

a branded world

PODCAST

with
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HOW TO DEFINE AND DELIVER ON A
HUMAN-CENTERED PURPOSE

EPISODE 080 | THE FUTURE OF BRANDS.

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INTRODUCTION

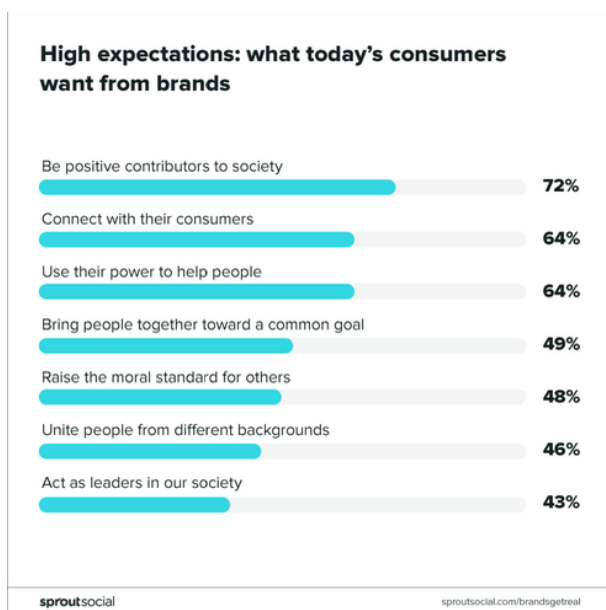
Brands of all sizes and industries are facing a challenging world, to say the least. But these challenges also present an opportunity for brands to become more relevant and meaningful to their audiences.

There is an increased pressure on brands to be a force for good and help solve social problems such as environmental issues, racism and diversity.

Global research shows that consumers expect brands to "act more human". This means that, "Consumers want brands that embody human qualities – be steadfast and transparent about their beliefs, consistent in their actions and authentic in their intentions."

[Deloitte's 2020 Global Marketing Trends Report](#) states

What do these expectations look like?



[What consumers want from brands – SproutSocial](#)

This may seem like a tall order, but it can be boiled down to this, consumers want brands to help solve social issues. They want to know what you stand for and want to see that you mean it.

How can brands be more human and ensure people are at the centre of everything they do?

It starts with the foundation of your organization. Your purpose. But it has to be the right Purpose.

Most organizations have a purpose and/or vision, but few have a human-centered or social purpose.

Now is the time to examine your purpose and ensure you have the right purpose, one that is a genuine intention of the organization and you can commit to.

This guide will walk you through the two key steps to define your purpose and ensure you can consistently deliver on it.

"Consumers want brands to be steadfast and transparent about their beliefs, consistent in their actions and authentic in their intentions."

“People don’t buy what you do, they buy why you do it”

Simon Sinek

STEP 1 – ENSURE YOU HAVE A HUMAN-CENTERED PURPOSE.

What you stand for and how you act as an organization is key in the decision making of consumers. It’s not enough anymore to have a good quality product and good customer service. Consumers want to know how a brand is making the world a better place. Not in superficial or symbolic ways, like posting supportive messages in social media or making a few donations to charitable organizations. But rather, what is the role you play in society. How is your organization a force for good?

Sets your direction

Your purpose is the reason you exist, your focus and promise. Your purpose clarifies your intentions and sets the direction for the organization. A human centered purpose declares your genuine intention and your commitment to make a positive impact to the world.

Differentiates your organization

Authentic human-centered purposes differentiate brands in the mind of consumers in a way that’s impossible for others to imitate. It creates a bond with your audience that is difficult to break, as long as you keep committed to your purpose. Your purpose, if it’s genuine and good one, is the answer to the question your audience is always asking, “Why you?”

Your purpose also helps attract and retain the right talent, those who share your values and believe in your purpose. Having a team who is passionate and committed about the organization’s purpose increases engagement and performance and is essential to shape the right culture.

What makes a good purpose?

There are four main criteria for a good purpose:

1. Genuine

Your purpose should never be a marketing scheme or key messages you push out. It must be a genuine intention of the organization, part of your DNA.

Ideally your purpose must be grounded on an experienced truth. In other words, something that your organization already does, and you can point to examples. This way, your purpose will resonate and get support internally and externally.

2. Aspirational

Your purpose needs to be big or ambitious enough to excite people to work towards it and inspiring enough to keep you going through tough times. Your purpose needs to be big enough that is not achievable in just a few years but rather something you're always striving for. In some cases, organizations choose a purpose that feels impossible and that's exactly why it's so important to pursue.

Example:

Patagonia: "To save our home planet"

3. Directional

While you want your purpose to be aspirational, it needs to be specific enough that it provides a clear direction on what path you should follow as an organization. This clarity is important to help the organizations know what to focus on and make the right decisions that are in alignment with their purpose.

Example:

ActionDignity: "To foster a community of equality and dignity for all."

4. Transformative

Ideally you want your purpose statement to reference the impact you want to have or the difference you make. Not all purpose statements make reference to a transformation but if you have a clear impact you're striving for, it's helpful to include it.

Example:

Airbnb: "Help create a world where anyone can belong anywhere"

"You are only as good as your last value based decision".

STEP 2 – MAKE YOUR PURPOSE REAL

Your purpose is the reason you exist, so your job and everyone else's job in the organization is to make it real. You need to make sure you can deliver on your purpose in good and bad times.

To ensure your actions and decisions are in alignment with your purpose, you must select the right set of values. Your values are the guardrails for how you behave and make decisions. You have to demonstrate your purpose is real by always making decisions and behaving in alignment with your values and purpose.

The value of your organization is measured by your ability to demonstrate through your actions that you are living and acting by your values and making the world a better place.

All your processes, policies and decisions need to be in alignment with your purpose and values. You need to recruit, review and reject based on values.

Your values and purpose need to be both the criteria for decision making as well as for evaluating your performance.

Example: Patagonia – "To save our home planet"

Examples of actions that align with purpose:

1. Patagonia will fix any item purchased no matter how old it is.
2. Self-imposed Earth tax of 1% – directed to providing support for environmental non-profits working to defend air, land and water around the globe.
3. Child care for staff.
4. Strict criteria and monitoring of labour, social and environmental conditions of all suppliers.