

Social issues can present promises and pitfalls for advertisers

Article

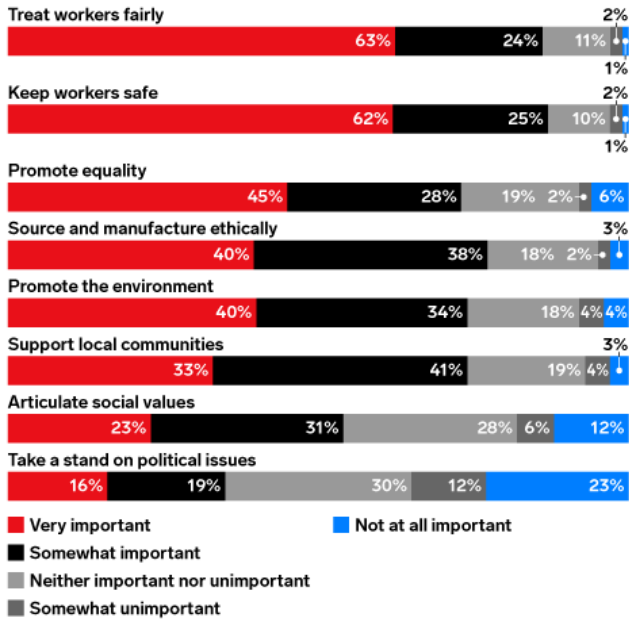
The trend: Social values influence the shopping behavior of two-thirds of US consumers, according to a 2021 McKinsey & Company survey. While this can present challenges for brands, it also provides an opportunity to show authenticity that can gain consumers' respect.

Nothing is a no-no: Our recent Spotlight report finds that despite the difficulty in navigating social and political causes, brands will not fare well by doing nothing when big and

controversial issues make headlines. That's because consumers, employees, and investors want transparency.

How Important Is It to US Consumers that Brands Take Select Actions?

% of respondents, Oct 2021



Note: ages 18+; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding
Source: Merkle, "2022 CX Survey Report," Jan 13, 2022

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Words to the wise: Here are some core principles that brands can keep in mind when faced with potentially thorny issues.

- Companies should be clear on their values, using their mission statement as a gauge for determining which issues to embrace or avoid.
- No constituencies should be ignored.
- Connecting with communities to gain an understanding of their needs and concerns can help brands.
- Know that things can go wrong—and put a plan in place to follow when that happens.

Go further: For more on how marketers can navigate social and political issues, read our [*Spotlight: What Values-Driven Consumers Really Want.*](#)