

# COVID-19 CONSUMER RESEARCH WAVE 64 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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June 18 - 20, 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 64

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## WAVE 64 INTRODUCTION

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The following research was conducted between **June 18 - 20, 2021** by The Harris Poll. Fielded among a nationally representative sample of **2,083** U.S. adults, the newest research demonstrates how consumers' perceptions are rapidly shifting as new developments emerge.

Section:

# 01

Topic:

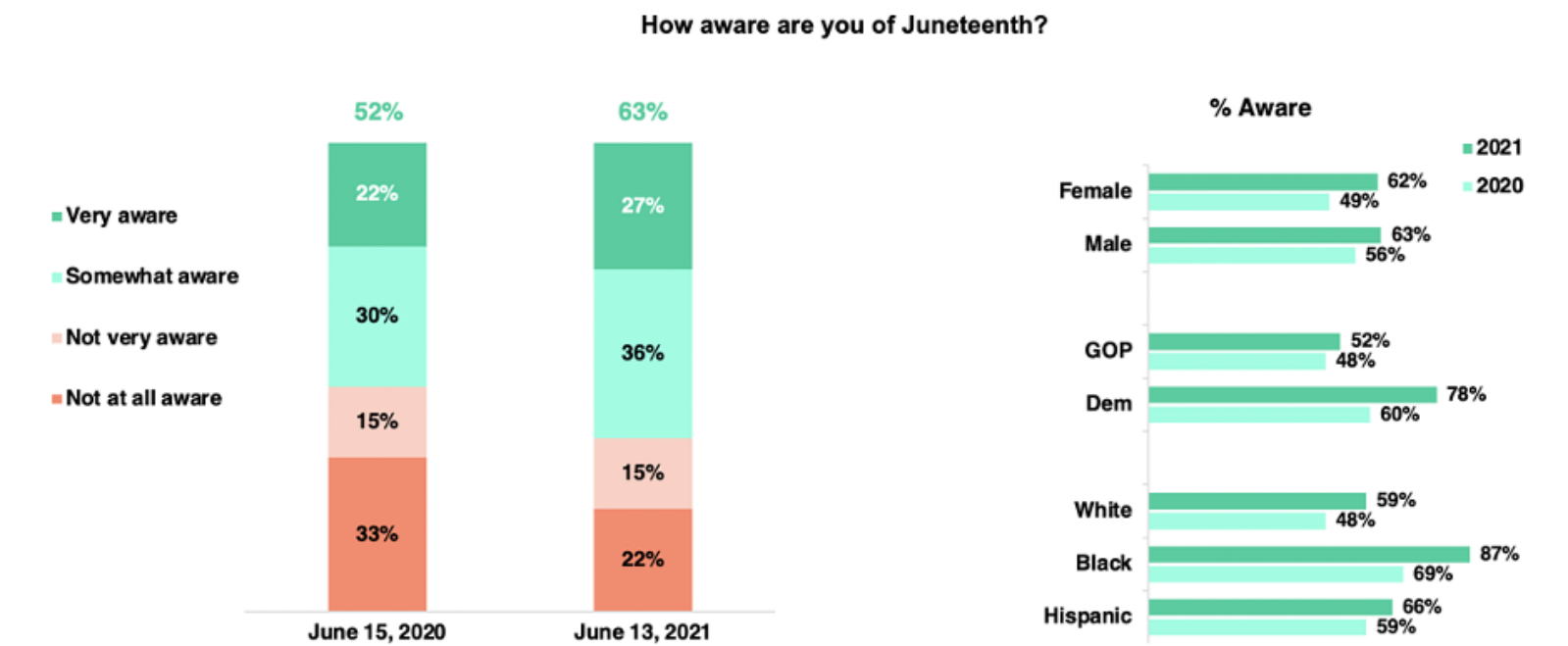
## A NEW FEDERAL HOLIDAY: JUNETEENTH

Introduction:

Last week, the U.S. government made June 19th (Juneteenth) a federal holiday in [honor](#) of the day that the last enslaved people in the U.S. found out they were free. We asked Americans about Juneteenth last year and checked back in to see how views shifted

- **Awareness is on the rise:** Slightly more than half (52%) of Americans were at least somewhat aware of [Juneteenth](#) in 2020. That number has risen to (63%) in 2021.
- **Overall, support for making Juneteenth paid day off is high but unchanged:** Two-thirds (66%) agreed a year ago that companies should honor the day with a [work holiday](#) compared to slightly more (68%) this year.
- **Room for education:** Among those aware of Juneteenth, only three in five (59%) could correctly identify its origin.
- **Commemorations around the country:** Celebrations of Juneteenth over the weekend ranged from full blown [festivals](#) to unveilings of statues in honor of [George Floyd](#). See how Americans celebrated in other [cities](#).

### Awareness of Juneteenth Has Increased Since 2020



Source: Harris Poll COVID-19 Tracker Wave 16 & 68  
BASE: US ADULT PUBL. AG. (2020 Nov 18-20, 2021 Nov 18)  
RC21: How aware are you of Juneteenth?

### Implication:

Companies have an opportunity as only one in five (20%) of employed Americans said that their company made an effort to connect Juneteenth to diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

Section:

# 02

Topic:

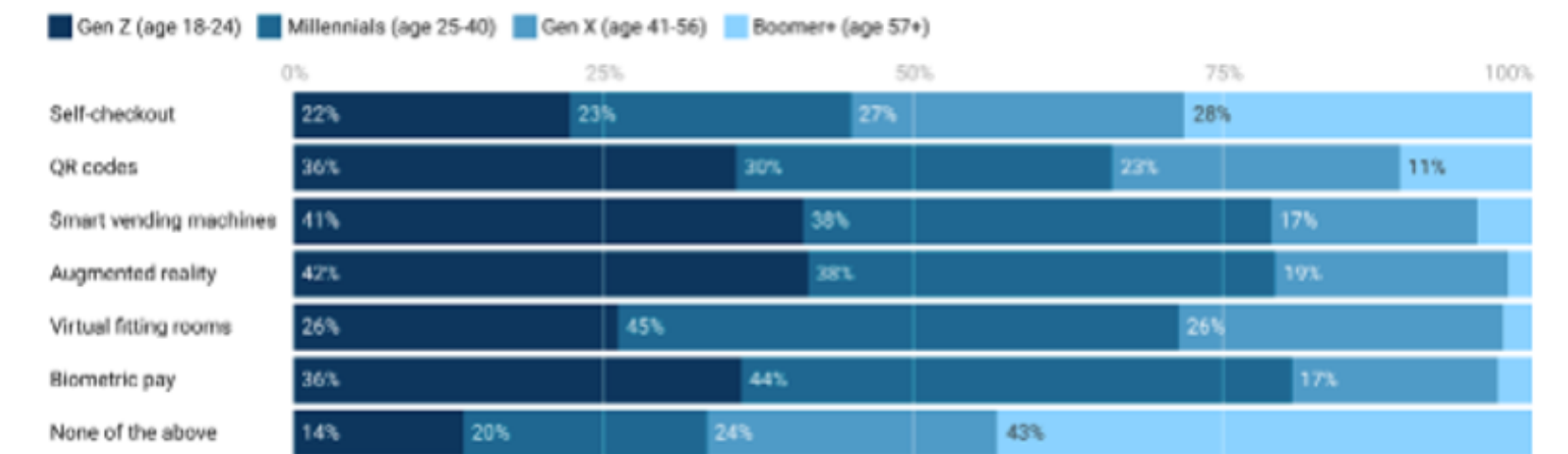
## AMERICANS DON'T WANT MORE TECH IN THEIR SHOPPING EXPERIENCE: MORNING BREW-HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

From pay-by-palm to virtual fitting rooms, retailers are investing money in innovations that streamline the shopping experience. But are consumers even using the shiny new tech? We take a closer look in our latest survey in partnership with [Morning Brew](#).

- **Self-checkout is conventional:** that's why 7 in 10 (71%) Americans said they have used it while shopping, but only a quarter (26%) said they've **shopped somewhere with fully automated checkout** - like an [Amazon Go store](#).
- **Other futuristic tech for shopping:** One quarter (25%) said they have used QR codes while shopping, while (19%) have used smart vending machines, (10%) used virtual fitting rooms, and only (8%) have used biometric pay.
- **Keep it simple:** 30% of respondents said they want more technology integrated in their shopping experience, while 57% either want less or for it to stay the same.

Retail tech used by US adults (by age group)



Source: Morning Brew-Harris Poll, June 2021, n=1993 US adults - Created with Datawrapper

Implication:

Retailers are rushing to innovate, but consumers are slow to adopt new habits. Even a pandemic-driven novelty like curbside pickup isn't as popular: Only 18% of consumers say they've used it.

Section:

# 03

**Topic:**

## **MOST AMERICANS BELIEVE NEW ALZHEIMER'S DRUG IS EFFECTIVE, BUT MANY ARE CONCERNED WITH FDA PROCESS: STAT-HARRIS POLL**

**Introduction:**

Earlier in June, the Food and Drug Administration approved a drug to treat patients with Alzheimer's. It is the first new drug approved by the FDA for the disease since 2003. We partnered with [STAT](#) to gauge Americans' feelings towards the newest treatment on the market:

- A majority (61%) of Americans **are at least somewhat concerned about Alzheimer's** as a public health threat, a steady number across all demographics.

- Even more, (66%) **are aware of the recent FDA approval of the new drug**, with a quarter (25%) of Boomers and Millennials saying they are very aware compared to just (14%) of Gen Zers.
- Three-fifths (60%) of those who are familiar with the details of the new treatment believe **the medication will be effective**, but 56% also say they have **concerns about the regulatory process used to endorse the drug**.
- Regardless, the vast majority (78%) said they are **excited by the prospect of a new treatment** for the disease.

**Implication:**

Although there is excitement, the price tag of \$56,000 is cause for concern since that is far above the [\\$8,300](#) threshold that a nonprofit determined would be considered cost-effective.

Section:

# 04

Topic:

## SELLOUTS ASIDE, 40% OF AMERICANS STILL WARY OF LIVE SPORTING EVENTS: SPORTICO-HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

More than half of the U.S. population has received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine and NBA playoff games are selling out, but our latest poll in partnership with [Sportico](#) shows that fan attitudes are not rebounding as expected.

- **Americans previously overestimated their hesitancy to return to live sporting events:** Only 61% say they would be comfortable attending a game at full capacity with a mix of vaccinated and unvaccinated fans. Although this number is much higher than [five months ago](#), the data show a greater hesitancy than anticipated.
- **Outdoor events are still viewed as notably safer than indoor ones,** with just over half (52%) saying they would be comfortable attending a full-capacity event of mixed vaccination status in an indoor arena.

- **Vaccinated-only seating sections:** 83% of vaccinated Americans say they would feel safer at a full-capacity venue sitting in a section designated for only vaccinated fans.
- **Some Americans still say that a number of innovations to venue sanitation are “critical” to their feeling safe enough to return to stadiums:** 49% of fans think that the availability of PPE, such as hand sanitizer and hygiene packages, are essential to the return to stands.

### Three-Fifths of Americans Feel Comfortable Attending Live Sporting Events

In January, only 42% of Americans said they would feel comfortable attending a sporting event with a full-capacity crowd if the country hadn't reached herd immunity, even if they personally were vaccinated.

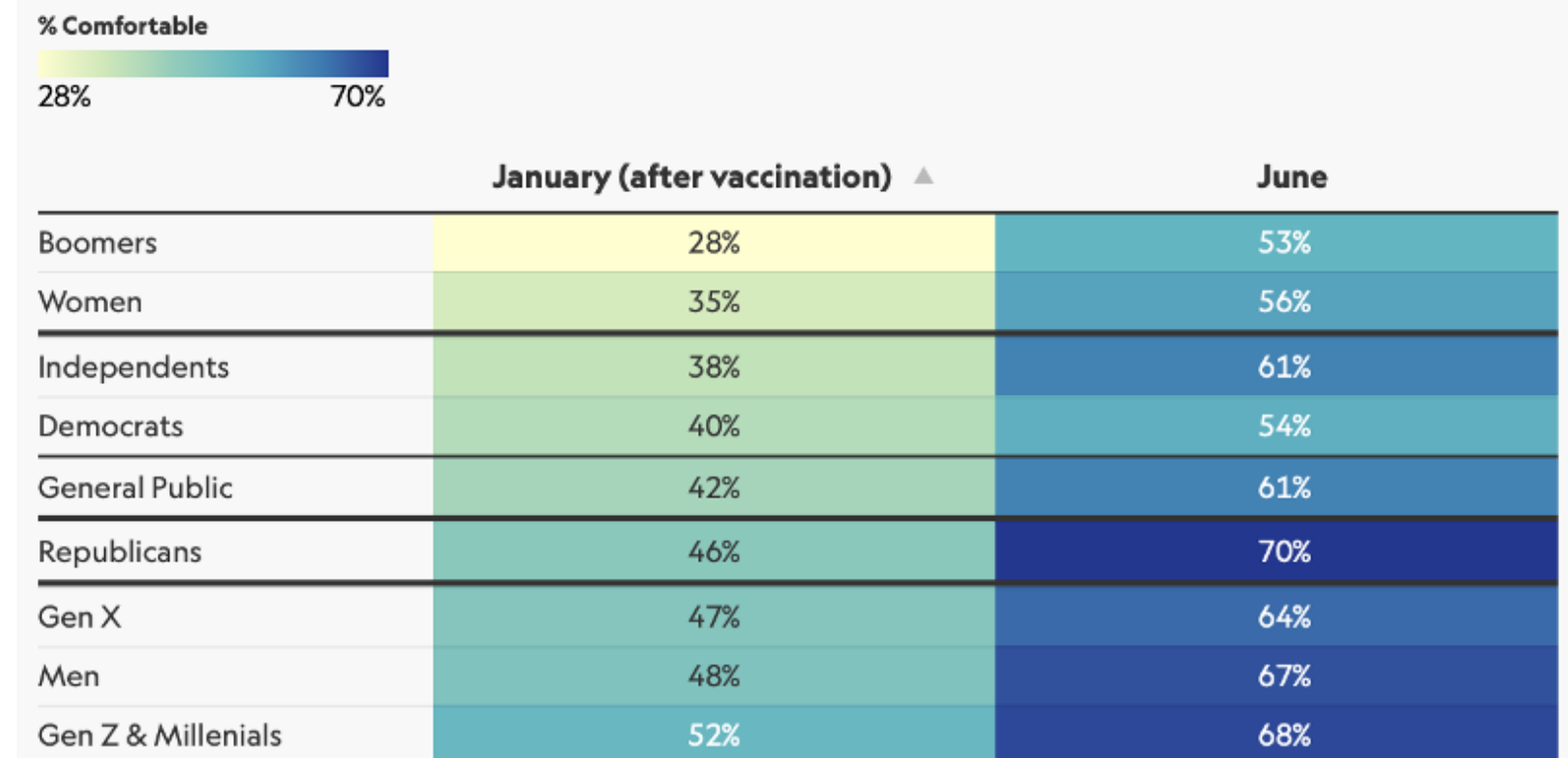


Table: Lev Akabas • Source: Harris Poll / Sportico

Implication:

While there is still hesitancy among the general population to throw themselves into crowded venues, people continue to feel more comfortable with returning to stadiums and [major league](#) sports teams are listening.



Section:

# 05

Topic:

## HOW MUCH SHOULD A BURRITO COST?

Introduction:

Earlier this month, Chipotle announced they raised menu prices by about 4% to offset the cost of increasing their workers' wages from \$11 to \$18 an hour. The move was met with praise by some and scoffing by others, so we checked in with Americans to see how they felt about paying more for a burrito:

- **Nearly three-fifths (57%) of Americans support restaurants raising menu prices** in order to pay employees a higher wage
- Among those who support raising menu prices, **two-thirds (66%) are willing to pay 3% or more of their total bill** and nearly one-third (31%) are willing to pay 5% or more, including 40% of Boomers - but only 9% of Gen Z.
- **Most customers will stay, though some will cut back:** 54% of consumers say if their favorite restaurant raised menu prices to pay higher wages they would not change how often they eat there. Over one-third (37%) say they would cut back, including half (49%) of Republicans (vs 29% of Democrats).
- Three-quarters of consumers (74%) **expect other restaurants to follow Chipotle's lead** by raising menu prices to pay workers a higher wage, though expectations are soft: 53% say others will probably follow and 20% say they definitely will.

Implication:

Chipotle's motto is "food with integrity" - and one way for companies to exemplify such integrity and values is to invest in their employees' well-being.

# Questions?

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**KNOWLEDGE IS POWER**

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