

# GAVIN / SOLMONESE

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## **BUSINESSES' SOCIAL ISSUES STANCE INFLUENCES AMERICANS' BUYING BEHAVIORS AND WORK PLACE CHOICES**

***National poll shows that Americans support the idea of corporate social responsibility –  
and that corporations stand to gain more than lose by supporting same-sex marriage***

**WASHINGTON, DC. (November 13, 2012)** - Americans place a great deal of value on the relationship companies have with the world around them and their position on social issues, according to the just-released Gavin/Solmonese Social Issues Engagement Index. The Gavin/Solmonese Social Issues Engagement Index is a new national poll the firm is conducting annually with Harris Interactive.

The inaugural study was conducted online nationwide by Harris Interactive on behalf of Gavin/Solmonese from October 16th – 18th, 2012, among 2,025 U.S. adults aged 18 and older. According to the survey, a substantial number of Americans, seventy-nine percent (79%) agree that corporations should behave in a socially responsible manner (i.e., take an active role in social issues). U.S. adults also care at least a moderate amount about companies' positions on issues such as environmental responsibility (70%), global human rights (63%) and coverage for reproductive care for women (56%).

“The good news is that, based upon this survey, we have tangible proof that Americans are interested in engaging with businesses that behave ethically and contribute economically in order to improve the quality of their workforce, their communities and society at large,” said Joe Solmonese, founder and managing partner of Gavin/Solmonese, a corporate restructuring and public affairs consulting firm.

### **Putting Their Money Where Their Mouth Is**

Additionally, the survey showed that a large majority of Americans, seventy-six percent (76%), are at least somewhat likely to base buying decisions on a company's social issues position. Interestingly, there was little variation in this number between different income brackets. The percentages were as follows: seventy-seven percent (77%) for households earning less than \$35k, seventy-eight percent (78%) for households earning \$35k to \$49.9k, eighty-three percent (83%) for households earning \$50k to \$74.9k and seventy-four percent (74%) for households earning \$75k plus.

“Based upon the findings of the Gavin/Solmonese Social Issues Engagement Index, nearly three quarters of wage earners in almost every income bracket care about companies' level of social responsibility and ‘vote’ with their dollars when it comes to the specific issues they care about. This should send a powerful message to corporate America,” said Solmonese.

### **Support of Same Sex Marriage**

With the national debate raging around the issue of marriage equality, some of the most interesting findings in the Gavin/Solmonese Social Issues Engagement Index related to respondents' attitudes and behaviors regarding same sex marriage.

According to the survey, eighty-three percent (83%) of Americans are at least somewhat willing to work for a company that supports same-sex marriage. Among those, the demographic with the highest percentage are U.S. adults aged 18-34 at eighty-seven percent (87%).

“Clearly these young adults are a prime hiring demographic for employers and are our nation’s next generation of business leaders,” said Solmonese. “So their opinions are likely to set the tone for the future and companies would be wise to consider their position on marriage equality if they want to attract an engaged and diverse workforce moving forward.”

One other interesting finding related to this demographic is that more than a third (34%) of adults in this age group would be much more likely or somewhat likely to switch to another brand or service provider if they found the one they currently used opposed same sex marriage.

This information should be a significant reinforcement of the role of social responsibility in corporate America, particularly in the wake of the 2012 election results in which the dramatic shift on public opinions around the issue of same sex marriage was seen nationwide. Same - sex marriage ballot initiatives won in Maine, Maryland and Washington State and an effort to ban same sex marriage lost in Minnesota – the first time in history that a ballot measure seeking to ban same sex marriage in an American state failed.

### **Abbreviated Methodology**

This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of Gavin/Solmonese from October 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012, among 2,025 adults ages 18 and older. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. For more information on the complete methodology of this survey, including weighting variables, please contact Carol Lunger, [clunger@stargroup1.com](mailto:clunger@stargroup1.com).

### **About Gavin/Solmonese**

Whether it's protecting a company or its creditors from failure, deploying new leadership, or reversing antiquated thinking, Gavin/Solmonese leads companies to measurable bottom line improvement. Named one of the country's Outstanding Turnaround Firms in Turnarounds & Workouts for the past 17 years, the Gavin/Solmonese Corporate Recovery Group (formerly NHB Advisors) provides leadership for underperforming and troubled companies and their stakeholders, helping businesses maximize value for owners, investors, creditors and employees. Gavin/Solmonese's Corporate Engagement & Public Affairs Group leads organizations through critical strategic thinking and tactical planning, creating better connections with consumers, decision makers and the media, resulting in market share growth and higher profitability. For more information, visit [www.gavinsolmonese.com](http://www.gavinsolmonese.com).

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