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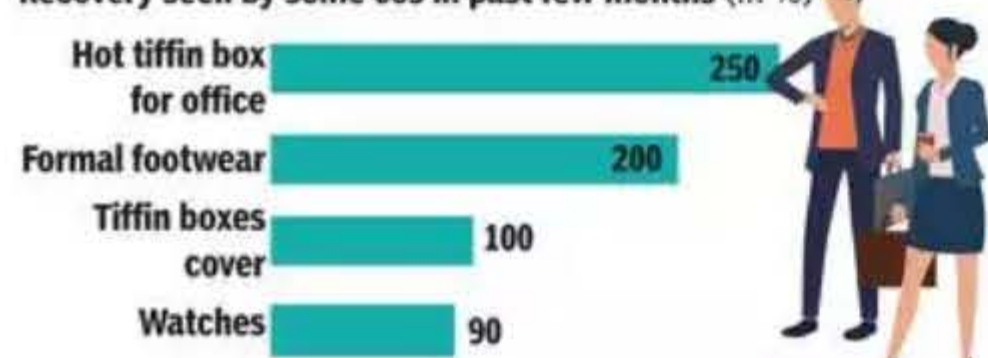
Office time: All dressed up, with lunch packed

Namrata Singh | TNN | Updated: Feb 24, 2021, 16:43 IST

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SWITCHING FROM WFH TO WFO

Recovery seen by some cos in past few months (in %)



> Demand for formal clothes has increased too

> 'Lunches & tiffins' searches have hit pre-Covid levels on Google Trends

Mumbai: Educational institutes may not be fully functional across the country, but lunchboxes are selling like hotcakes. Buyers: Officegoers.

“Over the last month, as offices started opening, we have seen a change in consumer trends with the ‘hot tiffin box for

up, with lunch packed



United Spirits to review its economical drinks portfolio



With Pearl Academy host conference, India takes c

100%,” said Tupperware India

MD Deepak Chhabra, quoting data from Google Trends. As Covid numbers gradually decline in several parts of the country, people are regaining their confidence to step out for work. Consequently, formal clothes, accessories like shoes, bags & watches — apart from tiffin boxes — are seeing increased sales. A month-on-month recovery is being witnessed across many of these categories, said industry officials.

As homemade food is being packed, so is the need to track time once you step out to work. “The recovery in watches has been steadily improving over the past few months. At the end of Q2, while our recovery was a little more than 50%, the same in Q3 has been close to 90% and we are seeing improvement across all channels and brands,” said Titan CEO (watches & wearables division) Suparna Mitra said.

And enough of lounging around in athleisure with a year of WFH. Metro Brands has seen an uptick in formal and office wear, with Q3 formal sales witnessing about 200% growth compared to Q2 of this year. “People have started stepping out and travelling, many offices have opened up and also the number of weddings has increased in the last quarter,” said Metro Brands VP (e-commerce & marketing) Alisha Malik. Consumers, however, continue to look for fashionable products with comfort. “While it remains an important factor, consumers don’t mind paying the right price for the right quality,” said Malik.

Bata India has witnessed growth in the sales of its comfortable smart business casual range in the last couple of months. Bata chief collection officer Matteo Lambert said, “Owing to the work-from-home culture, consumers’ preferences have evolved and moved towards casual space. We have seen people preferring comfortable and casual footwear, and we believe that people are going to carry the trend forward once offices open up fully. People will now prefer relaxed workwear where they can carry the comfort of home wherever they go and wear it through the day.”

There are multiple reasons for growth across different consumer segments, including the festive season which boosted spending. Another key factor is consumers’ need to celebrate relationships and social bonding after a long lockdown.

Due to the pandemic, the ‘on the go’ (lunches & bottles) segment had witnessed a significant drop in demand last year. Now Google Trends data shows that search levels for ‘lunches & tiffins’ have gone back to pre-Covid times, said Tupperware’s Chhabra. Moreover, the demand for Tupperware flasks and bottles too has risen in the last few months. “This shows how these unprecedented times have made people health-conscious and they now choose to carry their beverages with them,” said Chhabra.

Peter England COO Manish Singhai said there is a surge in people stepping out for work as offices are gradually resuming their regular schedule. Singhai said a new trend has emerged as consumers have moved from conventional formal wear to performance-oriented attire. There is also a high affinity towards natural and wellness-infused products. “We are also seeing strong growth in the consumption of athletic and slim fit products, which is probably the result of consumers becoming more fitness-conscious,” said Singhai.

In watches, the smart wearables segment has seen significant growth due to increased inclination towards fitness and consumers’ interest in using advanced technology products. Mitra of Titan Company said the company has also seen demand for fashion and lifestyle products.

“Covid acted as a catalyst for many lifestyle changes. Focus on fitness, indoor & outdoor activities, the trend of contactless payment accelerated as well. Thus, there has been a boom in demand for fashionable and smart wearables — products focused on performance and activities,” said Mitra.

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