

COVID-19 CONSUMER RESEARCH WAVE 33 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

October 29 - 31, 2020

MDC and **The Harris Poll** have partnered to conduct research to monitor the pulse of the American Consumer.

The executive summaries on the pages that follow provide insight into current consumer attitudes and behavior and can be used to help navigate the changing industry landscape. We hope this information proves useful to you and your team as you address these changes in real time and strategize for your next moves.

As always, we are here to help. Please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have.

Positively,

Ryan Linder + The MDC Family
Global Chief Marketing Officer, EVP



WAVE 33

WAVE 33 INTRODUCTION

The following research was conducted between **October 29-31, 2020** by The Harris Poll. Fielded among a nationally representative sample of **1,954** U.S adults, the newest research demonstrates how consumers' perceptions are rapidly shifting as new developments emerge.

Section:

01

Topic:

NATIONAL FEAR RISES AMID TENSE ELECTION

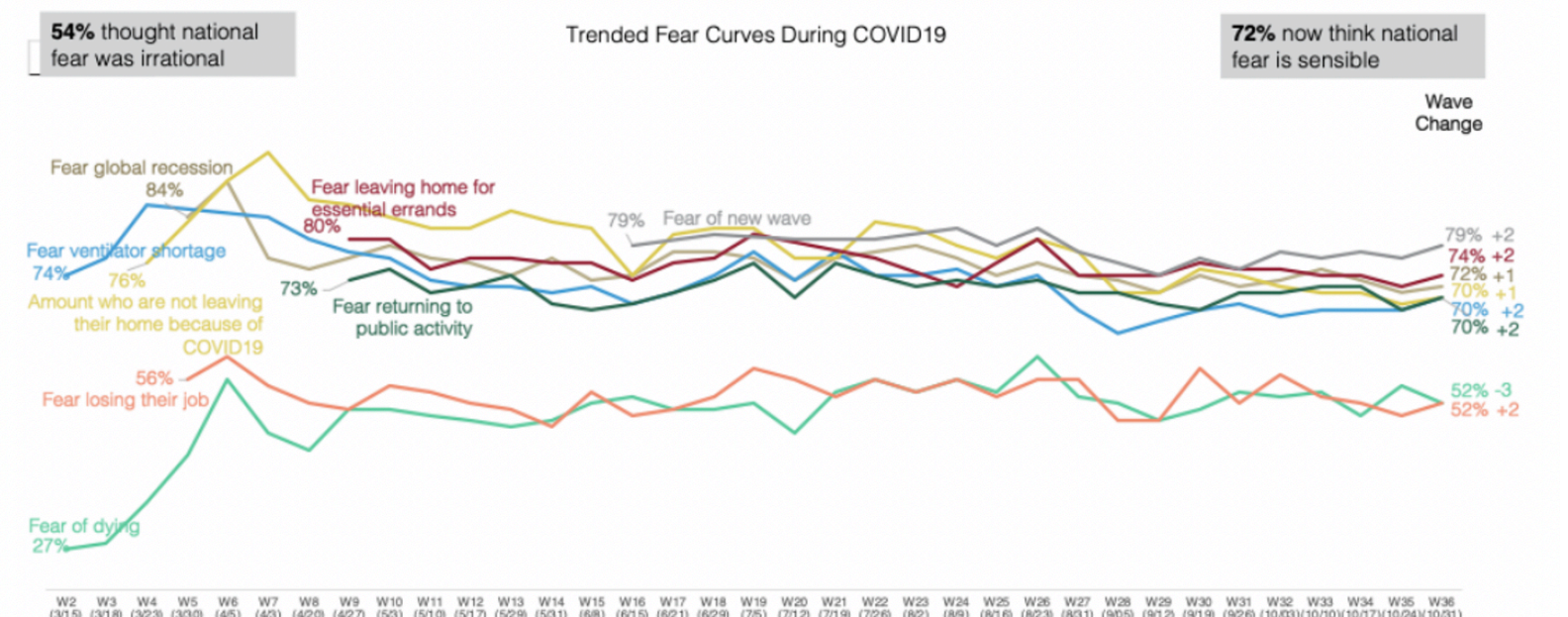
Introduction:

Nearly all aspects of fear rose this week, notably, the fear of another COVID-19 wave (79%) up two percentage points from last week as the [country recorded over 100,000 new coronavirus cases in a single day](#) for the first time since the pandemic began and [cases rose in 35 states in the last week](#). Five states — Maine, Minnesota, Indiana, Nebraska, and Colorado — set single-day case records.

In turn, many states have **brought back restrictions**; [Colorado moved the City and County of Denver to the more restrictive Safer at Home Dial Level 3](#), and Gov. Ned Lamont of Connecticut [rolled back restrictions to Phase 2 reopening](#), asking residents to stay home at night as the coronavirus outbreak continues. With the spike in cases, we see an increase of **public concern with leaving the house** (74%) and **returning to normal public activity** (70%).

THE HARRIS POLL: COVID-19 IN THE U.S.

The Task for Communicators: Lifting the Curtain of Fear



Section:

02

Topic:

BENEATH THE DIVISION AND ANXIETY IS A NATION THAT IS REFLECTING AND GIVING THANKS

Introduction:

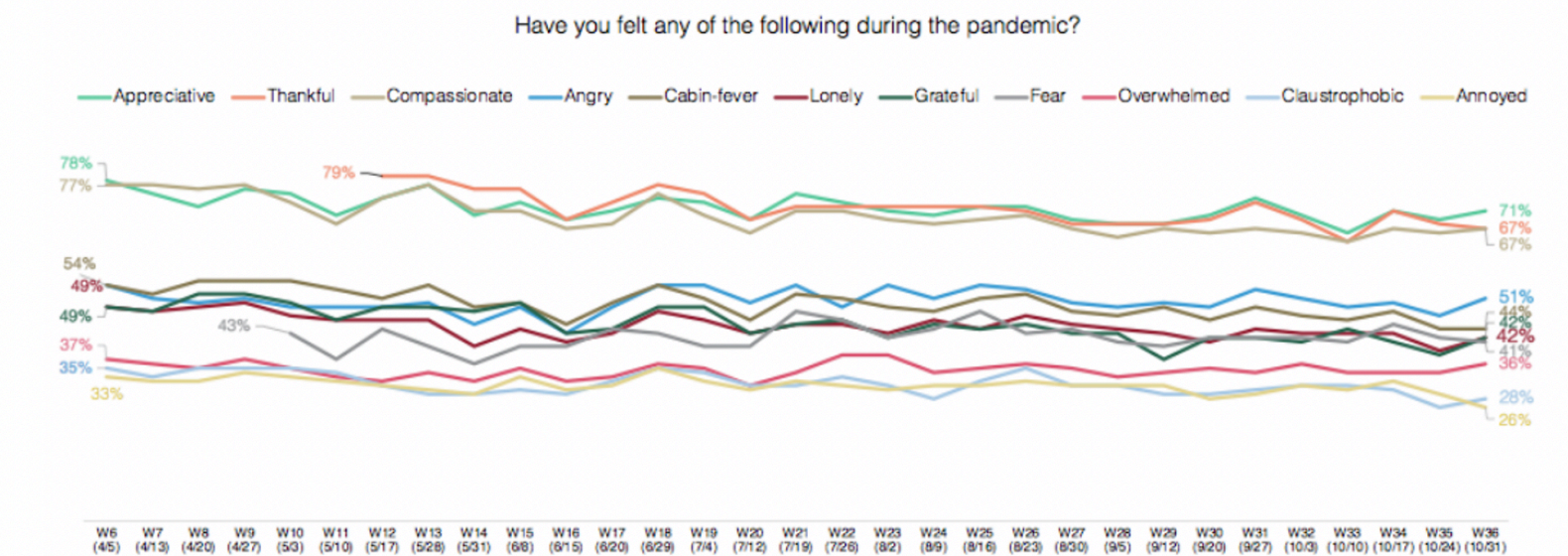
Amid one of the most trying times in our country with the pandemic and a divisive election, Americans are feeling **appreciative** (71%), **thankful** (67%), and **compassionate** (67%). More so than those who feel **angry** (51%) and **annoyed** (28%).

Looking ahead to Thanksgiving, Americans are planning to put politics aside and focus on what matters; Americans plan to cope with potentially heated political debates over their Thanksgiving meal by **agreeing not to talk politics at the dinner tables** (39%) and **changing the subject** (35%) - cheers to that!

What's more, is that this reflection of gratitude seems to be spurring **fundamental value shifts**: 76% say they will continue to **support charities** due to the pandemic in the future, 69% have an **increased appreciation of the outdoors** ever since lockdowns ended, and 43% say they will **stay more connected** to friends and family after the pandemic.

THE HARRIS POLL: COVID-19 IN THE U.S.

Beneath Anxiety, Reflection and Gratitude



Section:

03

Topic:

IT'S COVID AND THE ECONOMY, STUPID

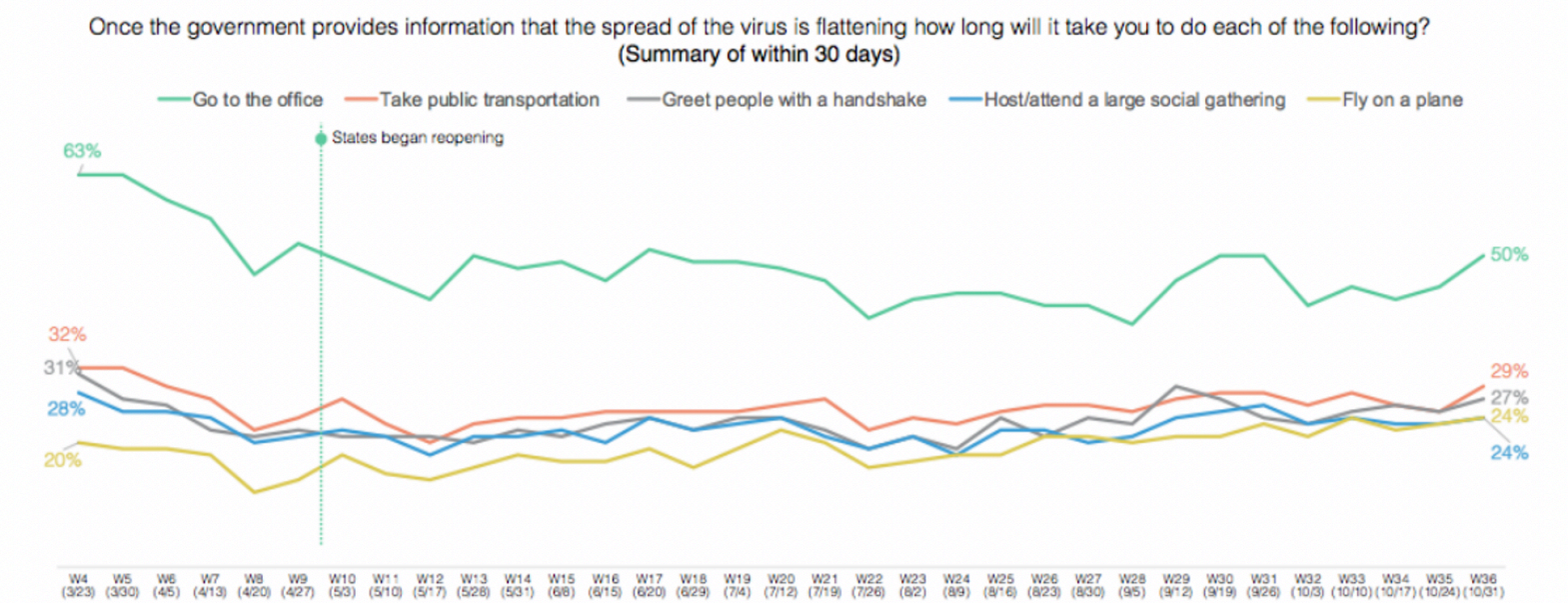
Introduction:

As American voters headed to the polls (and drop-off locations) these past few weeks, two interconnected issues were at the top of every mind: COVID and the economy.

- **Americans voted with their wallet because we still aren't out of the COVID recovery yet:** just over half (52%) of Americans still fear losing their job due to COVID-19 and 72% still fear a global recession.
- **How did Americans weigh the economy vs. COVID?** [The New York Times dives into the \(very early\) exit polls and concludes:](#) "The coronavirus dominated voters' thinking, but those concerned about rising infections sided with Joseph R. Biden Jr. while those who wanted the economy open went for President Trump."
- **But restarting the economy means re-opening businesses, something which states are forced to restrict due to COVID and something Americans are still quite wary about even after reports of the virus flattening:** only 39% say they will go out to dinner in the next 30 days of the virus flattening, less than a third (28%) say they will go to a gym class and only a quarter (25%) say they would go to the movies.
- **There is a ripple effect on supporting industries:** The slowdown of one industry says, business commuting, impacts all other supporting industries, in fact, [our study with TriNet](#) found six in ten SMB leaders (60%) have had to reduce their workforce in some way.
- **And Americans are worried about their communities:** nearly two-thirds (63%) say small businesses in their community are doing poorly and the same number (65%) say businesses in their community will eventually return to their normal, pre-pandemic levels. And half (50%) say a small business has had to close permanently in their community because of the pandemic.

THE HARRIS POLL: COVID-19 IN THE U.S.

Pause in Office Work and Commuting Has Economic Ripple Effects



Implication:

Either Biden or Trump will face an economy in shambles, a pessimistic public (54% would get a vaccine right away, down from 69% in early August, and on average Americans are saying it will be at least 6 months to return to normal activity once the virus flattens) and uncertainty on the horizon for months to come (about one-quarter of the public says it will be a year or longer before they go to a sporting event, attend a large social gathering, take public transportation, or stay in a hotel.)

Questions?

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KNOWLEDGE IS POWER
