

COVID-19 CONSUMER RESEARCH WAVE 128 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NOVEMBER 22 - 23, 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 128

WAVE 128 INTRODUCTION

The following research was conducted between **November 22 - 23, 2022** by The Harris Poll. Fielded among a nationally representative sample of **2,149** U.S. adults, the newest research demonstrates how consumers' perceptions are rapidly shifting as new developments emerge.

Section:

01

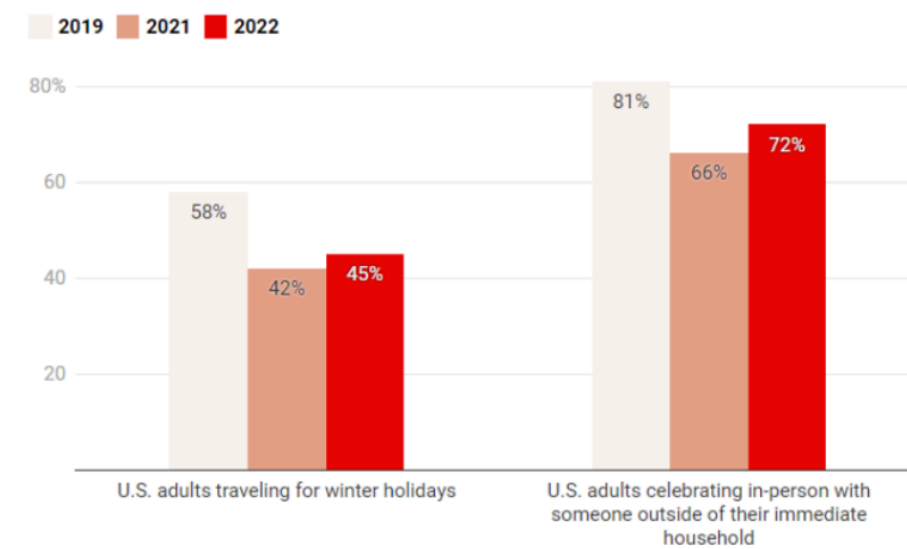
Topic:

COVID-19'S CONTINUED UPHEAVAL OF HOLIDAY PLANS: TIME-HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

It's beginning to look a lot like social distancing: According to our new survey [with TIME](#), holiday celebrations are inching back toward their pre-pandemic norms. But even as much of the country leans away from pandemic-era policies, many families are still planning to take "a side dish and gift to the holiday dinner, not a virus."

Americans are getting closer to pre-pandemic holiday behavior, but aren't quite there yet



2022 numbers are projections. All numbers based on a survey conducted online by The Harris Poll from Nov. 18 to Nov. 21, 2022 among 1,050 U.S. adults.
Chart: Elijah Wolfson for TIME • Source: Harris Poll

TIME

- Nearly a quarter (24%) of Americans say they **did not believe there is systemic racism** in America, while another (17%) said they were **unsure**, with more white Americans remaining unconvinced:

- Nearly three-quarters of Americans (72%) plan to **celebrate the holidays with at least one person outside their household** – down from (81%) who did so before the pandemic but **up from (66%) last year**.
- And close to half of Americans (45%) report **plans to travel during this year's holiday season**, compared to (58%) pre-pandemic and (42%) last year:
- **But COVID isn't entirely forgotten:** Over half of Americans (55%) report that COVID-19 will affect their holiday plans. Even for those gathering in person, about a third plan to limit the size of their celebrations (35%), a quarter will maintain social distancing (23%), and nearly a fifth (17%) will require attendees to be vaccinated.

Implication:

While a sour economy is partly to blame that more than half of Americans say that COVID-19 would affect their holiday plans, it is more about how Americans pay attention to [the 6.2 million flu cases reported across the country](#), according to the CDC.

Section:

02

Topic:

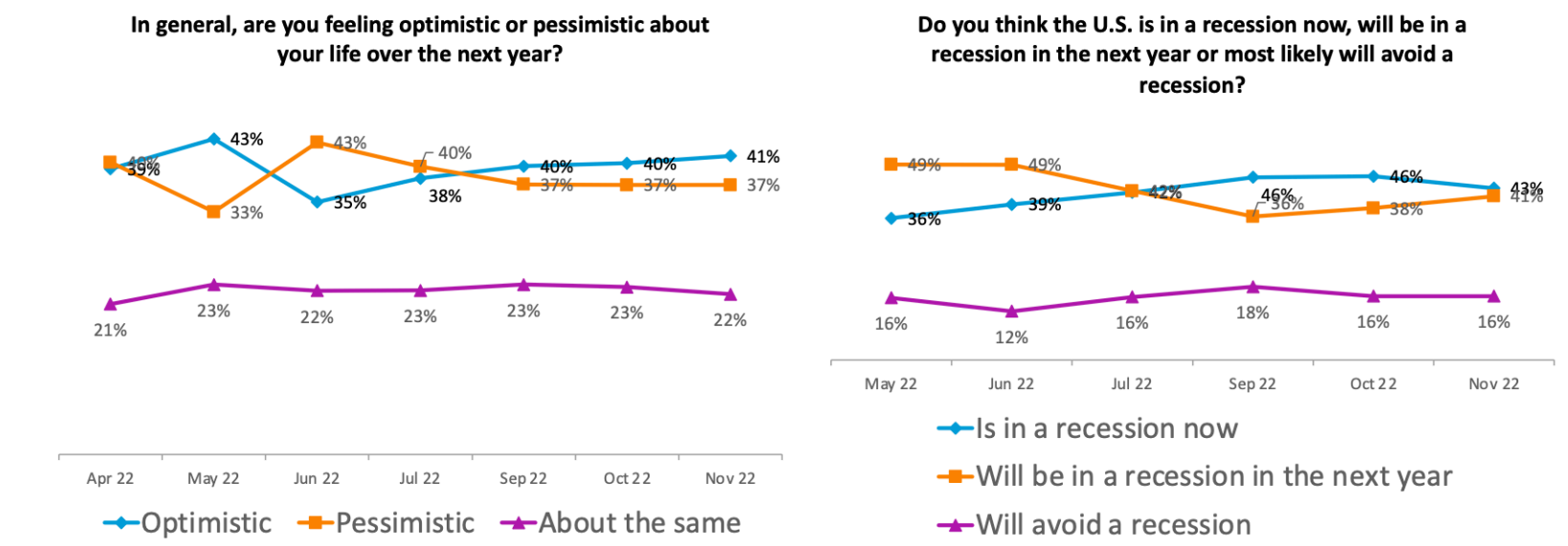
ECONOMIC PESSIMISM HOLDS POST ELECTION: HARVARD CAPS-HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

According to the November Harvard CAPS-Harris Poll findings featured [in The Hill](#), our Harris Poll Chairman (and Stagwell Chairman/CEO) Mark Penn reports on an exhausted electorate burdened by economic malaise and wondering when, or if a recession is on the horizon:

- Just a third of U.S. voters (32%) **believe the country is on the right track** compared to the wrong track (60%; unsure: 8%).
- Further, U.S. voters identified **inflation and economy/jobs as the two most important issues** facing the country today (39%, 27%).
- And voters share similar feelings about the **economy**, with a quarter (28%) thinking it's **on the right track** (v. wrong track: 64%, unsure: 8%).
- In part, nearly two-thirds of voters (64%) feel **the U.S. economy is weak** (v. strong: 36%).
- And nearly half (41%) of Americans think a recession is coming, while the other half (43%) think it's already here:

84 PERCENT OF AMERICANS SAY THE U.S. IS IN A RECESSION NOW OR WILL BE IN ONE BY NEXT YEAR



- **There is a financial bright spot:** Compared to June, there has been an (11%-pt) decrease in voters reporting their financial situation worsening (64% to 53%). But still, that's a majority of Americans.

Implication:

With this economic pessimism felt by American voters, [Penn details](#) how the electorate may be looking to different leaders: "There's so much animosity in the country against [Trump], and there's much animosity against Biden, too. Neither is the leadership this country is looking for for the future. The question is whether the party regulars will get that message."

Section:

03

Topic:

THE SOCIAL MEDIA GENERATION GAP: GRID-HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

As social media platforms have evolved and faced new disruptors, two new surveys [with Grid](#) and [Yahoo! Finance](#) identifies a generational gap among which sites users prefer and why:

- **YouTube, Instagram, & Facebook are still on top:** Three-quarters of Americans have used Facebook in the last six months, with (71%) using YouTube and (51%) using Instagram. Just a third (34%) reported using Twitter or TikTok.
- **Those sites are also the most trusted:** 3 in 4 (75%) view Facebook as trustworthy, while 6 in 10 (62%) trust YouTube and Twitter.
- But those figures **obscure differences** in how **Generation Z** interacts with social media. For these younger Americans, **YouTube is king** (83 percent), followed by **Instagram** (74 percent) and **TikTok** (64 percent).
- And this younger group is also more likely **to see TikTok as more trustworthy** (65% v. Gen X: 50%, Boomers: 26%) and **Twitter** as well (64% v. 52%, 29%).
- **Gen Z Aren't Looking for Friend Updates; They Are Leaning Into The Algorithm:** Gen Z doesn't turn to social to see updates from their friends; instead, they turn to social to be informed, entertained, and direct messages. Gen Z says their feed is **filled mainly with personalized content that the platform thinks I'll like** (62%), and a majority agree that 'algorithms have increased the content they like to consume and be entertained by (65%). **This is in contrast to older people, like Boomers and Gen X, who say most of their feeds consist of 'updates from friends/people I follow'** (66% and 57%, respectively).

Implication:

"If you think TikTok is just about viral dances, you'd be mistaken. Young people are turning to it for deeper purposes, like gathering information, building community, and cultivating equity," said Abbey Lunney, co-founder of The Harris Poll Thought Leadership Practice. "We see a giant shift in social media away from surface-level likes, hyper-edited photos towards spaces for authenticity and discovery."

Section:

04

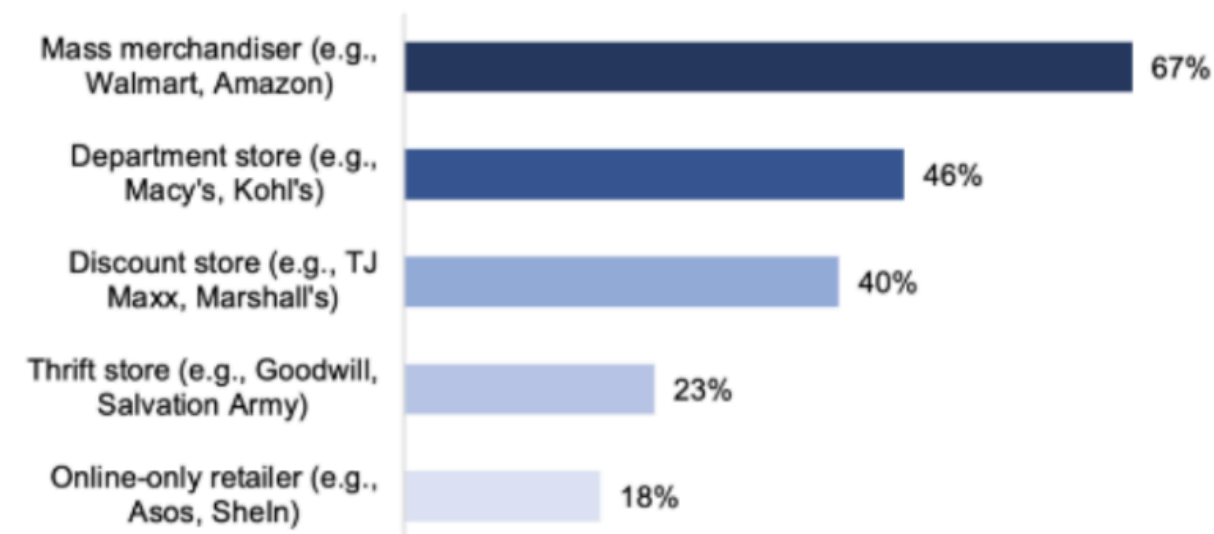
Topic:

THE RISING SECONDHAND MARKET: BLOOMBERG- HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

From rapidly reproducing designs to cutting down manufacturing costs (sometimes at the expense of working conditions), fast fashion and big-box retailers have an outsized influence on the clothing industry's impact on the broader economy. However, according to our latest survey in Bloomberg, there is an alternative (resellers) that could gain traction among shoppers.

- Currently, secondhand retailers (e.g., thrift stores) **lag behind mass-market stores in terms of popularity**, with just a quarter of consumers (23%) purchasing from one in the last year (v. mass-market retailers: 63%):



Source: Secondhand Clothes Survey- The Harris Poll
BASE: PURCHASED CLOTHING OR ACCESSORIES IN THE LAST YEAR (n=746)
Q3 From which of the following types of sellers did you purchase clothing and accessories in the last year? Please select all that apply. [TOTAL]

- **Secondhand clothing has the potential to become a staple for shoppers:** The resale market is primarily seen as established; four in five U.S. adults (84%) think **it's on its way up or holding steady** and two-thirds (62%) agree that **wearing vintage clothes is trendy**.
- **Cost and excitement are worth the shop:** Seven in ten (70%) secondhand clothing shoppers say that they **purchase thrift clothing to save money**, and over a third (37%) do so because it helps give them the **biggest bang for their buck**. Beyond that, (31%) are drawn to the market because of the **excitement they feel when searching for unique items**.
- **However, convenience is a big challenge that could stand in the way of secondhand clothing retailers:** One-fifth (19%) of people who haven't bought secondhand clothes in the last year say that it's too much work to search for them, and a slightly smaller number (14%) say it's more convenient to buy new clothes.

Implication:

While most consumers aren't currently looking to thrift stores to find their next favorite outfit, they have plenty of reasons to shop secondhand. Resellers are often seen as offering unique, eco-friendly items for shoppers on a budget – considerations that may help the broader resale clothing market enter the mainstream.

Questions?

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KNOWLEDGE IS POWER
