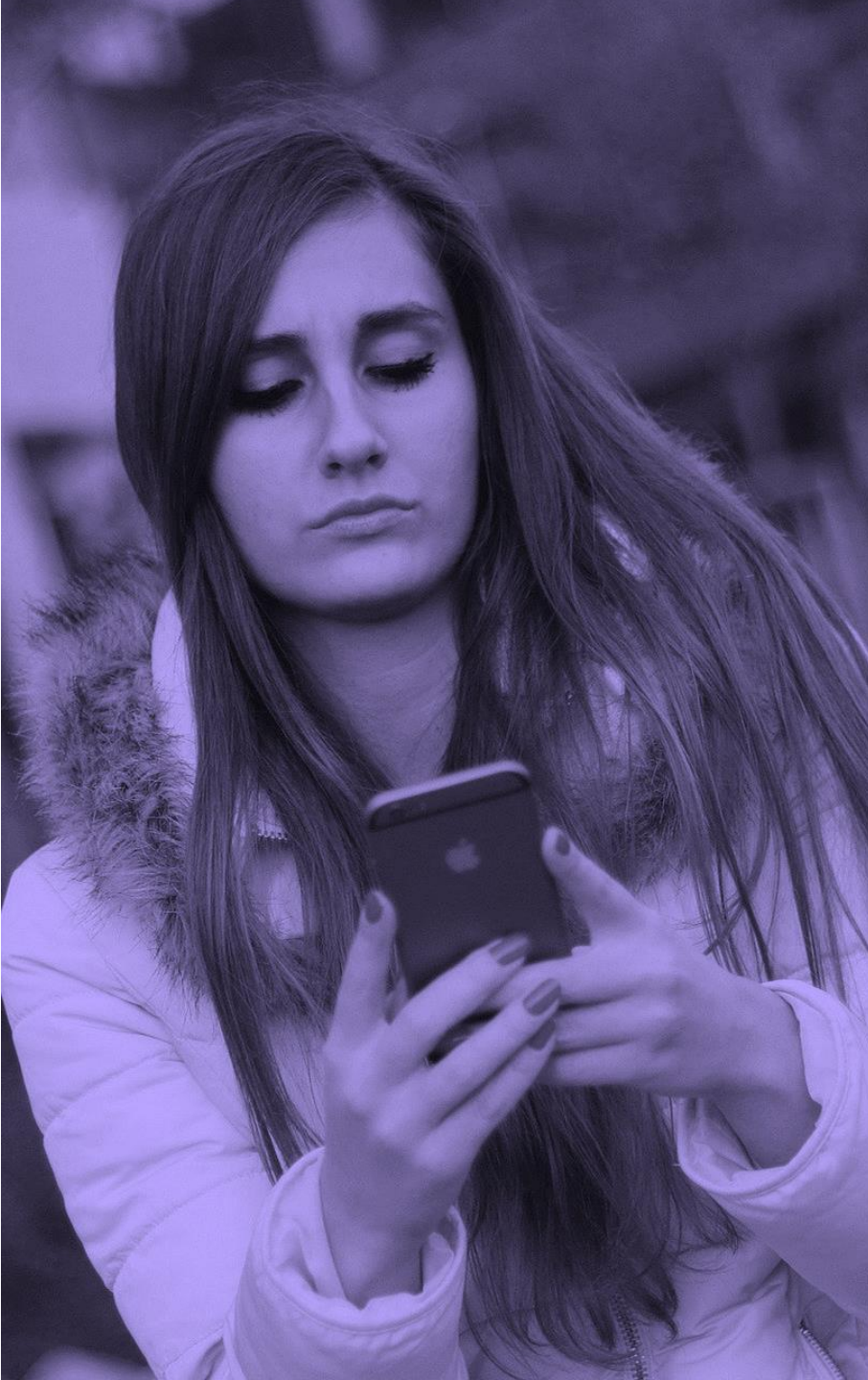


Brand Boycotters

Why European consumers are leaving brands and what drives them to come back

YouGov[®]





Understand and respond better to consumer behaviour

When negative press or a major scandal hits a brand, it affects the relationship with consumers – in the short term or over a long period of time. Consumers feel misled or even betrayed by the brand they have trusted. Their reactions can range from bad online reviews to outrage on social media to an outright boycott of the brand.

Global social and political issues such as climate change, racism and equal rights debates are influencing and changing consumers' expectations and demands on products, as well as corporate communication and management: Consumers expect more authenticity and credibility.

These aspects are even more crucial when a company or brand is in a crisis in order not to lose consumers and to rebuild consumer trust in their brand.

YouGov surveyed people in 10 European countries asking them what has led them to boycott a brand, how long the boycott lasted and – especially important for brands – what caused them to return to the brand in question.

A crowd of people at a protest, holding various signs. The image is overlaid with a blue tint. In the foreground, a sign reads "NO!". Other signs in the background are partially visible but illegible.

37 % of respondents in Europe have already boycotted a brand

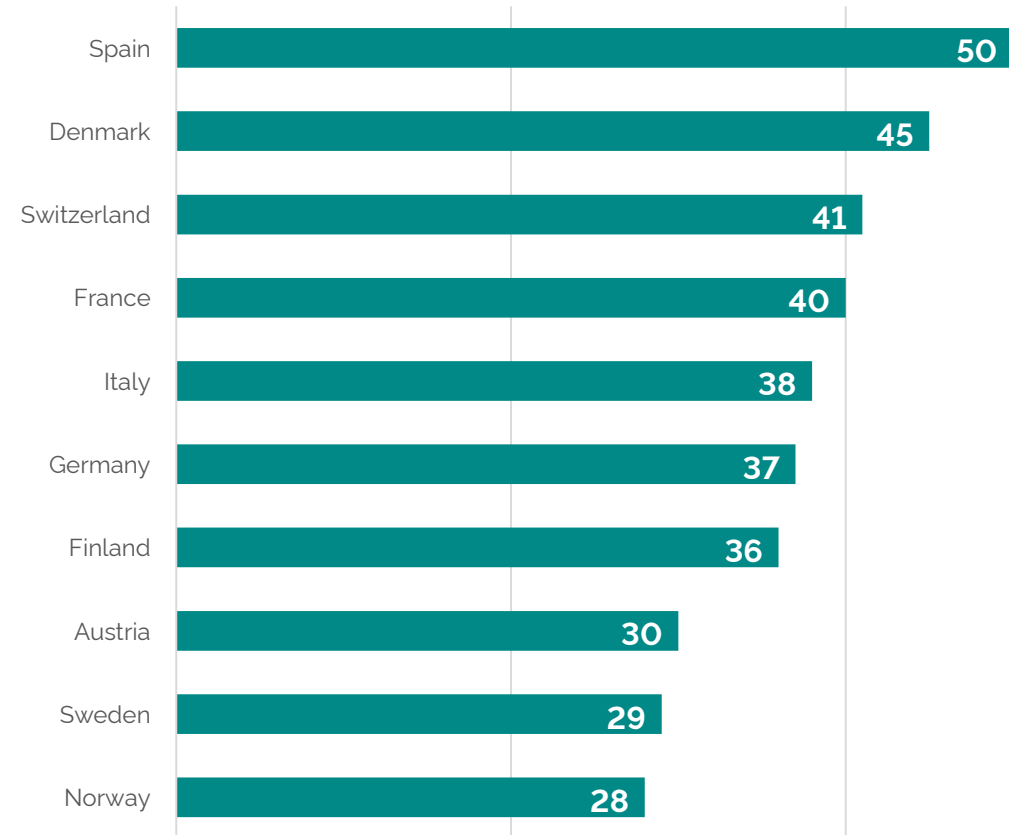
A scandal can lead to the loss of consumers for brands

When a brand is the subject of negative headlines, this usually has consequences on consumers' purchase decision. Brands can assume that a not insignificant portion of customers will stop purchasing their brand as a direct result of a scandal – at least temporarily.

In a Europe-wide comparison, it is mainly people in Spain (50 %) and Denmark (45 %) who tend to abandon a brand. In Austria, Sweden and Norway the consequences of a scandal are much less drastic for a brand. In all the countries surveyed, men are more likely to turn away from a brand after a scandal than women. With the exception of Switzerland and Italy, where women and men rank equally (41 vs. 40 %).

Brand boycotters

When you think of brands that go through a scandal and receive negative press (e.g. the Volkswagen emissions scandal) - Have you ever stopped using a brand permanently or temporarily as a direct result of a scandal? (% yes)



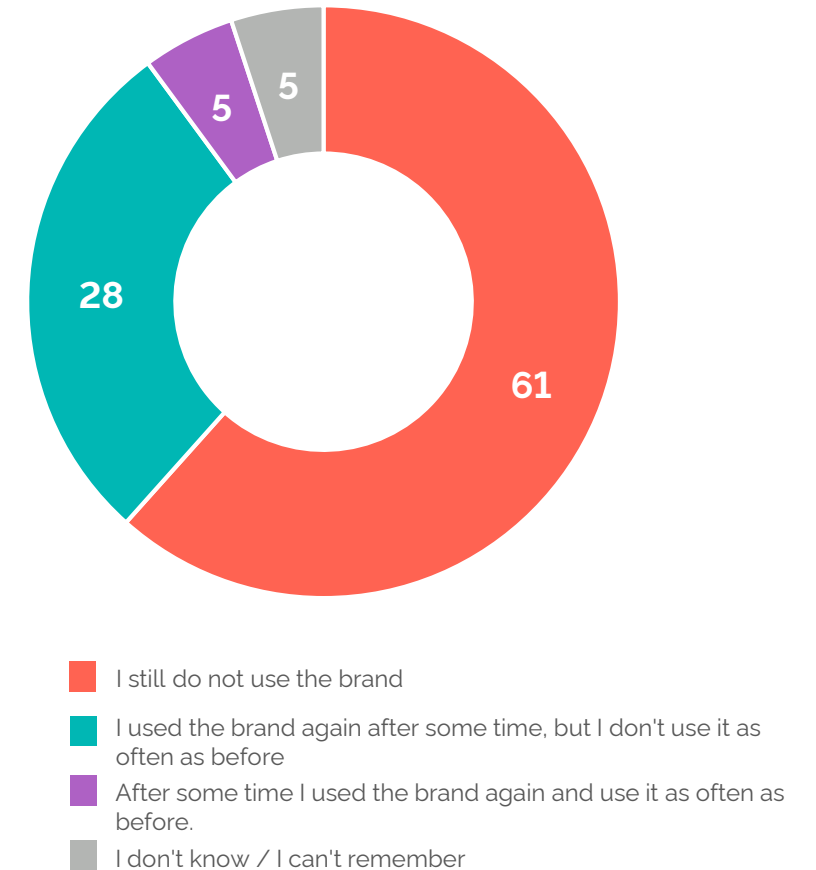
Consumers' lost trust in a brand is hard to regain

The majority of consumers who have stopped using a brand in the past are not yet using it again or have reduced their consumption.

It is mainly Swedes (67 %), Germans (66 %) and Finns (65 %) who continue not to use a brand as a result of a scandal. Consumers in Switzerland (36 %), Italy and Spain (35 % each) tend to return to the brand, but consume less than before the scandal. In comparison, the behaviour of the Norwegians is very different: consumers here are much quicker to forgive a brand than in the other markets and are more likely to use the brand in the same way as before the scandal (10 Norwegians vs. 5 % all respondents).

Brand usage

When you think about the last time you stopped using a brand as a direct result of a scandal, which of the following statements best describes what happened? (%)



Decision to stop using a brand – at least for a while

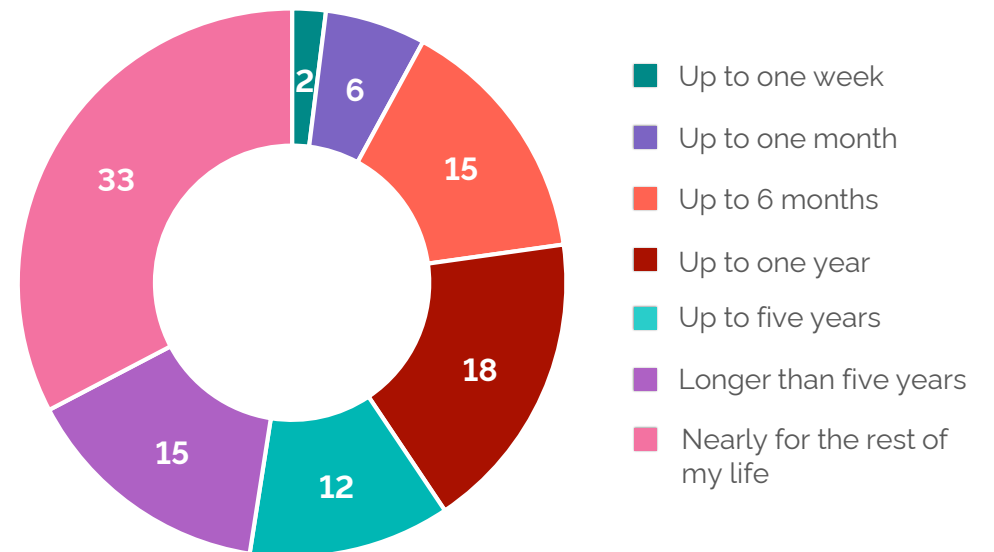
A brand scandal can have long-term consequences for customer relations – one third will never buy products of this brand again.

But brands can also hope for the return of their customers: The majority claim to have bought something from the brand again after a period of six months to five years.

The French (49 %), Spanish (41 %) and Swiss (38 %) are very consistent in their decision against a brand due to a scandal, stating that they want to avoid this brand for nearly the rest of their lives. In Finland (20 %), Sweden (20 %) and Germany (17 %), people are more likely not to buy products from a brand for more than five years. A fourth of the Italians will refrain from buying the brand for up to one year (24 %). In comparison, Danes and Norwegians (21 % each) are most likely to return to a brand after a maximum of 6 months.

Period of the boycott

When you think about the last time you stopped buying a brand as a direct result of a scandal, how long was/is the period of time you did not buy the brand as a direct result of the scandal? (%)





Respondents in Europe most often boycott brands from the sectors food, fashion retail and banking and financial services

Consumers have usually boycotted two to three brands

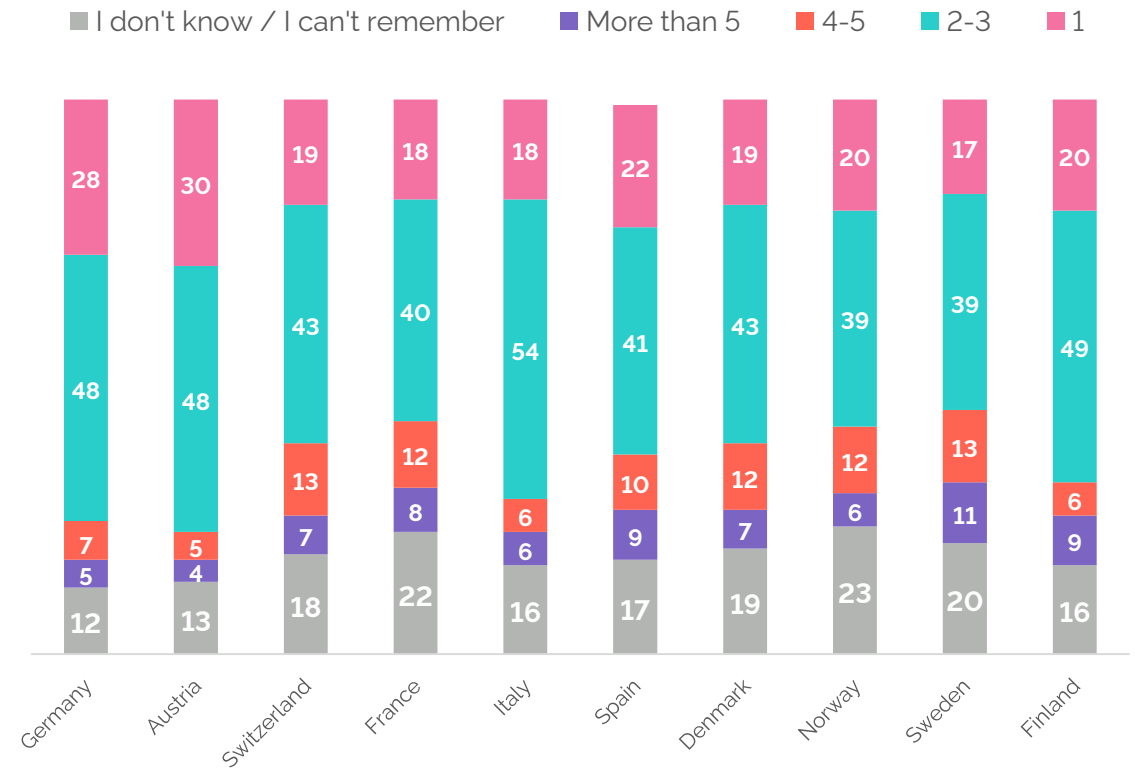
Consumers tend to be hesitant about the number of brands they are willing to boycott in the context of a scandal.

For instance, people in all the countries surveyed most often state that they have so far stopped buying a total of two to three brands as a result of a scandal around them.

Approximately one in five consumers have stopped purchasing at least one brand in their lifetime, with the exception of Germany and Austria, where the share is higher. Only few consumers state that they have already boycotted more than five brands.

Number of boycotted brands

How many brands have you stopped buying as a direct result of a scandal ? (%)



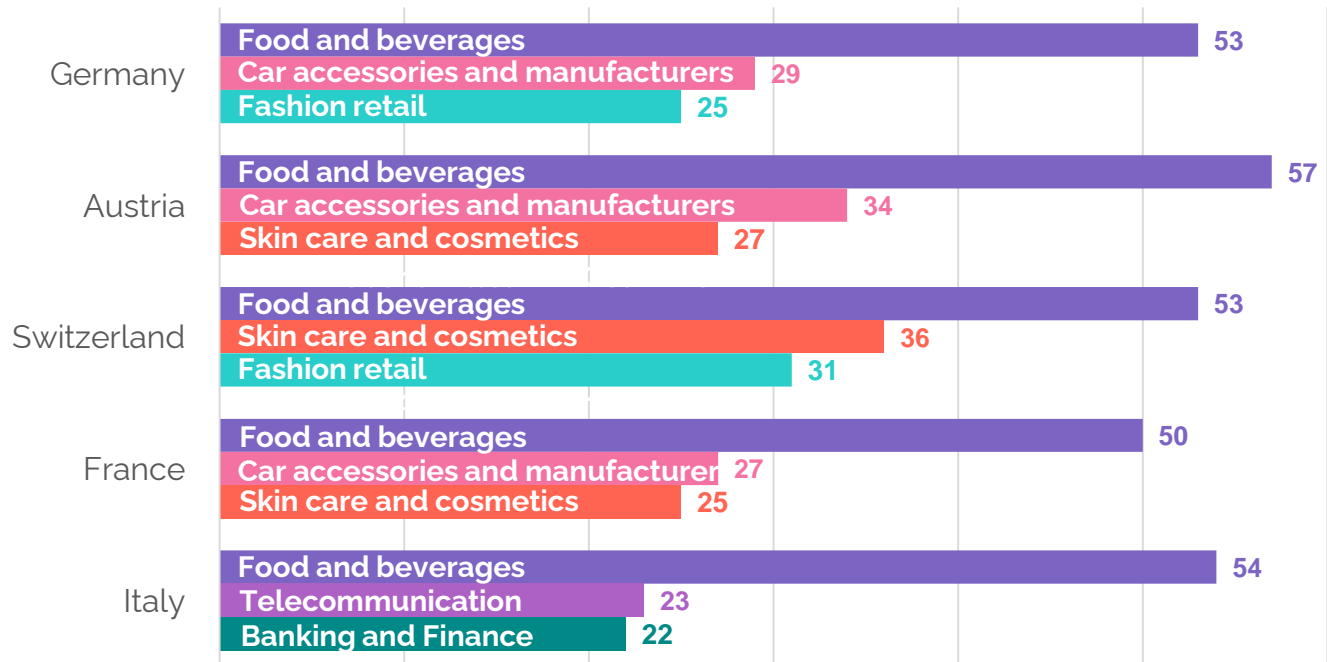
Food and Beverages brands are especially affected by boycotts

There are brand scandals in every industry, but food brands in particular can expect that consumers will remove them from their shopping list as a result of misconduct.

Likewise, clothing and cosmetics brands can assume a significant part of their consumers to stop using their products. Especially in Switzerland, Austria and France brands from these sectors will lose customers.

Industries of the boycotted brands

To which product groups / industries do those brands belong that you stopped buying as a direct result of a scandal? (Please select all that apply) (in %)



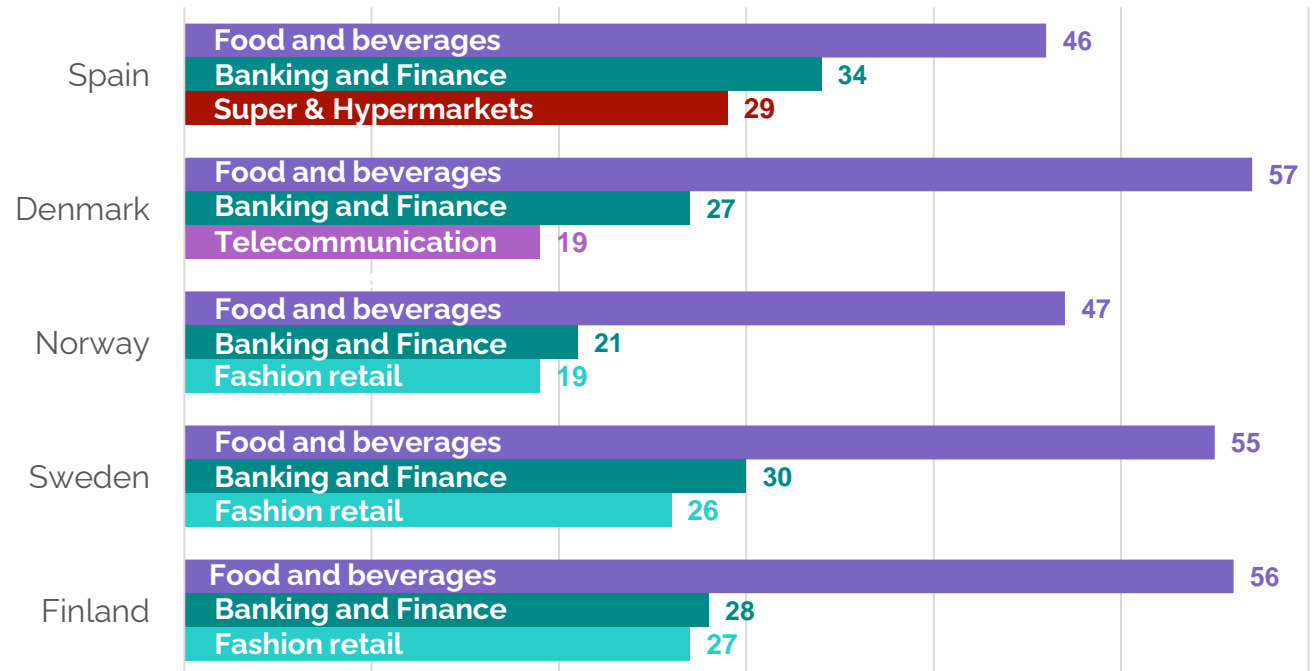
Brand boycott affects other sectors as well

Brands from the automotive, banking and financial sector are often affected by absent customers after a scandal as well. Even if the figures are significantly lower, the effect of a boycott is still noticeable as these products are purchased less frequently.

In Italy and Denmark customers have also turned away from brands from the telecommunications industry. In Spain, a boycott more often super- and hypermarkets.

Industries of the boycotted brands

To which product groups / industries do those brands belong that you stopped buying as a direct result of a scandal? (Please select all that apply) (in %)





Environmental damage is the most common reason why a brand is boycotted

YouGov Omnibus, population representative from 18+ in the respective country, survey period: July 27 to August 19, 2020, n- 3,803 (Germany n- 745, Austria n- 149, Switzerland n- 204, France n- 408, Italy n- 388, Spain n- 512, Denmark n- 453, Norway n- 280, Sweden n- 297, Finland n- 366).

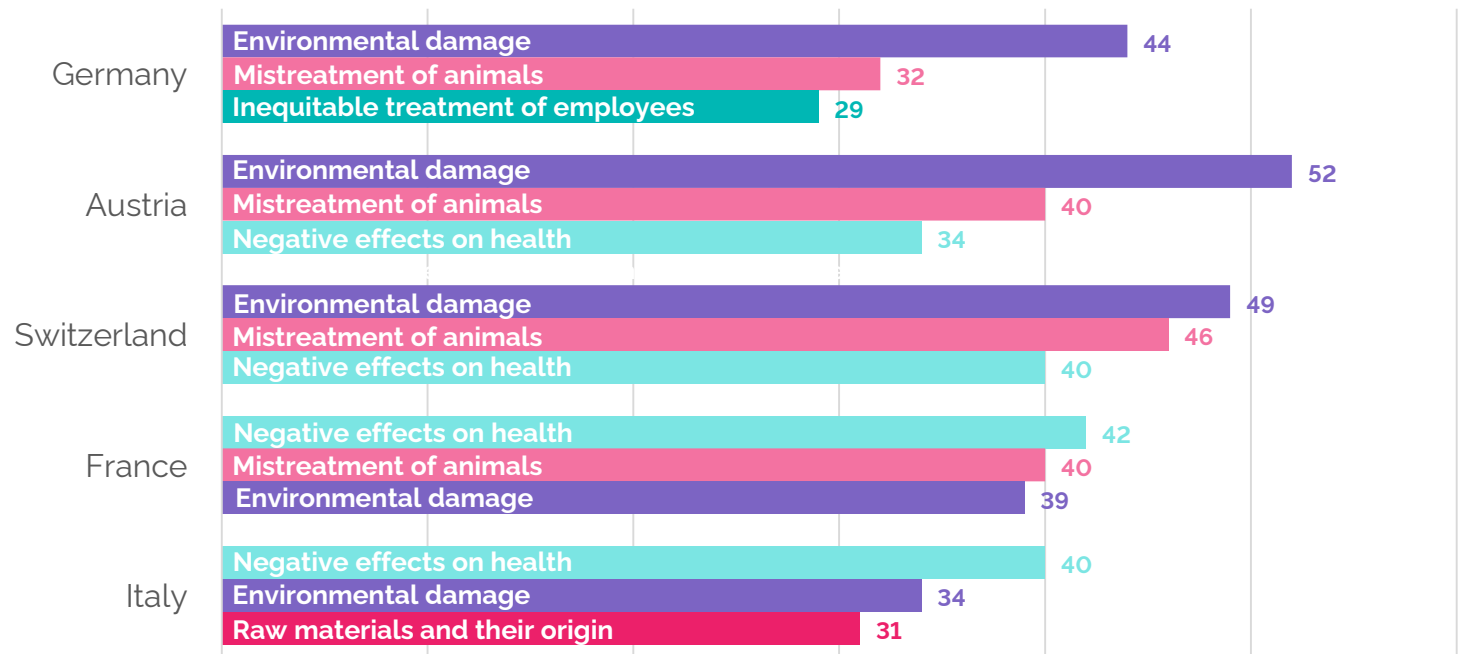
Environmental protection – if a brand behaves improperly here, there will be consequences

Negative press or a scandal brings brands' and companies' malpractices to light – this can include a wide range of topics. Such a violation of social norms leads consumers to boycott brands.

Across all countries, people agree: damage to the environment, mistreatment of animals and unfair treatment of employees are the most common reasons for a brand boycott.

Reasons for a brand boycott

Which of these reasons have ever made you boycott a brand? (Please choose all that apply.) (in %)



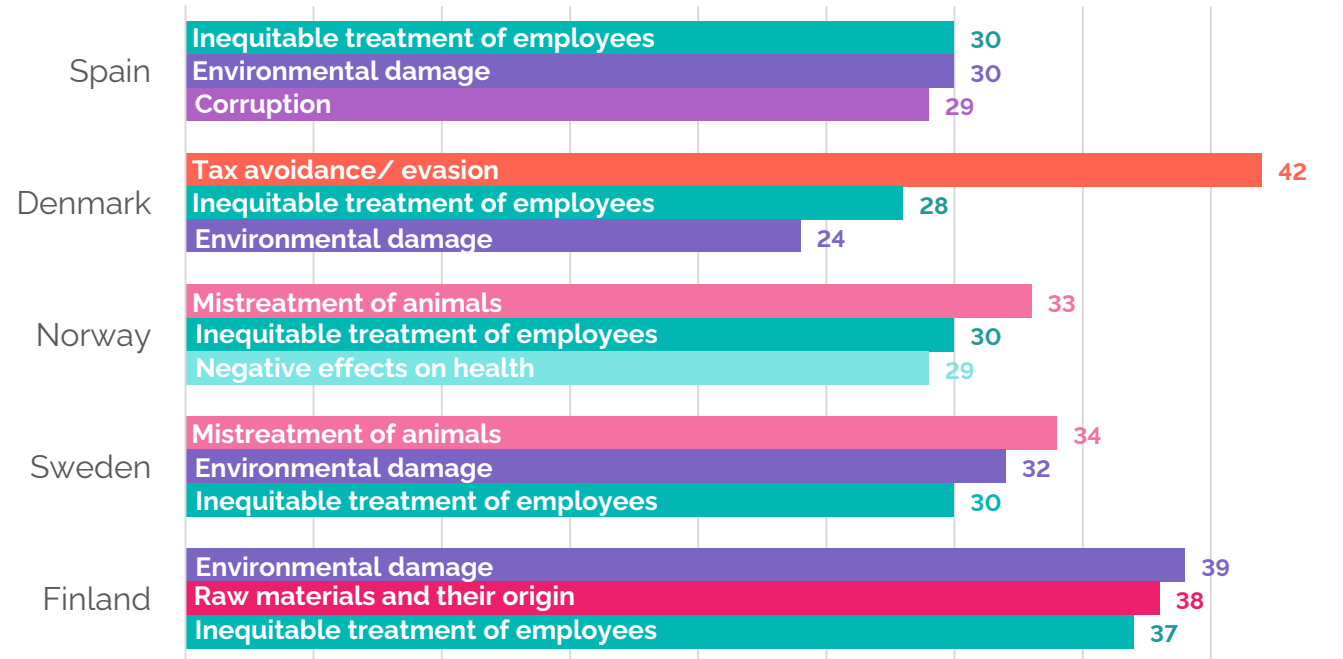
In fact, there are several reasons for a brand boycott

Consumers will also abandon a brand if their products have negative effects on the consumer health, or the used raw materials and their origin are violating current social norms.

In comparison, the most frequent reason for boycott in Denmark is noteworthy: 42 % state to boycott a brand because of tax avoidance or evasion. In Spain, on the other hand, corruption is one of the most prevalent causes.

Reasons for a brand boycott

Which of these reasons have ever made you boycott a brand? (Please choose all that apply) (in %)



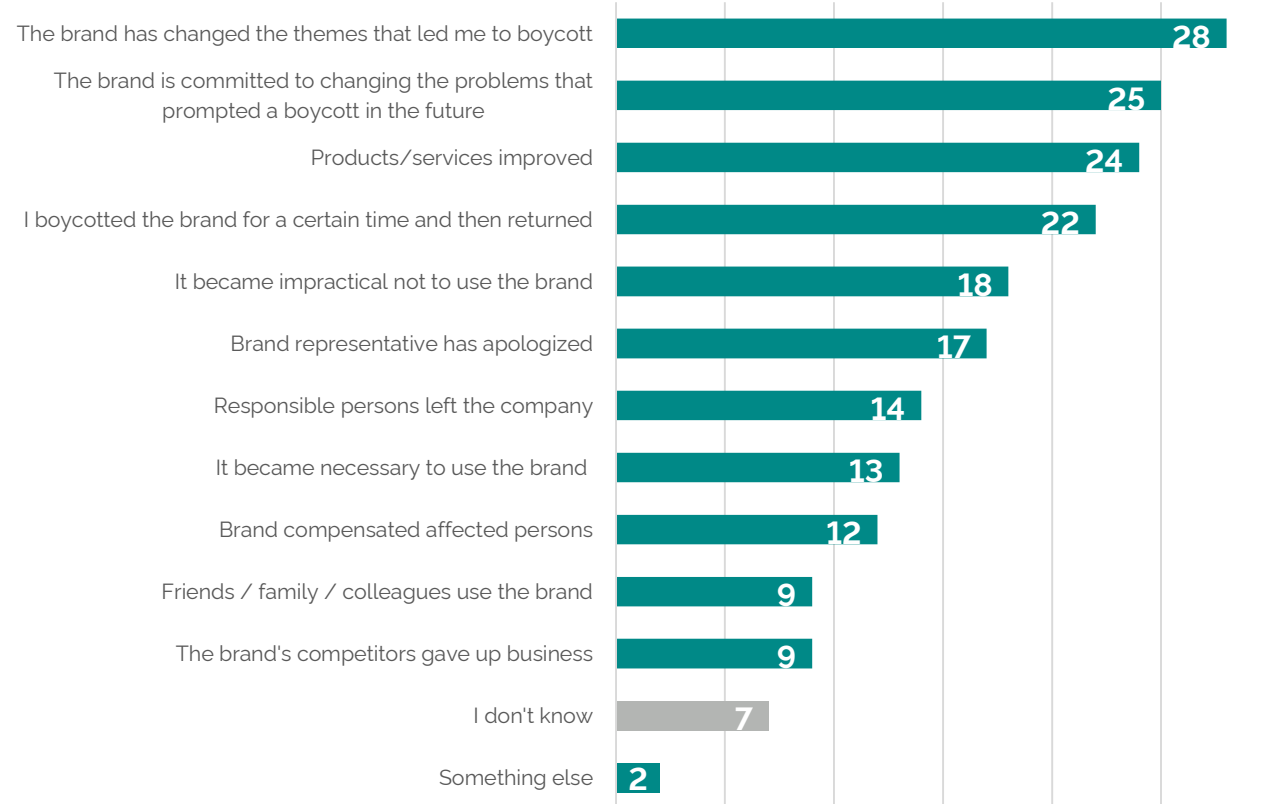
Good news: Consumers return to a brand when...

... the scandal is dealt with in a transparent, consistent and credible manner and the malpractice is ended.

Consumers in Europe expect a change in business practices if the brand has hopes of winning them back as customers.. Aspects such as convenience and the amount of time that has passed since the scandal are also factors that prompts consumers to return to a brand.

Reasons for brand reuse

What prompted you to re-use a brand that you had stopped using after a scandal? (Please select all that apply.) (in %)





Case Study - France

Quelles sont les conséquences d'une mauvaise réputation de marque en France ? Quel est le profil des consommateurs qui boycottent les marques ? Comment regagner leur confiance ?



62% des Français qui ont boycotté une marque déclarent ne plus l'utiliser à nouveau

Base : adultes français ayant déjà boycotté une marque (n=406)

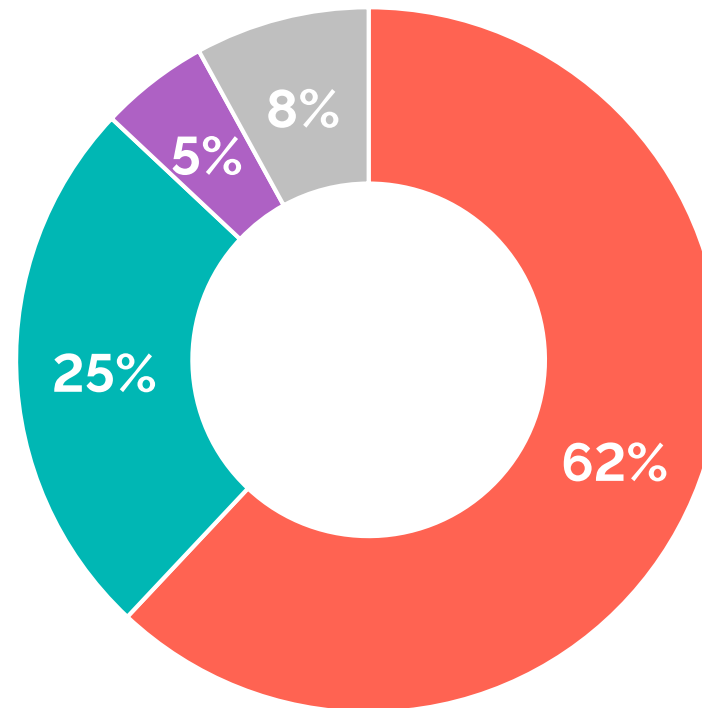
Alors que 40% des Français déclarent boycotter une marque à la suite d'un scandale, 41% des Français ne voient aucune raison d'agir de cette manière.

Base : adultes français (n=1018)

En pensant à la dernière fois où vous avez cessé d'utiliser/acheter les produits ou services d'une marque en conséquence directe d'un scandale, laquelle des mesures suivantes décrit le mieux ce qui s'est passé ?

Veillez sélectionner une seule réponse.

Base : adultes français ayant déjà boycotté une marque (n=406)



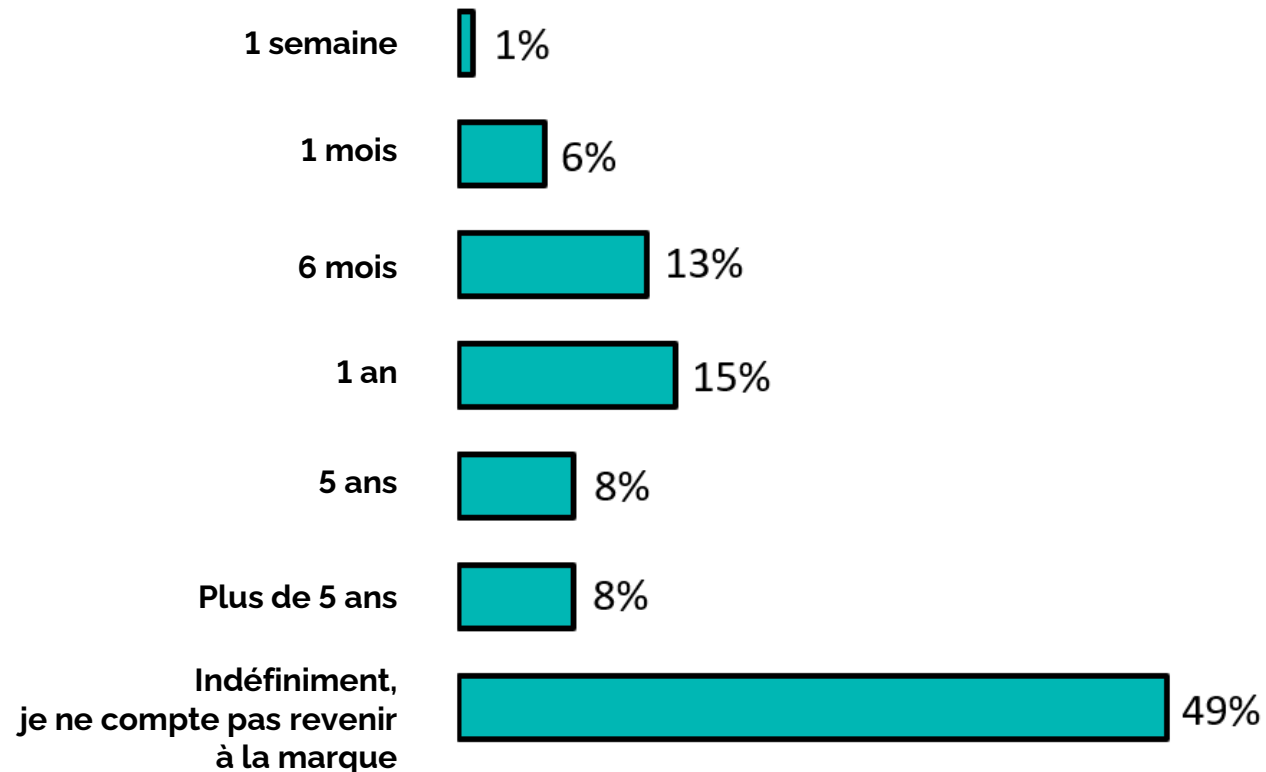
- Je n'achète/utilise toujours rien de cette marque
- J'y suis retourné(e) au bout d'un certain temps, mais je ne l'achète/l'utilise plus autant qu'avant
- J'y suis retourné(e) au bout d'un certain temps et je l'achète/l'utilise autant qu'avant
- Je ne sais pas / Je ne m'en souviens pas

Pendant combien de temps les Français boycottent une marque ?

En pensant à la dernière fois où vous avez cessé d'acheter/utiliser les produits ou services d'une marque en conséquence directe d'un scandale, combien de temps cela a-t-il duré ?

Veillez sélectionner une seule réponse.

Base : adultes français ayant déjà boycotté une marque pendant un certain temps (n=374)



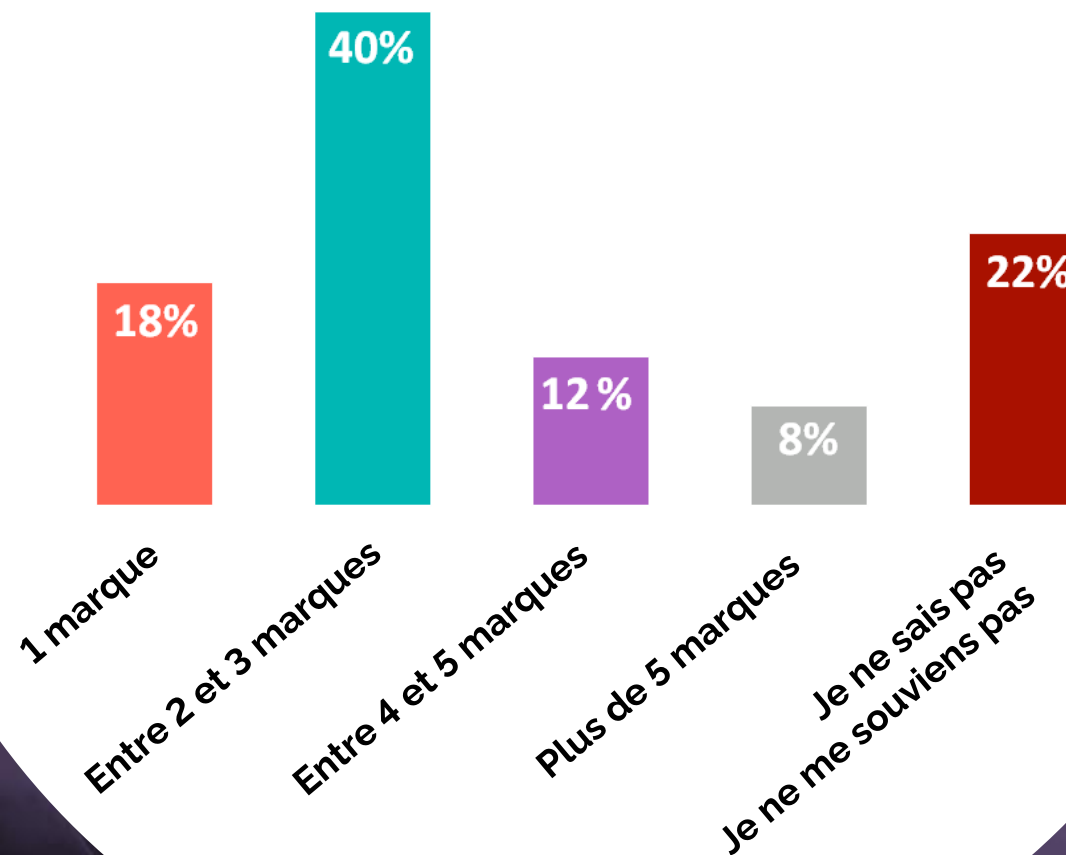
80% des Français déclarent boycotter une marque plus de 6 mois

... une tendance plus importante chez les femmes (83%) ainsi que chez les 55 ans et plus (88%)

40% des
Français ont
boycotté entre
2 et 3 marques

Combien de marque(s) avez-vous cessé d'acheter/utiliser à la suite d'un scandale ?

*Veillez sélectionner une seule réponse.
Base : adultes français ayant déjà boycotté une marque (n=406)*

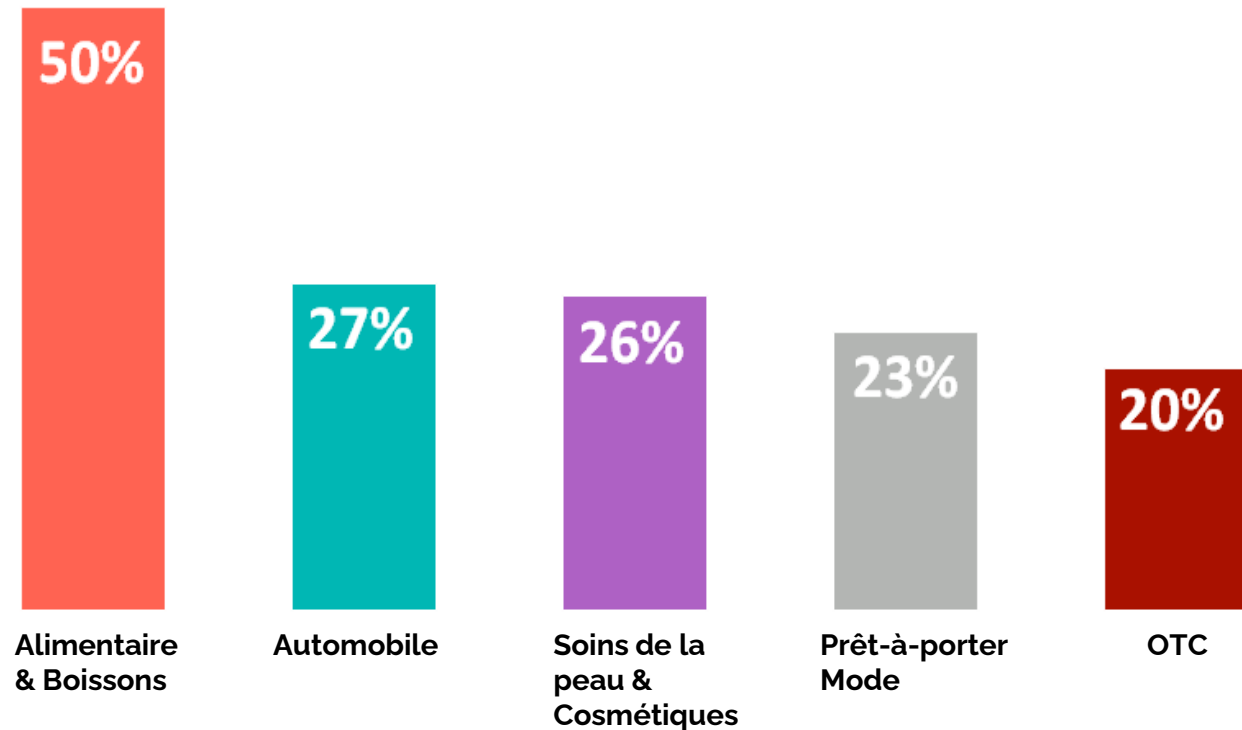


Les secteurs de l'alimentaire et des boissons, de l'automobile et des cosmétiques sont le plus souvent boycottés par les Français

Pensez à la fois où vous avez cessé d'acheter/utiliser une marque suite à un scandale, à quels produits/industries appartiennent les marques ?

*Veillez sélectionner toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent.
Base : adultes français ayant déjà boycotté une marque (n=406)*

36% des hommes ont déjà boycotté une marque du secteur automobile (contre 19% des femmes)



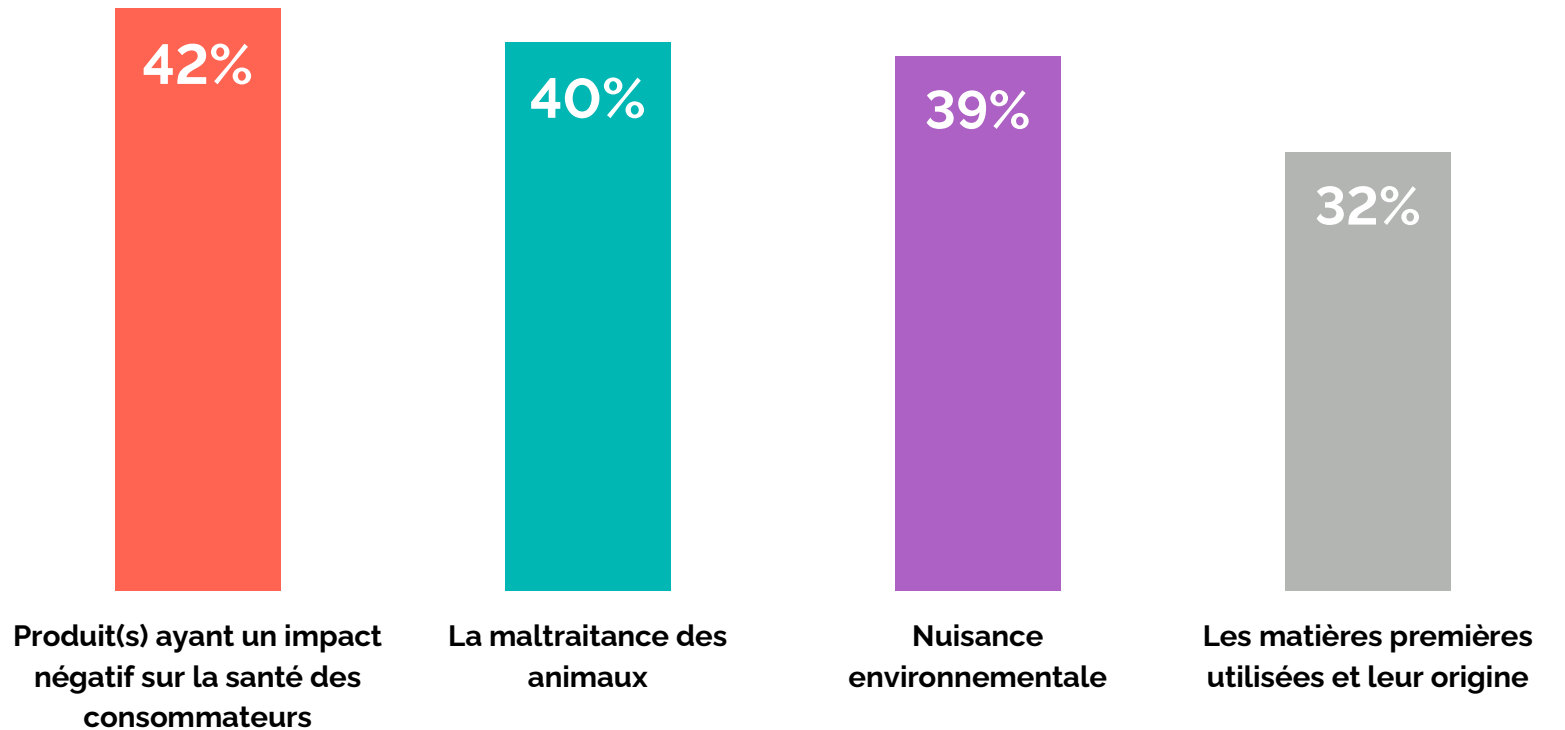
42% des Français ont boycotté une marque à cause de produits présentant un risque pour la santé des consommateurs :

un chiffre qui est bien plus élevé que la moyenne européenne (30%).

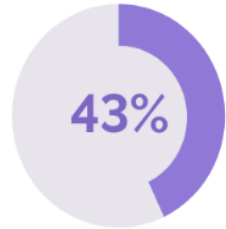
Laquelle/lesquelles de ces raisons vous a/ont poussé à boycotter une marque ?

Veillez sélectionner toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent.

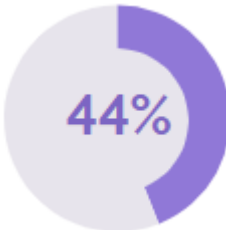
Base : adultes français ayant déjà boycotté une marque (n=406)



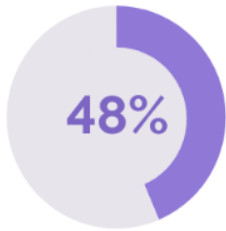
Quel est le profil des consommateurs qui boycottent les marques ?



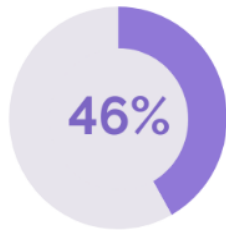
sont des hommes
(vs. 37% des femmes)



ont entre 18 et 24 ans
(vs. 36% des 35-44 ans)



sont des CSP+
(vs. 34% des CSP-)



sont des Français ayant fait
des études supérieures

Base : adultes français ayant déjà boycotté une marque (n=406)

Les réseaux sociaux qu'ils utilisent :

Base : adultes français ayant déjà boycotté une marque (n=406)

LinkedIn 43%

Twitter 43%

Facebook 40%

Quel est le profil des consommateurs qui boycottent les marques ?

Les Français qui ont déjà arrêté d'utiliser/acheter une marque ont une **position affirmée** en matière de **marques** et de **publicité**.



"J'aime les marques prêtes à s'impliquer sur des problématiques sociales"

(54% vs. 43% de la population nationale)

"Mon processus d'achat se caractérise par le repérage sur internet puis l'achat en magasin"

(45% vs. 38% de la population nationale)

"Une marque qui fait preuve d'honnêteté est très important pour moi"

(76% vs. 68% de la population nationale)

"Je préfère acheter des marques de mon pays/du pays dans lequel je vis"

(79% vs. 70% de la population nationale)

"Je m'efforce d'acheter des produits issus du commerce équitable."

(50% vs. 41% de la population nationale)

"J'aime faire attention à l'endroit où mes produits sont fabriqués ou cultivés"

(74% vs. 62% de la population nationale)



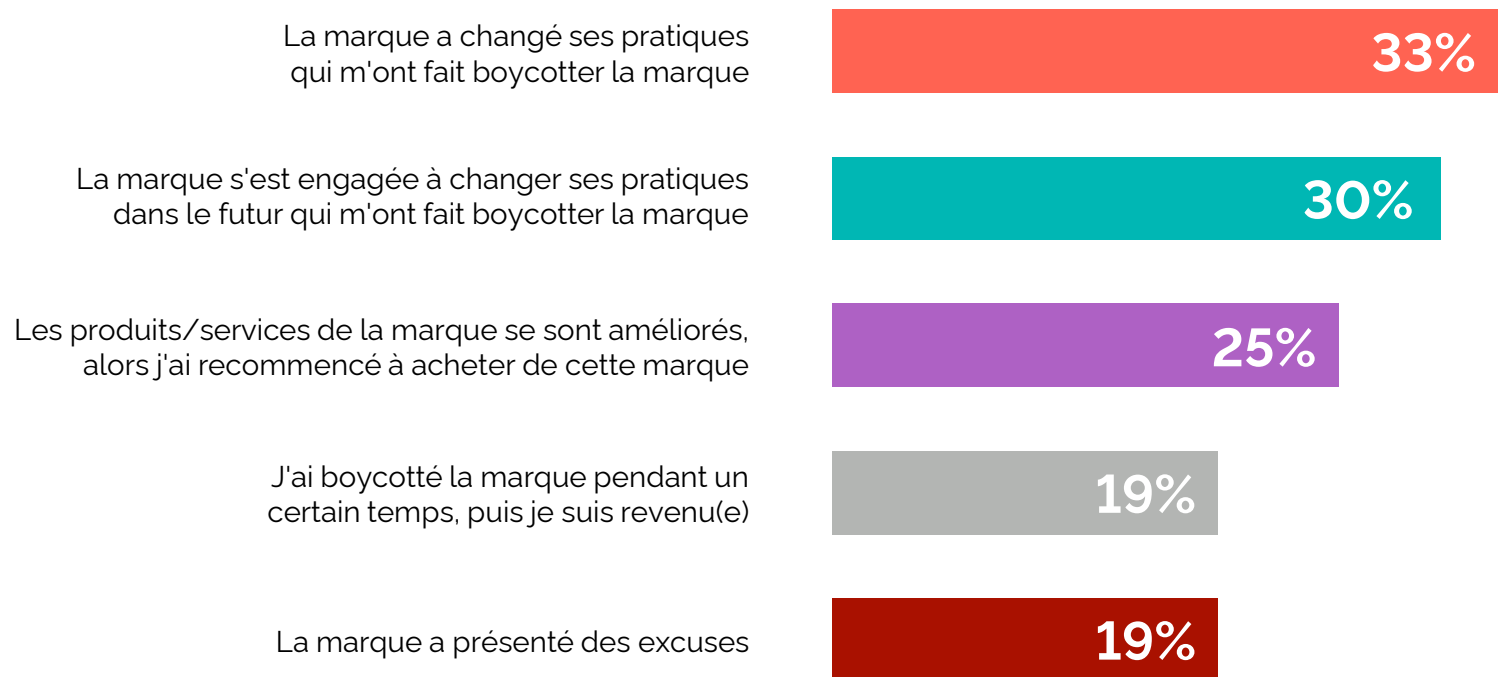
Que doivent faire les marques pour **regagner la confiance des « boycotters » ?**

Les marques qui changent leurs pratiques sont celles qui sont le plus susceptibles de regagner la confiance de ceux qui les ont boycottés à la suite d'un scandale. C'est ce qu'affirment 33% des Français qui ont déjà boycotté mais qui ont depuis de nouveau acheté/utilisé la marque en question.

Parmi la sélection suivante, que vous a-t-il fallu pour cesser de boycotter une marque ?

Veillez sélectionner toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent.

Base : adultes français ayant déjà boycotté une marque mais qui ont depuis acheté la marque en question (n=121)





Conclusion

1. When consumers turn away from a brand, they are very consistent with it and do not buy products from the brand for a long period of time.
2. Brand boycott – at least temporarily – affects brands in all industries.
3. Consumers want brands that adhere to social and political norms – those who deviate from these are boycotted.
4. In order to win consumers back as a brand, it is particularly important to appear credible and that communication and action are in line with the new brand principles.
5. People who are prepared to boycott a brand differ significantly from the general population. In order to convince them of a brand, the needs of this target group must be taken into account in brand communication.

Contact



Do you want to understand how your target group or customers react to negative headlines or scandals related to your brand and what consequences this may have for your company?

We provide you with concrete and practice-oriented insights about your brand, your customers and your target groups - nationally and internationally.

YouGov is an international Data and Analytics Group. All our solutions are based on our highly participative online community, where more than 9 million people worldwide share their opinions with us. We aggregate these opinions in our connected data pool, the YouGov Cube, which our customers can access via online dashboards. We can reach virtually any target group and generate reliable, high-quality data and insights that provide answers to your questions and challenges. With 41 locations in 25 countries and panel members in 44 countries, YouGov has one of the ten largest market research networks worldwide.



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