

16.6: Purpose-Driven Marketing

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to

- Understand issues related to purpose-driven marketing.
- Articulate best practices in purpose-driven marketing.

Brand Purpose

Brands satisfy many people, from employees to investors, customers, suppliers, and the communities they serve. These parties ask for more than a good product at a fair price. They ask for a brand to stand for something more than the product or service offered. Brand purpose is developed deep in an organization's DNA and should be infused in everything the brand says and does.

Accenture conducted a global survey of 30,000 consumers about brand purpose. It found that 62 percent of customers want companies to take a stand on issues such as sustainability, transparency, or fair working conditions. Furthermore, the brand purpose should align closely with the consumer's values to create an optimal purchase choice. Consumers are willing to switch brands if their values do not align (Barton, 2018).

The challenge runs deep. People expect brands to connect to a deep purpose; however, they are intolerant of brands that do so inauthentically. Walmart is an example of a company that received backlash from customers because of what they felt was not authentic. In May 2022, Walmart launched an ice cream flavor for the upcoming Juneteenth holiday. Consumers felt that Walmart was trying to sell a product rather than honor an important day in history (Valinsky, 2022). This example demonstrates the importance of holding a purpose at the center of the brand instead of using it as a means of selling a product.

Bombas knows how to build purpose into its DNA. The innovative, purpose-driven brand built its business on donating socks and underwear to homeless shelters with each purchase. As of this writing, Bombas has donated over 5 million items with the help of 3,500 impact partners in every state (Bombas, 2022). Its message is simple: you buy socks, they give socks. Purpose is at the heart of Bombas's organizational mission, and it will share it with anyone who will listen.

Link to Learning: More about Walmart and Bombas

There are numerous articles about Walmart and the Juneteenth backlash. Here are two worth reading so you can gain better insight into the customer's perspective:

- [CNN, Walmart Apologizes for Selling Juneteenth Ice Cream](#)
- [New York Daily News, Walmart's Juneteenth Ice Cream Leaves a Bad Aftertaste](#)

CNN Business interviewed the founders of Bombas to learn more about their work to provide homeless people with socks. Check out [this video about how Bombas integrates purpose and business](#).

Brands That Put Purpose First

The brands that put purpose at the center create ways for their customers to experience purpose. Dove pioneered brand purpose when it developed its Campaign for Real Beauty. Marketing research uncovered that young girls were impacted by the media's beauty standards. Dove took this insight and decided to tackle a systemic societal problem. This multi-decade campaign led to celebrating all types of beauty, redefining how we think of women and impacting self-esteem. Customers could experience purpose because the Campaign for Real Beauty was all about them. The Campaign for Real Beauty was more than just advertising; it reflected who Dove wanted to be in the world (Dove, 2022).

Link to Learning: Dove's Campaign for Real Beauty

Dove's campaign included several ads and commercials. Seeing examples of how companies focus on purpose will help your creativity in future marketing jobs. Explore the commercials created by Dove:

- Real Beauty Sketches, a commercial that artistically compares the gap between self-perception with perception from others



- Anti-photoshopping film *Evolution*, a viral commercial of a behind-the-scenes look at what happens with beauty ads



- Reverse Selfie, a commercial about the impact of social media on young girls' self-esteem



Why was this campaign so successful? Numerous articles and opinion pieces provide insight into its success. Read these two out for a sampling:

- Global Brands, [The Success of Dove's Real Beauty Campaign](#)
- Digital Marketing Institute, [Dove: A Spotless Approach to Digital Marketing](#)

Purpose-driven brands speak up, even when it's difficult or costly. If you read the news, you may see brands taking a stand on social issues. Russia's war on Ukraine in 2022 motivated several American companies to cease operations in Russia. It can be costly to cease operations in a country as large and populous as Russia, but companies such as Starbucks and McDonald's decided that their purpose was more important than their profits in this case.

Brands with purpose are intentional about inclusion. While exclusivity can be an effective marketing tactic for luxury brands, purpose-driven brands know that inclusivity is paramount. Procter & Gamble is known as a company that weaves inclusion into the fabric of its organization, from its hiring practices to the use of its paid media.

Link to Learning: Procter & Gamble Prioritizes People

Visit Procter & Gamble's (P&G) ["Explore Our Stories" web page](#) to view how the company prioritizes inclusion and creates opportunities for all people. Read three to five stories and consider what P&G is saying about who and what it values. Also, look at the partners that P&G collaborates with to create change in its communities.

Knowledge Check

It's time to check your knowledge on the concepts presented in this section. Refer to the Answer Key at the end of the book for feedback.

1.

Which of the following concepts are related to purpose-driven marketing?

- Transparency
- Sustainability
- Fair working conditions
- All of the above are correct.

2.

Which of the following is a best practice of purpose-driven brands?

- Standing up for what's right
- Good advertising

- c. Telling everyone about their purpose
- d. Being profitable

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