How Companies are Responding after a Year of Crises

Meaningful Data, Public Perception and the Reputation and Risk Impacts

September 10, 2020

John Gerzema, CEO
The Harris Poll
jgerzema@harrisinsights.com
Black Americans are especially affected economically by the pandemic

As a result of the current pandemic, have you or your household been impacted financially in any of the following ways?

- White: I have not been impacted financially
- White: Missed a bill payment
- White: Provided financial support for a family member
- White: Sought out new or additional sources of income
- Black: I have not been impacted financially
- Black: Missed a bill payment
- Black: Provided financial support for a family member
- Black: Sought out new or additional sources of income

Source: Harris Poll COVID19 Tracker Wave 26
Americans more empathic toward black community since Ferguson in 2014

Do you believe there is systematic racism in America?

% Yes

71%

BASE: AGES 18+
Source: Harris Poll COVID-19 Tracker Wave 17, June 18-20, 2020

For each of the following, please indicate if you think black people are discriminated against in that area or not.

- In the way they are treated by police: 59%
- In getting full equality: 45%
- In the way they are treated as human beings: 44%
- In getting decent housing: 52%
- In getting white collar office jobs: 51%
- In the way they are treated by the federal government: 50%
- In getting skilled labor jobs: 45%
- In getting into labor unions: 38%
- In getting hotel and motel accommodations: 37%
- In getting manual labor jobs: 35%
- In the way they are treated by police: 34%
- In the wages they are paid: 31%
- In getting a quality education in public schools: 26%
- In getting white collar office jobs: 27%
- In getting skilled labor jobs: 18%
- In getting into labor unions: 19%
- In getting hotel and motel accommodations: 15%
- In the prices they pay in grocery stores: 10%

BASE: AGES 18+
Source: Harris Poll COVID-19 Tracker Wave 17, June 18-20, 2020

Contrasted with American attitudes immediately following the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson Mo in 2014
Americans say this time feels different: more support from diverse groups

Which of the following describes why you feel this moment in the racial equality movement "feels different"?

Of the 77% of Americans who say “this time feels different” …

- There is more support from different groups of people than before: 46% (Wave 17) vs. 52% (Wave 15)
- It feels more powerful because more people are trying to create change: 42% (Wave 17) vs. 48% (Wave 15)
- I feel for the first time that there is opportunity to really affect change (i.e., for things to move forward in a positive way): 36% (Wave 17) vs. 42% (Wave 15)
- People outside the black community are finally trying to listen and understand the plight of POC: 38% (Wave 17) vs. 42% (Wave 15)

BASE: AGES 18+
Source: Harris Poll COVID-19 Tracker Wave 17, June 18-20, 2020
A strong majority of Americans feel this is lowest point in nation’s history

Is This The Lowest Point In History You Can Remember?

% Yes

2020
72%

2019 and 2018
56%

2017
59%

65% of voters say country is on the wrong track in July 2020
Up from 58% in May 2020 and 54% in March 2020

BASE: AGES 18+
Source: APA Civil Unrest Survey by The Harris Poll, June 2020

BASE: AGES 18+
Source: APA Annual Stress in America Survey by The Harris Poll, 2019; Annual Stress in America Survey by The Harris Poll, 2018

BASE: AGES 18+
Source: APA Annual Stress in America Survey by The Harris Poll, 2017

BASE: AGES 18+
Source: Harvard CAPS Harris Poll, July 2020

Most Americans Say This Is Lowest Point in U.S. History in Living Memory

Newsweek
June 23, 2020

Newsweek
June 19, 2020
In this crisis, companies seen as part of solution rather than the problem

Select Industry Reputation Trends (% Positive Reputation; 5, 6, or 7 on a 7-point scale)

Source: Harris Poll COVID-19 Tracker
BASE: AGES 18+
Americans want stability, direction; turn to companies with purpose, ethics

Large companies asked to step into the void of leadership

Corporate America more trustworthy/reliable than gov’t

Consumers look to companies to speak out on social issues

79%
Feel a company’s vision of the world is more important now than in past

79%
Expect a company’s leadership to respond to COVID-19 and racial inequality

81%
Feel even if a company stumbles it’s important to see how they think and what their intentions are

82%
Would forgive a company for a least trying to help, even if they don’t get it right (when speaking out)

72%
Is living up to their internal values (when speaking out)

81%
Agree that large companies with resources, infrastructure, advanced logistics are even more vital now to America’s future than before the pandemic.

72%
Trust companies more than the federal government to find solution on COVID-19 and racial equality.

76%
Say companies were more reliable than the federal government in keeping America running during the COVID-19 pandemic and related shutdown.

BASE: AGES 18+
Source: Harris Poll RQ
Majority of Americans feel companies addressing pandemic, not inclusivity

How much do you feel you know about how large companies are responding to… (% great deal/a fair amount)

- The COVID-19 pandemic: 63%
- The economic security of their workforce: 49%
- Racial injustice in this country: 51%

What proportion of large companies do you think are on the right track in how they are addressing… (% most/many of them)

- The COVID-19 pandemic: 65%
- The economic security of their workforce: 54%
- Racial injustice in this country: 49%

BASE: AGES 18+
Source: Harris Poll COVID-19 Tracker Wave 22, July 24-26, 2020