

**WIE** | Brands in ***Motion***

# **THE NEW BRAND LOYALTY**



September 2019

Brands Must Be Human to the Core to Thrive in the Consumer Revolution

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Brands face a perfect storm. Consumers today have unprecedented levels of knowledge and choice at their fingertips, are sick of living in a polarized world and are demanding a revolution. They want their lives to be easier, they want their needs met, they want brands to use technology responsibly, they want less division and more unity and they crave deeper connections — and they expect brands to deliver all of this now.

Brands have never had more power or opportunity to act with bold purpose, and they've never been more vulnerable or replaceable. How they do what they do matters more than ever.

Brands in Motion 2019 finds consumers are demanding that brands move toward a more emotional space. The new brand loyalty is driven by more than product or customer service — it's driven by a shared understanding of humanity and respect. To survive, brands must be human to the core.

## Five key stats

- 1** Brands in Motion has surveyed almost **80,000 people** over three years. In that time, not a single global consumer expectation has decreased
- 2** **74%** expect brands to take a stand on important issues
- 3** Consumers love tech, but **69%** say change is happening too fast
- 4** **92%** would stop using a product or service if it was using consumer data unethically
- 5** **91%** thought that brands could be adding speakers, cameras and sensors to products to collect more data

## What this means for brands

To thrive in the consumer revolution and build a new, deeper brand loyalty, brands need to do three things:

**Find their purpose and lead with it.** Consumers want brands to take a stand and provide stability in uncertain times, but any purpose needs to be authentic to the brand's soul.

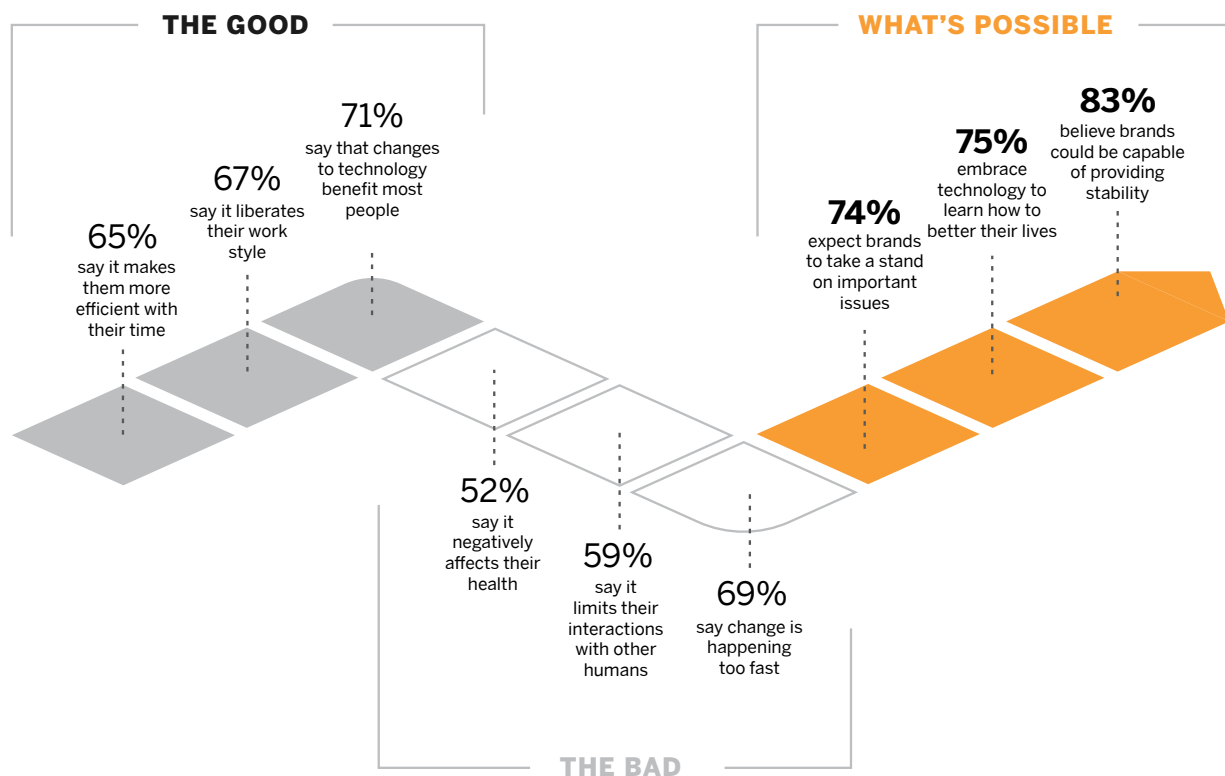
**Aim for mutual respect.** Consumers want more than a great product — they want to be treated like human beings. Every feature, communication and customer touchpoint needs to reinforce the fact that brands understand what consumers need to live fuller, easier lives.

**Tie local action to global impact.** Consumers want brands to weigh in on important issues, but visibility is key. Brands need to demonstrate positive change at the local level before they can win consumers over to their global initiatives.

# THE UNIFYING PROMISE OF TECHNOLOGY

The digital age isn't upon us, the digital age *is* us, and it's changing the way we look for meaning in our lives. Technology is the air we breathe, and the Brands in Motion 2019 global study shows that although we live in a deeply polarized world, consumers share a unified mindset when it comes to technology and what brands are capable of.

Surprisingly, it's not about where you live or whether you're a Baby Boomer or a Millennial — we all share the same mindset about how technology is reconfiguring our daily lives. Across genders, geographies and generations, we agree on the agony and ecstasy of technology, and we're optimistic about brands' ability to harness tech in a human way and provide stability in a world that feels increasingly out of balance.





These attitudes are driven by a new era of expectation, a push for accountability from all sides and an empowered consumer audience. Consumers have more choices, more information and more opportunities to educate themselves about new brands, and they're tired of living in a contradictory, polarized world. They want easier lives. They want technology that meets their needs effortlessly. They want greater unity and less polarization. They want deeper connections — with the people in their lives, with brands and with technology. In short, they want a revolution, and they want brands to deliver it now.

Brands have never had this much power or opportunity to create positive change in the world, but in many ways they're more exposed and disposable than ever. For brand communicators, this means that consumer scrutiny of a brand's products, ethical practices and purpose in the world has never been more intense.

Brands in Motion 2019 indicates that if brands want to thrive in this consumer revolution, they must be human to the core. Brands must prove they understand their customers as human beings, and that they're doing good in their communities and in the world at large. Brands that do this can build a new, deeper brand loyalty based on mutual respect. Brands that can't risk losing everything in a moment.



**“If I’m a consumer, I’m looking at the world and thinking ‘I don’t understand a lot of this, but here’s one thing I do: Technology is changing too fast and I can’t keep up.’ We’re all together in that.”**

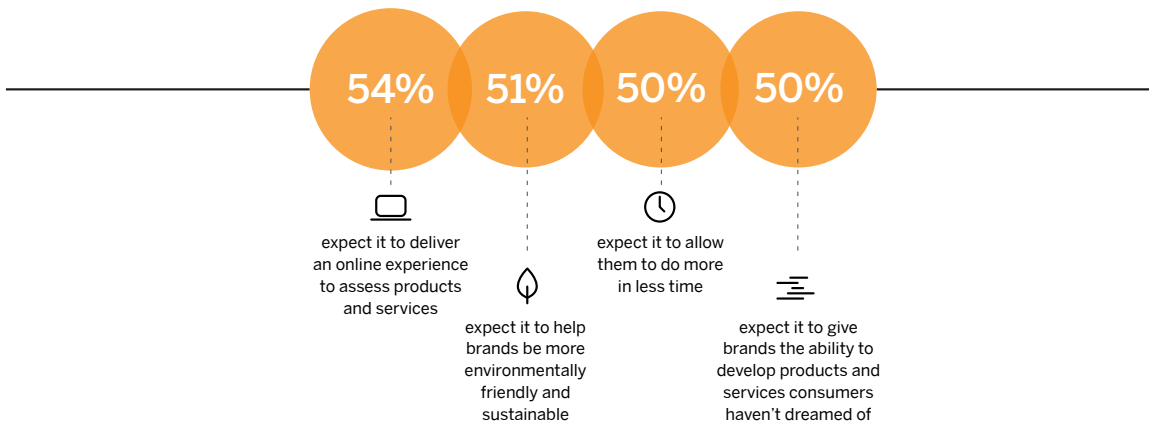
**Penny Burgess**  
**WE Red Bridge CEO**

# STEADILY RISING EXPECTATIONS

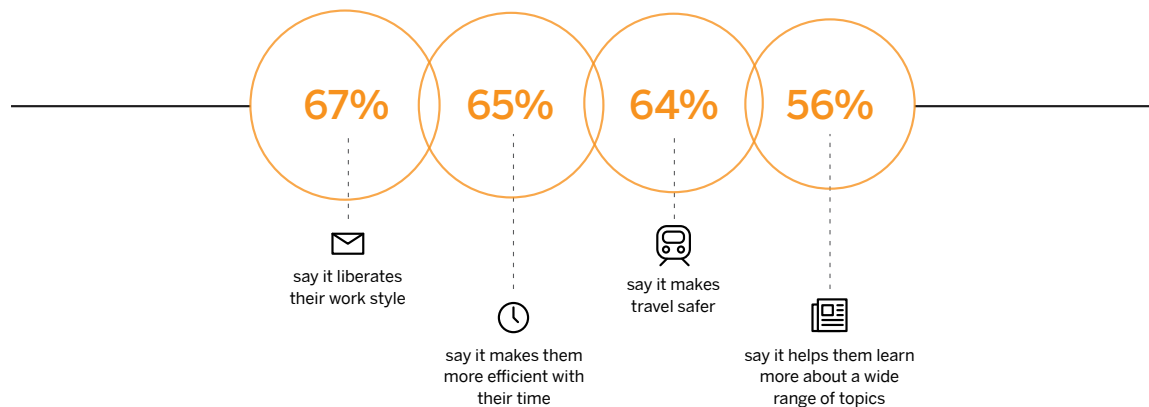
Technology is the common ground we all share, and brands are the ones delivering those experiences — whether that's enterprise-level cloud computing, IoT-enabled devices that make cars safer, a healthcare platform or a fast food brand's tech-enabled delivery. When consumers talk about what they expect out of technology, they're really talking about what they expect out of brands.

Brands in Motion has surveyed 80,000 people over three years, and we've never seen global consumer expectations decrease. In 2019, consumers continue to have very high expectations for how brands will use technology to innovate.

## Consumer expectations for how brands will use technology:



## They also have high expectations about how this new technology affects their lives:





“Last year we said expectations are higher than ever. You had to balance ethics and innovation, and show, not tell, consumers your value,” says **WE Global CEO and Founder Melissa Waggener Zorkin**. “This year, consumers are demanding that you do all that and speak your truth as a brand at the same time. They expect authenticity — if you want to tell a story, your brand has to live it first.”



The demands of the market mean that superlative and accessible tech products and services are table stakes. Consumer expectations go far beyond wanting brands to use technology to innovate and make their lives better. To tap into the new brand loyalty, brands need to act with bold purpose in the world.



**53%**

want brands to address environmental problems in both local communities and at a global level



**54%**

want the brands they support to balance great product with powerful purpose and activism



**74%**

expect brands to take a stand on the issues that matter to them



# COLLECTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY

One story consumers are hungry to see told on an authentic, human level? The story of a brand using technology ethically and safeguarding consumer data.

Although media conversations over the past 12 months have focused on regulatory actions or brands' need to be accountable, consumers see themselves as just as responsible as brands and governments — we're all in this together, and we have a responsibility to each other.

Companies have a responsibility to use technology ethically

97% agreed

Consumers have a responsibility to use technology ethically

96% agreed

The government has a responsibility to ensure companies use technology ethically

94% agreed

"It's about mutual respect," says Melissa Waggener Zorkin. "The consumer respects your product, and wants you to treat their data and their privacy with the same respect."

But the value consumers place on ethics can be a challenge for brands. Managing data responsibly, strengthening privacy policies and ensuring partners are acting ethically takes time, and consumers still expect rapid innovation. Striking the right balance between nimble tech innovation and thoughtful accountability is a challenge any brand working with consumer data needs to address if they want to build brand loyalty during the consumer revolution.



“To brands, it seems like their customers are saying speed up and slow down all at once,” says Dawn Beauparlant, WE’s Chief Client Officer and President, North America.



And consumers will punish brands if they don’t. In 94% of situations we surveyed, the majority of respondents said they would shame a brand if they perceive them as stepping out of line, even if they love the industry, and 92% said they would stop using a product or service if they found out that it was using consumer data in unethical ways.

Of course, some brands are easier to boycott than others. Look no further than big tech brands that have weathered more than a year of negative headlines and kept growing.

It all comes down to product: If consumers can swap in a comparable and better-behaved brand, they will, but if the brand is providing a product, service or level of value that they can’t find elsewhere, they may stay. “Being hard to replace isn’t a get out of jail free card,” says Rebecca Wilson, Executive Vice President of Singapore and Australia. “Consumers may forgive you in the short term, but they won’t forget. As soon as a more ethical option comes along, they’ll jump ship.”

### Ethics spotlight: Data privacy

Only 22% of respondents say brands were **absolutely being transparent with the way their data was being used.**



**91%** think that brands could be adding speakers, cameras and sensors to products to collect more data.



**93%** think that brands could be buying other companies to get access to data.



## HUMAN TO THE CORE

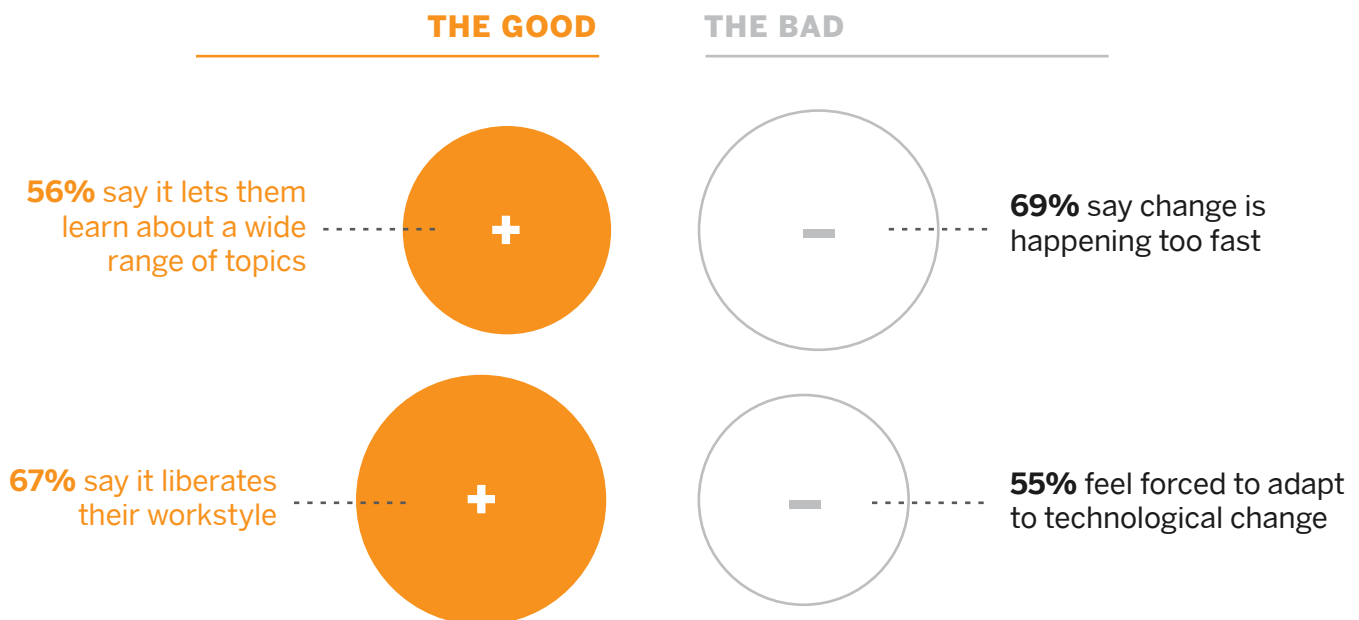
With consumer expectations and the call for accountability holding brands to what can sometimes feel like impossible standards, one strategy seems to hold the key to long-lasting consumer love: Brands must prove they understand their customers' humanity, and act with their own.

Consumers are moving toward a more holistic and unified understanding of the role technology and brands play in their lives. More than ever, they're looking for relationships, activities and technologies that work, live and breathe with them, that slot seamlessly into their lives, and that reflect them as human beings. In 2018, rational expectations outpaced the need for an emotional connection with brands. This year, emotional scores started creeping up to close the gap — up 3% YoY. "Consumers want brands to act in a more human, emotional space," says Dawn Beauparlant. "Brands can no longer simply provide solutions — they must provide meaning."

## Not customers — people

In such a rapidly changing world saturated with technology, consumers crave something deeper. They not only have high expectations for tech functionality, they have high expectations for how technology will enable them to lead richer lives.

But there's tension in our embrace of tech, as Brands in Motion respondents are unified on the good and the bad.



Brands have an opportunity to ease this pain — it's not about the technology, it's about how consumers fit it into their lives in a satisfying way.

"The challenge is to go beyond the customer journey and user experience and dig deeper," says Nitin Mantri, Group CEO, Avian WE. "It's about people. Not customers, not users — people."

## Brands' humanity in the world

As in previous years, consumers are looking for brands to lead with soulful purpose. 83% of respondents believe brands could be capable of providing stability, and 74% expect brands to take a stand on important issues. "Purpose is why you do what you do," says Melissa Waggener Zorkin. "What's changed now is that it has to go so much deeper than CSR. You can't just talk about it — you have to live it."

In 2019, there's a real focus on the environment. A majority of consumers now expect brands to use technology to be more environmentally friendly and sustainable. When asked about where they'd like to see brands take action on environmental issues, 40% said they should focus on making local communities better, 53% said brands should focus on both local communities and global issues, and only 7% said they should focus exclusively on global issues.



When asked about where they'd like to see brands take action on environmental issues







## HOW BRANDS CAN THRIVE IN THE CONSUMER REVOLUTION

In a polarized world, consumers want good and easy, and they're more able than ever to empower brands that deliver. For brands, this is a mandate: Lead with purpose to improve lives, use your products and communications to prove your humanity, and connect local consumers to global action.



**“It all comes back to the work. Every piece of creative, every communication, every customer touchpoint is an opportunity to tell a human story.”**

**Kass Sells,  
Global Chief Operating Officer,  
President, International**

## Find your purpose and lead with it

For brands, the work of self-examination can never end. Brands need to find their purpose, cultivate it and learn how to connect the values they cherish deeply with those of their consumers. This goes far beyond just a communications challenge — to resonate with consumers, purpose needs to be real. It must be at the core of everything the brand does. If it isn't, consumers will know and they will shame you.



### Brand in Motion: The Female Company

The Female Company helped start a conversation about inequality while sending a powerful message that connected with its audience. In Germany, tampons and other menstruation products are taxed at a rate of 19% — higher than luxury goods like oil paintings and caviar. To get around the tax, they packaged tampons in a product that the government taxed at only 7% — a book. The Tampon Book provided customers with the products they needed, educated them about inequality in the tax system, and ignited a nationwide conversation about the fairness of the tampon tax.



“The Female Company saw something that was unfair and took a stand,” says **Melissa Waggener Zorkin**. “Usually government regulation is one of the forces pushing on brands — it’s exciting to see a brand turning the tables.”



## Mutual respect

Consumers want more than a great product — they want to be treated like human beings. When accountability is collective, trust goes both ways. Consumers need to trust brands, but brands also need to trust and respect their consumers.



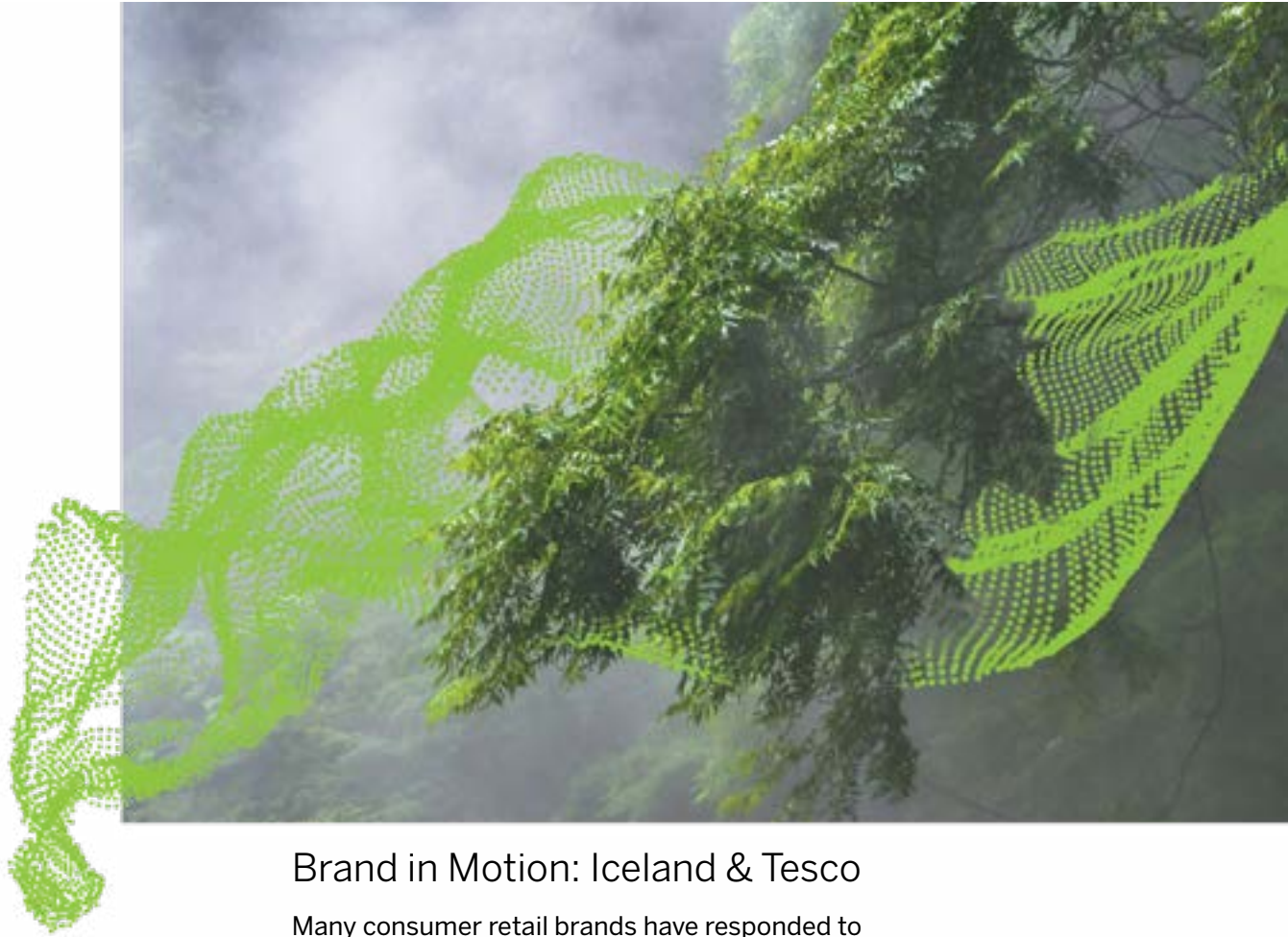
“Consumers know what they want and they know what’s best for them,” says **Ruth Allchurch, Managing Director, U.K.** “Trust them. Respect them. Empower them, and they’ll love you for it.”

### Brand in Motion: Glitch

Glitch is a suite of tools for building web apps, but its community is much, much more. Positioning itself as the opposite of networks that are rife with negativity and hate speech, Glitch has built a community where working developers, kids writing their first code, and AI engineers at tech giants all mingle together — and with no upvotes, downvotes or comments, its users have actual collaborative conversations. Trusting users to treat each other with respect has paid off — Glitch is now used by over a million coders.

## Local action for global impact

Consumers want to see brands doing good at both local and global levels. “Change is most visible in people’s day-to-day lives,” says Melissa Waggener Zorkin. “Any local action should ladder up to global initiatives, but for consumers, visibility is key.”



### Brand in Motion: Iceland & Tesco

Many consumer retail brands have responded to customers’ increasing expectation that they minimize environmental impact. Iceland pledged to remove palm oil — which contributes to the deforestation of sensitive rainforests — from its own label brands. They announced the move with their popular Rang-Tan advertisement, which utilized an existing Greenpeace ad. After Clearcast, the U.K. advertising authority banned it from airing on TV due to its “political nature,” it went viral on social media. Meanwhile Tesco earned headlines with the launch of its Unforgettable Bag in Malaysia, a bag that incentivized shoppers to reuse it, thereby cutting down plastic waste.



## YOUR BRAND IN MOTION

Digging deep and expressing your brand's humanity is no small task. Brands in Motion offers a high-level glimpse at the kind of communications your brand will need to lead with purpose, connect on a human level and take action — in the world and in people's lives. "The questions you need to be asking yourself are 'how can I best tell the story of my brand doing good in the world?' 'how am I fitting into people's lives?' and 'am I treating people with respect?'" says Kass Sells.

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# APPENDIX: BRANDS IN MOTION METHODOLOGY

Brands in Motion is a global study about how perceptions shift over time. WE partners with YouGov every year to survey consumers and B2B decision makers about their attitudes regarding:

- Forces affecting the market on a macro level
- Industries
- Brands

**25,000+**

consumers and  
B2B decision makers

**15**

market forces questions

**84**

brands

## 8 categories



Health & Wellness



Prescription Health



Food & Beverage



Finance & Banking



Automotive



Computing Devices



Smart Home



Business Tech Solutions

## 20 drivers of motion

Respondents rated each brand on 10 emotional and 10 rational drivers. Categories were rated on six emotional and four rational drivers.

### Emotional Drivers

- Customer experience\*
- Overall impression\*
- Defend/shame\*
- Social impact\*
- Disappeared \*
- Love/hate\*
- Forgive/not forget
- Shared values
- Life impact
- Buzz

### Rational Drivers

- Executive behavior\*
- Intent to purchase\*
- Necessary\*
- Innovative\*
- Financial performance
- Easy to work with
- Industry leader
- Value provided
- Responsible
- Quality

\* Drivers measured at category level

YouGov conducted the Brands in Motion global study using an online interview administered to panelists who had agreed to take part in surveys. Respondents to the survey were 18 years of age or older, did not work in advertising/PR/marketing/market research, qualified to rate one of the categories based on purchase history and purchase intent, and qualified to rate at least one of the brands surveyed based on awareness. A total of 25,193 responses were collected across eight markets between April and June of 2019, as follows:

Country	Sample size	Field dates
United States	3,880	4/23 – 5/8
Germany	2,915	5/6 – 5/19
South Africa	1,811	5/6 – 5/15
United Kingdom	3,704	5/6 – 5/25
Australia	2,931	5/6 – 5/25
Singapore	2,370	5/6 – 5/30
China	3,854	5/8 – 5/20
India	3,728	5/24 – 6/2

# **WE** | Brands in ***Motion***

The world,  
your brand  
and your stories  
are in motion.

**WE helps you find  
your Momentum.**

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