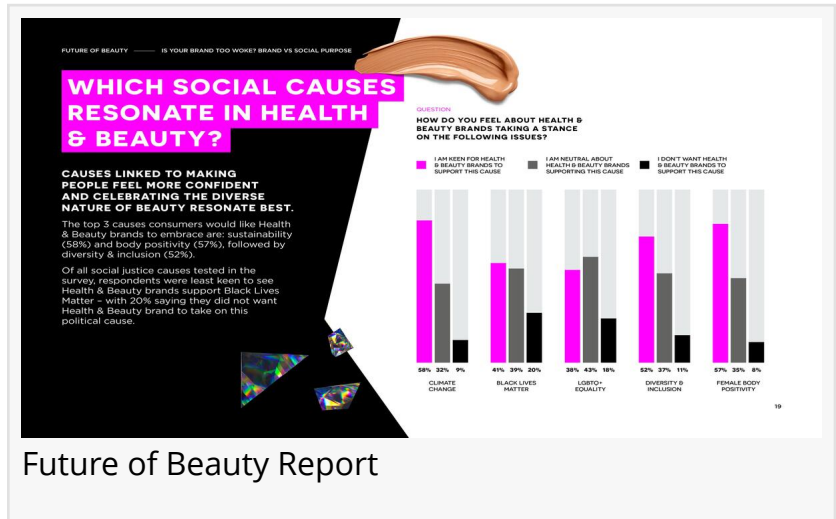


New Study Shows Consumers Are Uneasy About Health & Beauty Brands Supporting Woke Causes

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- According to new research, two-thirds (68%) of consumers are uneasy or unsure about health and beauty brands teaching and promoting 'woke' causes.

The survey also found that when it comes to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), what most people (58%) want is for health & beauty brands to 'pay their taxes, treat people fairly, respect the environment and not use it as a PR opportunity'.



- One in four consumers think 'woke-washing' brands are inauthentic
- 58% of people want health & beauty brands to be a good, ethical corporate citizen first
- Groups that people feel are most under-represented in advertising are disabled, older and larger-sized people.

Nearly half of UK consumers (41%) agree that the amount of 'green-washing' and 'woke-washing' in the health & beauty sector (brands faking their sustainability credentials or their interest in social issues like Black Lives Matter) is becoming noticeable.

A quarter (26%) think those brands come across as inauthentic as a result, while one in seven (14%) deliberately avoid the brands they see as behaving this way.

The nationally representative survey of 2,000 UK consumers was commissioned by The Pull Agency, a creative agency specialising in healthcare and beauty brands.

It noted that being an ethical corporate citizen is what consumers want most from health & beauty brands, rather than the in-vogue focus on brand purpose, such as showing support for a social justice purpose like climate change, LGBTQ+ rights or diversity and inclusion. In fact, the

study highlighted that only 22% of UK consumers are familiar with the term 'brand purpose', while 37% think they've heard of it, but admit they don't really know what it involves.

Kathrin Rodriguez-Bruessau, head of brand strategy at The Pull Agency, comments: "While the marketing world would have us believe that a grandiose brand social purpose is paramount, consumers don't seem to care as much or really understand the concept. According to most people, the first step is to just get the basics right and be a decent corporate citizen.

"Trying to be more than an ethical business actually carries risks. Several healthcare and beauty brands have got in trouble for perceived woke-washing and superficial attempts at brand activism. People are getting much smarter at identifying what's real and what's not and clearly irritated by inauthentic looking claims."

The survey did find that consumers would like to see health & beauty brands take a stance on key social and societal challenges, provided it's more than just woke-washing.

Women (41%) were nearly twice as much in favour of brands promoting social causes than men (22%), while more men (20%) than women (14%) find social purpose ads 'preachy'.

That said, more than half of all consumers (58%) want to see support for climate change, 56% are eager to see support for female body positivity and 52% want brands to back diversity and inclusion.

Kathrin continues: "We're certainly not suggesting that brands shouldn't promote social purpose, but if they decide it's the right path to take, they must consider how it's reflected in their ads, taking into account the consumer viewpoint. It is also important to take the time to check their company's past and current code of conduct across all their procedures – including a quick check on any brand ambassadors.

No matter how well intended their chosen social cause, if they fall short of people's expectations on the basics it's evident that news around a campaign could turn from worthy to inauthentic woke-washing in the blink of an eye."

When it comes to representation, most (43%) ranked 'advertising that shows a realistic set of models or actors to reflect real users of the brand' as the number one thing they want to see, followed by 'advertising that uses a range of models/actors such as different ages, sizes, gender, ethnicities or disabilities to be inclusive' in second place with 35% (rising to 40% of women).

Older (48%), larger-sized (47%) and disabled people most of all (58%) were the groups that most consumers currently see as under-represented in UK health & beauty advertising, rather than LGBTQ+ or ethnic minorities. Overall, respondents felt the disabled were the least likely to be accurately represented in ads (only 21% thought they were).

Overall, the survey found only a quarter of the UK population (27%) believe they are currently well-represented in industry ads.

When asking people how they felt about how they were personally represented (as opposed to looking at how minority groups are represented), more than half (60%) said that they don't feel they are well represented in health & beauty advertising.

Counterintuitively, it wasn't ethnic minorities that felt less well represented (54%), but white people (61%).

Kathrin concludes: "Personal representation remains a huge issue for health & beauty advertising, but the growth in customisation and improvements in 'try-on' technology are bringing the future ever closer. Soon, it could be entirely possible that the people we see in ads will be ourselves."

<https://www.thepullagency.com/events/is-your-brand-too-woke-brand-vs-social-purpose>

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