

COVID-19 CONSUMER RESEARCH WAVE 115 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AUGUST 19 - 21, 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 115

WAVE 115 INTRODUCTION

The following research was conducted between **August 19 - 21, 2022** by The Harris Poll. Fielded among a nationally representative sample of **2,048** U.S. adults, the newest research demonstrates how consumers' perceptions are rapidly shifting as new developments emerge.

Section:

01

Topic:

THE TABLES HAVE TURNED: BLOOMBERG-HARRIS POLL

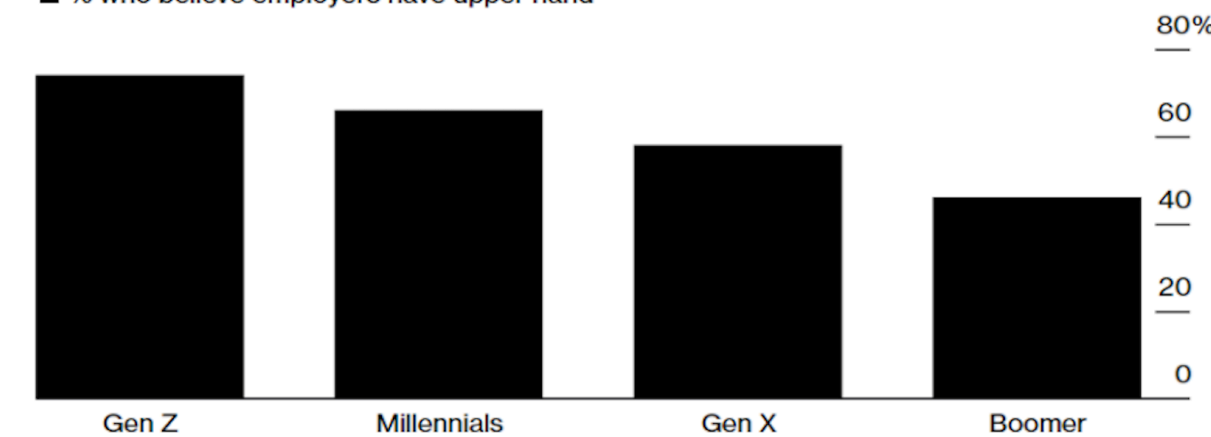
Introduction:

In our latest poll [with Bloomberg](#), U.S. employees say they're losing the upper hand as layoffs mount, along with concerns over the economy, pay, and remote work.

Bosses in Power

A majority of Americans in a recent poll said employers have more leverage in the job market

■ % who believe employers have upper hand



Source: The Harris Poll

- **Leverage is in the hands of employers:** (57%) of American workers believe **companies have more power** in the job market these days – a (5%-pt) increase from January. And as the below chart shows, younger employees especially feel this way.

- **Leaving employees to feel less empowered:** (59%) of workers indicated that while they would like a raise, they **don't feel comfortable asking for one**.
- And just half (51%) of **employees believe they can negotiate to work partially or entirely from home** without fear of repercussions.
- **Feeling like staying put:** Nearly two-thirds (62%) said current economic fluctuations are why they plan to stay at their current jobs.

Implication:

With employee wages not keeping up with inflation, It's a bit of a game of chicken. The calculus is: "I want to lock in greater pay right now by asking for a raise or moving to another job to get a raise. However, worrying about a recession, I'm now consciously thinking about my job security". Unfortunately, for many now, the choice seems to be retrenchment.

Section:

02

Topic:

AMERICANS AREN'T IMPRESSED WITH BILLIONAIRES

Introduction:

While six-in-ten Americans look up to billionaires, it doesn't mean that Americans are overwhelmingly pleased with the behaviors of the ultrawealthy, as seen by [our latest report](#).

- **A mounting disconnect between expectations and actions:** While seven in ten Americans strongly believe that billionaires have a responsibility to better society, they feel the ultra .0001% **are not currently doing enough**.
- That's because two-thirds of Americans (66%) believe economic inequality is a serious national issue, with nearly half (46%) saying that **billionaires make it harder to achieve their own American Dream** (LGBTQIA+: 68%, Gen Z: 59%, Millennials: 58%).
- Feelings of fairness rise to the top of Americans' concerns with billionaires: Two-thirds (65%) think that billionaires don't pay their fair share of taxes, (58%) believe that billionaires' activities contribute to the rising inflation, and (58%) share resentment over billionaires' wealth accumulation during the pandemic.

Implication:

"The self-made journey of wealth accumulation has always been foundational to the American dream, once with millionaires and now billionaires," says Libby Rodney, Futurist and Chief Strategic Officer at The Harris Poll. "From an individual point of view, many Americans still want to become billionaires, but from a collective sensibility, the story is shifting as billionaires are being painted as a barrier to Americans achieving their dreams while economic inequality grows. To a national crisis point."

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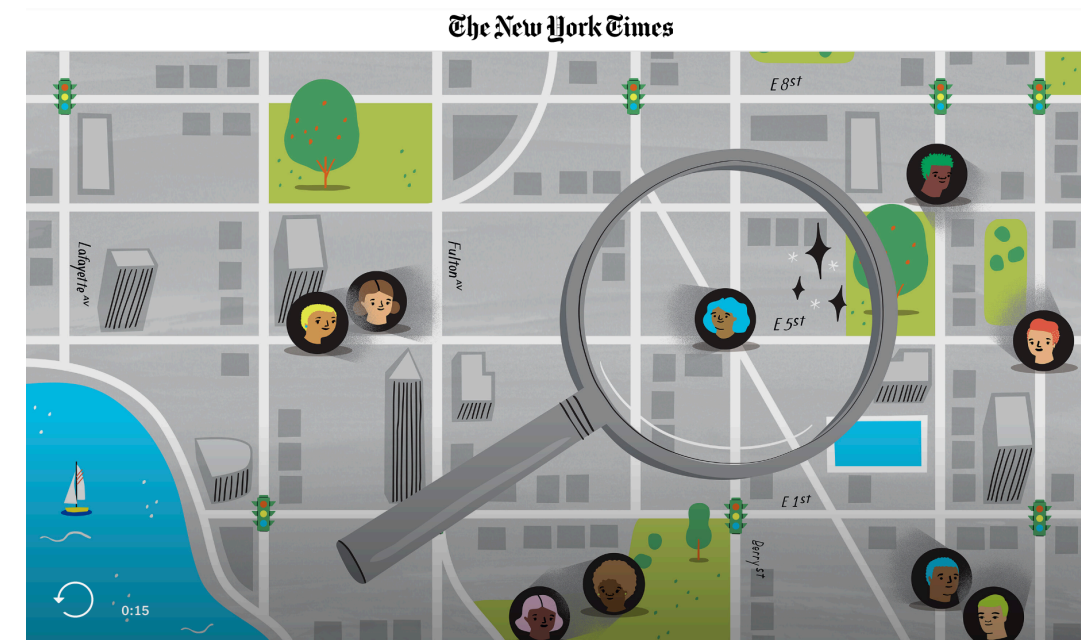
03

Topic:

THE DANGER IN LOCATION APPS: NEW YORK TIMES-HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

Introduced ten years ago, the Find My app has slowly become a popular way to keep track of friends. But in our survey [with The New York Times](#); however, the ease of sharing one's location speaks to a more extensive discussion around data tracking and privacy among users.



*Graphic | New York Times

- **Location sharing is a younger thing:** (77%) of Millennials and (69%) of Gen Z report having activated location-sharing features at least sometimes (v. gen pop: 62%).
- Almost half (48%) of those who use location-sharing apps **report wanting to share their location with other people** as a reason why, and two in five (37%) say they **feel safer** when they have location-sharing features activated.

- But sharing locations comes with privacy concerns: The New York Times [previously found](#) that dozens of companies use smartphone locations to help advertisers and even hedge funds, all unbeknownst to users.
- **Sadly, there are more severe consequences in a post-Roe world**, as [NBC News reported](#) that Facebook turned over chat messages between a mother and daughter who are now charged over an illegal abortion.

Implication:

While previous research [with Permutive](#) details a hesitancy among American and U.K. respondents in sharing their data with brands – (42%) of consumers would opt out of data sharing ultimately with advertisers – the Find My case study may detail how, in reality, Americans are willing to share data when they have complete control and knowledge of how the data is being used (e.g., by their friends, their uber, etc.). We used to trade privacy for convenience gleefully, but now at what cost?

Section:

04

Topic:

WHY WE MAKE POOR CHOICES WHEN IT COMES TO OUR HEALTH: JUSTWORKS-HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

In a recent collaboration with [Justworks](#), we find a significant knowledge gap between American workers and their health insurance benefits and coverage, a gap that could end up costing them.

- Over half of employed Americans (54%) **don't know the full scope** of what their current health insurance offers them.
- **Sticking with what they know, for better or worse:** Nearly two-thirds (62%) said they don't usually change their health insurance selections yearly **because it's too stressful**. Half (49%) even report feeling pressured to **select the most expensive health insurance option** to ensure **they have the coverage** they need.
- **Beyond insurance, Americans also lack knowledge about dietary supplements:** Half Americans (49%) mistakenly believe that most nutritional supplements have been declared safe and effective by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Implication:

Companies might be tempted to cut corners and costs given the opaque nature of corporate healthcare plans and employee reticence to dig deeper into their coverage. But health insurance benefits attract and retain talent: Employees cite having specific health insurance benefits as necessary when looking for a new job, and their current coverage is an important reason for staying in their role (78%, 63%, respectively). Businesses can also bolster communication since (44%) of workers feel uncomfortable asking H.R. insurance questions – leading to series such as [Axios' new series, Bill and Confused](#), which investigates confusing insurance claims and bills for everyday Americans.

Section:

05

Topic:

UKRAINE AT WAR, SIX MONTHS LATER: FORBES- HARVARD CAPS- HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

August 24th marks the sixth anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. According to recent Harris Poll COVID-19 Weekly Tracker and Harvard CAPS/Harris Poll data, [as featured in Forbes](#), Ukraine is still a top-of-mind concern for many Americans.

- **Strong support for Ukraine softens (slightly):** As of this past weekend, our weekly Harris Poll survey found that 7 in 10 Americans (70%) **remain concerned about the war** – but it was a (13%-pt) decrease from the heightened concern in mid-March.
- **Americans would be happy to help:** A late July [Harvard CAPS-Harris poll](#) found half of the registered voters (53%) saying the U.S. **should send billions more** in military equipment to Ukraine if Russia continues its invasion.
- Partly because they believe **U.S. support would make a difference**, with over half of voters (55%) believing that U.S. arms shipments would let **Ukraine push back Russia and win the war** compared to (45%) saying it's unlikely to alter the course of the war.

Implication:

American concern extends beyond a general worry for global neighbors to a more significant fear around the use of nuclear weapons in warfare. Three-quarters of voters (72%) are concerned that the war in Ukraine will lead Russia to use nuclear weapons inside the country. The concern isn't too far-fetched as the [U.N. calls for the immediate withdrawal](#) of Russian troops from the Ukrainian Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant amid fears of a catastrophic nuclear accident.

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
