

CAUSE SURVEY

Though an often overlooked target for cause marketing, men are highly interested in supporting companies that give back



THE MALE PERSPECTIVE

Men are an important audience to consider when crafting cause-marketing initiatives, finds this year's *PRWeek/Barkley PR Cause Survey*.

Alexandra Bruell reports

Five years into its National Denim Day program, Lee Jeans achieved an even split between male and female participants. Now in its 15th year, the effort, which benefits breast cancer research by inviting companies to “go casual for a cause” by wearing jeans to work on a designated day, while making a small donation, has raised about \$80 million.

“We initiated it as a dual-gender program because our brand is very much dual-gender,” says Liz Cahill, VP of marketing for Lee Jeans. “The success is the building of participation year over year.”

Breast cancer might seem like a cause that would target only women, but early on Lee Jeans recognized men were just as interested, even if their reasons were different, she adds. Men generally sought to support a cause that could potentially affect the women in their lives, while women were more likely to be passionate about the disease specifically.

However, the team still needed to overcome a male stigma about the disease in its messaging.

“Fifteen years ago, saying ‘breast cancer’ in mixed company was not necessarily politically correct,” says Cahill. “Then we had a cultural shift. Once men started feeling comfortable in pink, they started to see that they could make a difference.”

The brand has noticed a spike in participation during the years it has enlisted male celebrity spokespeople, such as Rob Lowe, Charlie Sheen, and Tim Daly. It also received promotional help from NFL players, many of whom wore pink during games in October in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. “It’s a nice indication guys are helping what’s been known as a woman’s disease,” she adds.

Opportunity for further engagement

Though a handful of brands have directly or indirectly targeted men in their cause efforts, they are in the minority. This means there is a significant opportunity to engage a demographic that is highly invested – and interested – in supporting cause efforts, finds this year’s *PRWeek/Barkley PR Cause Survey*. For the first time, this year’s study polled 536 men about their attitudes toward cause marketing, in addition to 79 marketers about their companies’ cause marketing programs.

Of those surveyed this year, 88% believe it’s important for companies to support a cause, compared to the 91% of women that responded the same way in last year’s survey.

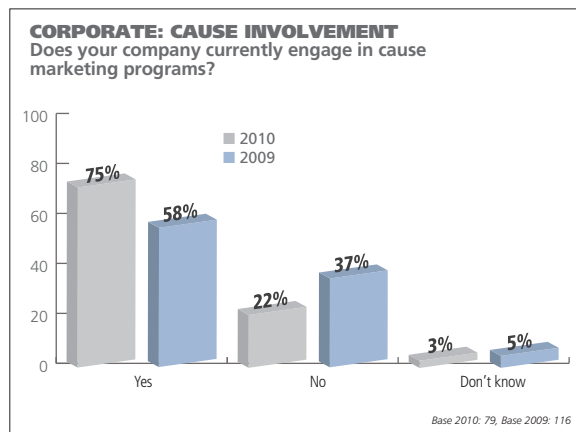
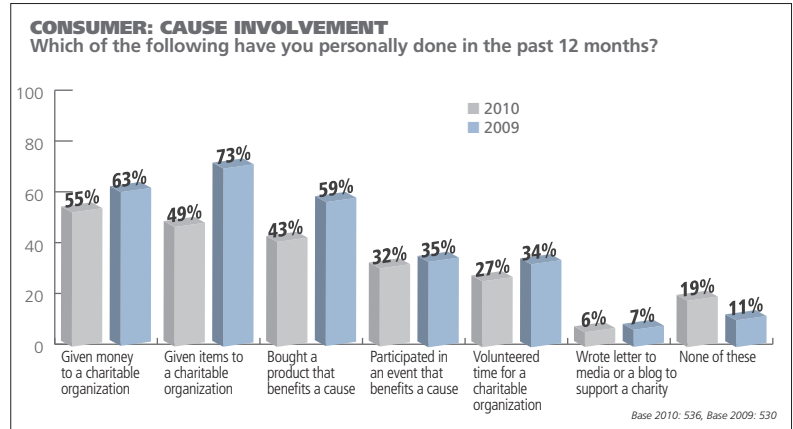
Even more encouraging: two-thirds of brands now engage in cause marketing (up from 58% in 2009) and 97% of marketing executives believe it is a valid business strategy. Even so, 68% of corporate marketing executives say they have no plans to target men with their cause efforts.

“Historically, women have always been seen as driving cause marketing in terms of an important connection, via cause, to the brands they like,” says Mike Swenson, president at Barkley. “We now know men are nearly as supportive as women are of cause marketing programs.”

He attributes this interest largely to a generational shift supported by the survey. Of the respondents who have been involved with a cause in the past year in some manner, 73% are 18 to 29, 80% are 30 to 41, and 89% are 42 to 60.



Actor Tim Daly is among the male celebrities to have lent their support to Lee Jeans’ National Denim Day



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“The Boomer generation has carved out the path toward looking at cause marketing as an important way to connect with consumers,” adds Swenson. “But even more so is Gen X and Gen Y Millennials, who view it as something that must be done. That’s why we’re seeing the numbers we do with men. It’s no longer a gender issue.”

Carol Cone, founder of the eponymous agency and now with Edelman, says men have been left out of the cause movement for most of the time she has been doing work in the sector.

She adds that Millennials, gender-neutral themselves and often skeptical of businesses, are pushing for cause, as seen in what they buy and for whom they work.

The flurry of brands targeting both male and female audiences through holistic marketing programs confirms this shift. For example, Timberland, which predominantly targets 19- to 27-year-old men, recently decided on tree-planting as its latest cause platform.

“We’re definitely gender-neutral with regard to our environmental marketing,” says Margaret Morey-Reuner, senior manager of values marketing at Timberland. “The majority of our consumers are men, but we’re building the business and growing our women’s products. We look at cause from a holistic brand perspective.”

The latest efforts include a tree-planting Facebook app and a reinstatement of the brand’s Earthkeepers Virtual Forest, both translating to actual tree-planting.

“We needed to do a better job of telling people stories about projects happening in real life that their actions are affecting, so we integrated a video feature,” she says.

Standout cause programs

Consumers are the most familiar with these cause-marketing programs:

- McDonald's Ronald McDonald House
- General Mills Box Tops for Education
- Yoplait Save Lids to Save Lives
- VH1 Save the Music
- Tide Loads of Hope
- Product [RED]
- Target Take Charge of Education
- Dawn Saves Wildlife
- Pepsi Refresh
- Avon Breast Cancer Crusade

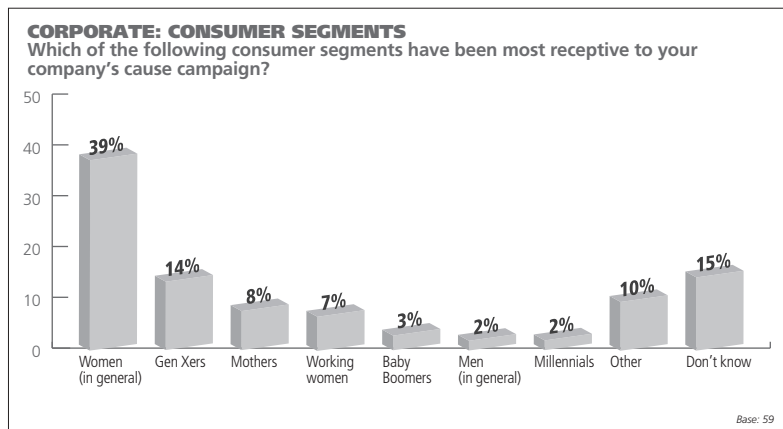
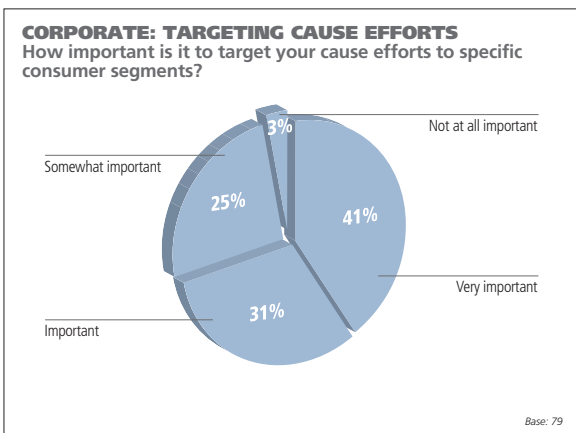
Base: 536

Most admired cause marketing programs by marketers:

- McDonald's Ronald McDonald House
- Avon Breast Cancer Crusade
- General Mills Box Tops for Education
- Dove Campaign for Real Beauty
- Target Take Charge of Education
- Pepsi Refresh
- Product [RED]
- Yoplait Save Lids to Save Lives
- Pampers UNICEF Vaccine
- Tide Loads of Hope

Base: 79

77%
cite a 'personal connection' as an important motivating factor for involvement with a cause



The effort includes an animated film that introduces the idea of life without trees, as well as a three-part video series on planting in Haiti via the Yéle Haiti organization.

In 2011, the company website will host GPS coordinates and technology showing the actual trees planted, as well as additional video footage from Haiti and China.

"We can send video crews to talk to farmers and NGO partners and edit them, put our logo on them, and tell a story," Morey-Reuner explains.

GPS is also a great technology to get men excited, she adds. "It's instant gratification. Guys will tell friends that we make great products, but it's more meaningful for us that consumers buy them. We're dedicated to the environment through tree-planting in different countries."

Demand for transparency

The technology also represents the kind of transparency that's important to males across the board, especially with regard to seeing the results of their investment in cause.

Of those surveyed, 80% say it's important to know exactly where the donation goes and what the results are. As to where they find that information, 35% want to learn about the results via the company website, while 33% prefer to obtain the information on the package.

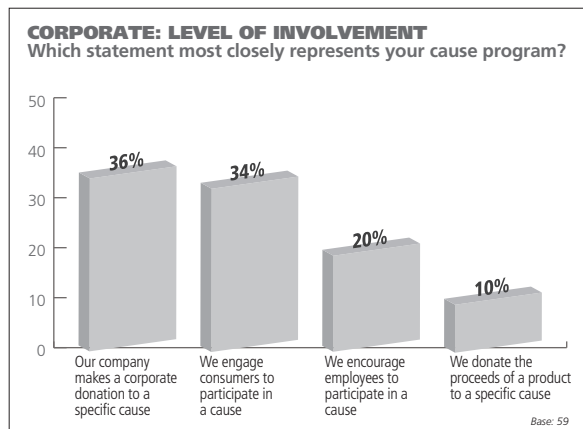
Nike has gained marketer praise for its gender-neutral cause efforts, especially for its work with Livestrong, an organization started by cyclist Lance Armstrong to raise money for cancer research.

Though the company has worked on campaigns with Product (Red) and launched programs such as the World Basketball Festival, its contribution to Livestrong is perhaps the most renowned. The brand partnered with the organization in 2004, starting the yellow wristband phenomenon for male and female audiences. Since its inception, it has generated about \$80 million for people affected by cancer, notes Derek Kent, Nike's US director of media relations.

The PR team has leveraged social media and digital platforms to raise awareness across all causes, such as a Livestrong Web feature enabling users to dedicate messages of hope along the roads of the Tour de France.

"It made people feel part of something bigger," says Kent. "We use sport as a powerful tool for positive social change."

When asked if men are a significant target, he explains that the company has seven brand categories, including female product lines. "We don't think of it that way,"



adds Kent. “We ask ourselves who can inspire people all over the world to engage in more athletic endeavors.”

Katherine McLane, director of communications at Livestrong, says, “We’ve had great success connecting with prominent men who recognize Lance, identify with him, and are very eager to support the cause because of their personal connection to his story.”

However, she adds that although the organization has “been fortunate in having enthusiastic and prominent male athletes and people in government willing to participate,” Livestrong targets “all types, ages, and genders.”

Though the organization claims to be a gender-neutral program, the report shows that the “personal connection” that McLane refers to is a main driver for involvement in a cause, with 77% citing it as an important motivating factor.

Other important factors include: peer family influence (57%), social opportunities (25%), workplace incentives (25%), and advertising (20%). Only 6% of respondents consider celebrity endorsements an important motivator.

Top causes for men

Alan Buddendeck, corporate VP of global communications and CSR at Nissan, attributes the heightened desire among men to get involved in corporate cause programs to “a better consciousness about the state of the planet and environment,” especially among younger consumers across gender lines who he says are more impassioned about how companies are running their businesses.

Like Nike and Timberland, he says gender has little bearing on Nissan’s cause and CSR strategy, which includes donations to and partnerships with organizations related to the environment, math and technology education, and humanitarian relief.

However, adds Buddendeck, “I’ve seen more requests from younger men in our company in various markets for engagements on various social issues, especially in the area of education, as well as increased inquiries from men about the environment.”

The brand’s devotion to global education, as seen through university sponsorships and book drives for children, is in line with the survey results showing that men were most likely to support causes related to children or education (20%). Health (18%), poverty (12%), and animal welfare (11%) were also significant.

Stephen Jacoby, VP and associate publisher of *Esquire*, helped drive the brand’s partnership with Save the Children as part of its annual Esquire House event last year.

He started the male-targeted program, dubbed “the ultimate bachelor house,” in 2003, in part inspired by advertisers such as Armani and Calvin Klein who were starting home lines and wanted to communicate with men who were getting married later in life.

It was a win-win to introduce a philanthropic program that would also resonate with its advertisers, explains Jacoby.

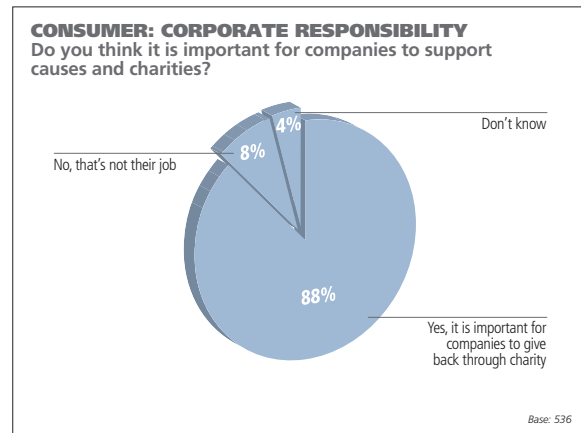
“People there had a greater sense of wanting to give back,” he adds. “The magazine wanted to promote and talk to various organizations that would really hit home with men and help raise awareness of their causes.”

The first house, which raises funds for breast cancer, caught the eye of Katie Couric and her campaign for cancer



“MEN SUPPORT THE CAUSE BECAUSE OF THEIR PERSONAL CONNECTION TO [LANCE ARMSTRONG’S] STORY”

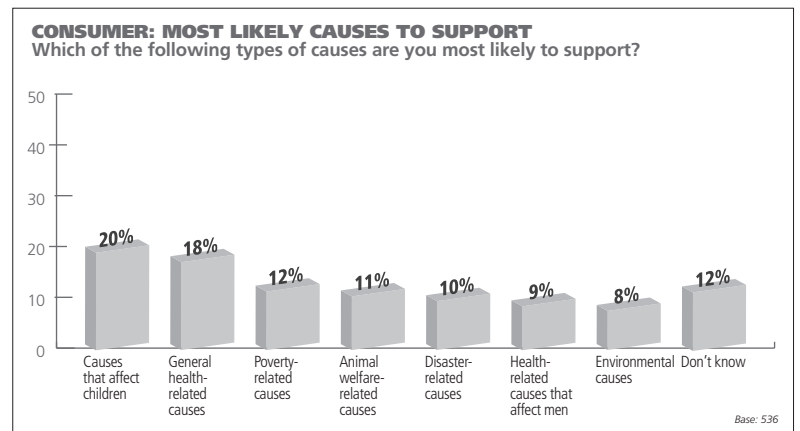
Katherine McLane, Livestrong



42%
of respondents claim social media has impacted their involvement with charities



For 2010, Timberland decided on tree planting as its latest cause platform



awareness. As with Lee Jeans, the brand wanted to bring awareness to a disease that indirectly affected men, but about which they were uncomfortable talking.

“You’re seeing over the past 10 to 15 years a consciousness rising among men,” says Jacoby. “Men, and the general population, are more educated and have taken on a greater role in doing good.”

This year, the program partnered with five charities and *Esquire* is planning four events at the house.

As with Timberland, he explains that new technology, such as a virtual reality feature by creative shop Luxurious Animals, can help “engage a man and his inner child.” Also, for the first time, the magazine is launching a

Facebook tab on the *Esquire* page dedicated to the event, with links to and discussions with the charities involved.

Marketers agree that social media is an invaluable tool for cause programs, and it’s helped bring men, who in the past may not have been listening or able to communicate their point of view, to the table.

“They’re using communications methods we hadn’t thought of 10 years ago, so it makes it easier for us to tell our story and have a conversation with them,” says Timberland’s Morey-Reuner.

She adds that while the digital landscape didn’t necessarily inspire

the brand’s promotion of reforestation, the research in the space motivated the brand to maximize its communications and social media platforms to help tell its story.

Improvement through social media

Though social media has drastically altered the marketing landscape overall, less than half of respondents (42%) say it has affected their interaction with charities. Of those, 25% report that social media has increased the amount of information they can obtain about a charity.

And while a majority of marketers with whom *PRWeek* has spoken have said that they’re not allocating additional resources to cause marketing, they say that social media has enabled them to more efficiently promote the causes.

MillerCoors’ Miller High Life brand is leveraging various marketing disciplines to promote its veteran cause program among its male target, including advertising and packaging. However, the campaign is for the most part social media- and PR-led, explains Andy Bowman, marketing communications manager at the company.

Through a coalition with Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, the company came up with the idea to donate \$1 million in both cash and experiences, such as football games, concerts, and fishing trips, to “give a veteran a piece of the High Life.”

The program that launched in July is in part a result of consumer feedback – from local markets and Facebook – indicating that men would be interested in a veteran-related cause, explains Bowman.

“It was about doing what we knew from a brand perspective to show support in a way that’s very different from



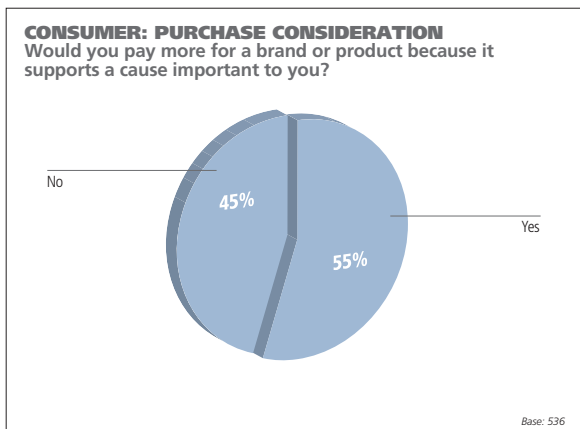
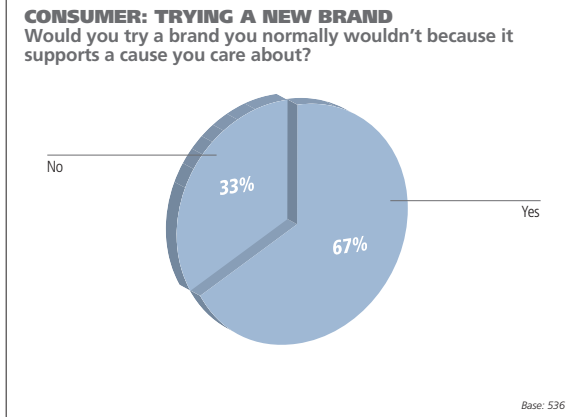
“WE NOW KNOW MEN ARE NEARLY AS SUPPORTIVE AS WOMEN ARE OF CAUSE MARKETING PROGRAMS”

Mike Swenson, Barkley PR

The respondents

Consumer: The survey polled **536** men. The median age of respondents was **36.6**. Of the respondents, **79%** were Caucasian, **6%** were black, **6%** were Hispanic, **4%** were Asian, **1%** were other, and **4%** preferred not to answer. The median annual household income for respondents was **\$63.5K**.

Corporate: The survey’s **79** respondents included the following titles: VP of PR/comms (**11%**); CMO (**6%**); VP of marketing (**6%**); SVP of marketing (**4%**); VP of CSR/cause marketing/corporate citizenship (**4%**); EVP of marketing (**1%**); SVP of PR/comms (**1%**); PR/comms manager (**14%**); marketing director (**9%**); director of CSR/cause marketing/corporate citizenship (**8%**); marketing manager (**6%**); director of PR/comms (**3%**); brand manager (**3%**); other (**24%**).



Is cause a cure for crisis?



One of the most interesting findings of this year's *PRWeek/Barkley PR Cause Survey* came in the verbatim answers from consumers. When asked to identify companies that are not doing cause programs that should be, the most common consumer responses were BP, Apple, and Goldman Sachs.

This raises an important question: Can an effective cause program help save a company in crisis? From the survey results, two things are clear: consumers expect more from companies that have reputational issues and companies that have crisis and reputational issues may find it difficult to implement a cause program.

"We are all paying attention to how companies act and whether or not they're transparent," says Barkley PR president Mike Swenson. "Brands must make sure that they're responsive and transparent about business practices. If they're not, a good cause program will only act as a facade for a while."

He cites Apple as an example of an organization that could be helped by a cause program.

"Apple does things the right way," notes Swenson. "So if it comes out with a powerful cause program that engages its consumers, that would give all of us who use Apple products another reason to like the company."

what other brands are doing," he adds. "We wanted to give [veterans] a positive experience that raises public awareness of the challenges facing this audience."

But the power here, and in cause marketing in general, is in the program's consistency and relevance to its overall marketing and business platform.

The veteran program is in line with Miller High Life's three-year-long marketing platform that touts a message about "common sense" and overcoming life's pretentiousness, as the company claims to do with its beer.

The theme also supported its 2010 Super Bowl campaign, which benefited small businesses, as it was inspired by "nonsensical Super Bowl commercials" during a recession.

"We thought, why not make the programs count for something, give back, and use that as a jumping-off point for drinkers about 'common sense,'" says Bowman.

A consistent message

While Cone says that sports, entertainment, and the military are prototypically effective topics for any male-related marketing program, she explains that a campaign's most important elements are its consistency and storytelling.

"Causes needn't be about a children's hospital," she says. "It can be a deep, sustained story to ignite the passion to

build a community and then have people following it. [Consumers] want to know that it's an ongoing story."

Sears' Heroes at Home program touts this kind of consistency, not only through its three-year-plus commitment, but also through a connection to its heritage, which is steeped in military dating back to its family-support program during World War II.

"It's not one of those come-lately sort of causes," says Tom Aiello, division VP for Sears Holdings. "We thought we could be credible in doing something in that space."

Three years ago, the company partnered with Rebuilding Together, a nonprofit that revitalizes military communities. With employment of 30,000 military veterans, Sears wanted to promote internal volunteerism, he explains.

"We chose the cause around veterans because of our focus on families and our close connection to the military," adds Aiello. "We're looking at roughly a third to a fifth of US families that have had a direct member serve at one point, so it's instantly getting a huge amount of the population."

Core tactics are military blogger outreach, in-store promotion, and a new automated volunteerism function.

The company is expanding the program to support members of the military still serving, providing families with money to buy "necessity items" during the holiday season.

"If you look at the dual-gender targeting of the program and at our customers, we have a renowned hard-line business among tools, appliance, and automotive that's an established business in a male-skewed target," he says. "And then look at our soft-line business that's innovation on the apparel and home front." ●

The *PRWeek/Barkley PR Cause Survey* was conducted by CA Walker from August 12-23, 2010. E-mail notification was sent to approximately 4,252 marketing pros and 2,365 consumers.

A total of 79 PR and marketing pros and 536 male consumers completed the survey online. The results are not weighted and are statistically tested at a confidence level of 90%. This article only offers a summary of findings.

