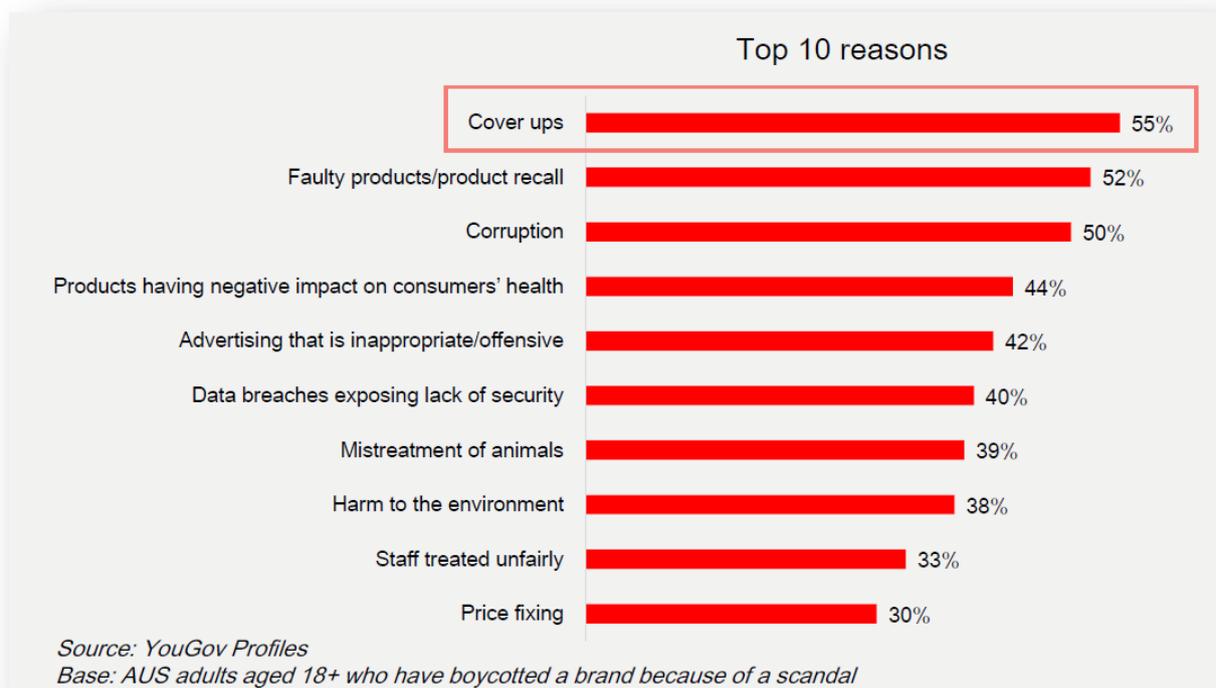


**THERE'S NO 'DEAD BATTING'
WHEN IT COMES TO BOYCOTTS**

I've generally thought that Australians were not particularly inclined to take up calls for boycotts, however a recent YouGov survey of Australian consumers has revealed some surprising information.

As the table below indicates at least half of the adult population or around 8 million Australians have boycotted a brand because of a scandal, faulty product, or corruption at some time. Extrapolated on a population percentage basis to WA it equals about 800,000 adult West Australians who have kept their wallets firmly closed, or if they must spend the money, have handed it over to someone else. Ouch!



As bad as losing money and marketshare to the competition might be in a boycott, there's also the problem of disgruntled customers and clients using the online world and traditional media to wreak even more damage on the organisation's reputation, sometimes more than what the 'crime' maybe warrants.

Although it's never an easy time for organisations targeted by an angry public or customer base, let alone one bemoaned in the media and in Parliament, boycotts and all they entail do not have to be a death sentence if we carefully apply the old maxim of attack being the best form of defense.

For example actively and promptly engaging with customers, the marketplace or communities can help to quickly regain a measure of control over the situation while also countering exaggerated and at times misleading allegations by those who seek to unduly harm your organisation.

Ironically, in these situations those affected can become your best allies. Certainly, you can try to ignore customers and others, but you do so at your peril. The alternative is to empathetically communicate with them and by doing so send them a message that they do matter to you and your organisation. Furthermore, and by gaining their attention and interest, you are supplying them with information that they can potentially use to defend their organisation from over-the-top allegations and misleading information. And just as importantly, you are countering allegations and mistruths with fact.

How you communicate and what you say requires substantial strategic and tactical considerations which space here does not permit to elaborate on. Regardless, and after some legal advice, a degree of mea culpa will go some way at least with affected parties. Similarly, telling people what you plan to do to fix a problem and/or avoid it happening again are constructive starting points to re-engage and repair the organisation's relationships with its stakeholders.

Hopefully, your company or organisation will not be the subject of a boycott, but click [here](#) if you'd like to see how different and sometimes global corporations handled their responses to things when they went off the rails.

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