



Simply, Better
Brand Purpose
Why brands need to be Superheroes

Brand Purpose: Why brands need to be Superheroes

It's not enough to be normal

Today's digitally driven world is often described as "the new normal" but to succeed today, brands need to be better than normal. They need to be

Superheroes:

- 1 **Driven by a clear Purpose**
- 2 **A force for good**
- 3 **Fast & agile**

75% of citizens around the globe think the world is changing too quickly. More than half wish they could slow down the pace of their lives



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Technology is disrupting business models and changing behaviours and attitudes

The average lifespan of a company listed in the S&P 500 index of leading US companies has decreased by more than 50 years in the last century, from 67 years in the 1920s to just 15 years today, according to the BBC¹.

In the past 10 years, Apple's share price has increased over 2400% from \$5 to almost \$120. By contrast, Nokia's share price at the time the iPhone launched was close to \$40 and 5 years later was \$1.71 – a drop of almost 95%.

It's not just technology manufacturers that are affected. Amazon has transformed retail; Uber is changing the face of the taxi business; AirBnB is revolutionising the hotel and accommodation industry; Spotify

is transforming the face of music; PayPal, Apple Pay and Google Wallet are changing the way we manage our money – the latter now allows you to send money by email...

And it's not just businesses that are affected, people feel it too. Ipsos' Global Trends Survey (GTS) found that 75% of citizens around the globe think the world is changing too quickly and more than half wish they could slow down the pace of their lives.

So how can brands succeed in a hyper competitive world of disruptive innovation?

Brands cannot succeed without adapting quickly as Nokia, Kodak, Borders Books, HMV and others can attest. Instead, brands need think and act like **superheroes**:



1 Driven by a clear Purpose

What is a Brand Purpose?

A Brand Purpose is a reason for being. It's why a company or brand exists and the ethos drives it, defined in a way that provides clarity and simplicity. It goes beyond product benefits, brand positioning and business objectives. Purpose is the intersection between a business' values and beliefs and those of the people it serves.

A Brand Purpose should:

- 1 Provide a focal point for the business that guides everything it does
- 2 Benefit people's lives and the world around us
- 3 Inspire employees and customers
- 4 Promote game-changing innovation that looks beyond the current product portfolio and drives future growth
- 5 Be constant and impermeable to short-term demands

Many of the world's biggest companies have embraced the concept of Brand Purpose and are orienting their brands around it. Unilever's CEO, Paul Polman, has committed the company to a sustainable growth model, saying: "In the next 15 years, we as a generation have the opportunity to be the people who eradicate poverty in a meaningful and sustainable way." The company's brands are now focused around purposes that benefit people's lives, e.g:

- Dove: celebrate every woman's unique beauty
- Lifebuoy soap: bring health and hygiene to a billion people
- Lynx/Axe: make love not war

Purpose is the intersection between a business' values and beliefs and those of the people it serves.

It's not just Unilever, IBM are seeking to 'Build a smarter planet', Innocent is focused on helping people to 'Live well, die old', Pampers's Purpose is to 'Help mothers care for their babies and toddlers' healthy, happy development', Visa's is to 'Provide freedom to people to follow their passions' and Petrobras aims to 'Support sustainable development in Brazil and beyond'.

Purpose provides focus and unites employees in pursuing a common goal. It deters activities that spread resources too thinly or in the wrong places. At the same time it allows companies to think beyond product and innovate in more meaningful ways:

- If Nike had focused on being a manufacturer of running shoes, instead of "bringing inspiration and innovation to every athlete", it would never have become the powerful force it is today in fashion and leading edge fitness technology.

- If Apple's Purpose had been to make better home computers, instead of "empowering creativity and self-expression", it would never have developed the iPod, iPhone or iPad.

Is purpose profitable?

The oldest company in the world is believed to be Nissiyama Onsen Keiunkan, a hotel in Japan that was established in 705 AD. There are several other companies in Japan that have been around for more than 1,000 years and another 20,000 that are more than 100 years old. Professor Makoto Kanda, of Meiji Gakuin University, has studied these businesses and says their longevity is because "they focus on a central belief or credo that is not tied solely to making a profit"¹.



2 A force for good

So why can being a force for good be a successful brand strategy?

Simplicity and clarity of Purpose strengthens the brand in consumers' minds

Ipsos GTS data shows that almost half of people say they “often feel overwhelmed by the choices I have as a consumer” and 61% wish life could be simpler. We just haven't the time to consider every decision in detail and our minds are wired to avoid this.

Consequently, brands are now understood to be heuristics for choice – a shortcut for easy decision making. Under-pinning these heuristics is a network of thoughts, feelings, images, associations, colours, symbols, memories and desires that each person has about a brand from experiences of usage, exposure to communications, word-of-mouth and so forth.

The simplicity and consistency of Purpose can help to nurture and reinforce the brand in the consumer's mind to ensure that it comes readily to mind in the situations and moments that matter (whether that be at point of purchase or earlier in the consumer decision journey).

People desire brands more if they do good

At Ipsos we use a measure of the brand relationship that is simple and intuitive and reflects that brands are heuristics for decision making. Attitudinal Equity (AE) uses just two questions and measures the strength of desire that each consumer has for every brand in a given category and is closely correlated with real world market share.

Our analysis across 17 categories in the UK, France, USA, China, Poland, Russia and Mexico shows that while functional performance (quality) is a driver of brand desire, it's not enough to succeed. The brands that people want to use and buy are those that build emotional connections through integrity, clarity and leadership which results in social approval.

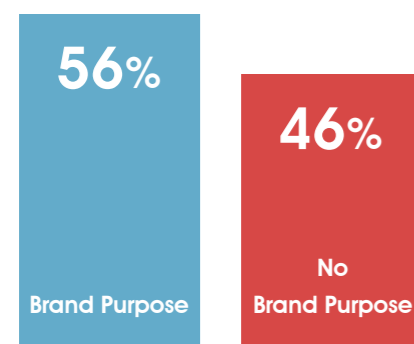
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Broader evidence also suggests that brands with Purpose over-perform on financial measures compared to those without.

The data from today's business world suggests that it doesn't have to be a choice, Purpose can also drive the bottom line. Unilever's share price has risen over 80% since Paul Polman took over as CEO in 2009 and Dove's “campaign for real beauty” has challenged culture and convention and helped grow annual sales from \$2.5bn to \$4bn².

Broader evidence also suggests that brands with Purpose over-perform on financial measures compared to those without.



56% of companies with a Brand Purpose outperform their competitors' revenue growth, compared with just 46% of those without a Purpose, according to a study published in the Harvard Business Review³.

63% of over-performing companies agree “we continuously engage our customers around our Brand's Purpose” and 60% of over-performers agree “in our company we ensure all employees are fully engaged in our Brand Purpose”, according the Association of National Advertisers⁴.

3 Fast and agile

To avoid being left behind, brands need to **innovate quickly in products and services that tangibly improve consumer's lives.** Supported by **agile and innovative marketing** that adopts a test and learn approach to take advantage of the real time data and opportunities that digital offers to get closer to the consumer:



Right time right moment - programmatic and data driven marketing delivered with more precision to reach the right audiences at the right moment in the consumer journey



More interactive - creating deeper brand relationships through more interactive, immersive, informative and entertaining formats



Highly compelling content - more media choices and multi-screening means branded content must be highly compelling to gain attention



Social & mobile - engaging people in new ways from conversations in social to personalised offers



Sharing & social amplification - extending the reach of compelling content across social networks and audiences to generate earned media



Faster insights - more access to data (behavioural, analytic, social) means consumer feedback and insights can be generated faster and accelerate innovation

While speed and agility is essential, brands must also ensure that they don't adopt a short-term mindset. Fast innovation and agile marketing needs to be guided by a clear Purpose that defines and directs what the brand wants to be.

Without Purpose, innovation can lead to the tyranny of endless incremental product-line extensions or marketing that focuses on short-term fireworks that burn brightly and are quickly forgotten, instead of guided arrows that aim at a clearly defined objective and contribute to a bigger strategy.

Case Study: Always

P&G's Always is a great example of a Purpose driven brand that achieves this. The brand's Purpose is to help women embrace womanhood. The latest expression of this is the #likeagirl campaign, which takes an agile approach that puts it at the heart of social conversation by challenging what it means to act #likeagirl.

The campaign contrasted how adults have become conditioned to limit their expectations of what girls can achieve with the reality of what young girls actually can do. A simple big idea was brilliantly executed to deliver:

Emotionally compelling content that people wanted to engage with and share

50m YouTube views within two months of launch

News coverage and debate online and across tabloid and broadsheet press

Online content targeted to reach women at the moment when they needed it, including period calculators, advice and content tailored by lifestage

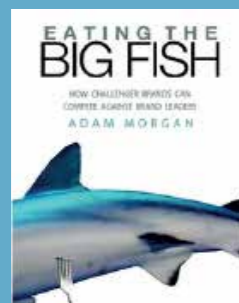
Real time marketing, such as tweets during the Super Bowl congratulating the winning team on playing #likeagirl

Always @Always - Feb 2
Congrats to @Patriots, you played, ran, and won #LikeAGirl. #SB49



Ask not what marketing can do for you...ask what you can do for others...

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“Consumers’ noses have evolved, they can smell a fraud and will blog about the smell.

Image has to be rooted in a brand's identity rather than being something created or marketed as a discrete entity in itself.”

We live in world of Wikileaks, activist bloggers and direct action, where green-washing doesn't work. Today's consumers are more media savvy than ever and social media has fuelled and facilitated the exposure of brands who get it wrong or fail to be authentic.

As Adam Morgan said in 'Eating the Big Fish': “Consumers’ noses have evolved, they can smell a fraud and will blog about the smell. An image rooted in identity is the difference between reality and marketing posture. It always has to be rooted in a brand's identity rather than being something created or marketed as a discrete entity in itself.”

What should your Brand Purpose be?

Central to Purpose is **authenticity**, which means Purpose must be **credible** and **founded in the values and heritage of the company**. It needs to stand the test of time and define who you are and what you do.

It also needs to **connect and resonate with the values and concerns of your consumers and employees**. Brands with a Purpose that feels too distant from people's everyday lives may struggle to create those connections. A strong Purpose will relate to people in all their spheres of concern:



Me – do you meet my needs?



My world – are you helping my friends and family?



The world – what are you doing for the world we live in?

The successful brands of the future will be fast and agile **Superheroes**, guided by a clear and simple Purpose that resonates with consumers at every level.

Sources:

1. bbc.co.uk/news/business-16611040
2. adage.com/article/news/ten-years-dove-s-real-beauty-aging/291216/
3. hbr.org/2014/07/the-ultimate-marketing-machine
4. Association of National Advertisers, Inc.

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At Ipsos ASI UK, we believe advertising and communications research should be fertiliser, not weedkiller, and a force for empowering creativity and building stronger brands.

Using iterative, flexible approaches, we empower our clients to find a big idea that's universal, and founded on human motivations.

We help brands to develop strategies that grow their business by using forward-looking measures of brand relationships that link to real-world behaviour – measures that are simple and intuitive and reflect that brands are heuristics for decision making.

Using neuroscientific techniques, such as Facial Coding and Biometrics, we enable our clients to understand and strengthen the emotional response to their advertising. We derive the impact of advertising on the brand – not by asking people how it affects them - and by revealing underlying and subconscious brand perceptions through Implicit Reaction Time (IRT) tests.

We help brands make campaigns that become famous by evaluating the potential of their activity to achieve virality through measures that reflect online and offline sharing behaviours, and using online ad replacement to test campaigns in the real world, in real time.

Ultimately, we believe that simplicity of purpose, communications and service is just as important to great research as it is to building great brands.

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