

Marketplace Insights from Business in the Community

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News, research and the latest buzz on brand purpose and building customer trust

Brand rankings and ratings

Radley Yeldar have released their [2016 Fit For Purpose index](#), with Unilever topping the bill once again. The index ranks companies with a narrow 'Word-Action gap' as high performers, with those saying more than they are doing (and vice versa) rated lowest. The report has put a big focus on collaboration, stating that out of the top 100 companies ranked, 83 percent have demonstrated some type of collaboration, with nearly half demonstrating robust collaboration overall and 70 percent of the top 20 engaging in a long-term partnership related to their purpose. There have also been noticeable movers and shakers in the list, which Marketing Week put down to brands [not fulfilling their purpose commitments](#).

Fortune have released their [Change the World](#) list of 50 businesses that are tackling society's biggest problems and making money in the process. Featured in the Top 10 are GSK, Nestle and Mastercard. This article from Fortune looks at the [lessons learned from this year's list](#), mainly that societal impact is increasingly featuring more in core strategies rather than an add on. It discusses how business are starting to see themselves through the social impact their products and services can have rather than focusing just on the products or services themselves. It also notes how businesses are forming meaningful collaborative projects with NGOs which relate to their core business, and the shift in responsible investing and the positive returns investors are seeing.

Engaging customers

Label Insight's study, [2016 Transparency ROI Study](#), has shown that [consumers desire more product information and are inclined to be more loyal to brands that provide detailed insights](#). About 40% say they would switch to a new brand if it offered full product transparency, and 81% say they would consider a brand's entire portfolio of products if they switched to that brand as a result of increased transparency. With consumers wanting more [meaningful relationships from the brands they are purchasing](#), this offers brands the opportunity to align their products to an authentic purpose, one which is clear, honest and transparent.

A recent YouGov survey of 4,000 18-24 year olds in the UK found that tech and media player brands, including Youtube and Netflix, were more popular with Millennials than consumer goods brands such as Ben and Jerrys or Cadbury. Alex Ririe, Managing Partner at Coley Porter Bell, argues that fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies need to work harder to engage consumers, as they lack the same level of engagement. Alex believes the solution is creating authentic brand purpose as "[Millennials value brands with purpose, but they can spot smoke and mirrors a mile off](#)".

Engaging employees

LinkedIn has released the [largest global study on the role of purpose in the workforce](#), Purpose at Work. The report revealed findings that show 38% LinkedIn members consider purpose to be equally weighted with either money or status, and 37% of LinkedIn members globally are purpose oriented, which means that they optimize their job to align with work that matters to them. One of the most surprising findings as noted by this [Guardian article](#), is that Millennials were found to be the least purpose driven generation. It is suggested this may be in part due to a lack of work experience.

Michelle Keaney, partnership director at The Marketing Academy, discusses how in times of uncertainty, such as the recent Brexit fallout, [having a social purpose can guide through choppy waters](#). Through a strong sense of purpose and a well-defined culture, businesses are able to retain and attract talent and loyal customers. Michelle uses the John Lewis Partnership as a good example of a purpose driven company that has survived through times of insecurity, due to its commitment to “the happiness of all its members, through their worthwhile and satisfying employment in a successful business”.

Shaping purpose

Sustainable Brands argue that when applying purpose, it is vital that companies conduct intensive research and analysis of the current environment and future trends affecting them. This includes understanding the political, economic, social and technological context in which a company operates. Conducting this research from the outset will create [true brand authenticity](#) and gives a company real relevance in the World. This article gives examples of how companies like Lego, Vodafone and Barclays are using their purpose to tackle current social and environmental issues.

Bringing purpose to life

[The Aspen Institute in partnership with Fortune magazine](#) have produced a series of video interviews with CEOs of companies including Ford and Novartis, discussing the purpose of their business and how they use this a strategic tool to drive innovation.

With Generation Z demanding more of companies, Campaign highlight the need for [business to move forward from the “do less bad” mantra, towards making meaningful societal impact](#). Brands need to be careful when lecturing consumers on how to behave but shouldn't let this stop them from developing products which aim to create a cultural shift. It is also noted that there is concern of broadcasting sustainability initiatives, out of fear it will be viewed cynically. With the belief that brands will become more vocal in driving the greater good, businesses need to move on from simply talking about purpose and sustainability to taking action.

[Unilever's latest marketing campaign](#) sees them focusing on the impact that their brands are having globally. It will include such impacts that it's brands Dove, Persil and Domestos are having on the world. Speaking about the new campaign, Keith Weed, Unilever's chief marketing and communications officer states “Brands with a purpose are at the heart of Unilever and we believe that the small choices we all make every day can make a big difference to the world we live in”.

Mattel have linked the recent increase in sales of the Barbie brand to a shift in thinking at the organisation. Through the release of their new diverse, inclusive doll selection, Mattel wanted children from all cultures to be able to relate to the character. The company have stated [the positive impact of a purposeful approach has given them the confidence to apply the same thinking across other brands](#).

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