anticipate that businesses will be open throughout the festive season, compared to 66% of East Coast Radio's listeners.

Consumers are on the hunt for affordable, fun and unique local offers for travel, and festive season and back-to-school shopping.

More than 90% of Jacaranda FM and East Coast Radio's audiences say they pay attention to festive season advertising on radio to get the best deals.



### Findings

Jacaranda FM and East Coast Radio's audiences are savvy shoppers. Despite earning higher incomes than the average household in their provinces, they are constantly on the hunt for the best food, clothing, electronics, appliances and travel deals. They turn to a trusted source such as radio to help them make purchasing decisions.

Online shopping continues to grow in South Africa. Food deliveries were limited at the beginning of the lockdown, with many areas in the country having little or no access to the service. Several major grocery stores now have delivery options, which are likely to continue beyond the pandemic.

But some consumers are still reluctant to try online shopping. Brands can partner with stations like East Coast Radio and Jacaranda FM to educate consumers on how they are moving towards providing customers with a positive online experience.

Radio has historically been the medium communities turn to in times of crisis. The medium is perfectly positioned to help brands get important messages across to consumers. Opportunities exist for brands operating in e-commerce, telecoms, personal health, finance, and insurance.

***For more information, please contact your [Mediamark](#) account manager or email us at [info@mediamark.co.za](mailto:info@mediamark.co.za).***

***Note: \*Surveys refers to surveys conducted by East Coast Radio and Jacaranda FM from lockdown Level 5 to lockdown Level 1.***

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