

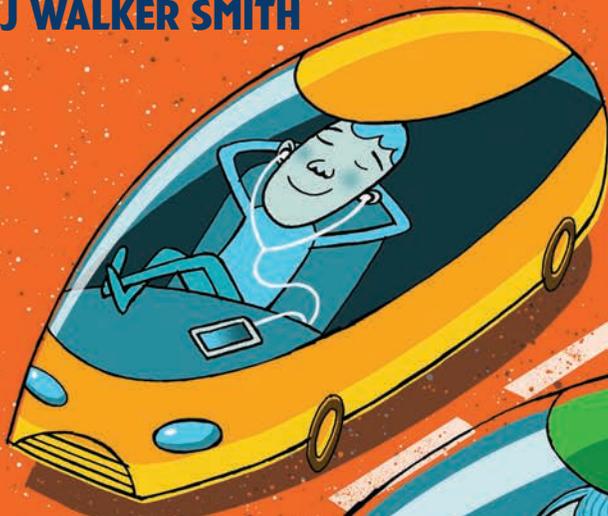
Market Leader

NEW THINKING, DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

The pivot to passive

From screens to sensors

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WHAT BBC WILL OUR CHILDREN INHERIT?
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IN PURSUIT OF PURPOSE
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In pursuit of purpose

'Purpose' is the first pillar of the Marketing Society's new Manifesto for Sustainable Growth. **Liz Tinlin** takes us on a quick tour of what purpose is, why we would want it, and how to create one

WOULD YOU love your whole organisation to believe in the same goal? Contribute to something bigger, steering your brand's impact on the world? Build a stronger, more enduring brand?

Pursuing 'purpose' can help you to achieve these aims because it provides a focal point, a big idea, around which to rally marketing thinking and the organisation's resources to create better consumer engagement, and ultimately drive sustainable growth.

WHAT PURPOSE IS NOT

Purpose is not an objective. Increasing profit, taking category leadership within three years, becoming most recommended supplier: these are all objectives – valid outcomes we want from our activities, without which modern business couldn't run. But the outside world generally doesn't care if you meet them or not. That's not a purpose as we mean it here.

Purpose isn't about the category. That's your positioning, and the triad

of segmentation-targeting-positioning remains at the core of all brand marketing – clearly defining what you are, for whom, and why this is better than your competitors, in a way that is differentiating, motivating, relevant and credible.

PURPOSE IS THE 'WHY'

Purpose goes beyond the category, beyond category-based positioning. It answers the question: but what's the point? Why do we do this? It's about defining the values that drive what you do, as explained superbly in the Simon Sinek TED talk 'How great leaders inspire action' (www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek). Sinek details the difference between what you do (your product features), how you do it (your positioning and benefits), and why you do it (your values and beliefs). For the most compelling brands today, people are buying into the 'why you do it'.

As identified by Jim Stengel (and Millward Brown Optimor) and detailed in his book *Grow*, all 50 best-performing brands between 2001 and 2011 had a bigger 'brand ideal', or purpose, at their heart. Stengel learnt this

on Pampers, managing the transformation from 'Dry nappies, happy child' (a category positioning), to 'Supporting healthy, happy child development' (a broader ideal), and found that this purpose galvanised the organisation into better NPĐ and more emotionally engaging activation.

Google's proposition might be 'To organise and make accessible the world's information', but its purpose is to 'Satisfy every curiosity immediately'. Innocent makes fun, healthy fruit drinks, but has a purpose to 'Help people live well, die old', and it supports that purpose with a 'Chain of good' from tasty little drinks to providing opportunity in the developing world.

Whether it's Lidl or John Lewis, Lush or Elemis, people buy into brands that reflect their values and priorities – that say something positive about them. A growing minority even want to look behind the label to see what is being done 'in their name'. Positioning your brand purely through the lens of your category is rarely enough to help you cut through the clutter and engage consumers emotionally. You need a big, compelling idea at the centre of your brand – an idea that taps into deeper motivations, values and beliefs that go beyond whiter whites, tastier yoghurts or better mortgage rates. 'Purpose' is that kind of idea, and we believe exploring and creating purpose is the best way for brands to stand for something that wins consumers' hearts and minds.

So purpose is a sense of shared ambitions and beliefs that explains why we do what we do, what we stand for in the world – and so shapes how and what we do.

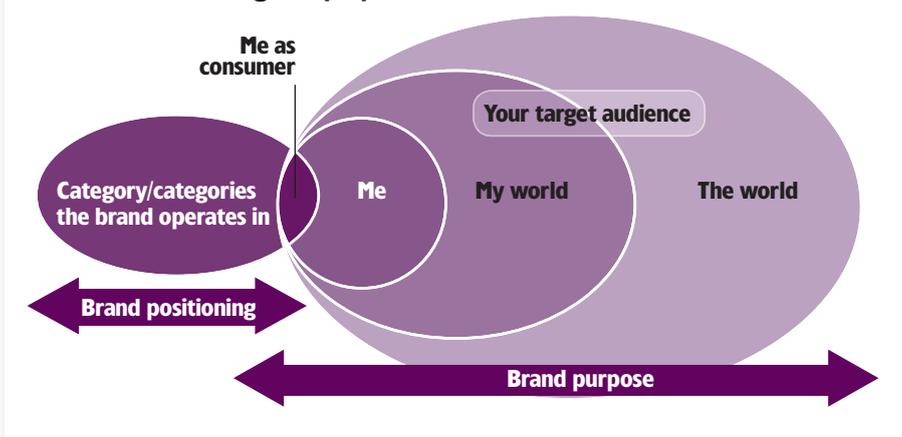
SPOTTING PSEUDO PURPOSES

But a word of caution is required in our jargon-littered marketing world. It's not the label 'purpose' that's important, but the thought itself – often what is labelled as a 'purpose' on a strategy document might not be, or what is already evident in a great brand positioning needs pulling out and focusing on as the brand purpose.

So here are four questions to test whether something, however it is labelled, really is a purpose:

- 1. Life:** Is it about the world, people, life, not about our category? (Acid test: could you apply it to a diverse range of categories, for example dog food, travel insurance and beer?)
- 2. Action:** Does it imply actively doing something, a sense of change, momentum? (Acid test: does it have a powerful verb in it?)
- 3. Simple:** Is it a clear, concise thought that would make sense to anyone from the CFO to the call centre staff? (Acid test: could you say to friends or family 'we're

FIGURE 1: Positioning and purpose



trying to do more to x' without feeling like a spin-spouting idiot?)

4. Relevant: Can your brand or business play an obvious role, however small, in achieving this purpose? (Acid test: can you link the facts of your business to this 'purpose' in one or two easy steps?)

PURPOSE IS FOR GOOD

Purpose in this context is not just externally focused, but also inherently positive, and has momentum. 'Purposeful' means to act determinedly with a goal in mind. So having purpose is about being a force for good – either in consumers' lives or in their broader world, or in the world at large. These three layers of 'Me', 'My World' and 'The World' are important distinctions here (Figure 1).

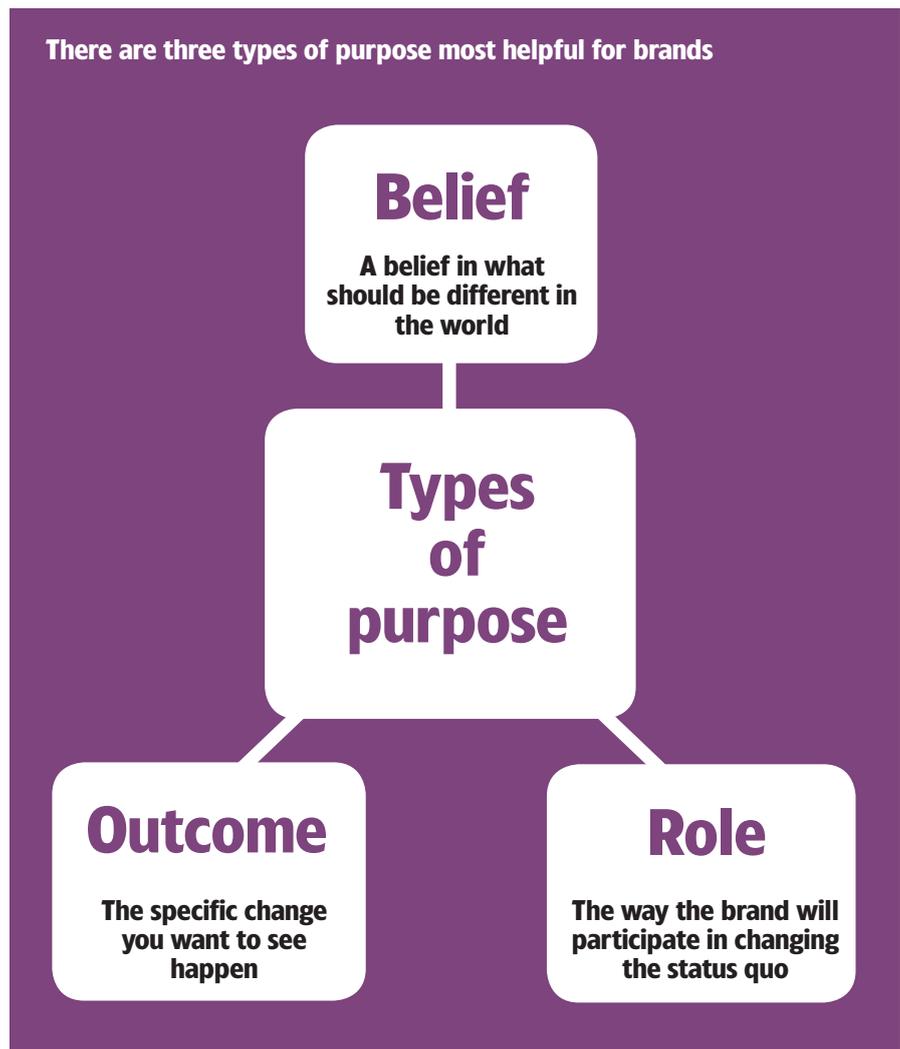
It would be a mistake to think that purpose is just about solving the world's problems. That is just one layer – 'The world' – with which only some brands will choose to engage. Stengel identifies five 'fields' of brand ideals and only one of these is 'impacting society'. However, experience suggests that a brand with strong purpose could choose to act in any of these three layers, and a strong brand will usually operate in all three. For example, Pampers primarily operates in the 'Me' space (mum and child) but demonstrates the 'child development' purpose through per-pack donations to a Unicef programme for maternal and newborn tetanus vaccinations. The programme has now eradicated tetanus in ten countries.

Haywards 5000 beer in India, owned by SABMiller, is another example. It is a mainstream 'working man's' strong lager, but is shifting from a very physical masculinity to one of mental resolve. Around a brand purpose of 'strengthening resolve for the next milestone' it encourages and enables consumers to do more – even running programmes that help relatively unskilled men to gain basic career skills vital for the emerging Indian job market. And never have I met a more passionate, excited and clear-thinking brand team. They are on a mission – and they love it. As Robbie Millar, SABMiller's group innovation and brand propositions director, says: "A clear purpose centres a brand and gives it a reason for being in the real world."

Being 'for good' is a broad definition of a brand's impact. But as soon as you go beyond 'Me' and into 'My World' or 'The World', you are starting to make your brand more sustainable, which – as we all know – is rising to the top of the business agenda.

'Sustainable' is a hard-edged, long-term macro goal. There's not one single brand

There are three types of purpose most helpful for brands



that is there yet. In brand terms, it means a state where the negative impacts of a brand's full 'cradle-to-grave' supply chain (including consumers, suppliers, producers, retailers, energy and raw materials) are not only minimised, but balanced by positive impact, so no people today or in future generations suffer because of that brand's existence.

Being 'for good' can apply to a whole range of specific impacts on people and the planet, whether through environmental, social or economic factors. It all starts with thinking of people as people, not just as consumers. Every individual I have ever worked with has something they care about – from gender equality to child education, from sweatshops to drinking water access, from loss of rainforest to pollution, from helping the poorest to gain employment to channelling entrepreneurship funds to the brightest new ideas, and from fair treatment of employees to ethical behaviour towards customers.

The need for brands to find a way to be 'for good' on some of these issues is increasingly important. Edelman's

'Goodpurpose' study shows that the vast majority of people would recommend a brand that supports a good cause over one that doesn't, and seek brands behaving 'ethically' (though definitions of 'ethical' vary). Most importantly, brands have credibility if they act with believable mutual self-interest: 76% of people believe it is OK for brands to do good while doing well. But for brands to do well – ie grow – it cannot be just a matter of brand philanthropy. The purpose has to be evident through committing to better solutions for consumers.

This idea of committing fully to something, and endeavouring to stand for something bigger, will be familiar to anyone who has read the excellent challenger brand thinking codified by Adam Morgan. His eight practices of a challenger brand provide a great guide for turning purpose into reality – particularly creating a lighthouse identity and thought leadership. But the pivotal practice is often 'creating symbols of re-evaluation' – namely, saying you stand for something isn't

Purpose gives marketers a voice and relevance in the boardroom

enough. You have to prove it with carefully chosen deeds that force people to realise you mean what you say.

TYPES OF PURPOSE

Purpose statements are often characterised by containing either a driving belief, an intended role and/or an ambition for change. But the critical factor is that it's about us, the organisation. There's no room for the word 'you' in a purpose. It's not a proposition.

A driving belief is a view about the world that shapes the business priorities – it may seem straightforward but it can have contentious implications, and there will be a degree of challenging the status quo. For example, the Johnson & Johnson Stayfree sanpro brand in India declares: "All women have the right to a healthy and hygienic life." This has impacted products, pricing, distribution and also education and PR. Together with local government and Unicef, it established a 'Women for change' programme, providing health clinics for adolescent girls promoted by celebrity spokeswomen.

Brands often choose to define a purpose as the role they will play in changing the status quo, rather than just a belief about what should change. For example: Starbucks ('Inspire and nurture the human spirit'); IBM ('Create solutions for a smarter planet'); Red Bull ('Energise the world'); Zara ('Democratise fashion trends'); and Dove ('Inspire women to have a positive self-image').

Sometimes the most powerful purposes that really transform organisations can be those that take belief and role and combine them into an ambition: a desired outcome – a 'We'll put a man on the moon' statement of intent. Martin Luther King had a dream about a nation where people were "judged not by the colour of their skin but the content of their character". This wasn't just belief, but a vision of a future. These are far rarer to find, but recent work shows that they can be the most compelling because then the organisation can focus on removing barriers to that outcome, internally and externally. For example, Homebase's new purpose is 'Helping everyone live in a home they love', which enables the retailer to work through the barriers to all kinds of people (everyone) living in homes, and to people

loving their homes, and deliver solutions to both. It rallies the whole organisation with a clear driving belief and streamlines decision-making with the question: 'Does this initiative help us achieve this outcome?'

PURPOSE IS A JOURNEY

Belief and ambition are most important where big changes are required because truly embedding the purpose is a long journey of change, taking years, not months. As Jo Kenrick, marketing director of Homebase, says: "The purpose of an organisation has to be strong enough to sustain people through the journey that organisation is going on. The tougher the journey is likely to be, the more powerful and believable the purpose has to be."

Regardless of the purpose the team chooses, the key is that the purpose, positioning and positive action are all closely linked, and consistently delivered, through the entire organisation. This isn't a marketing job – it's the whole organisation's job. It shapes the innovation agenda, every internal initiative and every aspect of brand activation. At its most integrated, it even drives personal objectives, HR strategies and internal culture, energising teams and harnessing the whole organisation in a single direction.

CREATING POWERFUL PURPOSE

Defining your organisation's purpose (whether your organisation is one brand or a whole business) is essentially about identifying the sweet spot between internal desire and external challenges. As the Homebase team would say, the purpose is where "the aims of the organisation intersect with the aims of the customer".

Internal desire is the crystallisation of what would motivate the team. Start with questions such as:

- What legacy do you want to have left in ten years' time?
- What kind of business do you want this to be?
- What do you believe this brand should stand for?

The method I have found most successful in doing this is based on the excellent brand archetype work created by Margaret Mark and Carol Pearson in *The Hero and the Outlaw*. Exploring the archetype of your brand or business avoids marketing jargon and gets to the heart of what kind of role you want to play – what kind of business you want to be.

External challenge is about identifying the change in the world that you want to address. For example, it could be about the time pressures of modern life, an

ageing population, child literacy, gender equality or perceptions of beauty. Start with questions such as:

- What do our consumers care or worry about in their lives?
- What trends will impact our category in ten years' time?
- What 'norm' do we want to overturn?

Consumer insight, cultural trends, scenario planning and semiotics can all help you to get a different perspective on Me, My World and The World.

PURPOSE AND THE BOARD

For marketers, there is an additional benefit to pursuing purpose. It gives the marketing leadership a voice and relevance in the boardroom that is often desired and rarely achieved. Although most boards arguably don't care enough about what the business says, they all care about what it does. Adopting a purpose means changing what the business does, and so is usually led by the CEO or, in a multi-brand business, the global head of each brand organisation.

PURPOSE: A RETURN TO VALUES

Some critics say purpose is at odds with the oft-quoted primary goal of business: to provide shareholder returns. But business being 'for good' isn't a new thought. It is a rediscovery of the thought that made many early brands and companies great in the first place, such as John Lewis, Cadbury, Kellogg's, Clarks and building societies.

Far from being the 'latest thing' in the world of marketing, purpose is probably the only thing that is proven to deliver sustainable business growth over the long term. It just needs fresh approaches and clever thinking that connect it to our complex modern world. And isn't that exactly what most marketers would like to be doing? We all have a chance to reinvigorate our brands and businesses by pursuing our purpose. We just need to ask ourselves: "Why are we here?"

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