

## Video Segment 4: Levi's Embraces Social Issues

### NOTE-TAKING GUIDE

*"Gun violence is one of the biggest issues with young people in this country. It's second to climate change. It's a reality that almost 60% of adults know somebody who has been affected by gun violence. It's touching everybody." -Chip Bergh, former CEO, Levi Strauss & Co.*

Chip Bergh says that while the company has always aligned with social issues, "Taking a stand on ending gun violence in the U.S. is a relatively new issue" for Levi Strauss & Co. Take some notes on how the following factors supported and influenced Chip Bergh and his team as they developed the company's gun-violence platform in the past several years:

**Working with the board of directors:**

**Safety in Levi's U.S. stores:**

**Parkland, Florida high school shooting and youth organizations:**

**The passage of gun-law legislation:**

Chip Bergh describes Levi Strauss & Co.'s purpose as "profits through principles." First, consider what this means. Also, list a few ways that he worked toward making sure the company culture was driven by values and not just the desire to make lots of money:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Reflection:** When companies make a social commitment, like ending gun violence, it can profoundly affect the brand. People associate this deep purpose with a company's products and either want to buy more or choose to take their business elsewhere. Some customers see this as an opportunity to express their own personal views by spending their money only in places that align with their values and have a desired social impact. Where do you take a stand with your dollars? Have you embraced or rejected a certain brand because of its beliefs? Would you shop at Levi Strauss & Co. knowing its involvement with gun control? Reflect on your own experience with purpose-driven brands and marketing.

## THE LANGUAGE OF BUSINESS

**(Linked terms are defined in the Wharton Global Youth Video Glossary)**

[Board of Directors](#) (The Board)

[Internal Successor](#)

[Brand](#)

[Market System](#)

[Branding](#)

[Marketing Strategy](#)

[Brand Loyalty](#)

[Nonprofit](#)

[Brand Manager](#)

[Organization](#)

[CEO](#)

[Retailer](#)

[Company](#)

[Shareholder](#)

[Company Culture](#)

[Social Impact](#)

[Consumer](#)

[Store Manager](#)

[Corporate Social Responsibility](#)

[Strategic Management](#)

[Customer Stickiness](#)

[Tradeoff](#)

[Democracy](#)

[First Amendment](#)

**Americus Reed:** The Whitney M. Young Jr. Professor of Marketing at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Reed's primary research and consulting areas are in brand equity and identity loyalty, the study of creating and fostering brand communities. He is also a co-host of the podcast, *Marketing Matters*.

**Balance Sheet:** A financial statement reflecting a company's assets (land, equipment, buildings), liabilities (debts that it owes) and other financial information at a given time.

**Barbara E. Kahn:** The Patty and Jay H. Baker Professor of Marketing at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Kahn is an internationally recognized scholar on retailing and brand loyalty. She is also the co-host of the podcast, *Marketing Matters*.

**Berlin Wall:** A barrier separating communist East Germany from West Germany that was destroyed by protesters beginning on November 9, 1989 and began German reunification.

**Business Community:** A term used to describe the collective group of companies with commercial operations; for example: the business community doesn't want that demanding regulation passed because it will impact profitability.

**Charles "Chip" Bergh:** Former president and CEO of Levi Strauss & Co. who is credited with the company's turnaround. He is also a legendary "brand guy" who previously spent 28 years at Proctor & Gamble, managing iconic brands like Old Spice.

**Climate Change:** The long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns that are increasingly caused by human activity, like the burning of fossil fuels that releases greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

**Company Policy:** A guideline that sets forth the practices and procedures of a business, including employee behavior, processes and even dress codes.

**Company Values:** A set of principles that guides how a company operates; values form the foundation of the company culture.

**Corporate Turnaround:** Reviving a business that has declined in sales or underperformed for a period of time, with a goal of making it successful.

**Customer:** A person or organization that buys goods and services from an organization – many denim heads are customers of Levi Strauss & Co.

**Employee:** A person working for a company who earns wages or a salary.

**Gabby Giffords:** A former U.S. representative from the state of Arizona who survived an assassination attempt and has gone on to become a gun-control advocate.

**Gun Legislation:** Laws that regulate ownership and use of guns.

**Levi's Jeans:** Blue denim jeans made by Levi Strauss & Co. Levi's 501 jeans are particularly iconic and known for their straight leg and button-down fly.

**Levi's Stores:** The physical retail locations where Levi's jeans and other Levi's products are sold. As of November 2023, Levi Strauss & Co. operated 1,172 company-owned retail stores worldwide.

**Levi Strauss & Co.:** An American clothing company trading under the stock symbol LEVI that is known worldwide for its Levi's brand of denim jeans. The company was [founded](#) in 1853 by Levi Strauss.

**Lockdown Drill:** When the occupants of a building, like students in a school, practice the procedures in place for safety during an emergency or threat to life.

**Marketing Matters:** A weekly podcast hosted by Wharton School marketing professors Barbara Kahn and Americus Reed that discusses marketing and advertising trends, consumer behavior, data and analytics, the latest in retail marketing and brand building.

**Open-carry State:** A U.S. state that legally allows people to visibly carry firearms in public places without a permit.

**Parkland Shooting:** In 2018, a 19-year-old opened fire on students and staff at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, killing 17 and injuring 17.

**Parkland Youth:** Following the Parkland shooting, a corps of surviving students took to social media, lobbied state lawmakers, organized rallies and walkouts, all in an effort to control gun use and [stop gun violence](#).

**Polarizing Issues:** Topics, like gun control and affirmative action, where people often have very different beliefs and argue in the extreme on either side, finding it hard to compromise.

**Profits through Principles:** A Levi & Strauss corporate policy and culture that suggests the business is not all about making money, but instead about following certain set values in their pursuit of profits.

**Purpose-driven Marketing:** Lots of marketers in the world are talking about brand purpose these days. Brand purpose looks to connect people with each other and the larger world and make consumers feel happy, satisfied and aligned with their personal goals. So, a brand is not all about the product; it's also about values and tackling social issues.

**Sandy Hook Promise:** A nonprofit organization set up after the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting to work toward preventing violence in schools and communities.

**Second Amendment:** The Second Amendment of the United States Constitution, ratified in 1791, asserts that people have the right to keep and bear arms (guns).

**Social Issues:** Issues that affect people's lives and impact communities, such as poverty, economic inequality, mental health and drug abuse.

**U.S. Congress:** The legislative branch of the United States federal government that has the power to create laws impacting Americans' daily lives.

**The Wharton School:** The Wharton School, also referred to as just Wharton, is the business school of the University of Pennsylvania, a private Ivy League university based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Wharton is a world leader in business education and a hub for academic research in all areas of business.

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