

Millennials Want Brands to Be Socially Responsible

And it affects this cohort's purchasing decisions

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A brand's ethics and social responsibility can influence purchasing decisions and loyalty for many millennials—a generation transitioning into their prime spending years.

“Millennials are very aware of when something feels inauthentic or forced, and we know this based on the ways they want to be targeted or what they want to see in ads. They are looking for, and respond to, things that almost can't be inauthentic,” said Joline McGoldrick, senior vice president of Data Insights and Research at [VidMob](#).

In a recent survey by RetailMeNot, two thirds of internet users ages 18 and older said more brands should take a public stand on important social values. And over half said that even if they disagree with a company's position, that wouldn't impact their likelihood to purchase from that brand.

How Do US Internet Users Feel About the Social Responsibility of Brands?

% of respondents, Nov 2018

Think more brands should take a public stand on important social values

66%

Would recommend a brand to their friends that aligns with their social values

61%

Spend more money with a brand that aligns with their social values

52%

A brand taking a public stand on something that they disagree with would not impact them shopping with that brand

51%

Note: ages 18+

Source: RetailMeNot, "The 2019 Retail Marketing Playbook," Jan 24, 2018

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This social sentiment is even more true for millennials—74% of respondents ages 22 to 37 said more brands should take public stands on important social values.

Taking stances on hot-button issues can be risky for brands. But in an increasingly polarized political climate, [some are courting controversy and are willing to alienate a vocal minority](#).

Nike is one such brand, which ran an ad late last year featuring Colin Kaepernick, the former NFL quarterback who sparked controversy by kneeling during the national anthem. There were consumers who cut the brand's logos off their socks, or even burned their sneakers. But there were also those who purchased Nike products in support.

A Quinnipiac University study [cited by the Washington Post in September 2018](#), revealed that 18- to- 34-year-olds approved of Nike's decision to feature Kaepernick by a 67% to 21% margin. What's more, 34% of millennials were more likely to purchase Nike products following the brand's campaign, according to a November 2018 survey from [ROTH Capital Partners](#).

Interested in reading more about millennials? eMarketer PRO subscribers can check out our report “Millennials 2019” publishing in February. Not sure if your company subscribes? [Check here.](#)