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## Groundswell of consumer support for local Irish businesses

### Companies urged not to waste an opportunity to tap into Covid-19 groundswell of consumer goodwill and loyalty toward Irish businesses.

As the Irish retail sector reopens, a new survey from fibre broadband firm [Siro](#) has highlighted the increased trend of buying Irish during the pandemic, with a large majority intending to continue to do so after Covid-19. The survey was published by Siro on the occasion of it joining Guaranteed Irish.

The research found that half of those surveyed indicated that they bought more Irish goods and services during the pandemic than previously and that their preference for Irish-first will continue post-Covid-19.

According to the survey 89pc of people cite Buying Irish as being important to them, of those 37pc believe it to be very important and 52pc somewhat important. 11pc stated they did not see it as important.

#### Brand loyalty

50pc of those surveyed responded that they are buying more Irish goods and services during the pandemic than they were prior to Covid-19. 41pc stated the extent to which they Buy Irish is unchanged, with 7pc buying less and 2pc not sure.

Of those who are buying more Irish goods and services during the pandemic, 79pc say they will continue to prioritise Buying Irish after the pandemic has ended; with 19pc not sure and 2pc saying they will buy less.

Those 18-30 years of age are significantly more likely to see Buying Irish as 'very important' relative to older age groups. Equally of those surveyed, women were more likely to Buy Irish than men. Although no notable regional differences emerged.

The top three reasons are Buying Irish goods and services cited by respondents were supporting Irish and local businesses at 82pc, the quality of goods and services at 63pc and avoiding import taxes and charges at 49pc.

The most common issues amongst respondents were delivery charges at 66pc and customer services issues at 38pc.

When asked about choosing a broadband provider 34pc surveyed had switched provider in the past year, with a desire for higher speeds and better value being the most cited reasons.

“Despite physical business closures over the past year, Irish consumers have looked to support local, Irish businesses,” said SIRO chief commercial officer Ronan Whelan.

“There is a huge opportunity for Irish businesses, post-pandemic, to continue to tap into the Covid-19 groundswell of consumer goodwill and loyalty toward Irish businesses.

“However, it shouldn’t be taken for granted, with businesses still needing to improve in areas such as delivery charges and customer services,” Whelan said.

He added: “What comes through so clearly in our research is that, despite physical business closures over the past year, Irish consumers in large numbers have looked to support local, Irish businesses, such as through online or click and collect services. This support for local and Irish has been pivotal in keeping many businesses afloat during the darkest days of Covid-19.

“As Ireland now looks to recover and rebuild, keeping this support engaged will be crucial. There is a huge opportunity for businesses to continue to tap into the COVID-19 groundswell of consumer goodwill and loyalty toward Irish businesses, once the pandemic has passed.

“However, customer loyalty is earned and shouldn’t be taken for granted, with businesses still needing to continuously innovate and improve in areas such as delivery charges and customer services,” Whelan said.

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