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Face Mask Revolution

Face masks gained widespread use and massive popularity over the course of this year. Take a closer look at the trend and learn what we can expect from the face mask market in the future.



While it remains unclear if face masks or hand sanitizer will win the spot for the top consumer item of the year, masks have taken a dominant place in our society and have

transcended the PPE market. They have rapidly become a familiar staple in the lives of almost everyone on earth. While it is thought that the standalone mask market will decline over the next year, the market is expected to be worth more than \$3 billion by 2026 – nearly double what it was a year ago.

Marking the Trend

Early in the pandemic, our industry was among the many using innovation to quickly adapt to the global demand for PPE. We witnessed everyone from car manufacturers to fashion designers deviating from their 2020 plans to create an infrastructure around the growing demand for face masks and other PPE items. There was a time when customization was not even on the horizon of possibility in the face mask market. But this early massive leap forward has been able to provide a critical balance between demand and creativity.



Face masks have become fashionable. The innovation curve that traditionally takes an extended period of time to create trends has worked its magic in a few short months. Masks can be found almost anywhere and the demand for unique, creative, and customized products is only increasing. Now that people have confidence in the safety provided, they are thoughtfully seeking out ways of obtaining the next best mask. Some buyers focus on science, some on comfort, and others on style. Regardless, the mask revolution has taken over.

As more people safely reenter an adjusted world, the demand for creative masks will flourish. This means that no one should underestimate this market. From a once makeshift trade, now we see uniformity, endless customization, and fashion application.

Mask Disposal

Unfortunately, as with many innovations of necessity, there remains a question on product disposal. Improper mask disposal has created a significant ecological hazard in many areas of the globe. Just 1 percent of masks in use today equates to 10 million individual products – and that waste is adding up. Beaches, rivers, and estuaries are being clogged with thousands of masks per day, both disposable and reusable.



The best way to cut down on this waste is through appropriate disposal. While most masks are not presently recyclable, they should all be disposed of properly in trash receptacles. Another challenge is increased harm to animals who happen to come into contact with discarded masks. It is important that any mask being placed in the trash have the strings cut so as to prevent entanglements. In addition, unwanted reusable masks can be recycled similarly to used clothes. Once properly cleaned, they can be taken to a local textile recycling center, available in most populated areas.

Looking to the Future

The use of face masks continues to be encouraged globally and scientists appear to agree that masks will not be eliminated from our society for a while to come. But with that comes hope and opportunity. Masks create possibility for commonality, socialization, and connectivity. They continue to bring business to industry distributors. We have come a long way in a short time, and with a continued effort to address the challenges at hand, we will continue to thrive.

Did you know that AIM still has face masks and other PPE items available through the [Group Buy program](#)? [Click here to learn more!](#)

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