

# HOW TO BUILD A BRAND CAMPAIGN THAT SPEAKS AMERICAN

TIPS FOR  
SUCCESSFUL  
MARKETING  
TO THE  
NEW HEARTLAND  
CULTURAL  
SEGMENT



## INTRODUCTION

There is a huge opportunity for brands to grow in the New Heartland. Too many brands and their agencies along the East and West Coasts assume that all Americans fit neatly into little categories. But that can be a costly assumption.

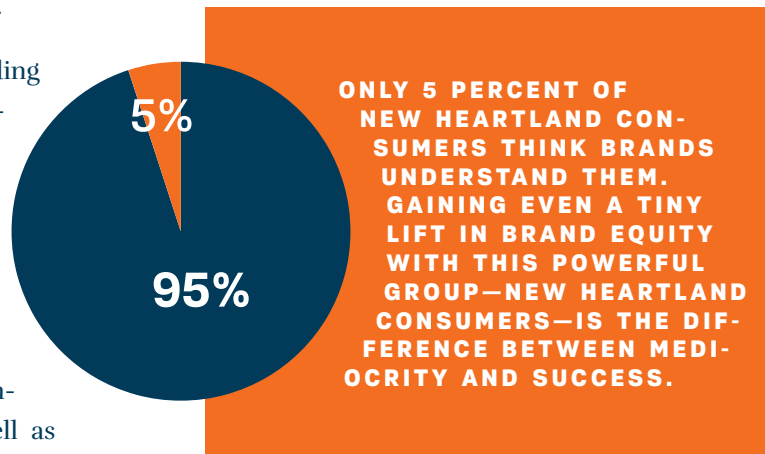
Many brands are actually spending large amounts of money on messaging that falls on deaf ears—simply because they don't take the time to understand the uniqueness of this very large consumer segment. In fact, only 5 percent of surveyed consumers in this region think that brands and companies really understand them well as a consumer.

The New Heartland definitely has its own language. New Heartlanders “Speak American®”—a

language that's built on distinct dialects, colloquialisms, inferred meanings, local definitions, and tradition-rich nuances all driven by long-standing cultural influences.

Brands wanting to reach New Heartlanders need to Speak American in order to be successful beyond a consumer transaction.

Strategically located in Nashville, New Heartland Group is a brand strategy, content creation, digital marketing and branded entertainment agency that creates messaging and engagement platforms that connect with consumers in the New Heartland.



New Heartland Group commissioned Prince Market Research to design and implement a first-of-its-kind extensive 52-part survey with 1,000

participants across the nation in an effort to provide a baseline study of New Heartlanders and their buying behavior and attitude. The findings, printed in this report, definitively distinguish the New Heartland as a unique and **POWERFUL CULTURAL SEGMENT**—one that brands should get to know.

The insights provided here are a combination of New Heartland Group's professional experience and in-depth third party and primary research. (All statistical data is referenced from and sourced in the 2014 New Heartland Consumer Insights Study and *Speak American® Too: Your Guide to Building Powerful Brands in the New Heartland*.)

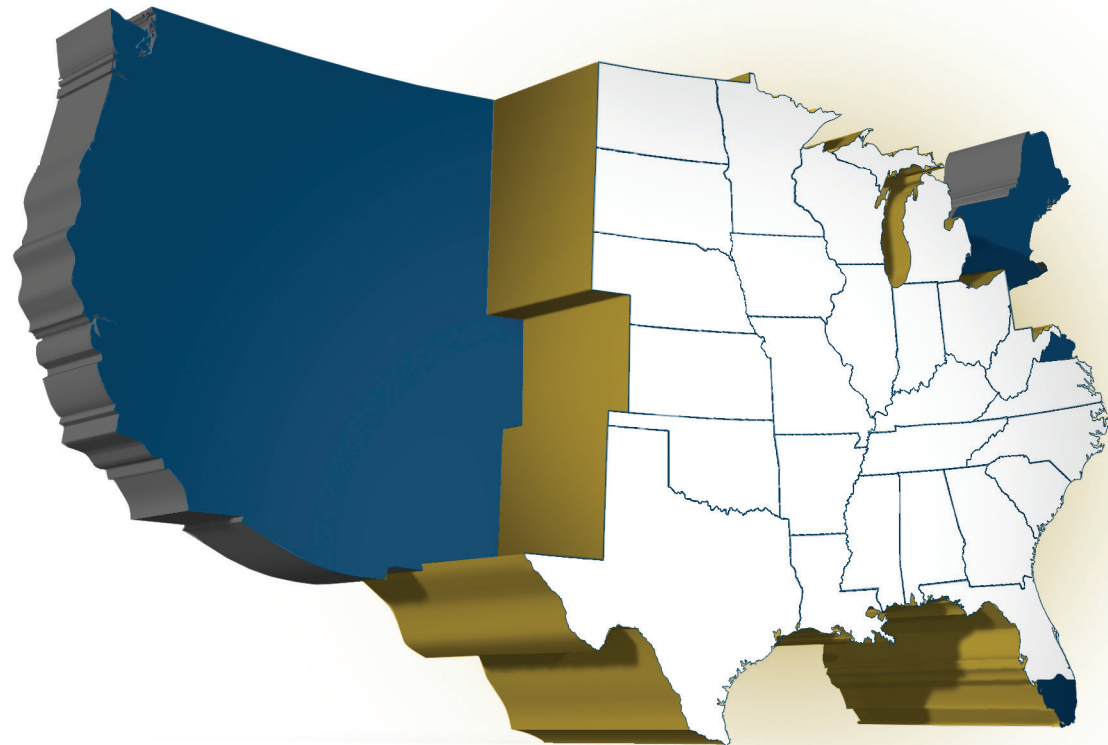
This white paper will explain:

- The geographic parameters and cultural characteristics of the New Heartland
- How New Heartlanders make purchase decisions and what impacts their buying behavior
- Key channels to access New Heartlanders

## MEET THE NEW HEARTLAND

**GEOGRAPHICALLY**, the New Heartland is largely comprised of 26 states in the Midwestern, Southwestern, and Southeastern portions of the United States. Stretching from the Florida shores to the plains of North Dakota to the tumbleweeds of Texas, the New Heartland covers quite a large area of the country.

A diverse group of mixed ethnicities, backgrounds, and interests, **THE NEW HEARTLAND IS DEFINED MOSTLY BY ITS SHARED SET OF VALUES.**



### STATES IN THE NEW HEARTLAND

WISCONSIN	SOUTH DAKOTA	WEST VIRGINIA	TENNESSEE
MICHIGAN	NEBRASKA	NORTH CAROLINA	MISSISSIPPI
ILLINOIS	KANSAS	SOUTH CAROLINA	ALABAMA
INDIANA	MINNESOTA	GEORGIA	OKLAHOMA
OHIO	IOWA	KENTUCKY	TEXAS
MISSOURI	VIRGINIA (excluding northern portion)	FLORIDA (excluding southern portion)	ARKANSAS
NORTH DAKOTA			LOUISIANA

**CULTURALLY**, the New Heartland shares certain beliefs and interests that establish its identity.

New Heartlanders are distinctly different in how they share core values. While the values are not unique to the New Heartland, they are more deeply rooted there. These core values live at the surface of everyday life and are discussed openly.

These core values have a profound influence on the New Heartlander's decision-making and buying behavior—big and small:

1. Faith (not religion)
2. Community
3. Family

**RESEARCH SHOWS THAT APPEALING TO CORE VALUES IS IMPORTANT, BUT BRANDS AREN'T DOING IT.**

Forty-one percent of consumers said they are more likely to buy products and services if the commercials and ads appeal to their core values. That same group of responders, though, noted that advertisers are failing to market to them effectively.

In the same group of responders, only 4 percent said commercials and ads “often” appeal to their core values, while 42 percent said these ads “rarely” appeal to their core values.

New Heartlanders specifically find messages that appeal to faith, friends, and family to be more effective than non-New Heartlanders do.

**NEW HEARTLAND  
CONSUMER INSIGHTS:**

**BRANDS ARE MISSING  
THE MARK WITH NEW  
HEARTLANDERS**

- Only 4% said ads appeal to their Core Values
- 40% said ads rarely appeal to their Core Values
- New Heartland women are nearly 3 times more likely to say they feel overlooked by brands in advertising



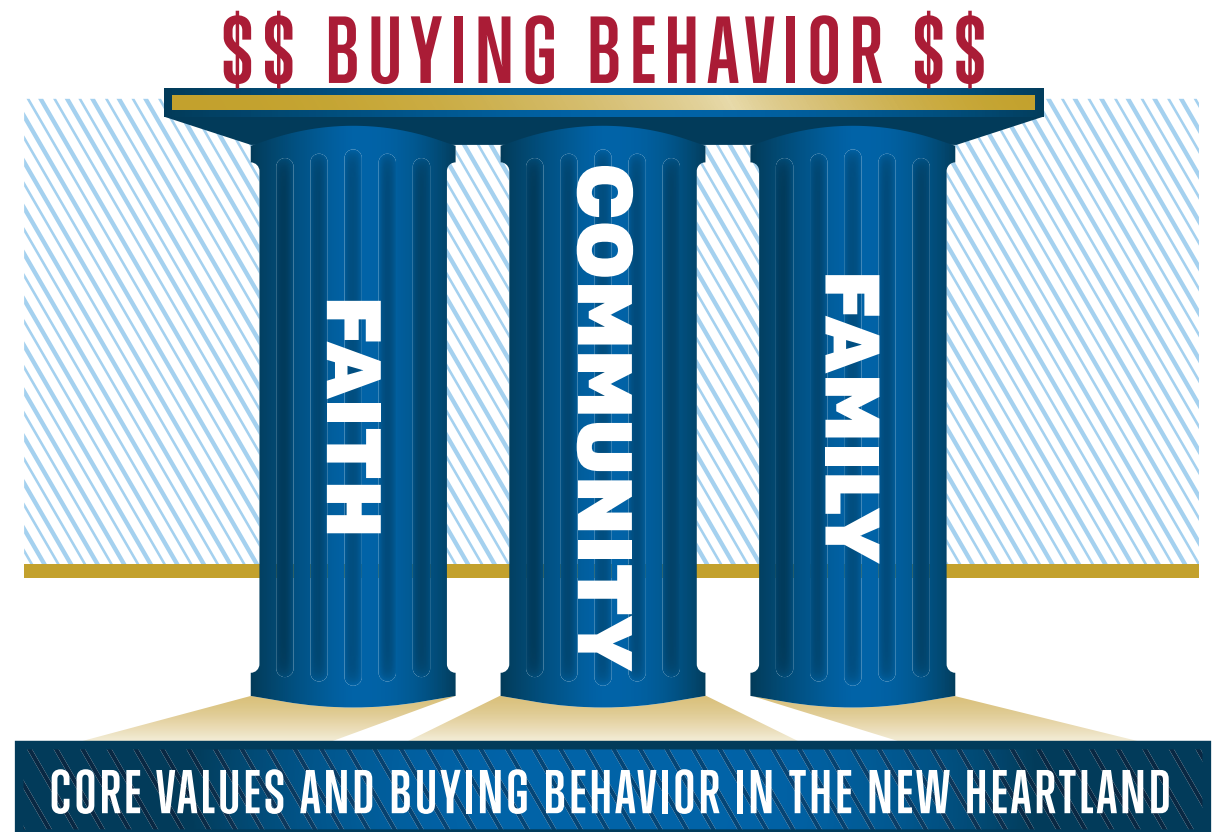


## HOW NEW HEARTLANDERS MAKE DECISIONS

Faith, Community and Family are the three Core Values that most New Heartland residents hold dear. They're the foundation of the culture and the basis on which decisions are made.

These three Core Values are essential to brand success in the New Heartland. It's often not only a question of the product agreeing with their Core Values, but the company as well.

Getting to know the New Heartland begins with understanding these Core Values and the importance they play in brand affinity, decision-making, and buying behavior.



## CORE VALUE: FAITH (NOT RELIGION)

Faith is listed as the top Core Value in the New Heartland.

According to the 2014 New Heartland Consumer Insights Study, 45 percent of New Heartlanders surveyed say faith is somewhat or critically important to them when making purchasing decisions, and 44 percent say that faith as an advertising element is an effective means of getting them to purchase.

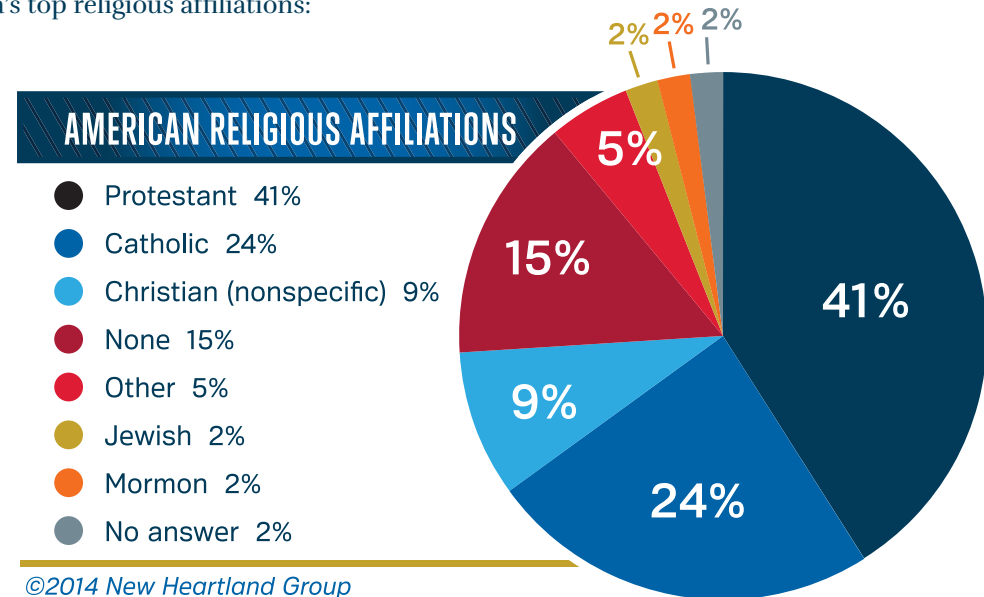
This could apply to the values of the company, the tone of the advertising campaign, or the product itself. New Heartland residents need to have faith in not only a product, but the company as well.

**FAITH TO A NEW HEARTLANDER DESCRIBES BELIEVING IN SOMETHING MUCH BIGGER THAN ONESELF, AND TRUSTING IT TO BE TRUE, WHETHER THAT'S GOD OR A MORAL CODE.**

## FAITH AND THE NEW HEARTLAND

A 2014 NBC/WSJ poll shows that 55 percent of Americans still place a major emphasis on their faith, saying religion is the most important or a very important aspect of their lives.

The fact is that Christianity is the most-practiced *form* of faith in the U.S.—but it's certainly not the only one. A recent Gallup Poll found that 74 percent of the country's population identify themselves as Christian. Here's the breakdown of America's top religious affiliations:



## FAITH AND ITS IMPACT ON BUYING BEHAVIOR

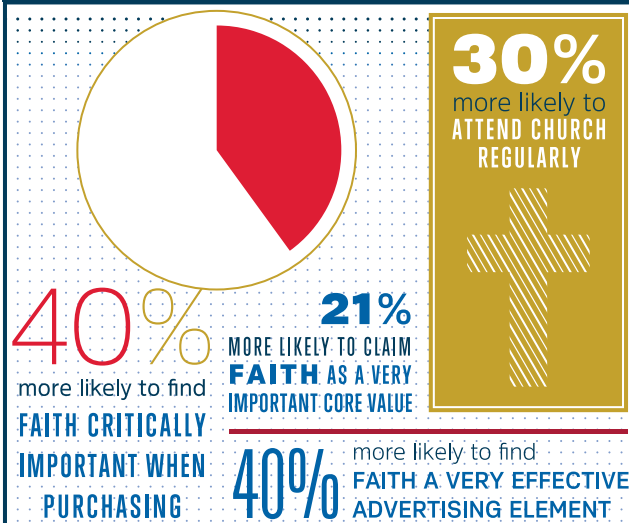


**74%** OF AMERICANS  
IDENTIFY THEMSELVES AS  
**CHRISTIAN**

**55%** OF AMERICANS SAY  
**FAITH**  
IS A VERY IMPORTANT ASPECT  
OF THEIR LIVES

**11 OF THE TOP 12**  
**MOST RELIGIOUS STATES**  
ARE IN THE NEW HEARTLAND

### NEW HEARTLANDERS + FAITH



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The largest number of churchgoers can be found in the New Heartland. Of the top-ranked states found to be the most religious, the New Heartland has nine of them, and includes none in the bottom ten.

New Heartlanders are faithful people, at least on the surface. But being faithful doesn't mean being politically or socially conservative or necessarily religious. It just means that New Heartlanders rely on faith in good times and the bad.

**FAITH MUST BE DEALT WITH STRATEGICALLY. WHILE BRANDS THAT IGNORE FAITH MIGHT BE APPEASING THE NONBELIEVERS (JUST 15 PERCENT OF AMERICANS), THEY RUN THE RISK OF SERIOUSLY OFFENDING THE FAITHFUL, WHICH REPRESENTS THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE COUNTRY.**

## CORE VALUE: COMMUNITY (RELATIONSHIPS/ SHARED VALUES)

The Community Core Value is one that takes many shapes in the New Heartland. Whether it's a neighborhood, a hometown, or a network of friends online, Community plays a large role in defining what matters to New Heartlanders.

In the New Heartland, the value of community goes hand-in-hand with Faith and Family. You'll find that most New Heartland communities are made up of an inextricable web of relationships—family is certainly at the heart of it often because so many extended families live within a close drive of each other.

The 2014 New Heartland Consumer Insights Study found that 45 percent of New Heartlanders live within a two-hour drive from most or all of their family members, compared to 39 percent of residents outside the New Heartland claiming the same.

Why do they stay put? The top reasons cited include:

- Wanting to be near family (74 percent)
- Wanting to stay in their hometown (69 percent)
- A belief that their hometown was a great place to raise children (59 percent)

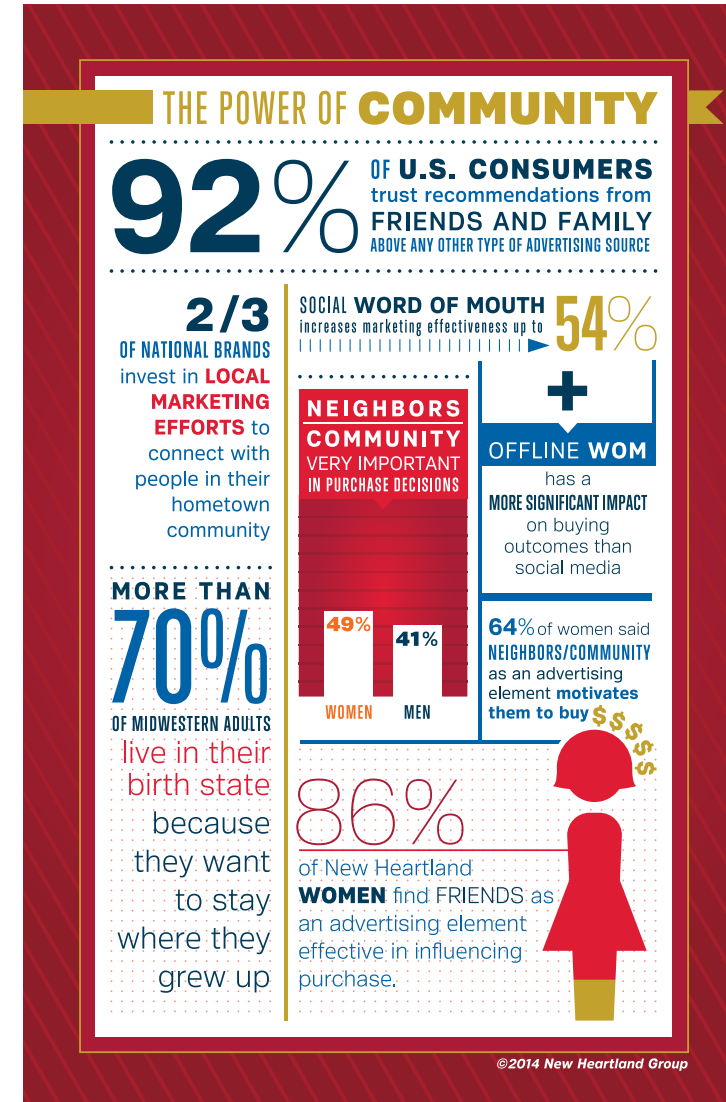
But wherever New Heartlanders form their connections, we see that Community is more about relationships and shared values than it is about geography.

Forty-nine percent of women and 41 percent of men in the New Heartland say Neighbors and Community are Very Important in their purchase decisions.

Word of Mouth drastically increases campaign effectiveness and brand advocacy. The New Heartland embraces and amplifies it more than any other cultural segment.

Eighty-one percent of New Heartlanders say Friends as an advertising element is Very/Some-what Effective in getting them to purchase.

**UNDERSTANDING WHY AND HOW NEW HEARTLANDERS FORM COMMUNITIES IS AN ESSENTIAL PART IN LEARNING HOW TO GAIN ACCESS TO THEM.**





## CORE VALUE: FAMILY

### (RELATIONSHIPS BEYOND BLOOD TIES)

The Community with the highest clout in the New Heartland is Family. And in the New Heartland, Family goes beyond the assumed nuclear unit or standard definition. Family relationships are not bound by the walls of a home, or even by blood. Close friends and extended relatives are all considered to be part of the family unit.

Community and Family work conjointly and are each very important Core Values. While we discovered that Family influences choice of Community in the New Heartland, we also found how much it affects purchasing decisions as well.

As a Forrester Research report found, Family is the number one source for product recommendations, with 70 percent of responders claiming an opinion from a family member is the most trusted. This includes all family members.

In fact, in the U.S., a reported 69 percent of parents consult their children on family purchases.

Eighty-one percent of New Heartlanders say Family is a “Very Important” core value.

Seventy-nine percent of New Heartlanders say Family as an advertising element is Effective in getting them to purchase.

Sixty-two percent of New Heartland women say “what my family says and thinks” is Somewhat or Critically Important to them when making purchase decisions.

Family traditions involve brands. In the New Heartland, loyalty to a brand can be passed through multiple generations.

**NEW HEARTLAND FAMILIES, LIKE THE REST OF AMERICA, ARE A GREAT BLEND OF AGES, RACES, AND GENERATIONS. THEY ARE BOUND TOGETHER WITH THE COMMON THREADS OF THE CORE VALUES.**

**FAMILY IS THE #1 SOURCE  
FOR PRODUCT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**69% OF U.S. PARENTS  
CONSULT THEIR CHILDREN  
ON FAMILY PURCHASES**

**70%**

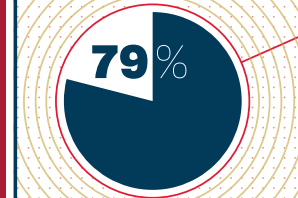
of consumers claim  
an opinion from a  
**FAMILY MEMBER**  
IS THE MOST  
TRUSTED.

**NEW HEARTLANDERS + FAMILY**

**62%** MORE LIKELY AMONG WOMEN  
**VALUE INPUT OF FAMILY**  
WHEN BUYING

**81** SAY FAMILY IS A  
**VERY IMPORTANT**  
**CORE VALUE**

MORE  
MOTIVATED  
TO BUY BRANDS  
WHO USE  
**FAMILIES**  
IN AD  
CAMPAIGNS



**FAMILY  
IS A KEY BRAND  
INFLUENCER**

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## WHERE TO FIND THE NEW HEARTLANDERS

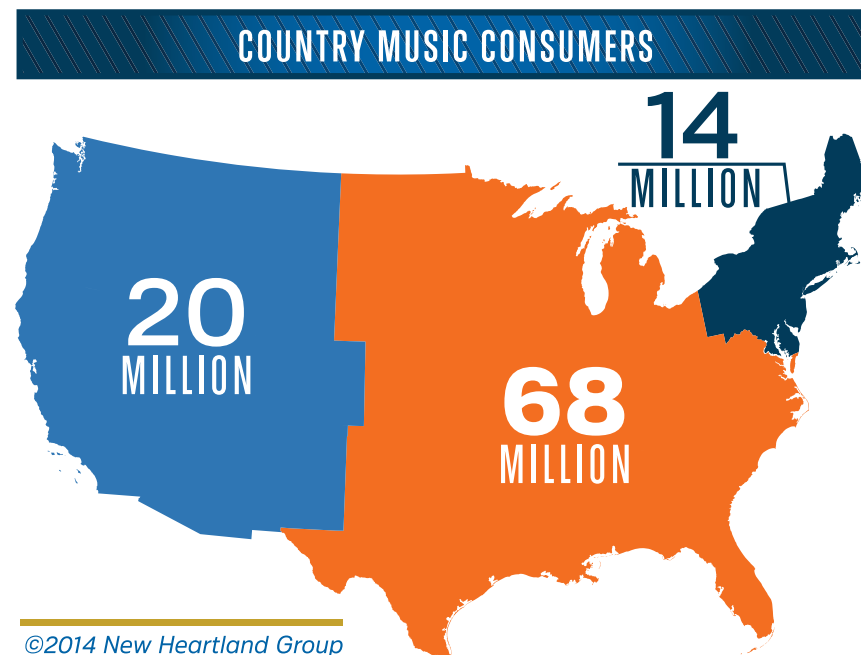
Armed with a better understanding of who the New Heartlanders are and their biggest influencers, brands should also have a strategy on where to find and engage them.

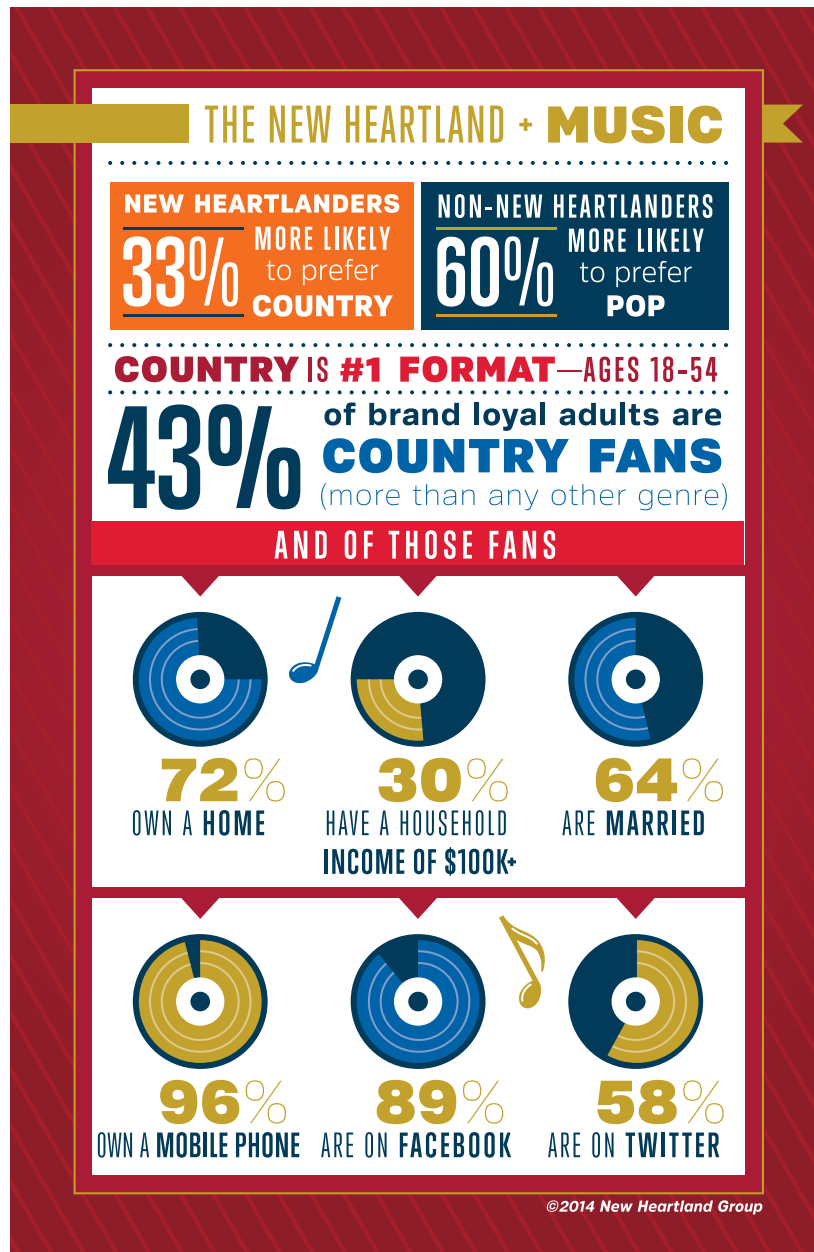
The Five Channels of Access are lifestyle choices where leisure time and disposable income are spent. Understanding what makes the New Heartland unique in these areas is key to brand success.

1. Music
2. Food
3. Sports
4. Outdoors
5. Social Media

## MUSIC

If you're interested in connecting with the New Heartland through music, Country Music should be high on your consideration list. Country Music is the most popular genre in the New Heartland, with 46 percent of New Heartlanders saying they "Love" or "Like" Country Music. New Heartlanders are 33 percent more likely to prefer Country Music, while non-New Heartlanders are 60 percent more likely to prefer Pop Music.





Country music connects with the New Heartlander through the three Core Values. Country music is about:

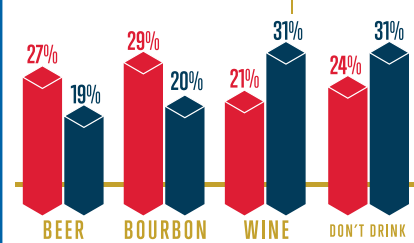
- **Faith**—Country stars are not afraid to acknowledge and celebrate their faith. This is very appealing to the New Heartland consumer who is starting to feel edged out of mainstream popular culture.
- **Community**—Country songs often extol the virtues of a close-knit, small-town community.
- **Family**—Country stars are also famous for singing about the role their family has played in their life, both the family at home and also their extended family.

Plus Country Music fans are powerful consumers with 72 percent owning a home and 30 percent with a household income of \$100,000 or more.

## THE NEW HEARTLAND + FOOD

NEW HEARTLAND  
WOMEN ARE  
**62%**  
MORE LIKELY TO  
**PREFER**  
COMFORT FOOD  
OVER  
GOURMET FOOD

**NEW HEARTLANDERS**  
**44%** more likely to be a  
"BEER AND BOURBON" CROWD

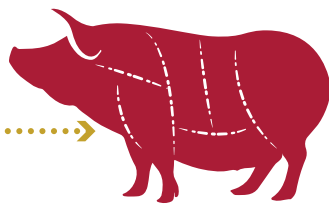


**80%** OF THE NATION'S  
BARBECUE FESTIVALS AND COMPETITIONS  
ARE IN THE NEW HEARTLAND

NEW HEARTLAND  
**19%**  
MORE LIKELY  
TO SAY  
**FOOD**

**WHAT IS  
BBQ?**

NON-NEW HEARTLAND  
**21%**  
MORE LIKELY  
TO SAY  
**EVENT**



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## FOOD

Food is far more than just sustenance in the New Heartland—it's a social experience. Whether it's the actual preparation of the food or gathering to enjoy the end product, food is an important link to the culture, a source of identity, and an excuse to gather with family and friends.

Food is also how New Heartlanders share congratulations, condolences, and celebrations. Food is a key component of the New Heartland lifestyle and woven into the core values.

For example, in the New Heartland, barbecue is considered something you eat, not something you do. Joining with family and friends to make and eat barbecue is just one way New Heartlanders reinforce important cultural traditions through food.

Thirty-nine percent of New Heartland women prefer comfort food over gourmet food, compared to only 24 percent of non-New Heartland women.

Most New Heartlanders prefer beer (27 percent) and spirits (29 percent) compared to non-New Heartlanders who prefer wine (31 percent) or don't drink at all (31 percent).

## SPORTS

New Heartlanders love sports! Like most Americans, they spend an inordinate amount of time at the ball field and follow the drama on the court. But there are a few sectors that are more prevalent in the New Heartland than in other parts of the country—college sports, auto racing, and youth sports.

These are three very separate activities, but they share one key component—fanatic loyalty.

Forty-seven percent of New Heartlanders said Sports as an advertising element is “Very”/“Somewhat Effective” in getting them to purchase (38 percent non-New Heartland). Only 29 percent of New Heartlanders said they are not sports fans (vs. 40 percent non-New Heartland)

## College Sports

Although professional sports are huge in the New Heartland, college sports are the personification of New Heartland core values.

In the New Heartland, one’s alma mater is more than just an institution for academic excellence; it also determines how you’ll spend most Saturdays from spring football to bowl games.

Of the twenty biggest football stadiums in the U.S., the New Heartland claims fifteen, with fourteen of those being college stadiums.

The 2014 New Heartland Consumer Insights Study found more than twice as many New Heartlanders claim to prefer college sports compared to non-New Heartlanders.

### PREFERENCE FOR COLLEGE SPORTS



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## THE NEW HEARTLAND + SPORTS

NEW HEARTLANDERS ARE MORE THAN **TWICE AS LIKELY** TO PREFER COLLEGE SPORTS

HOME TO  
**9** OF THE **TOP 10**  
SPORTS REVENUE-GENERATING COLLEGES

AND  
**18**  
OF THE  
**20**  
MOST LOYAL  
FAN STATES

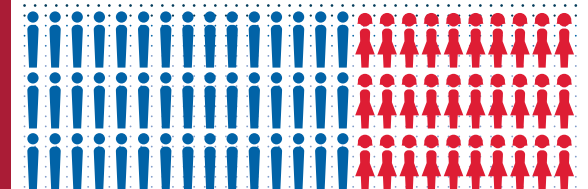
YOUTH U.S. SPORTS  
**\$7 BILLION**  
INDUSTRY



**8** OF 10 BEST STATES FOR  
HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL  
ARE IN THE NEW HEARTLAND

**44%** MORE LIKELY TO BE INVOLVED  
IN HIGH SCHOOL/YOUTH SPORTS

**NASCAR** is the **#1 spectator sport** in the U.S.



**75 MILLION NASCAR FANS** > **40% ARE WOMEN**

**ONE  
FIFTH**

OF FORTUNE 500  
COMPANIES  
SPONSOR NASCAR

Fans are **63%** more  
likely to consider a  
brand that is an  
official sponsor of  
**NASCAR**



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## Auto Racing

NASCAR is the number-one spectator sport in America; the average attendance for an event is just under 100,000.

NASCAR fans are 63 percent more likely to consider a brand that is an official sponsor of the sport. A study from NASCAR and *Sports Illustrated* found that 66 percent of fans were willing to pay more for a sponsor's product. Furthermore, an amazing finding was that 36 percent of NASCAR fans could name every sponsor of the top thirty ranked cars!

## Youth Sports

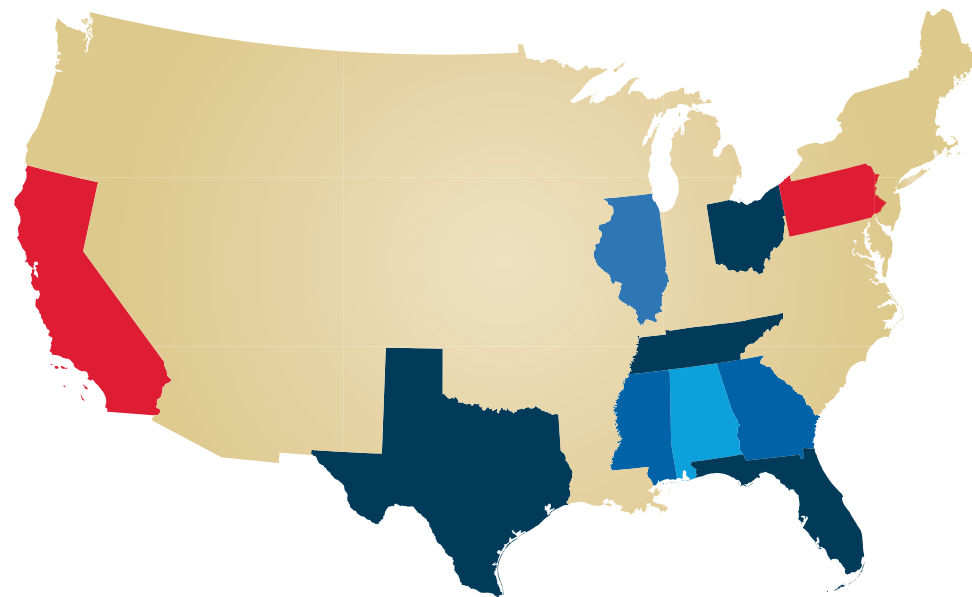
Youth sports take a big part of family time for many New Heartlanders. Thirteen percent of New Heartlanders are Very Involved in high school/youth sports (vs 9 percent non-New Heartland). Eight of the top ten states for the best high school football are in the New Heartland according to the MaxPreps Freeman Rankings.

### NEW HEARTLAND CONSUMER INSIGHTS:

NEW HEARTLANDERS  
ATTEND MORE LIVE  
EVENTS

—22% More Likely to  
attend at least 3 live  
music, sporting or  
NASCAR events a year  
compared to non-  
New Heartlanders

### TOP 10 HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL STATES



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## OUTDOORS

The geography of the New Heartland lends itself to some fantastic outdoor recreational opportunities. Hunting, fishing, and golfing are favorite activities for New Heartlanders.

### Hunting

Nine percent of New Heartlanders vs 5 percent of the rest of the country are hunters.

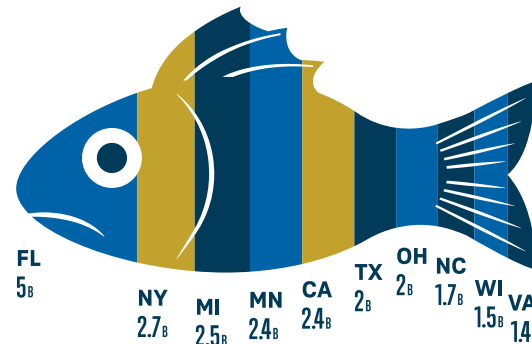
### Fishing

New Heartlanders are almost 50 percent more likely to have fished in the past two years. According to the American Sportfishing Association, the New Heartland has eight of the top ten fishing states based on annual expenditures.

According to The National Golf Foundation (NGF), the region that makes up the largest percentage of golfers nationwide is in the New Heartland: Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio together are home to 20 percent of all American golfers. The second largest, the South Atlantic at 18 percent, is also in the New Heartland.

In total, the NGF reports that 16.5 million New Heartland residents golf, compared with 10.6 million residents of non-New Heartland states.

#### TOP 10 FISHING STATES BY EXPENDITURES (\$)



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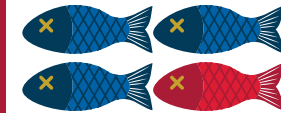
**SPORTS AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES AS ADVERTISING ELEMENTS ARE MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE FOR NEW HEARTLAND MEN (61 PERCENT SPORTS/53 PERCENT OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES) THAN THEY ARE FOR MEN OUTSIDE OF THE NEW HEARTLAND (51 PERCENT/40 PERCENT).**

## Golf

### THE NEW HEARTLAND + GREAT OUTDOORS

**NEW HEARTLANDERS** are **32%** more likely to find outdoor activities effective as an advertising element

25% OF U.S. ANGLERS ARE WOMEN



**56%** OF ANGLERS HAVE A HOUSEHOLD INCOME **\$50,000+**

**16% BRING IN \$100K+**

**68%** OF HUNTERS HAVE A HOUSEHOLD INCOME **\$50,000+**

**1 IN 10 HUNTERS IS FEMALE**

**1.5 MILLION FEMALE HUNTERS OVER AGE 16**

**\$ ANGLERS \$458**

**\$ HUNTERS \$338**

**ANNUAL SPENDING ON GEAR AND TRIPS**

### GOLFERS

**16.5 million NEW HEARTLAND**

**10.6 million NON-NEW HEARTLAND**

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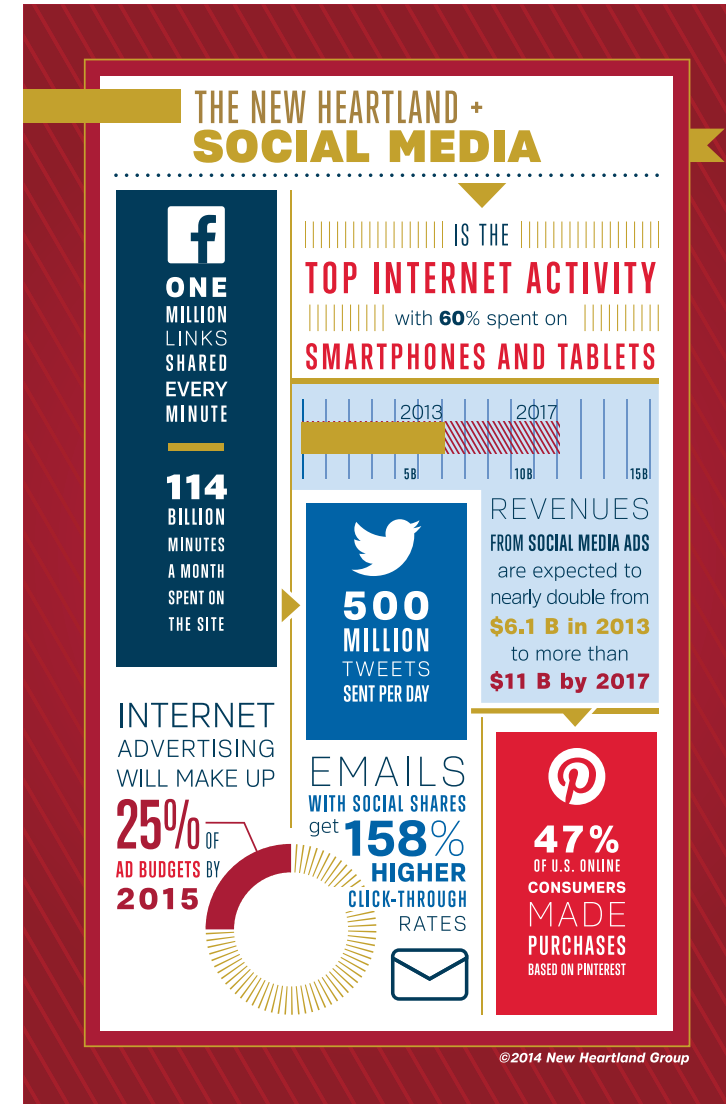


## SOCIAL MEDIA

Even though the Census shows that the populations in the South and Midwest have 2-5 percent fewer homes with access to the Internet, the behavior of New Heartlanders online are pretty much in line with the general numbers across all states. There's one key exception, however: New Heartland men are 23 percent more likely to have social media recommendations sway purchase decisions than their non-New Heartland counterparts.

### The Power of Social Media

- Social Media is now the top Internet activity, even surpassing email, with 60 percent of online time spent on smartphones and tablets.
- Facebook absorbs 114 billion minutes a month of consumers' time, and creates seven times more engagement than Twitter.
- 271 million monthly active Twitter users sending out more than 500 million tweets per day.
- YouTube beats out any cable network in their reach to U.S. adults in the 18-34 demographic.
- Forty-seven percent of U.S. online consumers have made purchases based on recommendations from Pinterest.
- Internet advertising will make up 25 percent of ad budgets by 2015.
- Emails with social shares get 158 percent higher click-through rate.
- Revenues from social media ads are expected to nearly double from \$6.1 billion in 2013 to more than \$11 billion by 2017.



## CONCLUSION

Building brands in the New Heartland cannot be accomplished from a cube farm on the forty-second floor of a Manhattan high-rise or in sprawling offices on the West Coast.

In order to truly understand the New Heartland consumer, brand strategists and marketing decision makers must immerse themselves in the New Heartland lifestyle—or hire brand experts who are. It's vital to understand the New Heartland heritage and loyalty, their Core Values that impact buying behavior, and how they discover and engage with products.

In the New Heartland, brands are built at the dinner table, at church gatherings, in the garage, out in the fields, on the production line, at concerts, on the golf course, at soccer practice, and on the front porch after five o'clock. They are passed down from generation to generation, like family heirlooms and treasured recipes. Men drive a certain type of truck because that's what their father drove, and their grandfather before them. Moms buy certain household products because they are the ones their moms used.

Building brands in the New Heartland doesn't come from a focus group or a survey; it stems from understanding the deep roots and heritage that is held close to the heart. To understand this passion and loyalty, you must find a way to live and breathe it every day or rely on experts who do. The New Heartland presents a massive opportunity for brands who understand it as a cultural segment and invest in the resources to build relationships with this extremely loyal group.

**YOU MUST  
SPEAK AMERICAN.®**



## LEARN MORE

This paper has touched on some key points from the 2014 New Heartland Consumer Insights Study.

A more in-depth analysis can be found in Paul Jankowski's book on the subject, *Speak American® Too: Your Guide to Building Powerful Brands in the New Heartland*, which combines the new research findings and New Heartland consumer case study examples. The definitive field manual to marketing in the New Heartland, *Speak American® Too* is not only a guide to understanding this culture, but it is also a blueprint for brands to use in designing their effective New Heartland campaigns.

For more information, contact: Kristy Lucero, 615.620-4710, [kristy@newheartlandgroup.com](mailto:kristy@newheartlandgroup.com).

To download a free chapter of *Speak American® Too*, visit:

[HTTP://WWW.NEWHEARTLANDGROUP.COM/BOOK-INFORMATION/](http://www.newheartlandgroup.com/book-information/)



NEW  
HEARTLAND  
GROUP  
*We Build Brands™*

New Heartland Group  
8115 Isabella Lane  
Suite 11  
Brentwood TN 37027  
615.620.4710  
[www.newheartlandgroup.com](http://www.newheartlandgroup.com)