

RESONATE

STATE OF ~~THE CONSUMER~~ ~~THE VOTER~~ YOUR CUSTOMER REPORT

Navigating the Intersection of Brand and Consumer Values



TABLE OF CONTENTS

03 HUMAN ELEMENT

04 INTRODUCTION

PART 1

05 INTRODUCING THE CONSUMER ACTIVIST

08 INTRODUCING THE EQUALIZERS

10 CONSUMER ACTIVISM BY INDUSTRY

- 11 • Auto Industry
- 12 • Health & Beauty
- 13 • Banking

14 CONSUMER ACTIVISM BY GENERATION

- 14 • Baby Boomers
- 15 • Gen X
- 16 • Millennials
- 17 • Gen Z

PART 2

19 HOW TO EFFECTIVELY ALIGN CORPORATE AND CONSUMER VALUES

- 20 • Align Your Cause with Consumer Values
- 21 • Align Your Cause with Your Brand Values

22 CONCLUSION

23 RESONATE METHODOLOGY



WE NEED THE **HUMAN ELEMENT** NOW MORE THAN EVER.

As we write this, the world is rapidly shifting. The public stage is growing even larger, with consumers closely evaluating how brands and retailers speak out on top-of-mind issues such as COVID-19 and the fight against racial inequality. Companies are attempting to pivot, modify and evolve their strategies, processes and messaging to stand in solidarity.

Companies who have been deemed essential, and have remained open throughout the pandemic, are offering additional benefits to their employees. For example, Walmart, the nation's largest retailer, paid out \$385 million in bonuses to their employees back in April as a thank-you for their hard work during such a turbulent time. Darden Restaurants, which owns Olive Garden, Longhorn Steakhouse and Capital Grille, is offering up to seven days of paid sick leave to hourly employees. And grocery stores, including Giant, Harris Teeter, Safeway and others, have implemented "seniors-only" hours to ensure social distancing for shoppers ages 60+.

Meanwhile, companies, in addition to ensuring the health of their employees, are joining the fight against racism in America. As peaceful demonstrations and riots broke out in cities across the country, dozens of companies took a stand against racial injustice and against police violence. Brands like **Nike, YouTube and Starbucks**, among others, aligned themselves with the Black Lives Matter movement by running **powerful ads** and **writing public letters**. But in these times, and with today's progressive consumer, conventional crisis response is deemed insufficient. Customer voices have grown louder and they're demanding action. They're seeing that they must be actively anti-racist — words are not enough in 2020. In this unprecedented time, where personal values are playing a more prominent role than ever before, it's critical that brands, retailers and media companies take consumer values into account with every decision they make.

While it appeared that pandemic-induced anxiety about health and **financial concerns** were waning ever-so-slightly, local communities, the nation and the world turned its attention to the long-standing call for racial equality. Consumers **called on brands** to respond swiftly with appropriate and meaningful measures, a formidable challenge for leadership across the entire organization from brand strategy, corporate communications and sales, to customer service and human resources.

It's more critical than ever to remember that your audience is made up of humans. Understanding and aligning your brand to who they are and the things that are impacting their everyday life is the key to connecting and engaging with them. At Resonate, our sole purpose is delivering real-time consumer intelligence for brands, agencies and media companies. Our best-of-breed **A.I.-driven platform** unites the power of custom research with robust and relevant behavioral data to create the deepest, most comprehensive understanding scaled to 200 million U.S. consumers, which includes your customers and prospects. Resonate continues to track sentiment related to the COVID-19 pandemic, racial equality and a wide range of impactful issues, all with the goal of getting you the freshest, real-time data to drive your decision-making.

The Consumer Activist will continue to play an increasingly important role in the U.S. economy and this report is designed to help you navigate the rapidly evolving landscape.



INTRODUCTION

Back in 1773, a group of American colonists in Boston were angry when Britain imposed a “taxation without representation” rule on British tea. In protest, American patriots threw 342 chests of tea from the British East India Company overboard. More than just a story from your high school history class, this 250-year-old declaration of independence set the stage for future Americans standing up for the social and political causes they're passionate about.



From the bus boycotts during the civil rights movement, to the Delano grape strike protesting years of poor pay and working conditions, America's rich history is filled with storied examples of consumers boycotting brands and organizations that don't reflect their values. While this concept isn't new, there have been an increasing number of consumer-led boycotts and protests in recent years. Everything from the mountain of available information online, the expectation for brand transparency, social media and a new wave of purpose-driven companies has made it easier for consumers today to speak with their wallets about the brands and retailers whose values don't align with theirs.

73% of U.S. consumers believe product and service-based companies should put a stake in the ground to represent their values*. Airbnb's highly praised #WeAccept ad, which aired just nine days after President Trump signed an order to temporarily close America's borders to refugees, and Yoplait's ad addressing the issue of mom-shaming both resulted in a massive lift in brand interest*. And, these are just two of the countless brands that have taken a stand on relevant issues in the last several years. Brands with the most momentum are those whose mission goes beyond turning a profit and focuses on the betterment of society*.

“We are at an inflection point in consumer activism today,” says Paul Massey, President of Powell Tate. “Companies operate on an increasingly public stage, with mainstream media and social platforms accelerating consumer movements like never before.” 60% of consumers say they've taken some form of positive or negative action in response to a brand's actions, with 34% saying they've spoken about that brand or company to their friends, family or coworkers and 17% saying they shared a social media post about a brand or company*.

While there's an entire category of technology that exists to track and measure social sentiment, the emphasis has always been on the what and not necessarily the who and the why of the people behind that sentiment. Resonate has a simple belief — better understanding leads to better relationships between brands and customers. That's why we've developed the deepest, most comprehensive understanding of the U.S. consumer.

Our analysis of the rise in consumer activism and how brands that are aligning corporate and consumer values gain a competitive edge is derived from the **Resonate Ignite Platform**, which houses over 13,000 dynamic attributes on over 200 million U.S. consumers. We broke our research down into two parts:

PART 1

- Who is the Consumer Activist? Who are the Equalizers? What causes do they care about and what makes them tick?
- How does activism differ by industry? Are people in the market to buy a car as worried about a brand's social stance as those looking for beauty products?
- How does consumer activism differ by generation?

PART 2

- How does your brand authentically take a stand that aligns to both your corporate and consumer values?

Read on to learn more about the rise of purpose-driven brands and how consumer activism influences businesses today.

* Econsultancy, Axios, Weber Shandwick's *Battle of the Wallets*

MEET THE CONSUMER ACTIVIST

This shopper visits websites such as **Grab Your Wallet**, **Open Secrets** and **BUYcott**. They're typically a single man or woman, between ages 18-24 who is still in college.



PERSONAL VALUES



Accepting those who are different

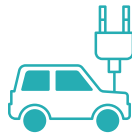


Living an exciting life



Maintaining a good public image

PREFERS BRANDS THAT



Reduce energy use



Reduce packaging



Listen to the public

FAVORITE BRANDS



Patagonia



Whole Foods

TOP ENGAGEMENT ISSUE AREAS



Promoting civil liberties



Supporting pro-choice issues



Improving transportation/mass transit

The subset of U.S. consumers we analyzed as Consumer Activists are searching for content about economic boycotts, [#GrabYourWallet](#), [Open Secrets](#), the [BUYcott app](#) and ethical consumers. This cluster of shoppers — which is largely made up of single men and women ages 18-24 who are still in school — is highly tuned into a brand’s values, so it’s critical to have a deep understanding of who they are, from their brand preferences to what motivates them to get out of bed in the morning.

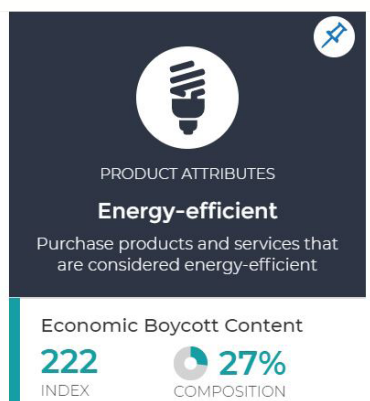
One of the ways Resonate reveals a deeper understanding of consumers is by looking at the [personal values](#) that impact their daily decisions. We ask participants of our [National Consumer Study](#)™ to choose from a list of values that they feel are important to the decision-making in their lives, pulled from the Theory of Basic Human Values by Shalom H. Schwartz. According to Resonate’s Personal Values [curated report](#), this group’s top values are: **accepting those who are different, living a life that’s full of novelties, challenges and excitement and maintaining a good public image.**

When it comes to psychological values, they’re highly motivated by social and professional status and proving their competence and skills while gaining recognition from peers, which makes sense as they’re paying their dues in the early stages of their career. Not only do they work hard and have a drive to succeed, they want to be acknowledged for it.

So, how do these values and motivations shape the shopping preferences and habits of these Consumer Activists? We ask survey participants how their personal values guide daily purchasing decisions. When it comes to corporate responsibility, they prefer companies that listen to the public, reduce energy use and reduce packaging. Clearly, these preferences align with the idea that this group cares deeply about how companies are contributing to society.



Source: Resonate Ignite Platform 2020



When it comes to product selection, they're 437% more likely to buy products that are **produced sustainably** and 122% more likely to buy products that are **energy efficient**. They also buy organic foods. In the near future, Consumer Activists are planning to buy furniture, watches, jewelry and sports/fitness products.

What causes are particularly important to this subset of consumers? A few of the engagement issues this group is passionate about are **promoting civil liberties, supporting pro-choice issues** and **improving transportation/mass transit**. Their top brands are **Patagonia** and **Whole Foods**, both of which are committed to sustainability, preserving natural resources and caring for the environment.



How do these Consumer Activists engage with their favorite brands? They're 347% more likely than the average U.S. consumer to **contact companies to share their thoughts** and 309% more likely to **pay a premium for a values-aligned brand**. They're also 368% more likely to **participate in a company's societal program**, such as donating products or money to a charity via a brand.

Source: Resonate Ignite Platform 2020

NOW WHAT?

Putting Insights into Action: How to Use This Data

Leverage your deep understanding of their shopping preferences, the causes they support, what they value and what makes them tick to help you attract and retain these Consumer Activists. When it comes to your messaging, consider highlighting exactly how your products are produced sustainably. The product development team could create a specific product that, when purchased, your company donates a specific amount of money to an environmental organization. Your brand management team can assess how causes could align with your company's mission and deepen the emotional relationship with activist consumers. In terms of customer experience, when stores are allowed to re-open, incorporate an interactive experience in-store that promotes environmental wellness. For example, you could offer a clothing recycling program similar to H&M's or provide a solar-powered charging station. **By taking a stand on a social or political issue that matters to you and this group of consumers, you're more likely to strengthen customer loyalty and deepen brand trust.**

MEET THE EQUALIZERS

This consumer puts the most emphasis on treating everyone equally. They strongly believe in the equality and protection of all people. They believe that life is about social justice.

They're typically a married woman between ages 45-54 with no kids under 18.

PERSONAL VALUES



Everyone being treated equally



Acceptance those who are different



Obeying laws and fulfilling obligations

PREFERS BRANDS THAT



Treat employees fairly



Support the community



Listen to the public

FAVORITE BRANDS



Reebok



CVS Health

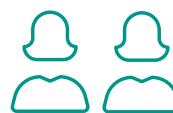
TOP ENGAGEMENT ISSUE AREAS



Promoting gender/race equality



Supporting pro-choice issues

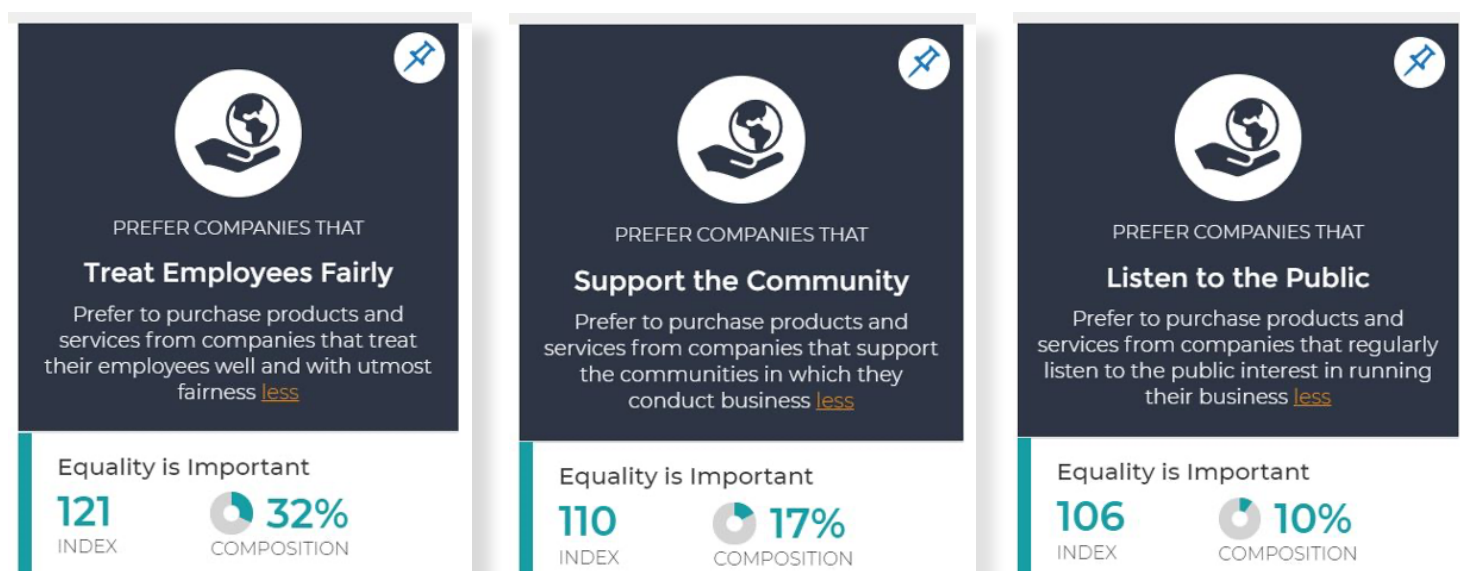


Promoting gay/lesbian equality

This subset of U.S. consumers value equality over any other personal value. This group — largely made up of married women ages 45-54 with no children under 18 — is personally driven by fairness, tolerance, social activism and believes life is about social justice. It's what gets them out of bed in the morning, so it's critical to emphasize this value in everything you do when engaging with these consumers.

When we asked the participants of our National Consumer Study to choose from a list of values that are important to them, this group selected **equality, tolerance and fulfilling obligations** as their top three. When it comes to psychological values, or what personally motivates them in their everyday lives, they're motivated by trust from others, expressing their individuality and have an optimistic outlook.

So how do values and motivations affect the shopping preferences and behaviors of the Equalizers? When it comes to corporate responsibility, they prefer companies that treat employees fairly, support the community and listen to the public. All of these preferences align with the emphasis they place on equality and tolerance, so it's no surprise they expect the same from the companies they do business with.



Source: Resonate Ignite Platform 2020

What causes do these consumers align themselves with? Their top engagement issue areas are race/gender equality, pro-choice issues and gay/lesbian equality, which again, aligns with the core values that drive their most basic and important decisions. Their top brands are CVS Health and Reebok, both who have spoken out on issues surrounding racial equality recently. Below is the message of solidarity and support for the Black community currently displayed on Reebok's homepage when you visit their website.

Without the Black community, Reebok would not exist.
America would not exist.

We are not asking you to buy our shoes.
We are asking you to walk in someone else's.

To stand in solidarity.
To find our common ground of
HUMANITY.

How do the Equalizers engage with their favorite brands? This segment is 14% more likely to report heavy social media engagement. They're more likely to be on Twitter, respond to or post to a friend's page and they're more likely to share something important — perhaps a message that aligns with their desire for equality. This group is also willing to use their voices to further social causes. They are more likely than the average American to engage in the following activities: share thoughts online, contribute to charity, contribute to a cause, vote based on an issue and sign a petition, among other activities.

NOW WHAT?

Putting Insights into Action: How to Use This Data

The push for racial equality is now at the forefront of the American agenda. U.S. consumers have come out in droves to protest racial inequality and police brutality, despite health concerns of large gatherings as it relates to COVID-19. If you want to connect and engage this group on a deeper level, it's essential that you weave this value into every facet of your company, from product development and messaging to HR initiatives and customer experience. And, keep in mind, consumers are acutely tuned in to which brand messages are performative v. which are being put into real, measurable action.

These are not all changes that can happen overnight, but expressing your intent and action steps to your customers and prospects regarding plans to re-evaluate hiring practices or donate to particular cause will tap into their most important value and allow you to strengthen your relationship with this segment.

CONSUMER ACTIVISM BY INDUSTRY

How does consumer activism vary by industry? Do those in the market for a new car or new beauty products care as much about a brand's value alignment as those looking to switch banks?

We ask consumers in our **National Consumer Study™** what they plan to purchase in the next 12 months, from a new house or car to new home office furniture and baby products. We looked at how much certain purchase intenders from various categories care when it comes to brand-value alignment.

AUTO INDUSTRY SHOPPERS

Consumers who are planning to buy a car within the next 12 months



These are primarily married men, between ages 25-34 with no children

PERSONAL VALUES



Living a life full of excitement



The freedom to be creative



Maintaining a good public image

PSYCHOLOGICAL DRIVERS



Romantic love



Expressing their individuality

PREFER COMPANIES THAT



Reduce packaging



Reduce energy use



Have truthful ads

INFLUENTIAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION



TV ads, riding in friends' cars and online ads



MEDIA PREFERENCES

Social channels: Twitter, Reddit and LinkedIn

Streaming services: HBO Now, ESPN+ and Showtime

37%

They're 37% more likely than the average U.S. consumer to pay more based on an important issue

88%

Auto shoppers are 52% more likely to feel guilty about their environmental impact, 88% more likely to look for a car with an electric engine and 66% more likely to be interested in buying a hybrid

25%

They're 25% more likely to criticize companies that they feel aren't doing enough for the environment and believe that giving incentives for corporate donors, donating money and giving incentives for green business are the best ways to help the environment

Source: Resonate Ignite Platform 2020

NOW WHAT?

Putting Insights into Action: How to Use This Data

Auto companies looking to lure prospective buyers through dealership doors should consider their passion for going green when crafting messaging, content, creative and offers. Resonate's proprietary data reveals the many shades of green that auto-intenders may feel passionate about. It reveals not only if they want to buy a Prius, but whether or not they care about sustainable manufacturing and if they feel guilty about their car's harm to the environment. Since auto shoppers are highly influenced by ads on TV and online, consider highlighting the ways the company has reduced harm caused to the environment by autos on the various digital channels where they spend time. Inform consumers about the new environmentally friendly products that your product development team is working on, such as increasing the engine's gas mileage or your plan to develop electric-only cars. Your CX team might ask for feedback from prospective and current customers asking how you can minimize your environmental impact, and then work to incorporate their suggestions. By tapping into the green issues they're passionate about, you'll not only win their business, but earn their trust, which is critical for auto brands to succeed.

HEALTH AND BEAUTY INDUSTRY

Consumers who are looking to buy new health and beauty products in the next 12 months



Mostly married females ages 45-54

PERSONAL VALUES



Caring for family/friends



Showing their abilities



Being seen as trustworthy

PSYCHOLOGICAL DRIVERS



Devotion to faith



Having an optimistic outlook



Proving competence and skills

PREFER COMPANIES THAT



Provide safe products

LESS LIKELY TO CARE IF COMPANIES



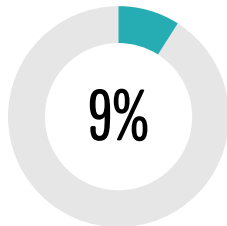
Reduce packaging and energy use



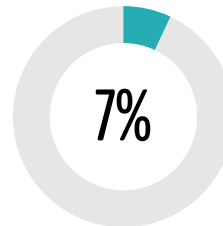
Listen to the public



Donate to charities



Only 9% of these beauty buyers say they'd pay more based on an important issue



Only 7% say they'd participate in a company's societal program

Source: Resonate Ignite Platform 2020

NOW WHAT?

Putting Insights into Action: How to Use This Data

Consumers in the market for health and beauty products care about companies providing safe products. Focus on highlighting the ingredients your brand uses that are safe and healthy, since that aligns more closely with their values and shopping preferences, rather than putting effort into a campaign about a relevant social issue that may be seen as inauthentic. Consider including videos of how your products are made on your website or invite prospective and current customers to your store for a special event once you re-open, where they can see the products being made in person.

BANKING INDUSTRY

Consumers who are planning to switch banks within the next 12 months



Mostly married men ages 25-34 with no children

PERSONAL VALUES



Living a life full of excitement



Safety in their community and nation



Being in charge

PSYCHOLOGICAL DRIVERS



Romantic love



Proving competence and skills

TOP CHARITABLE ISSUES



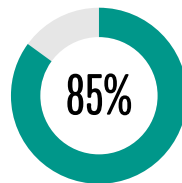
Poverty



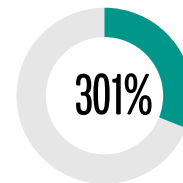
Animal rights



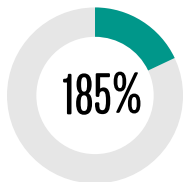
Childhood obesity



85% more likely than the average consumer to prefer companies that listen to the public and 72% more likely to prefer companies that donate to charity

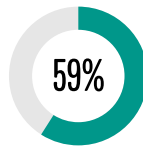


They're 310% more likely than the average U.S. consumer to be highly engaged with advocacy issues

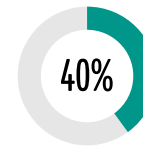


They're 185% more likely to contact a company to share their thoughts

FINANCIAL PSYCHOGRAPHICS



59% more likely to believe a financial crisis is coming soon



40% more likely to fear a stock market drop

Source: Resonate Ignite Platform 2020

NOW WHAT?

Putting Insights into Action: How to Use This Data

Banks looking to retain their fleeing account holders would likely benefit from taking a stand on a social issue that matters to this subset of consumers. These are people who've declared they're planning on switching banks soon, so aligning your bank's values with your customers values is an effective way to retain them. It gives them a reason to invest in your business that goes beyond dollar signs. Consider donating a specific amount of money to a charity they care about when a customer takes a specific action, such as opening a new account or downloading your app. With so much economic uncertainty today, it's critical to position yourself as a trusted resource for your on-the-fence account holders. Highlight your 24/7 customer service capabilities, hire more representatives to take calls or answer online chats. Consider coming up with content about financial security and the ways your bank can help them during this rapidly changing financial time. With so much money at risk, taking a stand on a relevant issue help you be seen as a trustworthy and helpful source, giving them a reason to continue their banking relationship.

CONSUMER ACTIVISM BY GENERATION

Of course, not every U.S. consumer is a Consumer Activist; the need for a company's values to align with their own varies among generations. We looked closely at how four major generations differ in their approach to consumer activism and which ones care the most about how closely a brand aligns with their own personal values.

BABY BOOMERS

AGES 54-72

For **baby boomers**, brands exist only to sell products and services they need. Buying from them is nothing deeper than a surface-level transaction. Many shoppers today consider their purchases to be an extension of their views, beliefs and lifestyles*, but according to Resonate's proprietary insights, baby boomers don't necessarily feel that way.

Their top personal values are **obeying laws and fulfilling obligations, safety in the community and one's nation and being reliable and trustworthy.**

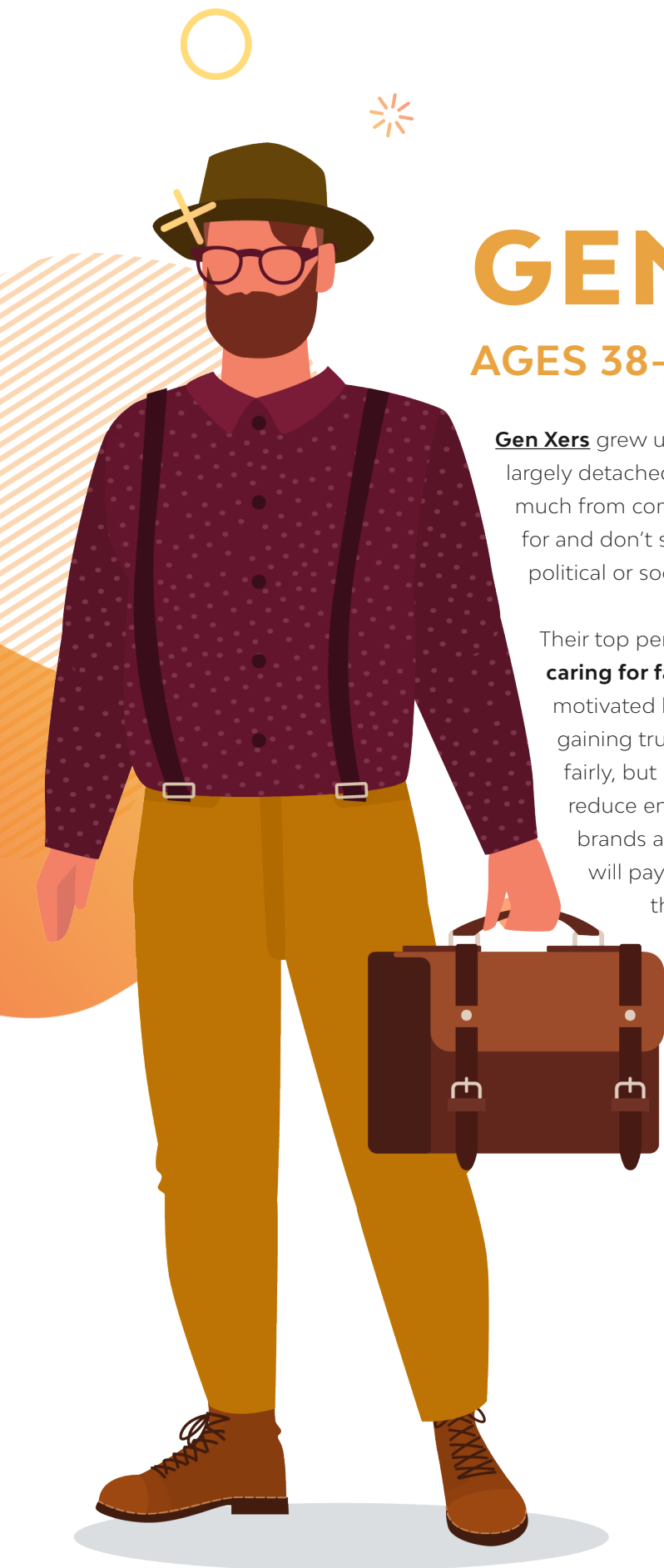
They're driven by their devotion to their faith, trust from others and have an optimistic outlook. They prefer companies that price products fairly and provide safe products. They're 34% less likely to seek out companies that reduce energy use, 29% less likely to prefer companies that donate to charities and 23% less likely to prefer companies that listen to the public.

Baby boomers won't pay more based on an important issue, share their opinion of a company or engage in a company's societal program. They're 18% less likely to care about a brand's reputation, 30% less likely to criticize a company for not doing enough for the environment and are admittedly unengaged in advocacy issues.

Brand value alignment is clearly not a top priority for them when it comes to making purchase decisions, so if this is your target audience, you might want to hold back on pledging allegiance to a specific cause and put your efforts and resources towards creating a cost-effective and safe product.



* AdWeek



GEN X

AGES 38-53

Gen Xers grew up long before the rise of the purpose-led brand and were largely detached from the internet and social media. They don't expect much from companies besides the product or service they're paying for and don't see buying or not buying from a particular company as a political or social statement.

Their top personal values are **safety in oneself and one's nation, caring for family/friends and maintaining traditions**. They're motivated by their devotion to faith, proving competence and gaining trust from others. They prefer companies that price products fairly, but don't particularly care if companies donate to charities, reduce energy use or listen to the public. They download apps from brands and follow them on social media, but only 12% of Gen Xers will pay more based on an important issue. They prefer products that are family-friendly and don't care whether or not they're produced sustainably. They're also 16% less likely to care about a brand's reputation.

If they're your target demographic, it's important to note that Gen X probably isn't concerned whether their personal values align with your brand, so it shouldn't be a major part of your marketing strategy.

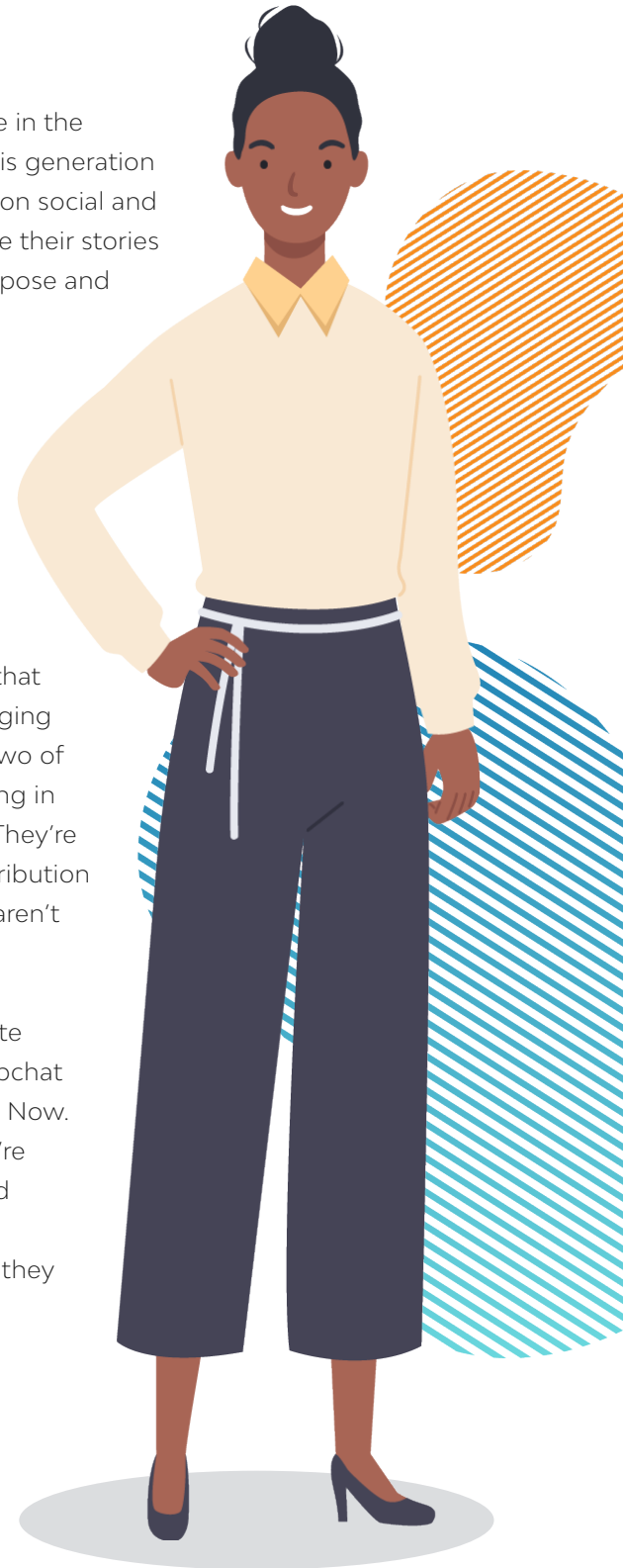
MILLENNIALS

AGES 21-37

The **millennial** generation is the most racially and ethnically diverse in the nation's history* and came of age during the internet explosion. This generation is passionate about holding brands accountable for their positions on social and political issues, and social media has given them a platform to share their stories and enlist the help of the public to bring attention to a brand's purpose and values*.

According to the **Resonate Ignite Platform**, which houses over 13,500+ attributes on over 200 million U.S. consumers, millennials' top personal values are **being in charge, acquiring wealth and influence, showing their abilities and being admired**. Their daily decisions are driven by romantic love, living an exciting life and creativity. Their top factor in deciding where to shop is based on a brand's reputation. They're 32% more likely to prefer companies that reduce energy use, 30% more likely to prefer ones that donate to charity, 22% more likely to prefer ones that reduce packaging and 20% more likely to prefer companies that listen to the public. Two of millennials' favorite ways to engage with a brand are by participating in their societal program and paying more based on a specific issue. They're 40% more likely to research companies to find out about their contribution to green initiatives and 27% more likely to criticize companies that aren't "green" enough.

The charitable causes they care most about are at-risk youth, climate change and addressing poverty. You can find them on Reddit, Snapchat and Instagram and streaming YouTube Premium, Disney+ and HBO Now. Consider highlighting any support you've given to the causes they're passionate about or highlight the ways in which you've contributed to improving green efforts in order to entice and retain millennial consumers, especially since 81% of millennials want the companies they buy from to practice business sustainably and ethically*.



* Pew Research, Sprout Social, Forbes

A stylized illustration of a young person, likely representing Gen Z, wearing a blue cap, sunglasses, a red long-sleeved shirt with yellow suspenders, and blue pants. They are holding a black smartphone. The background features abstract shapes: a yellow circle, a starburst, and a blue and white striped area.

GEN Z

AGES 18-20

Resonate only focuses on the U.S. adult population, so our insights do not include the younger portion of **Gen Z**. This generation is growing up in the age of social media and has 24/7 access to all kinds of information with the touch of the latest iPhone. This generation has the highest expectations when it comes to brands; 87% of Gen Zers say that they expect more from brands than just products*.

Gen Z's top values are **living exciting, fun lives, harnessing their creativity and avoiding upsetting or harming people**. Their daily decisions are driven by social and professional status and recognition from their peers. Gen Z and younger millennials (21-24) make up 38% of the Consumer Activist group discussed earlier. Gen Z is highly engaged with advocacy issues, but 54% less likely to be politically engaged. Clearly, this group is more concerned with the social issues affecting our country over political ones.

If Gen Z is your target audience, you might want to consider avoiding political stances and stick to social issues. They're 43% more likely to support companies that reduce their energy use, 40% more likely to support ones that reduce packaging and 36% more likely to support those that donate to charities. Their top charitable issues are climate change, at-risk youth and natural resource preservation. They're 39% more likely than the average U.S. consumer to engage in a company's societal program and 91% more likely to decide where to shop based on a brand's reputation.

In 2018, a group of Gen Zers launched one of the biggest displays of consumer activism in recent years. Survivors of the school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida revealed brands and retailers that donated to the NRA, offered discounts to NRA members or were in any way linked to the NRA and called for boycotts of their products and services. As a result, many companies did cut ties with the group, including Hertz, United and Delta*.

* AdWeek, Business Insider

AUDIENCE COMPARISON CHARTS





HOW TO EFFECTIVELY ALIGN CORPORATE AND CONSUMER VALUES

Being a purpose-led brand is not a trend*. Your organization must have a deep understanding of your own beliefs, as well as your audience's values, psychological drivers and preferred forms of expression before taking a stand on a social or political issue. It must be authentic to your brand or corporate values. If you take a stand simply because other companies are doing so or because you want to jump on the latest trending hashtag on Twitter, it will feel ingenuine to your audience, and you could lose them as a customer to your competitor.

So, how can a brand ensure they're doing so in an authentic way without potentially alienating customers and prospects? "Think about how your political statements align with your company mission and culture and your broader reputation. If you don't see an alignment, then it's probably not smart to make those kinds of statements," says Brayden King, management & organizations professor at Northwestern University*.

It's key to make sure the stand you take will resonate with your target audience and give them a deeper sense of identity with your brand. Having a holistic, 360-degree view of who your customers and prospects are, which is revealed thru Resonate's 13,500+ proprietary attributes, has a positive impact on your business because you'll be able to connect with them on a deeper level. If your stance is the opposite of your target customer's values, they'll likely abandon your brand for one that aligns more closely with what they want. If a brand can successfully identify the market opportunities and risks and pick the best time to declare an opinion supported by the majority of its stakeholders, it can actually build a strong, positive image*. With the ever changing world we're living in today, it's critical for your brand's success that you have access to fresh, dynamic data that keeps up with the pace of today's rapidly evolving consumer. Having a deep, holistic understanding of who they are and what issues or causes they care about has never been more critical to your brand's success.

* Footwear News, KelloggInsight, Yonah.org

ALIGN YOUR CAUSE WITH CONSUMER VALUES

A prime example of a brand that succeeds in corporate and consumer value alignment is **Southwest Airlines**. According to Resonate's proprietary data, 21% of Southwest customers donate money to charity as their preferred method of giving back. The airline's "Points for a Purpose" program gives its customers the opportunity to donate their frequent flyer points to nine different charities, including All Hands Volunteers, American Red Cross, Make-A-Wish and Ronald McDonald House Charities. The airline shows that it values its customers by giving them an outlet to express their social activism in a way that's meaningful to each individual consumer.

CVS is an example of a brand that backs issues their customers care about. Back in 2014, before the huge spike in consumer activism, CVS stopped selling cigarettes. According to Resonate data, their customers are big advocates of living a healthy lifestyle. They're 42% more likely to believe a gym membership is a necessity, 36% more likely to value athletic accomplishments and 18% more likely to be aware of family health history. Their move to stop the sale of cigarettes aligns well with their consumers' core value of health and wellness.

More recently, CVS made another move that tapped into their customers' beliefs. According to Resonate's insights, 34% of CVS customers prefer doing business with companies that have truthful ads. CVS recently launched an initiative called "Beauty Unaltered" in which they identify beauty advertisements found in their store that have been digitally altered. Explaining further they **said**: "We believe we have an opportunity, and responsibility, to think about the messages we send to our customers and how they impact their health."

Another brand aligning its corporate and consumer values is **Nike**. According to Resonate's proprietary data on personal values, one of Nike customers top values is tolerance, and Nike's most recent ad taps directly into their value of acceptance and inclusion. They released a "Don't Do It" ad as Black Lives Matter protests began across the country. The ad encourages consumers not to sit by and watch as racism continues to plague the country, but instead, actively fight against it. The last time Nike broached the topic of race, they used Colin Kaepernick as the face of their 30th anniversary celebration of their famous, "Just Do It" slogan and the company's online sales jumped 31%. It's no surprise they saw these protests as an opportunity to connect with their customers and prospects.

ALIGN YOUR CAUSE WITH YOUR BRAND VALUES

When deciding whether to take a stand on a social issue, consider your brand's core values. Do they align with the issue at hand? What about your mission statement? If so, your customers and prospects will be supportive and you'll gain a competitive edge over other brands. However, if it's not approached in a way that feels authentic, you risk alienating current and future customers. If you're randomly slapping your logo on a cause, you're going to come off to many as an inauthentic opportunist*. For example, if your customer base is only 5 percent women, spicing up your ads with demands for women's rights misses the mark*. While women's rights are obviously an important social issue to address, it likely won't be as resonant as it would for a brand or retailer with a larger female base.

One company that champions causes that are in line with its brand mission is **Patagonia**. In December 2017, President Trump issued an order reducing the size of nationally protected land in Utah by almost 2 million acres. Patagonia replaced their usual homepage with the phrase, "The President Stole Your Land". This wasn't part of a big marketing blitz or campaign strategy; it simply fit in well with their mission statement: "Being at Patagonia, we appreciate that all life on earth is under threat of extinction. We aim to use the resources we have — our business, our investments, our voice and our imaginations — to do something about it." It was an authentic way to take a stand on something the company has always been passionate about and reminded their consumers that they have their back when it comes to causes they care about.

Another company whose stance social issues matches their core values is **TOMS Shoes**. For every \$3 the company makes they donate \$1 to children in need. They also vowed to give away one-third of their net annual profits to help with the distribution of shoes and give grants to organizations they partner with that focus on equal opportunity and mental health. These continued acts of charity directly correlate to the company's mission statement: "TOMS has always stood for a better tomorrow — one where humanity thrives. To us, that means no matter who you are or where you live, you feel physically safe, mentally healthy and have equal access to opportunity." Their dedication to this cause fits perfectly with the core of who they are as a business, so their target customers and prospects know it's authentic and choose to continue to invest in their shoes — even if there may be less expensive alternatives.

On the other hand, companies who choose not to take a stand may end up hurting their business. In January 2017, President Trump issued a travel ban on people traveling from specific majority-Muslim countries. NYC taxi workers shut down their operation to protest at JFK airport, while **Uber** continued servicing the area, even tweeting that riders should expect longer wait times. Consumers were outraged and saw it as Uber taking an advantage of an opportunity to profit off the travel ban. The hashtag #DeleteUber went viral on social media and thousands of people deleted their Uber accounts. Meanwhile, **Lyft's** founders wrote an [email to its users](#) outlining its plan to donate \$1 million to the ACLU over the next four years, citing that the travel ban was, "antithetical to both Lyft's and our nation's core values." The letter also stated, "We created Lyft to be a model for the type of community we want our world to be: diverse, inclusive and safe." As a result, Lyft surpassed Uber in daily downloads for the very first time*.

* Inc.com, Yonah.org, Business Insider

CONCLUSION

Consumers today want more than ever from their brands and are exerting their buying power to make a statement. A company that simply provides them with a product or service is not enough and your consumer relationships extend far beyond the swipe of a credit card. People want to feel that the companies they're supporting with their wallets also align with their personal values. Every decision to either buy from or abandon a brand is an extension of those beliefs.

There's a lot to consider when it comes to your brand taking a stand. It's critical that you have a deep, holistic understanding of who your customers and prospects are, what they value, the causes and issues the support, their shopping behaviors and preferences and so many other factors as they evolve in real time.

Having this 360-degree view informs your approach to taking a stand on social issues; consumers see through a campaign that's not aligned to a company's values. Identify a cause that's genuinely reflective of your customers' values as well as yours. Your decision to take a stand will further strengthen customer loyalty and give your brand a competitive edge.



RESONATE METHODOLOGY

The Resonate Ignite Platform weaves data from multiple streams with advanced data science, artificial intelligence and human inspiration to artfully unlock deep insights into human motivations. Resonate's deep consumer insights are forged from two powerful types of data: consumer surveys and streams of online and offline consumer activity. Resonate runs the largest continuous U.S. consumer survey throughout the year that yields hundreds of thousands of responses. The goal of these surveys is to get not only basic demographic variables, purchasing and political preferences but to also understand why people have made those decisions and the values that guide them.

The questions are formulated so that we can glean the sentiment behind consumers' everyday decisions. That's one of the ways that Resonate is unique. Many companies will provide research on what's being purchased but few provide insight on why that decision was made.

Armed with deterministic survey responses from 200K U.S. adult consumers, Resonate then turns to online activity to complete the story at scale. Resonate analyzes tens of billions of web events each day linked to the survey respondents. These events and activities are anonymous and compliant with all consumer privacy principles. The platform analyzes the anonymous web traffic through our natural language processing and looks for keywords to understand the page the person visited. Then machine learning takes their survey responses and their web activity to create predictive models that help marketers understand and connect with their target audiences.

Typically, by the time research like this gets to marketers, it's several months old. Resonate's proprietary data is updated daily, so it's the most relevant in the industry. We are understanding people's sentiments and behaviors on a daily basis so that marketers can truly understand the Human Element, the behavioral sentiment that explains the why.

The data we gathered is then turned into actionable intelligence. These insights are delivered directly to our clients or via our easy-to-use platform that's ready to use from day one. And because people's preferences change often, Resonate provides a continuously updated view of audiences complemented with curated analyses and impactful visualizations. Resonate data can be used to enrich companies' first-party data, such as purchase or loyalty data, and to augment third-party data, including purchase data. The platform shows who is clicking on media ads, who's visiting their website, their app users and much more. The data gives marketers a discovery lens for what they think is important through a clean, yet robust visualization.