

COVID-19 CONSUMER RESEARCH WAVE 112 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

JULY 22 - 24, 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 112

WAVE 112 INTRODUCTION

The following research was conducted between **July 22 - 24, 2022** by The Harris Poll. Fielded among a nationally representative sample of **1,986** U.S. adults, the newest research demonstrates how consumers' perceptions are rapidly shifting as new developments emerge.

Section:

01

Topic:

WORKERS: OUR WAGES AREN'T KEEPING UP: ASA-HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

With wages not keeping up with inflation, a majority of U.S. workers are concerned that their paycheck isn't enough for themselves and their families, according to our latest survey with the American Staffing Association (ASA), as covered by [The Hill](#) and [Bloomberg](#).

- Nearly 6 in 10 (58%) employed Americans are concerned that **their paycheck won't cover their needs** now.
- And because of that, **one job might not be enough anymore**: Nearly three in ten said they **plan to seek a job change in the next six months**, while another (28%) **will look for a second job**.
- Gen Z and Millennial workers were most likely to say they will search for a **new, higher-wage job** in the next six months.
- At the same time however job switching is suddenly becoming more precarious: (52%) of Americans are now concerned about losing their jobs

Implication:

Employers are balancing a delicate act of passing on higher costs to consumers and keeping their labor force happy. Beyond compensation, they should consider other stressor factors like work flexibility and investments in employees' professional development as ways to keep and recruit talent. But any relief, however creative is imperative: [KPMG found that](#) some companies are reducing employee healthcare premiums by 10% in 2022, with no change in benefit levels.

Section:

02

Topic:

THE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS AMONG BLACK AND HISPANIC AMERICANS: THE CVS HEALTH-HARRIS POLL NATIONAL HEALTH PROJECT

Introduction:

July is Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, and our latest data from the CVS Health-Harris Poll National Health Poll, covered exclusively by [Forbes](#), found that minorities bear the brunt of the mental health crises driven by the pandemic.

- Four in ten (40%) Hispanic Americans (+10%-pts pre-pandemic) and (29%) of Black Americans (+12%-pts) **rated their mental health as poor** (v. white: 22%).

- **And their workplaces aren't helping:** (62% of Black and (54% of Hispanic Americans report their job as negatively impacting their mental health (v. white: 38%).
- But for those employed, small percentages of Black and Hispanic **employees say their employer openly talks about mental health** (35%, 34%, respectively).
- And back in February [in partnership with Fortune](#), we found similar numbers even reported a complete lack of mental health services in their workplaces (Black: 31%, Hispanic: 42%).

Implication:

The conversation around mental health for communities of color extends beyond the corporate environment, too, as half of the Black respondents and (41% of Hispanic respondents said that while they'd like to go to therapy, they can't afford it.

Section:

03

Topic:

CONSUMERS' CONCERN RISE ON BRANDS TRACKING THEIR ONLINE BEHAVIOR: PERMUTIVE- HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

According to our survey in partnership with [Permutive](#), US and UK consumers are concerned about their data privacy, tracking, and sharing, underscoring a trend of decreasing consumer trust with targeted advertising.

- Only (27%) say they **completely understand how their personal data is** used by brands and companies to target them with advertising online.
- Three-quarters (75%) of consumers are **not comfortable** making a purchase from a brand that has poor personal data ethics.
- Nine in ten (89%) say they would be more likely to spend money with a brand that makes a commitment to protecting their personal data online over one that doesn't.

Implication:

Suddenly, Americans look a lot like Europeans when it comes to data privacy concerns. The U.S. advertising industry can no longer play the role of “innocent bystander” in data privacy and must move towards responsible and transparent collection, management, and usage of consumer data if they want to avoid the privacy downfalls of potential lost sales and their impact on corporate reputation. Meta, (Facebook) for instance scored in the bottom 5% on trust and reputation in our most recent Axios-Harris Poll.

Section:

04

Topic:

WILL USICA GET TOUGH ON CHINA?

Introduction:

According to [a recent Forbes op-ed](#) featuring The [Harvard/CAPS-Harris Poll data](#) overseen by Stagwell Chairman/CEO (And Harris Chairman) Mark Penn (and written by his founding partner of Penn-Schoen Berland, Doug Schoen), the focus is on the USICA bill and its potential impact on inflation and stalling supply chain issues.

- **USICA: The United States Innovation and Competition Act**, would authorize spending of \$100 billion over 5 years on a new technology directorate including tech research but especially, incentives to bring CHIP production back onshore by creating capital investment incentives for companies like Intel and Nvidia.
- The bill also has the potential to impact leading American concerns **around inflation** (89%) and **supply chain issues** and potentially reverse some pessimism, as back in mid-June, we found that three-quarters (76%) believe **that the worst is still ahead of us** regarding inflation).
- Regarding supply chain disruptions, in mid-May, (63%) of Americans agreed they are understandable given global circumstances (e.g., the pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war, etc.) – however, Millennials and those with HHI under \$50K are the least forgiving, as (40%) and (44%) **expect companies to honor their service commitments** and disruptions are unacceptable.
- Yet, (56%) would be willing to pay higher prices for service guarantees – a (15%-pt) increase from mid-January 2022, when only (41%) of Americans said so.
- Schoen, says, “The president has struggled to project strength and steadiness as Commander in Chief, and as a result, his approval rating on foreign affairs is just 40%, according to a recent Harvard-Harris poll. Handing over American technology and products will only worsen voters’ perceptions of his ability to lead on the world stage and will give his political opponents fresh ammo in the midterms.”

Implication:

Even if passed, USICA is not a quick fix to economic turbulence, as 7 in 10 Americans believe that we are already experiencing a global recession and a similar number of registered voters believe the U.S. economy is weak. But with China looming around Taiwan, the world’s largest CHIP producer, this is not only a supply chain issue, but a potential national security issue as well.

Section:

05

Topic:

WORK TRAVEL HAS CHANGED POST COVID TOO: HARRIS BRAND PLATFORM

Introduction:

The COVID-19 pandemic shut many doors yet opened some new opportunities as thousands of office workers were told to clock in remotely. With wi-fi a nearly ubiquitous fixture across the country, many people are hoping remote work is a free ticket to work their 9-to-5 from exotic new locations, according to our [latest snapshot](#) utilizing [Harris Brand platform data](#).

- More than a fifth (22%) of those wanting to work remote, partially or permanently, **desire the ability to** travel while working remotely.
- More than half of employees who desire the freedom of remote work in order to travel consider requiring employees to work onsite **an outdated practice** (67%) and a sign that **an employer doesn't trust its employees** (52%).
- **Yet, there may be trouble in paradise:** There is some fear among employees who want to work remotely that working offsite **could make them look lazy** (34%) or feel **more pressure to be accessible** (58%).
- Whether to escape their home office or a family vacation, **travel demand is growing** as our Harris Brand Platform **found increased use of Booking.com**, seen by their significant lift in both the Trial (+5.6) and Usage (+6.8) stages between May to June.

Implication:

While COVID-19 squashed traditional work travel, a new type of traveling employee was born as destination work took off. As companies establish their new in-office/remote work policies, it is still to be seen whether workcation packages become a more common offering across large hotel chains or slowly fade away as a pandemic memory.

Questions?

RYAN LINDER

Global Chief Marketing Officer, EVP, Stagwell

ryan.linder@stagwellglobal.com

JOHN GERZEMA

CEO, The Harris Poll

jgerzema@harrisinsights.com



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