

Special Report: The 2023 Axios Harris Poll 100 Corporate Reputation Findings

MAY 24 - 26, 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



The Axios Harris Poll 100 Rankings

WAVE 150 INTRODUCTION

Today's newsletter will focus exclusively on the marketer caring for a brand's reputation and communications, legal affairs, investor relations, and others caring for the image of the C-suite. If you have time to parse these stories, you'll see that people buy brands from companies they admire; to them, corporate reputation and brand marketing are the same.

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Topic:

SPECIAL REPORT: THE 2023 AXIOS HARRIS POLL 100 CORPORATE REPUTATION FINDINGS

Introduction:

Every year since 1995, The Axios Harris Poll has asked Americans their opinions on corporate reputation through our RQ® (Reputation Quotient) methodology. For example, their study of 16,310 Americans between March 13-28 asks them to name companies with the 'best' and worst reputations and then rank them on vision, products and services, ethics, trust, and culture.

Instead of elites, we ask people on Main Street, who buy a company's products and services, what they think of the firm behind the brand. And each year, the distance between brand and corporate image grows smaller.

This is mainly because companies attract public attention by speaking out on social issues. But in a divided country, the fatigue is growing: (69%) of Americans now say companies **should avoid speaking out on social issues or divisive topics and instead focus on their operations** (Rep: 84% v. Dem: 58%).

One exception exists, however. Eight in ten (84%) Americans agree that **companies must have a track record of acting on their values to be taken seriously** (Dem: 86%, Rep: 84%).

This partly explains why Patagonia and Chick-Fil-A are in the top 5, and companies like Disney continue to fall. Nevertheless, Patagonia took the No. 1 overall ranking, followed by Costco, John Deere, Trader Joe's, and Chick-Fil-A. (Toyota, Samsung, Amazon, USAA, and Apple round out the top ten).

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THE AXIOS HARRIS POLL 100 RANKINGS

This year's Axios Harris Poll 100 moves toward secure, stable, familiar, and patriotic brands, as Sara Fischer and Margaret Talev discuss on the [Axios Today Podcast](#) and in Mike Allen's [Axios AM Newsletter](#).

Winners: Outdoor clothing retailer **Patagonia took the No. 1** overall ranking across seven dimensions, earning an RQ of 83.5, followed by Costco, John Deere, Trader Joe's, and Chick-fil-A rounding out the top five.

Biggest gainers: Uber, Nike, Costco, American Express, and Chick-fil-A had the top five most significant gains in RQ score compared to 2022 (6.3%-pt, 5.2%-pt, 5.0%-pt, 4.3%-pt, and 4.3%-pt, respectively).

In American brands we trust and purchase: Costco, Chick-fil-A, and UPS were cited as the three most trusted names, while Patagonia, John Deere, and Apple were rated highest on products and services.

Look at this list like a grading curve of the 100 most mentioned companies by Americans (for good or bad). Patagonia is #1 (top); Trump Org is #100 (bottom). Also note that the distance between many company RQ scores is small, suggesting vast swaths of esteem for many of the top firms in America.

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The Harris Poll
Harris Insights & Analytics LLC, A Stagwell Company

The 2023 Axios Harris Poll 100
2022 to 2023

Guide to RQ® Scores: 80 & Above: Excellent | 75-79: Very Good | 70-74: Good | 65-69: Fair | 55-64: Poor | 50-54: Very Poor | Below 50: Critical

Rank 1- 50		RQ®	Rank 51- 100		RQ®
1	Patagonia	83.5	51	Gucci	75.6
2	Costco	82.1	52	Nestle	75.3
3	John Deere	82.0	53	Target	75.2
4	Trader Joe's	81.7	54	Dell	75.2
5	Chick-fil-A	81.4	55	Royal Dutch Shell	75.2
6	Toyota Motor Corp.	81.0	56	Volkswagen Group	75.1
7	Samsung	81.0	57	Anheuser-Busch	75.0
8	Amazon.com	80.7	58	Delta Air Lines	74.9
9	USAA	80.6	59	Chipotle	74.8
10	Apple	80.6	60	Macy's	74.7
11	3M	80.5	61	State Farm Insurance	74.7
12	Sony	79.8	62	Tesla Motors	74.3
13	Honda Motor Co.	79.8	63	AT&T	73.9
14	UPS	79.8	64	Wendy's	73.9
15	Microsoft	79.7	65	Verizon Communications	73.8
16	Subaru	79.4	66	Chevron	73.8
17	American Express	79.3	67	Stellantis (Chrysler)	73.3
18	LG Corporation	78.8	68	Hobby Lobby	73.0
19	CVS (CVS Health)	78.7	69	Arby's	72.6
20	HP, Inc.	78.7	70	United Airlines	72.3
21	Nike	78.4	71	Southwest Airlines	71.9
22	Adidas	78.4	72	McDonald's	71.8
23	Procter & Gamble	78.2	73	Taco Bell (Yum! Brands)	71.7
24	BMW Group	78.2	74	Bed Bath & Beyond	71.5
25	The Home Depot	78.2	75	Uber	71.5
26	Kellogg Company	78.2	76	Johnson & Johnson	70.9
27	The Kroger Company	78.0	77	The Walt Disney Co.	70.9
28	Kraft Heinz Company	78.0	78	eBay	70.7
29	Fidelity Investments	77.9	79	JCPenney	70.6
30	IBM	77.8	80	Walmart	70.3
31	JPMorgan Chase & Co.	77.7	81	Bank of America	70.1
32	Ford Motor Company	77.6	82	ExxonMobil	68.9
33	Aldi	77.6	83	Dollar General	68.7
34	General Motors	77.5	84	Burger King	68.6
35	Google	77.4	85	Shein	68.2
36	Best Buy	77.2	86	Subway	68.2
37	General Electric	77.0	87	Comcast	68.0
38	Capital One Fin Corp	76.9	88	Wells Fargo & Co.	67.8
39	Walgreens	76.9	89	Dollar Tree	67.3
40	PepsiCo	76.8	90	Family Dollar	65.6
41	Nordstrom	76.7	91	Balenciaga	65.5
42	Netflix	76.7	92	BP	63.5
43	Lowe's	76.6	93	Bitcoin	61.1
44	PayPal	76.5	94	TikTok	61.1
45	Kohl's	76.3	95	Spirit Airlines	60.1
46	T-Mobile	76.2	96	Facebook (Meta)	59.7
47	FexEx Corporation	76.2	97	Twitter	59.3
48	Starbucks Corporation	75.7	98	Fox Corporation	59.3
49	The Coca-Cola Company	75.6	99	FTX	58.6
50	Pfizer	75.6	100	The Trump Org	52.9

*Bitcoin was featured in the ranking after sufficient nominations from Americans who perceived it as a public or private company.

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Note a few trends:

A Flight to Reliability

Americans, in a year of crypto collapse, Chinese spy balloons, AI uncertainty, and the ongoing war in Ukraine, sought companies that were tangible, reliable, and authentic. [Many are also American.](#)

Scorn of The Prophets

There is a [pivot against renegade](#) solo leaders who run amok of good governance or take up too much time and attention. FTX and Sam Bankman Fried made our list for the first time this year — ranking 99th of 100 for reputation, near dead last. Tesla saw one of the most significant reputation drops of the past year, from 11th in 2022 to 62nd place, as Twitter (ranked near last at 97) created business and reputational issues for Musk.

Brands Fall Prey to Politics

The most significant lesson in this year's study is that when you divide, you subtract—meaning customers. Disney continued to decline (No. 77 from 65 last year) amid partisan politics. Disney was ranked the 5th most divisive company in our study, a measure of the difference between Republicans and Democrats, with a variance of 19.3 points in reputation vs. 4.4 average for the top 100 companies in our study. Compared to last year, more Democrats reported having a more favorable opinion of Disney (44% v. Rep: 21%), while Republicans reported a more negative view (42% v. Dem: 12%).

Takeaway: As we told [Business Insider](#) today, companies you can see, touch, and trust are core to driving reputation this year. This is a reaction to Ai uncertainty and digital-crypto meltdowns like FTX, Twitter, and Bitcoin, which all scored poorly with Americans. In our data, nearly eight in ten (78%) say that companies that make actual, tangible items rather than intangible digital items matter more to me today than ever before.

Disney's Reputation Hit By Political Drama

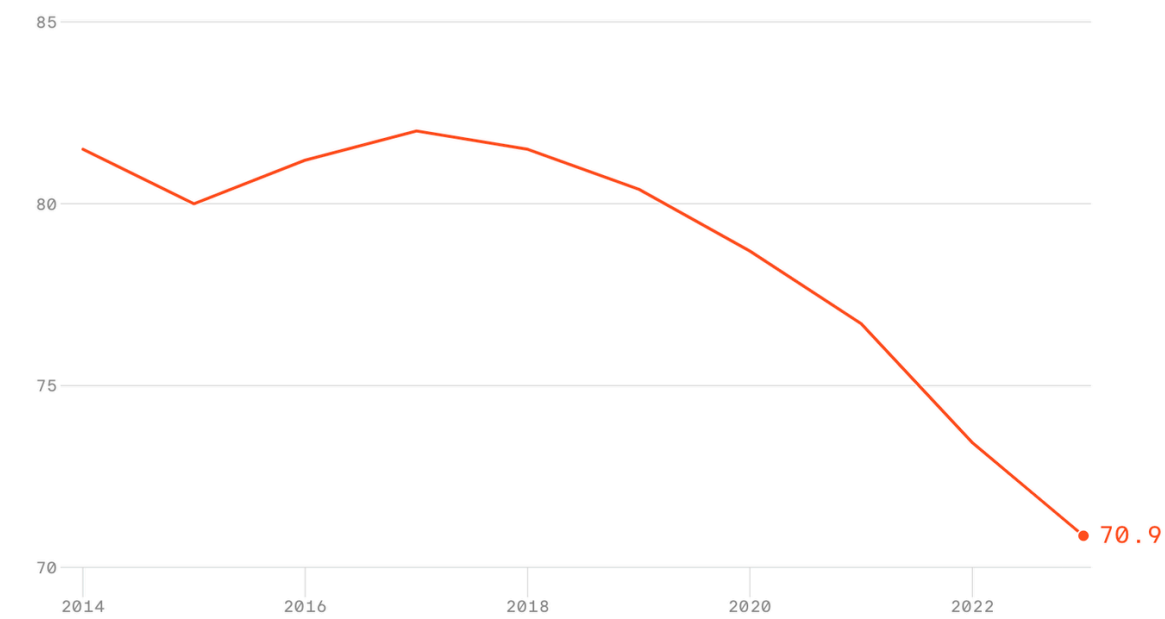
The Walt Disney Company took a big hit in this year's Axios Harris Poll 100, dropping a dozen spots, to 77th, after tangling with Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis over students' LGBTQ+ rights, [reports](#) Axios' Margaret Talev and Sara Fischer.

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Disney's Axios Harris Poll 100 Reputation Score

Survey of Axios Harris Poll participants conducted 2014 to 2023



Data: Axios Harris Poll 100; Chart: Axios Visuals

By the numbers: The company was ranked the fifth most polarizing brand of 100 in this year's survey – measured by the gap between the assessments of Republican and Democratic respondents.

Disney's RQ® score was 70.9 out of a possible 100. **That's down from 73.4 in 2022.**

Among Democrats, it jumped to 80.3 from 72.5. But **it plunged 14 points with Republicans**, to 61 from 75.

The average RQ gap between Republicans and Democrats in this year's survey was 4.4. In Disney's case, it was 19.3. So while Disney's reputation score has declined since the 2017 survey, that trend was **bipartisan – until this year.**

Zoom in: Respondents were asked how they felt about Disney now compared with a year ago.

Over 2 in 5 (44%) Democrats, but only a fifth (21%) of Republicans said they **felt more positive about the company.**

Meanwhile, (42%) of Republicans said their **feelings about Disney grew more negative** over the past year, compared with (12%) of Democrats.

(35%) of Republicans, but just (19%) of Democrats said **Disney has become less authentic and more divisive.**

(63%) of Democrats, but (46%) of Republicans describe the company as **family-oriented.**

Takeaway: The lesson here is that when you divide, you subtract. When you divide audiences, you will subtract customers from your business. Unlike brands like Patagonia or Chick-fil-A that already are identified with ideological or policy views, Disney "didn't have a track record for speaking out on this issue" and came to the issue late.

Year of the Tarnished Titans

FTX and Tesla, once seen as shining examples of innovation and opportunity, took two of the biggest reputational hits in this year's Axios Harris Poll 100 brand reputation survey, [details](#) Margaret Talev and Sara Fischer.

#62	Tesla Motors	74.3	50	+
#93	Bitcoin	61.1	-	+
#97	Twitter	59.3	1	+
#99	FTX	58.6	-	+
#100	The Trump Organization	52.9	-	+

Axios Harris Poll 100 2023

Twitter ranked 97th among the 100 brands survey respondents identified as most visible in the country today while **Tesla saw one of the biggest reputation drops** of the past year, from 11th in 2022 to 62nd place this year, with a 74.3 RQ (79.5 in 2022).

Crypto giant FTX made the list for the first time this year — **ranking 99th of 100 for reputation**, with an RQ of 58.6. The firm filed for bankruptcy last year following a liquidity crisis that was caused by what the government calls an illegal crypto-trading scheme. Its founder, Sam Bankman-Fried, was once considered one of the most successful young entrepreneurs in the world. Now he faces criminal charges.

FTX's fall took crypto with it: Bitcoin, though not a company, also joined the list for the first time this year as respondents named it as one of the most visible brands — and ranked it 93rd of 100 for reputation.

The Trump Organization finished in last place overall **for the second year in a row**, with an RQ of 52.9, even lower than the year before.

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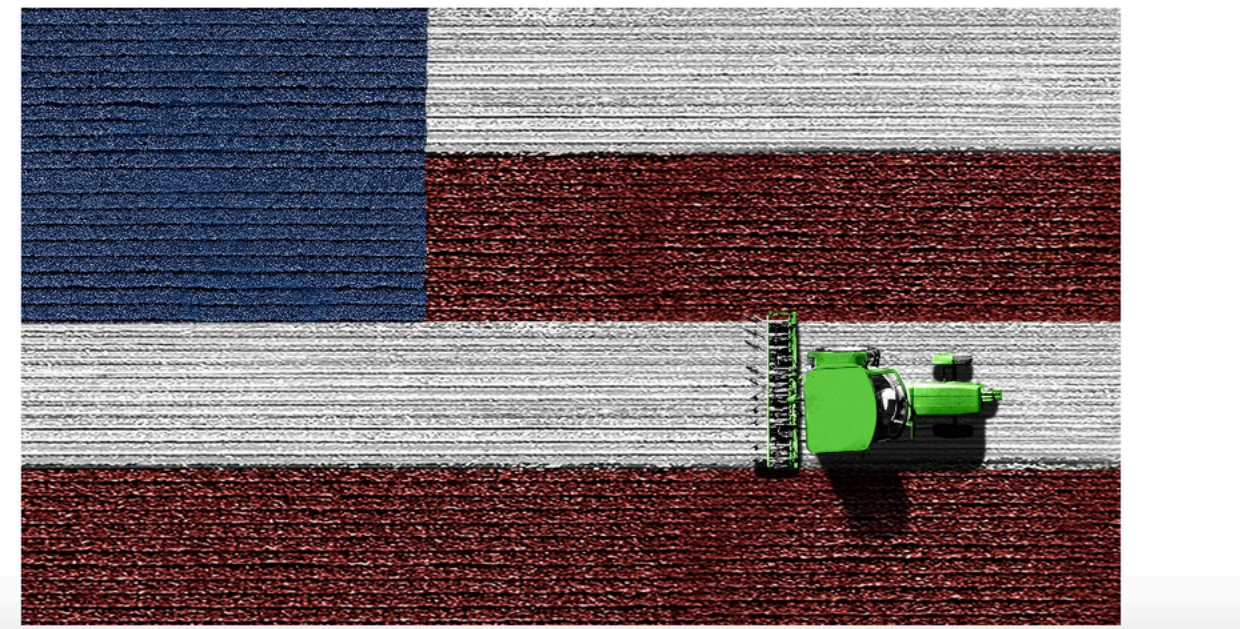
Takeaway: Amid a crypto collapse and Musk madness, Americans have grown wary and weary of big ideas and powerful moguls who they feel have overpromised and underdelivered. With runaway danger in concepts as diverse as AI to Crypto, there is a 'checks and balances' dynamic. But one overriding concern is unchecked values in a power vacuum: Eight in ten (79%) Americans say companies will need to rebrand and evolve to stay relevant in the coming years, and yet (75%) say companies are "rebranding" their products and services when they should be rebranding their ethics and values.

Trust in U.S. Companies Soars as Global Tensions Escalate

Brands with ties to the heartland – including John Deere (Illinois), Kohl's (Wisconsin), and USAA (Texas) – are enjoying big reputation gains compared with foreign firms, according to this year's Axios Harris 100 poll [as reported](#) by Sara Fischer and Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian.

Trust in U.S. companies soars as global tensions escalate

 Sara Fischer, Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian



Axios visuals May 2023

Of note: Costco, Kraft Heinz, and Chick-fil-A ranked in the top 10 among the 100 companies surveyed about their reputations across categories such as culture, ethics, and citizenship.

Be smart: Chinese firms, including [TikTok](#) parent ByteDance and e-commerce giant [Shein](#), were some of the lowest-ranking firms in terms of reputation, 94th and 85th, respectively.

Samsung, a Korean firm, and Toyota, a Japanese firm, both ranked in the top 10 in terms of overall reputation; Japan's Sony and Korea's LG ranked 12th and 18th, respectively.

Other **global brands didn't rank as high as most American firms** this year, but their reputation scores didn't dip as low.

Takeaway: Companies deeply embedded in American culture ranked higher than most others across attributes such as culture, ethics, citizenship, and trust – especially brands associated with China. "I think what's been driving that is the geopolitical environment and macroeconomics. You've got the Chinese spy balloons, Russia and Ukraine, China and Taiwan, and Americans are reverting to home.

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
