



Amex Digital Payments Trendex

# The Time for Contactless Is Now



**DON'T**  
*do business*  
**WITHOUT IT™**



The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a shift in consumer purchase behaviors and payment preferences. American Express Global Network research conducted earlier this year<sup>1</sup> found that consumers are becoming more knowledgeable about the use and benefits of contactless payments, resulting in the growing popularity of contactless during the pandemic.

The most recent Amex Digital Payments Trendex survey<sup>2</sup> among U.S. merchants reveals they are responding to consumer interest by accelerating the adoption of touchless ways to pay to keep customers and staff healthy and safe. Both studies suggest that the preference for contactless payments will continue, even after quarantines are lifted and commerce returns to its new normal.

<sup>1</sup> The American Express Digital Payments Survey was conducted April 6-8, 2020 among a sample of 1,004 adults age 18+.

<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all findings cited in this paper are from The Amex Digital Payments Trendex, an online survey conducted among a sample of 400 business leaders between July 30-August 7, 2020. Detailed survey method is in the Appendix.

## The Shift Towards Touchless Transactions

The COVID-19 pandemic has led merchants towards offering no-touch payment options and away from cash transactions or card payments that require signature or PIN.



# 73%

of merchants agree that, since the COVID-19 outbreak, they **prefer customers to pay with a card or app**, instead of having to handle cash.



# 15%

of merchants who required signature or PIN for card payments said they **will discontinue the practice** because of COVID.

# 52%

**offered contactless payment options** to their customers pre-COVID-19 and plan to continue to do so.

## Merchants Understand the Benefits of Contactless

Even before the outbreak, merchants were leveraging the speed, convenience and reliability of contactless payments, including cards, mobile wallets, wearable devices and QR codes.

However, due to the pandemic, merchants are also now focused on the health and safety benefits that contactless payments offer for both employees and customers.

# 8-in-10

merchants agree that **using contactless payments keeps the checkout area cleaner and safer** for employees and customers, and eighty-four percent believe it is safer for personal health than using cash, swiping a card, or inserting a chip card.



# Merchants Encouraging the Use of Contactless Payments



Satisfied with the benefits of contactless, **80%** of merchants say they have been **encouraging their customers to use no touch payments.**

**84%** agree that due to the pandemic, they are even **more likely to promote this payment option.**

As consumer interest continues to grow for no-touch payment options, so has the number of merchants who are encouraging the use of contactless.

In fact, **SEVEN-IN-TEN MERCHANTS** say that since the COVID-19 pandemic, **customers are requesting the option of contactless tap-and-go or mobile app payments.** And, as a result, one-third of merchants who did not previously offer contactless payments either adopted or plan to adopt this payment method.



# Contactless Is Here for the Long-Term

The trend towards contactless is likely to continue beyond the COVID-19 outbreak, with **eighty-one percent of merchants** who currently offer or plan to offer contactless payments saying they intend to make this a permanent option for their customers.

The value proposition for contactless has never been more appealing for merchants. As consumer interest for convenient, touch-free ways to pay is likely to continue, now is the time for merchants to move away from requiring signature or PIN for card transactions and take advantage of the speed, reliability and safety that no touch payments offer.

[Learn more](#) about how American Express supports contactless payments.

81%



## Survey Method

The 2020 Amex Digital Payments Trendex survey was conducted online among a sample of 400 business leaders in the U.S. who have responsibility for making decisions regarding customer payment options, IT/data security, or online sales strategy and planning.

Respondent companies must offer credit/debit card or digital payment options to their customers in addition to online/mobile payments. At least some portion of their payments must be accepted at point-of-sale. Companies operate in the following customer-facing industries: Arts / Entertainment / Recreation, Construction / Home Improvement, Financial Services / Real Estate / Insurance, Healthcare, Personal Services (e.g., Salon, Barber, Gyms, etc.), Professional Services (e.g., Repair Services, Legal Services, Design, Decorator, etc.), Restaurants / Bars / Food Services, Retail Trade, Travel/Leisure.

The sample for the study came from an online panel. Fieldwork was conducted between July 30-August 7, 2020.

