

The Weekly Digest

A single source for consumer sentiment, news, and resources related to what's happening in the country today

January 6, 2021

This week, we look to the future. While the challenges of 2020 will remain with us well into the new year, the components of change are already beginning to take shape. COVID cases are consistently topping 200,000 per day (that's 138 people contracting COVID in the U.S. every minute), but as vaccinations ramp up, the dream of normalcy inches closer to becoming reality. A new presidential administration only weeks away and the impact of today's Georgia runoff vote are expected to drive political change in 2021. This will be particularly significant in regard to our economic recovery and the possibility of further stimulus packages to support Americans who are struggling

from the pandemic (see Spotlight On: The 2021 U.S. Economy).

2020 was a year that brought us many unexpected shifts in consumer behavior, so predicting what 2021 will have in store is no easy task but many experts are placing their bets on what trends will emerge in the new year (See: Chart of the Day). Brands are also hyper-focused on these trends as they attempt to adapt and recover from what was a rough year for most businesses. But perhaps no brand is more bullish on the future right now than Burger King, which is helping consumers "[send themselves a Whopper in the future](#)".

Number of COVID-19 Cases in the U.S.

21,052,711

Number of Daily New Diagnoses in the U.S.

227,288

Trajectory of New Diagnoses: **Increasing**

As of 9:30am Source: [Johns Hopkins](#)

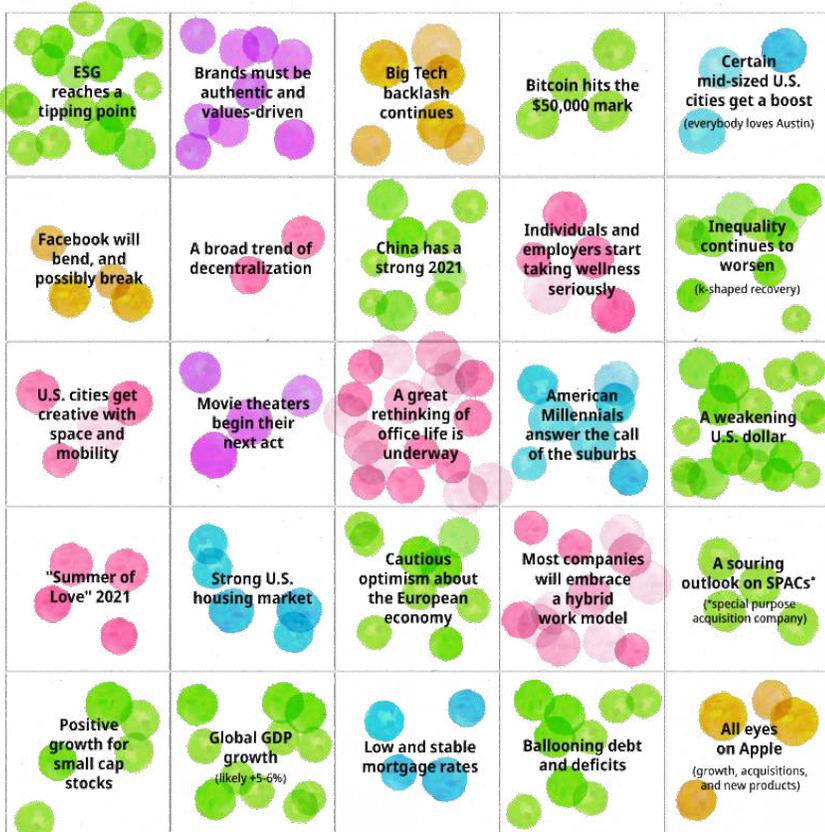
Consumer Discussions



Date: 12/30/20-1/5/21 Source: Brandwatch

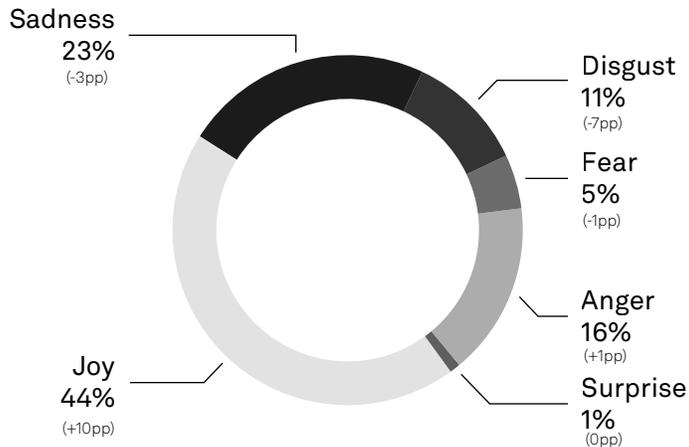
Prediction Consensus: What the Experts See Coming in 2021

Official 2021 Bingo card



Date: 1/5/21 Source: [Visual Capitalist](#)

Emotional sentiment



Date: 12/30/20-1/5/21 Source: Brandwatch

Note: Change in emotional sentiment is reflective of changes since 6/10, when we shifted how social listening is being pulled to be reflective of all social conversations, rather than COVID-19-specific conversations.

COVID-Related Resources

- Tracking COVID-19 vaccines around the world (12/18/20) [Visual Capitalist](#)
- The pandemic metric to trust right now (12/31/20) [The Atlantic](#)
- Vending machines now dispense coronavirus tests (1/4/21) [CNet](#)
- New Year's resolutions that will actually lead to happiness (12/31/20) [The Atlantic](#)
- Struggling to discuss tough topics with a kid? Here are books that might help (12/31/20) [NPR](#)

Racial-Justice-Related Resources

- Listen & learn: 4 of the best podcasts on race & inclusion [Game Plan](#)
- 10 keys to everyday anti-racism [Greater Good Berkeley](#)
- 4 key ways to build strong social justice movements [Teen Vogue](#)

Joy

Anger

Fear

Sadness

Disgust

Spotlight On: The 2021 U.S. Economy

The U.S. economy is expected to experience four different phases in 2021 based on the virus's spread, the vaccine's distribution, and policy responses' effectiveness. The four phases will be important for businesses to keep in mind as they plan ahead for the new year. Initially, the second coronavirus relief package will help but will begin to wear off in April, which will have negative effects on households' finances. After the vaccine is widely distributed, people will begin to return to their normal activities, driving economic activity. By the end of the year, we'll most likely see how well people are actually navigating the new normal. Below are the outlined phases:

- **Phase 1: Stimulus high (January-April)** - Consumers will grow more confident in the economy as stimulus checks and unemployment insurance payments offset the negative economic consequences of a rapidly spreading virus and restrictions on economic activity.
- **Phase 2: Vulnerability (April-June)** - As the effects of the second COVID relief bill fade, personal finances and consumer spending are likely to weaken.
- **Phase 3: Bounce back (July-October)** - With the U.S. on track to have the vaccine widely distributed by the end of Q2, the economy will experience a dramatic rebound that will likely last throughout the rest of the year as consumers grow comfortable engaging in normal activities.
- **Phase 4: Normalization (December-2022)** - The end of the year will be a first indication of the strength of the economy post-pandemic. The ability of unemployed workers to find work will determine economic potential going into 2022.

Source: [Morning Consult](#)

Economic News

- Vaccines could unleash a hobbled US economy & spur job growth in 2021, but risks loom (12/28/20) [USA Today](#)
- One vaccine side effect: Global economic inequality (12/25/20) [NYTimes](#)
- The economic impact of COVID-19, according to business leaders (12/29/20) [Visual Capitalist](#)
- The best and worst performing sectors of 2020 (1/4/20) [Visual Capitalist](#)

Marketing/Media News Related to COVID-19

- 8 marketing trends to watch for in 2021 as aftereffects of a volatile year linger (1/4/21) [Marketing Dive](#)
- How COVID memories will open new connections between brands and consumers (12/22/20) [Adweek](#)
- Livestreaming will take retail by storm in 2021 (12/21/20) [Adweek](#)
- Ford nixes F-150 ad campaign, urges America to 'finish strong' in battle against COVID-19 (12/31/20) [NBC News](#)
- Burger King wants you to send yourself a Whopper in the future in this new campaign (1/2/21) [Ads of the World](#)
- How Durex is discussing AIDS and safe sex in Singapore amid COVID-19 (1/4/21) [The Drum](#)
- Alaska Airlines released an '80s-style 'Safety Dance' music video about flying in the coronavirus-era (12/16/20) [Insider](#)
- Low-cost airline Ryanair comes under fire for 'jab and go' ad amid COVID-19 lockdown (1/5/21) [USA Today](#)
- Guitar Center, tailored brands find bankruptcy lifeline after year of COVID struggles (12/31/20) [Cheddar](#)
- Beyond Meat, Impossible Foods, Oatly: The alternative food brands that defined COVID-19 era eating (12/24/20) [Yahoo! Finance](#)

Marketing/Media News Related to Racial Injustice

- 'Hiring more diverse people isn't enough': 4 things to really focus on to promote racial equity in 2021 (12/16/20) [CNBC](#)
- Recruitment: Bringing the lessons of 2020 into 2021 (1/4/21) [Harvard Business Review](#)
- Influencer marketing is especially vulnerable to racism. What's being done about it? (12/21/20) [Adweek](#)
- How Pepsi plans to help Black-owned restaurants generate \$100 million in sales (12/26/20) [Adweek](#)
- Theater companies hold conversations on race, equity and inclusion (12/31/20) [Post-Gazette](#)
- Grocery store Giant Food is highlighting minority-owned food brands (12/29/20) [Eat This, Not That](#)

For a regularly updated blog tracking brands' responses to racial injustice, visit AdAge [here](#)