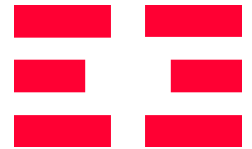




WPP

Subsidiaries: VML, Kantar, BCW, Hill & Knowlton
Locations: United Kingdom (HQ)
Industries: Commercial and Professional Services

RISK LEVEL:



High Risk

DESCRIPTION:

WPP often yields to political activism in shaping corporate governance, potentially alienating consumers, dividing employees, and harming shareholders. The company implements race and identity-based policies that replace merit, excellence, and integrity with preferential treatment and outcomes. WPP occasionally embraces corporate initiatives that redirect its central focus from business goals to partisan policies and divisive issues at times. This approach fails to safeguard free exercise, free speech, and free enterprise.

Corporate Weaponization

Has canceled customers, suppliers, or vendors due to their political views or religious beliefs OR corporately boycotts, divests, or sanctions regions, people groups, or industries. Medium Risk

WPP received a score of 95 on the 2025 Corporate Equality Index (CEI) from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), a political stakeholder group. The company recruits employees based on sexual identity issues. The company discriminates against vendors that do not promote divisive sex and gender policies, indicating it prioritizes sexual issues over merit (1)(2). VML received a score of 60 on the 2025 Corporate Equality Index (CEI) from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), a political stakeholder group. The company recruits employees based on sexual identity issues. The company discriminates against vendors that do not promote divisive sex and gender policies, indicating it prioritizes sexual issues over merit (3)(4). However, WPP has not publicly canceled customers, suppliers or vendors based on political views or religious beliefs (5).

Charitable giving (including employee matching programs) policies or practices discriminate against charitable organizations based on views or religious beliefs. High Risk

WPP does not appear to discriminate against charitable organizations based on views or beliefs (1). VML's HRC 2025 CEI rating indicates the company will not donate to non-religious charities unless they embrace controversial sexual identity policies (2)(3).

Employment policies fail to protect against viewpoint or other discrimination and/or are ideological in nature. High Risk

WPP's HRC 2025 CEI rating indicates the company forces employees to attend multiple, controversial trainings on gender identity, sexual orientation, transgender issues, and divisive racial ideology. The company provides gender transition guidelines for its employees and a specific benefits guide with a comprehensive explanation of transgender services funded by the company (1)(2). However, the company does not provide viewpoint protections for its employees (3)(4). Kantar company hosts mandatory unconscious bias training for all employees (5).

Corporate Governance and Public Policy

Uses corporate reputation to support causes, organizations, or policies hostile to freedom of expression. High Risk

WPP's HRC 2025 CEI rating indicates the company agrees to allow a controversial stakeholder group focused on sexual identity issues to dictate marketing or advertising strategy. By doing so, the company risks dividing employees, alienating customers and harming shareholders (1)(2). WPP's PGLC membership reflects its commitment to "operationalize" company coverage of transgender surgery and treatment, the vetting of business partners based on LGBTQ+ policies, and the financial support of LGBTQ organizations on a global level (3)(4)(5). WPP signed an open letter in support of the Equality Act, a controversial bill and advocates for "anti-racism", displaying Ibram X. Kendi's "How to be an Antiracist" on its website (6)(7). WPP's subsidiary Burson Cohn & Wolfe (BCW) has signed letters supporting the Equality Act and opposing the Florida Parental Rights in Education Act (8)(9). BCW was part of the Freedom for All Americans coalition, which advocated for federal legislation that would overrule state laws designed to protect girls' sports and similar laws (10). Burson Cohn & Wolfe's Executive VP was ranked 41 in the 2020 Pride Power List after he created the Human Rights Campaign Americans for Marriage Equality campaign (11). BCW's Global President published a statement in support of Black Lives Matter (12). WPP's CEO Mark Read is a signatory to CEOs For Gun Safety (13). During the 2022 Pride Month, VMLY&R, a subsidiary of WPP held a digital event called "Made With Pride" featuring speaker events and LGBTQ employee stories (14). VMLY&R opposed various state and local legislation intended to protect parental rights, girls' sports, bathroom facilities, and gendered spaces (15)(16). VMLY&R opposed legislation in Iowa intended to protect parental rights, girls' sports, bathroom facilities, and gendered spaces (17). VMLY&R opposed the Florida Parental Rights in Education Act, which would prohibit teaching gender identity and sexual orientation to kids in K-3rd grade (18). WPP opposed various state and local legislation intended to protect parental rights, girls' sports, bathroom facilities, and gendered spaces (19). WPP is a member of the "Don't Ban Equality" business coalition, which advocates against any abortion restrictions because they are "bad for business" (20). BCW opposed legislation in Iowa intended to protect parental rights, girls' sports, bathroom facilities, and gendered spaces (21). WPP's CEO, Mark Read, signed the CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion pledge, which includes a commitment to promote DEI through bias education training in the workplace (22)(23)(24). BCW opposed the Florida Parental Rights in Education Act, which would prohibit teaching gender identity and sexual orientation to kids in K-3rd grade (25). WPP was a contributing member of GARM's Action Guide to Reduce Media Greenhouse Gas Emissions which provides an action plan for media companies to transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions (26).

Uses corporate funds to advance ideological causes, organizations, or policies hostile to freedom of expression. High Risk

WPP and VML provides a benefits package for employees that covers travel/lodging costs for an abortion and transgender medical procedures for covered employees and dependents, including children (1)(2)(3). WPP's HRC 2025 CEI rating indicates the company covers transgender related costs for its employees and their children, including paid short-term leave, puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, chest surgeries, genital surgeries, medical visits and lab monitoring, travel and lodging. Additionally, the company has pledged philanthropic support of at least one organization or event that promotes sex and gender ideology. By allowing a political stakeholder group to dictate operations, the company increases health care costs and risks dividing employees, alienating customers and harming shareholders (4)(5). VML's HRC 2025 CEI rating indicates the company covers transgender related costs for its employees and their children, including paid short-term leave, puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, chest surgeries, genital surgeries, medical visits and lab monitoring, travel and lodging. By allowing a political stakeholder group to dictate operations, the company increases health care costs and risks dividing employees, alienating customers and harming shareholders (6)(7). WPP is a PGLC member (8). The company uses gift-matching funds to support BLM and Color of Change (9). VMLY&R has a section of its Foundation Impact Report titled "Black Lives Matter Matching Gift Program" in which they have matched donations to the Black Lives Matter movement (10). VMLY&R foundation has also financially supported The Trevor Project and Des Moines Capital City Pride (11). WPP's agency Wunderman sponsored the LGBT festival ShanghaiPride, which "aims to raise the profile of LGBT issues in China" (12).

Uses corporate political actions and/or financial contributions for ideological, non-business purposes.

High Risk

WPP's HRC 2025 CEI rating indicates the company publicly advocated for controversial sex and gender ideology through local, state or federal legislation or initiatives. By allowing a political stakeholder group to dictate operations, the company risks dividing employees, alienating customers and harming shareholders (1)(2). WPP does not operate a PAC at this time but has not lobbied for ideological purposes (3)(4)(5)(6)(7).

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