

COVID-19 CONSUMER RESEARCH WAVE 50 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

March 12 - 14, 2021

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 50

WAVE 50 INTRODUCTION

The following research was conducted between **March 12-14, 2021** by The Harris Poll. Fielded among a nationally representative sample of **1,977** U.S adults, the newest research demonstrates how consumers' perceptions are rapidly shifting as new developments emerge.

Section:

01

Topic:

THE GREAT AWAKENING: A YEAR OF LIFE IN THE PANDEMIC AS DOCUMENTED BY THE HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

Monday we released a special report on a year's worth of The Harris Poll weekly COVID-19 tracker revealing new priorities in how we choose to live our lives, where we want to live and work, and how we choose to spend our time and money.

With over 55 consecutive weeks of consumer research, surveying over 114,000 people, we believe we have stood up the single largest comprehensive data set on life amid COVID-19.

This report examines loss, resilience and emergence. The pandemic is remaking many aspects of American life that we are only now beginning to understand. From values and beliefs to routines and relationships, change is underway across the nation.

Companies, in trying to recover, must adapt, evolve and understand the evolution of Americans, who are digitally accelerated, hyper-resourceful and ever-mindful. There will be new winners and losers in a transformed marketplace. But one thing is clear: conventional wisdom and assumptions no longer hold in a post-COVID America.

[Download the report](#)

[Read the press release](#)

Section:

02

Topic:

COVID AND THE AMERICAN CONSUMER: CHEDDAR-HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

This week John Gerzema, CEO of The Harris Poll, spoke to [Cheddar](#) about where the U.S. is after a year of enduring a pandemic and what the future looks like for consumers. Here is what he has to say:

- **A savings dam is about to burst:** Americans are gearing up for a spending free-for-all and consumer confidence continues to grow. Almost one-third (30%) of \$100K+ households report that they expect to spend more than they did last spring. Two-thirds (66%) of Americans who have remained employed throughout the pandemic said that they were able to save more than they otherwise would have.
- **CV-PTSD:** The lingering psychological trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic will inevitably affect the way Americans shop. Nearly half (48%) do not want to use cash anymore and 30% are taking fewer trips to the store and stocking up on as much as they can when they do go.
- **Meet and greet:** The last year made Americans hyper-aware of what they touch and where they put their hands. With that, more than half (54%) say that they would be happy if they never had to shake another person's hand again. Handshakes are so 2019.



Implication:

Americans are ready to ride the digital acceleration wave. With companies finding ways to make in-person shopping an obsolete experience, consumers are ready to spend money.

Section:

03

Topic:

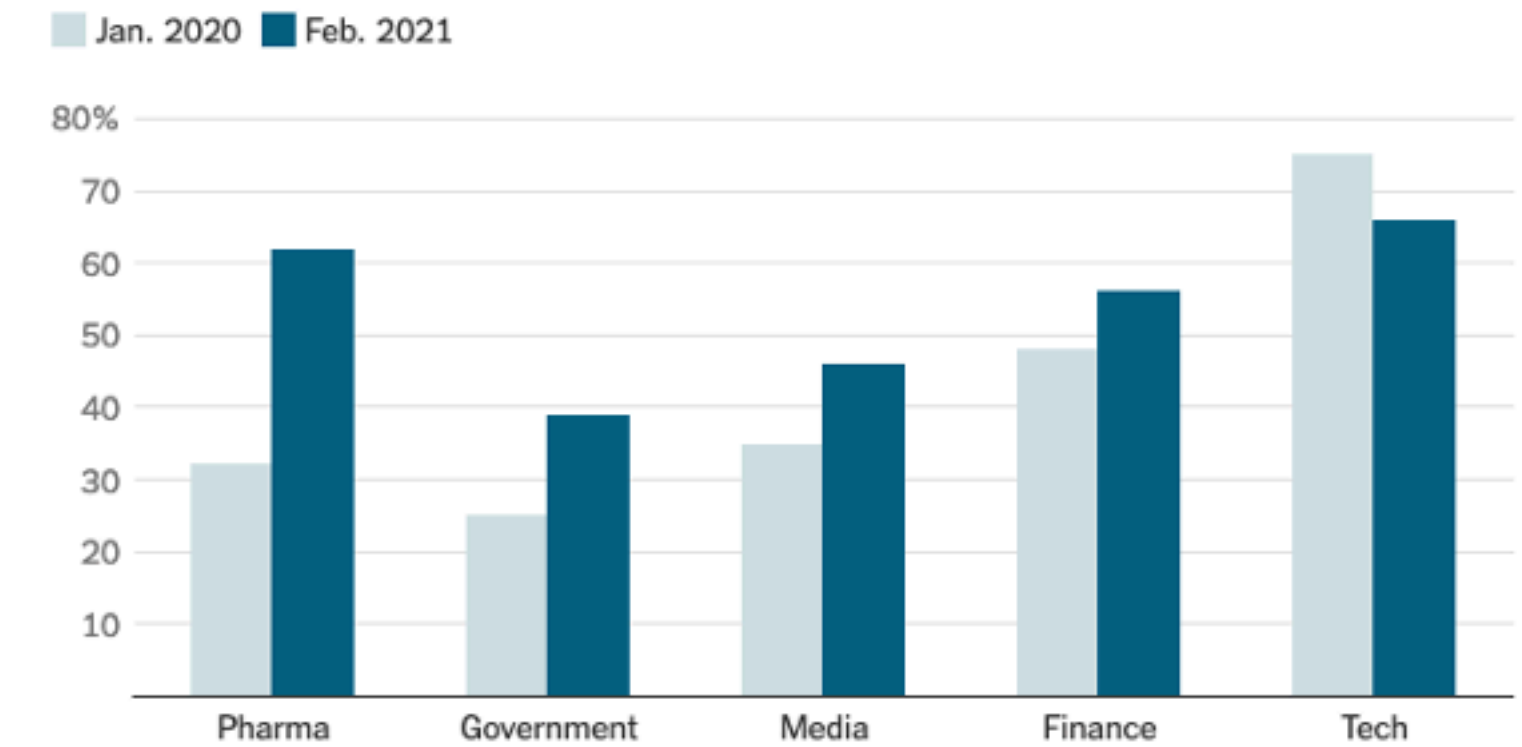
BIG PHARMA'S BOOST: NYTIMES DEALBOOK-HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

At the height of the pandemic, more than half of Americans were afraid of dying from the virus and a similar share were afraid of losing their jobs. Only in the past month, with vaccines rising and hospitalizations and deaths declining, is fear abating. Big Pharma is the unlikely hero of the pandemic, [The New York Times](#) says using Harris Poll data.

- **Tipping the scale:** Approval ratings rose for many industries from January 2020 to February of this year, but the reputation of the pharma industry — stained by its role in the opioid crisis and criticized for high drug prices — benefited the most. In January 2020, only 32% of Americans viewed the industry positively; late last month, that had almost doubled, to 62%.
- **Pharma to the rescue:** And just less than half (44%) of Americans say their opinion of the industry has improved since the start of the pandemic — because of the actions the pharma industry has taken. In fact, on our Essential 100 ranking from June 2020, we asked Americans which companies they viewed as being part of the solution: Johnson & Johnson ranked #3, and Pfizer ranked #8.
- Harris Poll polling partner [STAT News](#) looks at a post-COVID pharmaceutical industry.

Public approval rating of industries



Source: The Harris Poll • The New York Times

Implication:

Stained by its role in the opioid crisis and criticized for high drug prices, the pharmaceutical industry will hope to maintain its strengthened image in a post-COVID world. “The pharmaceutical industry’s ability to innovate and perform under intense pressure and in a time of crisis is the ultimate validation for any business,” adds John Gerzema, CEO of The Harris Poll.

Section:

04

Topic:

WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT OURSELVES IN LOCKDOWN: AXIOS-HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

Americans learned over the past year that they kind of like working and socializing from home and might keep these parts of their pandemic lifestyles going even after offices, bars and restaurants become options again, according to our data [featured exclusively in Axios](#).

- **Home is here to stay:** Three quarters (75%) of Americans said they learned during the pandemic that they prefer socializing in small groups at home over going out to bars. Three-fifths (59%) said they **didn't miss going out to bars to socialize as much as they thought they would**, and 60% said they've learned over the past year how much they love entertaining at home in small pandemic pods.
- **Americans have also gotten used to working from home:** 67% said their lifestyles have **gotten healthier while working from home**, and 55% said they've discovered that they didn't miss the office as much as they thought they would. Two-fifths (40%) said they'd miss having extra time in the mornings if they have to go back into an office full-time.
- **A different kind of getaway:** Three quarters (74%) of Americans who are working from home said they'd consider taking a "[workcation](#)" - going somewhere else for a while, but working while there.

Implication:

Even after the threat from COVID-19 subsides, we know life won't simply return to what it once was. This year has altered everything from our media diets to our sense of work-life balance to our ideas of what's fun, but through the hardships many have found the silver linings.

Section:

05

Topic:

A LOOK AHEAD

Introduction:

After a catastrophic year in which our lives came to a halt and we lost over 536,000 of our fellow Americans and millions around the world, there's growing confidence that the ending of the crisis phase of the pandemic may be within reach.

- **Pathway to immunization:** Last week, President Biden directed all states to open vaccine eligibility to all U.S. adults by May 1st - **an initiative in which 65% of Americans are confident we will reach.** [Alaska and Mississippi are already there](#), while [Ohio set March 29th as their date](#) for all adults to be eligible.
- **No more summertime sadness:** Following the May 1st goal, 60% are confident that we will "return to normal" by the summer - **a 15-pt increase** from just three weeks ago on February 21st. Three-fourths (75%) of Americans are optimistic that we will have all Americans who want the vaccinated inoculated by summertime.
- The Atlantic looks at "[a quite possibly wonderful summer](#)" in which the pandemic may feel like it's behind us - even if it's not entirely. Colorado's governor pictures a "[very close to normal](#)" summer.
- **Fear is slowly abating, but is still very real:** Despite the increased optimism, most Americans (64%) still fear returning to normal public activity - down from (70%) on January 10th and (67%) fear leaving home for essential errands - down from (76%) during the same timeframe.

Implication:

Americans feel the tide is turning: 69% say the worst of the pandemic is behind us, up 7-pts from just two weeks ago. But still have a long way to go before we feel completely normal. If resiliency is the reward, let's look back and see how we got there.

Questions?

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KNOWLEDGE IS POWER
