

## Research

- Primary (Hypothetical)
  - **Surveys and Polls**
    - **Objective:** Measure the attitudes of both progressive and conservative consumer groups towards Target's DEI policies and recent changes.
    - **Method:** Design online surveys targeting both customer groups to ask questions about brand perception, attitudes toward DEI, and their willingness to continue shopping at Target given recent changes.
  - **Focus Groups**
    - **Objective:** Gather qualitative insights into how different customer segments (progressive vs. conservative) are reacting to the DEI rollback.
    - **Method:** Host separate focus groups for progressive and conservative consumers, exploring deeper feelings about the brand, their understanding of DEI, and their expectations for companies in relation to social issues.
  - **Intercept Study**
    - **Objective:** To understand how Target's recent DEI policy rollback affects customer perceptions and their likelihood of shopping at Target.
    - **Method:**
      - **1. Location:**
        - **Approach customers in Target stores or use a pop-up survey online.**
      - **2. Survey Questions:**
        - "How aware are you of Target's recent DEI policy changes?"
        - "How do you feel about these changes?"
        - "Does this change affect your decision to shop at Target?"
- Secondary Research:
  - **Case Studies on DEI Backlash & Corporate Response**
    - **Nike's Response to Social Justice Movements:** Examines consumer and investor reactions to Nike's campaigns (e.g., Colin Kaepernick ad).
    - **Disney & LGBTQ+ Controversies:** Analyzes how Disney's fluctuating stance on LGBTQ+ policies impacted public perception.
    - **Starbucks' Racial Bias Training (2018):** Reviews how Starbucks handled public backlash and the effectiveness of its DEI efforts.
  - **Financial & Market Impact Reports**
    - **Yahoo Finance / Bloomberg / Reuters:** Stock performance analysis of companies that faced DEI-related boycotts.
    - **Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA):** Reports on consumer loyalty and brand reputation in retail.

## Key Audiences

- Progressive Consumers:
  - 1. Loyal Supporters of DEI Initiatives
    - Customers who have consistently supported Target due to its strong DEI policies and feel personally aligned with its diversity efforts.
  - 2. Socially-Conscious Shoppers
    - Customers who are not as deeply invested in corporate DEI but generally expect companies to align with socially responsible practices.
  - 3. Millennial & Gen Z Shoppers
    - Younger customers who prioritize ethical consumption and have higher expectations for corporate social responsibility.
- Conservative Consumers:
  - 1. Disengaged or Apathetic Consumers
    - Customers who are not deeply invested in DEI issues but are swayed by political narratives. They may be influenced by media coverage of DEI policies.
- Employees:
  - DEI Advocates:
    - Employees who are passionate about diversity, equity, and inclusion and expect the company to uphold these values.
  - General Workforce:
    - Employees who may not be deeply involved in DEI initiatives but are concerned about the company's values and culture.

## MAC Triad

Audience	Message	Channel
Loyal Supporters of DEI Initiatives	Target's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion reflects the values we share.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Email Newsletter</li><li>● Social Media Posts</li></ul>
Socially-Conscious Shoppers	We're rebuilding trust and recommitting to the values we know matter to you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Social media campaign</li><li>● Blog posts</li><li>● Local community events</li></ul>
Millennial & Gen Z Shoppers	Your values guide us. We're listening, learning, and taking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Social Media Campaigns (Instagram</li></ul>

	action to reflect them.	& TikTok) ● Influencer Partnerships ● Targeted Ads
Disengaged or Apathetic Consumers	You can count on Target for a reliable, affordable, and enjoyable shopping experience.	● Direct Mail ● Email Campaigns ● Social Media Campaign
DEI Advocates in the Workforce	We remain firmly committed to equity, inclusion, and supporting every team member's voice.	● Internal Communications ● Employee Newsletters
General Workforce	We're dedicated to maintaining a positive, inclusive, and respectful workplace for all.	● Internal Communications ● Team Meetings ● Employee Surveys

## Issues

Issues	Objectives
Target's rollback of DEI initiatives has frustrated progressive consumers who feel the brand no longer reflects their values.	Retain at least 5% of previously engaged DEI-supporting customers by rebuilding trust through targeted engagement within two months.
Socially-conscious shoppers are uncertain whether Target still upholds ethical business practices.	Reassure 10% of socially-conscious shoppers of Target's ethical commitments through transparent messaging and community initiatives within two months.
Millennial and Gen Z consumers are reacting negatively on social media to Target's perceived shift away from inclusivity.	Increase positive sentiment among Millennial and Gen Z shoppers by 15% through influencer partnerships and social media engagement within two months.

Disengaged consumers are influenced by political narratives and may shift loyalty if brand trust is not reinforced.	Maintain retention and shopping frequency among disengaged consumers through value-based messaging focused on quality and convenience within two months.
Employees, especially DEI advocates, are concerned about the company's commitment to inclusion and workplace culture.	Reassure DEI-focused employees of Target's continued commitment to an inclusive workplace through internal messaging and engagement within two months.

## OST

Objective 1.0: Increase positive sentiment among Millennial and Gen Z shoppers by 15% through influencer partnerships and social media engagement within two months.

### Strategy 1.1: Leverage Social Media & Influencer Partnerships to Rebuild Brand Trust

Tactic 1.1.1: Partner with Millennial and Gen Z influencers who align with Target's values to create engaging content about why they shop at Target (TikTok & Instagram).

Tactic 1.1.2: Launch a TikTok campaign encouraging customers to share their favorite Target finds and why they choose to shop at Target.

Tactic 1.1.3: Develop interactive Instagram Stories and polls in collaboration with influencers to engage younger shoppers and gather real-time feedback.

### Strategy 1.2: Reinforce Target's Brand Identity Through Authentic Storytelling

Tactic 1.2.1: Launch a TikTok campaign featuring employees and customers sharing their favorite Target experiences.

Tactic 1.2.2: Create a "Behind the Brand" series on Instagram and TikTok, highlighting Target's support for employees through "day in the life" videos.

Tactic 1.2.3: Develop a TikTok and Instagram campaign where influencers share their favorite Target finds and showcase in-store experiences.

Objective 2.0: Reassure employees, especially DEI advocates, that Target remains committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable workplace and society.

Strategy 2.1: Communicate Transparency and Commitment to DEI Internally

Tactic 2.1.1: Issue an internal memo from the CEO acknowledging the concerns, addressing the boycott, and reaffirming Target's long-term commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Tactic 2.1.2: Create a dedicated section on the internal Target website highlighting past DEI achievements, the reasons for the rollback, and future goals to maintain transparency.

Tactic 2.1.3: Develop and distribute a series of blog posts and articles on the internal Target website and external platforms, written by key executives, discussing the company's DEI journey, the impact of the boycott, and plans to continue supporting DEI initiatives.

Strategy 2.2: Enhance Employee Engagement and Support for Inclusive Practices

Tactic 2.2.1: Establish Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) focused on various aspects of diversity and inclusion, and provide them with the resources and support needed to drive meaningful change within the organization.

Tactic 2.2.2: Implement ongoing training programs for all employees to ensure they understand the importance of respect, fairness, and community and how they can contribute to a more inclusive workplace.

Tactic 2.2.4: Create a feedback mechanism where employees can anonymously report any instances of discrimination or bias they experience or witness, and ensure that these reports are addressed promptly and effectively.

**Potter Model**

Is it ethical for a company to shift its stated values (related to DEI) based on external pressure, even if it's done to avoid financial harm?

<b>Definition</b>  <b>Pro:</b> Companies should prioritize avoiding financial harm by adjusting DEI commitments under external pressure  <b>Con:</b> DEI values remain non-negotiable even when external pressures threaten financial stability	<b>Loyalties</b>  <b>Pro:</b> Loyal to shareholders (protecting financial viability) and employees (avoiding layoffs)  <b>Con:</b> Loyal to marginalized groups and society
<b>Values</b>  <b>Pro:</b> Financial sustainability outweighs DEI commitments during crises  <b>Con:</b> Integrity in upholding DEI principles outweighs short-term financial risks	<b>Principles</b>  <b>Pro:</b> Mill's Principle of Utility (greatest good for stakeholders – financial preservation)  <b>Con:</b> Kant's Categorical Imperative (duty to uphold DEI as moral and imperative)

Yes it is ethical

While the rollback may appear as a compromise, it reflects a strategic effort to preserve financial stability, protect jobs, and ensure the company can continue supporting DEI efforts long-term. From a utilitarian perspective, this decision promotes the greatest good for the greatest number—balancing the needs of stakeholders, employees, and consumers while maintaining the brand's long-term viability.

### **Strategic Communication Budget – \$250,000 (2-Month Plan)**

Goal: Rebuild trust, increase positive sentiment, and retain/support key audiences

#### **1. Research & Insights – \$40,000**

Online Surveys (Progressive & Conservative audiences, ~2,000 respondents) | \$10,000

Focus Groups (4 sessions, professional moderation + incentives) | \$15,000

In-store/Online Intercept Surveys | \$10,000

Social Listening Tools (e.g., Sprinklr, Meltwater) | \$5,000

#### **2. Influencer & Social Media Strategy – \$90,000**

Micro & Mid-Tier Influencer Partnerships (5–8 creators, TikTok + IG) | \$50,000

TikTok/Instagram Ad Buys (targeted to Gen Z & Millennials) | \$25,000

Content Production (video, design, photography for campaigns) | \$10,000

Interactive Engagement (polls, contests, Q&As) | \$5,000

### **3. Internal Communication & DEI Engagement – \$45,000**

CEO Memo & Transparency Campaign (writing, video production) | \$5,000

Employee Resource Groups (mini-grants, tools, support) | \$10,000

Internal DEI Web Portal/Hub (design, content, maintenance) | \$10,000

DEI Town Hall & Listening Sessions | \$10,000

Post-rollback Training & Peer Dialogue Tools | \$10,000

### **4. Owned Media & Community Messaging – \$40,000**

“Behind the Brand” Employee & Customer Stories (TikTok/IG series) | \$15,000

Blog Articles, Newsletter Series (in-house + freelance) | \$5,000

Community Pop-Up Events or Listening Booths | \$15,000

Community Partner Collaboration or Sponsorship (e.g., DEI nonprofits) | \$5,000

### **5. Evaluation & Reporting – \$15,000**

Post-Campaign Survey + Sentiment Analysis | \$7,000

Campaign Analytics, KPIs Dashboard | \$5,000

Final Report Design & Presentation Materials | \$3,000

### **6. Contingency – \$20,000**

Buffer for unexpected costs, content expansion, or added reach | \$20,000