

COVID-19 CONSUMER RESEARCH WAVE 105 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

APRIL 15 - 17, 2022

Stagwell 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 Stagwell Family

Global Chief Marketing Officer, EVP



WAVE 105

WAVE 104 INTRODUCTION

The following research was conducted between **April 15 - 17, 2022** by The Harris Poll. Fielded among a nationally representative sample of **2,028** U.S. adults, the newest research demonstrates how consumers' perceptions are rapidly shifting as new developments emerge.

Section:

01

Topic:

MILLENNIALS FOR MUSK

Introduction:

Unlike Twitter's Board of Directors who are [strongly opposed to Elon Musk's buyout offer](#), a plurality of Americans (59%) support the billionaire's offer, especially Millennials (71%, 65%). However, not all Americans would be pleased with the business transaction.

- Millennials are more likely to believe that Musk would have a positive impact on Twitter's **profitability** (75%), **free speech** (75%), and **improving** Twitter as a product (72%).
- In comparison, Gen Z was more likely – even more than Gen X and Boomers – to think that Musk would actually **have a negative impact** on Twitter's profitability, free speech, and product improvements (40%, 39%, 45%)
- The difference is in part to philosophy, as Millennials were again more likely to think that billionaires purchasing media companies **would be a good thing** for free speech on the internet (73%), freedom of the press (72%), and even democracy (71%) compared to Gen Z (57%, 59%, 52%).

Implication:

The difference in opinion between Gen Z and Millennials should remind companies that the opinions and interests of young Americans can vary widely and should not be homogenized when deciding their latest marketing and operational processes.

Section:

02

Topic:

GAS PRICES, INFLATION, MAKE SOME WANT TO WORK FROM HOME AS OFFICES CALL WORKERS BACK: USA TODAY- HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

Workers are returning to the office as more employers demand their staff be in-person at least part of the time. But, according to our survey in [partnership with USA Today](#), rising inflation is causing concern for some workers about how much a return will cost them.

- Over three-quarters of employed Americans (78%) are concerned about being **able to afford the price of gas for their commute**, along with the price of food (72%), the price of public transportation (38%), paying for a new office wardrobe (34%), and parking fees (33%).
- **Millennial employees** are the most worried with (76%) fretting about the price of gas, while (73%) are worried about the price of food and (49%) are concerned about the cost of public transit.

- To combat commuting costs, one-fifth of workers received a **raise** (20%) and/or **bonus** (19%) to help with commuting costs while others are able to work from home whenever or receive **reimbursements for** gas, meals, parking, and public transit fares (17%, 13%, 13%, 12%, 11%). Yet (44%) of workers say their workplaces **aren't helping to cover the costs of commuting**.

Implication:

Companies will have to try all kinds of initiatives to make the return to the office something their employees can be excited about, whether it be investments in food and drinks, or helping subsidize commutes.

Section:

03

Topic:

GLOBAL EXECUTIVES SUSPECT THEIR OWN COMPANIES OF “GREENWASHING”: GOOGLE CLOUD-HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

According to our latest survey with Google Cloud and covered by [Axios](#) and [Fast Company](#), senior executives at large companies are prioritizing sustainability goals, yet many say that “green hypocrisy exists” and even their own companies overstate sustainability progress.

- Among over a thousand C-Suite or VP-level executives across 16 global markets and industries, senior leaders face **barriers** to making progress on sustainability, especially **difficulties in measuring and verifying progress**.
- Eight in 10 (80%) of executives rate their company above average for their sustainability work. However, just (36%) say their organizations **have measurement tools** in place that allow them to track their progress in detail.

- More than half (58%) say their organization is **even guilty of greenwashing** (i.e., purporting to be environmentally conscious for marketing purposes but actually isn't making any notable sustainability effort).

Implication:

Companies need to be authentic in their sustainability measures and metrics for the betterment of the environment, but they also need to recognize that greenwashing could impact their demand as environmental-conscious consumers switch away.

Section:

04

Topic:

CLIMATE, ENVIRONMENT SHAPE GEN Z LIFE DECISIONS: 4-H- HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

In partnership with 4-H, and [covered by Axios](#), we found that 8 in 10 teenagers expect climate change and other environmental forces to affect big decisions like where they live and whether to have children. Here's what else teenagers are saying:

- More than three-quarters of teenagers (77%) ages 13 to 19 feel that they **have a responsibility** for protecting the future of the planet and the same share feel empowered to act.
- Yet just (45%) of teenagers ages 13-19 believe political and global leaders **are taking meaningful action** to protect the environment.
- **They also see room for improvement locally.** Only a slight majority (55%) say their community makes a “meaningful” effort to prevent environmental hazards to protect citizens.
- The lack of action is problematic as (84%) of teenagers agree that “if we don’t address climate change today, it **will be too late for future generations**” and the same share believes climate change will affect “**everyone**” in their generation due to geopolitical instability.

Implication:

The sense of responsibility for the environment among the majority of teenagers will impact not only the environment but the future of politics and businesses. Companies will need to be aware of how teenage priorities will change the marketplace as they age into adulthood.

Section:

05

Topic:

TAXATION SURVEY REVEALS CYNICISM – AND A WILLINGNESS TO CHEAT: CHICAGO TRIBUNE-HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

Are you tempted to fudge a little bit as you fill out your income tax return? And if you did, would it be a crime? For many Americans, the answers to those questions are not as clear-cut as one might expect according to our latest article in the [Chicago Tribune](#).

- More than half of Americans (57%) believe they are **taxed at unfairly high rates**, and the sentiment extends through every cohort – age, education, gender, income, and race/ethnicity.
- Nearly two-thirds of U.S. adults say that deliberately misreporting income is tax evasion. But a slight majority (52%) say there's no difference between underreporting and using legal loopholes to lessen what one owes.
- Nearly 6 in 10 U.S. adults say it **would be smart to use loopholes to owe less**, and the share increases to two-thirds among those making more than \$100,000 annually and college grads.

Implication:

According to our CEO, Will Johnson, in the meantime until a tax code reform, when you feel that surge of bitterness over writing out another big check to the government this month, know that you're not alone: Most Americans feel the same way.

Questions?

RYAN LINDER

Global Chief Marketing Officer, EVP, Stagwell

ryan.linder@stagwellglobal.com

JOHN GERZEMA

CEO, The Harris Poll

jgerzema@harrisinsights.com



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER
