

**COUPON** FOLLOW

# CONSUMER SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2021

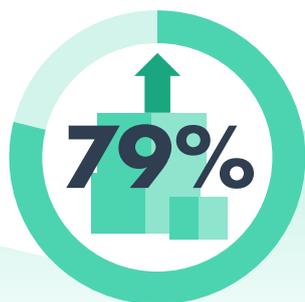
Online commerce in 2020 witnessed rapid and historic growth due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As shoppers rapidly transitioned to digital to get goods without encountering crowds and continue to do so, there are environmental considerations on the impact of this societal shift.

In a survey of more than 1,300 U.S. consumers, we asked Americans about their personal preferences regarding sustainable retailing. Are consumers aware of the impact their increased online shopping makes on the environment? Do consumers care about what retailers are doing to be more sustainable, combat climate change, and be more environmentally conscious? Answers to these questions and more are addressed in this report, as we examine consumers' perception of their impact on climate change, and how interested they are in sustainability as it compares to their preferences for convenience and budgetary restrictions.



# KEY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

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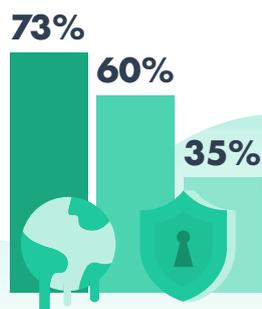
## 1 E-COMMERCE SHOPPING HAS ACCELERATED DUE TO THE PANDEMIC, BUT CONSUMERS ARE MIXED ON IF THAT IS WORSE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.

79% of consumer respondents stated making more purchases this year, compared to last year, specifically due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, over half (55%) of consumers stated they felt buying online and having goods shipped directly to them has the same impact on the environment as buying in-store.



## 2 ALMOST ALL CONSUMERS WOULD SHOP MORE SUSTAINABLY IF THERE WERE SOME MONETARY INCENTIVE OR DISCOUNT.

92% of consumers felt a discount or tax credit would be at least somewhat effective in swaying them to shop sustainable brands. And over half (55%) of consumers felt a discount or tax credit would be very or extremely effective to push them toward sustainable brands.

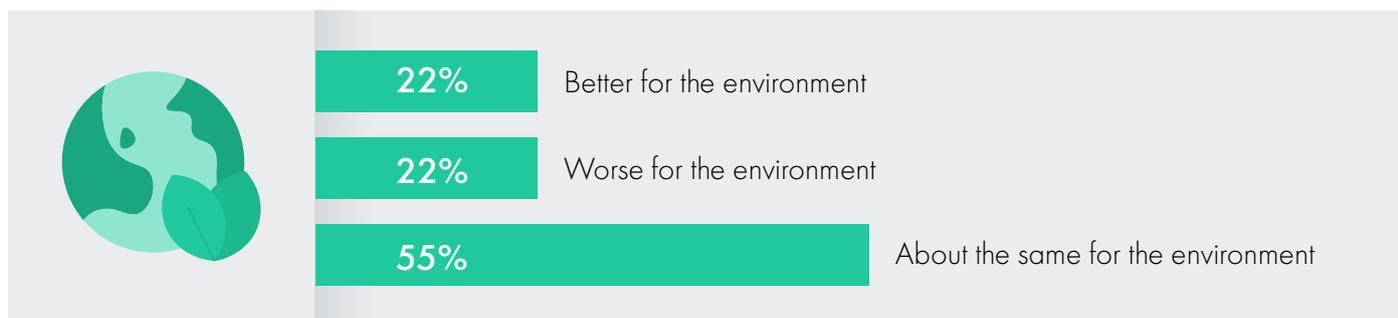


## 3 WHEN ASKED DIRECTLY IF RESPONDENTS FELT DATA PRIVACY OR CLIMATE CHANGE WAS MORE IMPORTANT TO THEM, ABOUT 60% STATED DATA PRIVACY.

While 73% of US consumers felt climate change would impact them in their lifetime, 60% of US consumers felt their data privacy was a more important issue to them than climate change; Only 35% felt climate change was more important to them.

# Consumers seem unsure whether purchasing goods online over in-store is more or less beneficial for the environment

DO YOU FEEL PURCHASING ONLINE AND HAVING GOODS SHIPPED TO YOU DIRECTLY IS...



Answered: 1,302

Skipped: 0

Our research suggests that consumers are not clear on the environmental impact of increased e-commerce purchasing when compared to in-store purchasing. **55%** of consumers stated they felt buying online and having goods shipped directly to them has the same impact on the environment as buying in-store, while the remaining were split at **22%** each on if it was better or worse for the environment.

**68%** stated they would be likely or very likely to change their shopping habits (e.g. shop less often, pay extra for carbon offset, etc.) to help reduce human impact on climate change.

**About 3 of 4 (73%)** of consumers stated making at least one intentional eco-friendly purchase in the last year, while about 1 in 4 (24%) stated making 4 or more.

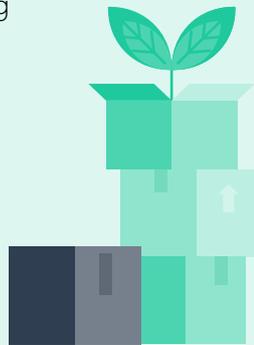
## NOTABLE MENTION

A recent CNN article notes that **"SHOPPING ONLINE USES SEVEN TIMES AS MUCH CARDBOARD AS PICKING UP ITEMS FROM A STORE, ACCORDING TO THE COMMODITY DATA ANALYTICS COMPANY FASTMARKETS."** However, there are more than just boxes to consider when determining the environmental impact on the delivery of goods to consumers.

# There is a generational gap in perspective on climate change

Overall our data suggests that younger generations are more concerned with climate change than older generations. Additionally, older generations may prioritize other concerns such as data privacy, while Young Millennials (aged 24-29) were the most likely to correlate climate change to human-related activities.

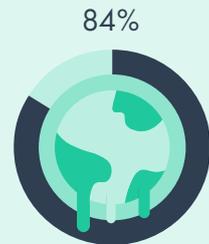
Boomers were least likely to seek out an **eco-friendly package**, with about 1 in 3 (35%) stating they've made zero intentional eco-friendly purchases in the last year. While Young Millennials were the most likely to seek out more eco-friendly packages, with half (50%) stating they've made **3 or more intentional eco-friendly purchases in the last year**.



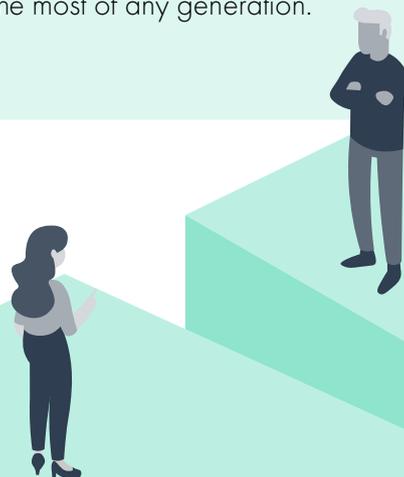
Millennials were the most likely to be influenced by a **discount, tax credit, or other monetary incentives** to shop sustainably, with 63% stating it would be very or extremely effective.



Gen-Z and Young Millennials were about split (48% of Gen-Z and 50% of Young Millennials) when asked which topic was more important to them: **Climate change or Data privacy**; however, older generations skewed toward being more concerned with data privacy.



**84%** Young Millennials were the most likely to feel that **climate will affect them** in their lifetime, with 84% stating as such. Additionally, over half of Young Millennials strongly agreed that climate change is caused by humans and human-related activities, the most of any generation.



# Consumer perceptions of major retailers when it comes to sustainability vary, but marketing and advertising may play an influential role

In our survey, we asked consumers to identify, in their opinion, brands that resonate both positively and negatively when it comes to incorporating sustainability-focused initiatives. Answers were also free form as not to bias anyone into selecting a brand. Not surprisingly, Amazon was the most commonly entered major e-commerce giant and top of mind when it comes to sustainability. Other key takeaways include:

- Amazon has a slightly more positive perception, while Walmart skewed much more negative.
- Amazon has been pushing TV ads about their climate change goals, which may be beneficial to customers' perception of them.
- Having only positive mentions, Patagonia, Toms and Seventh Generation clearly have made a positive impression on consumers.
- Additionally, Tesla received positive marks, while Exxon received negative. Of note, most respondents cited having negative associations related to climate change with various oil / energy, and some auto companies.

## COMPANY RANKINGS BY NET MENTIONS

AMAZON	+46
TESLA	+42
PATAGONIA	+27
WHOLE FOODS	+23
TOMS	+13
SEVENTH GENERATION	+12
COSTCO	+11
APPLE	+5
FORD	-5
CHEVRON	-8
MCDONALD'S	-13
BP	-18
EXXON	-42
WALMART	-130

## SUSTAINABILITY DOESN'T DRIVE BRAND LOYALTY IN THE MAJORITY OF US CONSUMERS

85% of respondents stated that the quality of products make them loyal to a brand or retailer, while 80% stated the price of their products is what drives loyalty. Only 1 in 4 (25%) respondents stated that sustainable/ethical business practices was what drove their loyalty.



### SUSTAINABILITY HUBS AND POLICIES OF MAJOR RETAILERS:

Amazon - <https://sustainability.aboutamazon.com/>

Walmart - <https://corporate.walmart.com/global-responsibility/sustainability/>

Target - <https://corporate.target.com/corporate-responsibility/planet>

# RESEARCH SUMMARY

Overall, it seems that the majority of US consumers agree that humans are the primary contributors to climate change, that climate change will impact in their lifetime, and are likely to change their shopping habits to reduce the human impact on climate change. However, it is unclear what changes exactly consumers are willing to make to their typical shopping habits. The majority are not yet usually seeking out environmentally conscious products or companies.

Additionally, sustainable business practices are not a major driver of consumer loyalty among other considerations like product quality and prices, and the majority don't feel strongly about environmental considerations when shopping online.

## METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

For this research, we surveyed 1,302 US adults (18+) on November 17, 2020. Around 14% of respondents we identified as Generation Z, 31% as Millennials (14% as Young Millennials, 17% as Older Millennials), 29% as Generation X, and 25% as Baby Boomers. Generations are defined below:

**GENERATION Z - 18-23**

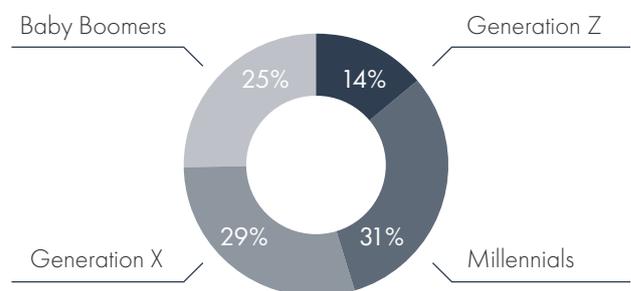
**YOUNG MILLENNIALS - 24-29**

**OLDER MILLENNIALS - 30-39**

**GENERATION X - 40-54**

**BOOMERS - 55+**

Survey data have certain limitations related to self-reporting. These limitations include telescoping, exaggeration, and selective memory. We didn't weight our data or statistically test our hypotheses. This was a purely exploratory project examining climate change and sustainability viewpoints with a focus on shopping.



## FAIR USE STATEMENT

Climate change and sustainability are top of mind for many US consumers and citizens around the world. Feel free to share this research with whomever you think may benefit from it, but be sure your purposes are noncommercial, and please do provide a citation link back to the research on this page so they have access to our full findings and survey methods.