

Chapter 19

Brand Purpose and Purpose-Driven Marketing: The New Digital

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ABSTRACT

With the changing and transforming world, the relationship between consumers and brands began to change and transform. Nowadays, it is not enough for brands to produce quality products or provide quality service for consumers. Now, consumers expect brands to be sensitive to social, ecological, economic, or health problems. This situation has enabled the two concepts to become important and popular today: brand purpose and purpose-driven marketing. Brand purpose is the “why” the brand exists. And purpose-driven marketing is a marketing trend that aims to connect brands with their consumers through common social goals. It seems that the concepts of brand purpose and purpose-driven marketing will be more common in marketing communication. The notion of purpose will change the commercial dynamics of brands in the same way that digitalization transformed the way people buy and sell stuff. This is exactly why purpose is the new digital.

INTRODUCTION

The digitalizing world has completely changed both brands and consumers. Brands aim to attract consumers' attention and create a positive attitude towards them by using media, especially digital media. With the development of digital media, it has become easier for brands to reach and interact with consumers. On the other hand, since digital media is cheaper than conventional media and because of the advertising clutter caused by brands' infinite desire to connect with the consumers, consumers can avoid ads. Or the advertisements created by brands may disappear in the advertising crowd.

Besides all these, brands still want to create long-lasting relationships with their customers. But, consumers' expectations from brands are completely different from 10 or 20 years ago. Today, consumers

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-7192-7.ch019

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do not evaluate or choose a brand only with the features of its products or the prestige of using it. These factors are not enough for a brand to be preferred by consumers. In a world of nearly infinite choice, consumers increasingly base their purchasing decisions on factors beyond price and product benefit. They look to how brands articulate their ideals; not simply the corporate culture, but how they aspire to benefit customers and the world. (TED 2012 Ads Worth Spreading Report as cited in Hsu, 2017, p. 373). Especially the Millennial generation (Gen Y) and Gen Z, born into the digital world or grew up in the digital world, establish a different relationship with brands than other generations. The Millennial generation (Gen Y) and Gen Z, which are stated to be more sensitive to social events, sustainability, and the future of the world, can easily share these ideas with the whole world with the help of digital media.

Therefore, for a brand, what it produces or what service it offers to consumers is not enough in today's world. As mentioned above, consumers are different now. Nowadays, as the reflections of today's trends, they want to know everything about a corporation or a brand. The consumer's request for information can be about the contents of a product of a brand, as well as about the sustainability and environmentalism works of that brand. And especially with the help of digital media, consumers can get every information they want to know about a brand in seconds.

With the effects of all these, we are seeing a lot of prosocial consumers today. Pro-social consumers are increasingly connecting with brands that serve the purpose of making the world better. They are consuming the products of these brands and benefit from their services. Especially, through digital and social media, they are sharing and recommending these brands with other pro-social consumers with similar sensitivities.

So, the changing needs of consumers, new habits, social and environmental sensitivities, and way of perceiving the world compel brands to change, to renew their understanding of marketing, and to show more attention to consumers and the realities of the world than ever before. As Simon Sinek (2011 as cited in Hsu, 2017, p. 373) said, "People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it. And what you do simply proves what you believe." It seems that brands that can achieve this will continue to be in the lives of consumers in the future, too. However, it is possible to say that the future is not very bright for brands that are not concerned with the social, political, environmental, and cultural sensitivities of the consumer. Many current studies and researches confirm this situation. For example, according to global marketing, communication, and media agency Havas Media Group's Meaningful Brands 2019 Research, people wouldn't care if 77% of brands disappeared (Meaningful Brands Research Report, 2019). That means consumers say "I don't care if that brand is out of my life tomorrow". People say this for 77% of the brands they use. It's a very dramatic result for brands' future. And also considering that Havas Meaningful Brands 2019 research was conducted in 30 different countries with the participation of 350,000 consumers, including 1800 brands, it is becoming clear how serious the situation is for brands in a global sense. Besides, the Havas Media Group's Meaningful Brands research, which has been conducted since 2008, reveals that this remarkable rate of 77% has increased every year for 11 years (Akkılıç, 2020). So, many things are changing rapidly in the world of marketing globally. But before everything else, the consumers are changing, so brands have to keep up with this change.

As another result of the Meaningful Brands Research 2019, 77% of consumers prefer to buy from companies that share their values. Consumers expect brands to understand and empathize with them. They want brands to care about what they value and to protect those values (Meaningful Brands Research Report, 2019).

However, another important piece of data from Meaningful Brands Research 2019 is as follows: 55% of consumers believe companies have a more important role than governments today in creating a better

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