



RCX QUARTERLY TREND REPORT

A Partnership Between:

Radical
XTM

and

Inkblot Analytics

NOTICE: This document and its contents are exclusively owned by Inkblot Holdings, LLC and cannot be reproduced, distributed, communicated, or otherwise used without the express written permission from Inkblot Holdings, LLC. This document and its contents are solely provided for use by Inkblot Holdings, LLC current and prospective clients in conjunction with products and services offered by Inkblot Holdings, LLC, and for no other purpose. Nothing herein creates any rights, substantive or procedural, in any party other than Inkblot Holdings, LLC.



Introduction

Over the past few years, a concerning trend has emerged in the marketing landscape, characterized by the proliferation of messages and strategies that generate negative experiences for consumers. In today's fast-paced and interconnected world, both consumers and employees alike are finding themselves compelled to report a greater number of unfavorable encounters with brands compared to positive ones. It has become evident that companies and brands must adapt to this changing paradigm by taking a more conscientious approach to their marketing tactics while keeping the consumer as a whole in mind. Rather than merely seeking to drive short-term profits, they must now prioritize the cultivation of marketing strategies and messages that foster positive connections and experiences for consumers. This emphasis on fostering positivity can lead to a more sustainable and harmonious relationship between brands and their customers, ultimately benefiting both parties in the long run.

Radical Customer Experience™ (RCX) helps brands develop trauma-informed marketing strategies to engage with their customers on a **deeper, more meaningful level.**

A brand's ability to be sensitive to consumer perceptions, values, and behaviors is essential to identifying how the brand is perceived by consumers. To help turn brand sensitivity into measurable and "diagnosable" scores, RCX collaborated with Inkblot Analytics, a research and analytics firm specializing in psychographics. The result of this partnership is this report: The RCX Ranking Report.



The **RCX Quarterly Trend Report** is a quarterly report that focuses on a brand's sensitivity score. Supported by empirical evidence, the report will provide an overview of:

1. Current Consumer's perspective, emotions, and thoughts on marketing campaigns that exploit sensitive issues
2. How brands can cultivate a positive experience for consumers through marketing campaigns
3. Introduce our proprietary Cancel Culture Checkup scale as a solution

This report also provides an empirical example of how the combination of psychology, technology, and our "secret sauce" work together to create the Cancel Culture Checkup score.

Methodology

For this first RCX Quarterly Trend Report, we recruited participants from across the United States. We were able to recruit **101 participants** who completed the survey online.

Our online survey was divided into the following sections:

- Introduction and Consent Form
- Positioning Information
 - Positioning Observation
 - Positioning Problem
 - Positioning Insight
 - Positioning Solution
- Cancel Culture Checkup Scale
- Demographics

We used a proprietary scale to measure employee personality profiles, the Workplace Characteristics scale. We measured five key personality profiles with the Workplace Characteristics scale for each individual with



six items each: Sociable, Agreeable, Resolute, Mindful, and Creative. We added responses to the Workplace Characteristic scale for each respective personality profile to obtain overall personality profile scores.



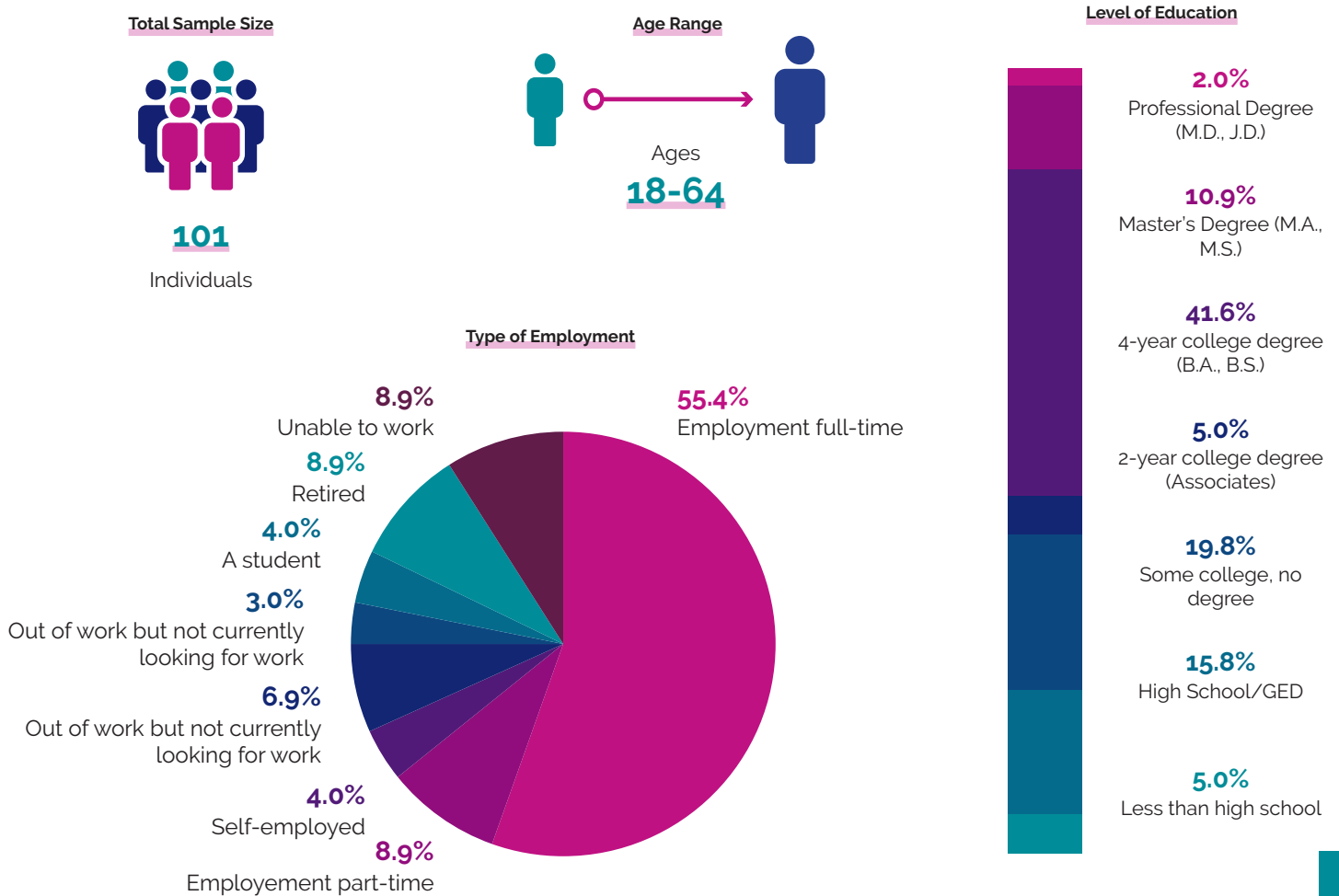
While this study was quantitative, our proprietary projective test, **"Transgression Identifier,"** can also be used to capture study goals qualitatively. Powered by Brand Blots, Inkblot Analytics' AI-enabled projective testing platform, the "Transgression Identifier" measure is an add-on service providing hidden insights.

Using a rigorous data cleaning and quality assurance (QA) process, we ensured that the data were:

- Produced by real people (not bots)
- Produced accurately (not randomly answered)
- Entered thoughtfully (not someone rushing through it to answer as quickly as possible)

Sample

To have a better understanding of who took this survey, the following is a detailed breakdown of the sample composition.



Overall, the sample was representative of a wide variety of individuals, which was ideal for generalizing these results to all individuals.



Results

In the current study, we found that nearly **28% of participants** had come across advertisements of marketing campaigns that exploited sensitive issues like personal traumas and/or societal crises to grab their attention. When asked to provide examples of such instances, participants reported on marketing campaigns such as:

1. Exploitation of historical events such as Juneteenth and 9/11
2. Use of sensitive images of sick people or animals
3. Reminders of personal traumas such as school shootings or loss

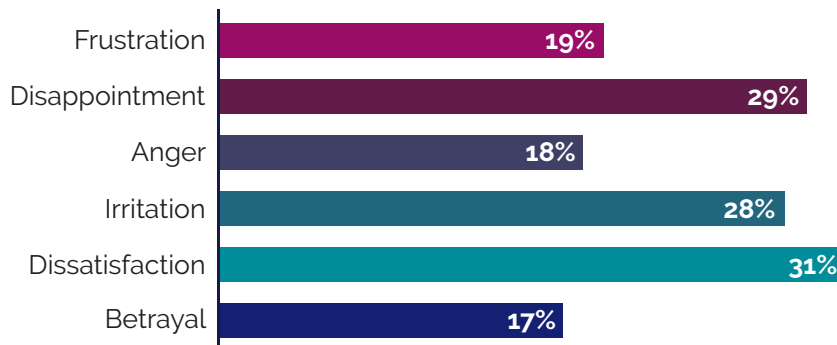
To better understand how such marketing campaigns influenced consumers, we asked our consumers to rate how 10 specific hypothetical marketing campaign scenarios encompassing sensitive issues like personal traumas and/or societal crisis made them feel. An example of a hypothetical marketing campaign scenario included "Mother's Day Promotions for Bereaved Individuals: Receiving a Mother's Day promotion or advertisement after someone's mother has passed away."

We found that **45% of individuals** had personally experienced the personal struggle/event in their life presented in the hypothetical marketing campaign scenario they were presented with. For these individuals, the marketing campaign scenario generated an overall negative experience, where nearly **34% of these individuals** felt very uncomfortable receiving such a campaign.

Even when not personally impacted by the event, consumers reported feeling discomfort with marketing campaigns. For example, when asked about their level of comfort with real-life marketing campaigns we found the following scenarios to be particularly uncomfortable for respondents:

- 42.0%** Reacted negatively towards **Fashion Nova's "Columbine" Collection**. Fashion Nova faced backlash for releasing a collection named after the Columbine school shooting, which was seen as deeply insensitive and exploitative of a tragic event.
- 34.6%** Reacted negatively towards **Nationwide's Super Bowl Ad**. Nationwide released a Super Bowl ad discussing childhood accidents and deaths. The ad faced backlash for being overly serious and disturbing for such a lighthearted event.

Moreover, respondents reported the following emotional responses to negative experiences with marketing campaigns:





Strong negative emotions and discomfort in response to marketing campaigns that evoke a negative experience for consumers is indicative of the need for brands to be more sensitive to consumer needs in marketing campaigns. Particularly, when in response to a marketing campaign or message they disliked, **53% of respondents** reported that they were likely to do the following: **ignore the brand or unsubscribe from the brand.**

So what are consumers actually looking for? To better understand what consumers focus on, we inquired about which factors contributed to an overall negative or positive experience with a brand.

Consumers rated the following four factors as the most important in generating a negative experience with a brand:

1. Poor customer service
2. Product defects or quality issues
3. Misleading advertising
4. Overly aggressive marketing tactics

Conversely, consumers rated the following four factors as the most important in generating an overall positive experience with a brand:

1. Exceptional customer service
2. High product quality and reliability
3. Honest and transparent advertising
4. Respectful and non-intrusive marketing tactics

Results indicate that focusing on honest and respectful advertising campaigns above and beyond what a product offers is essential for a positive consumer-brand relationship.

However, when asked about their opinion on brand messaging and advertising, in our study, we found that **32% of respondents** reported that they consider very few brands to successfully stand out through their messaging. Moreover, we found that **56% of respondents** reported feeling overwhelmed by the sheer volume of brand messaging and advertising across various media, as a result **61% of respondents** reported that sometimes they choose not to engage with or respond to brand messages due to the sheer volume.

To truly stand out to consumers, brands must go above and beyond.

When asked about which brands marketing strategies appealed to consumers the most, respondents reported the following brands:



Specifically, respondents reported the following components as appealing about these brands:

1. Authenticity
2. Transparency
3. Quality
4. Creativity



In general, respondents reported the following as important to them when purchasing from a brand:

1. Authenticity in messaging (65%)
2. Messaging that considers consumer past experience (54%)
3. Consideration of customer reviews in messaging (58%)

70% of study respondents noted that they were more likely to engage with or purchase from brands that demonstrate a commitment to marketing that is mindful of the consumer.

Altogether, these results indicate a need for brands to be intentional about their marketing tactics, leaning towards generating more positive than negative experiences for consumers by being mindful of consumer experiences, being authentic in their actions and messaging, and fostering trust within their consumer base.

Cancel Culture Checkup Example • • •

To measure consumer perceptions of a brand's sensitivity score, in the current study, we administered the Cancel Culture Checkup scale. The scale measures consumer perceptions of a brand's sensitivity to consumer needs in three key areas: **Radical Vulnerability, Radical Authentic Investment, and Radical Empathy**. The brand sensitivity score is calculated as a combination of these three areas. The brand sensitivity score ranges from 0 - 100, where lower scores indicate that the consumers perceive a brand as less likely to be "canceled" or in other words as a sensitive brand. The threshold to be considered a good brand is a score of 15 or lower.

In our study we asked consumers to rate their perceptions of the following brands:









Based on the brand sensitivity scores, **Balenciaga** seems to be the brand that is perceived to be the most sensitive to consumer needs among these brands. However, Balenciaga falls at a score of 27, which is higher than the threshold of 15 or lower, indicating that while it performs better than the other brands, it is still scoring poorly relative to most brands and is at high risk of being "canceled." Conversely, **Whole Foods**, the brand with the highest score, is most likely to be "canceled" among the three brands. Consumers perceive Whole Foods to be less radically vulnerable, authentic, and empathetic towards consumers.



This score can be broken down further into the three key areas:



	Radical Vulnerability	Radical Authentic Investment	Radical Empathy
	54	53	53
	31	31	33
	33	32	40
	41	41	38
	41	43	47
	26	27	28



More detailed insights on how to improve a brand's score to cultivate more positive consumer experiences with a brand can be gleaned from the Cancel Culture Checkup and our AI-powered platform: [RadicalHI](#).

Next Steps

This report is only the tip of the iceberg. More extensive research can be conducted to take a closer look at employee and employer personality profiles and C-Scores. If there are topics that interest you, we'd be happy to include them in our next round of research. Just let us know by contacting us at info@inkblotanalytics.com.