

# DO BRANDS HAVE A ROLE IN THE 2020 ELECTION?

Nearly 2 in 3 voters identified a role brands can play

An Ipsos Point of View

GAME CHANGERS



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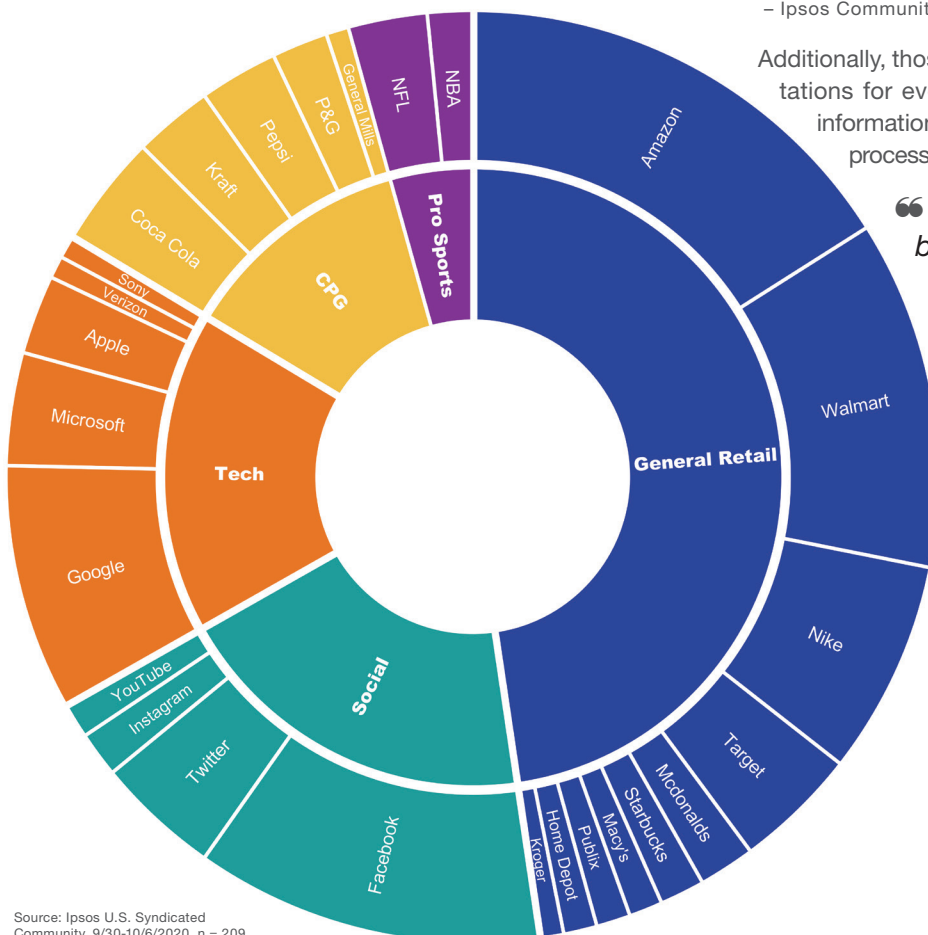
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An Ipsos White Paper

Election day is quickly approaching and political campaigns are operating on overdrive. Do brands have a role to play, too?

In a recent Ipsos U.S. syndicated community study, over 60% indicated they do. However, opinions were largely divided along age, ethnicity, and party lines. Furthermore, HOW brands should play a role saw similar differences of opinion. Social media has also been abuzz with brand-related conversations reflecting similar levels of discord based on personal and political differences. So what are brands to do? Here are a few key takeaways to help navigate through the next several weeks.

## Which Brands Should Be Involved in Voter Encouragement or Education Efforts?



Source: Ipsos U.S. Syndicated Community, 9/30-10/6/2020, n = 209

## 1. Be Unbiased

47% of people believe brands or corporations should give their employees the time and resources to vote while 46% believe they should encourage the general public to vote. However, most feel these efforts should be focused on general support for the voting process itself vs. support for any one candidate.

*“I think [brands] should go about [voter education] in a non-partisan way that encourages third-party voters to get involved, possibly influencing them to back a major candidate to make their vote count.”*

– Ipsos Community Member

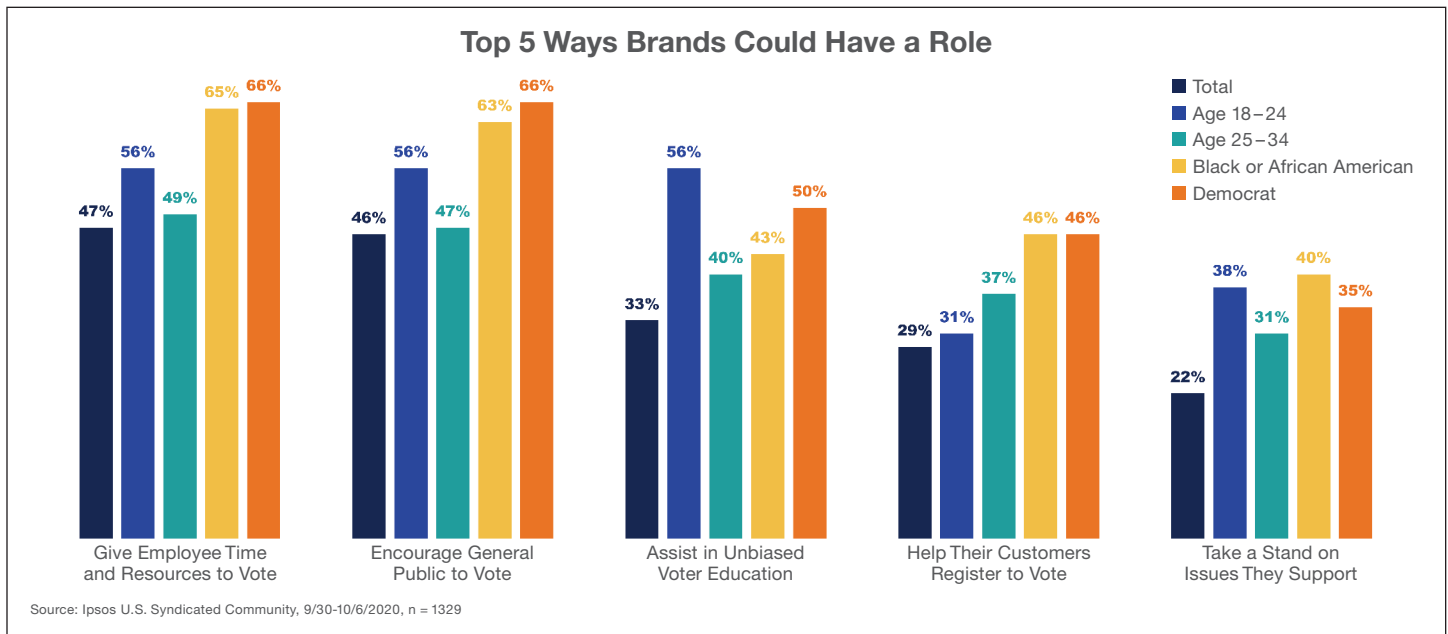
Additionally, those who feel brands should play a role hold expectations for everyday big brands to get involved by providing information and accessibility when it comes to the voting process.

*“Brands like Amazon that have big retail websites could post links to help people register to vote. Companies like the NFL and Coca Cola who do lots of TV advertising could change their commercials to encourage fans to vote and give text codes to link people to voter registration sites.”*

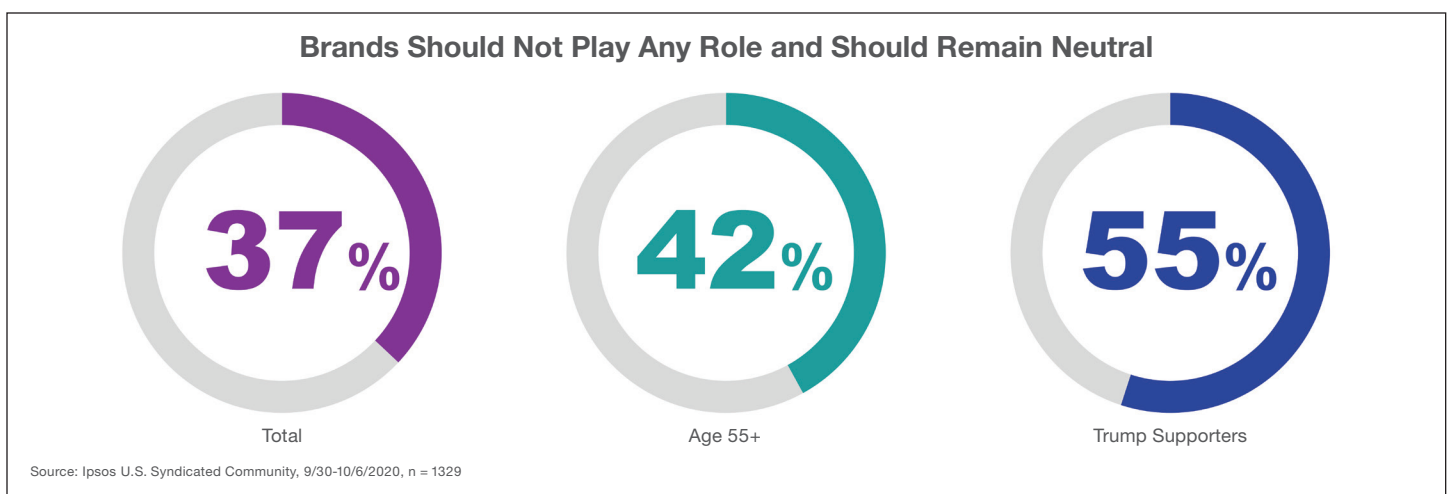
– Ipsos Community Member

## 2. Like Everything, This is Polarized

Support for brand involvement in the election skews significantly higher among certain voter segments including younger voters, Black or African-American voters, and Democrats. Democrats are 20% more likely to support brands encouraging the general public to vote (66% vs. 46% total), and both Democrats and Black or African-American voters feel more strongly that brands should also help their customers register to vote (46% across both segments vs. 29% total). Younger voters aged 18–24 and Black or African-American voters also show much more support for brands taking a stand on issues they support (38% and 40% respectively vs. 22% total).

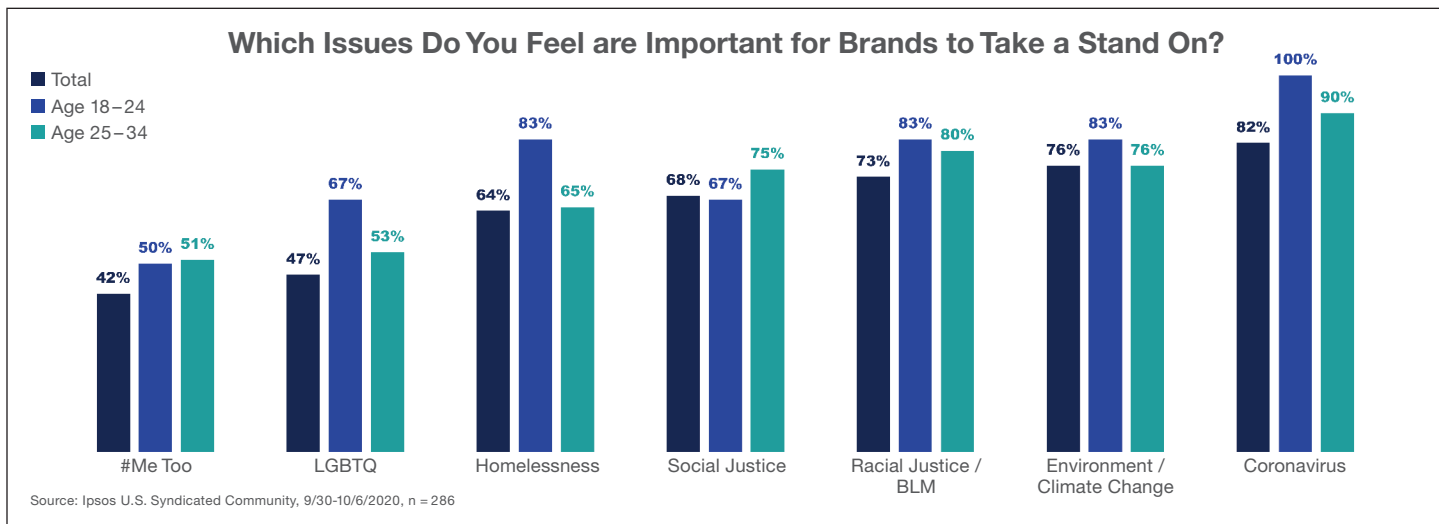


By contrast, older voters and those who plan to vote for Trump are more likely to say brands should not play any role right now and should remain neutral.



### 3. Younger Voters will Reward Your Brand's Stance on Social

While those who support brands taking a stand feel strongly about a variety of issues, younger voters are generally even more supportive about brands getting involved in a wide variety of issues across the board.

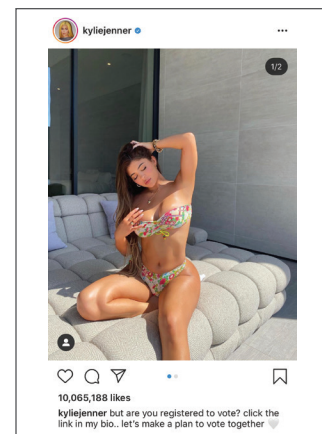


This is also reflected in social media conversations, where authenticity emerges as another key attribute driving positive response. Ben & Jerry's, well known for decades of brand development around social activism, was quick to make their stance known on supporting the BLM movement. This led to brand mentions spiking in June and an influx of consumer support online. Similarly, when Patagonia launched an election-infused clothing line in mid-September with the tagline 'Vote the A\*holes Out,' it was largely seen as a positive move aligned with the company's ongoing commitment to environmental activism. Notably, Patagonia also [publicly clarified their stance as non-partisan](#), saying of the message, "It refers to politicians from any party who deny or disregard the climate crisis."

"After @benandjerrys released their statement about #BlackLivesMatter I just knew I had to go buy some ice cream. Thank you for taking a stand." – Social Media User

"Gosh, I love @patagonia and brands that aren't afraid to speak up and act out for what they believe in. Gotta get these shorts!" – Social Media User

Influencers' election-related efforts have also generated a great deal of response on social that has translated to real-world action. LeBron James' 'More Than a Vote' initiative, aimed at combating voter suppression, has recruited [over 10,000 poll workers](#) and is seen by supporters as a pro-democracy effort. And in late September, an Instagram post by Kylie Jenner encouraging her followers to vote sparked a [1500% user increase](#) to non-partisan voter registration website Vote.org.



Previous Ipsos research has shown that brand messaging resonates most [when concrete actions are taken](#) at the same time. As campaigns continue to heat up over the next few weeks, and people are bombarded with political messaging from all sides, brands have an opportunity to stand out by staying close to key audience sensibilities, taking actions that resonate, and embracing authenticity along the way.

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