

brandfog

McPHERSON
STRATEGIES

2018

CEOS SPEAKING OUT ON SOCIAL MEDIA SURVEY



During these tumultuous times, our society has become extremely polarized on prominent social issues

During these tumultuous times, our society has become extremely polarized on prominent social issues like immigration, human rights, economic inequality, gun control, racial discrimination, women's reproductive rights, and LGBTQ rights. Hot-button issues have forever altered the traditional business-as-usual practice of CEOs keeping their heads down, staying quiet and riding out the storm during social turmoil. CEOs are now expected to speak up about cultural issues and take a stand, and financial implications and consequences follow for both the leadership team and the brand.

The results of the recent Edelman Trust Barometer show that consumers now expect chief executives to inform conversations and policy debates on social issues, and respondents across all age groups expect a company's CEO to be personally visible in sharing the company's purpose and vision. Furthermore, 56% of respondents said that they have no respect for CEOs who remain silent on important issues¹. Consumer expectations have shifted dramatically, impacting how people perceive brands and their leadership team, and ultimately influencing how they wield their purchasing power. A recent survey "Brands & Stands: Social Purpose is the New Black" found that 64% of those who

believe that it's extremely important for a company to take a stand on social issues also said that they were very likely to purchase a product based on that commitment².

When we introduced our first **BRANDfog Social Media & Leadership Survey in 2012**, we already knew about the lasting impact social media would have on leadership, and our survey respondents agreed. Six years ago, companies understood the important role that social media plays in brand building, but most had not yet realized its full potential to raise the profile of executives to establish thought leadership and strengthen the credibility of the brand. This has now changed dramatically.

Today, companies can weather a social media storm if they embrace transparency and act swiftly and decisively to make corrections. However, companies whose leaders are perceived to be weak or unwilling to take a stand in the face of controversy will lose the trust of stakeholders. Our new findings confirm that when CEOs speak out on the issues people care about, this profoundly affects the view of the company, and shapes the reputation of the brand.

Ann Charles

Founder & CEO BRANDfog, Social Media for the C-Suite

1. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/01/business/dealbook/ceos-social-change.html>

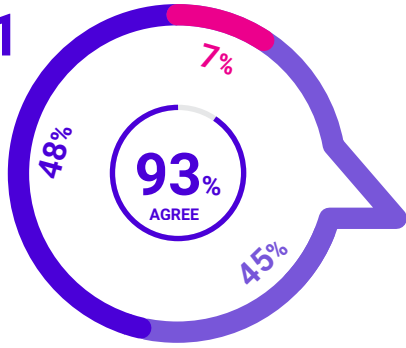
2. http://www.sustainablebrands.com/news_and_views/marketing_comms/sustainable_brands/consumers_ready_reward_brands_take_stands

Our 2018 survey takes a closer look at the far-reaching effects of a CEO's social media activity on brand trust and purchase intent. The survey also examines social media as an effective tool that enables CEOs to amplify their positions on key social issues, and demonstrates how CEO engagement on social media can provide a role model for the next generation of leaders.

METHODOLOGY

BRANDfog & McPherson Strategies 2018 CEOs Speaking Out on Social Media Survey surveyed 500 US employees in diverse companies. The companies surveyed ranged in size from startups to Fortune 1000 companies and spanned various industries.

Q1

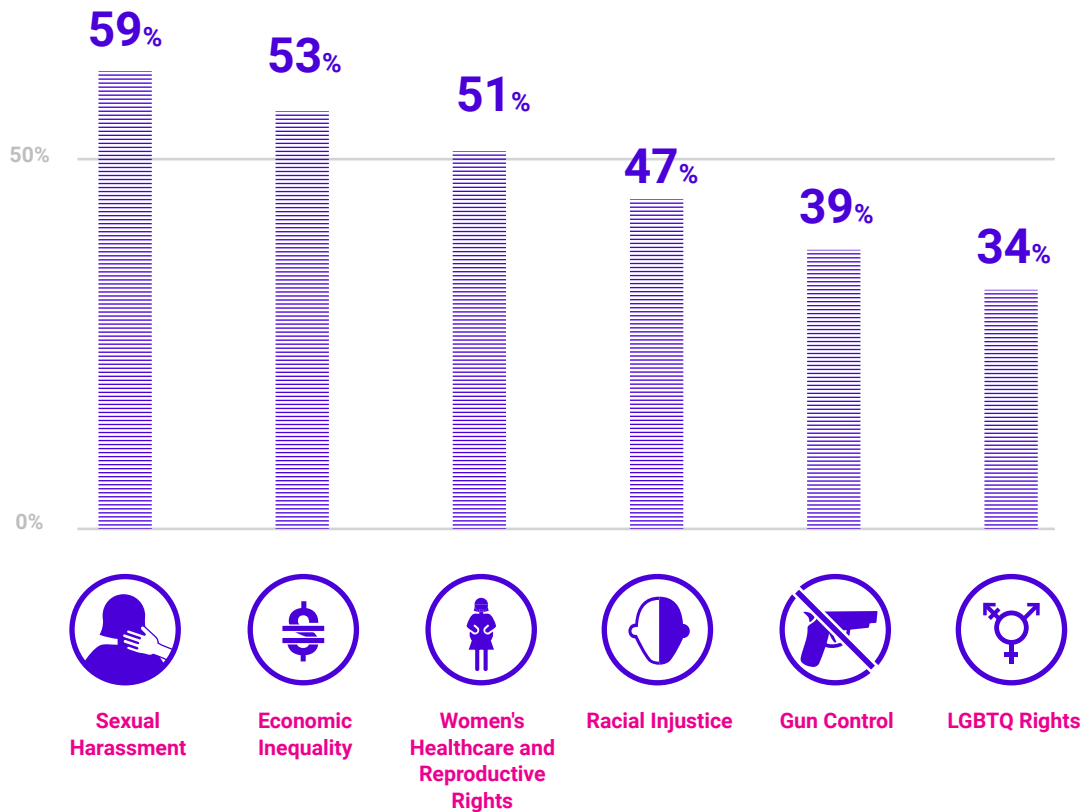


When CEOs issue statements about the key social issues of our time and I agree with the sentiment, I am more likely to make a purchase from that company.

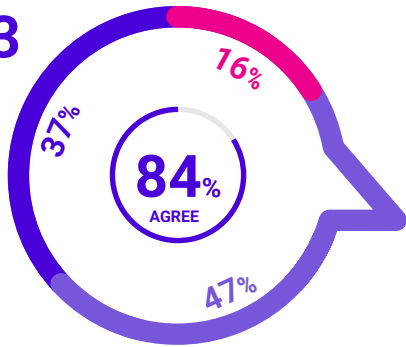
STRONGLY AGREE AGREE DISAGREE

Q2

For companies that I patronize, it is important for me to know the CEO's position on prominent social issues such as: (please select all that apply)



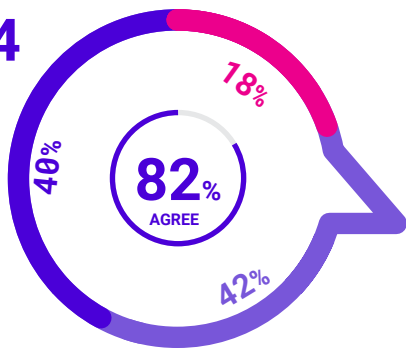
Q3



STRONGLY AGREE AGREE DISAGREE

When CEOs issue statements about the key social issues of our time and I disagree with the sentiment, I am less likely to make a purchase from that company.

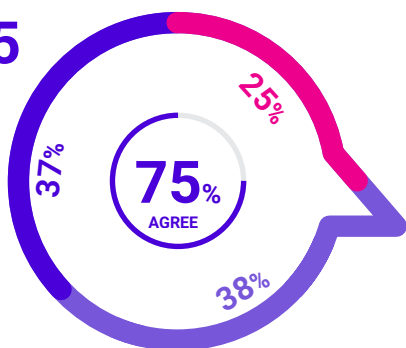
Q4



STRONGLY AGREE AGREE DISAGREE

As an employee, it is important for me to know my CEO's position on prominent social issues like women's reproductive rights, gun control, immigration policy, economic inequality, racial discrimination and LGBTQ rights.

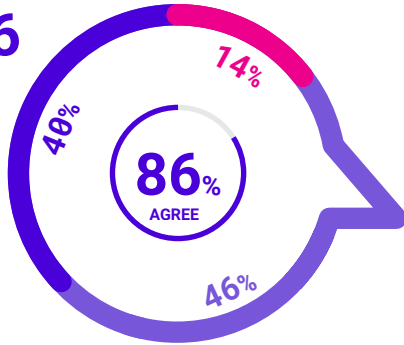
Q5



STRONGLY AGREE AGREE DISAGREE

As an employee, it is important to me that my CEO communicates their opinion publicly regarding the key social issues of our time.

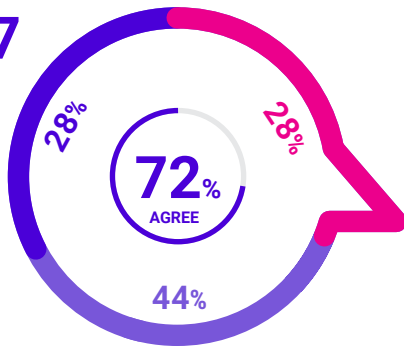
Q6



STRONGLY AGREE AGREE DISAGREE

CEOs that publicly defend the rights of others on social media are demonstrating great leadership.

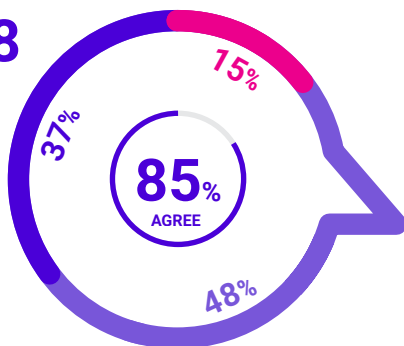
Q7



STRONGLY AGREE AGREE DISAGREE

I expect the CEOs of brands I support to use social media to address the key social issues of our time.

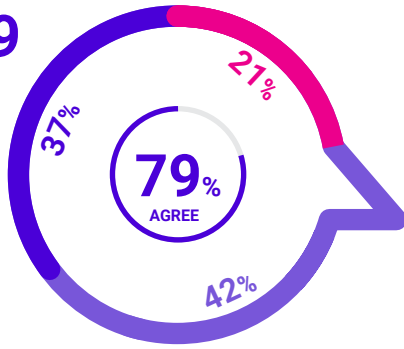
Q8



STRONGLY AGREE AGREE DISAGREE

When a CEO speaks out about the social issues I care about on social media, this affects my view of the company and shapes the reputation of the brand.

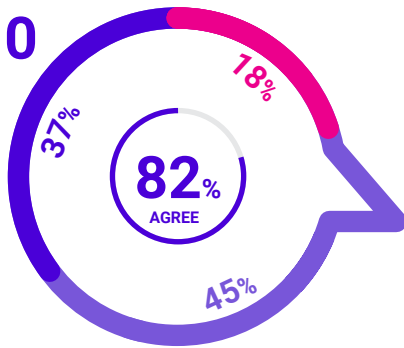
Q9



STRONGLY AGREE AGREE DISAGREE

When a CEO speaks out about the social issues I care about on social media, it helps to build brand trust.

Q10



STRONGLY AGREE AGREE DISAGREE

CEOs on social media who take a stand on the key social issues of our time can act as role models for the next generation of leaders.