

# Women Are Strongest Believers in the Power of Supporting Causes

8 in 10 American women believe that supporting causes creates a sense of purpose and meaning in life; and feel everyone can make a difference through their support

**Washington, D.C. (May 16, 2011)** — American women are strong believers in the power of individuals to make a difference by supporting causes, while their male counterparts are more likely to view supporting causes as a fad, according to new data released today by Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide and Georgetown University's Center for Social Impact Communication. The findings are part of the larger *Dynamics of Cause Engagement* study, conducted among American adults age 18 and older in late 2010, which explored trends in cause involvement and the roles of a variety of activities in fostering engagement with social issues.

## Similarities and Differences in Cause Support

In addition to believing that everyone can make a difference by supporting causes, American women are more likely than men to believe that supporting causes creates a sense of purpose and meaning in life, makes them feel good about themselves and makes them feel like part of a community. **More than four in ten Americans (45%) are actively involved with supporting causes, and women make up a significantly larger part of this group than men.**

Men and women are generally in agreement when it comes to which particular causes they choose to support. For both, feeding the hungry and supporting our troops are among those that rank the highest, and as expected, gender-related health issues like breast cancer and prostate cancer are significantly more likely to be supported by women and men, respectively. In addition, survey results indicate that **women are more compelled to support youth-related causes like bullying and childhood obesity, while men are more likely to support the Tea Party movement.**

Women and men also tend to agree on the ways in which they most often support their chosen causes. For both, more historically prominent ways of engaging with causes top the list, including donating money, talking to others, and learning

more about the issues and impacts. **Women, however, are significantly more likely than men to get involved by donating clothing and other personal items, and volunteering their time in support of causes.**

## Social Media and the Sexes

**When it comes to social media, women are more likely than men to recognize the role that sites like Facebook can play in facilitating cause involvement.** Two-thirds of women (65%) believe that social networking sites can increase visibility for causes, and six in ten (60%) believe they allow people to support causes more easily. It comes as no surprise, then, that women are more likely to support causes through promotional social media activities (e.g., joining a cause group on Facebook, posting a logo to a social profile, contributing to a blog) than men (17% vs. 12%, respectively). Women also turn to social media as a source of cause information more often than men—though for both, this lags far behind traditional TV and print media sources and personal relationships.

Current perceptions of social media aren't entirely rosy, though. Nearly three quarters of men and women (74% and 73%, respectively) agree that emails about causes can sometimes feel like spam, and **about half of both populations admit that they get too many cause-related emails now** (49% and 45%, respectively) and that everybody "likes" causes on Facebook and it does not really mean anything (48% and 49%, respectively). Practitioners should be wary of these indicators and ensure strategic uses of these digital tools in order to avoid unintentionally contributing to "cause fatigue."

## Women Support Companies that Support Causes

Cause marketers often target the female demographic with campaigns, and with good reason—survey results confirm that **American women are significantly more likely than men to show their support of a cause by purchasing products or services from companies who support the cause.** In addition, women are more likely to learn about causes through corporate partner or sponsor promotions, including advertisements, product packaging, and in-store displays.

**CONTACT:** Julie Dixon, Deputy Director, Center for Social Impact Communication Email: [jld227@georgetown.edu](mailto:jld227@georgetown.edu) Phone: 202.687.8552



## About the Survey

Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide and Georgetown University's Center for Social Impact Communication developed the study with the objectives of showcasing trends in cause involvement and evaluating the role of a variety of activities in fostering engagement. An online survey was conducted by TNS Global among a nationally representative sample of 2,000 Americans ages 18 and over. The survey was fielded November 30 to December 22, 2010, and has a margin of error of +/-2.2% at the 95% confidence level. Throughout this report, an asterisk \*\* next to a number indicates a significant difference from the corresponding audience at the 95% level of confidence.

**Additional key findings** will be released in upcoming weeks:

**May 31** — Cause Involvement by Ethnicity

**June 13** — Cause Involvement by Generation

**June 30** — Cause Involvement and Behavior Change

## Key Findings

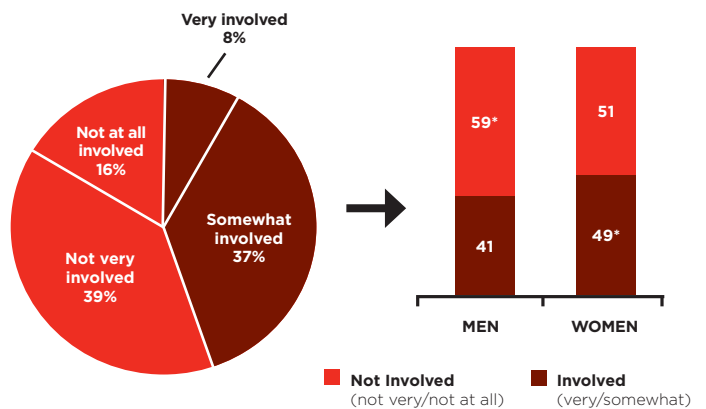
### General Cause Beliefs

Women are more likely than men to believe that supporting causes creates a sense of purpose and meaning in one's life, makes them feel good about themselves and enhances the feeling of belonging to a community.

MEN	WOMEN	Strongly/Somewhat Agree
73%	80%*	I believe everyone can make a difference by supporting causes
71%	81%*	Supporting a cause can give you a sense of purpose and meaning in your life
68%	80%*	Supporting causes makes me feel good about myself
59%	68%*	Supporting causes makes me feel like I am part of a community
43%*	37%	Supporting causes has become a fad

### Cause Involvement

Over four in ten of Americans (45%) are involved with causes, with higher concentrations of women.



### Top 5 Sources of Information

Television & print media, personal relationships and websites are still the most important sources of information for learning about causes.

Although social media tools are lower on the list of main sources, they revealed to play a greater role for women than men.

	MEN	WOMEN
TV program or news story	62%	64%
Newspaper article	50%	51%
Friends	42%	49%*
Family	41%	46%*
Website	37%	38%
Social Media NET	19%	28%*

*Social Media NET includes blogs and social networking sites.*

### Top 6 Cause Involvement Activities

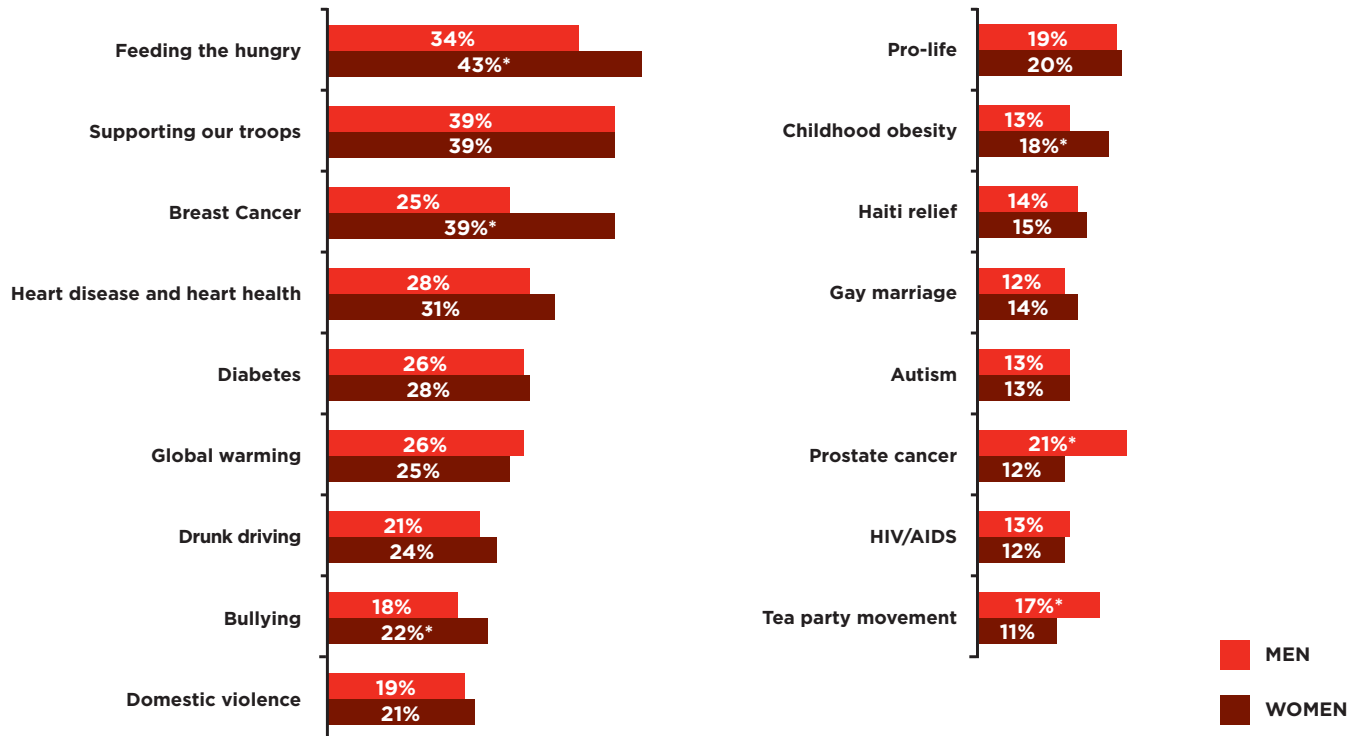
The more historically prominent types of engagement (e.g., donating, learning more about the cause, signing a petition and volunteering) remain the most often means of cause involvement for both genders.

MEN	WOMEN	Activity
41%	42%	Donating money
34%	33%	Talking to others about it
18%	30%*	Donating clothing, rewards points, hair or other personal items
20%	22%	Learning more about the issue and its impact
19%	20%	Signing a petition for the cause
15%	20%*	Volunteering time (i.e., help-lines, soup kitchens, mentoring, cleaning)
12%	17%*	Social Media NET (i.e., help-lines, soup kitchens, mentoring, cleaning)

*Social media NET includes social media promotional activities (e.g., joining a cause group, posting a logo to a social profile or contributing to a blog).*

## Involvement with Specific Causes

Men and women alike share high involvement with feeding the hungry and supporting our troops. Gender-related issues such as breast and prostate cancer receive strong support from women and men, respectively.



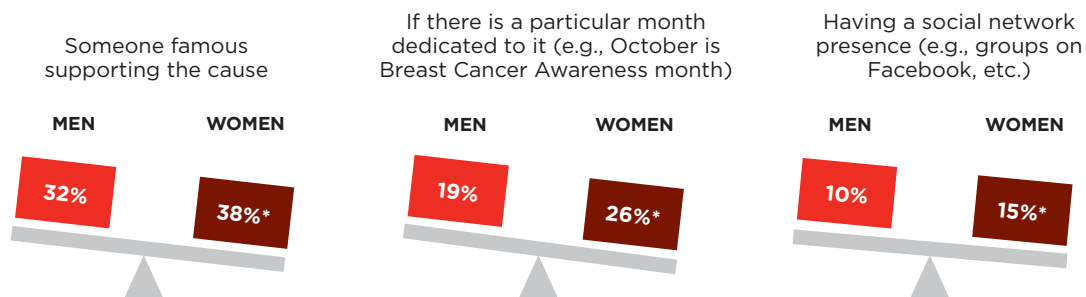
## Prominent Causes in 2011

Both genders agree that supporting our troops and feeding the hungry will continue to stand out in 2011.

MEN	WOMEN
Supporting our troops (38%)	Supporting our troops (38%)
Feeding the hungry (29%)	Bullying (34%*)
Tea party movement (27%)	Childhood obesity (30%*)
Global warming (27%)	Feeding the hungry (29%)
Bullying (23%)	Breast cancer (29%*)

## Attention Drivers

For both men and women, the main drivers of attention for a cause or social issue are having many people affected by it, a timely event or tragedy, and children being impacted. However, women are more likely than men to believe that causes can attract interest by having the support of a celebrity, a particular month dedicated to it and/or a social networking presence.



## Perceptions of Online Involvement

Social networking sites help facilitate visibility and support of causes, especially among women.

### Strongly/Somewhat Agree

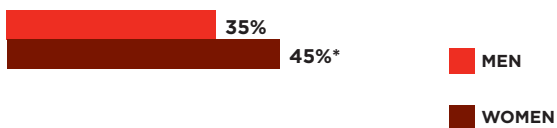
Online social networking sites, like Facebook, increase the visibility of social causes and issues



Online social networking sites, like Facebook, allow people to support causes more easily



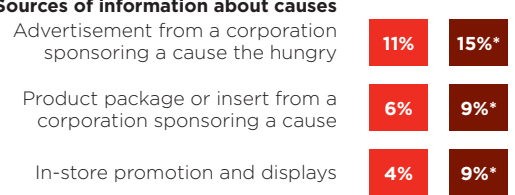
I feel like I can help get the word out about a social issue or cause through online social networks, like Facebook, Twitter and blogs



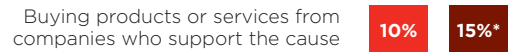
## Corporate Cause Involvement

Overall, women are more likely than men to learn about causes through corporate sponsorship and to show their support by purchasing products from companies that support causes.

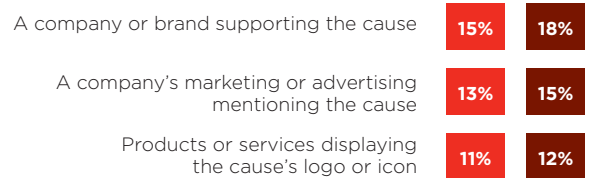
### Sources of information about causes



### Most often means of involvement with causes



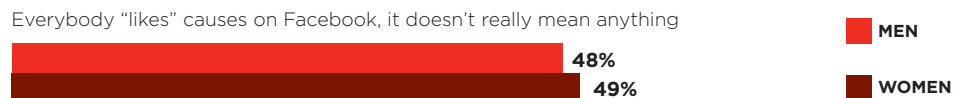
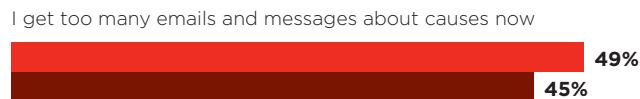
### Attention Drivers



## Cause Fatigue

Cause-related emails seem to be at a risk for creating "cause fatigue" among both women and men.

### Strongly/Somewhat Agree



## About the Center for Social Impact Communication

Georgetown University's Center for Social Impact Communication (CSIC) is the nation's leading educational resource on social impact communication. Launched in 2008 and housed in the Master of Professional Studies program in Public Relations and Corporate Communications, CSIC aims to elevate the discipline by pioneering industry standards in responsible communication practices and by educating and inspiring the professionals who lead the way in creating positive social impact through their work. For more information, visit [csic.georgetown.edu](http://csic.georgetown.edu).

Twitter: @georgetowncsic

## About Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide

Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide (Ogilvy PR) is a global, multidisciplinary communications leader operating in more than 80 markets. For more than two decades, Ogilvy PR has been at the forefront of social marketing—advancing personal and public health and safety and broader socially desirable goals via communications initiatives. We have developed numerous social marketing campaigns to successfully raise awareness, educate and prompt action regarding some of today's largest and most complex issues, ranging from cancer to cardiovascular health, substance abuse to homeland security, youth violence prevention to disaster preparedness, and much more.

Named Large Agency of the Year by The Holmes Report and PRNews, Ogilvy PR is a unit of Ogilvy & Mather, a WPP company (NASDAQ: WPPGY), one of the world's largest communications services groups. For more information, visit [www.ogilvypr.com](http://www.ogilvypr.com) and [smexchange.ogilvypr.com](http://smexchange.ogilvypr.com).

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