

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## Online fashion rental service Le Tote pivots to appeal to consumers at home

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*Le Tote fashion rentals. Image Credit: Le Tote*

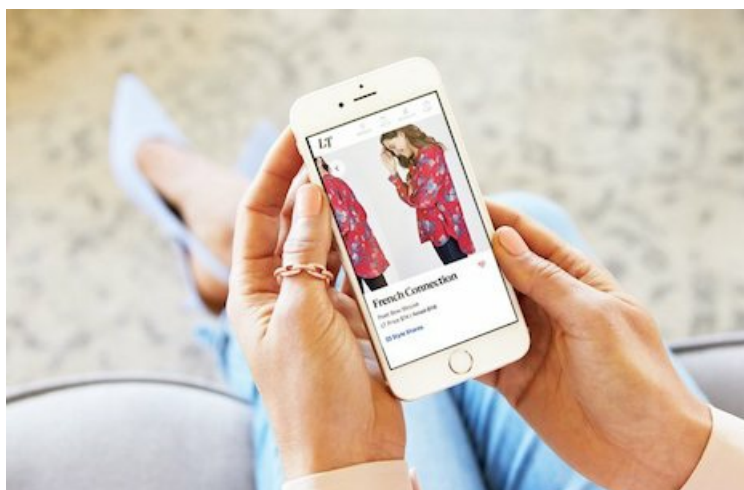
By DIANNA DILWORTH

Online designer apparel and accessories rental service Le Tote is adjusting its messaging as the company feels the pinch after remote-working customers facing office shutdowns across the United States are dialing down their attire.

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Under test is the strength of the recurring-subscription model in apparel and accessories. Not only is the cost under scrutiny, given the reduced use-case, but so is the hygiene with garments and jewelry among members and subscribers.

"If the quarantine and shelter-in-place protocols last beyond the end of this month as experts are predicting, we expect more consumers to put their recurring subscriptions on hold for the short term, not just for clothing rental, but for all products that aren't essentials right now," said Rakesh Tondon, president of Le Tote, San Francisco.



*Le Tote fashion rentals app. Image Credit: Le Tote*

Athleisure rising

For the time being, packages are still being delivered, so these companies are adapting their strategy to maintain business by offering more comfortable apparel options.

Le Tote, for instance, has been working to increase its athleisure offerings to give users more variety from brands such as Free People Movement and Nike.

To promote these new offerings, the subscription service is creating content with inspiration for these items including tips and tricks on how to make work-from-home fashionable.

The brand has been pushing this message in email and on Instagram in a move to stay relevant in these uncertain times.

"For clothing rental, in particular, this makes sense," Mr. Tondon said. "Because users aren't going into the office or out on the weekends, both of which they rely primarily on their rented items for, they are leaning more on athleisure for their at-home attire."



*Rent the Runway. Image credit: Rent the Runway*

#### Clean communications

Cleaning the apparel and accessories is key to germ-phobic customers worried about the COVID-19 coronavirus.

Le Tote deploys either wet or dry cleans with detergents. Wet-cleaned items are sent through a steam tunnel, or pressing process, in which they are exposed to steam that is over 200 F.

Jewelry is cleaned in an ultrasonic cleaner with soap and then swab tested. Belts and handbags are deep cleaned with alcohol-based disinfectant wipes.

"The health and safety of our members and employees are priority number one," Mr. Tondon said.

"Le Tote's proprietary washing and cleaning procedures were designed to kill bacteria and viruses," he said. "We're continuing to use our stringent methods to ensure our apparel and accessories are thoroughly sanitized now and at all times.

"According to the CDC, flu viruses are killed through a variety of processes including exposure to heat above 167 F, detergents and alcohols. All of our clothing and accessories are cleaned in-house utilizing these CDC-recommended processes.

"We are also taking additional steps within our distribution center by wiping down equipment and laundry facilities with alcohol-based disinfectants every day. We are providing disposable gloves to all employees and maintaining social distancing with individuals working a minimum of 6 feet apart."

Le Tote is using email and social media to connect with members and share details of their cleaning processes.

Additionally, the brand's customer care team is on hand to answer direct questions from members to maintain an open dialog as the situation evolves.

"We also know that, now more than ever, people feel the need to come together," Mr. Tondon said.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

As Tom Bodett put it: "They say a person needs just three things to be truly happy in this world: someone to love, something to do, and something to hope for."

A post shared by Le Tote (@letote) on Mar 21, 2020 at 2:00pm PDT

### Social messaging

While most of the online rental services are making it easy for customers to put their memberships on hold during these uncertain times, not all consumers are pushing pause on their accounts.

Mental health professionals recommend adhering to a daily routine whether working from home or in the office and this includes dressing up everyday.

For some members, their regular deliveries will bring normalcy and spark joy at a time of being shut in and they may not be willing to give up this emotional and mental benefit.

"We've invited our members to join our Instagram community for support, inspiration and connection," Mr. Tondon said.

"They are sharing their work from home set-up, their stay-at-home style, quotes, tips and tricks that are helping them get through this unprecedented experience," he said.

"At a time when we're inundated with bad news, it's so important that we do our part to foster connection. We want to provide a destination where she can find joy and camaraderie."