



To: Interested Parties
From: ROKK Solutions/Engagious
Date: April 2, 2020
Subject: Swing voter insights on corporate social good efforts

Engagious/ROKK Solutions conducted a focus group on March 9th with 11 swing voters: 10 who voted for President Obama in 2012 and President Trump in 2016, and one who voted for Mitt Romney in 2012 and Hillary Clinton in 2016. This was followed by two online focus groups on March 25th including eight of the same swing voters.

ROKK Solutions wanted to gain insight into how these voters viewed businesses and brands in the wake of the coronavirus, with a focus on social good and government assistance. Below are our findings.

Key Finding: Voters have a positive view of companies that are using their resources to alleviate the impacts of Covid-19 in local communities. We recommend our clients put a specific focus on their social value-add when communicating with customers, policymakers and influencers. Policy asks alone may fall on deaf ears.

This approach allows brands to soften the ground in advance of any requests for government assistance, as well as promote consumer loyalty throughout the crisis and beyond. By creating goodwill with voters, companies can create air cover for policy makers to legislate in their favor.

Key Findings

Swing voters are taking note of national and local businesses who have gone out of their way to contribute to the greater good during this crisis—and they view these efforts positively.

On the national level, they are familiar with the following efforts:

- T-Mobile and some other phone companies are providing unlimited smartphone data to its customers;
- Audible has opened up their children's content, making it available to everyone;
- Internet and utility companies are waiving late fees and not cutting off service to people;

- Ford Motor Company is trying to help people who cannot make their car payments.

On the local level, they cited these examples:

- One company donated 40,000 masks to hospitals;
- The owner of the NBA’s Minnesota Timberwolves donated money to Mayo Clinic for faster testing pertaining to the coronavirus;
- Lord Fletcher’s, a restaurant, gave away 500 dinners to people in need;
- Restaurants in downtown St. Paul gave away fresh food to low-income people;
- A nearby restaurant provided pizza to the homeless and to people who had no money for food;
- Some local restaurants are waiving delivery fees.

Our swing voters viewed these efforts positively, describing them as “uplifting.”

Most of our swing voters view large companies or industries requesting government assistance to get through the crisis more favorably if they know they are using their capabilities to help communities in need.

The majority of our swing voters viewed these large companies or industries more favorably, and none said they would view them less favorably. This finding aligns with current research indicating the [majority](#) of Americans expect brands to promote social good beyond their product or service.

Half of our swing voters believe donations of protective equipment, such as masks and gloves, would be the most impactful right now.

With various large corporations pledging donations to help address the crisis, respondents rated which category of donation they think is the most impactful right now:

	Total
Donations of protective equipment, such as masks and gloves	4
Cash payments to people who have lost jobs and need money	3
Donations of food for those suffering from illness and those treating the sick	1

Most of these swing voters told us that large companies requesting government assistance to get through the crisis would have no impact on their willingness to do business with them after the crisis has subsided.

During the Great Recession, some large companies or industries received negative attention for requesting financial assistance from the government. We were interested in finding out how government-supported large companies would be viewed, and whether it would impact our swing voters' willingness to do business with them post-crisis. Six told us it made no difference either way, one would be more likely to do business with them, and one would be less likely.

These voters generally feel companies were "victims of circumstance" (rather than getting into this situation by their own reckless behavior). We heard that, if they used a product or service pre-crisis and still needed it post-crisis, they would continue doing business with that company as long as it didn't misbehave, such as misusing the funds. Notably, none of our eight swing voters believed the multi-trillion dollar legislation was a "bailout" for large corporations.

Conclusion

Consumers have many choices when it comes to the brands they do business with. In the current crisis climate we face, swing voters demonstrated a favorable view of those who are using their platforms and capabilities to help -- particularly those who are able to supply masks or other badly-needed equipment.

Disclaimer

The key findings in this report are based upon the opinions and feedback from eight swing voters in one location. They are not a representative sample, nor should they be viewed as such.