



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Onesixtyfourth's CultureQ research demonstrates people believe social reform will come from brands not policymakers**

**New York, January 15, 2012** – *"There is a huge lack of courage and integrity in our country's leadership."*

During this period of sustained economic uncertainty, when people continue to feel insecure about their futures and have little faith in governments, the absence of leadership is apparent.

Interviews for **CultureQ**, Onesixtyfourth's study of societal shifts and movements, strongly indicate that Millennials and Baby Boomers in the US and UK believe reform will not come from policymakers but, rather, from brands.

There is a clear untapped opportunity for corporations to positively shape society and culture. Perceived as more in tune with our day-to-day lives and values than government and accustomed to innovating to survive, people see brands as best placed to be courageous enough to take the necessary risks to push society forward.

*"I think everyone is equally responsible [for improving society], no one company can do anything alone. Bigger companies have more pull though, so they should be the most encouraging."*

In December, Onesixtyfourth surveyed 763 earlier technology adopters and news-engaged Millennials and Baby Boomers in America and Britain to identify their ambitions, fears and concerns for 2012 and understand their attitudes toward brands, including social responsibility. The data from this study synthesized with that from on-going conversations with Millennials identified some hugely important cultural shifts.

**Corporate Social Responsibility is outmoded**

*"Many companies believe they have a responsibility to 'give back' to society and to me this is wonderful -in the future...[businesses will] have to give to get."*

No one brand stands out notably as a responsible corporate citizen, despite companies' best efforts to communicate CSR and foundation activities. For consumers, brand leaders and corporate citizens are becoming synonymous. Meaningful corporate

citizenship cannot be removed from people's daily lives: it must address their routines, consumption habits, hopes and fears. Responsible corporate citizenship is as much about fair pricing as it is about using corporate assets to meaningfully impact society and create positive change.

Responsible brand citizenship starts with simple things like employing people in my community, being respectful of employees, and saving resources. Innovative research and development efforts around plastics and fuel, helping people in the developing, etc. then follow. Overall, good citizenship begins with helping *me*, the individual consumer, and then expands outward. To lead, a corporation must have what it means to be a responsible citizen embedded within its vision and clearly state how the company advances society.

### **People buy brands that are real, not demigods**

Brands shouldn't feel compelled to convince us they are perfect and everything is rosey all of the time. After all, humans are inherently imperfect and when someone pretends to be flawless we naturally question their sincerity and genuineness. The best brands represent an attainable form of perfection.

Transparency and authenticity have been the defining attributes of brands operating in a post 2008 world. As brand life cycles are squeezed by innovation and technology, these values won't go far enough to deliver what people desire. Sincerity will be the watchword in 2012.

Brands who are clear about how they advance society, who integrate sincere practices into their marketing and operations, and who turn ethics into results will come to exemplify good brand citizenship. And thereby be touted as leaders.

### **About Onesixtyfourth**

Onesixtyfourth is a trend-based brand planning consultancy and strategy boutique that helps organizations connect more meaningfully with their audiences and leverage the power of their brands.

###

### **Media Contact:**

Rosalia Scampoli

Marketcom PR

212-537-5177, Ext 7

[rscampoli@marketcompr.com](mailto:rscampoli@marketcompr.com)