

CBS Mornings

06/01/23

7:02:45 a.m. [TEASE]

22 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Brand Politics]

TONY DOKOUPIL: We have got a great show for you, including a look at what we are calling brand politics. You may call it the same. Companies are taking a stand on all kinds of social issues. Some people love it, they applaud it. But for others, it's an example of what they say is a woke agenda in corporate America. We're going to dig into why it's happening and how it has become such a cultural flashpoint.

NATE BURLESON: Oh, I love it when Tony hits the streets.

(...)

7:18:24 a.m. [TEASE]

25 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Coming Up; Brand Politics]

DOKOUPIL: Coming up, more companies speaking out on social and political issues and we found Americans are divided on the issue. [TO WOMAN] You like it when a company takes a stand on something?

WOMAN: Not particularly.

DOKOUPIL: Not particularly.

WOMAN: Yeah.

MAN: It is nice to be transparent, you know, in a world that you don't get that anymore.

DOKOUPIL: A lot of eyerolls. We're going to look at the impact of brand names becoming more involved in issues outside of their everyday core business.

(...)

7:52:31 a.m. [TEASE]

3 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Ahead; Brand Politics]

DOKOUPIL: Coming up, woke corporations, that's the allegation.

(....)

8:00:45 a.m. [TEASE]

8 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Brand Politics]

DOKOUPIL: We are also taking a look at politics in branding as more businesses take a stand on social issues, and some people are not happy about it.

(....)

8:02:41 a.m.

7 minutes and 8 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Brands Taking Stands; Why More Companies Are Weighing in on Political & Social Issues]

DOKOUPIL: But we are going to begin this hour with a look at why so many major American brands seem to be caught up in the culture wars. We're talking about Target, Bud Light, Disney. They're all facing a conservative backlash right now for their support of the LGBTQ+ community and it's a major shift going on right here in corporate America, a shift in tone and one that many Republicans complain is almost entirely to the left. [TO WOMAN] If your shoes could vote, who would they vote for?

WOMAN: Probably a Democrat.

DOKOUPIL: The question, at one time, might have seemed crazy. [TO MAN] If your favorite beer were a person, who would it vote for? A Democrat or a Republican?

MAN: I will not answer that. [LAUGHS]

DOKOUPIL: But in this day and age — if the companies were people, you're saying they would vote for Democrats?

WOMAN: Yes.

[MILLERCOORS AD]

[COCA-COLA AD]

[NIKE AD]

DOKOUPIL: As more big brands sell not only their products, but their values, people notice.

WOMAN: They need to.

DOKOUPIL [TO WOMAN]: You think they need to do more?

WOMAN: Absolutely.

DOKOUPIL: Some love it.

MAN: It's nice to be transparent, you know, in a world that you don't get that anymore.

MAN: People say that, oh, you can't be political. That is virtually impossible to live in a democratic society and not be political.

DOKOUPIL: But many others — [TO WOMAN] — you like it when a company takes a stand on something?

WOMAN: Not particularly, no.

DOKOUPIL: Not particularly —

WOMAN: Yeah.

DOKOUPIL: — would rather not think of politics when they shop.

WOMAN: I don't even think that they care. I think that they're just doing it just to look good.

DOKOUPIL: It wasn't always this way.

[CIVIL RIGHTS PROTESTERS]

DOKOUPIL: And in fact, during the Civil Rights Movement, when *The New York Times Magazine* asked if corporations have a social duty to speak up, the head of U.S. Steel declared that's "quite beyond what a corporation should do." So what changed?

FINN PARTNER'S AMY TERPELUK: The mission of a company is to give back to society and the business —

DOKOUPIL: Amy Terpeluk helps craft these strategies for the marketing firm, Finn Partners.

TERPELUK: — and companies are focusing on longer term, purpose-driven commitments and actions that relate back to their core business and their core values.

DOKOUPIL: She says it's partly the push of investors, partly the sway of employees, and largely the expectation of customers themselves.

TERPELUK: We're facing these incredible social and environmental issues. We need to solve and we need to solve fast, and they looked to companies as having the resources, the speed, and the social innovations to be able to do that.

DOKOUPIL: Surveys have suggested 70 percent of Americans now believe brands should take a stand on social issues, with nearly two-thirds saying they'll buy products based on their beliefs and values. But not all customers believe the same things.

GOVERNOR. RON DESANTIS (R-FL): Disney's posturing has alienated a lot of people now.

DOKOUPIL: Florida Governor Ron DeSantis is locked in a political battle with Disney, for example, after the company publicly opposed a bill he later signed it into law.

[KID ROCK SHOOTING CASE OF BUD LIGHT]

DOKOUPIL: Bud Light, meanwhile, faced a backlash and watched its sales plummet all for sending a promotional can to a prominent transgender social media star.

[DYLAN MULVANEY CLIP]

CONSUMER RESEARCH's WILL HILD: This is absolutely dangerous to businesses that wade into these issues and they really do it at their own peril.

DOKOUPIL: Will Hild is executive director of Consumers Research, a nonprofit that's been issuing woke alerts about companies taking progressive stances.

HILD: Our message is simply this: Serve your consumers, not woke politicians and activists.

[UGG AD]

DOKOUPIL: He sees these campaigns as quite obviously a shift to the left and doesn't buy the idea that customers really want this kind of marketing.

[AIRBNB AD]

[P&G AD]

HILD: It's a radical proposition, but I think they should just focus on selling high quality goods and services at a reasonable price.

DOKOUPIL [TO HILD]: So you think corporate America writ large is running the risk of alienating half of their potential customers?

HILD: Yeah. There's no question about it.

DOKOUPIL: One result is a recent boom in right-leaning companies.

EVAN HAFER [in BLACK RIFLE COFFEE ADVERTISEMENT]: We have the mission to provide coffee and culture to people of America.

DOKOUPIL: Black Rifle Coffee Company, for example, is a conservative alternative to Starbucks.

JEREMY BOERING [in Jeremy's Razors ad]: They condemned our views.

DOKOUPIL: And The Daily Wire, a right-leaning media company is dreaming even bigger —

BOERING [in Jeremy's Razors ad]: Behold, Jeremy's Razors.

DOKOUPIL: — with a line of anti-woke shaving gear, chocolate bars, and eventually. they say, children's programming.

BOERING [in ad]: Stop giving our money to woke corporations that don't think you deserve their product.

DOKOUPIL: But none of that has deterred companies like The Body Shop.

[THE BODY SHOP ADVERTISEMENT]

DOKOUPIL: Which works with Finn Partners and has a full time activism team at headquarters.
[TO KING] So what changed?

THE BODY SHOP's NYKEBA KING: I think, for us, nothing changed.

DOKOUPIL: Corporate executive Nykeba King says activism at The Body Shop is more than a seasonal item.

NYKEBA KING: The Body Shop was really founded around the belief that business can and should be a force for good.

DOKOUPIL: And there are reminders of that belief in every store, even if not every customer appreciates it. [TO KING] Your core customer clearly —

NYKEBA KING: Yes.

DOKOUPIL: — is a-okay with everything you're saying and doing and is coming back for more.

NYKEBA KING: That's right.

DOKOUPIL: But there are also customers out there who might want the Luscious Lychee or

lychee or the you name it body product —

NYKEBA KING: Mmmm.

DOKOUPIL: — but they pause because their politics —

NYKEBA KING: Mmmm.

DOKOUPIL: — their positions are not yours.

NYKEBA KING: So I'd invite them to come in or explore The Body Shop and learn what we support because there's likely something in there that we can agree about, and we respect the fact that there are people who may not align with our positions, but we're firm in what we believe.

DOKOUPIL [TO KING]: So sitting on the sidelines is not an option?

NYKEBA KING: No.

KING: Oooo, I like her,

DOKOUPIL: Yeah, she's great.

KING: — not just because her last name is King. I like what she was saying. I never paid attention when I was younger in college or in my early 20s what a company's position was, but now I actually do.

BURLESON: Yes.

KING: And — and I don't want to give money to people or companies that I don't think are trying to do good, be good, and make the world a better place. I — I don't, so I'm definitely influenced by it.

BURLESON: I love this because it's — it's thought provoking.

KING: Yes.

BURLESON: It creates a conversation, which is what we should be having, regardless of what side of the spectrum you sit on.

KING: Yep.

BURLESON: The question I would ask, so if brands, professional athletes, and athletes that play these sports can't talk about political or social issues, then who? Is it your politicians? Is it your community leaders? The next question would be, are they the best voices —

KING: Mmhhh.

DOKOUPIL: Yeah.

BURLESON: — to handle all of these issues and only them?

DOKOUPIL: You know, Chris Christie is going to announce a presidential campaign, maybe he already did.

KING: Yes.

DOKOUPIL: He says he is aiming at the exhausted majority. I do think there is an exhausted core of customers —

KING: Yes.

DOKOUPIL: — who just want a product at a fair price and they don't want to think about the politics —

BURLESON: Right.

DOKOUPIL: — but reality is we do, and this is a change. Remember Michael Jordan famously said Republicans buy sneakers, too.

KING: Republicans buy tennis shoes, too. Yes, yes.

DOKOUPIL: Right. But more recently, Phil Knight has said, it doesn't matter if people hate you, it matters how many people love you.

BURLESON: Mmmm.

KING: Oh, I like that, too.

DOKOUPIL: So corporations are making that calculation here that there are more people with them than against them.

KING: Tony, I thought was interesting, you showed that headline from 1963 —

BURLESON: How about that?

DOKOUPIL: Yeah. Times have kind of changed.

BURLESON: That was a good call.

KING: — that they had raised that issue —

DOKOUPIL: We're not sure about civil rights.

KING: Yes, what was it?

DOKOUPIL: We are going to sit out this one.

KING: 1963? Well done, Tony Dokoupil.

BURLESON: Good job, man.