
Real Time Expert[®] Poll
Corporate Political Activism



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A word cloud on a white background featuring various corporate names and political issues. The words are arranged in a roughly rectangular shape, with some overlapping. The colors range from dark brown to green. The words include: FreeSpeech, Starbucks, McDonald's, Comcast, ChickfilA, Taxes, Apple, AmericanAirlines, HobbyLobby, PayPal, ClimateChange, Guns, Abortion, and GayMarriage.

FreeSpeech
Starbucks
McDonald's
Comcast
ChickfilA
Taxes Apple
AmericanAirlines
HobbyLobby
PayPal
ClimateChange
Guns
Abortion
GayMarriage

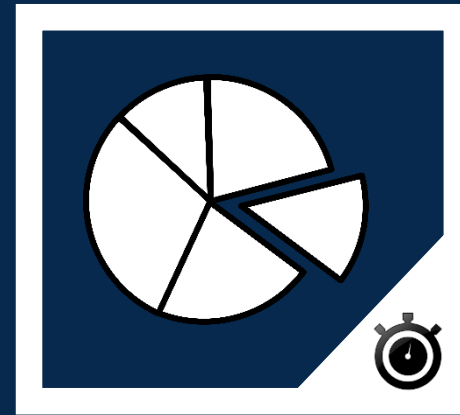
Our Mission

To provide an objective voice and immediate feedback when companies become politically active.

What is Corporate Political Activism?

“A public position taken by an organization, or its executives, on a divisive political issue, election, or legislation.”

How it Works



Company Takes Stand

Company announcement will be chosen about 6 times per year based on newsworthiness and interest level of the panel.

Expert Panel Surveyed

Panelists grade the company's management of the stand and give brief open-ended reactions.

Results Sent to Media

Responses are aggregated and reported to the media within 4-6 hours.

Follow-up Interviews

Reporters follow-up with individual panelists.

The Panel

Expert panelists are from 40 universities in 8 countries. They represent both liberal and conservative political leanings, and specialize in diverse topics such as corporate reputation, social impact, communications, politics, and economics.

Tamar Avnet
Yeshiva University

Mike Barnett
Rutgers Univ.

Jos Bartels
Tilburg Univ. (Netherlands)

Sharon Beatty
Univ. of Alabama

Aronte Bennett
Villanova Univ.

Marya Besharov
Cornell Univ.

CB Bhattacharya
ESMT (Germany)

Dora Bock
Auburn Univ.

Tom Brown
Oklahoma State Univ.

Vanessa Burbano
Columbia Univ.

Archie Carroll
Univ. of Georgia

Rick Clancy
Univ. of North Carolina- Chapel Hill

Alin Coman
Princeton Univ.

Andrew Crane
Univ. Bath

Timothy Coombs
Texas A & M

Chiara Cordelli
Univ. of Chicago

Peter Dacin
Queen's Univ. (Canada)

Jeff Dotson
Brigham Young Univ.

Shuili Du
Univ. of New Hampshire

Pam Ellen
Georgia State Univ.

Jenn Griffin
Loyola Univ.

Julie Irwin
Univ. Texas

Russ Klein
American Marketing Association

Sherryl Kuhlman
Univ. of Pennsylvania

Alex Kull
Univ. of San Diego

Dan Laufer
Victoria Business School (New Zealand)

Tom Lyon
Univ. of Michigan

Jeanette Mena
Univ. of South Florida

Kevin Money
Univ. Of Reading (U.K.)

Rowena Olegario
Univ. of Oxford (U.K.)

Vanessa Perry
George Washington Univ.

Neeru Paharia
Georgetown Univ.

Vontresse Pamphile
Northwestern Univ.

Vanessa Perry
George Washington Univ.

Davide Ravasi
City University (U.K.)

Stefanie Robinson
North Carolina State Univ.

Americus Reed II
Univ. of Pennsylvania

Simona Romani
LUISS Guido Carli (Italy)

Laura Schons
Mannheim Univ. (Germany)

Sankar Sen
Baruch College

Nancy Sirianni
Univ. of Alabama

Craig Smith
INSEAD (France)

Scott Swain
Clemson Univ.

Tillman Wagner
WHU (Germany)

Rupert Younger
Univ. of Oxford (U.K.)

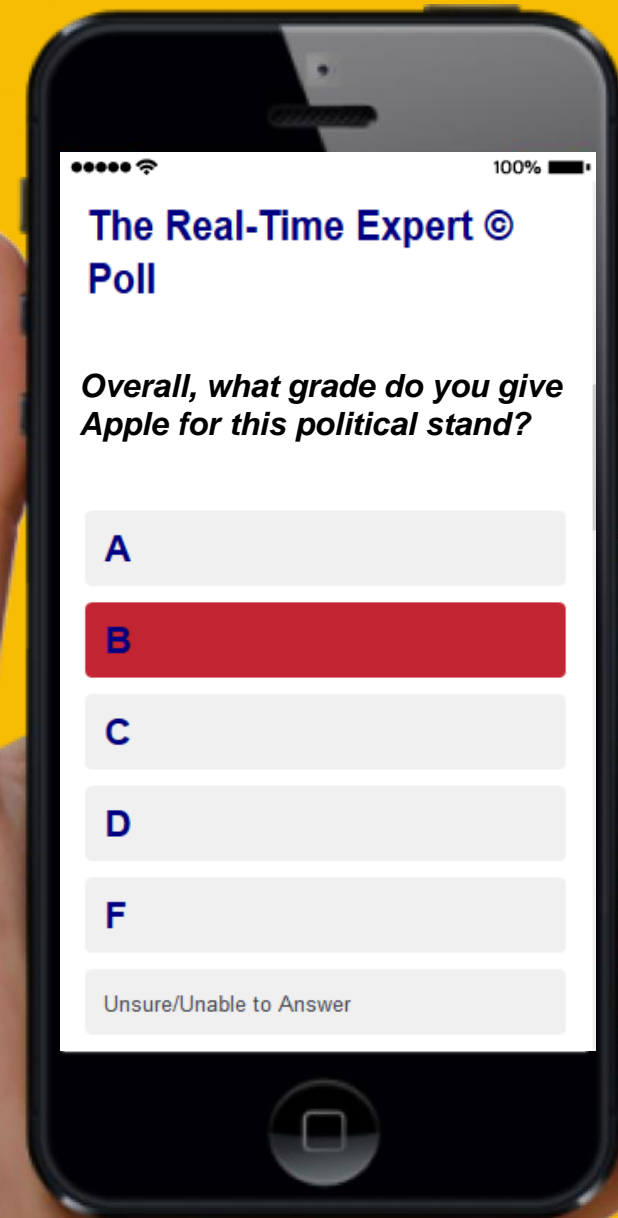
Alex Zablah
Univ. of Tennessee – Knoxville

Latest Study Microsoft and DACA (May 6, 2017)

Many companies have come out against President Trump's decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

Microsoft has perhaps taken the strongest stand. A few examples of its actions over the past week:

- It signed an open letter to Trump in support of DACA (along with 400 other companies)
- Microsoft President Brad Smith said Congress "should adopt legislation on DACA *before* it tries to adopt a tax reform bill. This is the only way, given the number of legislative days Congress has scheduled over the next six months, we realistically can expect Congress to complete DACA legislation in time"
- Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella posted a message in which he said that supporting DACA "is core to who we are at Microsoft and I believe it is core to what America is."
- The company vowed, "If Dreamers who are our employees are in court, we will be by their side."



Poll Items

1. Overall, what grade do you give [company] for this political stand?

(Scale: A, B, C, D, F)

2. Evaluate the political stand on each dimension:

- a) **Leadership** *the political stand is proactive, setting a standard for peer companies to follow*
- b) **Consistency** *the political stand is consistent with the central and enduring values of the company*
- c) **Transparency** *the company is forthcoming in describing the motivations behind the political stand*
- d) **Materiality** *the political issue is substantively relevant when key stakeholders are deciding whether or how to interact with the company*

(Each dimension rated on 1-5 scale, Extremely Inaccurate-Extremely Accurate)

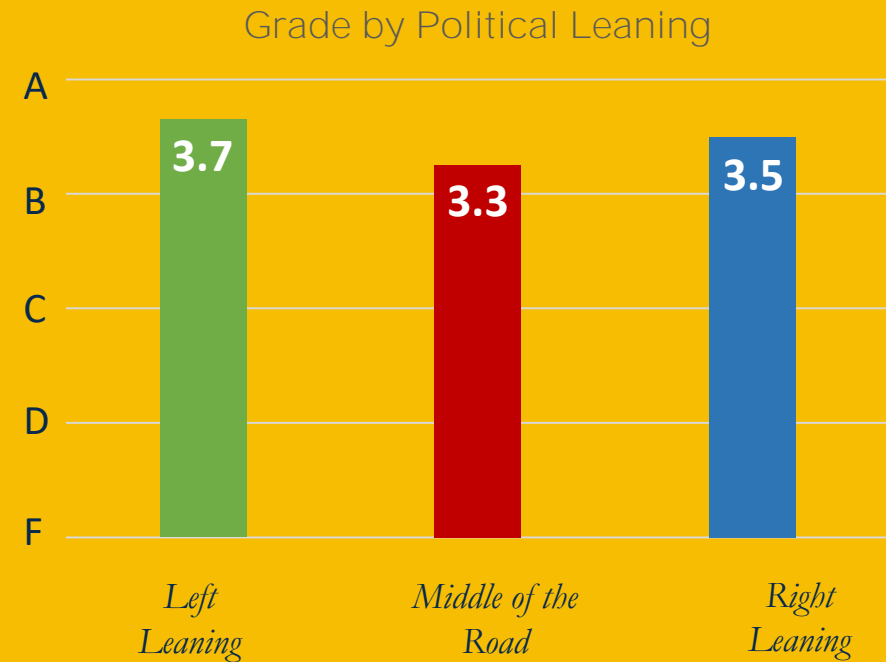
3. If you have additional comments, write them here. (Responses are anonymous unless you choose to sign your name)

Topline Result

A

The panel gives Microsoft a grade of A for how they are handling the political issue.

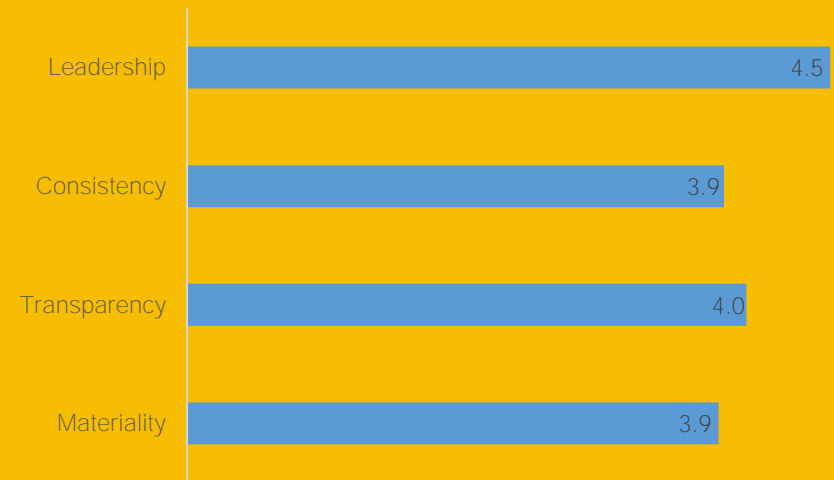
Scores were high across the political spectrum.



Key Indicators

The panel gave high marks across the board to Microsoft: for taking leadership on the issue (4.5 on a 5-point scale), for being transparent in their position (4.0), for presenting a consistent message across the organization and over time (3.9), and for acting on an issue that is materially relevant to its stakeholders such as investors, employees, and customers (3.9).

Microsoft Performance by Key Dimension



Open-ended Comments

The professors on the panel were generally positive in their comments. The company was lauded for tying its stance to American values, not just the company's values.

However, there was also some skepticism about Microsoft's motives. One panelist also objected to framing the stand as a material issue when the panelist believes it should be supported on moral grounds.

“For Microsoft, continued access to highly skilled foreign labor is essential. Thus, this seems a strategic "no-brainer", as it signals to those it seeks to attract and retain that the firm stands behind them. It's hard to see how any backlash would harm Microsoft, as anti-immigrant buyers cannot switch to Apple, if for no other reason, Apple has a similar stand. Thus, there only seems to be an upside.”

-Michael Barnett, Rutgers University

“Brad Smith, in particular, did a nice job of tying the stance with Microsoft's core interests as well as core American values.”

-Anonymous panelist

“One more example of companies "posing" to be socially responsible.”

-Anonymous panelist

“It is a very reasoned and thoughtful statement on its blog.”

-Anonymous panelist

“Focusing their opposition to DACA being revoked around their hiring pool---feels selfish. Dreamers, Microsoft employees or otherwise, are deserving of defense and protection.”

-Anonymous panelist

About Our Sponsor

Drexel LeBow's Institute for Strategic Leadership advances an evidence-based perspective to leadership. The Institute believes that clear, verifiable support will help leaders diagnose preconceived ideas and assumptions that may not be accurate, and replace them with practices that have been proven to be effective. It generates evidence –based knowledge through research grants, curriculum development, and corporate outreach.

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Real Time Expert® Poll on Corporate Political Activism

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