Cost of Living Crisis & Brand Affinity
What are the most important issues currently facing Britain?

Source: The Guardian Cost of Living survey. Question A1. In your opinion, what are the most important issues currently facing Britain? Please select up to 3. Base: n=1700 UK 18+ adults, n=764 Guardian
The cost of living crisis is the most important issue facing Britain

60% Cost of living

3 in 5 of UK 18+ adults (incl. Guardian readers) say the “cost of living” is one of the most important issues

Source: The Guardian Cost of Living survey. Question A1. In your opinion, what are the most important issues currently facing Britain? Please select up to 3. Base: n=1700 UK 18+ adults, n=764 Guardian
... and consumers have made clear how they intend to or have already responded to the crisis

Top 5 actions (All UK adults)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Done already</th>
<th>Planning to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduce energy consumption</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switch to cheaper brands</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce/be more selective on treats and luxuries</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop spending on treats and luxuries</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek offers/discounts on favourite brands</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Guardian readers were, however, less likely to switch to cheaper brands or stop spending on treats/luxuries. This is encouraging for advertisers: Guardian readers are more open with their brand choice and buck the behavioural trend of stopping spending on treats/luxuries during a crisis.

Consumers feel that both the government and brands should help combat the ongoing crisis

Guardian readers however are **significantly more likely** to agree on statements around financial empowerment, appearing more confident of their financial situation being robust enough during the crisis.

Source: Statistically significant v Non Recall group at a 99.9% confidence level
What do people want brands to help with?

% agree with measures selected to help people through the cost of living crisis

- All UK adults
  - 51% Offer better value for money
  - 37% Run money-off promotions
  - 41% Support their employees by paying more or offering better benefits
  - 32% Find sustainable ways to use fewer natural resources
  - 31% Encourage people to reuse products more
  - 31% Support charities, schools and food banks
  - 31% Keep the packaging size the same or larger
  - 29% Not lower the quality of products/services
  - 28% Offer free products to those who need them most
  - 27% Offer more durable products
  - 23% Influence policymakers to tackle the cost of living crisis
  - 23% Provide info about money-saving tips
  - 22% Keep the size the same or larger
  - 17% Create more jobs
  - 16% Provide help with mental health
  - 14% Run money-off promotions

- 53% Keep prices the same or lower
- 41% Support their employees by paying more or offering better benefits
- 37% Run money-off promotions

Statistically significant v Non Recall group at a 95-99.9% confidence level

Guardian readers place importance on brands helping their employees, local communities and sustainability

% agree with measures selected to help people through the cost of living crisis

- **41%** Support their employees by paying more or offering better benefits
- **48%** Support charities, schools and food banks
- **32%** Find sustainable ways to use fewer natural resources
- **39%** Influence policymakers to tackle the cost of living crisis
- **23%** Secure benefits in UK
- **29%** Offer better value for money


Statistically significant vs Non Recall group at a 95-99.9% confidence level
Consumers do not want brands to stop investing in social responsibility or the quality of products and services

% selecting areas which should definitely/probably NOT be cut to keep costs of products and services lower

- **78%** Quality of products and services
- **63%** Investments in sustainability, the environment and tackling climate change
- **59%** Charitable donations and initiatives
- **55%** Investments in innovation and product development
- **60%** How much they pay suppliers
- **55%** Investment in diversity, inclusion and equality

★ Statistically significant v Non Recall group at a 95-99.9% confidence level

Source: The Guardian Cost of Living survey. Question A13. Should brands cut any of the following to keep costs of products and services lower? Base: n=1700 UK 18+ adults, n=764 Guardian
Guardian readers place importance on brands continuing to invest in charities, diversity and inclusion and sustainability

% selecting areas which should definitely/probably **NOT** be cut to keep costs of products and services lower

- **63%** Investments in sustainability, the environment and tackling climate change
- **68%** Charitable donations and initiatives
- **55%** Investment in diversity, inclusion and equality
- **64%**

*Statistically significant v Non Recall group at a 95-99.9% confidence level

**Source:** The Guardian Cost of Living survey. Question A13. Should brands cut any of the following to keep costs of products and services lower? Base: n=1700 UK 18+ adults, n=764 Guardian
What can brands do?

**Prices**
The most helpful things that brands can do are:
1) keep prices on essentials low
2) offer targeted promotions

**People**
Brands should support their staff through the crisis, and provide extra support to those in need.

**Planet**
Brands should not compromise on sustainability, and create efficiencies by a better use of resources.

**Personal**
Reward loyalty: listen to the most valuable consumers and provide personalised help.
Shared Values + Brand Trust + Brand Love = Brand Affinity
Brand affinity pays off in the cost of living crisis

% will buy the same or buy more in the view of the cost of living crisis

All UK adults: non-affinity brands: 36%
All UK adults: affinity brands: 53%
Guardian readers: affinity brands: 58%

Brand trust

Advertising with trusted media brands increases brand affinity by 45%
Advertising in media which consumers love increases brand affinity by 42%
### Shared values

Advertising in media which shares consumer values increases brand affinity by **50%**

**Top 10 media brands which share people's values, % UK adults**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Guardian/The Observer</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Channel 4</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITV</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sky</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Independent</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Mail/Mail on Sunday</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Emotions impact brand metrics

- Our research found that Guardian readers who felt interest and happiness towards advertising, became more aware about the brand.
- Hope, amazement and warmth corresponded most closely with an increase in brand loyalty; feelings of trust and admiration increased purchase intent.
- People who felt anxiety, sadness or anger were more likely to support a charity advertiser or change their behaviour.

Guardian readers feel an emotional connection towards the Guardian

84% of Guardian readers feel emotions towards the Guardian

Source: The Guardian Cost of Living Survey. Question C3. Please indicate what do the Guardian or the Observer make you feel? n = 724 Guardian readers
This emotional connection also applies to advertising readers see in the Guardian

62% of Guardian readers feel emotional about advertising and branded content they see in the Guardian

Source: The Guardian Cost of Living Survey. Question C3. Please indicate what do the Guardian or The Observer make you feel? n = 724 Guardian readers
Building brands through clarity, action and imagination

Financial clarity in a crisis

The challenge
Barclays challenged us to show young people, teachers, parents and businesses how its LifeSkills programme can benefit them, and to raise awareness of its huge scale.

The insight
Barclays wanted us to showcase the important work the LifeSkills team has done to help young people. Drawing on an emotional and societal message, we reached the Guardian’s core audience of families and millennials.

What we did
We produced a four page print supplement in Observer magazine, including articles such as “Step up in life: get the skills that matter” which demonstrated how LifeSkills can make a meaningful difference to people’s lives. To top off the promotion of the campaign, we delivered four 30 second audio ad spots across Today in Focus.

The results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>05:21</th>
<th>58m</th>
<th>+65%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>average dwell time</td>
<td>digital impressions, exceeding benchmark by 214%</td>
<td>uplift in brand trust</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Financial clarity in a crisis
The challenge
How can the British Red Cross get through to people in an age of compassion fatigue and short attention spans fuelled by a 24 hour news cycle?

The insight
To actively care about an organisation, you need to see behind the scenes. That’s one of the things the Guardian does best - revealing the human stories within complex organisations.

What we did
The British Red Cross helps one person every eight minutes. And it all starts with your donation. We brought the scale, scope and humanity of this to life with five stories told across multiple formats to make British Red Cross’s mission “connecting human kindness with human crisis” unmissable.

The results
104% of unique user KPI achieved
100% of audio impressions KPI achieved
1m 49s average dwell time

Encouraging action in a crisis
The challenge
To establish eBay as a destination for home and garden by showcasing it can allow you to build a home as unique as you, and to demonstrate the breadth and depth of inventory available on eBay.

The insight
We reach 5 million readers who are planning to spend upwards of £1,000 on home improvements in the next six months. Our readers are always on the lookout for fresh interiors ideas - our homes and interiors content has had 14.4 million page views in the past year.

What we did
In partnership with eBay, we produced a bright, bold, multiplatform shoppable content campaign, which inspired readers to express themselves through their home decor with help from eBay’s extensive Home & Garden range.

The results
142% of unique user KPI achieved
+71% uplift in consideration of eBay for their online homeware needs
2m 45s average dwell time

Finding joy in a crisis
How we help readers

Every year the Guardian and the Observer team up with a group of charities to raise funds for a chosen cause. In December 2022, we joined forces with Citizens Advice and Locality to help address the cost of living crisis. It was a huge success.

We framed the campaign around a blunt question: “Heating or eating: which one would you choose?” and raised more than £1.5m, with over 13,000 people contributing.

Our coverage of the cost of living crisis helps readers stay informed and navigate their way through, as well as holding power to account. With 3.5–5.5 million unique monthly browsers and 10–25 million monthly page views on average, our cost of living coverage has significant reach and impact.
Advertise with the Guardian

advertising.enquiries@theguardian.com