



# Can Brands Be a Bridge to a Better Future?

An Ipsos Point of View



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*“The whole world has to unite in order to win, because unity is strength.”*

– IPSOS COMMUNITY MEMBER, BRAZIL

The COVID-19 pandemic swiftly and dramatically disrupted the lives of people on a global scale. That led to behavioral and attitudinal shifts that impact core values around the world.

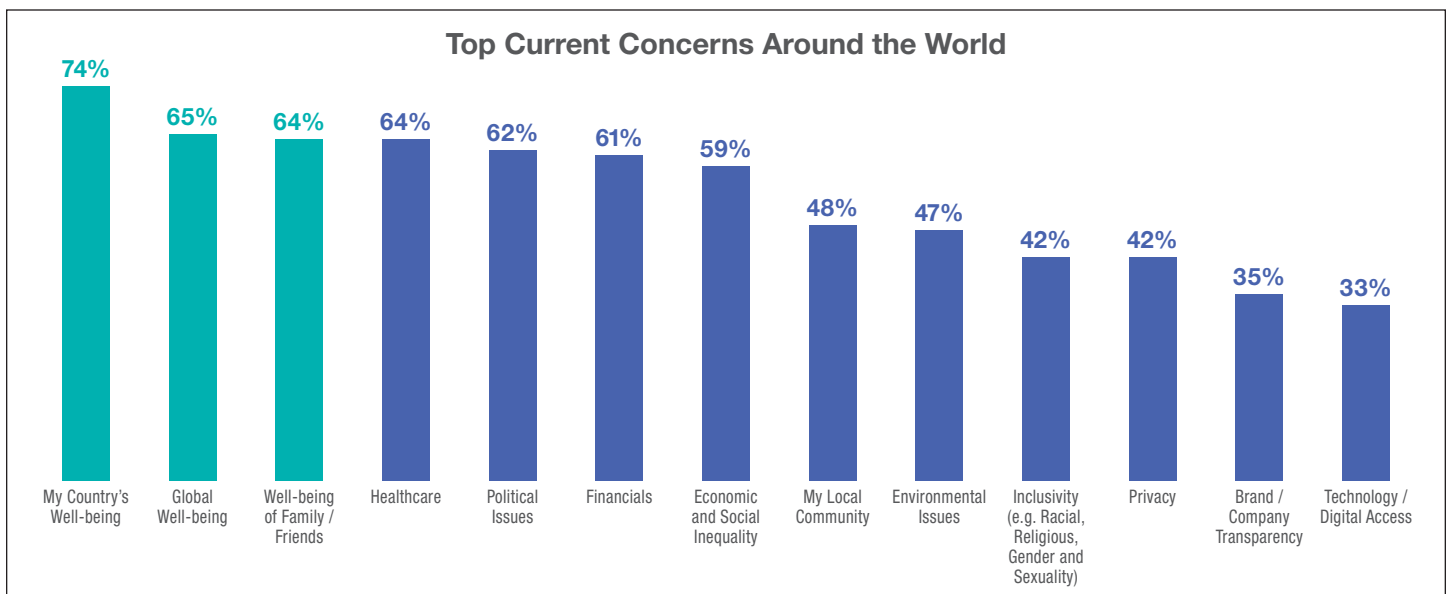
Ipsos research showed a unique tension as people sought to forge a better future. On one hand fear, anxiety, and mistrust led many to sequester themselves away from others. But people simultaneously recognized that in order to make it through these times, we must look beyond geographical borders, government mandates, and self-centered behaviors to unite in our efforts. In other words, people around the world were driven to move beyond the ‘me’ to the ‘we.’

As people want to, as the United Nations says, “build back better,” let’s look at several key themes global citizens identified to understand how brands support that vision.

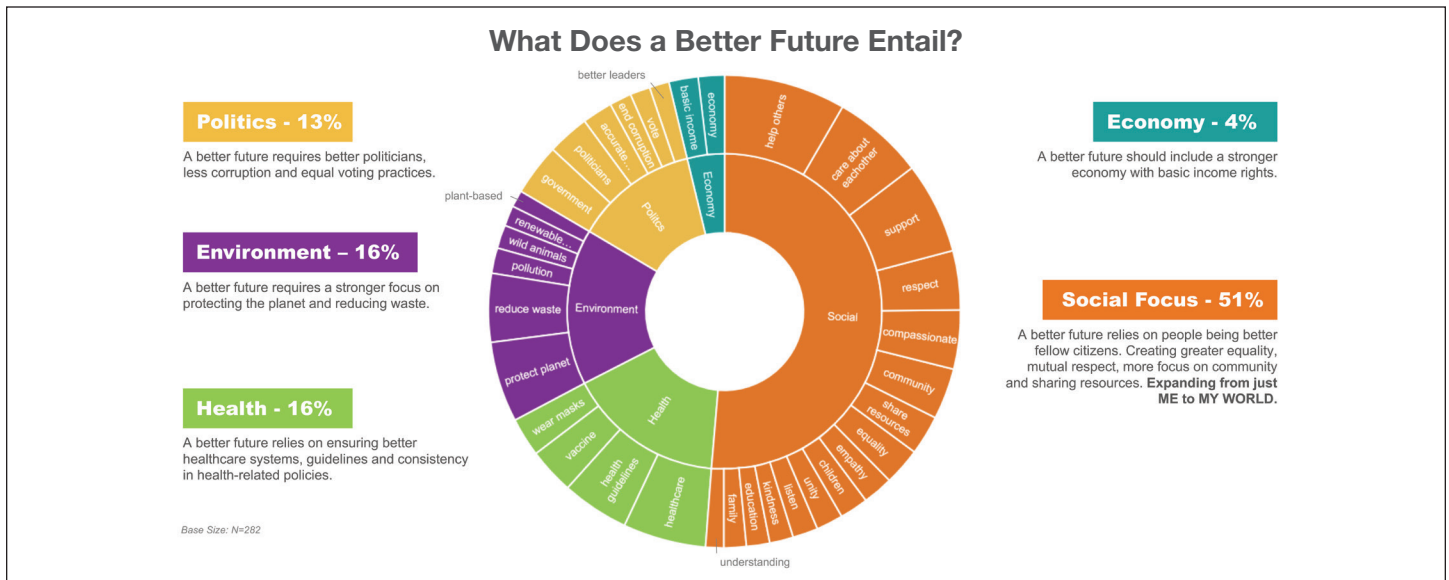
## The Key Theme

**Moving From ‘Me’ to ‘We’:** Ipsos leveraged its own online communities in five countries—the U.S., Brazil, France, Poland, and Japan—to understand how people were feeling now and how collective hardships could potentially inform a path to a better future. Using the [Ipsos Good Innovation Model](#) as a lens, we assessed how what they were saying laddered up into what was better for themselves, their world and THE world.

In the midst of a pandemic, people are focused not only on their immediate circles but on the larger world around them. When looking at the five countries in aggregate, the concept of “My World,” (reflected in “My Country’s Well-being”) topped the list of concerns, with the concept of “The World,” (reflected in “Global Well-being”) coming in second along with the well-being of family and friends.

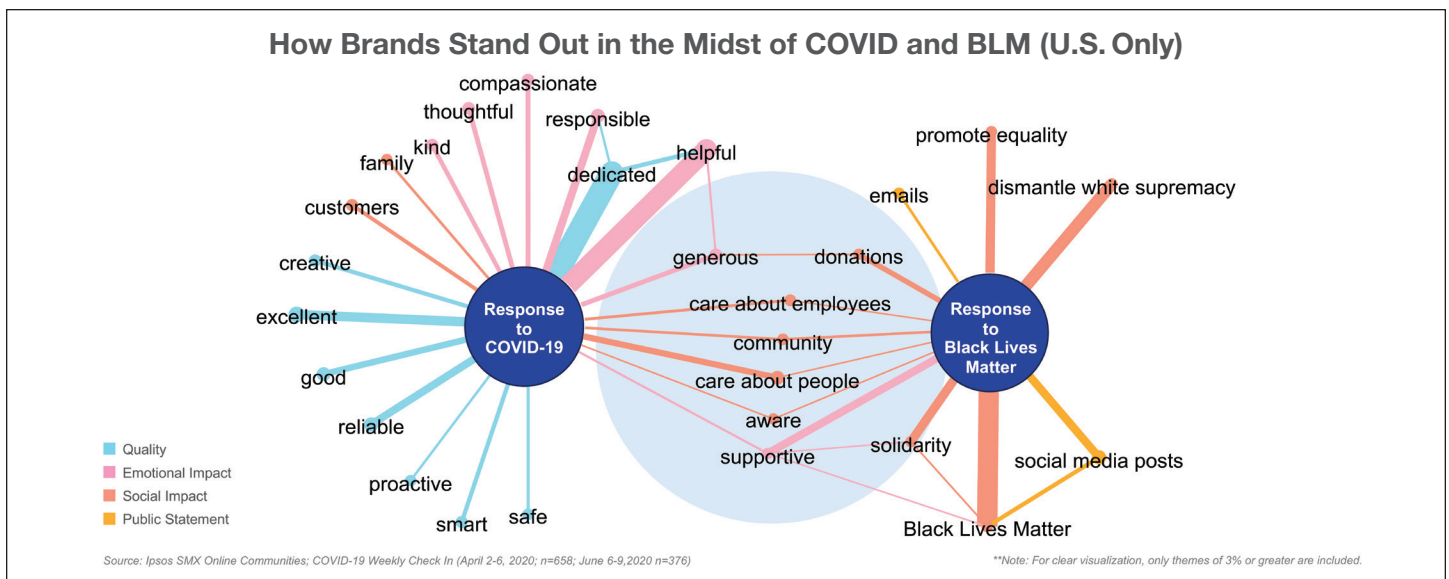


We saw a similar theme emerge when ideating with community members about the future, and what the concept of ‘building back better’ would entail. The largest part of respondents’ open-ended conversation was focused on the idea of doing social good—in other words, being better fellow citizens through greater equality, mutual respect, more focus on community, and sharing resources. Additionally, people called out health, the environment, politics, and the economy as critical areas for improvement.

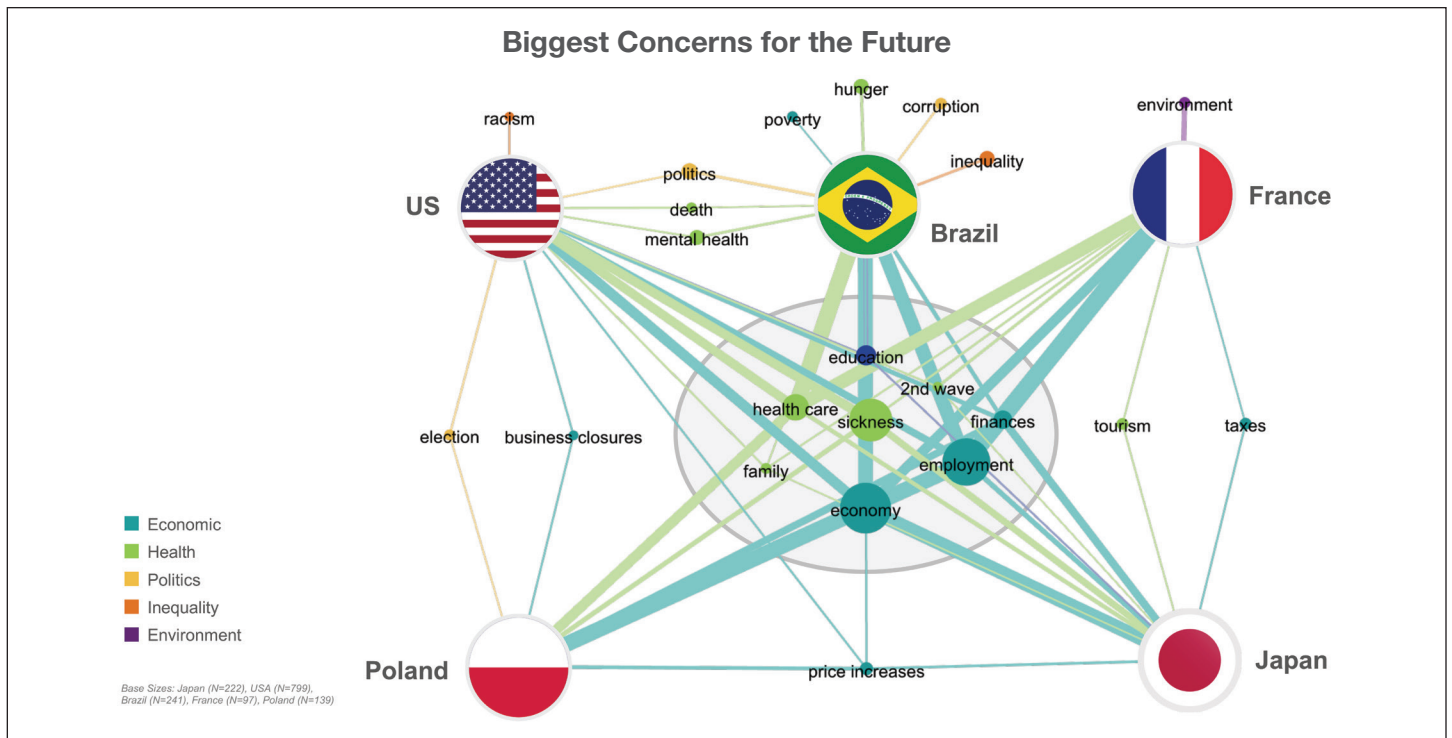


## Brand Actions for Building a Better Future

**Do Social Good by Building Greater Empathy:** At a macro-level, people felt this involved working together to better understand the struggles of the world and to repair damages collectively and with kindness. More tangibly, they felt this kindness was exuded by wearing a mask, being open to others’ experiences, buying local, and other small acts of goodwill towards the people and communities around them. In the U.S., consumers expect brands to show up with humanity as well, as illustrated at the center of the bi-mental network below. Expectations from brands were similarly reflective of a shared concern for humanity and taking care of others—through donations, support, and caring for employees.



**Link Utility with Purpose:** When looking ahead, healthcare and the economy were top of mind in all five countries, as demonstrated by the universal themes shown at the center of the mental network chart below. People felt a better future relies on ensuring better healthcare systems, guidelines and consistency in health-related policies. Similarly, they felt a better future should include a stronger economy with basic income rights.



*“Our country needs to really look at the cracks in the system and see where people are being held back. Focus on equality, healthcare for all, and taking care of the people.”*  
 — IPSOS COMMUNITY MEMBER, U.S.

*“The leaders of my country are not interested in the lives of citizens. They think only about their priorities, about power.”*  
 — IPSOS COMMUNITY MEMBER, POLAND

*“I don’t think the politician’s way of thinking is to put the people first.”*  
 — IPSOS COMMUNITY MEMBER, JAPAN

So link utility to purpose by demonstrating the positive impact of your brand on society. This must take place through real-world actions around information and education. For example, in a recent U.S. [Ipsos study on brand truth](#), nearly 3 out of 4 people felt that financial services companies are responsible for educating people across topics like investment, money management, and saving. Similarly in healthcare, about 8 in 10 respondents felt that healthcare companies are responsible for educating people across topics like diseases and symptoms, physical fitness, and leading a healthy lifestyle.

**Guide Policy Change for Equality and Sustainability:** One interesting similarity that emerged across community discussions in all five countries was that concerns about the future were driven in large part by a distrust in leadership. This skepticism around world leaders has left many with a notable desire for guidance—an issue that brands are well-poised to address.

In the latest wave of the [Ipsos Essentials](#) global report, 49% of people surveyed trust brands and companies over the government for information. This number skews even higher in countries that have been hit the hardest and in those that feel the government has not done a good job of handling the situation—such as Brazil (63%) and the U.S. (53%).

A similar distrust was also apparent in conversations about environmental policy. People felt a better future requires a stronger focus on protecting the planet and reducing waste, which many felt current leadership was not addressing. Brands have an opportunity to step up in this regard as well.

*“They prefer to facilitate the economy rather than think longer term on an ecological (and therefore economic) level.”*

– IPSOS COMMUNITY MEMBER, FRANCE

Looking again at the [Ipsos brand truth survey](#), almost half (48%) of Americans are more likely to trust companies that have sustainability and/or social responsibility programs in place.

Despite widespread questions about what a post-pandemic future will bring, it's clear that people are seeking a greater sense of empathy, humanity, and cooperation. Brands not only have an opportunity to support this vision but also to shape it through actions and innovations that impact positive change.

## A Note on Methodology

Ipsos online communities enable real-time access to on-tap and engaged audiences all over the world. For this study from July 2020, we conducted a series of quick-turn qualitative and quantitative activities in Ipsos-owned syndicated communities in the U.S., France, Poland, Brazil, and Japan, gathering 1,500+ responses, 1,000+ images, and 170+ videos in under a week with zero monetary incentives.

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GAME CHANGERS

