

# Consumers in Europe will be more attuned to brand purpose and messaging

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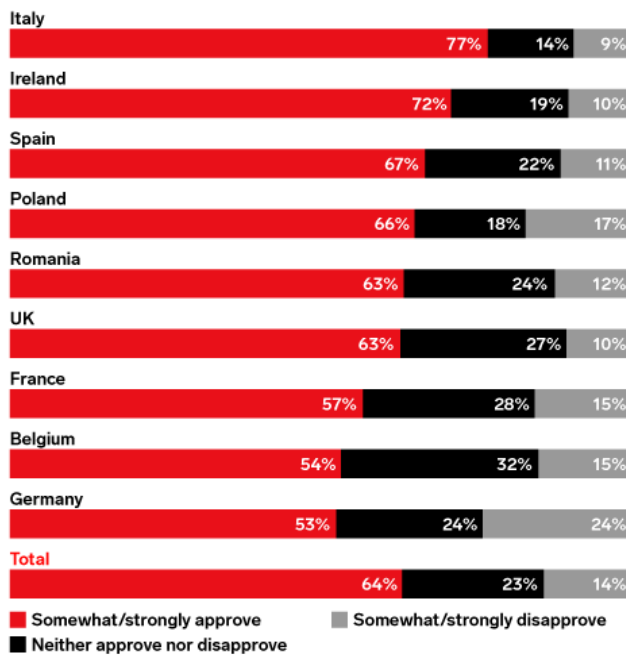
**eMarketer Editors**

Consumers in Europe increasingly see brands in a much broader context. The public is becoming more alert to the ways companies and brands go beyond advertising and marketing to make other positive contributions—or not.

In May 2020, with no end in sight to the pandemic, nearly two-thirds (64%) of internet users in Europe said that brands should run ad campaigns referring to the pandemic, or related to it, according to GlobalWebIndex.

## Internet Users in Europe Who Approve of Brands Running Advertising Campaigns Related\* to the Coronavirus Pandemic, by Country, May 2020

% of respondents in each group



Note: n=7,487 ages 16-64; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding; \*advertising which shows how they are responding to the coronavirus pandemic or helping customers  
 Source: GlobalWebIndex, "Coronavirus Research: Multi-Market Research Wave 4"; eMarketer calculations, June 2, 2020

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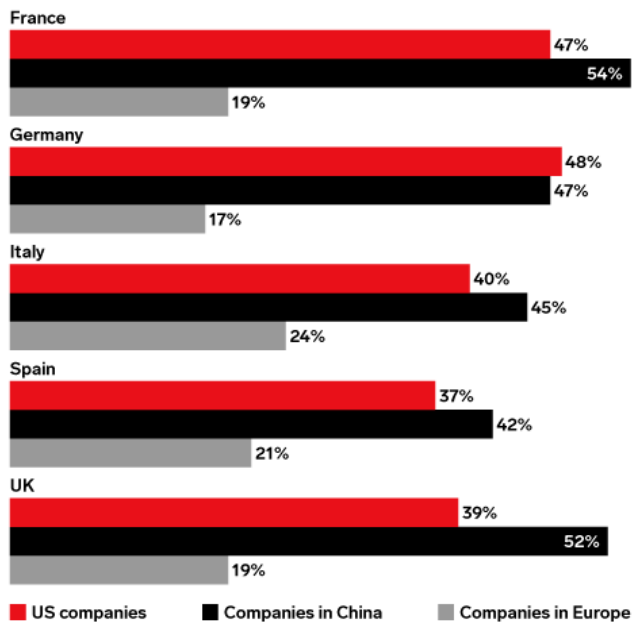
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But the converse also applies: Brands that don't step up to the plate, or are linked with counterproductive actions, can easily lose consumer approval.

Chinese brands suffered in Europe during the first acute phase of the pandemic in H1 2020, according to a June survey of adults in the EU-4 countries and the UK by Morning Consult. For example, over half of respondents in France and the UK said the pandemic had made them look less favorably on Chinese companies.

### Adults in Select Countries in Europe Who Say the Coronavirus Pandemic Has Made Them Less Favorable Toward Companies in China, Europe, and the US, June 2020

% of respondents in each group



Note: ages 18+

Source: Morning Consult as cited in company blog, June 24, 2020

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US brands were also affected, as the virus began to spread in the US and the federal government mounted no effective plan to combat it. In all European markets polled, at least 37% of adults (including 48% in Germany) said they felt less favorable toward those brands as a result.

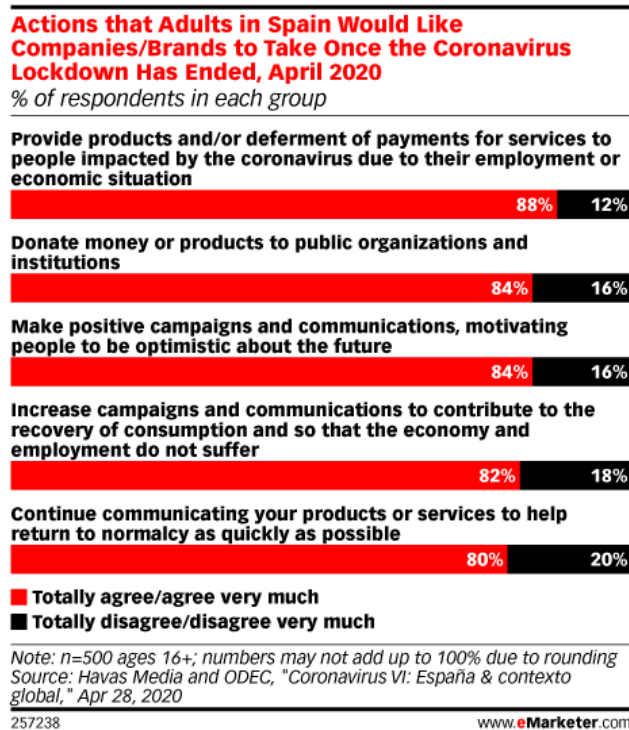
Overall, Morning Consult found that several major US brands posted sizable declines in net trust, net favorability, and community impact among consumers in Europe in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak.

More generally, Morning Consult noted a steep decline in the purchasing of both US and international brands by adults in Europe since the start of the pandemic. Domestic brands, and brands that consumers were loyal to before the coronavirus struck, were least affected by lower levels of buying.

"It's clear that in 2021, more consumers will be keeping an eye on retailers' ethical credentials," said **Karin von Abrams** eMarketer

principal analyst covering Western Europe at Insider Intelligence. “Crucially, consumers believe that firms’ ethically responsible behavior should be a long-term commitment.”

In Spain, 88% of adults surveyed by Havas Media and ODEC in April wanted companies and brands to be proactive in providing products, and/or deferring payments, after the lockdown ended for those whose employment or economic situation was affected by the coronavirus. Over 80% said firms and brands should donate money or products to public organizations and institutions, produce ad campaigns and messages that are positive, and increase those that help consumption recover.



Of course, many retailers were already taking on this imperative; 58% of those in France surveyed by KPMG and Fédération du E-commerce et de la Vente à Distance (FEVAD) in November 2020 believed that environmental consciousness was already well established among consumers.

But online retailers aren’t blind to the complexities of their situation either; 55% reported that these new consumer behaviors posed an

inherent risk to their future. As a result, 81% of retailers polled said they considered the subject of corporate social responsibility a priority.

For more insights on retail trends in Europe and the UK, eMarketer PRO subscribers can read our recent reports or listen to episodes from our monthly international podcast:

**Report** by Karin von Abrams Jan 14, 2021

## Western Europe Retail Trends 2021



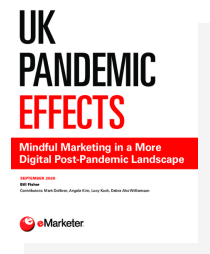
**Report** by Bill Fisher Nov 04, 2020

## UK Holiday Season Shopping 2020



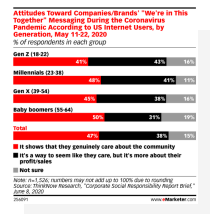
**Report** by Bill Fisher Sep 01, 2020

## UK Pandemic Effects



**Audio** Dec 14, 2020

## Around the World with ... Standout Brands of 2020: Collaborations and brand goodwill



Audio Nov 02, 2020

## Around the World with ... Holiday Shopping: Thanksgiving Weekend, Singles' Day, and the Buen Fin

