

CRUSADING CONSUMERS COME OUT SWINGING FOR CHARITIES

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The pandemic has provided the opportunity for deep reflection about what's important – and for many, that means making ethical purchases. What does this mean for corporate partnerships?



Australians are turning their attention to companies that support charities. Because not only do they want companies and brands to address their impact on society and the environment, they also want them to be active agents of change.

This is according to a new report from [BePartnerReady.com](https://www.bepartnerready.com), in partnership with [Cavill + Co](#), [Di Marzio Research](#), and [Marlin Communications](#), which argues that a new breed of ‘Conscious Consumers’ has emerged out of the world’s lockdowns and they expect the companies they interact with to demonstrate transparency, staff care, ethical supply chains, and minimal environmental damage.

Consumers have realised they have agency and leverage in the way they interact with corporates – by working for companies that align to their values, by purchasing products that do good and boycotting those that do harm, and by asserting their concerns and influencing those around them through the power of social media.

A snapshot of findings

Attitudes on behaviour

- Over two thirds of Australian consumers believe that corporates only care about profit and will do anything to get it.
- Just under three quarters agree the old model of corporates operating purely for profit is dead. Companies should take responsibility for their impact and take action.
- Three quarters of Australian consumers agree it is time corporate Australia stepped up and showed leadership in solving social issues.
- Just under two thirds believe corporate Australia (of all the institutions) has the greatest potential to solve societal problems.
- Just under two thirds agree that during Covid they've re-evaluated priorities and are more likely to buy products and services from companies doing good.
- Over one third have actively boycotted a company or brand in the past year, due to its poor social responsibility.
- Over three quarters of Australian consumers believe corporates should partner with charities to solve social problems, in the coming year.
- Over one quarter have actively switched brands, because of its support of a charity, in the past year.
- Over half say they will switch brands supporting a charity, in the coming year (rising to over 4 in 5 saying possibly).
- The top 6 causes that prompt consumers to switch brands are: climate change (23%), mental health (20%), healthcare and medical research (19%), environmental conservation (18%), support and care for vulnerable people (17%) and animal rescue/care (17%).

Attitudes on communications

- Almost three quarters of Australian consumers agree they're more likely to believe a company's support of a cause if they can see the tangible social impact.
- Almost three quarters of Australians agree a company's cause activity is more genuine if they're partnered with a charity.
- Over two thirds of consumers agree it is good when a company helps to amplify a topical cause, but must show genuine commitment or it is just woke washing/PR stunt.

The impact for nonprofits

A great example of a company that has listened to the voices of Conscious Consumers is ME Bank, who have a [pink everyday transaction account card](#) that contributes 1c to breast cancer research, every time it's used. To date the card has generated over \$1 million for the National Breast Cancer Foundation, and it's ME's most popular debit card.

In 2020, Coles partnered with the Heart Foundation to support Australians' aspirations to become healthier and more active. They launched the [Coles Health Hub](#), a one-stop online portal offering practical information and solutions around exercise, diet and nutrition, mental health and motivation.

There is credibility that comes with an official charity partnership – it’s all too easy for a company to post online that they are a ‘sustainable brand’, a move that is often labelled ‘woke washing’. A charity partnership adds proof that a company is actually putting money where their mouth is.

So, what does all this mean? Well, according to the report:

“If, and when, companies rise to answer the call of the Crusading Consumer, there will be a greater demand for companies to embrace CSR and Social Good strategies.

For those that do, the results are far reaching and include motivated and proud staff, enhanced reputation, differentiation from competitors, and potentially more customers.”

Could there be a better time for you to have your corporate engagement strategy at the ready?

To read the report in full, [click here](#), where you will also find a copy of the report for **New Zealand** and for **corporates, companies and brands** (both reports will be available from mid-November 2021).