Celebrity Scandals and Endorsement Deals:

Contributed by Harris Interactive
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Three-Quarters of Americans Say it Does Not Impact Feelings on the Brand

One in five, however, say a celebrity scandal makes them feel worse about the endorsed brand

It seems each week there is a new celebrity scandal to which the various entertainment magazines, websites and television shows devote hours of time.

Sometimes, an underlying consequence of these scandals can be the loss of an endorsement deal for the celebrity involved. But, does this matter to the average consumer?

The answer is: not really.
Three-quarters of Americans (74%) say when a celebrity endorser gets involved in a scandal, it doesn't impact the way they feel about the brand or brands they endorse. Just over one in five (22%) say they feel worse about the endorsed brands and 5% say they feel better about them.

These are some of the findings of a new Adweek Media/Harris Poll, survey of 2,140 U.S. adults surveyed online between April 23 and 27, 2010 by Harris Interactive.

Age differences
There is an age difference when it comes to attitude towards the endorsed brands after a scandal. Eight in ten (81%) Americans aged 55 and older, as well as 77% of those 35-44, say the scandal has no impact on how they feel about the brand.

Those 45-54 are most likely to have a negative feeling as 28% of them say they feel worse about the brand. Those 18-34, however, are most likely to think positively about it as 11% say they feel better about an endorsed brand after a celebrity gets involved in a scandal.

Regional differences
There are also some regional differences in attitudes towards brands after a celebrity gets caught doing something wrong. Those in the Midwest are most likely to have a negative attitude.

Over one-quarter of Midwesterners (26%) say they would feel worse about the brand a celebrity endorses compared to 19% of those who live in the East.

So what?
Whenever a celebrity endorser is caught doing something questionable - whether it is actually illegal or just considered wrong - the brand executives face a very tough decision.

Should they pull that endorsement or let it move forward? While it might matter a little more to certain groups than others, in general, strong majorities of Americans say it really doesn't change how they feel about the brands.

While it is understandable that the companies may not renew an endorsement deal, there doesn't seem to be any great need to pull current endorsements for fear of collateral damage.

Methodology
This Adweek Media/Harris Poll was conducted online within the United States between April 23 and 27, 2010 among 2,140 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population.

Where appropriate, this data were also weighted to reflect the composition of the adult online population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.

Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population.

Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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