

# The Weekly Digest

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

WEEKLY DIGEST  
October 21, 2020



The New York Times reported today that the U.S. is seeing an average of 59,000 new coronavirus cases per day, the highest level since the beginning of August. The U.S. is forecast to set a record in the next week for the highest new daily cases since the pandemic began. Unlike earlier in the pandemic, new cases are not concentrated in specific states or regions, but rather growing nationwide. With cooler weather forcing people indoors and frustration with months of restrictions, the stage is being set for a challenging winter.

But, in the run up to the election, political, economic, and social issues are also front and center in people's minds. After the Black Lives Matter protests of the summer, many companies are still navigating how to talk about social issues. The Harvard Business Review offers a framework to help brands determine when to publicly take a stand (see Spotlight On: When Should Your Company Speak Up About a Social Issue). To a great extent, speaking out in a credible way depends on whether the issue is related to the company's strategy and brand values – this is when consumers want to hear from brands (see Chart of the Day). What matters in these volatile times is that brands are recognizing the need to speak out and have a more meaningful impact on society, and having the conversations internally and with their stakeholders on how to approach having a more public voice on important social issues.

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

# 8,275,093

## Number of Daily New Diagnoses in the U.S.

# 58,805

Trajectory of New Diagnoses:  
**Increasing**

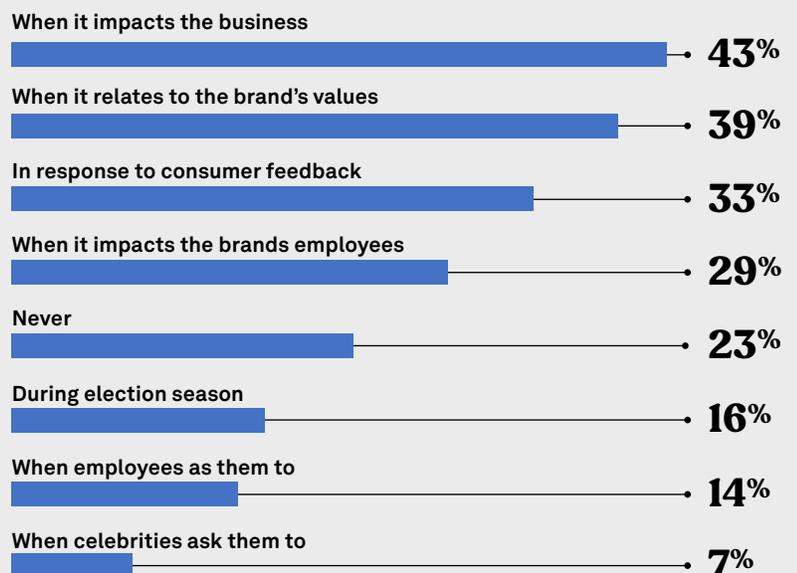
As of 7:24am Source: [Johns Hopkins](#)

## Consumer Discussions



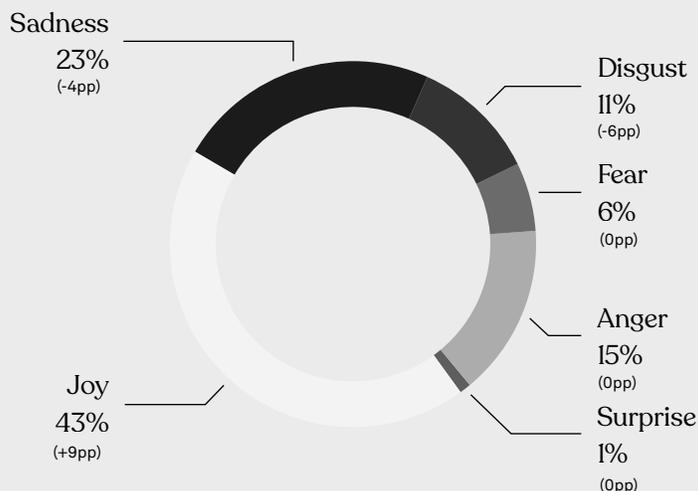
Date: 10/7/20-10/13/20 Source: Brandwatch

## When consumers want brands to take a stand on public issues



Date: 7/7/20 Source: [Sprout Social](#)

## Emotional sentiment



Date: 10/14/20-10/20/20

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:

- Surprising results in initial virus testing in NYC schools (10/19/20) [NYTimes](#)
- What to do after your PPP loan money runs out (10/19/20) [Fox Business](#)
- How to make socially distanced holidays actually feel special (10/20/20) [VICE](#)
- Coronavirus maps: How severe is your state's outbreak? (10/20/20) [NPR](#)

## Racial Justice-Related Resources:

- 'There certainly was an extremely Black movement': Ibram X. Kendi recounts how Blackness has been on display in 2020 (10/20/20) [The Root](#)
- 'White supremacy' once meant David Duke and the Klan. Now it refers to much more. (10/17/20) [NYTimes](#)
- Why the Asian American Covid data picture is so incomplete (10/20/20) [NBC News](#)
- The best holiday movies starring people of colour [Flare.com](#)
- 12 holiday movies starring Black folks [BET](#)
- Register to vote at [vote.org](#)
- What's on your ballot this election? Get informed and visit [Ballotpedia](#)

### Joy

**Kat17479968 (minneapolis)** @Kat17479968 1h  
RT @drsfaizanahmad Meet my #COVID duty colleague Dr Arup Senapati an ENT surgeon at Silchar medical college Assam . Dancing in front of COVID patients to make them feel happy #COVID19 #Assam <https://t.co/rhviYPIsW0>

**lumpiazaddy (JUSTICE FOR BREONNA/ELIJAH)** @lumpiazaddy 11h  
Thank you lord for another negative covid test 🙏

### Anger

**NessaLauren (Vanessa Lauren)** @NessaLauren 17 Oct  
Talking about how people are treated differently because of their race ISNT racism!

**Maggssss (Maggss .)** @Maggssss 17 Oct  
I hate not having regular doctor appointments because of COVID 😞

### Fear

**LeahMcGrathRD (LeahMcGrath)** @LeahMcGrathRD 18 Oct  
RT @Leicnut Good (and very fit) friend of mine recovering after a nasty dose of covid. Don't get blasé about this virus folks. The threat is real. #COVID19

**Active\_Minds (Active Minds)** @Active\_Minds 14 Oct  
"The school year is in full effect and I'm becoming more and more aware of the unique mental health challenges that COVID-19 has created in my life and for students across the country." New on the blog 📖 <https://t.co/pUDFdlw2W>

### Sadness

**DebbieJWarren (Debbie Jones Warren)** @DebbieJWarren 11h  
[@SaraJaneKehler](#) Praying for you, dear sister. Life can be so hard especially now with COVID complications. 💜💜💜

**buddywriterdude (Utah Girl Chronicles 🌸🌻🌺🌻🌺 Support Writers)** @buddywriterdude 14 Oct  
[@AP](#) I have family in Wisconsin and this is very depressing news. The COVID situation is bad up there and it only will get incrementally worse.

### Disgust

**anna\_domet (Anna)** @anna\_domet 21h  
RT [@KamalaHarris](#) Black Americans are dying from COVID-19 at 2x the rate of white Americans. This pandemic has further reinforced historical inequities in our nation—and it is clear that confronting these disparities is not a priority for this administration.

**Bacarb4Lyfe (BLOODY BACARBIE)** @Bacarb4Lyfe 18 Oct  
[@YonceBardi](#) Racist slurs are never ok

## Spotlight On: When Should Your Company Speak Up About a Social Issue?

In recent years, companies have been under pressure from various stakeholders—employees, customers, investors, and the communities in which they operate—to publicly take a stand on current political and social movements. Research shows that 53% of consumers agree that every brand has a responsibility to get involved in at least one social issue that does not directly impact its business. However, it is impossible and impractical for brands to speak out on every issue. So, when should companies and their executives speak out? Harvard Business Review has published a framework to help companies make this decision.

### 3 questions to guide your approach:

1. Does the issue align with your company's strategy? Your strategy is based in part on the company's mission and values. These should be aligned with the issue you're speaking out on so your statements will be viewed in an authentic way.
2. Can you meaningfully influence the issue? Does your company have the expertise and resources to make a difference? Are you willing to put your money where your mouth is? If not, speaking out could be viewed as hypocritical.
3. Will your constituencies agree with speaking out? When these key constituencies disagree with each other, you must carefully weigh their relative importance to your business.

### Framework to guide your response:

- If you answer "yes" to all three questions above, then you can speak out on the issue at hand.
- If you answer "yes" to two of the questions and "no" to a third, you may want to approach the situation as a follower. This may consist of joining a coalition of companies or an industry association that is speaking out on the issue. Or you may have a division or individual product or brand that speaks on the issue, rather than the entire company.
- If you answer "yes" to only one of the questions, you should continue monitoring the situation.
- And if you answer "no" to all three questions, you should not speak out.

In order to be prepared and respond thoughtfully, companies should discuss in advance which issues they have a perspective on and create a playbook for their response. Companies should assign a forecasting team to monitor and research issues and decide on the ones that most align with or impact their business strategy. They should then develop a playbook for speaking out on these issues.

Source: [Harvard Business Review](#) (10/16/20)

## Marketing/Media News Related to COVID-19

- Air travel high: TSA screens 1 Million for 1st time since March (10/20/20) [NPR](#)
- When start-ups go into the garage (or sometimes the living room) (10/20/20) [NYT](#)
- America will sacrifice anything for the college experience (10/20/20) [The Atlantic](#)
- Yelp is paying young people \$2G to "re-empty the nest" (10/20/20) [Fox Business](#)
- 5 big numbers that show Netflix's massive growth continues during the coronavirus pandemic (10/20/20) [Forbes](#)
- How Google's 'hybrid' work model could work for your business (10/20/20) [Forbes](#)
- Marketers step up flu-shot efforts amid unsettling anti-COVID vaccine campaigns (10/20/20) [AdAge](#)

## Marketing/Media News Related to Racial Injustice

- Is the ad world's push for racial justice a moment or a movement? (10/13/20) [Marketing Dive](#)
- Disney strengthens racism warning for classic films (10/16/20) [NPR](#)
- Starbucks sets diversity benchmarks to advance social and racial equity (10/16/20) [Adweek](#)
- C.E.O.s set goals to advance racial equity by providing money and mentorship (10/16/20) [NYTimes](#)
- Arnold Schwarzenegger, Usher, Nas and others discuss race and equality in live Twitch homepage takeover (10/15/20) [Hollywood Reporter](#)
- '100kPledge' tracks social justice commitments from public figures and corporations (10/14/20) [Bloomberg News](#)
- Sony releases free Black Lives Matter PS4 theme (10/19/20) [The Verge](#)
- Black history and culture attractions still looking for corporate donors to match all the BLM rhetoric (10/19/20) [Skift](#)
- 'Cops' resumes production after cancellation amid Black Lives Matter movement (10/18/20) [The DePaulia](#)
- 5 things every brand must know about supporting Black Lives Matter (10/13/20) [Forbes](#)

## Economic News

- How America gave up on fighting the pandemic and saving the economy (10/19/20) [VOX](#)
- Coronavirus tanked the economy. Then credit scores went up (10/18/20) [WSJ](#)
- Stimulus nears election endgame on Pelosi deadline, Senate vote (10/20/20) [Bloomberg](#)

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