

a branded world

PODCAST

with
Luiza Campos



3 ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS TO HELP
BRANDS SURVIVE AND THRIVE

EPISODE 077 | NECESSITY IS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION.

marca strategy

INTRODUCTION

There are many examples of brands that managed to flourish during a crisis. Historic data shows that brands that can innovate and pivot quickly, are much more likely to survive during a crisis.

But for many brands, to envision possibilities rather than focus on the present existing problems, may be difficult to do and even feel wrong, after all, we're in crisis management mode and the instinct is to protect and defend. But it is exactly the ability to envision possibilities and seek new opportunities that give brands the best path forward to survive and potentially even thrive.

It takes intention and effort to create the right environment and nourish the right mindset to allow our teams to be creative and imagine new opportunities.

These 3 elements will help guide you to move from the present challenges to possible new opportunities that both address market demand and fit with your brand purpose and values.

3 essential elements to help brands survive and thrive a crisis:

1. Brand Identity
2. Assets and resources
3. Audience Needs

1. BRAND IDENTITY

Your brand purpose and values are your north star. They are your guide; they show you the right path. They are your anchor or source of stability helping you stay grounded and have clarity of purpose even if everything else around you is unclear. They are your inspiration and motivation. Reminding yourself and your team of your purpose and values is the way to stay on course while also imagining the many different ways you can continue to strive for your purpose and live by your values.

Make sure you have your purpose and values as your guide and your filter for decision-making.

Some examples of brands who have and continue to do live by their purpose and values are:

Harlem Globetrotters - "Create lasting family memories one smile and one raddling dunk at a time".

The Harlem Globetrotters, like many other brands have been greatly impacted by the pandemic crisis as they had to cancel all their games and tour. But, following their purpose and values, they have created at-home educational materials to keep kids and families entertained and to continue to bring smiles all over the world.

Some of the videos they created are:

- Teaching how to do tricks with a basketball, dribble like a globetrotter.
- Workouts for kids where Scooter (globetrotter actually does the home-workout with his three kids).
- Motivational messages.
- Geography with the globetrotters

These short videos are in keeping with their brand purpose and presented in the Globetrotters unique brand personality.

1. BRAND IDENTITY - CONT.

Mint mobile - As a way to try to help and provide value during the crisis, Mint Mobile have offered free unlimited data to their customers, but the way they delivered the information is what is so great.

The actor Ryan Reynolds bought Mint Mobile late in 2019 and he was the one to deliver the message to their customers by leaving a voice message to all customers.

Customers were surprised to hear the actor's voice in their inbox, and the message was fitting with the brand personality. It was funny, relatable in a self-deprecating way, unique to Reynolds and the brand itself. This resulted in a lot of buzz in social media and in a lot of brand engagement. Some customers called back and once again were greeted to Reynolds' voice, asking them to leave their name, message and least favourite Ryan Reynolds movie. This prompted even more buzz and engagement.

These two examples show how these brands are engaging and helping customers through the crisis but in a unique way, fitting with their brand personality.

2. ASSETS AND RESOURCES

Take note of all your assets and resources. Physically list things you have. From skills, expertise to assets such as computers, vehicles, equipment. Also think about people, staff, supporters, partners, influencers, etc. Basically, everything and everyone you may be able to tap into to help you re-deploy, re-imagine or re-purpose.

Looking at your physical assets as well as the combined skills and experience of your team, even skills that may not use in their current roles, can lead you to think about new ways to use these assets and resources.

People around you, being your existing clients, supporters, social media followers, suppliers, collaborators, etc. can be a great source of inspiration, for new opportunities.

3. AUDIENCE NEEDS

Disparity has always been present, and in this crisis is no different. While some people are at home worrying how they'll pay their rent, others are at home wondering what else to binge watch. Audience needs can be vastly different, and they can change quickly as the crisis progresses.

Understanding your audience needs is important to help you think about how you may be able to address these needs.

Some tools to use to help you better understand your audience needs are:

- Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Looking at Maslow's hierarchy of needs can be helpful to help you understand different needs any individual has, from the most basic of shelter and food, to safety, belonging and self-actualization. Depending in your audience and where they are in terms of the crisis progression their needs may fall in one of these categories.



3. AUDIENCE NEEDS - CONT.

Some examples of what brands have done to address the needs in different categories highlighted in the Maslow's hierarchy of needs are:

- Physiological:
 - LVMH, small brewers– making hand sanitizer or masks, donating gloves and ventilators.
 - Virgin - Driving to deliver food.
 - Hotels and convention centers – opening up their doors to house homeless people.
 - Airbnb – housing healthcare providers
- Safety:
 - Tools to help people work from home, retailers providing Plexiglass for cashiers, mental health support
- Belonging: Tools to connect such as: Zoom, Houseparty, or Psych or Monopoly.
- Self-Actualization: Online courses (professional development, acquiring new skills) Baking, painting, etc. Some providers are: Udemy, Coursera, Masterclass.

- Research

Look for the latest in consumer behaviour research that can provide insights on the consumer's needs, opinions and behaviours.

- Some sources for such research are; Edelman, Kantar, GlobeWebIndex, Brandwatch, Ipsos, nfpsynergy.

- Directly ask your audience

Through surveys, social media pools, online comments, customer service calls.

- Search listening tools

- Google auto complete
- Google Trends
- Answer the public
- Keyhole
- Awario

Use these three elements: 1. Brand identity, 2. Assets/Resources and 3. Audience Needs as your guide and create the right environment and the right mindset to allow our teams to be creative and imagine new opportunities.

Make sure you:

- Allow yourself to be playful. Take time to relax, play and think. Don't over work yourself and don't stay in the worry of the challenges you're facing now.
- Share ideas. Let all your team and even others outside your organization, chip in. And don't disregard ideas too quickly because they seem impossible or too outside your core business. As long as they are within your purpose and values and they address the needs of your audience, don't be too quick to turn them down. Instead think of what it would take to make it true. The crazy idea may be just what you need, or it may not, but at least think of ways you could make it real may allow you to think of different strategies, and new feasible ideas.
- Ask open questions: What if...? What need is there and how may we address it? What are we not doing for our customer? If we were starting now, what would we do? If we knew this was coming, what would we have done/created?
- Look at other industries, even if completely unrelated. What are others doing? What have brands in other countries done?
- Let your purpose guide you. Think of other ways by which you can achieve your purpose Netflix is a great example of a company who focused on their purpose to help them evolve in a time of crisis.

The Netflix example.

Netflix was founded in the years leading up to the dot-com bubble. In 2000 they were struggling, like many other businesses and actually placed the company up for sale but didn't find a buyer. Instead, they focused on their purpose of telling stories and imagined the different ways they could deliver on it.

Doing so led Netflix to completely change their offering and not depend on bricks and mortar, or specific technology like video tapes to deliver on their purpose. They transformed the business model to become a streaming on-demand platform and later to a producer of content.

Although business has always been around movies and TV shows, the changes Netflix implemented demanded very different business models, including staff skills requirements, pricing models, etc. These were significant changes for the organization and they came with risks, but they ultimately proved to be the right path.

- Experiment. If you can try something with little investment or cost, go for it. Experimenting in the real world, with a sample size audience, or small offering, will give you the experience and feedback needed to test the idea, improve it or generate new ideas to pursue.

Ultimately, brands exist to solve problems. We are all facing many problems. Some familiar and some new. But as many problems as we have, there are likely as many solutions which can be potential business opportunities.

It takes discipline and intention to give your teams the right space and to foster the right environment, to truly imagine new opportunities. And it takes courage, which is understandably hard to come by during a crisis. But don't let fear be your kryptonite.