



CENSUSWIDE

THE RESEARCH CONSULTANTS

**Why it's time for
brands to connect their
missions and values
to their content**



Missions and values are at the heart of every brand

They are the foundational beliefs that give brands purpose and inform how they operate in the marketplace.

Much of the time, brands' missions and values are banished to the confines of their About Us page.

And yet, they could be the very thing that set brands apart in a world where consumers are almost constantly bombarded with choices of where to spend their hard-earned cash.

Censuswide set out to discover just how important brands' missions and values are to consumers, and whether it might be time for brands to bring this fundamental part of their identity to the forefront of their marketing strategy.

Drawing on our own research, this report explores the true impact of missions and values on purchasing decisions, whilst offering actionable insights on how brands and their PR and marketing teams can best communicate these to their target audiences.

Methodology

Censuswide conducted a nationally representative survey of 2,004 general consumers between 13.10.2023 - 16.10.2023.

Censuswide abides by and employs members of the Market Research Society which is based on the ESOMAR principles. Censuswide is a member of the British Polling Council.



Do Brits even care about brands' missions and values?

We Brits can be a cynical bunch.

Almost half (46%) of us agree¹ that we are often wary that brands' missions and values are misleading or false. Plus, just 35% say they think brands genuinely do value things like sustainability, diversity and inclusion and social and economic justice etc. over profit¹.

However, despite these sneaking suspicions that brands are simply telling us what we want to hear, many Brits do want to feel that their brand relationships are built on a shared set of values.

In fact, UK consumers are just over 3 times more likely to think it's important² (46%) for the brands they shop with to have missions and values that align with their own than they are to think it's unimportant³ (15%).

46%

of Brits say it's important² to them that the brands they shop with have missions/values that align with their own

Vs

15%

of Brits say it's unimportant³ to them that the brands they shop with have missions/values that align with their own

The question is, just how important is this to brands?

In the next section, we'll explore the reasons why brands should never take their missions and values for granted.

¹Strongly agree' and 'Somewhat agree' responses combined.

²'Very important' and 'Fairly important' responses combined.

³'Very unimportant' and 'Fairly unimportant' responses combined.

Can brands' missions and values really impact sales?

According to our research, yes, they certainly can.

The findings reveal compelling evidence that brands' missions and values have a definite impact on many consumers' purchasing decisions.

We discovered that almost 2 in 5 (36%) consumers try to primarily buy from brands whose missions and values align with their own.

This represents a significant portion of brands' potential customer bases, highlighting the need for brands to ensure that their missions and values are in-keeping with those of their target markets.

36%
of consumers try to primarily buy from brands whose missions and values align with their own

34%
of consumers try to avoid purchasing from brands whose missions and values don't align with their own

For those that need a little more convincing that missions and values matter, we also discovered that those who fall short of consumer expectations could end up missing out on big business.

In fact, just over a third (34%) of consumers try to avoid purchasing from brands whose missions and values don't align with their own.

The fact that almost 2 in 5 (38%) consumers would stop purchasing from a brand after it, or its leadership, behaved in a way that did not align with their values and 3 in 10 (30%) consumers would encourage others to stop shopping with a brand after it or its leadership did this also shows how vital it is for brands to live up to their own values once they are in place.

The findings show that missions and values can have a very real effect on revenue. And yet, as we'll discuss in the next section, many brands are failing to communicate these effectively.

¹Strongly agree' and 'Somewhat agree' responses combined.

²'Very important' and 'Fairly important' responses combined.

³'Very unimportant' and 'Fairly unimportant' responses combined.

Are brands' missions and values visible enough?

So far, we have discovered that not only are brands' missions and values important to a substantial number of Brits, but for many they are also a key influencing factor when making purchasing decisions.

Given the sizeable impact missions and values could be having on sales, one would expect brands to be on top of their game when it comes to communicating this fundamental part of their identity.

However, our research tells a different story.

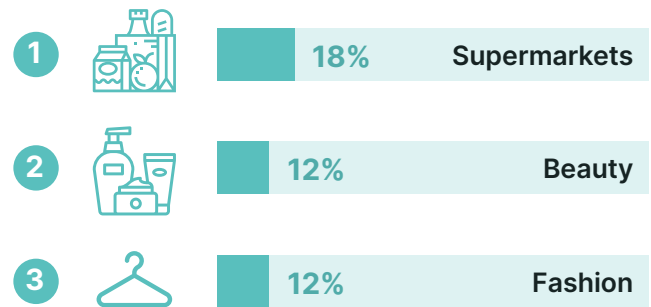
In fact, just 35% of consumers agree¹ that brands are doing a good job of making their missions and values visible, with just 1 in 10 (10%) saying they strongly agree.

Just
35%

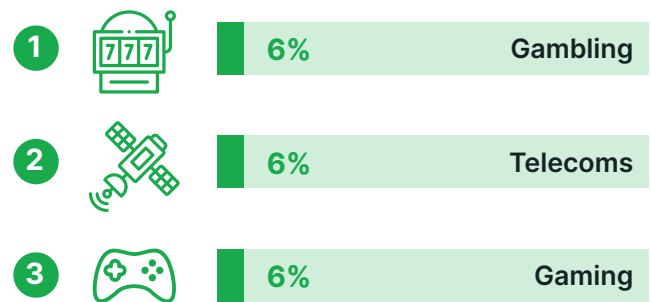
of consumers agree¹ that brands are doing a good job of making their missions and values visible

Our findings suggest that brands in a wide variety of sectors seem to be lacking in this department.

The top three types of brands consumers were most likely to say are best at communicating their missions and values are:



Meanwhile, the three types of brands consumers were least likely to say are best at communicating their missions and values are:



However, with such small percentages across the board, it's clear that for brands in all sectors there is huge room for improvement in this area. The findings show that consumers would appreciate brands making more of an effort to improve the visibility of their missions and values. In fact, almost 2 in 5 (39%) agree¹ that more visible brand missions and values would help them to make easier purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, over 2 in 5 (42%) agree¹ that brands that make their mission and values visible or easily accessible are more trustworthy.

We'll explore how brands can do this in the following sections.

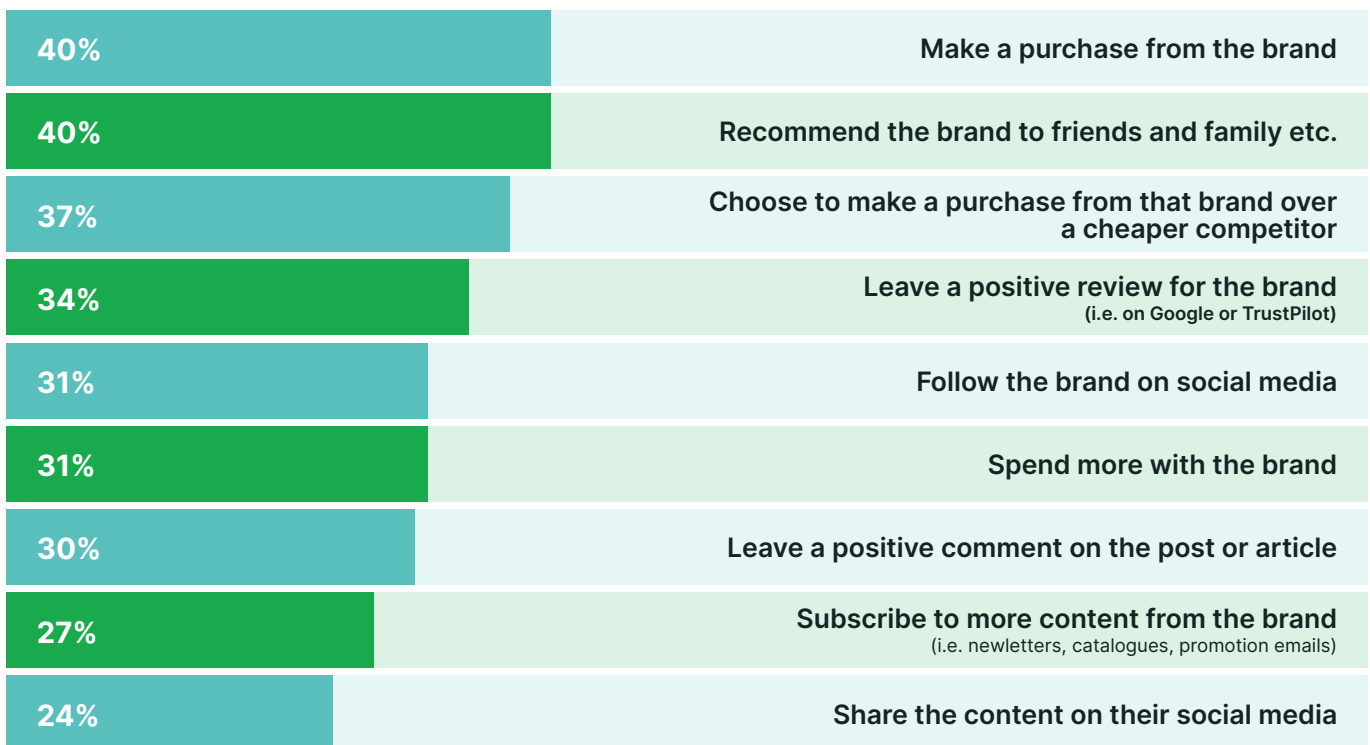
¹Strongly agree' and 'Somewhat agree' responses combined.

The power of content

A closer look at how the visibility of brands' missions and values can affect consumer behaviour makes a very strong case for brands to work with their PR and marketing teams to shape a content strategy around this.

The graph below shows the percentages of consumers that are likely¹ to take a variety of positive actions having seen a piece of content from a brand or in the news that shows that their missions / values align with their own:

Q. How likely, if at all, are you to do the following when you see a piece of content from a brand or in the news that shows that their missions / values align with yours?






The fact that sizeable percentages of brands' customer bases said that they would be likely¹ to make a purchase from a brand (40%), spend more with the brand (31%) and make a purchase with that brand over a cheaper competitor (37%) is surely a sign that it's time for brands to connect their missions and values to their content.

¹Very likely' and 'Somewhat likely' responses combined.



Building content strategies around missions and values

The top 5 values according to consumers

- 1  **Quality**
(i.e. of products and services)
23%
- 2  **Environmental sustainability**
18%
- 3  **Putting people ahead of profits**
13%
- 4  **Transparency**
13%
- 5  **Ethical employment practices**
12%

What missions and values are most important to Brits?

When shaping their content, brands and their PR and marketing teams may wish to consider the types of things Brits are looking for when it comes to missions and values.

The research shows that even at a time when households are feeling the pinch, consumers are most likely to be looking for brands that are on a mission to deliver quality to their customers.

In fact, consumers were more likely to say quality products and services (23%) are most important to them when it comes to deciding which brands to engage with or purchase from than they were to say the same of putting people ahead of profits (13%) and supporting consumers during the cost-of-living crisis (11%).

Brands and their PR and marketing teams should also take note of the fact that almost a fifth (18%) of consumers say that environmental sustainability is most important to them when it comes to brands' missions and values.


Reaching consumers

Now that we have established what consumers are looking for when it comes to brands' missions and values, we will now explore the ways brands and their PR and marketing teams can communicate these most effectively.

The good news for brands is that many consumers (67%)¹ are actively on the hunt for brand missions and values that align with their own.

The top three places consumers are most likely to **actively seek out information** about a brand's missions and values are:

- 1 **The brand's own website**
22%
- 2 **The brand's own social media channels**
(e.g., TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, X (formerly known as Twitter), YouTube)
19%
- 3 **Independent websites for checking a brand's values**
(e.g., GoodOnYou, Ethical Consumer, The Good Shopping Guide)
17%

67% 
of consumers **actively seek out information** about a brand's missions and values¹

The top three places consumers are most likely to **have seen a piece of content** about a brand's mission or values that resonated with them are:

- 1 **The brand's own social media channels**
(e.g., TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, X (formerly known as Twitter), YouTube)
19%
- 2 **The brand's own website**
20%
- 3 **The brand's advertising**
20%

It's vital that brands and their PR and marketing teams ensure that missions and values are visible on all of these platforms. However, some channels undoubtedly offer better reach than others.

¹Reverse of 'N/A - I don't actively seek information about a brand's missions / values'.

Chart A shows the percentages of consumers who view content on a variety of platforms.

Meanwhile, chart B shows the average number of times per week consumers view content on these platforms and therefore give an idea of where messages about brands' missions and values are most likely be visible to consumers.

Q. In a typical week, how frequently, if ever, do you look at content (i.e. news articles, posts, blogs, videos) on each of the following?

Chart A: % of consumers who look at content on this platform²

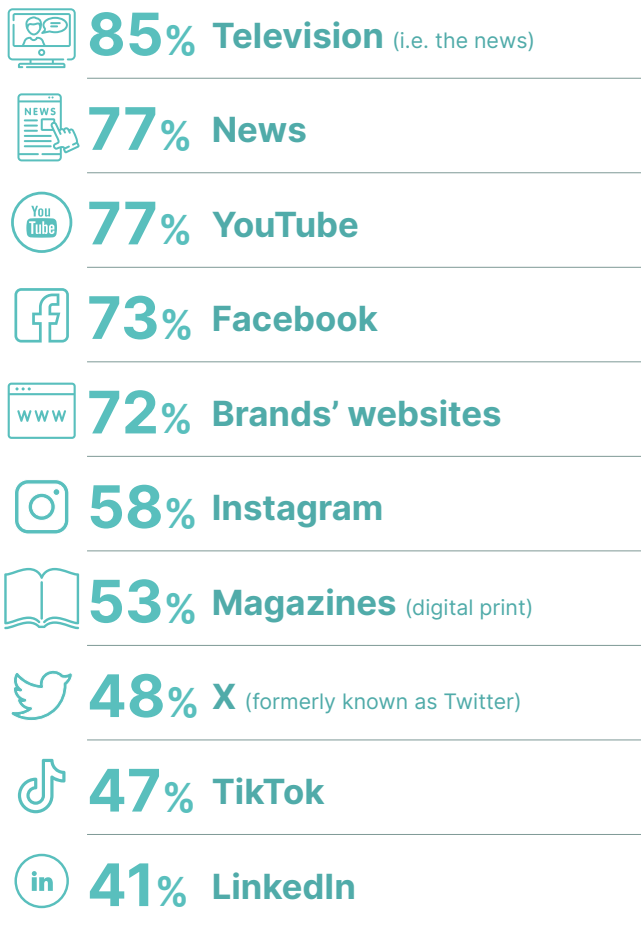
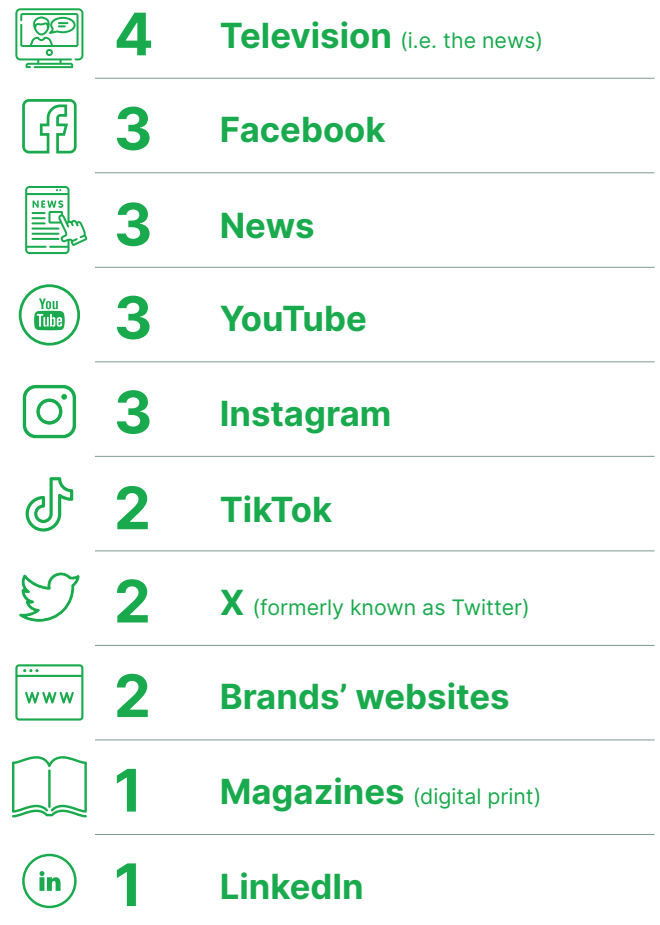


Chart B: Mean number of times per week consumers view content on this platform³



When it comes to the social media platforms where consumers are most likely to stumble across brands' missions and values, Facebook comes out on top.

In fact, contrary to recent reports that Facebook is on its way out, our findings show that both the percentage of consumers using Facebook, and the number of times they view content on the platform each week exceed figures for the likes of X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram and newcomer TikTok.

² Reverse of 'N/A – does not apply/unsure' and 'Never' responses combined.

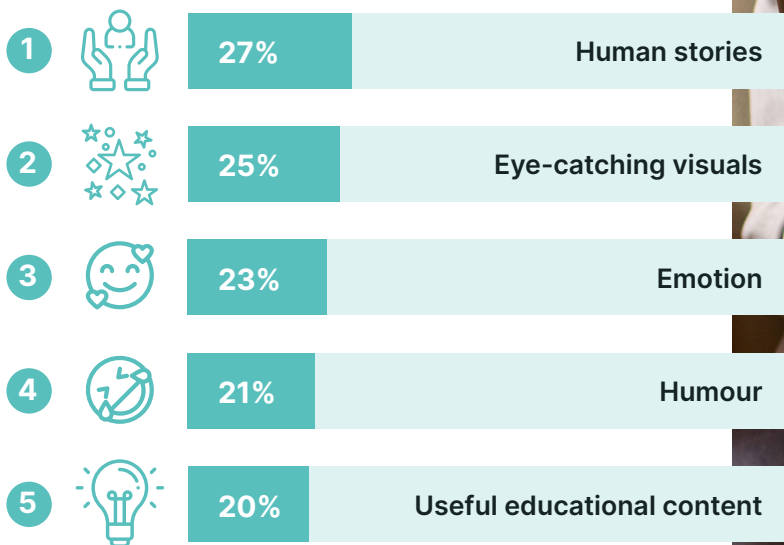
³ Mean: (Times per week excl. N/A)

What type of content resonates most with Brits?

When communicating their missions and values, it's worth brands considering that some types of content resonate with consumers more than others.

Choosing the right one will maximise brands' chances of getting their missions and values to have the desired impact on consumers' behaviour.

Overall, the top five things Brits say resonated with them about a piece of content on a brand's mission and values that they have seen are⁴:



On the other hand, respondents are least likely to say that shock factor (11%) and having a celebrity spokesperson (11%) were what resonated with them about a piece of content they've seen on a brand's values.



⁴Those who have seen a piece of content about a brands' mission or values that resonated with them.

Who cares most about brands' missions and values?

According to our findings, millennials surveyed are especially worth targeting with content about brands missions and values.

In fact, almost 3 in 5 (57%) say it is important¹ to them that the brands they shop with have missions/values that align with their own, while just less than half (48%) of gen Z, over 2 in 5 (44%) gen X, and just less than a third (32%) of baby boomers surveyed say the same.

They are also the generation most likely to do all of the following:

45% To primarily **buy** from brands whose missions / values align with their own

45% To **stop purchasing** from a brand after it, or its leadership, behaved in a way that does not align with their values

41% To **try to avoid purchasing** from brands whose missions / values do not align with their own

38% To **research** brands' missions / values before making a purchase with them

What's more, when it comes to brands' content, millennials surveyed are most likely to say they are likely² to do the following after seeing a piece of content from a brand or in the news that shows that their missions and values are aligned:

51% Make a **purchase** from the brand

49% **Recommend** the brand to friends and family

47% **Choose** to make a purchase from the brand over a cheaper competitor

41% **Spend more** with the brand

Given that millennials are settled into their careers and tend to have a higher disposable income, it's in brands' best interests to target this group with messages about their missions and values.

For brands trying to reach this generation, making their missions and values visible on their social media channels is crucial, as millennials are most likely to actively seek this information out on these platforms (27%).

Brands can also be sure that their content makes an impact on millennials by including eye-catching visuals (27%) and human stories (27%), both of which were most likely to have resonated with this group about a piece of content they'd seen on a brand's missions and values³.

¹ 'Very important' and 'Fairly important' responses combined.

² 'Very likely' and 'Somewhat likely' responses combined.

³ Those who have seen a piece of content about a brand's mission or values that resonated with them.

Key takeaways

- 1** Consumers really do care about brands' missions and values. In fact, a hefty chunk (46%) of Brits say it's important¹ to them that the brands they shop with have missions and values that align with their own.
- 2** Great brand missions and values drive sales. Not only do a sizable portion of brands' potential customer bases try to primarily buy from brands whose missions and values align with their own, but many consumers would avoid shopping with brands whose missions and values don't hit the mark.
- 3** Brands should be doing more to make their missions and values more visible. This would be a welcome change for consumers, many of whom say that more visible missions and values would help them to make easier purchasing decisions.
- 4** Content is key. According to the findings, content that shows brands have missions and values that align with consumers has the power to influence many consumers to purchase from a brand, recommend it to others, or even choose that brand over a cheaper competitor.
- 5** Consumers are on the hunt for brands' missions and values. They're most likely to be looking for content about quality and environmental sustainability and want to see human stories and eye-catching visuals.
- 6** Millennials care the most about brands' missions and values. Not only is this generation most likely to say it's important to them that the brands they shop with have missions and values that align with their own, but they're also most likely to be influenced to purchase from brands by content about their missions and values.

¹Very important' and 'Fairly important' responses combined.

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