

# COVID-19 CONSUMER RESEARCH WAVE 134 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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FEBRUARY 3 - 5, 2023

**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 134

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## WAVE 134 INTRODUCTION

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The following research was conducted between **February 3 - 5, 2023** by The Harris Poll. Fielded among a nationally representative sample of **2,053** U.S. adults, the newest research demonstrates how consumers' perceptions are rapidly shifting as new developments emerge.

Section:

# 01

Topic:

## TAKE MY JOB, PLEASE!: SOME WORKERS RELISH GETTING LAID-OFF: BLOOMBERG- HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

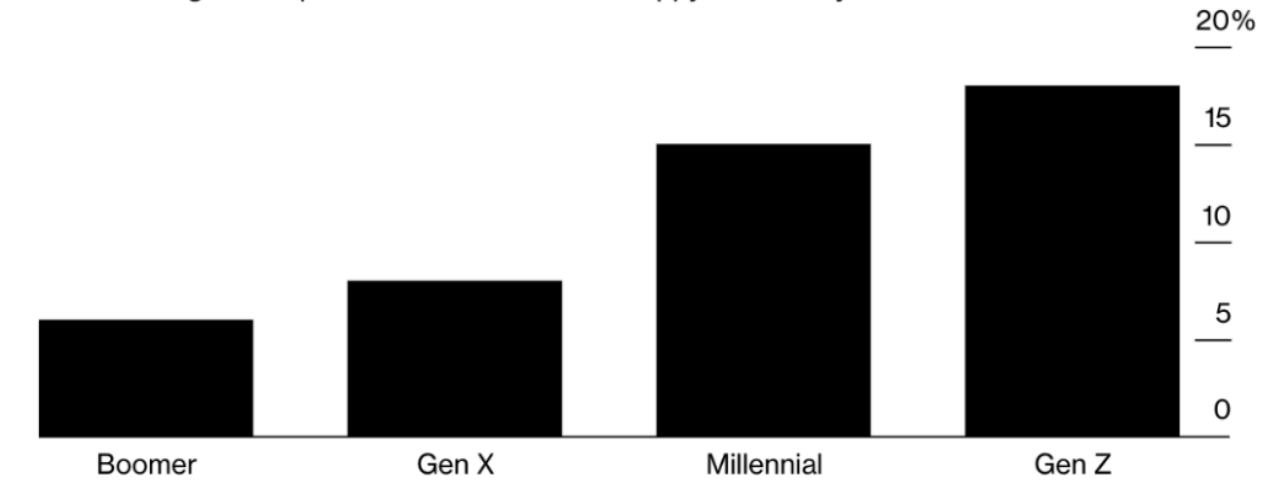
Employment status: laid off and loving it. That's the mood of a small but vocal group of employees caught in the job cuts roiling firms from Wall Street to Silicon Valley, according to our latest survey [with Bloomberg](#).

- Nearly one-fifth (18%) of Gen Z and (15%) of Millennial employees would be happy being laid off, more so than their older colleagues (Gen X: 8%, Boomers+: 6%).
- And one in ten employees say they would feel thankful (9%), relieved (10%), and even happy if laid off today (12%).

### Looking on the Bright Side of Layoffs

Members of Gen Z are most likely to react with feelings of happiness

■ Percentage of respondents who would feel happy about a layoff



Source: The Harris Poll

Bloomberg/Harris Poll Survey of employed Americans January 2023

- **A layoff means a re-set:** Of those who experienced a layoff in the last year, (42%) spent **more time with friends and family**, as well as were **more likely to have spent time on their hobbies (28%) and prioritized their physical and mental health (26%, 29%)** than those who lost a job five or more years ago (15%, 15%, and 10%, respectively).
- **Another door opens:** Most employed Americans (43%) say that if they were laid off right today, they'd **find another job within three months**, but that changes across generations, with Boomers less likely to think so (28% v. Gen Z: 43%, Millennials: 48%, Gen X: 47%).

Implication:

"Getting fired is normally one of the biggest crises of a worker's career. But the strange incongruity of today's job market – where the unemployment rate fell to its lowest level since 1969 in January, even as tens of thousands of people were laid off from big tech companies like Google, Microsoft, and Amazon – is making it easier for employees who find themselves out of work. They're taking a more relaxed view of unemployment, regarding it as a way to escape from positions they didn't like, spend more time on hobbies, and eventually line up better opportunities" (Bloomberg).

Section:

# 02

**Topic:**

## STILL WORRIED ABOUT COVID? YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN: TIME-HARRIS POLL

**Introduction:**

Since March 2020, [The Harris Poll has been tracking](#) pandemic sentiment and precautions among Americans. But in a new poll [with TIME](#), the spirit of the largest mobilization of vaccination in U.S. history is now in the rearview mirror, leaving many Americans (especially older and immunocompromised) to navigate the future on their own.

- Where we are today: Now that most mask mandates are gone, less than half of American adults (44%) had worn a mask in the three months leading up to January 2023.
- And without enforceable ventilation requirements in most public spaces, in the last three months, few Americans have kept up with precautions related to initial exposure risk, such as social distancing (37%), limiting in-person presence in public spaces (32%), and limiting in-person gatherings (30%).
- Additionally, we found that a fifth (19%) of Americans haven't taken any COVID-19 precautions in the last three months.
- The easing up of precautions is in part to the three-quarters of Americans believing that [the worst of COVID is behind us](#) (74%), with just a quarter (26%) believing it's still ahead.

- However, Americans aren't fully escaping pandemic worries, as we have [found that](#) two-thirds are still concerned about potential shortages of hospital staff and equipment (66%) and COVID persisting and being part of everyday life from now on (60%).

**Implication:**

Even as Americans believe the U.S. is out of the woods on the pandemic, real consequences of variant mutation continue to threaten the health of Americans and the healthcare that can be provided. Specifically, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [revoked emergency-use authorization for Evusheld](#), a therapy meant to be used as an alternative to COVID-19 vaccines for people unable to receive a vaccine or those immunocompromised, after concluding that it isn't effective against the [newer circulating variants](#).

Section:

# 03

**Topic:**

## INVESTORS WANT ESG IN THEIR PORTFOLIOS: NUVEEN-HARRIS POLL

**Introduction:**

According to a new Harris survey with Nuveen in [Investment News](#), most investors are interested in ESG and want their advisors to guide them.

- Three-quarters (75%) of investors over 21 with at least \$100,000 in investible assets see their company ownership as a way to **get businesses to address ESG-related risks and opportunities**.
- More than half (57%) would be interested in **shifting their portfolios** to invest only in companies **with net-zero emissions**.
- Further, over (80%) said that companies should be **more transparent about ESG issues**, and (73%) said they would **be more likely to invest in businesses that are open** about their plans for addressing those factors.
- **Just good business:** More than three-quarters (76%) of those surveyed said they agreed that factoring in risks and opportunities associated with responsible investing, or R.I., **should always be part of the investment process, the company found**. Nearly 80% said R.I. incorporates material factors that are often missed in traditional financial analysis, and 68% said it can be employed to help reduce market risk in their portfolios.

- Last year's findings from the 2022 [Milken Institute Harris Poll Listening Project](#), a peer-to-peer survey of business leaders, found that (68%) said their company has as much as a quarter (or more) of their portfolio dedicated to ESG investments. However, nearly a third (32%) lack ESG investments entirely.

**Implication:**

In 2022, ESG went from Davos-speak to culture war fodder from anti-woke [critics like Vivek Ramaswamy](#) and [Ron DeSantis prohibiting Woke ESG considerations for state investments](#). But Amy O'Brien, Nuveen's global head of responsible investing, said [in an announcement](#) of the survey findings, "Although many investors are interested in R.I.'s positive impact on society, in their minds, the process of managing key ESG factors should also focus squarely on mitigating critical impediments to company performance."

Section:

# 04

Topic:

## MOST AMERICANS HAVE A NIGHTMARE NEIGHBOR: LIFEHACKER-HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

In a new [Lifehacker story](#), an Ally-Harris Poll finds that over half (55%) of Americans say they have had a "nightmare neighbor" in the past. And with mortgage rates easing, just over ten percent (11%) of Americans [plan on purchasing a home](#) in the next year, which means...new neighbors.



- According to Lifehacker, here are some hacks to be a good neighbor:
- Shhh, keep it down! The number one problem people have with their neighbors is noise, with nearly half (46%) disliking loud neighbors.
- Keep "questionable" lifestyles on the low: Over 2 in 5 (44%) neighbors partake in questionable lifestyles (e.g., running an illegal business out of their home, drug dealing).
- Don't let your house fall into disarray: Over a third (34%) of Americans dislike neighbors who don't keep up their house and property.
- Mind your business: A third (32%) of Americans do not appreciate nosy neighbors.
- Be a helper: Seven in ten (71%) value neighbors that take care of their home, who are always willing to help out (66%), who take good care of their neighborhood (49%), and who are friendly with their neighbors (47%).

Implication:

The potential of nightmare neighbors might be less of a concern when homeownership feels out of reach for many Americans, as a recent Harris Poll [with Fortune](#) found that 6 in 10 (59%) renters are worried that they will never be able to own a home. However, it's never too late to be a good neighbor, whether you live in a house or apartment complex.



# Questions?

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**KNOWLEDGE IS POWER**

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