

## Enabling the Good Life

A Sustainable Brands® Research Study in Partnership with Harris Poll









#### Introduction

Over the past half century or so, our collective sense of whether we are living a "Good Life" has slowly migrated away from the original values of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" that shaped our country. Those values that united us as citizens have slowly given way — thanks not in small part to the advertising and marketing industries — to the pursuit of money, status and personal achievement as our path to happiness. In the process, we have begun to be referred to, and to see ourselves as, consumers first, and, it might be said we have nearly forgotten the fundamental role we play as citizens in our collective wellbeing.

As consumers, we have become little more than commoditized objects to serve the global economic engine. But the pendulum is beginning to swing back the other way. A growing contingent of citizens around the world are beginning to understand that

consumption doesn't, in fact, equate to happiness, that our obsession with 'keeping up with the Joneses' can even get in the way of our ability to live a happy life. More of us are beginning to realize that overconsumption has negative impacts not only on our own health and the health of our communities, but also on the health of our planet.

As a result, we are slowly but surely beginning to reprioritize our aspirations, and in keeping with our shifting sense of priorities, we are beginning to expect more from the brands we choose to support. We increasingly want to know how our purchases impact not only our own health and the health of our family, but also the health of our communities, the environment and the broader ecosystem of people involved in making the things we buy. We want to know where and how the products we buy are made, how the workers who make them are treated and where our goods will go once they're no longer in use.

This spring, to validate our sense of this subtle shift in our global societal aspirations, Sustainable Brands® launched a threeyear initiative to help businesses understand and enable this shifting vision of The Good Life that we have sensed is emerging within the global marketplace. The research study shared here, done in partnership with the Harris Poll and supported by Ketchum, represents a crucial first step towards helping us understand what The Good Life means to people today and how they feel about the role of brands in helping them live their new aspirations. What we found validated the emerging insights we've gathered from traveling around the world, talking with people about their feelings about life and their relationship to brands:

Rather than the pursuit of money, status and personal achievement, we are collectively beginning to seek balance and

### simplicity, along with greater connection to family, community and the environment as foundations of a life well lived.

The report you are about to read details our findings and shines a light on opportunities for brands to help drive business value and brand loyalty by recognizing, and helping deliver this changing view of a Good Life to their customers. For brands to remain competitive, they must evolve with this new generation of consumers — those whose decisions are driven to create a better world for themselves and their families, without negatively impacting the world around them. The Sustainable Brands community of innovators has already been testing new frameworks, tools and partnerships to ensure purpose-driven brands outperform traditional ones in delivering tangible business results. Soon, all brands will need to follow suit.

This transition towards The Good Life is not a fad. It represents a significant, long-term shift in our societal dreams and aspirations. We hope that, like us, you see the immense opportunities inherent in becoming part of this growing movement. We believe that helping shift global economic activities toward the "next economy" will better deliver a flourishing future for our children while maintaining the health of our planet on which we all rely for sustenance.

We welcome your questions and observations as collectively we work toward building the better brands and businesses of tomorrow.

KoAnn Skrzyniarz Founder & CEO Sustainable Brands

Wendy Salomon VP, Consultant Harris Poll







### The Good Life in Today's World

Today's vision of The Good Life has surely evolved. To ascertain how U.S. society conceives of The Good Life, this research study adopted a two-phased approach: The first portion consisted of a qualitative survey that generated 2,145 U.S. adult respondents, asking, in an open-ended format, what The Good Life means to them today. This qualitative data was then used to develop a quantitative survey, which asked a statistically valid panel of 1,000 adults representing the general population across the U.S. to prioritize various elements of The Good Life they aspire to today.

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As our world becomes increasingly fast-paced, complex, and confusing, it is no surprise that so many are seeking a simpler lifestyle and are reassessing their personal definition of what it means to be "rich."

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#### Cash Plays a Role But Is No Longer King

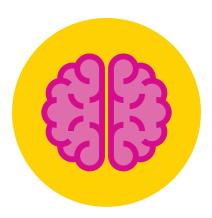
While many U.S. consumers (62%) say that financial concerns prevent them from achieving what they consider to be The Good Life, there is a strong, emerging recognition that money alone does not buy happiness. In fact, 78% agree with this exact statement. Over half (52%) agree that it is insufficient to wield a large enough checkbook to buy whatever they want. When it comes to what respondents dream about doing with their money if/when they have it, only a quarter (26%) see the classic measure of status — the ability to purchase luxury items — as an accurate indicator they are living The Good Life.

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#### Four Key Elements of The Good Life Today

First and foremost, people's vision of The Good Life certainly is changing. In fact, 71% of U.S. adults say that their view of The Good Life is different from that of their parents. Across the board, we see individuals shifting their focus away from status, money and personal achievement that became so central to the "American Dream" in the 20th century, to value **Balanced** a simpler, more balanced **Simplicity** life filled with meaningful connections to people, and living community and the a simpler, environment. healthier life Here are the four key elements of The Good Life, ranked in order of priority according to respondents: Meaningful Money and Connections **Status** to people, community or having and the money and environment the ability **28**% to spend it **Personal** Achievement with respect to both career and level of education 10%



think if people understood each other better, we would all live a better life



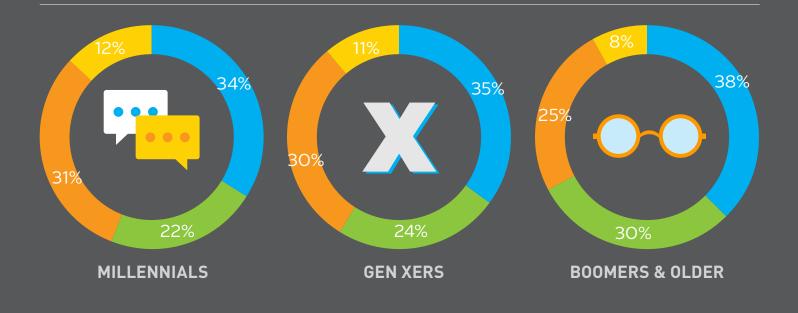
72%
feel if more people
achieved The Good
Life, there would be less
global conflict

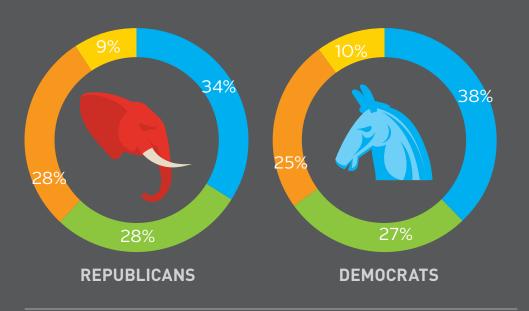
#### We're More Alike Than the Media Makes Us Out to Be

Perhaps one of the most striking findings from this study is that this shift in societal aspirations is no longer relegated to a single identifiable demographic. Rather, prioritization of the four elements shows remarkable consistency across gender, age, region, income and even political and faith affiliation.

Across generations (Millennials [34%] Gen Xers [35%] and Baby Boomers or older [38%]), the interest in Balanced Simplicity rises to the top as having the largest impact on defining The Good Life. There is also little difference between men (37%) and women (35%); parents (35%) and non-parents (36%) or Republicans (34%) and Democrats (38%). In other words, these aspirations aren't restricted to a particular group but are remarkably consistent across the board. And still, the majority of adults (83%) also acknowledge that, in fact, equal access to The Good Life for all does not exist today.

As a complement to the remarkable similarity across demographics, the research also showcases respondent desire for greater cooperation and service towards others as a pathway to achieving The Good Life. More than 3 in 4 U.S. adults (76%) agree that living The Good Life requires making a difference for others in the world. Collectively, 89% of adults argue that if people understood each other better, we would all live a better life, and 72% argue that, if more people achieved The Good Life, there would be less global conflict.





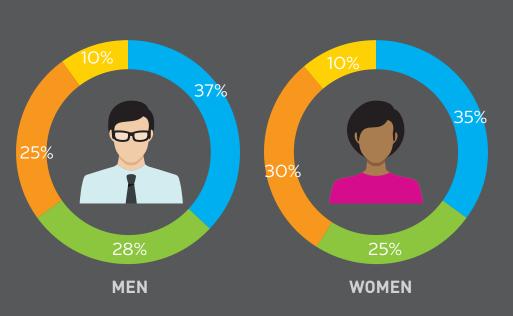
## Balanced Simplicity is Consistently Top Across Demographics











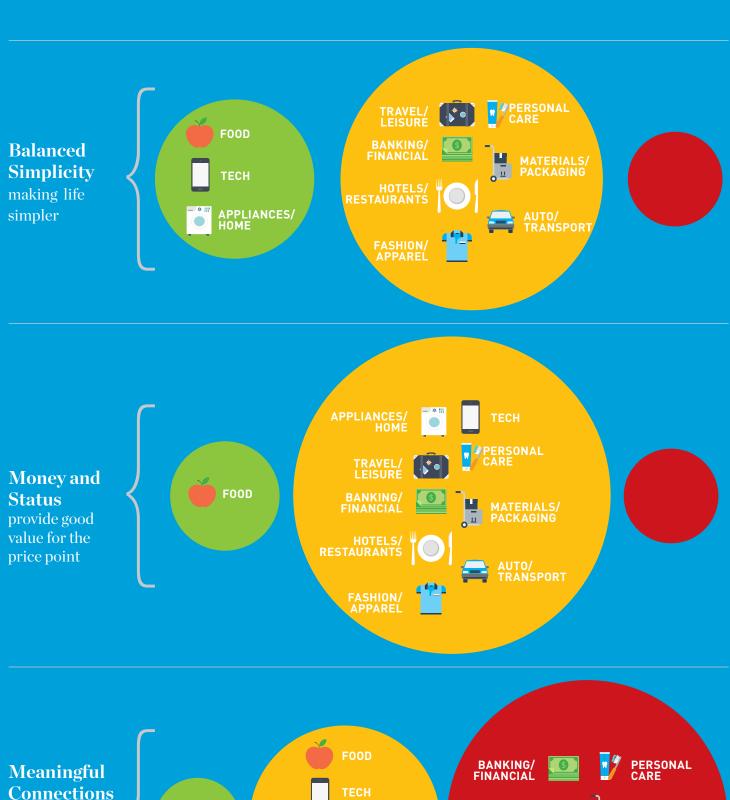
## 80% are loyal to businesses that help them live The Good Life

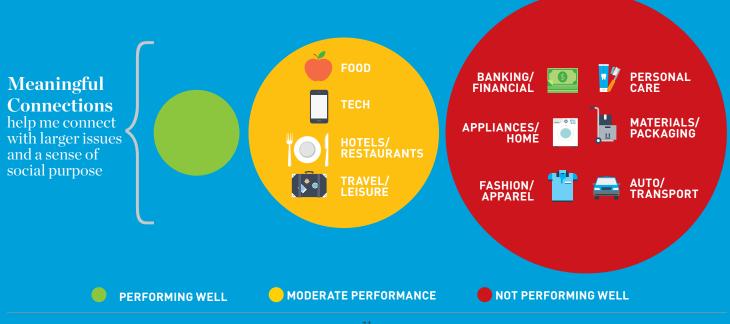
# Why The Good Life Matters for Businesses & Brands

#### Citizens Want Business to Lead and Promise to Reward Them

People want business to help them live The Good Life, and a strong majority (80%) say they are loyal to those who do. While 51% of respondents to our study sense that companies would like to help them live the life they seek, nearly 2 out of 3 (65%) struggle to name brands that are actually doing something about it. For brands, this is a ripe opportunity to innovate and create goods and services that genuinely help individuals realize their changing definition of The Good Life.

This isn't specific to one industry, either. Today, the relationships companies have with individuals are far more transactional and less "sticky" than they could be, and every industry has room to improve. When graded on each industry's alignment with Balanced Simplicity, Money and Status and Meaningful Connections, none of them perform "well" in all three categories. Some, such as Food & Beverage, are quite close to being fully supportive of The Good Life, while others -Materials & Packaging, Fashion, Banking & Financial Services and even Personal Care – have ample room to evolve. On the whole, brands are delivering far better on Balanced Simplicity and Money and Status than on Meaningful Connections. The significant opportunity here is for brands and business to move from a more surface engagement with people to one that develops relationships, loyalty and advocacy.





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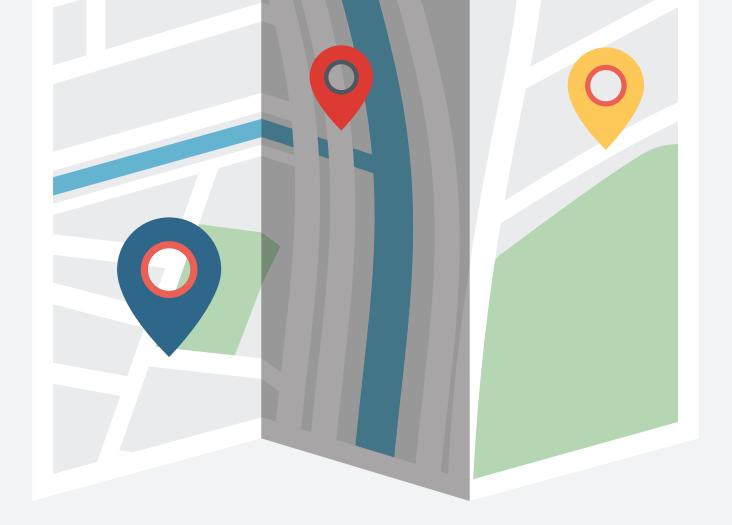
believe they can influence companies to do better through purchase, yet only

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The Good Life

### Consumer Demand Is Complicated

At the same time, it can be confounding to brands to find that consumers' actions are not always aligned with their words; in other words, they are not doing their part, either. While 65% believe that they can influence companies to do better by "voting" at the checkout counter, only 28% actually confirm they have purchased products or services because they enhance The Good Life. Why? Because the actions of brands that are beginning to embrace new attributes of today's view of the Good Life have not broken through to connect in a meaningful way to customers. Either Good Life attributes are not differentiated. or if they are, they are not well communicated in a sustained manner. Again, this spells opportunity for brands to evolve their engagement with customers to move beyond just selling more, to creating active, loyal brand supporters.

The bottom line is this: it is up to brands to be more proactive in anticipating and understanding their customers' changing aspirations even before they do — and then to innovate accordingly. Steve Jobs had it right: "You can't just ask customers what they want and then give it to them. By the time you build it, they'll want something different." Brands must be able to identify new core insights about their customers, then innovate products, services and programs to support their evolving aspirations.



#### How Organizations Are Navigating This Dilemma

Brands struggling to find methods of promoting and supporting consumers' desires to live a life reflected by more Balanced Simplicity and/or Meaningful Connections — the two most important components of The Good Life, according to respondents — may find inspiration in the examples below.

Unprompted, individuals identify companies such as **Apple, Amazon, Google, Procter & Gamble, Trader Joe's** and **Panera** as leaders in this endeavor. What do they all have in common? These courageous companies are disrupting their own businesses. They are listening to people, generating keen insights, inventing new products, services and experiences that create relationships and engage with the lives of their consumers and then talking about it!

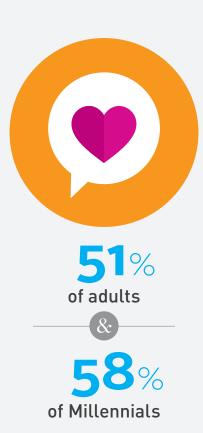
The good news is that emerging examples of product and service offerings and new business models that serve up a more balanced, simple and healthy life for consumers — as well as help them connect better to family, community and the environment — abound around the world today.



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would pursue work they love over money In terms of **Balanced Simplicity**, people are increasingly turning towards products and services that are not only simpler but also contribute to their health and wellbeing. For example, in the food industry, consumers are showing a preference for products made with fewer, natural and "clean" ingredients they can recognize. According to a recent survey of over 2,800 Europeans across nine countries, 77% of participants regarded a food or beverages' ingredient list as important, and 68% valued claims of 'no additives' or 'no artificial ingredients.' In fact, respondents placed higher value on the ingredient list (77%) and clean ingredient claims (68%) than they did on the brand making the product (53%).

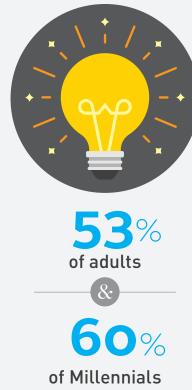
We see countless examples of the rise of brands supporting **Balanced Simplicity** in the wealth of startups such as **Sun Basket**, **Good Eggs** and **Hello Fresh**, which offer home or office delivery of healthier, often locally sourced food options that are easy to prepare. We see a similar rise in apps designed to make it easy to incorporate exercise and/or mindfulness into busy schedules — including **Breathe**, **Headspace** and **Calm**, among many others. On a larger scale, commitments to deliver more healthy and convenient foods, such as **Campbell Soup Company**'s acquisition of **Plum Organics** and **Amazon**'s recent acquisition of **Whole Foods**, each take this whole trend to a new level.

One can also see brands innovating in support of **Balanced Simplicity** in the growing popularity of the sharing economy, one of a myriad of innovative business models that speak to consumer desire to simplify by decluttering their lives. Carsharing services such as Lyft, Uber and Zipcar and clothing services such as **Rent the Runway** (which enables customers to rent, rather than buy, clothes) are booming in popularity. The sharing economy model speaks to the greater consumer trend of shifting away from a focus on possessions to looking for creative, simple and cheap ways to share resources with others. Marks & Spencer's 'Shwopping' campaign helped consumers simplify their lives by reducing clutter while they shop, and **Ford's** recent move into bike sharing combines the shareable economy model with assisting customers in being more balanced and healthy as they get around town. The examples are plenty and proliferating quickly— and yet consumers aren't quite conscious of how these brands are helping, pointing once again back to the opportunity not only for innovation, but also for sustained communication about how brands are delivering against these emerging core societal values.

There are also many examples to demonstrate how people today value **Meaningful Connections**. Our research clearly demonstrates that our fast-paced world is creating a craving across all demographics for a return to more meaningful reconnection to family, community and the environment. We can clearly see, but have not yet broadly recognized, early indications of this in the enormous success of digital connection platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp and **LinkedIn**, which have 2 billion monthly users, 1.2 billion monthly users and 500 million total users, respectively. Chief to the missions of these platforms is connecting people, whether it be friends, family or professionals. Starbucks made its fortune creating a "third place" where people could connect with others in their community easily, and more recently, has put its brand behind connecting the communities within which it operates with immigrants who contribute to our country's rich diversity.

Beyond connecting to other individuals, many adults today hope to feel connected to their workplaces. 51% of adults (and 58% of Millennials) say that pursuing work they love rather than prioritizing money is important to their vision of The Good Life. More than that, 53% of adults (and 60% of Millennials) ranked working somewhere that aligns with their purpose/values as being critically important.

There is also evidence of a greater desire to feel more connected to nature, especially in today's modern urban environments. To facilitate this connection on behalf of its customers, **Timberland** turned its focus to urban greening projects. Timberland helps plug its employees and other volunteers into community service projects to plant trees and restore community gardens in underserved urban communities. This also helped Timberland employees feel more connected to the brand they represent and the communities they work in. **REI** has thrived by encouraging and enabling all of us to reconnect to the outdoors.



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### How Are Brands Embodying the Spirit of Balanced Simplicity and Meaningful Connection?



#### Balanced Simplicity — Some Initial Examples to Get You Started

Brands and products that exhibit Balanced Simplicity contribute to consumers' well-being, health, moderation and ultimate happiness. They favor quality over quantity, durability over, clarity over saturation and usefulness over triviality. Much of the time, inroads in **Balanced Simplicity** are coupled with growth in one or more of the other elements of The Good Life, as is evidenced in the examples below.

#### **Balanced Simplicity with Panera Bread**

**Panera Bread's** <u>"Food as It Should Be"</u> campaign, first launched in 2014, catalogues the restaurant chain's journey towards serving only "100% clean" food. In January of 2017, it achieved its goal of completely eliminating artificial additives from its menu, thus addressing the aforementioned consumer desire for simpler ingredients.

Panera Bread has also taken a hard line <u>against sugary beverages</u>. In a recent national survey it commissioned, researchers found that 83% of U.S. consumers underestimate the amount of sugar in a 20 fl. oz. serving of standard soda. To help educate consumers, Panera became the first national restaurant chain to post both added sugar and calories at the point of pour. As founder, chairman and CEO **Ron Shaich** said at the time: "We believe it's up to companies to take the lead on transparency, not wait for legislation." The company reports seeing customers begin to "trade from fountain soft drinks to [their] new, clean beverages."



Among the most approachable methods of promoting **Balanced Simplicity** that brands have found is supporting a healthy relationship and equilibrium between work life and personal life. **Clif Bar** is a <u>prime example of such a brand</u>. Against a backdrop of 30% workplace engagement in the U.S., 90% of Clif Bar employees participate in <u>CLIF CORPS</u>, the company's volunteer program. This program seeks to produce 10,400 volunteer service hours on company time, or the equivalent of five people working full-time in the community, per year.

Additionally, Clif Bar provides its workers with the following perks/amenities:

- In-office childcare
- An in-office gym, featuring: climbing wall, yoga, personal trainer, group exercise classes, financial incentives for working out 30 minutes a day
- In-office personal care, including: chiropractor, acupuncturist, massage services, onsite barber
- \$1,000 a year toward home energy-efficiency upgrades
- \$6,500 toward a fuel-efficient (such as hybrid or electric) vehicle
- A six-week paid sabbatical after seven years at the company

By making it possible for its employees to live simpler and more balanced lives, Clif Bar fosters productivity, job satisfaction and loyalty. The brand boasts a turnover rate that is roughly 1/3 of the industry average and 98% of employees say that they are proud of where they work.





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#### **Balanced Simplicity with Patagonia**

Pioneers in the apparel industry have been particularly successful at promoting meaningful connections and a more balanced life. In 2011, **Patagonia** rebelled against Black Friday with the now-famous "Don't Buy This Jacket" campaign. In 2013, the company launched its "Worn Wear" campaign, which invited customers "to celebrate the stuff you already own," instead of joining the annual consumerist melee.

#### **Balanced Simplicity with REI**

In 2015, while most retailers held all-day (and all-night) Black Friday sales, **REI** launched its #OptOutside campaign, closing its 149 stores and paying its employees to take Thanksgiving and Black Friday off. Rather than spending time running from one store to the next, REI encouraged its customers to spend time outdoors, connecting to nature and to their families instead. The following year, over 550 brands (including Sustainable Brands!) joined REI®'s #OptOutside campaign.

This example and the one before it (Patagonia) are particularly illustrative of the overlap potential between the key elements of The Good Life. By promoting the values of moderation, excellence, reclamation and deliberate consumption — core tenets of Balanced Simplicity — Patagonia and REI simultaneously foster a community of conscious consumers who are increasingly aligned with the needs of their local and global environment.

#### Getting Started Enabling More Meaningful Connections

Successful brands today understand the power of Meaningful Connections — that intimacy, humanity and trust, when delivered, support business growth. Meaningful Connections extend beyond the product offering; they cultivate thoughtful engagement with stakeholders and create a culture of inspiring and positive interactions.

#### Meaningful Connections with HEINEKEN

In Spring of 2017, **HEINEKEN** launched its <u>"Worlds Apart"</u> campaign, a social experiment that paired sets of strangers with differing backgrounds, ideals and views, and invited them to first build a bar together, then discuss their differences over a cold beer. They coupled an environmentalist with a climate change denier, a transphobic man with a transgender woman, and a feminist with an antifeminist. United over a beer, each partner made a real effort to understand the other, someone unlike anyone she or he normally conversed with, and forged an authentic (Meaningful) connection. HEINEKEN's campaign tastefully tapped into a widely felt desire to comprehend the other side of an "incomprehensible" ideological gap, and made its product a suitable bridge.



More and more organizations, ranging from world-class NGOs to multibillion-dollar energy giants, are turning to virtual reality (VR) to cultivate **Meaningful Connections**. VR delivers new ways to tell a story that people can truly understand; when individuals view an organization's VR film, they tend to experience a deeper emotional connection with that brand.

In 2015, **Singularity University** and **Amnesty International** ran a <u>successful VR campaign</u> that virtually transported people to the war-torn streets of Aleppo, Syria, where thousands of civilians have died as a result of barrel bombings. The experience attempted to capture the devastation caused by the bombings and "elicited both strong, emotional responses from the public and a high level of donor engagement."

On the other side of the world, Danish giant **Ørsted** is <u>using VR to shake its fossil-fuel heavy image</u>. With this technology, consumers are able to tour Ørsted's offshore wind farms and connect with the physical space from which their energy is being sourced. Reactions have been markedly positive.

#### Meaningful Connections with Planet Labs

Unnoticeable, incremental changes are happening every day that create big impacts for the planet; however, incremental changes are generally imperceptible by the human brain. **Planet Labs** is solving this problem with <u>real-time data visualizations and space-mapping</u>, with help from a constellation of Earth-observing satellites, to capture the planet's entire surface every day, bringing the "unnoticeable" changes happening on the planet to the world's attention.

Planet Labs is taking "change" that most people care about in the abstract and providing a means for them to feel connected to it. In short, it is making sustainability real.



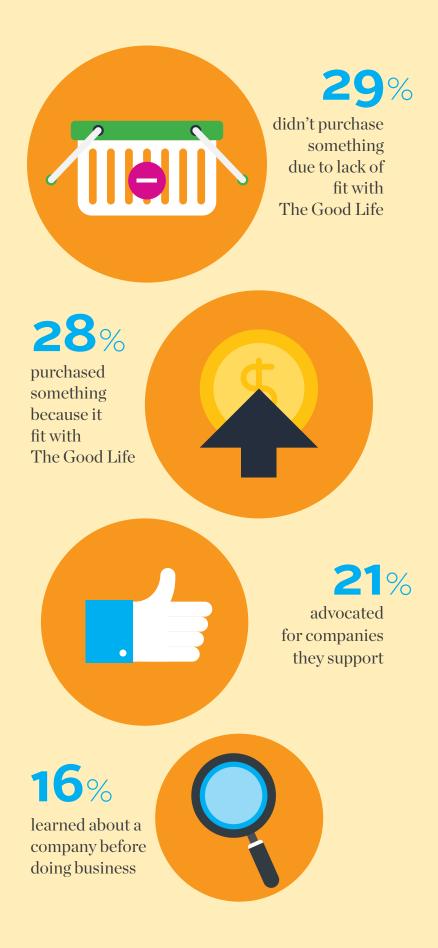
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#### The Business Case Is Clear

The business case for supporting The Good Life is clear. This opportunity to engage with people on a deeper level will increase their loyalty, advocacy and (ultimately) purchases. It is undeniably tied to the bottom line.

Failing to engage will put brands at an increasing disadvantage. Already, 29% of individuals in the United States refrain from making purchases that are incongruent with their conceptions of The Good Life, and 28% spend money on products or services specifically because they are aligned. 16% of U.S. consumers take the time to learn about a company before they agree to be customers, and 21% actively advocate for those that they support.



#### Where Do We Go From Here?

As we've demonstrated in this report, there are certainly gaps between intentions and actions on the part of companies and individuals to create and enable The Good Life. Brands that seize this opportunity to redesign their product services and offerings will accelerate both brand loyalty and profitability.

This transition will require courageous optimism. It will take a strong and evolving partnership built on active listening on the part of brands and feedback from consumers. But it is certainly possible!

Over the next three years, the Sustainable Brands community will leverage international partners to examine how the vision of The Good Life is changing on a multi-local level. We will solicit and publish bi-weekly case studies on The Good Life to spark ideas for brands seeking to change. And, in June of 2018, we will expand our discussion of The Good Life to share case studies, tools and strategies for brands seeking to redesign how their products and services align with this changing mindset.

Through this work, we hope to lead brands to understand how they can move from traditional marketing to mattering to people, how they can foster meaningful connections amongst their consumers, and how they can incorporate the concepts of 'balance,' 'simplicity' and 'moderation.' We intend to push brands to build strong partnerships with their customers, so they can meet the underlying demand for The Good Life.

Sustainable Brands invites participants in this "next economy" to use their personal and collective insights to spark inspiration and innovate new ways to engage with our evolving vision of The Good Life of the future. We encourage brands taking these cutting-edge research insights to heart to join our ever-growing community of brand leaders and learn from true innovators in this space.

We offer individuals who have ideas about, or examples of The Good Life to share these ideas with us via <u>Twitter</u>, our <u>Facebook page</u>, or our <u>LinkedIn community</u>. Most of all, we hope that our collective, continued work on redefining the Good Life and redesigning with this vision in mind will help deliver a better life for all.



#### Methodology

The Good Life research was conducted in two main stages, starting with a qualitative, exploratory phase and moving to a quantitative stage. The qualitative portion leveraged Harris Poll's QuickQuery online omnibus to mine what The Good Life means to U.S. adults. The survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Poll in conjunction with Sustainable Brands, supported by Ketchum. April 10–14, 2017. A total of 2,145 interviews were conducted among U.S. adults 18+. Survey participants were asked two open-ended questions: 1) When you hear the phrase "the good life," what does it mean to you? and 2) Next, we'd like you to think about what The Good Life meant to your parents when they were growing up. In what way would your parents' definition of The Good Life be different from how you define it?

The qualitative results were subsequently used to define the Elements of the quantitative survey, which was administered to 1,074 U.S. adults online. The data were weighted to ensure that relevant demographic characteristics of the sample matched those of the U.S. general population. All respondents (not only those who met the qualifying criteria) were weighted to U.S. Census Bureau demographic profiles for the U.S. population 18+ on gender, age, region, education, income and ethnicity. Propensity score weighting was used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

Key Elements from the data were weighted using the maximum-difference scaling technique (max-diff). Key insights from the data was analyzed by leaders from Sustainable Brands, Carol Cone On Purpose and Harris Poll and are synthesized in this report.

Future research will look to take The Good Life questionnaire internationally and collect data on how The Good Life changes globally. Furthermore, these research methods may be repeated in coming years so as to spot trends in shifting conceptions of The Good Life over time.



#### Research Leads

This research project was conducted in collaboration between Sustainable Brands®, the Harris Poll with support from Carol Cone On Purpose and Ketchum.



#### **About Sustainable Brands**

Sustainable Brands® is the premier global community of brand innovators who are shaping the future of commerce worldwide. Since 2006, our mission has been to inspire, engage and equip today's business and brand leaders to prosper for the near and long term by leading the way to a better future. Digitally published news articles and issues-focused conversation topics, internationally known conferences and regional events, a robust e-learning library and peer-to-peer membership groups all facilitate community learning and engagement throughout the year. Sustainable Brands is hosted by **Sustainable Brands Worldwide**, a division of Sustainable Life Media, headquartered in San Francisco, CA.



#### **About Harris Poll**

The Harris Poll is one of the longest running surveys in the U.S. tracking public opinion, motivations and social sentiment since 1963 that is now part of Harris Insights & Analytics, a global consulting and market research firm that delivers social intelligence for transformational times. We work with clients in three primary areas; building twenty-first-century corporate reputation, crafting brand strategy and performance tracking, and earning organic media through public relations research. Our mission is to provide insights and advisory to help leaders make the best decisions possible.



#### **About Ketchum**

Ketchum is a leading global communications firm with operations in more than 70 countries across six continents. The winner of 45 Cannes Lions and an unprecedented five *PRWeek* Campaign of the Year Awards, **Ketchum** partners with clients to deliver strategic programming, game-changing creative and measurable results that build brands and reputations. Ketchum is a part of **Omnicom Public Relations Group**.



#### About Carol Cone ON PURPOSE (CCOP)

CCOP is a 21st century consultancy committed to helping organizations identify, accelerate and amplify their purpose, CSR and sustainability commitments for significant business and social impact. The firm is structured with senior partners at its core, who drive client strategy, along with custom teams of experts from The Purpose Collaborative, 35+ firms, in 15 cities and 10 countries, around the globe. www.purposecollaborative.com.

#### **Acknowledgements**

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