

Roe v. Wade: Why 'taking a stand' has an impact on brand perception.



Buzz word or not, the concept of 'authenticity' holds a lot of weight in the brand community.

And with 72% of Gen Z shoppers saying they are more likely to buy from companies that contribute to social causes, it's no surprise why taking a stand is often a good call for brands these days.

When Roe V Wade overturned in June, we saw many brands choosing to comment and act. Some offered to pay expenses for those travelling to clinics, and brands like Google gave employees the option to relocate if they lived in states with bans.

We wanted to see whether speaking out had a positive or negative impact on these brands. So, we've used our Brand Management platform (which measures the strength of the relationship between brands and consumers) to find out the effect that taking a stand had on their brand.

By looking at brands like Starbucks, Kroger and Airbnb (each of whom offered travel reimbursement to employees during this time) and comparing this data to Walmart (a brand that has not commented on the ruling), we'll determine whether taking a stand has a long-lasting impact.

First, a little bit about ProQuo's data

Every relationship is driven by fundamental human factors, for example if we like how people behave, if we feel they understand what we need, if we find them transparent and whether we feel they do the right thing.

In fact, there are 16 different factors that determine this relationship. We refer to these as the 16 Drivers of Brand Relationships and they are responsible for establishing the strength of a relationship between brands and people.

This is exactly what our platform measures - via daily interactions with consumers.

In this piece, we'll be focusing on four key Drivers:

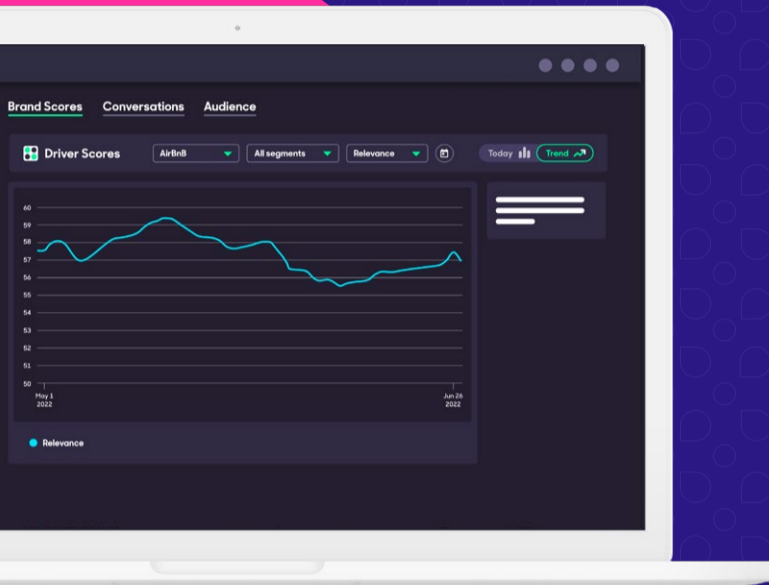
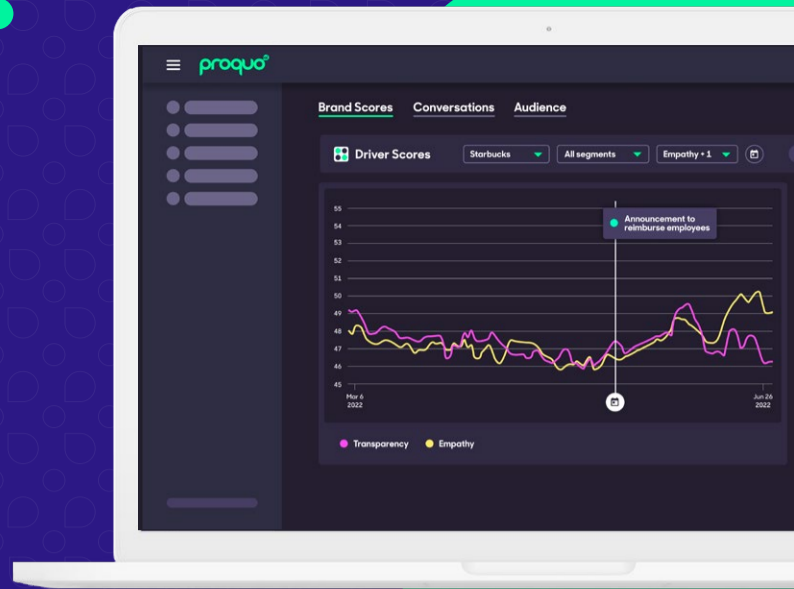
- 🧠 **Empathy** - how well a brand understands its consumers' wants and needs
- 🔍 **Transparency** - how open the brand is
- 🎯 **Relevance** - how in tune with the times they are
- 🏛️ **Integrity** - if they are seen to be doing the right thing

Starbucks

In May, Starbucks announced their decision to reimburse employees who had to travel out of state for abortions. Directly after this announcement, the brand experienced instant spikes in their **Empathy** and **Transparency** brand scores.

Empathy **Transparency**

However, both spikes were short-lived, and the scores have dipped back down weeks later.



Airbnb

Similarly for Airbnb, we see **Relevance** spike immediately after the brand first took action – but this decreases quickly.

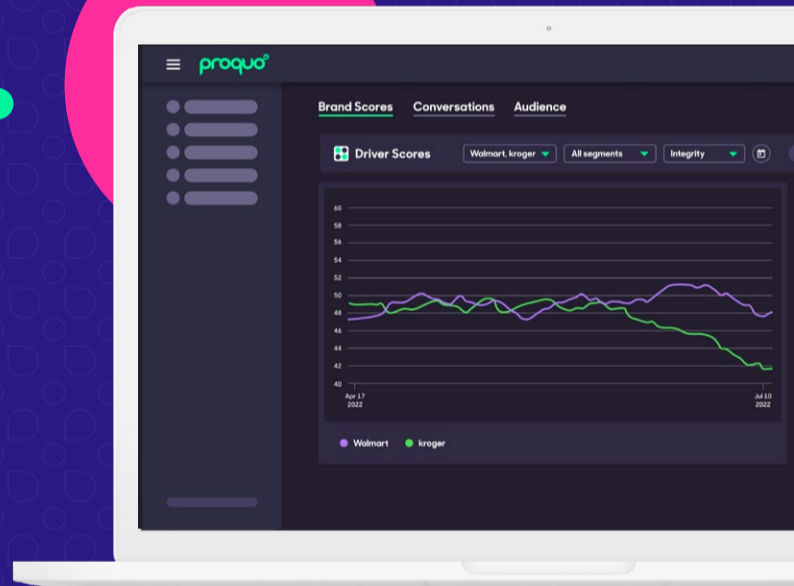
Relevance

Kroger and Walmart

A fascinating “straight” comparison is between Kroger and Walmart in the grocery category. One chose action and the other has remained neutral.

After speaking out, Kroger’s **Integrity** Score actually declined in comparison to Walmart. There could be a multitude of reasons behind this, for example, whether or not the base consumer of this category or brand is aligned with the view expressed by the brand, or if the delivery of the message didn’t hit home.

Integrity



The spikes seen across coffee and travel indicate that it’s helpful for brands to ‘tune’ into what’s going on around them, as supporting public movements does garner attention.

As with many marketing activities that grab headlines, the impact of these actions on the brand itself is short lived. In order to compound these scores over time, brands should make sure their actions remain consistent with the stance they’ve taken. Repetition and consistency are the key in this instance to remaining authentic.

When it comes to Walmart vs Kroger, we can see a radical difference between the way the grocery category is reacting to the news, compared with travel and coffee.

The decision to not take a stand seems to have left Walmart in a good position against Kroger – as Kroger’s Integrity dips, Walmart’s scores are actually rising. This demonstrates how critical it is to understand your customers’ needs and beliefs.

We’re interested to see how these scores develop, as some of the US engage in ‘No Buy July’ – boycotting large corporations like Walmart.

Looking to gain a deeper understanding of your consumer?

Get a demo