

The COVID-19 Pandemic Has Led to a Surge of Socially Responsible Behaviors According to Special Release of the Conscious Consumer Spending Index (#CCSIndex)

Good Deeds Are Up After Three-Year Slide, While Index Rebounds from Historic Lows. Amazon and Walmart Top Both Nice and Naughty Lists. Trust Outpaces Purpose as Key Influencer of Consumer Preference Post-Pandemic

LOS ANGELES and NASHVILLE, Tenn. – COVID-19 has had a radically positive impact on socially responsible behaviors, according to a special release of the Conscious Consumer Spending Index (#CCSIndex).

After a three-year slide, consumers have been spurred to significant increases in a range of “do good” behaviors such as reducing consumption, donating to charity and buying products and services from socially responsible companies. This rebound of goodness comes at a time when approximately one quarter of Americans are reporting a decline in household income, their overall wellbeing or both. In total, 1,006 Americans were surveyed for the latest index.

Conducted annually each fall since 2013, the #CCSIndex is an ongoing benchmarking study. Good.Must.Grow., a socially responsible marketing consultancy, administers the index to gauge momentum for conscious consumerism and charitable giving. Researchers fielded this mid-year check point to gauge what impact the COVID-19 pandemic is having on social responsibility.

Overall, the impact is positive. The #CCSIndex jumped 15 percent to 46 on a 100-point scale. This was the highest score since 2017, and a dramatic reversal from a record low performance of 39 last November. The Index score is calculated by evaluating the importance consumers place on purchasing from socially responsible companies, actions taken to support such products and services, and future intent to increase the amount they spend with responsible organizations. Based on the design of the Index’s algorithm, even a one-point change in overall score indicates meaningful movement of consumer sentiment.

“This pandemic has had an extensive and negative impact on our collective wellbeing, but it has also served as a catalyst for community and consciousness,” said Heath Shackelford, Founder of Good.Must.Grow. “We have been forced to come together in new ways. We’ve benefited from fresh perspectives and resetting of priorities. And I think we are taking seriously our individual roles as change makers to lead with purpose and reward companies and causes who do the same.”

Other key findings from the Index include:

- Those who have been diagnosed with COVID-19, or have cared for an immediate family member with the virus, were far more likely to report improved wellbeing, charitable giving, supporting socially responsible companies and backing local businesses, than those with no direct exposure.
- Nearly half of Americans (47%) believe companies will be more socially responsible as a result of the pandemic.

- More than three-quarters of Americans say that how a company treats employees and customers during the pandemic will be an important factor when determining whether to support them following the pandemic. Overall, matters of trust outranked a company's purpose and social impact as priorities for consumers post-pandemic.
- Just under half of Americans will be working harder on their personal health (43%) and building their savings accounts (41%) as a result of the pandemic.

Naughty or Nice – Which Companies Are Behaving Well During the Pandemic?

When asked which companies were doing a good job of being socially responsible during the pandemic, the most likely responses (unaided) were:

1. Walmart
2. Amazon
3. Target
4. Kroger
5. Costco

Interestingly, when asked which companies were NOT being socially responsible during the pandemic, the same two brands led the way. The top five were:

1. Amazon
2. Walmart
3. Tesla
4. Hobby Lobby
5. Tyson Foods

“I believe there are many positives here,” said Shackleford. “The data we collect have been trending the wrong direction for several years, and it seems there is renewed momentum for consumers to more consistently support organizations that are mission-driven and committed to positive social impact. It will be important to sustain this energy as we continue to navigate the pandemic and prepare for a new normal.”

About the Study

This study was conducted in partnership with Supportive Research Solutions. Sampling was provided by Dynata. Data was collected May 9 -16, 2020. In total, 1,006 Americans were surveyed (margin of error is +/- 3%). For more information on the Conscious Consumer Spending Index, please visit www.goodmustgrow.com/ccsindex

About Good.Must.Grow.

Doing good by any means necessary. That's our motto. We are obsessed with helping good organizations grow. We provide strategic marketing support for socially responsible businesses, nonprofit causes and individuals committed to making our world a healthier place. We also fuel our own initiatives aimed at specific causes, ranging from human trafficking to addiction to health and wellness. Proud to be a Certified B Corp and ranked as a Best for the World company. Learn more at goodmustgrow.com.