



A GOTHAM RESEARCH GROUP SPECIAL REPORT

## Low Prices vs. Ethics: Consumers Rate Corporate Priorities

### Introduction

- As more Americans feel the personal impact of the economic crisis, we decided to use our September 2010 national survey to revisit an issue we first explored in 2005: What values do consumers believe are most important for businesses to uphold?
- Our findings demonstrate that consumers' priorities for businesses have shifted considerably over the last few years – and that, despite consumers' *need* for lower prices, they increasingly *want* businesses to behave ethically.

### Key Findings

Despite the economic downturn, ethical business practices are rated as increasingly more important than bottom-line, consumer-oriented priorities such as low prices.

- Consumers today rate “ethical business practices” as the most important value for businesses to uphold – a 5 point shift upward from 2005.
  - Community-based values, such as “contributing to the local community” and “protecting the environment” have also become more important to consumers.
- “Providing low prices to consumers” is now rated as less of a priority than it was five years ago – dropping 8 points between 2005 and 2010.
  - Another consumer-oriented value, “quality products and services,” has also fallen off in importance – dropping 3 points from the top spot in 2005 to second place in 2010, behind “ethical business practices.”

#### ABOUT US

Gotham Research Group is a market research and consulting firm with a unique set of research methods designed to help clients better measure and predict the perceptions and behavior of consumers and elite stakeholders.

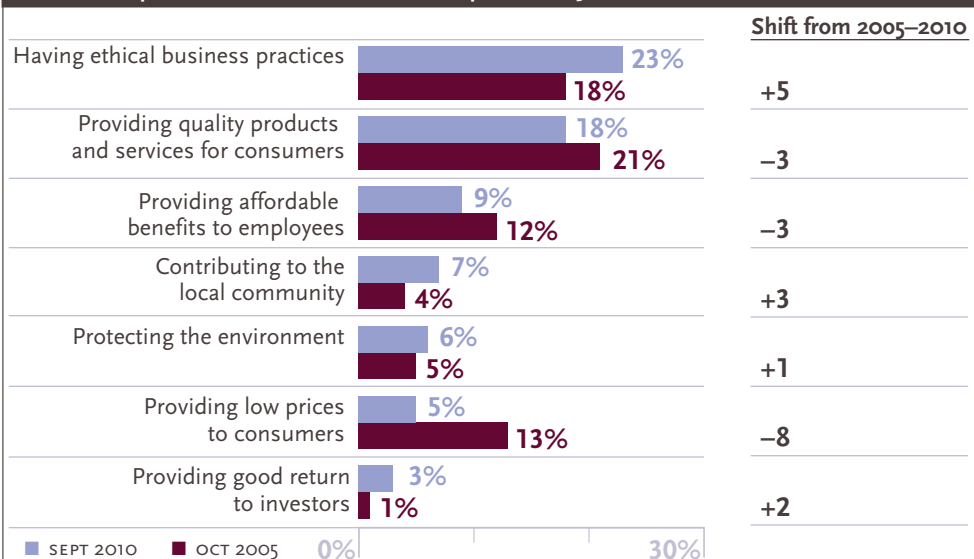
Gotham specializes in customized research that informs the development and execution of: branding and positioning initiatives, advertising campaigns, crisis communications, leadership/organizational changes, policy issue campaigns, new product launches, and thought leadership/PR initiatives.

#### LEARN MORE

If you'd like to learn more about these findings, contact Rita Baker by phone at 646.734.9613 or email [rbaker@gothamresearchgroup.com](mailto:rbaker@gothamresearchgroup.com).

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#### The Most Important Values for a Business to Uphold: 2005 vs. 2010



Now I'd like to read you a few values that some people think are important for businesses to uphold. Please tell me which one you think is the most important for businesses to uphold?

#### A Note on Methodology

The findings described in this memo are based on a survey conducted Sept. 23-26, 2010 among a national probability sample of 1,013 adults, age 18+, living in private households in the continental United States. The margin of error on the total sample of 1,013 is +/- 3.1%. The study was conducted by telephone and respondents were drawn from a random digit dial sample which gives every household an equal chance of being called. All respondents were screened to ensure that they are currently 18 years or older. The overall sample results were weighted demographically and geographically. All numbers are presented as percentages and, due to rounding, may not add up to 100%. The 2005 national survey was conducted using identical methodology, from Oct. 27-Nov. 3, 2005 among 1,200 adults, 18+ (margin of error, +/- 2.8%).