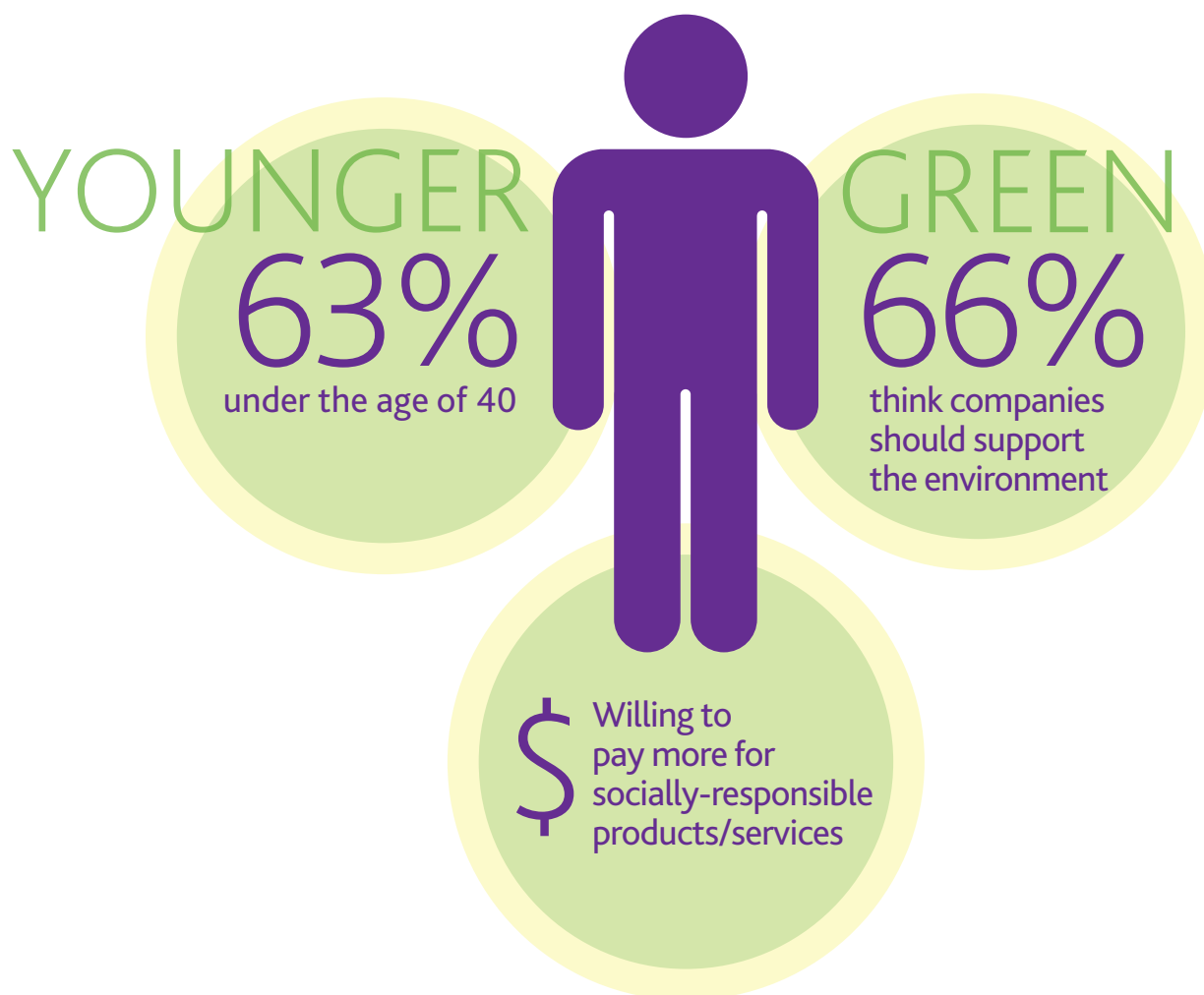




A Nielsen Report  
**The Global,  
Socially-Conscious  
Consumer**  
March 2012

**nielsen**  
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# WHO IS THE GLOBAL, SOCIALLY-CONSCIOUS CONSUMER?



Around the world, companies have invested time, talent and treasure in social and environmental efforts for a range of complementary reasons. For many companies, cause marketing—the use of social and environmental efforts to build a brand and increase profits—has been a secondary if not primary motivation.

Cause marketing won't work with all customer segments—some simply don't care—but previous research suggests that there is a segment of socially-conscious consumers who cause marketers ought to pay attention to<sup>1</sup>. But who are these socially-conscious consumers? What causes are most important to them? What's the best way to reach them?

New findings from a Nielsen survey of more than 28,000 online respondents from 56 countries around the world provide fresh insights to help marketers better understand the right audience for cause marketing activities, which programs resonate most strongly with this audience, and what marketing methods may be most effective in reaching these consumers.

In the study, respondents were asked if they prefer to buy products and services from companies that implement programs that give back to society. Anticipating a positive response bias, respondents were also asked whether they would be willing to pay extra for those services. For the purposes of this study, Nielsen defines the "socially-conscious consumer" as those who say they would be willing to pay the extra.

<sup>1</sup>See W. Thomas Anderson, Jr. and William H. Cunningham, "The Socially Conscious Consumer," *Journal of Marketing*, Vol 36 (July, 1972), pp. 23-31

## Nearly Half of Consumers Will Care with their Wallet

Nielsen's survey started by confirming what other studies have suggested, that the majority of consumers, today, express a general preference for companies making a positive difference in the world<sup>2</sup>. Two thirds (66%) of consumers around the world say they prefer to buy products and services from companies that have implemented programs to give back to society. That preference extends to other matters, too: they prefer to work for these companies (62%), and invest in these companies (59%). A smaller share, but still nearly half (46 percent) say they are willing to pay extra for products and services from these companies, the "socially-conscious consumers," as defined and focused upon in this report.

According to Nielsen's survey, global, socially-conscious consumers tend to be younger: 63 percent are under the age of 40, compared to 55 percent of all respondents. In general, Nielsen's survey shows that younger consumers are more likely to spend extra for products and services from socially-responsible companies. Fifty-one percent of all respondents aged 15 to 39 are willing to pay extra for such products and services compared to 37 percent of all respondents over age 40.

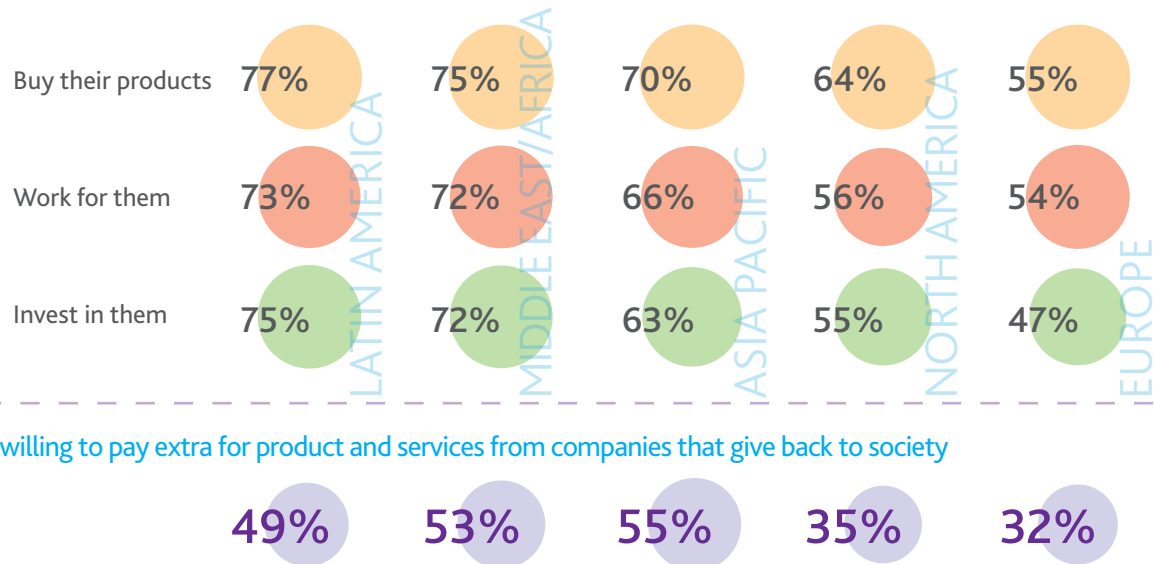
There are also important regional differences in the social consciousness of consumers with consumers in Latin America, the Middle East/Africa and Asia-Pacific stating a stronger willingness to

pay extra than those in North America and Europe. Overall, about one-third of European and North American consumers say they are willing to pay extra for products and services from companies that have implemented programs to give back to society, while at least half of respondents in the other regions are.

In the study, the highest concentration of socially-conscious consumers were found in the Philippines, where 68 percent of respondents said they were willing to pay extra for products and services from companies that had implemented programs to give back to society. By contrast, just 20 percent of respondents in the Netherlands indicated their willingness to do so.

While cultural bias is not factored into the survey results, regional differences support previous hypotheses about unique regional perceptions of corporate social responsibility. In parts of Europe, there may still be a tendency on the part of consumers to view corporations primarily as economic players<sup>3</sup>. In Asia, these findings correspond with increasing corporate attention to corporate social responsibility and its impact on performance<sup>4</sup>. Additionally, since Nielsen's measure of social consciousness includes willingness to pay more for goods and services, regional variations—and demographic variations—include fundamental differences in price sensitivity.

Figure 1. % of consumers who prefer to buy from, work for, and invest in companies that give back to society



Source: Nielsen Global Survey of Corporate Citizenship, Q3 2011

<sup>2</sup>See Cone Communications and Echo Research, "2011 Cone/Echo Global CR Opportunity Study," October 2011 and Edelman, "2012 Edelman Trust Barometer," January 2012

<sup>3</sup>See Isabelle Maignan and David A. Ralston, "Corporate Social Responsibility in Europe and the U.S.," Journal of International Business Studies, Vol 33 (3rd Quarter, 2002), p497-514

<sup>4</sup>See Yan Cheung et al, "Does Corporate Social Responsibility Matter in Asian Emerging Markets?" Journal of Business Ethics, Vol 92 (March 2010), p401-413

## Not All Causes are Equal in Consumers' Eyes

There are innumerable worthy causes for brands to support, but effective cause marketing requires strategic prioritization. To maximize ROI on cause marketing efforts, companies need to identify the most relevant causes to their business. One component is the expectation consumers have of the specific brand in question, but a more fundamental question is 'which causes are most important to socially-conscious consumers overall?'

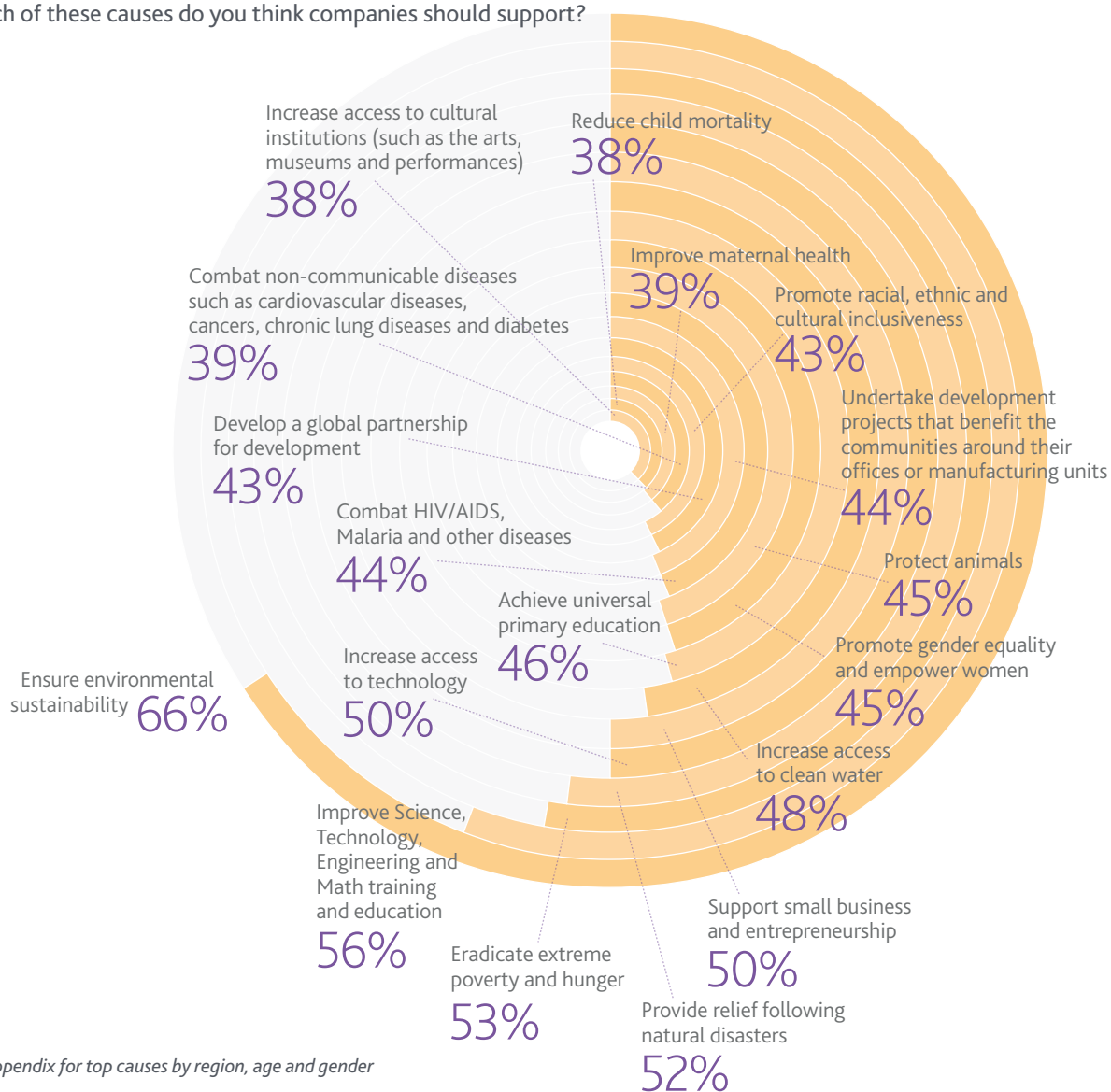
The survey results indicate that socially-conscious consumers care most about environmental sustainability. From a list of 18 causes that included the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals<sup>5</sup> as well as other prominent corporate social

responsibility topics, 66 percent of socially-conscious consumers identified environmental sustainability as a cause companies should support. This preference may be a byproduct of extensive efforts already underway by brands to "green" their portfolio and associate themselves with this cause.

The next most important cause to 56 percent of socially-conscious consumers may be less obvious: improvements to science, technology and math education. Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger is also a priority for this segment, with 53 percent of socially-conscious consumers believing brands should play a role in the cause.

Figure 2. % of socially-conscious consumers who think companies should support these specific causes

Which of these causes do you think companies should support?



See Appendix for top causes by region, age and gender

Source: Nielsen Global Survey of Corporate Citizenship, Q3 2011

Socially-conscious consumers defined as those who expressed willingness to pay extra for products and services from companies that have implemented programs to give back to society.

<sup>5</sup>Eight time-bound goals set at the 2000 United Nations Millennium Summit. More at [www.un.org/millenniumgoals/](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/)

## Connecting with the Socially-Conscious Consumer

One of the challenges of cause marketing is effectively reaching the socially-conscious consumer. In order for a customer to behave differently based on a brand's social and environmental investments, they must first be aware of them.

In cause marketing efforts, basic trust in chosen advertising vehicle may be even more important than advertising at large. Consumers have grown increasingly sensitive to "greenwashing," the idea that a brand will artificially inflate its environmental or even social investments for consumers.

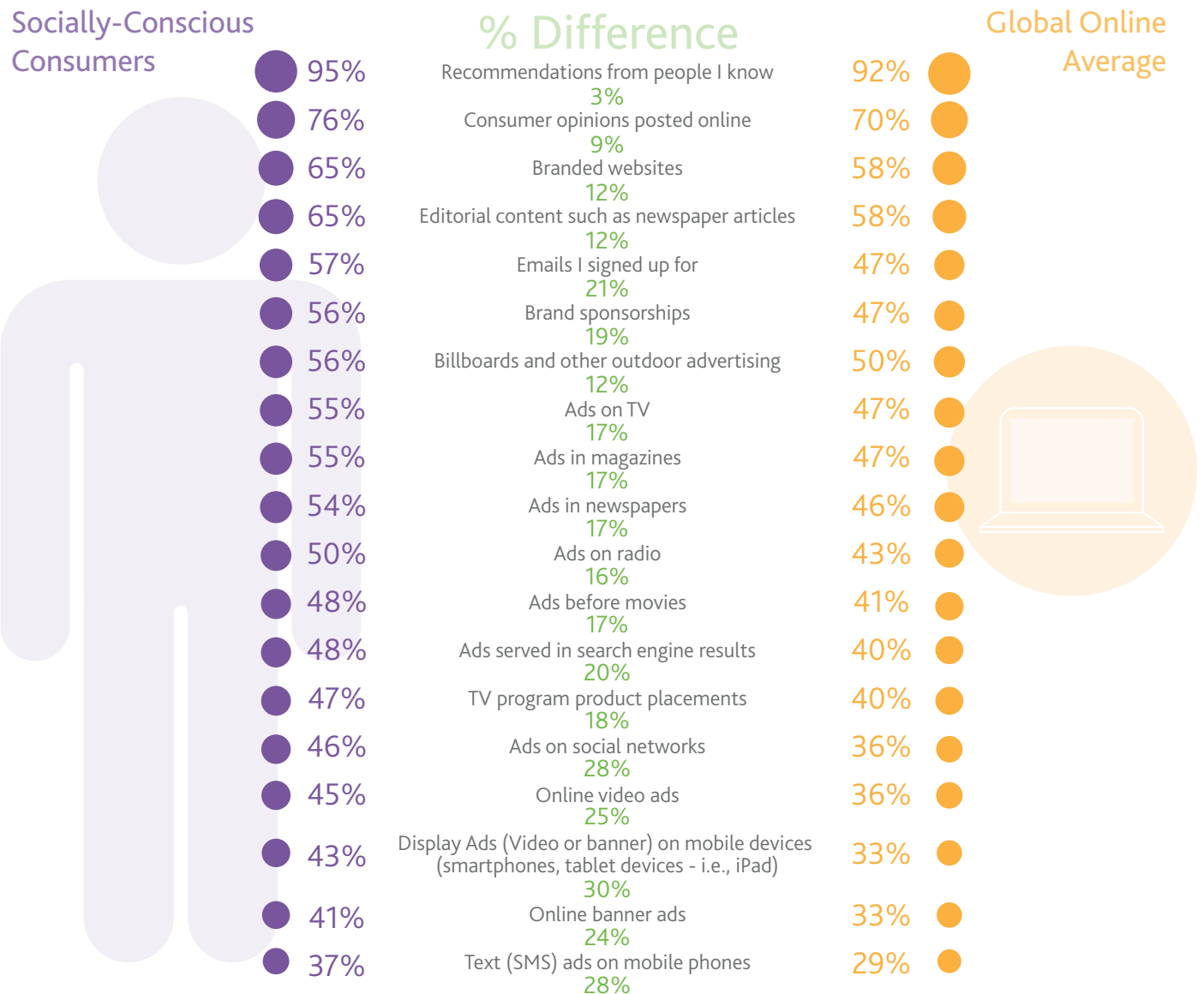
When it comes to advertising and recommendations, socially-conscious consumers trust recommendations from people they

know (95%), while also looking for opinions and information posted by other consumers online (76%), slightly more so than the global online survey average (92% and 70%, respectively). Among paid, third-party advertising channels, socially-conscious consumers most trust outdoor, TV and print media, though they tend to be more trusting of advertising across channels.

This survey confirmed the importance of social media in cause marketing. Socially-conscious consumers are more likely than consumers overall to trust ads found on social networks and they were also more likely than total respondents (59% vs. 46%) to say they use social media when making a purchase decision.

Figure 3. % of socially-conscious consumers who trust various forms of advertising

To what extent do you trust the following forms of advertising ("Trust completely" or "Trust somewhat")?



Source: Nielsen Global Survey of Corporate Citizenship, Q3 2011  
 Socially-conscious consumers defined as those who expressed willingness to pay extra for products and services from companies that have implemented programs to give back to society.

## Smarter Cause Marketing

Not all consumers expect companies to care about social responsibility, but those that do can be segmented and understood in ways that allow brands to engage in cause marketing which appeals to the right consumers, with the right causes and through the right marketing channels. This report provides just one new layer of insight in the exploration of the socially-conscious consumer.

For marketers, this report provides guideposts to better understand your customers' social consciousness in order to refine your cause marketing efforts and create more shared value for your brand and society. For cause organizations, this report presents the opportunity to further make the case that consumers will reward partnering brands for implementing programs to give back to society.

For Nielsen, the continued exploration of this topic is a responsibility we take seriously: to our global clients and to our communities, who should mutually benefit from a better understanding of the socially-conscious consumer.

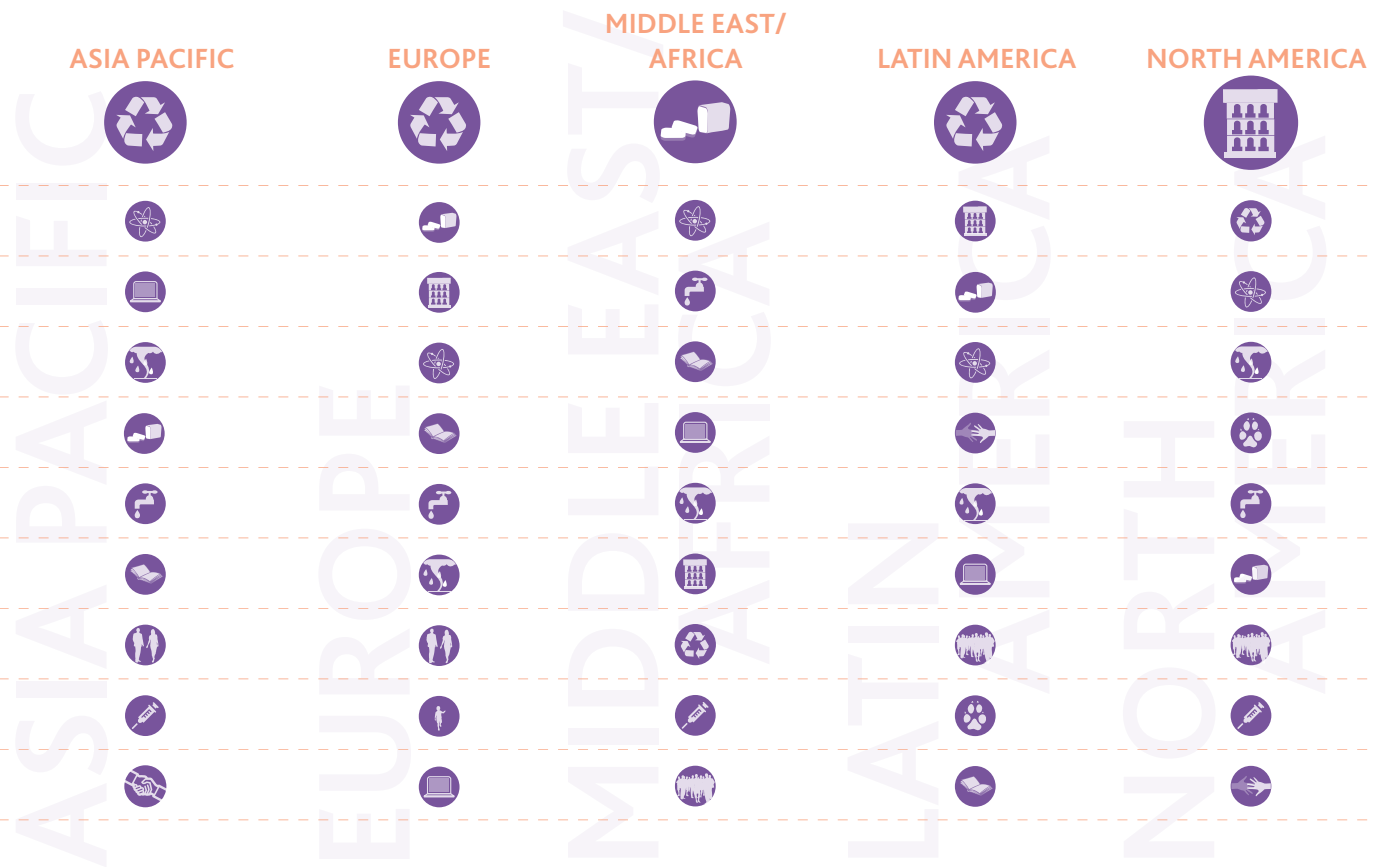
*Better understand  
your customers' social  
consciousness in order  
to refine your cause  
marketing efforts*



Figure 4. Top 10 causes ranked by region among "socially-conscious" consumers

Which of these causes do you think companies should support?

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop a global partnership for development
- Combat non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic lung diseases and diabetes
- Increase access to technology
- Promote racial, ethnic and cultural inclusiveness
- Improve Science, Technology, Engineering and Math training and education
- Protect animals
- Support small business and entrepreneurship
- Increase access to clean water
- Provide relief following natural disasters
- Increase access to cultural institutions (such as the arts, museums and performances)
- Undertake development projects that benefit the communities around their offices or manufacturing units

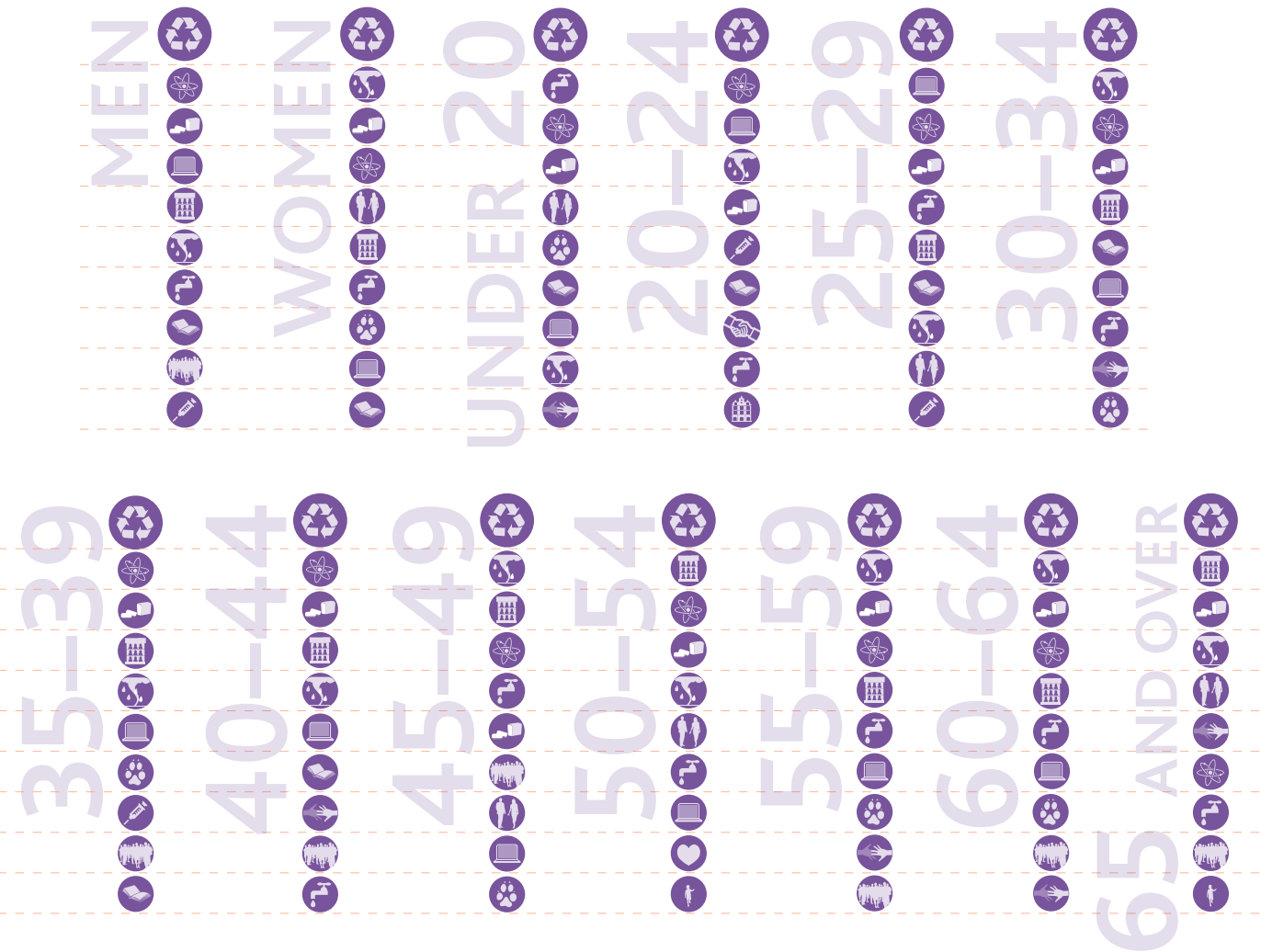


Source: Nielsen Global Survey of Corporate Citizenship, Q3 2011  
 Socially-conscious consumers defined as those who expressed willingness to pay extra for products and services from companies that have implemented programs to give back to society.

Figure 5. Top 10 causes ranked by gender and age among "socially-conscious" consumers

Which of these causes do you think companies should support?

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger        | Develop a global partnership for development  | Protect animals   |
| Achieve universal primary education         | Combat non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic lung diseases and diabetes | Support small business and entrepreneurship   |
| Promote gender equality and empower women   | Increase access to technology   | Increase access to clean water  |
| Reduce child mortality                      | Promote racial, ethnic and cultural inclusiveness   | Provide relief following natural disasters  |
| Improve maternal health                     | Improve Science, Technology, Engineering and Math training and education                                      | Increase access to cultural institutions (such as the arts, museums and performances)                   |
| Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases |   | Undertake development projects that benefit the communities around their offices or manufacturing units |
| Ensure environmental sustainability         |   |   |



Source: Nielsen Global Survey of Corporate Citizenship, Q3 2011  
 Socially-conscious consumers defined as those who expressed willingness to pay extra for products and services from companies that have implemented programs to give back to society.



## Countries in the Study:

Argentina  
Australia  
Austria  
Belgium  
Brazil  
Canada  
China  
Chile  
Colombia  
Croatia  
Czech Republic  
Denmark  
Egypt  
Estonia  
Finland  
France  
Germany

Greece  
Hong Kong  
Hungary  
India  
Indonesia  
Ireland  
Israel  
Italy  
Japan  
Latvia  
Lithuania  
Malaysia  
Mexico  
Netherlands  
New Zealand  
Norway  
Pakistan  
Peru  
Philippines  
Poland  
Portugal

Romania  
Russia  
Saudi Arabia  
Singapore  
South Africa  
South Korea  
Spain  
Sweden  
Switzerland  
Taiwan  
Thailand  
Turkey  
United Arab Emirates  
United Kingdom  
Ukraine  
United States  
Venezuela  
Vietnam

## About the Nielsen Global Survey

The Nielsen Global Survey of Corporate Citizenship was conducted in August/September 2011 and polled more than 28,000 consumers in 56 countries throughout Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and North America. The sample has quotas based on age and sex for each country based on their Internet users, and is weighted to be representative of Internet consumers and has a maximum margin of error of  $\pm 0.6\%$ . This Nielsen survey is based on the behavior of respondents with online access only. Internet penetration rates vary by country. Nielsen uses a minimum reporting standard of 60 percent Internet penetration or 10M online population for survey inclusion. The Nielsen Global Survey, which includes the Global Consumer Confidence Survey, was established in 2005.

## About Nielsen

Nielsen Holdings N.V. (NYSE: NLSN) is a global information and measurement company with leading market positions in marketing and consumer information, television and other media measurement, online intelligence, mobile measurement, trade shows and related properties. Nielsen has a presence in approximately 100 countries, with headquarters in New York, USA and Diemen, the Netherlands. For more information, visit [www.nielsen.com](http://www.nielsen.com).

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