
Stakeholder engagement in today's polarized environment: *Knowing how to respond*

October 12, 2017

Your panelists



Wesley Combs

- Principal
Combs Advisory Services



Bob Witeck

- President & Founder
Witeck Communications



Apoorva Gandhi

- VP, Multicultural Affairs
Marriott International



John Burchett

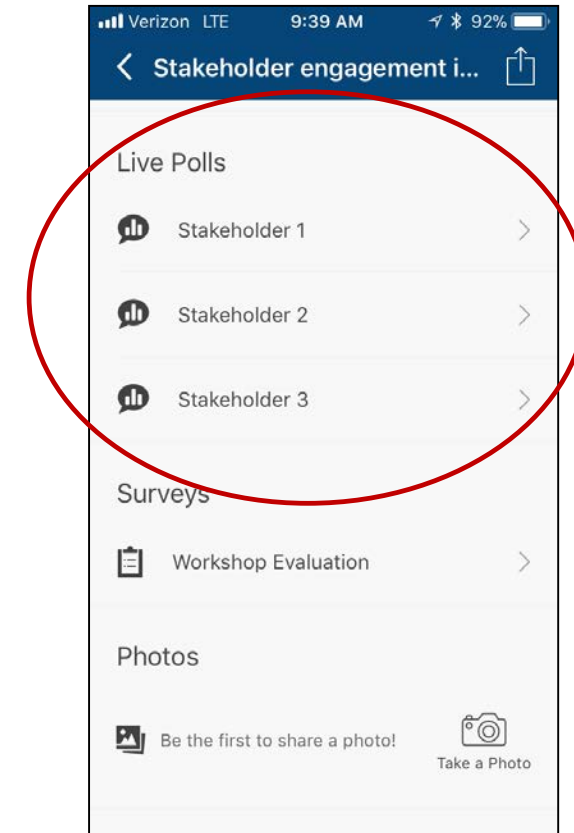
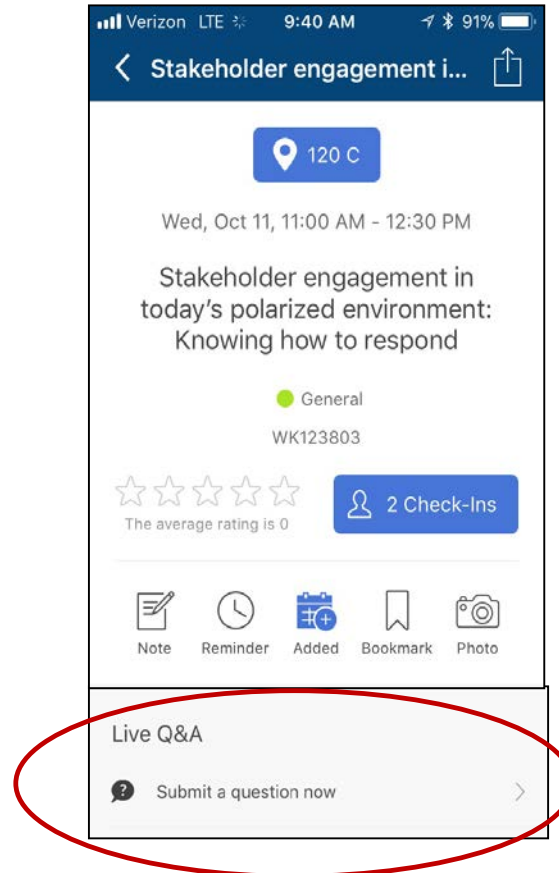
- Head of Public Policy for
Access and Google Fiber
Google

Agenda

- **Current environment and what's at stake (Wes)**
- **Communicating authentically (Bob)**
- **Case study: Marriott International (Apoorva)**
- **Case study: Google (John)**
- **Q&A**

We want you to be a part of our conversation today

- Go to O&E app
- Click on “Schedule” button
- Find this session and click on it
- Scroll down until you see:
 - **Live Q&A:** use this to submit your questions during the session and we will answer the during the Q&A portion of the agenda
 - **Live Polls:** you will be asked to answer three questions during the session and will be prompted when to do so



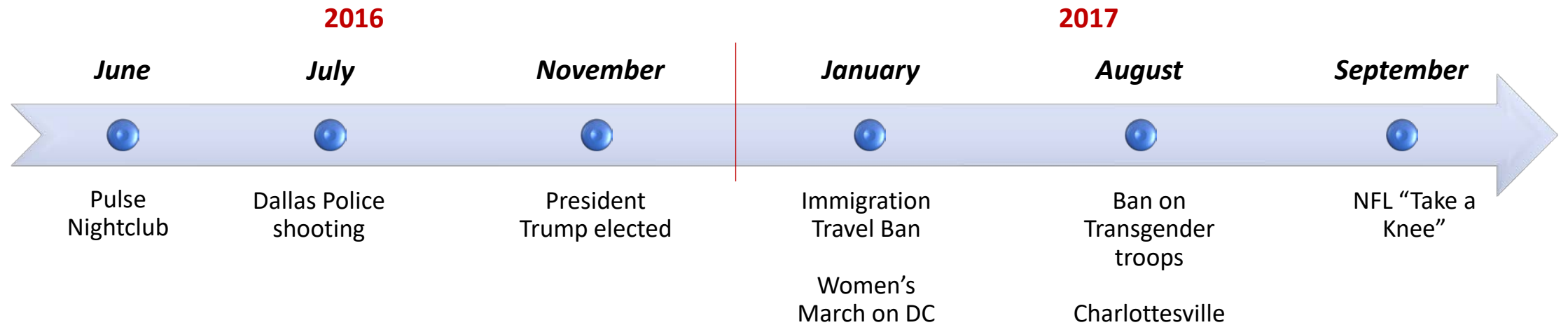


Wes Combs

Combs

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Fear, uncertainty and doubt from shifts in public policy and acts of violence weigh heavily on minds of workers



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Poll Question #1

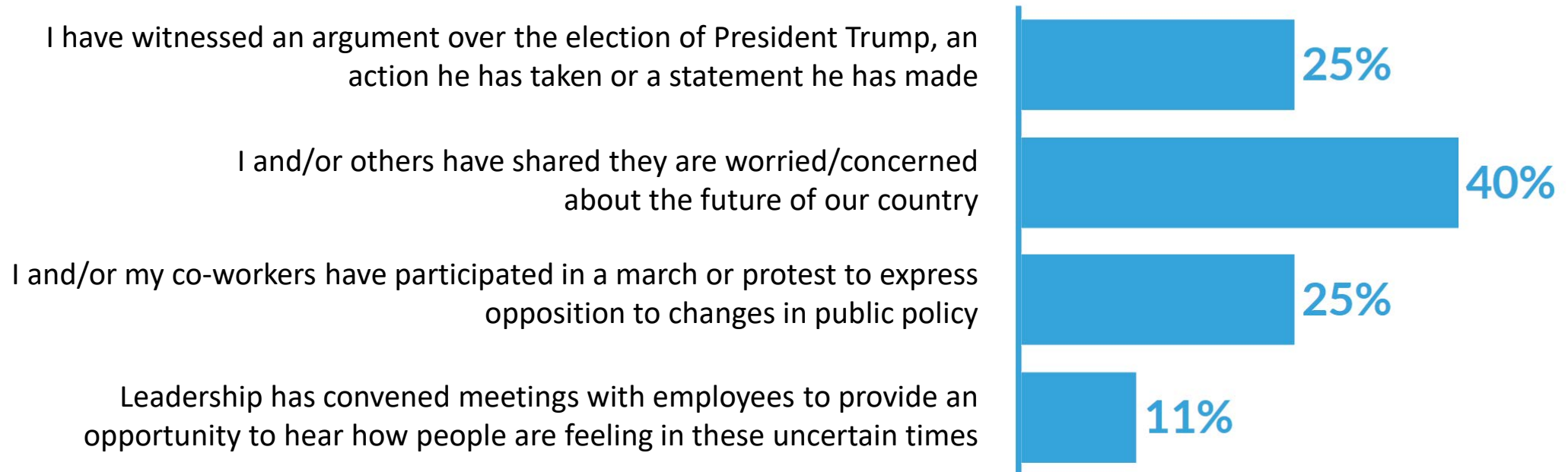
Since the election, have any of these situations happened at work: **(check all that apply)**

- I have witnessed an argument over the election of President Trump, an action he has taken or a statement he has made
- I and/or others have shared they are worried/concerned about the future of our country
- I and/or my co-workers have participated in a march or protest to express opposition to changes in public policy
- Leadership has convened meetings with employees to provide an opportunity to hear how people are feeling in these uncertain times

Question 1: <https://api.cvent.com/polling/v1/api/polls/sppkgmiq>

Poll Q1 Results

Since the election, have any of these situations happened at work
(check all that apply):



Research shows the resulting polarizing discourse dilutes collegiality and negatively impacts the bottom line



45% of Americans got into an argument this year with someone (a friend, family member, coworker, etc.) over the election



57% of Americans cited the current political climate as a significant source of stress

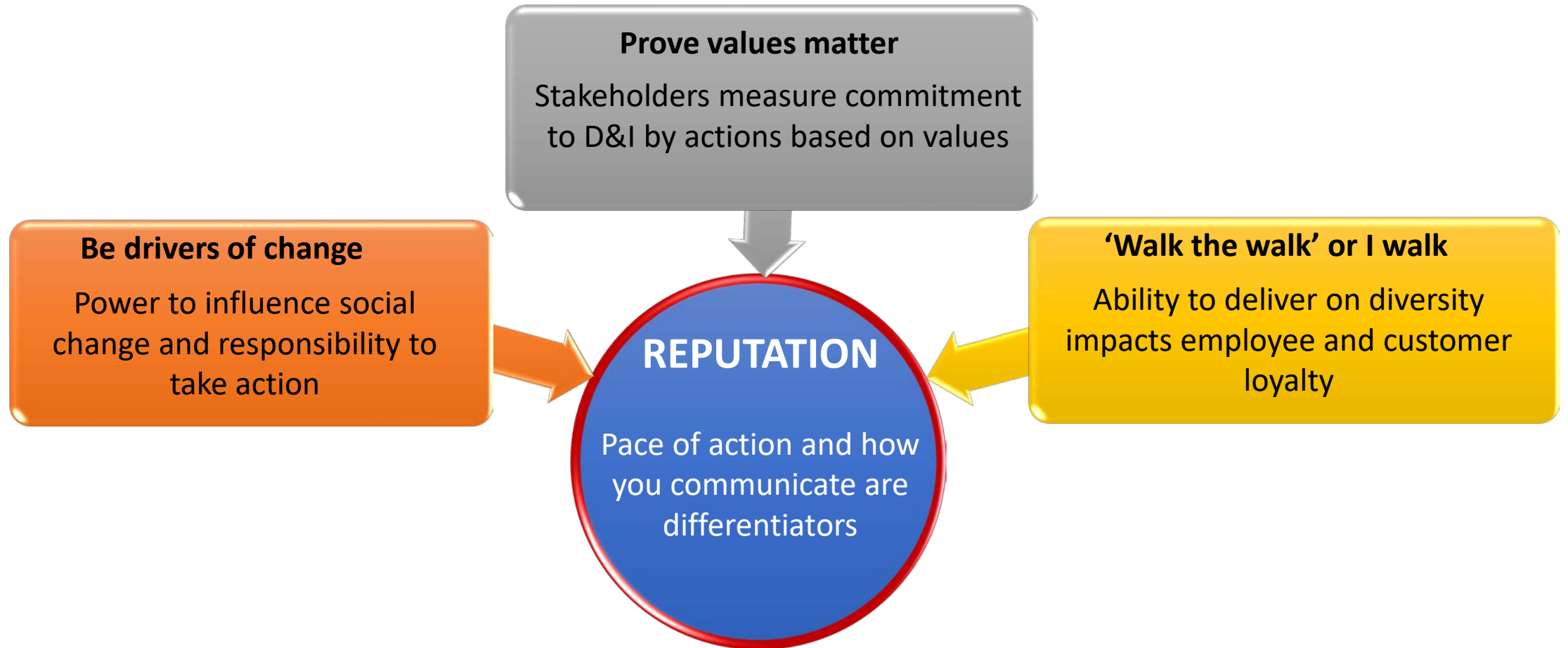


1 in four employees were negatively affected by political talk at work



- 1. Retention:** Google found employees on teams with more psychological safety were less likely to leave the company
- 2. Engagement:** Employees feel more connected to their co-workers in collegial workplace environments
- 3. Productivity:** Stress and anxiety impacts workplace performance and quality of work

As distrust in government mounts, employees/customers want CEOs to take action and amplify support for diversity



What can we learn from organizations that are consistently recognized for being a best place to work for diversity

- 1. *Authenticity:*** Their actions in the workplace and in the broader community demonstrate a consistent commitment to their core values of respect for the individual and diversity and inclusion.
- 2. *Transparency:*** They openly share information about their goals, objectives and progress with internal and external stakeholders.
- 3. *Accountability:*** They assign responsibility for achieving outcomes, which impacts annual performance reviews accordingly.

Poll Question #2

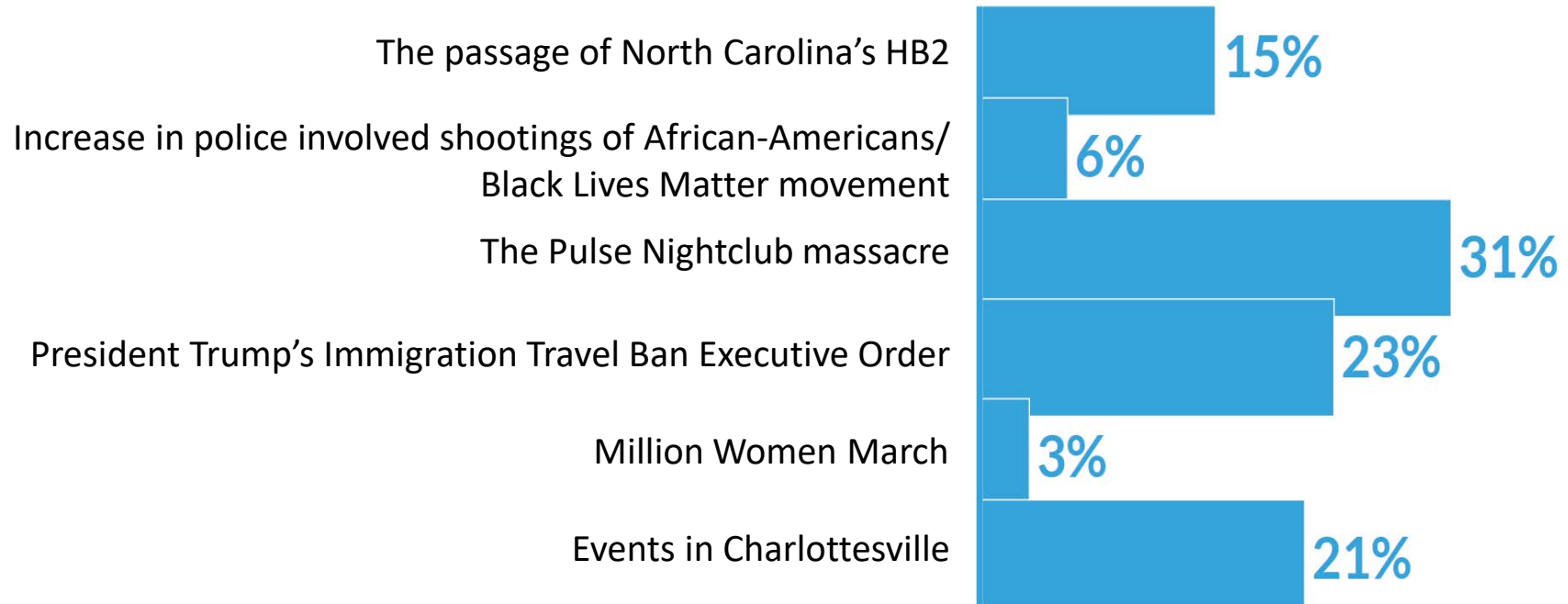
Did your employer make a statement internally (staff) or externally (to the media or to customers) in response to any of these events?

- () The passage of North Carolina's HB2
- () Increase in police involved shootings of African-Americans/Black Lives Matter movement
- () The Pulse Nightclub massacre
- () President Trump's Immigration Travel Ban Executive Order
- () Million Women March
- () Events in Charlottesville

Question 2: <https://api.cvent.com/polling/v1/api/polls/sphduzgl>

Poll Q2 Results

Did your employer make a statement internally (staff) or externally (to the media or to customers) in response to any of these events?



Case Study: Microsoft & the Immigration Travel Ban – Actions Matter

Friday January 27, 2017: President Trump signs Executive Order 13769 - Immigration Travel Ban

Saturday January 28, 2017: Microsoft President and Chief Legal Officer Brad Smith sends email to all employees; Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella posts on LinkedIn

Authenticity: Sent email within 24 hours saying leadership is aware of situation and doing everything it can to provide fast and effective legal advice/assistance to those who need it

Transparency: Revealed there were at least 76 Microsoft employees directly impacted but that number could rise as they learned more

Accountability: Stated *“immigration issues are important to a great many people across Microsoft”* and that CEO has said this publicly as well as with government leaders

Poll Question #3

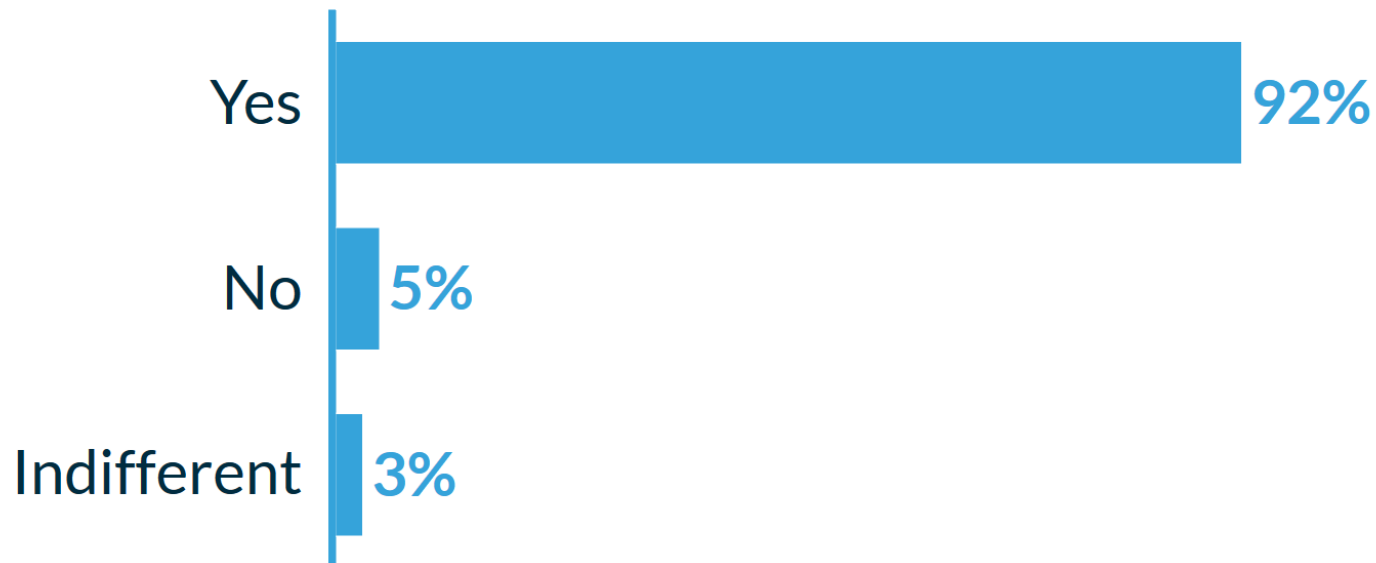
Would you be more loyal to your organization if the most senior official (CEO, Executive Director, etc.) took a public position on a hotly debated current issue?

- Yes
- No
- Indifferent

Question 3: <https://api.cvent.com/polling/v1/api/polls/spy0g9i5>

Poll Q3 Results

Would you be more loyal to your organization if the most senior official (CEO, Executive Director, etc.) took a public position on a hotly debated current issue?



Delivering on D&I brand value proposition

ENGAGEMENT

1. Involve stakeholders when setting priorities/understand how LGBT issues impact others
2. Actions aligned with values



COMMUNICATIONS

1. Keep outreach bi-directional
2. Consistently provide updates on progress

PERFORMANCE AND CONDUCT

1. Tie achieving D&I objectives to performance/compensation
2. Enforce workplace conduct guidelines

How your organization can show stakeholders you are in it for the long haul

Business priority: Treat diversity and inclusion the same as other mission-critical skills like finance and marketing

Clear goals: Define what success looks like and report progress with stakeholders

Core value: Communicate diversity and inclusion is essential to remaining competitive

Culture of inclusion: Leaders capable of leading across difference and who “live the values”

Build trust: Establish social impact partnerships in communities that reflect diversity of workforce

Let's dig deeper...

Bob Witeck will focus on the aspects of authentic communications and guidelines best practice organizations should follow.

Apoorva Gandhi and **John Burchett** will share how their organizations approached the decision to respond to external events like the Immigration Travel Ban and what actions they took.



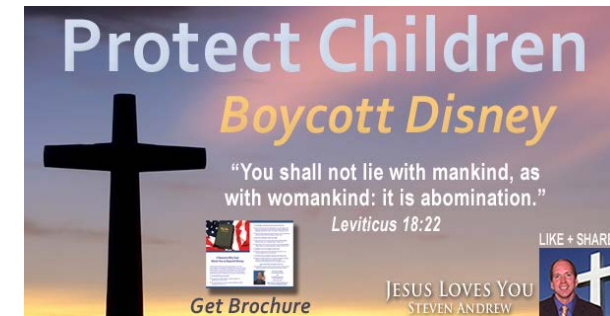
Bob Witeck



Strategic Messaging

Then

- Risk: Corporate leaders feared blowback, few addressed “social” issues
- LGBTQ leadership centered on HIV/AIDS health and well-being
- Internal Focus: Most messaging aimed at internal stakeholders
- Backlash: Real though unpredictable
- Short-lived Fuse: Without Internet, echo chamber



Now

- More Reward, Less Risk: Public advocacy reflects public attitudes
- Business Case: Companies emboldened by authentic business rationale
- LGBTQ Stakeholders: LGBTQ ERG leaders and members have trusted voice with management
- Strength in Numbers: More coalitions, more business allies and united leadership
- Partners: Greater participation in LGBTQ causes and nonprofits (Out & Equal, NGLCC, HRC, et al)



Make Messages Count: What Matters?

- *Corporate Values*
- *Selectivity*
- *360 Degree Review*
- *Internal and external stakeholders*
- *Consistency*
- *Timing*
- *Messenger*
- *Action Taken*
- *Media Channels*
- *Precedent (or not)*
- *What does success look like?*





Apoorva Gandhi

Marriott
INTERNATIONAL

#LoveTravels

Combs
ADVISORY SERVICES

Engaging with Purpose



CEO Arne Sorenson, on “the importance of the words we use,” speaking to Fortune in May 2017:

“...the company has been working to more overtly communicate to the LGBT—lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender—community at a time when there’s “more anxiety” around diversity and inclusion than there used to be, Sorenson said. “Which makes the hearing of those words that much more important,” he added.

Inclusion means Inclusion

In 2015, Indiana sets the stage for national debate on so-called ‘religious freedom’ laws



CEO Arne Sorenson, at PFLAG Straight for Equality Gala, March 30, 2015

“This is just plain wrong and ... and we will not stand for it ... the notion that you can tell businesses that somehow they are free to discriminate is madness.”

CNBC HOME U.S. NEWS MARKETS INVESTING TECH MAKE IT VIDEO

BUSINESS STRATEGY

Supporting LGBT: Business can't afford inequality


COMMENTARY

Arne Sorenson is the president and CEO of Marriott International
Monday, 24 Feb 2014 | 11:13 AM ET

CNBC

The hospitality industry, by definition, tends to be diverse and welcoming, and given the nature of our business, it is incumbent on a company like Marriott International to promote inclusivity. It is becoming increasingly apparent to me, however, that promoting equality also has much broader economic resonance and benefits.

A major topic of conversation at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland last month was the global business community's response to pervasive social and economic inequalities in many parts of the world. The latest meeting at this international crossroads made clear that, to unleash global growth, we must recognize and help resolve some sobering challenges related to the status of women, youth unemployment, and various forms of discrimination or violence against marginalized populations.



Source: Marriott | Facebook
Kauai Marriott Resort

Inclusion means Inclusion

Taking to the airwaves and online media

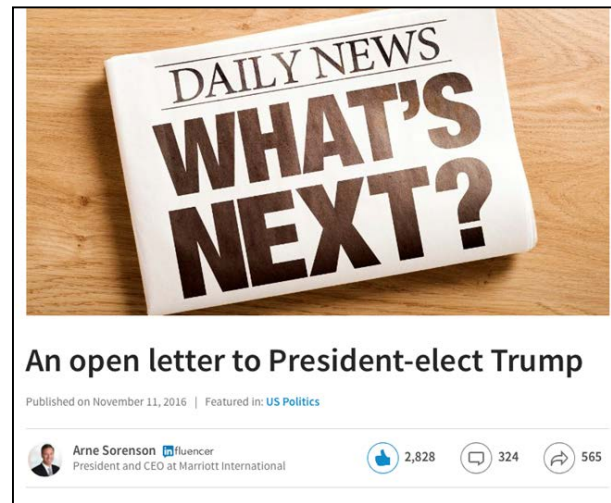
CEO Arne Sorenson, CNBC April 2016:

“For Marriott and for me, this was an easy call. The law does not reflect our values or a basic principle that helps drive new jobs and economic growth in North Carolina and beyond: Everyone deserves to be welcome.”



Inclusion means Inclusion

In 2016, a new Administration takes office.



CEO Arne Sorenson on LinkedIn, November 11, 2016 in an Open Letter to President Trump:

“The government has no business in our bedrooms – or our bathrooms. Everyone, no matter their sexual orientation or identity, has a right to live without interference in their private lives.”

Marriott Words and Actions

- **Signed DOMA repeal amicus brief – Spring 2013**
- **Urged Governor’s veto of Arizona ‘religious freedom’ law – February 2014**
- **Opposed Indiana, Georgia and other ‘religious freedom’ legislation – Spring 2015**
- **Signed amicus brief in Obergefell marriage equality case – Spring 2015**
- **Opposed hurtful anti-transgender legislation in North Carolina and Texas – 2016 and 2017**
- **Preparing for the current term of the U.S. Supreme Court – 2017 and 2018**

John Burchett

Google fiber

Thank you for joining us today

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions:

- Wesley Combs, Principal - Combs Advisory Services
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- Bob Witeck, President and Founder - Witeck Communications
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- John Burchett, Head of Public Policy for Access and Google Fiber - Google
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WESLEY COMBS

Founding Principal, Combs Advisory Services



Wesley Combs is the Founding Principal of Combs Advisory Services, a strategic consultancy that works with business, non-profit and government leaders seeking to optimize performance by embedding diversity and inclusion (D&I) into operational strategies. By building D&I competency, organizations have the ability to leverage its positive impact on strengthening their public brand as well as the bottom line.

He previously was the North America Diversity & Inclusion Director at The Boston Consulting Group. Wes oversaw the design, development and execution of programs across a range of diversity and inclusion efforts, affecting the recruitment and retention of employees from diverse backgrounds at all levels at BCG in North America.

Prior to that, he was a Senior Manager at Accenture Ltd. where he lead the firm's global inclusion and diversity consulting practice, working with clients optimize their talent and market strategies.

Wes also served as the president and co-founder of Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc., an organizational strategy consultancy that specialized in diverse market segments focusing on how multicultural and diversity issues impact corporate, non-profit and government organizational human capital management and marketing strategies.

His non-profit community engagement includes serving as a DC Advisory Board Member of The Posse Foundation.

BOB WITECK

President & Founder, Witeck Communications



Bob Witeck is President and Founder of Washington, DC-based Witeck Communications, Inc.

He is a seasoned communications and marketing strategist, public affairs counselor, speechwriter, market researcher as well as a messaging and crisis communications expert. In this role, he consults with corporations, nonprofits, associations and leaders. For more than 25 years, he is recognized as a specialized communications pioneer designing strategies to reach and engage lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) communities around the world.

Mr. Witeck is a graduate with distinction of the University of Virginia and named an Echols Scholar. Post-university, he served in the Office of the Legal Adviser at the U.S. Department of State. On Capitol Hill for more than a decade, Witeck also served as communications director for the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation as well as a Senate press secretary and legislative assistant. Before opening his firm in 1993, he was senior vice president for Hill & Knowlton Public Affairs representing global and U.S. clients and associations.

A frequent speaker and writer, in addition to his book, “Business Inside Out” (Kaplan 2006), he has contributed a broad range of opinion columns, professional articles and contributing chapters to journals. He has served on a variety of voluntary and professional boards including the NEA Foundation, GLAAD, GLSEN, NLGJA and currently serves on the Human Rights Campaign’s Business Council. In 2015, he was appointed to Virginia’s first-ever LGBT Tourism Task Force, and in 2016, Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe appointed him to the Board of Visitors of George Mason University, the state’s largest public university.

Bob Witeck works in Washington, DC and lives in Arlington, Virginia with his spouse, Bob Connelly, Jr.

APOORVA GANDHI

VP - Multicultural Affairs, Marriott International



As Vice President for Multi-Cultural Affairs for Marriott International, Apoorva Gandhi is responsible for creating and executing an externally-focused global strategy that builds preference and loyalty from diverse customer segments for the Marriott portfolio of brands. He helps ensure the company's marketing, sales and operations consider and reflect multi-cultural markets and public affairs as Marriott continues its aggressive growth throughout the world.

Mr. Gandhi has nearly 25 years of proven strategy, business process, program management and organizational change skills, leadership and delivery expertise. He also has extensive management and delivery experience working with diverse business clients and a solid track record delivering measurable success to clients across various business disciplines.

Prior to his current position, Mr. Gandhi was senior director for organizational capability where he led the company's global reorganization program in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. He has held other positions with Marriott, beginning as a front desk associate when he first completed college. He also worked as vice president for global lodging services where he helped deliver critical brand initiatives.

Before joining Marriott, Mr. Gandhi was a senior consulting manager in Accenture's Communications and High Tech practice for more than a decade, where he managed merger and integration programs as well as process reengineering efforts for large telecom clients. He also led diversity programs at Accenture.

Mr. Gandhi is an honors graduate of the University of Maryland, School of Business and Management. He is a member of the J.W. Marriott, Jr., Diversity Award committee, Delta Sigma Pi Business Fraternity and Omicron Delta Kappa Leadership Society. Apoorva lives in Bethesda, Md. with his wife and three children. In his free time, he enjoys travel, playing ice hockey and listening to music (loudly).

JOHN BURCHETT

Head of Public Policy for Access and Google Fiber, Google



John Burchett is the Head of Public Policy for Google Access and Google Fiber. Before moving to Access/Fiber, Mr. Burchett led the public policy for Google in the US States, Latin America and Canada since. He is based in Google's Washington, DC office.

Prior to joining Google, he was Chief of Staff to Governor Jennifer Granholm where he acted as the Chief Operating Officer for the State of Michigan. He has also served Governor Granholm as Director of Michigan's Washington, DC Office, and as the Deputy Director of her Transition Team in 2002. Mr. Burchett, a Michigan native, has lived in Washington for most of the last 19 years. He was a White House Fellow in 1997 – 98, a Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, an Assistant Management Officer for the DC Control Board, and a management consultant, specializing in state and local government, business planning and business process reengineering.

Before moving to Washington in 1997, Mr. Burchett was an Assistant Wayne County Corporation Counsel. At Wayne County he focused on real estate and economic development projects for the County. He was heavily involved in the negotiations and development of the two new stadiums in downtown Detroit. Before joining Wayne County in 1994, Mr. Burchett was a real estate lawyer for Little Caesars Enterprises, and for Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn. He also was a law clerk to the Hon. Cornelia Kennedy on the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit.

Burchett received his J.D. from Harvard Law School and his B.A. from the University of Notre Dame.