

What Do Consumers Think About Brands That Take a Stand on Reproductive Health Care?

Results From a Nationwide Survey of U.S. Consumers

September 3, 2021

Greenwald Research conducted a national survey investigating consumer reaction to brands that take a stand on social issues, and in particular brands that take a stand on the issue of reproductive health care. Commissioned by Tara Health Foundation, the survey was conducted using Dynata's online panel among a national sample of n = 1,241 adults, ages 18 and older. The survey also included oversamples to ensure sufficient sample size for subgroup analysis on Generation (Gen Z, Millennial, Gen X, and Boomer), Black/African Americans under age 30, and for Hispanic/Latinx Americans under age 30. The results are weighted to ensure that they are reflective of the U.S. adult population. Fielding took place between August 2nd and August 11th, 2021.

The purpose of the survey is to understand how a brand's values and public support of certain social issues impact how consumers perceive those brands and whether it makes consumers more or less likely to buy from that brand. The research also examines consumer awareness of brands that actually took a stand on a social issue in the last year and whether they have actively sought out or boycotted brands because of those actions.

This memo outlines key findings from the research.

Most Consumers Believe Brands Should Take a Stand on Social Issues

70% of consumers say it is important for brands to take a stand on social issues, including 46% who say this is extremely/very important. Gen Z and Millennials are especially likely to see this as important (86% and 80%, respectively).

The stance goes beyond symbolism: 70% of consumers also believe that brands can actually make a difference by taking a stand (33% say a significant difference). Gen Z and Millennials, along with Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx consumers, lead the way in the belief about brands having an impact.

Half of Consumers Would Be More Likely to Buy from a Brand that Publicly Supported an Issue They Care About

Consumers are ready to vote with their wallets: 55% of all consumers, and 67% of Gen Z and 66% of Millennials, say they would be more likely to buy from a brand that takes a public stance on a social issue that matters to them.

Gen Z and Millennials are also more aware of socially engaged brands: 57% of Gen Z and 53% of Millennials can recall a recent example of a brand taking a stand in the last year. These generations are also more likely to believe that a brand that takes a stand on one issue they care about also supports other issues of importance to them (52% of Gen Z and 49% of Mill. agree, vs. 33% of Gen X and 17% of Boomers).

Those with higher household income are also more likely to be aware of brands that took a stand on a social issue in the last year (52% of those with \$50K-\$99K and 54% of those with \$100K+ vs. 41% of those with less than \$50K) and more aware of brands specifically taking a stand on reproductive health (28% of those with \$100K+ vs. 22% of those with \$50K-\$99K and 17% of those with less than \$50K).

This Isn't Just a Future Trend; Consumers are Currently Seeking or Avoiding Companies Because of Social Issues

In the past year, 59% of all consumers took action toward a brand that demonstrated social values that align or conflict with their own, including:

- 33% who actively sought out brands that support social issues they care about.
- 35% who actively avoided or boycotted ones that conflict with their views.
- 39% who recommended a brand that shares their views to family/friends.
- 36% who recommended that family/friends avoid brands that have conflicting values.
- 31% who posted positive messages on social media about companies because of their values.
- 21% who posted negative messages on social media about companies because of their values.

This brand activism is, again, even more prevalent with younger consumers: 82% of Gen Z, 76% of Millennials, 85% of Black/African American consumers under 30, and 84% of Hispanic/Latinx consumers under 30. Liberals are also more likely to take action: 73% vs. 51% of Moderates and 53% of Conservatives.

A Majority of Consumers Say Reproductive Health Care is Extremely or Very Important

77% of consumers consider reproductive health care (i.e., access to contraception and abortion) an important issue; 53% say it is extremely or very important. 91% of Gen Z and 86% of Millennials say it is important.

Of those who think it is important for brands to take a stand on social issues, 86% say it is important that brands take a stand on reproductive health care in particular (63% say it is extremely/very important). This puts reproductive health care in line with the desire for action on other social issues, such as gender equity (92%), racial justice (94%), voter rights (92%), and gun control (89%).

4 in 10 Consumers Would Be More Likely to Buy from a Brand That Supported Reproductive Health Care

42% of consumers, and more than half of Gen Z (56%) and Millennials (55%), would be more likely to buy from a brand that publicly supported reproductive health care. It's also the case that 41% of all consumers would choose the brand that publicly supported reproductive health over a cheaper alternative and 38% would choose the brand over their very favorite brand.

Importantly, this positive reaction overwhelms the potential negative: only 8% would be less likely to buy from a brand taking this type of stance. Even among Conservatives, the "less likely" share is only 14%.

Political giving is also an important issue. If it became known that a brand makes political contributions to candidates or officials who support abortion bans and restricting abortion access, 38% of all consumers (and 56% of Liberals) would feel less positively about the brand. 51% of consumers also think it is appropriate for brands to withhold contributions to these political candidates/officials as a way to take a stand.

Consumers See Several Ways That Brands Can Take Action

Consumers think there are a number of actions that a brand could take that would be appropriate for showing support of reproductive health care. 64% say it would be appropriate to ensure employees have access to the reproductive health care they need, 58% say the same about donations to organizations that address reproductive health care, and 56% would favor a public statement in support of the issue. These stats include all consumers, including Conservatives. Liberals, not surprisingly, are even more supportive of these actions.