

COVID-19 CONSUMER RESEARCH WAVE 167 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OCTOBER 20 - 22, 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 167

WAVE 167 INTRODUCTION

The following research was conducted between **October 20 - October 22, 2023** by The Harris Poll. Fielded among a nationally representative sample of **2,128** U.S. adults, the newest research demonstrates how consumers' perceptions are rapidly shifting as new developments emerge.

Section:

01

Topic:

STREAMING AHEAD CAN HURT YOUR LOVE LIFE: ROKU-HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

In a new Harris study with Roku, [in the New York Post](#), streaming ahead is practicing infidelity by another name to many couples.

- Streaming cheating is unforgivable: One in five (21%) adults in relationships say they've gotten angry when their partner "cheats" and watches an episode of their show on their own.
- Fake binging is also a thing: About a quarter (23%) of couples admitted to pretending to enjoy a show simply because their partner or spouse likes it.
- Streaming logins are a relationship must-have: Nearly one-third (29%) of single Americans have a two-streaming service standard and won't date anyone who doesn't subscribe to at least two streaming platforms.
- A quarter (26%) of streamers would instead give up sweets for a week, and a fifth (18%) would willingly stub their toe instead of learning of a spoiler to "The Bear" or "Lessons in Chemistry."

Implication:

These findings are a peek into how streaming is weaving into our romantic tales and, perhaps, becoming a character in our love stories. So, whether you're a serial show-pretender, a staunch anti-spoiler, or someone who uses streaming as a conversational lifeboat, you're not alone.

Section:

02

Topic:

THE HIDDEN MIDDLE: THE GLOBE AND MAIL-HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

There is ample reason to believe the U.S. is divided. Still, in new Harris research [with The Globe and Mail](#), my co-CEO Will Johnson suggests the noisy rancor of the country's public discourse masks a more optimistic social cohesion.

- Agree to disagree: About (76%) of Americans see the good in those they disagree with, and (71%) have friends who don't share their views.
- It's all an exaggeration: Nearly six in ten think some of the cultural wars are either overblown or missing the mark.
- The cohesion is evident with brand reputation: Two of the most respected companies in the U.S., according to the [2023 Axios Harris Poll 100](#), are Patagonia and Chick-fil-A, each on two ideological ends of the spectrum, yet respected by most Americans for living up to their values.
- And while (83%) of Americans are unsettled by the normalization of trauma from gun violence and terrorist attacks – nearly seven in ten are hopeful that today's chaos will motivate change.

Implication:

"Taken together, it suggests large majorities of Americans remain largely unswayed by the ferocity of public debate on the issues that dominate the country's political sphere. "What I see when I look at the data is a much more nuanced, complex picture of Americans – and, I think, a more optimistic view as far as how we all feel about one another," says Johnson.

Section:

03

Topic:

INFLATION'S HIDDEN HEALTH BURDEN: NATIONWIDE- HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

As inflation continues to eat into real wages for most Americans, many are losing confidence in their ability to afford their health expenses, according to new Harris research [with Nationwide](#).

- Nearly two in ten (18%) American adults have postponed health care such as a medical procedure, physical exam, or renewing prescriptions in the past twelve months to save money.
- And to find additional savings, (10%) say they are considering downgrading their health insurance plan because of high inflation, including a fifth (19%) of Gen Z.
- Americans can't afford medical surprises: We found more than half of Americans (51%) say they could not pay off an unexpected \$5,000 health care out-of-pocket expense.
- Will I outlive my healthcare? More than one quarter (26%) expect AI advancements in health care to add more than a decade to their lifespan, yet, (59%) aren't confident in their ability to afford health care costs as they age.

Implication:

While many adults feel confident they will be able to maintain good physical health, almost half of those who are retired regret not taking better care of their health to save on healthcare costs in retirement. Additionally, adults may need to be more accurate in their assessment of the need for healthcare specialists in retirement, and that may impact healthcare costs in retirement. (Nationwide)

Section:

04

Topic:

RISING HOME VALUES (AND ANGST): FAR-HARRIS POLL

Introduction:

Rising home values aren't dampening economic anxiety for many homeowners, we find with Finance of America Reverse (FAR) in [Reverse Mortgage Daily](#):

- Despite that (86%) of U.S. homeowners say their home value increased from 2022 to 2023, nearly the same number (79%) are still as anxious now about the state of the economy as they were last year.
- Add in increasing spending stress: (41%) of homeowners feel anxious about their discretionary spending, up from (32%) in 2022, while (40%) their ability to pay off debt, up from (36%) in 2022.
- This leaves nearly a third (32%) to say they were likely to use a home equity loan, a slight increase from 28% in 2022.
- However, knowledge around home equity loans is unequal: Only (42%) of women know that home equity can help supplement income in retirement, compared to (65%) of men.

Implication:

"Homeowners' concerns about the economy remain high, and they are more apprehensive about their ability to pay for certain costs when compared to last year, yet many aren't looking to their housing wealth to help pay for expenses," FAR said in a statement. "The survey also found a lack of knowledge about financial products like reverse mortgages that could offer potential solutions."

Questions?

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