

Hardware retailer notes surge in sales of building supplies during lockdown

The different levels of lockdown restrictions has, unsurprisingly, been accompanied by different responses and trends. Now, as various business sectors adjust to a new consumer climate, and restaurants work towards safely reopening, an unsurprising new consumer trend has emerged: home building, renovations and improvements.



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Since the start of lockdown, social media platforms have been inundated with posts on trending hobbies, from baking bread and brewing beer, to making TikToks and, showing off DIY projects.

So a spike in hardware sales is not unexpected – but the unprecedented demand is fast exceeding supply, according to hardware retail chain Laduma Hardware. With safety regulations and protocols in place, Laduma reopened stores countrywide on 1 May in line with regulations – and says it immediately experienced frenzied buying at all 15 branches.



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“May has proven to be a bounce-back month for the hardware industry as customers are investing in either building their homes from scratch, or renovating them,” notes Laduma’s chief operations officer, Vibin Nair. This, he says, is borne out by a surge in demand for buildware supplies.

“Since reopening our stores, we have seen a noticeable uptake in the demand for bricks, cement, tiles and tile adhesives, roofing materials including Harvey tiles, concrete tiles and corrugated iron, brick force and electrical wiring materials. From this, it is clear that people are following the old adage: ‘If you can’t move, improve’. People are not only undertaking seasonal home maintenance tasks and minor improvements to make their homes more comfortable, they are also tackling bigger, fresh build projects.”



Laduma Hardware Group's retail expansion

24 Jan 2020



Laduma services rural and peri-urban communities – most making up a large proportion of what global insights and data company Kantar describes as Mzansi’s ‘Nillionaires’ (those with little or no income) in its recent 3rd Wave study: (Brand Love in the Time of Covid. Yet research shows that home renovations and improvements during Covid-19 follows global trends.

At the start of lockdown in March, Kantar predicted that about 40% of people who had put off doing home renovations would do so during lockdown – and statistics from UK marketing consultancy Rare Consulting show that in the week of May 4 to 11, 74% of the population took part in some sort of home management and DIY activity.

Google Search Trends data reveals a drastic spike in the search for DIY information during lockdown, with a massive average 1,241% increase in garden DIY phrases being searched for on Google. And requests for advice on best tools for the job have become regular features on Facebook and Twitter:

“ Ladies: sander recommendations? Particularly for a gal with small hands and tennis elbow? (Used the [@DEWALTtough](#) random orbital on the canoe and the grip is just too big)— Xyla Foxlin (@XylaFoxlin) [June 26, 2020](#) ”

Yet most build and hardware suppliers are not operating at full capacity, and therefore are unable to satisfy the demand, adds Nair. “For example, we’ve had an unprecedented demand for cement, which has led to customers queuing as early as 5 in the morning to ensure they are able to get cement as the load is delivered.”

For this reason, Laduma has intensified its focus to not only protecting staff and customers during the pandemic, but also on ensuring their stores are fully stocked to meet customer demand.



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Laduma reports having been on a consistent growth trajectory. This, says Nair, is largely due to "the company’s rapid, intensive response to the Covid-19 crisis, and its unwavering commitment to staff, customers and meeting the needs of the community it serves".

Nair adds, “Our growth and sustainability, even during these critical times, is largely due to these three intrinsic imperatives: comprehensive staff training; a deep understanding of our customer base and a commitment to community development.

"Happy customers are, after all, the original social influencers, as they will easily share their experiences with others and so, promote your business and boost your brand."

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