



# THE SHIFT FROM IMAGE TO IMPACT

How brands are creating  
an antidote to apathy

Ogilvy

WARC  
AN ASCENTIAL COMPANY



## The power of impact.

Since the dawn of advertising, brands have tried to attach themselves to cultural trends. When brands see something catch the attention of their target audience, they figure it makes sense to latch on. And that's because for the longest time, effective marketing was about conjuring an image.

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ANTONIS  
KOCHILAS  
Global CEO  
Advertising  
& Co-author of  
"The Shift from  
Image to Impact"

Brands are still doing this today.

In the summer of 2021, a well-known American deodorant brand created a new product tied to a cryptocurrency—which itself was inspired by a meme featuring a dog—and launched the campaign on a day of celebration of that cryptocurrency.

This obviously made some level of sense for the brand, whose audience is likely pretty familiar with cryptocurrency and the world of meme-speak that surrounds it.

This meme-crypto-deodorant hyperbole, however, exemplifies why this type of image chasing is fool's gold. It sees the brand trying to hijack the cultural spotlight—in this case, by aligning itself to something which may have some meaning to the target audience but no association with the role the brand plays in the audience's life. That last point is key. Your *brand* must show that it is relevant to your audience's life—not just to its social media feed.

This type of marketing—marketing which is focused on creating an image—is no longer sufficient. Brands may feel hip to market this

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way, since it's been the mark of good marketing in the past. But the past is the past for a reason. The state of play has changed.

In the last 15 years, with the launch of the iPhone and with the explosion of Facebook, we've collectively lived through truly unprecedented change. Digital platforms have penetrated our lives far faster than radio, television, and other major technological advances did. And not only have these platforms grown quickly, but also the role they play in our world sets them apart from previous media. They have affected our behaviors and preferences on a major scale, with bigger and broader global implications.

In the old world, we had an abundance of available attention amidst a dearth of media. This caused brands to chase impressions, looking to build by making themselves visible at every opportunity they could to get in front of their audience's eyes.

But now, the opposite is true. We have an abundance of media, and a scarcity of attention, because everything competes for this finite attention. Brands now cater to an audience that is beyond being simply a receiver of messages, and even beyond the products and services of brands. The public today is submerged in the experiences that brands create and the content they serve. Brands have become immersive forces in their lives.



With this relationship shift, marketers have to make a major change. They must move from creating marketing in which people are targets, to marketing that people are a part of. Brands used to operate like this: they were lighthouses. They emanated a big, bright signal that stretched far and wide, getting people's attention and



is submerged in the  
hat brands create and  
hey serve. Brands have  
ersive forces in their  
relationship shift,  
a major

offering them an aspirational destination. But because of the way technology has radically changed the world, and people's behavior with it, brands and their audiences have a new relationship. An effective brand today is more like a flashlight. It's a companion that a person carries with them wherever they go, which helps them define

and follow their own journey. Successful modern brands are servant leaders, making an impact on people's lives—or, rather crucially, helping people make an impact on their own lives.

Let's not misconstrue it—brands still need to have an image, and image-making is still a part of marketing. But image is a means to a great end, not the sole objective. Brands should no longer go to extremes when it comes to image.

Effective marketing today needs to go much deeper. It must move from creating an image and manically mirroring cultural trends to helping the brand make an impact on people, on the planet, and on performance.

What does it mean to make an impact, and how can brands do it?

That's what this piece will examine. The following pages will explore the shift from image to impact that people expect of brands.

It will discuss how brands now show empathy for people rather than mirror mass culture; why brands should shift from being aspirational to inspirational; why they should eschew consistency for coherence and assertion for authenticity; why brands should embrace the end of conspicuous consumption and the arrival of conscious consumption; and why brands need to ditch exclusivity for inclusivity.

Impact may seem subjective, but it can be measured. Within this report, we'll unveil the new Ogilvy Brand Impact Index, created in partnership with WPP's BrandAsset® Valuator, which will identify the brands that are making the biggest impact across the world today.

The shift brands must make—from image to impact—is crucial because of the public's current view of brands: they believe that brands have a role to play in making the world a better place, but at the same time believe that if most brands disappeared, the world wouldn't be much different.

This represents a significant gap. With a public that is more selective in its choice of brands — while holding those brands to a higher standard — brands can no longer market how they used to. Brands must be companions, not destinations. They must include, not exclude. Above all else, they must have impact.

The brands that do will sustain growth in this ever-uncertain future, and they'll do so by making an impact on people, on the planet, and on their companies' performance. And that is what Ogilvy is here to do—inspire brands and people to impact the world.

## What does it take to stand out?

We all know how important it is to be distinctive.

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DAVID TILTMAN  
SVP Content  
WARC

Marketers have always faced the challenge of making their brands stand out from the crowd, while being recognizable and familiar to their buyers.

That challenge remains. But the context in which marketers are meeting it is changing.

This report, created with Ogilvy and built around some of their most recent thinking, explores some of the ways marketers are looking at building brands at a time when the way we buy is being challenged. Indeed, as the scale of the climate emergency is becoming ever more apparent, it is a time when consumerism itself is being challenged.

The report argues that there are a number of emerging tensions as consumers across age groups and categories feel pulled in different directions.

It explores how these tensions open up new opportunities to build distinctiveness. And it explores how to do that within a fragmented media landscape where it is harder than ever to influence “culture” at scale.

It is an approach we have termed *impact*.

It is important to note we are not talking about “purpose” here. That has become a lightning rod issue in the industry—to such a degree that we probably need to

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reset the debate. It is, arguably, more important to understand how the challenge of being distinctive and relevant is evolving in the 2020s.

To compile the report, we have spoken to marketers grappling with these challenges in their own strategies. A big thank-you to all the interviewees for their input.

Enjoy the report!

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## The rule of apathy: Why brands need to prioritize impact.



People's expectations of brands are evolving. 83% of consumers think companies should only earn a profit if they also have a positive impact on society. To improve performance, brands should consider looking beyond image. For many, that will mean showing they are contributing to both "people" and "planet."

This chapter discusses how brands can fill the "trust vacuum" that exists in large parts of the world, and why many brands are failing to grasp the opportunity. It cites research demonstrating that prioritizing impact over image can help brands outperform their peers.

CHAPTER 2  
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## New tenets, new tensions: examining changing consumer dynamics.



A fast-changing world is causing significant tensions within individuals. They're being pulled in different directions at once, creating intersections: points where people are wrestling with contradictory forces or transitioning to new modes of being. These intersections are rich in opportunity for brands with the right stance and strategy.

This chapter examines three tensions: how people define themselves versus how they're defined through others; the paradox of uniqueness versus equality; and the growing demand for both personalized and shared experiences. It ends by exploring how these tensions manifest themselves in conscious consumerism.

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## How to create an antidote to apathy: the 6 shifts.



To increase impact and distinctiveness, many brands need to change how they "show" and how they "act." 6 shifts illustrate this theme:

1. From mirrors of mass trends to magnets for individuals. p. 44
2. From aspirational to inspirational. p. 52
3. From consistency to coherence. p. 60
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This chapter covers why consumers are turning to companion brands: brands that behave as flashlights rather than lighthouses. It then looks at the 6 shifts in detail, using case studies to illustrate each shift and the business benefits that have resulted.

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## Mapping a path forward.



Brands need to develop methodologies to measure how much impact they deliver currently. Many of the component parts will already be in place; the challenge is bringing them together into a single view. Once measurement is in place, brands can model "return on impact," resolve key barriers to progress and position themselves ahead of future market or consumer needs.

This chapter explores how existing measurement frameworks can be adapted, with a prime example being the Ogilvy Brand Impact Index developed by Ogilvy and WPP's BrandAsset® Valuator. It concludes by laying out the 5 questions every brand should ask itself as it seeks to increase impact.

SYNOPSIS  
p. 102

## Re-capping the story.



**Why brands  
need to prioritize  
impact**

THE  
RULE  
OF  
APATHY



**“Expectations are that  
companies and brands must do  
their business in the right way.”**

NICK RICH, VP Insights & Analytics, Carlsberg

## Occupying the vacuum.

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Across Western democracies, the bond between the people and the state is badly fractured. Trust in government and other establishment bodies is declining fast.

In the UK, only 42% of the population say they trust the government. In the USA, it's just 39%—and 10 points lower among Republican voters.

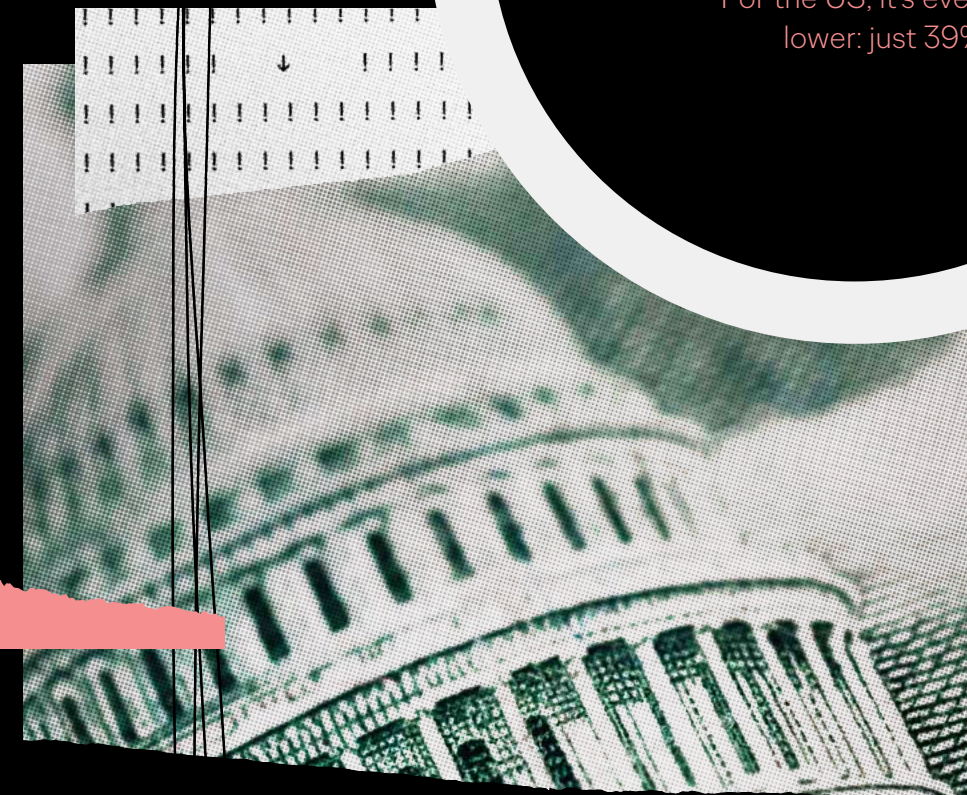
There is now widespread doubt whether the state has the competence (or perhaps even the desire) to fix societal problems and improve our collective health, wealth and happiness.

While some skepticism still surrounds the motives and practices of big business, it is faring better than government.

By significant margins, people see companies as a unifying force in society (+14 points) and a highly effective agent of positive change (+29 points). The figures for government are -12 points and -7 points, respectively.<sup>01</sup>

An opportunity exists for businesses, and the brands they operate, to step up and fill the trust vacuum.

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**42%**

Only 42% of the UK population **trusts the government.** For the US, it's even lower: just 39%.





*“Genuine connection with consumers is probably at the top of every CEO’s agenda.”*

MARTHA VELANDO, former CMO, De Beers

## Audiences are sterner judges than ever before.

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While trust is available, it won't be easily won. People's expectations of brands are now higher than ever. They are also changing.

Accenture Strategy's most recent global survey of nearly 30,000 consumers found that 62% want companies to take a stand on issues like sustainability, transparency and fair employment practices.<sup>02</sup>

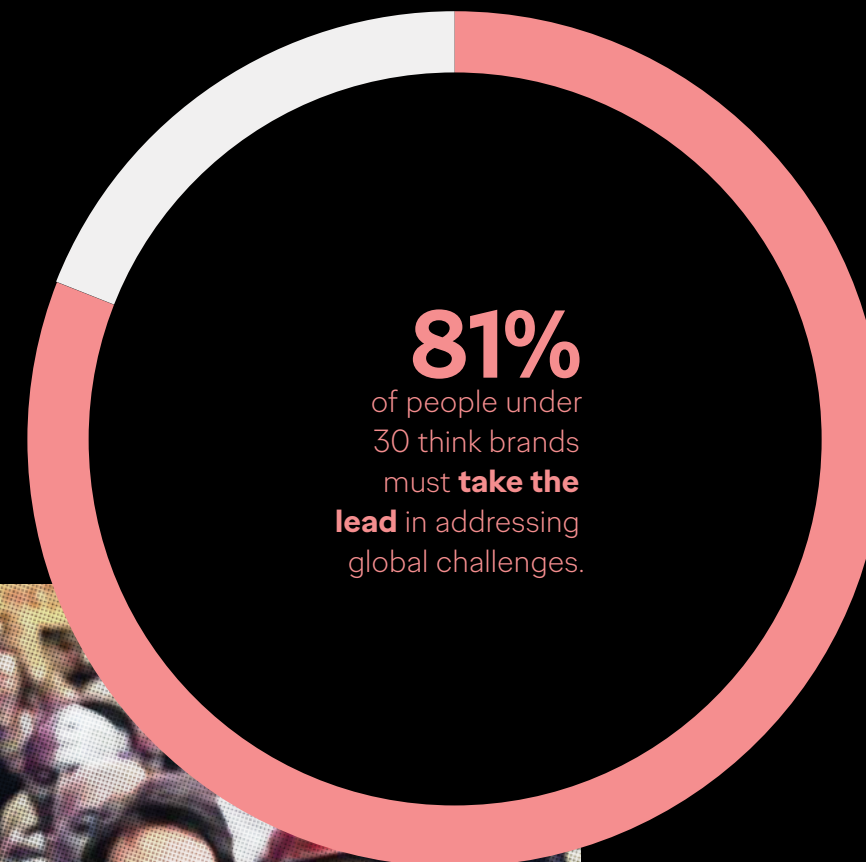
This sentiment is even stronger among younger generations. Research shows that 81% of people under the age of 30 believe brands must take a leading role in confronting the challenges facing humanity.<sup>03</sup>

When it comes to their own interests, consumers are also looking for more from brands.

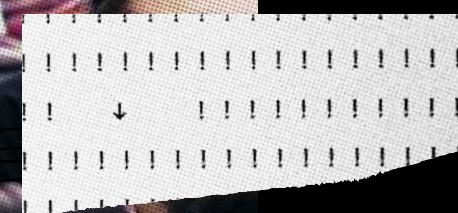
People have always turned to brands for entertainment and education; some now expect them to be active sources of inspiration as well. And in an era where large sections of the population feel increasingly vulnerable, many are hoping brands will provide the helping hand they need.

The bar is set high, but brands that meet these expectations have an unparalleled opportunity to embed themselves in people's lives and become indispensable.

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**81%**  
of people under 30 think brands must **take the lead** in addressing global challenges.





**Three in four brands could disappear**  
overnight, and the majority of consumers wouldn't  
care or would easily find a replacement

## Many brands are failing the test.

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The opportunity may be there, but too few brands are stepping up to the plate. As a result, people's natural indifference to brands—at least at the individual level—is increasing.

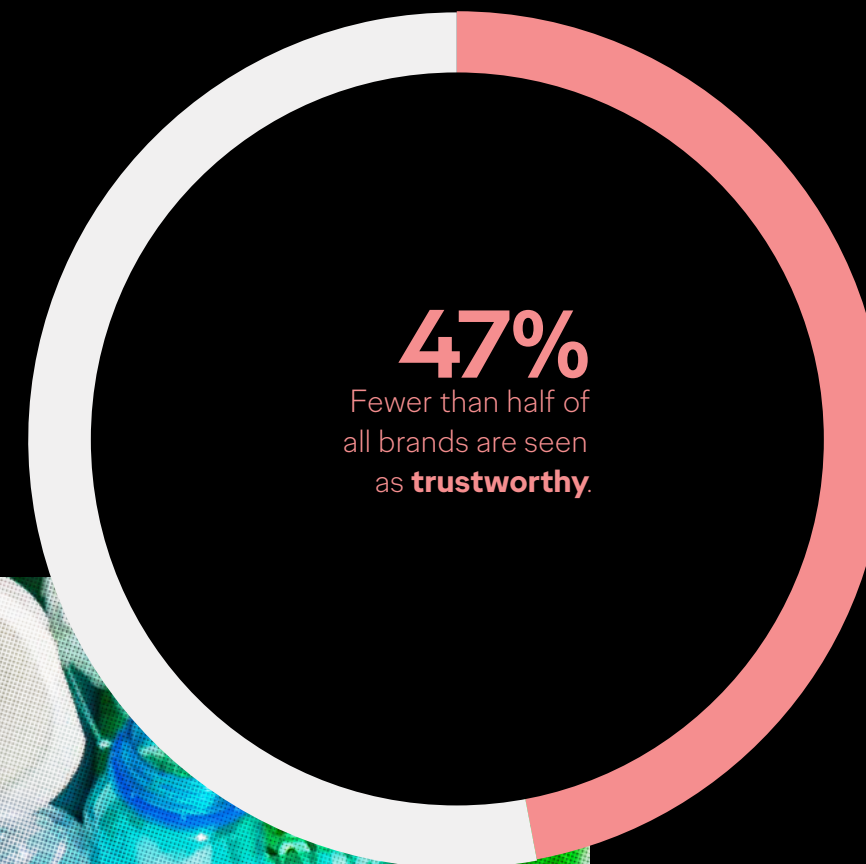
Research has found that three in four brands could disappear overnight, and the majority of consumers wouldn't care or would easily find a replacement. Just 47% of brands are seen as trustworthy.<sup>04</sup>

Whichever category you look at, you can see brands failing to generate sufficient

meaning or momentum. They lack the mental availability required to prosper. In turn, they struggle to increase their physical availability through distribution gains or by penetrating new sales channels effectively.

In a world where choice is abundant and attention is scarce, the prognosis for these brands is not good. The obsession with image that historically dominated marketing thinking has taken them as far as they can go. They need to re-orientate as a matter of priority.

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## Impact is the key to profitable growth.

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What should be the nature of this re-orientation? Examination of consumer trends provides plentiful evidence to guide the decision.

A study in 2020 found that 83% of consumers said companies should only earn a profit if they also deliver a positive impact.<sup>05</sup>

As well as giving businesses permission to profit, impact may also directly influence audience behaviors. For instance: 93% of Gen Z claim that the more socially and environmentally responsible companies are, the more attracted and loyal those Gen Z customers and employees will be.<sup>06</sup> Of course, there's always a significant gap between claimed and actual behavior—but it's clear which way the wind is blowing.

Brands that have read these signs correctly are already reaping the rewards. Kantar

Consulting has modelled the “impact of impact.” Its study suggests that brands with a high focus on impact have experienced a valuation increase of 175% over the past 12 years compared to a median growth rate of 86%.<sup>07</sup>

It's not that brand image doesn't matter. It clearly does. But what a brand is seen to contribute drives positive business outcomes more powerfully than cosmetics alone.

Impact needs to be evident in terms of what the brand does “for me” (in order to earn a bigger role in my life) and what it does “for us” (in order to enhance the well-being of the planet, society and future generations).

It is this combination that leads to improved performance and profitability.



**“Customers understand whether purpose is part of your DNA.”**

TANJA GRUBNER, Global Marketing & Communications Director, Feminine Care, Essity

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**Examining  
changing consumer  
dynamics**

NEW  
TRENDS,  
NEW

TENSIONS

## Observations on today's consumer.

As we've already seen, consumers' priorities are evolving and have increasing bearing on their brand choices.

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It's important not to exaggerate the point. The fundamentals of price and quality still play a key role. And convenience—in terms of availability, speed of delivery and the effort required to make a purchasing decision—is more pivotal than ever.

But there are new dynamics at play that marketing needs to lean into. These can be viewed through two lenses: what people expect from brands at a personal level (“for me”), and what they expect at a collective level (“for us”).

What this examination reveals is a series of tensions, not just between individuals, but also within individuals. Some of these

tensions are more pronounced in younger generations. They're likely to stick and strengthen, which makes them even more significant for brands. They represent tomorrow's customers as well as today's.

The second reason these tensions are so important is that they generate a number of intersections: points where people are seeking to resolve seemingly contradictory forces or transition to new modes of being.

These intersections represent areas of high potential—but many brands will need to shift stance and strategy if they are to seize the opportunity.

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We can observe a series of significant **tensions** within individual consumers. In a fast-changing world, they're being pulled in different directions at once.

These tensions create **intersections**: points where people are wrestling with contradictory forces or seeking to transition to new modes of being.

By focusing on these intersections and providing solutions, brands can carve out a bigger role in people's lives. But seizing the opportunity may require **shifts** in stance and strategy.

# TENSION

# #1

## How individuals are defining the “me” versus how they’re defined by the “we.”



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49%

Among 18- to 24-year-olds identify as something other than “totally heterosexual”

The term “selfie” spiked on Google Trends in March 2014. That same month, Ross Douthat, writing in the *New York Times*, predicted that “in the future there will only be one ‘ism’—Individualism—and its rule will never end.”<sup>08</sup>

Consumers are defining their central identity in ever more fluid and diverse ways. As just one example: in a YouGov survey, 23% of the British population identify as something other than “totally heterosexual.” Amongst 18- to 24-year-olds, that number rises to 49%.<sup>09</sup>

This is why McKinsey talks about the “undefined ID.”<sup>10</sup> But the trend isn’t all one way. 75% of Gen Z consumers say that political or social engagement is fundamental to how they define themselves.<sup>11</sup>

In other words, while people are more determined than ever to carve out their own place in the world, they’re also drawn strongly to the collective. This isn’t just about adopting a cause; it lies at the heart of social media’s magnetic appeal.

One upshot of this tension is that while people hate to be labelled, they’re increasingly quick to label others. Who we are for

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**“Gen Z specifically is a group that doesn’t want to be put in a box. They want to float above the boxes. In the morning, ‘I’m here’; during the evening, ‘I’m there’; at the weekend, ‘I’m over here.’ That fluidity has to be reflected by brands.”**

JOSE GORBEA, Global Head of Brands, Agencies & Sustainability Innovation, Hewlett Packard Graphics

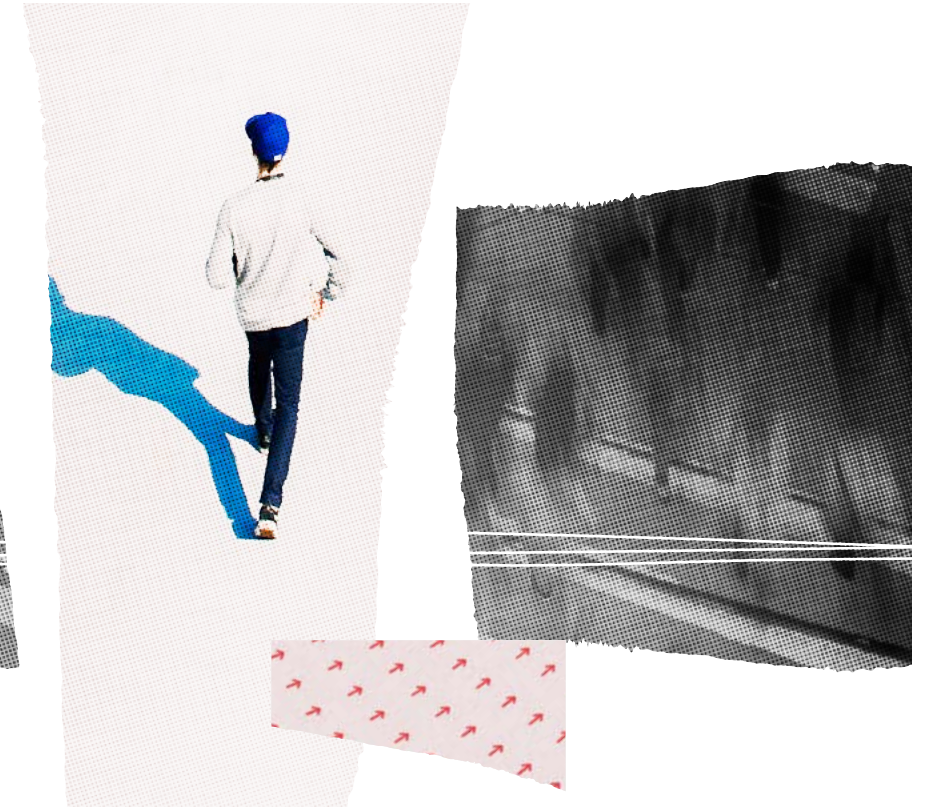
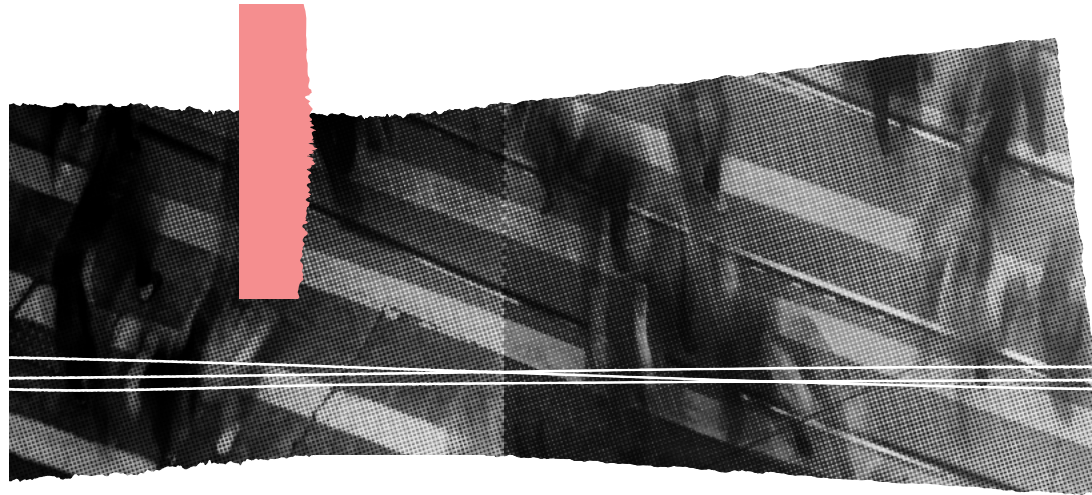
and who we are against plays a central role in defining our identity.

The implication for brands is two-fold. On the one hand, they need to inspire and support individuals on their personal journey. On the other, they need to align themselves with—or at least not contradict—the collective credo. Neither is easy when identities are so multi-faceted and many causes are highly oppositional.

# TENSION

## #2

### The paradox of uniqueness versus equality.



64%

Of respondents thought there should be greater gender equality.

Digital has fundamentally altered how people interact with the world around them. With more and more experiences becoming on-demand and self-service, consumers expect to be able to exert complete control at the time and place of their choosing.

Social media has had a parallel effect in terms of self-expression. We all have 24/7 access to powerful global communications platforms. The consequence is that people not only believe they're entitled to comment, they also expect to be heard.

Consumers are ever more insistent on their right to set the agenda. This not only strengthens the belief they have in their

own exceptionalism, it also means they expect brands to recognize their absolute uniqueness and respond accordingly.

But there's a paradox here. Increasingly, people are also insisting that there be one common agenda. They want a world of absolute equality where the same opportunities exist for all.

As one example: in a global survey, 64% of respondents thought there should be greater gender equality. Only 7% disagreed. Again, the sentiment is significantly stronger among the young. In the UK, for instance, 83% of those aged 18-29 were in favor, a figure that dropped to 66% amongst people aged 50 and over.<sup>12</sup>



**“Target has become a dangerous word. Consumers don't choose brands based on demographics. We're all very multi-dimensional. Even within categories, people will choose different brands depending on the context they're in.”**

ANN MUKHERJEE, Chairman & CEO, Pernod Ricard

These aren't just privately held views. If they believe organizations aren't playing by the rules, consumers are quick to call them out. The price can be heavy. Research by Deloitte has found that 45% of Gen Z-ers have stopped buying certain brands because of ethical or sustainability concerns.<sup>13</sup>

The challenge for brands is to navigate these poles, providing consumers with a service that feels uniquely tailored while demonstrating commitment to creating a perfectly level playing field.:

# TENSION

## #3

### The desire for personalized experiences versus the pull of shared experiences.



76%

of people would rather purchase experiences than things. And 80% of them want experiences that connect them to others.

One important way in which brands tailor their services and messaging is through personalization.

Personalization is effective on multiple levels. It proves to people that their individuality is recognized and valued. It leads them to believe they're getting something particularly advantageous (whether that advantage is actual or purely perceptual). And it demonstrates that a brand is prepared to meet them on equal terms and work hard for their custom.

43% of consumers say they're prepared to pay more for personalized offerings. In higher income groups, the figure rises to 58%.<sup>14</sup>

87% of online shoppers are happy to share their personal information in return for an improved shopping experience (although it must also be said that one in three are disappointed by the results when they do).<sup>15</sup>

If personalization is a selfish urge, people are just as motivated in the opposite direction. They increasingly crave shared experiences that create a sense of belonging.

In research, 76% say they'd rather spend their money on experiences than material items. Of these, four in five are specifically looking for experiences that help them better connect to friends and family. And these findings aren't exclusive to younger consumers; they include all age groups.<sup>16</sup>



***“A lot of companies still work on the basis of ‘Let’s have one slogan for a product, one slogan for a brand, send it out there and everybody has to chew on the same content.’ But when you give more of the power to the people, it pays off.”***

JOSE GORBEA, Global Head of Brands, Agencies & Sustainability Innovation, Hewlett Packard Graphics

Once again, the implication is that brands need to look two ways at once. They need to serve their customers 1:1. But they also need to be generous and imaginative in creating shared experiences that deliver a release from the pressures of everyday life.



## Conscious consumerism: “For me” as well as “for us.”

marketing. But image is a means to a  
great end, not the sole objective.  
Brands should no longer go to  
extremes when it comes to image.  
Marketing today needs to go  
beyond image and move from

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In examining how consumer dynamics have changed, we've identified three key tensions:

- how people define their center versus how they are defined through (and by) others;
- how people insist on their absolute uniqueness while also insisting on absolute equality;
- how people simultaneously demand personalized experiences and shared experiences.

Brands need to bear these in mind when considering the rapid rise of conscious consumerism.

In the December 2021 issue of PwC's Global Consumer Insights Pulse Survey, 52% of respondents said they were now more eco-friendly than they had been six months before. Almost as many claimed to actively consider factors related to sustainability when making purchasing decisions.<sup>17</sup>

Research by Vericast underlines the point.<sup>18</sup> Over half of US shoppers want the brands they buy to have values that align with their own. Amongst younger consumers, 72% say they're more likely to be loyal to a brand or retailer if they know it behaves ethically.

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...are servant leaders, mak  
...oken to on people's lives—or, rat  
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...egies. A their own lives. Let's no  
...it—brands still need to h  
...making is st



***“Our belief was that we had to recognize the effort of coffee farmers in the fields, working to provide our morning cup of coffee. Initially, we were only looking for interviews...but we ended up printing more than 1,000 of their stories on the jar. So, when you’re preparing your coffee, you see the farmer and understand the lives behind that cup of Nescafé.”***

JULIETA LOAIZA, VP Marketing,  
Communication & Corporate Affairs, Nestlé



On the face of it, conscious consumerism is very much about “us.” It’s overtly focused on the planet and future generations.

But it’s important to recognize that it also contains strong “for me” elements. Doing good helps us feel good about ourselves.

In examining the purchase of fair-trade products, for instance, academic research has found that “the strongest motivational aspect—well ahead of social guilt—appears to be to please oneself. Our participants clearly stated that fair trade consumption made them happy... This motivation is identified in terms of having fulfilled responsibility towards the self.”<sup>19</sup>

In other words, conscious consumerism provides another route to self-definition. It affirms people in their ability to exert control.

This intersection of “for us” and “for me” is potent territory for brands aiming to attract such consumers. As well as lowering the price and convenience barriers that often stop good intentions from converting into behavioral change, brands need to find ways to trigger and satisfy these inner-focused needs.



HOW  
TO CREATE  
AN ANTI-DOTE  
TO APATHY

## How brands show + how brands act = impact

# SHOW HOW TO ACT

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Throughout the last century, brands were built almost exclusively on the basis of how they showed. Assuming an acceptable standard of product quality, it was mass media advertising, packaging and in-store presence that drove market share.

This gave a huge advantage to brands with the financial clout to dominate the airwaves and shelves. Economies of scale also allowed resource-rich companies to price competitively.

Size still matters, of course. Having a significant share of a large market is still the #1 factor in determining a brand's return on marketing investment.<sup>20</sup>

Showing remains vastly important. Without it, brands cannot secure the mental availability they need. But how brands should show is changing.

It's no longer sufficient to simply create and reinforce an attractive brand image. If they're to overcome widespread consumer indifference, brands also need to demonstrate that they're making a positive contribution.

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How brands show is only one part of the equation. How they act is equally important.

The rise of digital has had many consequences. One is that it has exposed organizations of all sorts, including businesses, to unprecedented scrutiny. People can now find out virtually anything at the click of a button. And for all the reasons explored in Chapter 2, they're increasingly keen to explore what's going on beneath the surface.

More than ever before, the spotlight is on how companies and brands act. Whether it's employment practices, their track record on sustainability, their actions in terms of diversity and inclusion...businesses need to show that they're walking the walk. The cosmetics of image need to be supported by intrinsic, characterizing behaviors that prove a brand is worthy of consumers' custom and loyalty. Every claim needs to be verifiable and embedded in an operating framework that proves the brand is doing everything it can to help both people and planet.

If brands are to deliver the impact required to profit and grow, they need to pay equal attention to how they show and how they act.



***“Don’t just raise awareness—actually help consumers overcome the issues.”***

TANJA GRUBNER,  
Global Marketing &  
Communications  
Director, Feminine  
Care, Essity

## Brands as life companions.

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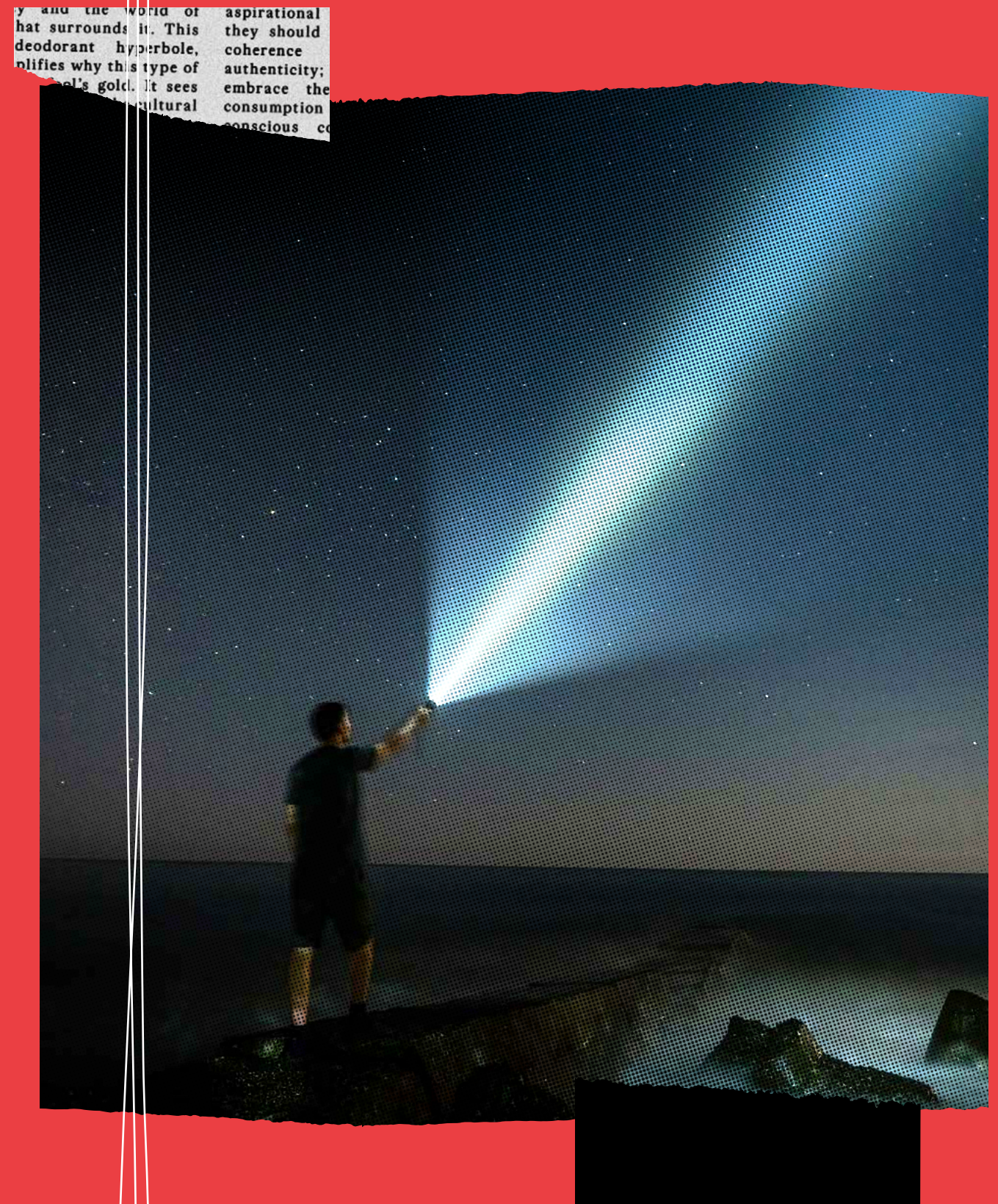
Brands have always played three key roles. First, they educate consumers about what is new and valuable. Second, they act as short-cuts to choice by promising consistent and satisfactory performance. And third, from the original soap operas onwards, they provide entertainment.

Even in the recent past, all these things could be achieved through the combination of a well-burnished image and big media occasions (usually relying on high-spend TV campaigns). Brands were lighthouses. Even if their radiance was occasional, it was enough to attract people's attention and draw them in.

But this isn't sufficient for today's consumers. Partly as a consequence of digital, they expect brands to do more and do it more often. Some are looking for brands to empower them, others for a helping hand to get through life. Either way, they want to feel that brands are making an active contribution on an on-going basis.

Rather than wanting brands to be lighthouses, people want them to be flashlights that help them find their own way forward. They may not be interested in brands as friends, but they do want them to be guides and companions. If brands want to play a bigger part in their audiences' lives, they need to rise to this challenge.

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**“Every music platform has 60 or 70 million tracks in their library. We’re obviously not the rights holders so the content is pretty similar. So, how do you set yourself apart? How do you deliver actual value for the consumer? It comes from true personalization and Wrapped is the mother of all personalization quests.”**

JORRIT DEVRIES, Global Category Development Officer (Advertising–Tech/Telco), Spotify

At least per day is **spent on mobile** internet by the average US consumer

# 4hours



Apple became the world’s first \$3 trillion company for precisely this reason. It’s not just that it makes beautifully designed products and has created an easy-to-use, super-connected ecosystem; it also allows people to discover new things and put them to use wherever and whenever they want. Across the App Store, music, TV, gaming, and books, and from mobiles to watches to AirPods, Apple is the perfect example of a companion brand.

The average US consumer spends over 4 hours a day on the mobile internet.<sup>21</sup> Throw in Apple’s other services, and the brand is touching its users for a huge proportion of

their waking lives. This is another important facet of companion brands; while they still invest heavily in big marketing campaigns, they also strive for omnipresence in the moments that matter most to their customers.

Some companion brands have skillfully joined the dots between the two. With Wrapped,<sup>22</sup> Spotify has created its own annual event. By “reflecting on the large role audio plays in the lives of our listeners,” Wrapped allows individuals to see exactly how the brand has accompanied them throughout the past 12 months. In parallel, it gives the brand rich fuel for

communications campaigns that show how Spotify has been a companion to the world.

The importance of companionship extends far beyond the big tech companies. In order to get closer to consumers and drive response, many brands are focusing on points in time where relevant help and guidance will be of particular value.

One example would be Deutsche Bahn, Germany’s national rail operator. To persuade people to travel within the country rather than fly abroad, it released ads that compared an overseas destination with a similar city in Germany—and stressed

the affordability of the latter by using real-time flight costs from the nearest airport. The campaign returned €63.90 for every €1 invested.<sup>23</sup>

Whether an initiative is strategic or tactical, companion brands understand the importance of being “omnipresent.” But to win, brands need to be more than simply present. What really matters is how they show in these moments.

## From mirrors of mass trends to magnets for individuals.



While brands have been around for centuries, their importance accelerated dramatically in the 1950s.

This was an era where large sections of the population shared the same ambitions. For marketers, it was both easy and effective to define their audiences with a broad brush. Income, social class and regionality provided sufficient granularity.

Rather than concern themselves with nuance, brands held up a mirror to a mass audience and reflected its goals and cultural certainties.

Today's world is much more fragmented. People are defining their central identities in ever more diverse ways. There are many causes that divide society rather

than unite it. And culture is splintering into a thousand shards.

While this liberates people, it also comes at a cost. Many feel more stressed and less secure. With trust in the establishment fading, they're looking elsewhere for help and support.

Brands can fill this gap—but only if they show true understanding at an individual level. Rather than simply mirror culture, they need to manifest real humanity and empathy.

As CleverTap CEO Sunil Thomas put it when writing for *Forbes*:<sup>24</sup> “Many customers are tired, anxious and burned out. The last thing they want to hear is an ill-timed marketing message promoting an unrelated product they can't afford....

# 86%

of Americans think that **showing empathy** is critical to creating greater brand loyalty. 90% think that brands need to show empathy with actions and not just words



**“Empathy is the core quality marketers need to succeed.”**

JONATHAN HALVORSON,  
Global VP Consumer Experience,  
Mondelez International



**“Context is the driving force.”**

JULIETA LOAIZA, VP Marketing,  
Communication & Corporate  
Affairs, Nestlé

Inconsiderate marketing in a time of strife can do more damage to a company than most people realize. Your business needs to be sensitive to your customers' reality. Be considerate and be aware.”

Empathy is a multiplier of impact and translates to positive business outcomes. Research by Ipsos in 2020 found that 86% of Americans think that showing empathy is critical to creating greater brand loyalty.

But it needs to be more than skin-deep. In the same study, Ipsos reported that “90% of our respondents think that brands need to show empathy with actions and not just words.”<sup>25</sup> In other words: they need to provide front-foot solutions to genuine audience pain points.

**Like other FMCG brands, Cadbury had become obsessed with chasing growth through product extensions. The result was advertising focused on the short term—and returns that were diminishing with every passing year.**

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In 2017, Mondelez decided the brand needed to show in a radically different way. It went back to go forward, concentrating on the values that made Cadbury globally famous in the first place: generosity of spirit and human kindness.<sup>26</sup>

### **The shift exemplified**

Small retailers in India were especially badly hit by COVID lockdowns.

To support them, “Not Just a Cadbury Ad” urged local communities to shop at independents when buying their November 2020 Diwali presents.<sup>27</sup>

The brand went the extra mile, producing 7,000 different versions of the ad to showcase individual retailers across eight cities. Hyper-local audiences were targeted on Facebook and YouTube, while Google was used to intercept shoppers searching the vicinity for places to buy gifts.

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### **Results**

Against the bleak backdrop of the pandemic, Cadbury had forecast a sales decline of 30%. Instead, it achieved 2% growth.

The brand secured distribution in an additional 16,000 outlets, with share of sales through smaller retailers increasing from 60% to 74%.

Cadbury’s empathetic approach made it a magnet for its trade customers and its customers’ customers alike.



**Skincare advertising in China relies heavily on standard category tropes: the promise of youthful skin.**

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SK-II, a prestige brand from Procter & Gamble, has increased consideration and share by breaking the mold.

Its strategy focuses on starting conversations around the societal pressures most keenly felt by its primary target of young executive women—especially the pressure to get married before the age of 27.<sup>28</sup>

**The shift exemplified**

One of SK-II's four major campaigns between 2015 and 2020, "Meet Me Halfway," tackled what the audience identified as the epitome of marriage pressure: going home for Chinese New Year.

For many, this is the one time a year they see their parents. But when family and relatives gather, the nagging about finding a husband starts. The pressure is so strong that eight out of ten single women are hesitant about making the journey.

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SK-II's insight was that much of the problem stemmed from a lack of communication between generations. Its solution was a mini documentary in which three young Chinese women asked their parents to "meet them halfway," literally and figuratively, to increase mutual understanding. The activity was amplified by using experts and opinion leaders to explore how the conversations might unfold.<sup>29</sup>

**Results**

In the five years up to 2020, SK-II's market share in China grew by 37% and consideration increased by 48.8%.

The four campaigns earned media coverage in 54 countries. "Meet Me Halfway" alone achieved an organic global reach of 1.18 billion engagements.



## Huggies

Despite being one of the most recognized names in baby care, Huggies had been losing share for a decade. Sales were being stolen by both multinational competitors and new DTC start-ups.

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To rebuild brand meaning, Huggies developed a new mission: “to help navigate the unknowns of babyhood.”

The creative twist was that “We Got You, Baby” took the baby’s perspective. Huggies understood that showing how its products make babies more comfortable and secure in their world would trigger a heightened response from parents.<sup>30</sup>

### The shift exemplified

In South Africa, the brand wanted to demonstrate why it provided the best solution for active babies.

With no new product innovations to lean on, Huggies custom-built a distance-tracking device, fitted it to a group of babies’ diapers and tasked them to “race” 21 kilometers in the comfort of their own homes.

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Their progress was packaged as a series of highlights videos. “Baby Marathon” unfolded in real time over 13 days, with the first baby crossing the finish line in just under 6 days. The campaign was promoted for 9 weeks across Facebook, search, premium display and YouTube.<sup>31</sup>

### Results

“Baby Marathon” helped increase year-on-year sales by 19%. Huggies has seen parallel successes wherever the new creative platform has been used.

In the USA, the brand topped the category in organic search volume for the first time in three years. “We Got You, Baby” also drove an 11-point uplift in positive brand sentiment.

## From aspirational to inspirational

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The “desire to acquire” used to sit at the heart of marketing. Based on the premise that there was a straight line between ownership and happiness, social stratification was central to how many brands positioned themselves. Brands were something to aim and strive for, representing another rung up the ladder.

Of course, brands like Rolex, Ferrari or Dom Perignon remain highly aspirational. But over time, the circle has tightened into an ever-smaller group of luxury items.

As people become more insistent on their absolute uniqueness, they become less willing to be defined by the badging on

which brands used to rely. Their aspirations and motivations are set by themselves, not by third parties.

This doesn't make brands any less important to them. But it does mean they are looking for brands to play a different role.

Rather than be fixed symbols of success, brands need to play an active and imaginative role in inspiring their audience. They must provide the fuel that helps people reach their potential.

This significantly extends both the remit and the opportunity for brands. They can empower people through new tools and



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**“One of the ways we measure success at Unilever is the impact of our ‘Brand Do,’ our purpose in action. ‘Dirt Is Good’ is about powering up people (including the ones behind the brand) to act for a better world and planet.”**

TATI LINDENBERG, Vice President Marketing, Unilever

services. They can surface useful but previously unknown information. They can celebrate and galvanize causes that matter to their customers. And they can inspire consumers to look at the world with fresh eyes.

As we saw in Chapter One, people believe business can be a positive agent of change. If they are to maximize impact, brands need to show up in ways that recognize and repay this faith.

Since 2004, “Campaign for Real Beauty” has famously rejected the stereotyping and airbrushing that are still so prevalent in the category.

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Originally based on the insight that only 2% of women consider themselves beautiful, Dove has consistently committed “to make women feel comfortable in the skin they’re in and create a world where beauty is a source of confidence and not anxiety.”

The brand “invites all women to realize their personal potential.” Advertising and action work in harmony. The Dove Self-Esteem Project, for instance, helps young people around the world build positive body confidence.

### The shift exemplified

During COVID-19, Dove invested US\$7.5 million in supporting frontline healthcare workers, donating personal care products, sanitizer, bleach, food and PPE.

It also spotted an important intersection. Under the pressure of the pandemic, women’s beauty confidence was at an all-time low. But in parallel, “real beauty” was being re-defined as something that flowed from courage and a sense of duty.

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The “Courage Is Beautiful” campaign ran on major TV networks and social media platforms in 15 countries. Outdoor sites were used to express Dove’s gratitude to individual healthcare workers, with the brand making a donation to the hospitals in which they worked.<sup>32</sup>

### Results

In the USA, “Courage Is Beautiful” drove a 13-point rise in brand power, helping penetration grow by 3.5%. But Dove’s commitment to impact is best judged in the long term.

Between 2004 and 2019, sales increased by US\$500 million, and the brand’s value grew by US\$1.2 billion.

The Dove Self-Esteem Project has so far touched over 60 million lives. Unilever has set a goal of reaching 250 million by the end of this decade.



**“Just Do It” has always been an inspirational call-to-action—but it used to be hallmarked by a highly aspirational stance. In many ways, Nike was the archetypal “big media occasion” brand: extravagant TV ads, featuring the world’s most famous sports stars, timed to coincide with major sporting events.**

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In recent years, the brand has pivoted. Its primary focus is now on inspiring people at the individual level.

Its digital ecosystem of training, running and community apps is one part of this. The other is advertising that celebrates alternative perspectives, inspiring people to look at the world with fresh eyes.

### The shift exemplified

Nike knew from its research with professional athletes that sports didn’t just help them realize their athletic potential. It allowed them to realize their potential in life by exerting a positive influence on society. This led to the key insight behind the “Dream Crazy” campaign: sports empower athletes to change not just their own world, but the world around them.

NFL quarterback (and Nike athlete) Colin Kaepernick had become a center of debate by taking the knee during the

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playing of the national anthem. On Labor Day 2018, he posted a simple tweet: “Believe in something. Even if you have to sacrifice everything.” Other Nike athletes such as Serena Williams and LeBron James then tweeted their support.

Four days later, on September 7, the 90-second TV spot broke during the first NFL game of the season. At its climax, Kaepernick encouraged everyone watching to challenge themselves: “Don’t ask if your dreams are crazy. Ask if they’re crazy enough.”<sup>33</sup>

### Results

In just one week, the campaign earned US\$288,698,586 in earned media equivalent value. Google searches reached an all-time high. And Nike’s stock hit a new record of US\$85.55, adding US\$6 billion to the company’s value.

Since Barbie first hit the shelves in 1959, more than 1 billion units of the iconic doll have been sold.

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Yet as her 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary approached, there was cause for concern. Brand equity was at an all-time low. An increasing number of parents saw little more than a “skinny, materialistic blonde with a boyfriend.”

Mattel knew it needed to inspire parents to look deeper and see what Barbie enables through play: imagination, self-discovery and storytelling. The 2019 birthday celebrations provided the perfect platform to re-state and re-affirm the brand’s role.

### The shift exemplified

Barbie’s purpose is “to inspire every girl to realize her full potential.” Role models are critical to this, so Mattel released 20 one-of-a-kind dolls made in the likenesses of powerful women. Honorees included actress Yara Shahidi; tennis star Naomi Osaka; and activist and model Adwoa Aboah.

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It also launched commemorative products representing six careers in which women remain under-represented: astronaut, pilot, athlete, journalist, politician and firefighter.

Content on the YouTube Kids app and live events further underlined the message. Finally, the Barbie Dream Gap Project was launched to raise funds and awareness for organizations dedicated to levelling the playing field for girls.<sup>34</sup>

### Results

PR for the anniversary campaign garnered nearly 4,000 media placements and over 6 billion impressions. More than 4,000 people visited the one-day event in New York City; attendees included Yara Shahidi, Grammy winner H.E.R., Diane von Furstenberg, Anna Sui and Candace Bushnell.

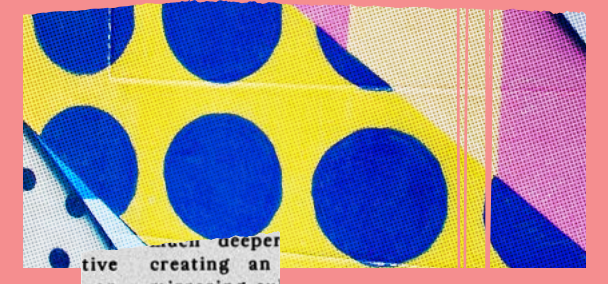
The impact Mattel sought went much deeper than sales alone, but the campaign was commercially successful, with more than a quarter of a million dolls sold during the month.

## From consistency to coherence.

Every

# 60 seconds

the world watches **694,444 hours** of video on YouTube; sends **12 million iMessages**; uploads nearly **240,000 photos** to Facebook; and spends **US\$283,000** on Amazon.



“Every 60 seconds, the world watches 694,444 hours of video on YouTube; sends 12 million iMessages; uploads nearly 240,000 photos to Facebook; and spends US\$283,000 on Amazon.”<sup>35</sup>

Historically, marketers were highly focused on ensuring all brand communications were uniform in shape and form: “matching luggage” in the parlance of the day. Exerting this level of control was seen as paramount to building and protecting the brand’s desired image.

Such control is no longer possible—nor desirable. First, the number of platforms

and channels in which a brand needs to be present has multiplied exponentially. And each has its own argot and frames of reference. What works on Facebook doesn’t work on TikTok, far less on broadcast media.

Second: culture is moving ever faster, amplified by the billions of voices on social media. Brands need to immerse themselves in the cultural stream and be fast and flexible in responding to new trends.

While brands cannot be consistent in the way they once were, neither can they afford to be incoherent.



**“Gone are the days when it was okay if you didn’t understand the ‘why’ of your brand.”**

ANN MUKHERJEE,  
Chairman & CEO, Pernod Ricard



**“You have to make for-purpose creative.”**

MARIA KOUTSOUDAKIS, Brand & Marketing Director, Vodafone

It is more important than ever for brands to show in ways that demonstrate they’re absolutely clear about the role they want to play in people’s lives and the larger world. They need a well-defined “purpose” (which can but need not necessarily be cause related).

Brands need this ruthless clarity of intent if they are to accumulate meaning and appeal across platforms. At the same time, it gives them the elbow room to show in unexpected and arresting ways that feel truly native to channel.

The coherent expression of a motivating north star is critical to increasing brand impact.

**Burger King is a much smaller player than McDonald's. Magnifying impact is therefore a commercial priority. As Fernando Machado put it when CMO: "The biggest risk is doing something that doesn't get noticed. If I were to compete with just media money, I would lose the war before the first battle starts. I need to do bold things."**

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The brand may be deliberately disruptive. But that doesn't mean its comms strategy is scattershot. Everything it does is built around four key pillars: mouth-watering, big and bold, playfully irreverent and proudly true.<sup>36</sup>

### The shift exemplified

Product quality and the removal of artificial ingredients are particular points of emphasis. These are where Burger King believes it can be competitively distinctive—while also having the most fun.

"Moldy Whopper," for instance, was much more than a stunt. It was a laser-focused way of dramatizing that the Whopper was now 100% clean with no artificial colors or preservatives. It thereby addressed a key brand weakness: three out of the top

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five barriers to consumption were linked to perceptions of poor food quality.<sup>37</sup>

The same clarity of intent was evident in "Burn That Ad" in Brazil. The superior taste that comes from flame-grilled burgers is a key point of difference. So Burger King developed an AR feature on its app that allowed people to burn down McDonald's ads simply by pointing their phone at them.<sup>38</sup>

### Results

"Moldy Whopper" created extraordinary levels of awareness, generating 8.4 billion organic media impressions. It also increased "consideration to visitation" rates by 23%. "Burn That Ad" was equally successful, stimulating 1 million downloads in a month. Sales via the app increased by 55%.

The key benefit of coherence, however, is cumulative impact. What Burger King achieves is a share of mind that's well ahead of its share of spend.





# SHIFT

## #3

### Glade

FROM CONSISTENCY  
TO COHERENCE.

**SC Johnson is very clear about Glade’s reason for being: it enables users to “flip the switch on your environment.... Glade’s consciously crafted scents shift the mood, adjust your mindset and let you express your unique taste.”**

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Advertising is critical to telling this story. But SC Johnson knows it needs to “show” as well as “tell,” so it works hard to insert Glade into the everyday lives of its audience.

#### **The shift exemplified**

Opening ecommerce boxes has become an everyday event for most of us. Glade saw this as the ideal opportunity to drive awareness of its Mandarin & Mimosa Room Mist.

It partnered with Walmart to place branded, scent-filled packing pillows into people’s online deliveries. It also sent surprise packages to relevant influencers, encouraging them to share the experience with their followers and pass on a money-off coupon.<sup>39</sup>

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Previously, Glade had created the Museum of Feelings in New York City: an interactive experience designed to showcase the connection between scent and emotion. Those visiting in person could take an immersive “journey of the senses” through the museum, while the building’s exterior changed color depending on how the weather, stock prices or flight delays were affecting the city’s mood.<sup>40</sup>

#### **Results**

In the 10 weeks after the Walmart initiative, sales of Mandarin & Mimosa Room Mist increased by 55%.

The Museum of Feelings attracted 56,000 visitors and widespread media coverage, including articles in the *New York Times* and the *Huffington Post*.

Glade’s multi-pronged approach shows the value of coherence. It has succeeded in maximizing impact within channel while bringing the brand’s point of view to life across channels.

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## Red Bull takes brand coherence up a notch or two further.

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While its advertising promotes the functional benefits of the energy drink (employing a heavy wink to do so), its marketing overall is a supremely coherent expression of the brand's high-energy philosophy.

Red Bull commits itself to its audience's passion points, creating its own events and carving out a unique place in the world's cultural fabric.

### The shift exemplified

The brand is highly invested in F1, NASCAR, football, ice hockey, a wide variety of extreme sports and music. It's also won fame through one-offs like Project Stratos, a parachute jump from the edge of space that broke three world records. All of this feeds into its content hub, Red Bull TV.

Red Bull applies its strategy with surgical precision in individual countries and regions. Take Latin America.

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One of its F1 drivers is current world champion. The other is Sergio Pérez, a Mexican. Grand Prix in São Paulo and Mexico City provide the perfect platform to showcase the brand.

Red Bull Brasil is one of four professional football teams owned by the brand. Its Skate Generation event was founded on the island of Florianópolis, Brazil, and returned there last year. It runs mountain biking events across the continent. And Chile hosted the Red Bull Batalla Final in 2021, a shoot-off between the best 16 music freestylers in the Spanish-speaking world.

### Results

Since it launched in 1987, Red Bull has sold 100 billion cans. It is global market leader in energy drinks; in 2020, its share by value was 43%.

Red Bull has been described as "the brand that redefined the culture of marketing."<sup>41</sup> An obsession with coherence lies at the heart of its success.

## Brands must show in ways that are genuinely distinctive rather than simply differentiated.

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To win in today's noisy, hyper-competitive world, brands need to stand out. They need to be distinctive.

This isn't simply about beating their direct peers in the battle for attention. Consumer choices are far less driven by category comparison, so brands are fighting on a much wider front. If they're to gain share of mind, share of heart and share of wallet, they must feel more distinctive than the brands in many adjacent sectors.

Part of this is about creating memorable, instantly recognizable brand assets. A study by Kantar Millward Brown has shown that brands with the strongest assets are on average 52% more salient. In other words, they are much more likely to be front of mind when shoppers are making decisions.<sup>42</sup>

But even more important is possessing a unique, ownable point of view that is expressed in ways that are empathetic, inspiring and coherent.

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***“Being distinctive and genuine will become much more important.”***

MARTHA VELANDO,  
former CMO, De Beers



***“Distinctiveness is important, but you need to make sure you're not just trying to jump on the bandwagon of being purpose driven.”***

JORRIT DEVRIES, Global Head of  
Category Development, Spotify

Differentiation can provide brands with strong uplift, but it's increasingly elusive. Even when it can be gained, it's usually short-lived.

This is why distinctiveness is a more important goal than differentiation. It's more resonant, multi-dimensional and defensible.

How brands show is critical to creating the distinctiveness they need. But it's only part of the equation. The extrinsic factors of product, price, packaging and promotion need to be built on solid foundations.

## From platforms for assertion to pinnacles of authenticity.

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Many brands were built in an era where communication only flowed one way. How they presented themselves could not be easily investigated or challenged.

Brands with the resources to dominate mass media were automatically imbued with authority. They could act as loudspeakers, pushing out messages to position themselves in the best possible light.

To a large extent, marketing was an impenetrable veil. But digital and social have torn the veil to shreds. It's never been easier for consumers to see behind the curtain.

This has two important implications for how brands act. First, they must be transparent.

They must be prepared to let audiences get up close and put their claims to the test. In a world where concealment is difficult (if not impossible), brands must welcome the inevitable scrutiny.

Second, it means they must act authentically. What they say must match what they do. This applies across the board: the products they manufacture, the packaging they use, the purposes they espouse, their corporate and employment practices.

Research has found that 86% of consumers say authenticity is a critical factor in determining which brands they like and support. Amongst those aged under 35, the percentage is even higher.<sup>43</sup>

HOW TO CREATE AN ANTIDOTE TO APATHY



# 86%

of consumers say authenticity is a **critical factor** in determining which brands they like and support.

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**“There are now societal demands that we didn’t see a decade ago.”**

TATI LINDENBERG, Vice President Marketing, Unilever



**“It’s important that brands be accountable.”**

MARIA KOUTSOUDAKIS, Brand & Marketing Director, Vodafone

Authenticity also applies to the company brands keep. Cultural partnerships—including those with influencers—can be highly effective. But to gain maximum traction, they must involve more than the exchange of money. There needs to be real commitment on both sides and a genuine alignment of interests.

Acting authentically is non-negotiable. Consumers are asking increasingly demanding questions and many brands lack the right answers.

But those that can verifiably connect product proof points with purpose, and support both with impeccable standards of corporate conduct, are well placed to increase brand impact.

Brands need to be true to themselves. Hitching their stars to causes like sustainability or race equality can only work if supported by meaningful, top-to-bottom action. If an organization’s claims are found to be empty or superficial, it’ll be much worse off than if it did nothing.

**“I know it sounds crazy; but every time I’ve made a decision that’s best for the planet, I’ve made money.”**

YVON CHOUINARD, founder.

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Visit the Patagonia website and you’ll notice that “Activism” is one of four main tabs on its home page.

Since launch, the brand has pledged 1% of sales revenue to preserve and restore the natural environment. Thus far, this “self-imposed Earth tax” has translated into US\$89 million in cash and in-kind donations.

In 2017, Patagonia announced that apparel in good condition could be returned for new merchandise credits.

Two years later, it started “Recrafted”: a program that creates and sells clothing made from used Patagonia gear.

### **The shift exemplified**

Black Friday has always been an invitation to rampant consumerism. In 2011, Patagonia turned this on its head. Its ad in the *New York Times* urged people to spend less for the benefit of the planet. “Don’t Buy This Jacket” touched a nerve, helping catapult the brand into double-digit growth for the next four years.

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Actions speak even louder than words. During the 2020 US presidential elections, the company shut its headquarters, distribution hub and stores to give its employees time to vote. Other businesses did the same; but Patagonia went further, offering employees an optional four days off to train and serve as poll workers. It also paid staff members to send letters or text messages encouraging known environmentalists to get out and vote.

### **Results**

Axios Harris publishes Poll 100, an annual ranking of the companies with the best reputations in the USA. Last year, Patagonia topped the list.

As the research firm observed: “It has a clear point of view and delivers both great products and a genuine impact on society.”<sup>44</sup>

## Ben & Jerry's

The brand was founded on a clear principle: any business should also be a good citizen.

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Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield's initial focus was internal. It ensured employees who had same-sex partners received the same company benefits as heterosexual couples; and it constructed its supply chain to favor independent farmers.

From there, it turned its attention to the world outside. The Ben & Jerry's Foundation was established in 1985, with 7.5% of pre-tax profits being used to fund community-oriented projects. Priority areas are now human rights, historically marginalized sections of society and the environment.

### The shift exemplified

In the brand's own words: "We use ice cream to change the world."

In 2017, the Australian government was set to vote on equal marriage rights for all regardless of sexuality. To show its support, Ben & Jerry's hit on something that symbolized the lack of choice available to same-sex couples. It banned visitors to its stores from buying two scoops of the same-flavored ice cream. As they say, a principle isn't a principle until it costs you money.

It also installed mailboxes, encouraging customers to write to their local representative and demand they vote in favor of the act.<sup>45</sup>

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### Results

With a budget of just AUD 10,000, Ben & Jerry's impacted 163 million people through nearly 100 pieces of editorial coverage.

The Marriage Equality Act was passed in December 2017 by a landslide. While the brand obviously can't take all the credit for the outcome, its whole-hearted commitment was widely recognized and applauded.

# SHIFT

FROM PLATFORMS FOR  
ASSERTION TO PINNACLES OF  
AUTHENTICITY.



**Chipotle was born of the belief that food that's raised and prepared in the right way tastes better.**

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It only uses 53 ingredients; none contain artificial ingredients or preservatives. Nothing is frozen. It was also one of the first national restaurant brands to set goals on serving organic local produce and meat raised to the highest standards of animal welfare.

Chipotle bundles its philosophy under the banner of "Being Real." And that means acting authentically at every level.

### The shift exemplified

In 2019 alone, the company launched three new commitments:<sup>46</sup>

An industry-first education initiative that offers all employees the chance to earn a debt-free college degree.

A new benefits program that guarantees access to mental and financial well-being support for its entire workforce of 80,000.

"The Future of Farming": a partnership with the National Young Farmers Coalition to provide grants and three-year supply contracts to farmers under the age of 40 who meet the brand's "Food with Integrity" standards.

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### Results

Chipotle's determination to align what it says and what it does delivers real business benefits.

Not only did its 2019 activity generate 19.1 billion media impressions; same-store sales grew by 11% and digital revenues increased by 88% year-on-year. Online revenues now top US\$1 billion.

## From conspicuous to conscious.

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“Conspicuous consumption will be considered unthinkable 50 years from now. This could be the last generation that flaunts its wealth.”<sup>47</sup>

In Shift #2, we discussed how brands used to position themselves as symbols of aspiration. In addition to their functional performance, they were markers of status.

But the balance has shifted. People still want to look and feel good...but they also want to demonstrate how much they care. For an increasing number, the latter now trumps the former.

This is a trend that’s been evident for many years. But it’s been accelerated by COVID-19. In a global survey, Accenture found that consumers “have dramatically evolved”: 60% reported making more environmentally friendly, sustainable or ethical purchases since the start of the pandemic. Nine in ten of these said they were likely to continue doing so.<sup>48</sup>

Shoppers also have a laser eye on how companies treat their employees. Research by McKinsey in August 2020 discovered the degree to which a business was perceived to be supporting its staff during the crisis was a top three reason for switching brands in the USA, France and the UK.<sup>49</sup>

# 60%

of consumers reported making more **environmentally friendly, sustainable or ethical purchases** since the start of the pandemic. Nine in ten of these said they were likely to continue doing so.



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**“Telling consumers how the brand is interacting with communities around the world can have a powerful role.”**

MARTHA VELANDO,  
former CMO, De Beers

Every action a brand takes, internally or externally, will eventually lead to a reaction amongst customers and employees alike. Decisions need to be weighed carefully if the brand is not to make itself conspicuous for the wrong reasons.

The pressure is growing for brands to act with a higher degree of consciousness than ever before. A large proportion of

their current and future audiences want to live more ethically and sustainably; brands need to help them achieve this goal.

This must be more than cosmetic. Before looking outwards, brands need to look in. Any issues in terms of current business practice—be that how they manufacture, the relationship they have with their suppliers, or their hiring and employment policies—need to be identified and addressed. And until they’re fixed, brands must resist over-promising.

If they are to become more impactful, acting consciously should be at the top of every brand’s marketing agenda.



**Blake Mycoskie first came face-to-face with childhood poverty on a visit to Argentina. Returning to the USA, he founded TOMS in 2006.**

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From the outset, the business was focused on “facilitating the give.” Every time someone bought a pair of its shoes, the company donated a pair to an impoverished child. TOMS’ goal was to build a bridge between the consumer and individuals in need.

Over the course of its lifetime, the initiative donated 95 million pairs of shoes. TOMS overhauled the program in 2019 and now donates 1/3 of its profits for grassroots good.

### The shift exemplified

The brand is highly committed to sustainability. It ensures that 100% of its packaging is sourced from sustainably managed forests and a minimum of 80% comes from recycled materials.

The business-for-purpose ethos is deeply entrenched within TOMS. “Tomorrow’s Projects” is a monthly internal initiative. Any employee can submit an idea they believe will help a cause they care about. Staff then vote, with the winning idea receiving a donation of US\$10,000. The individual who championed that cause is given two days off work to help decide how the funding is used or to travel to the area where the money will be spent.<sup>50</sup>



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### Results

By supporting non-profit organizations around the world, TOMS has thus far impacted 100 million lives.

In the latest B impact assessment, TOMS earned an overall score of 121.5; that’s more than 40 points higher than the minimum required to become a B Corp. The median score for non-qualifying businesses who complete the assessment is just 50.9.<sup>51</sup>

**De Beers has been the clear leader in the global diamond industry since it was founded in 1888.**

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The company recognizes that leadership brings responsibility. It is committed to helping the sector as a whole act more consciously and ethically, improving the livelihoods of miners and their communities.

A parallel priority is to ensure the provenance of diamonds is wholly transparent.

### **The shift exemplified**

The Tracr platform was initiated by De Beers but built in collaboration with its industry peers.<sup>52</sup>

Tracr uses the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence and blockchain technology to create a digital record for every diamond registered. The platform spans the entire value chain, documenting every step of a diamond's journey from earth to end purchaser.

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By doing so, it enables all participants to inspect the social and environmental impact the gem has had on different communities. It therefore plays a key role in providing the surety and assurance that customers are looking for.

### **Results**

Tracr is only one way in which De Beers is helping stakeholders to live more ethically and sustainably.

Under the title "Building Forever," the company has set itself an ambitious set of goals to be achieved by 2030. These include: reducing its water footprint by 50%; supporting 10,000 female entrepreneurs; engaging 10,000 girls in STEM; and creating four jobs in its partner countries for every one within the De Beers organization.

# SHIFT

FROM CONSPICUOUS  
TO CONSCIOUS.

# #5 IKEA

**IKEA operates over 450 stores in more than 60 countries. 775 million people pass through its doors each year, with another 5 billion visiting its online channels.**

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As a leading furniture retailer, the company believes it has a responsibility to protect the planet. It has therefore made a global commitment to “inspire and enable 1 billion people to live more sustainably” by 2030.

IKEA doesn’t think lecturing people is the best way to achieve this goal. Rather, it applies “Knuff” theory to nudge shoppers in the right direction.<sup>53</sup>

### The shift exemplified

Research shows that 77% of consumers are interested in learning how to lead a more sustainable lifestyle. Cost is the biggest barrier: 62% believe eco-friendliness comes at a price.

This is fertile territory for IKEA: it’s well positioned to operate at the intersection of sustainability and affordability. The “Tiny Home” campaign is one example of how the brand is seeking to fill this space.

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CASES

HOW TO CREATE  
AN ANTIDOTE TO APATHY

CHAPTER 3



By taking a virtual tour of the home, people can discover a host of hints and tips that will help them live more sustainably: from space-saving furniture to a water-saving sink, a gas-free portable cooktop, a wooden countertop made from “the whole tree,” and kitchen cabinets made from recycled plastic bottles.

### Results

In addition to widespread PR coverage, direct engagement was high: during the launch phase, “Tiny Home” received 3.1 million video views and 3.4 million podcast listens.

Research also showed strong brand uplift. Against a control sample, exposure to the campaign drove a +18 point lift in agreement that “IKEA is a retailer that cares about sustainability” and a +25 point lift in those classifying the brand as socially conscious.<sup>54</sup>

## From exclusive to inclusive.

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If growth relies on maximizing mental availability amongst all potential category buyers, there's a curiosity in the fact that brands used to trade heavily on exclusivity.

At least superficially, many went out of their way to portray themselves as not being "for everyone." Instead, they positioned themselves against rigidly defined social hierarchies: marketing's equivalent of a caste system.

One consequence of this was that advertising frequently resorted to stereotypes, presenting the target audience with idealized versions of him- or herself. This was seen

as—and generally was—an effective way to unlock aspiration and the desire to consume.

But the world looks very different today. Ideals are less commonly shared; people want to assert their own personality rather than borrow that of others.

Brands now need to prove they're focused on, fit into and provide a safe home for a myriad of different lifestyles and identities. By doing so, they can simultaneously demonstrate their commitment to acting consciously and meet consumers' insistence that the same rules and opportunities should exist for all.



# 88%

Of people agree that "not enough brands do a good job of representing people similar to me or my community"

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***"If there's something I'm happy about, it's that creative is more reflective of the diverse reality we live in. But I don't know if anyone is really hitting a home run yet. Everyone has room to improve, and I will be politely dissatisfied with our current situation."***

JONATHAN HALVORSON, Global VP Consumer Experience, Mondelez International

Research by Kantar shows that 59% of consumers say it's important that the companies they buy from actively promote diversity and inclusion. Amongst younger millennials, 70% claim that more diverse casting in ads is a key driver of preference.

This should be a slam dunk, but many brands are falling short. 88% of people agree that "not enough brands do a good job of representing people similar to me or my community."<sup>55</sup>

Inclusivity is one area in which the way brands show and the way they act must intersect precisely. Your advertising can be a paradigm of diversity, but it'll be to no avail if your employment policies don't match up. Conversely, you can top the corporate league table in DE&I—but most people won't notice unless it pulls through into communications.

**As befits a truly global brand, Coke has a long history of promoting diversity and inclusivity.**

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For instance, its “Boys on a bench” ad showed Black and white kids sitting and laughing together in a New York City park. It ran in 1969, just a year after Martin Luther King had been assassinated.<sup>56</sup>

Some 50 years later, Coke’s campaign with the International Olympic Committee adopted a similar strategy. To increase engagement amongst younger audiences in advance of Tokyo 2020, it leaned into the inclusive nature of the Games. The Olympics is one of the world’s great gatherings, where everyone is welcome regardless of background.<sup>57</sup>

### **The shift exemplified**

In recent years, the brand has been highly active in supporting LGBTQ+ communities. In 2019, it took a stand against the Hungarian government with its “Love Is Love” campaign.

In Brazil, a widespread homophobic slur is “That Coke is a Fanta.” To send out a message of empowerment, the brand reversed the logic. Timed to coincide with International Pride Day, it filled limited edition Coca-Cola cans with Fanta. The packaging carried the message: “This Coke is a Fanta. So what?” The activity generated over 1 billion PR impressions and positive perceptions of the brand increased by 10 percentage points.<sup>58</sup>

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### **Results**

Advertising may be used to drive home the point, but Coke’s commitment is deep-rooted. It has earned the right to speak through its actions.

It was one of the first companies to support the Employment Non-Discrimination Act and has funded its LGBTQ+ employee association for over 20 years. It has also had a perfect score on the Human Rights Campaign Foundation’s Corporate Equality Index since 2006.

# #6 Mastercard

**Acting inclusively is the right thing to do. It can also be a real source of competitive advantage.**

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For financial services companies, small businesses represent a significant prize: they account for 99% of all US businesses. Huge marketing resources are targeted at the sector, but brands continuously struggle to cut through and grab the attention of busy owners. American Express' "Small Business Saturday" is one of the few programs to have made a real impression.

Mastercard spotted the fact that their competitors were addressing all small businesses in the same way. But its research identified that female owners do business with a higher sense of purpose. 63% say they'd sacrifice short-term profits to maximize long-term community impact.

### The shift exemplified

Launched during National Small Business Week, Mastercard's campaign highlighted the social impact achieved by female business owners. But it didn't stop there.

Funding is a particular challenge for women owners. So Mastercard gave five of them the chance to win US\$10,000 each by telling their story on its social channels.

The brand also created an Advisory Council of inspiring female entrepreneurs, including Payal Kadakia of ClassPass and Morgan DeBaun of Blavity, to provide content and mentorship. Finally, it hosted conferences in key small business hubs, including New York City and San Francisco.<sup>59</sup>



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### Results

Through its actions, Mastercard provided 1:1 support to over 5,000 female business owners.

Just as importantly, it unlocked a groundswell of positive sentiment amongst the target. Brand favorability lifted by 8 points, while consideration increased from 70% to 74%. More broadly, consideration amongst "affluent women" in general increased by +10 points.

**P&G takes a whole-world view of inclusivity: its hiring and promotion policies; the organizations it partners with; even where it spends its media dollars.**

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The company is entirely clear-eyed about its strategy, seeing it as a force for growth as well as for good. As P&G's Damon Jones put it in 2020: "We've made a stake in equality because it's not only the right thing to do for the world—it's good for business. There are trillions of dollars of economic benefit that people of color, or women, or marginalized communities have that's every bit as powerful as the 'majority' cohorts."<sup>60</sup>

### The shift exemplified

My Black Is Beautiful (MBIB) was formed at P&G in 2006 by a group of visionary Black women. Its purpose was—and remains—to change the narrative around Black beauty by addressing the societal and cultural stigmas associated with self-image. MBIB activities have included "The Talk," a two-minute film that sought to end the conversations that Black parents inevitably have to have with their children about racial bias.<sup>61</sup>



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In parallel, P&G is funding "Widen the Screen": a content creation and talent development platform that enables creators to share the full richness of the Black experience. One example of how P&G is investing is Queen Collective. Working with Queen Latifah, Flavor Unit Entertainment and Tribeca Studios, it provides female filmmakers of color with the opportunity to share their stories from their own unique perspective.<sup>62</sup>

### Results

The My Black Is Beautiful community now has some 3 million members. "The Talk" alone earned 15.8 million social mentions of @MBIB.

P&G is ranked as one of the USA's top employers in terms of LGBTQ+ equality (Human Rights Campaign),<sup>63</sup> diversity (Forbes)<sup>64</sup> and gender equality (Bloomberg).<sup>65</sup>

## Standing up and standing out.

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Sometimes it's enough for brands to stick to the fundamentals: delivering high-quality products at affordable prices in ways that are as convenient as possible for customers.

These basics remain essential; but if growth is to be accelerated, they need to be used as the platform from which brands can go forward.

Increasingly, people want brands to stand up and make a positive contribution. They are not prepared to let them hide behind the veneer of image, however carefully constructed or well polished. Consumers

now judge brands by their actions as well as their words.

As we've seen, 83% of consumers say companies should only earn a profit if they also deliver a positive impact.<sup>66</sup> And 93% of Gen Z claim that the more socially and environmentally responsible companies are, the more attracted and loyal they'll be as both customers and employees.<sup>67</sup>

Brands need to demonstrate absolute clarity about the role they play in helping people push forward on life's journey. While this purpose need not be cause-related, it

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must be inclusive, conscious and authentic. Consumers can and will test their claims; brands need to welcome this scrutiny and meet it with honesty and transparency. They must also act in the round, ensuring corporate practice, product proof points and brand purpose are exactly aligned.

Brands need to stand out as well as stand up if they're to overcome consumer indifference. They need to strive for true distinctiveness, showing high levels of empathy, powerful inspirational qualities and 360° coherence.

The brands that have come to feel most meaningful and indispensable, like Dove and IKEA, deliver impact at both levels. They are seen to make a difference for both "people" and "planet."

By doing so, they have won an unfair share of mental availability and earned the permission to profit and grow.

83%

Of consumers say companies should only earn a profit if they **also deliver a positive impact**

93%

of Gen Z claim that the more socially and environmentally responsible companies are, **the more attracted and loyal they'll be** as both customers and employees.





MAPPING

A PATH

FORWARD

## Measuring impact.

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As the saying goes: “If you cannot measure it, you can’t improve it.”

Most organizations will already be tracking some of impact’s component parts. Brand Equity, Net Promoter Score, digital performance metrics, quantitative research on whether a company is perceived to behave ethically or whether a brand is acting sustainably—these all form part of the jigsaw.

The challenge is to develop a single-source view that brings together impact on “people,” impact on “planet,” and impact on “performance.” The methodology must be capable of being applied consistently and globally. And for reasons of both cost and

sanity, the solution needs to build on existing frameworks and tools.

Ogilvy is working with WPP’s BrandAsset® Valuator to answer this challenge.

BrandAsset® Valuator (BAV) is the world’s leading empirical study of brands. Developed with partners at Columbia, MIT, Dartmouth and the University of Washington, it captures the key dimensions that drive brand momentum, advocacy and financial success. It has been running for 30 years, and its database now covers 100,000 brands in 50 countries.

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**BrandAsset® Valuator (BAV) is the world’s leading empirical study of brands. It captures the key dimensions that drive brand momentum, advocacy and financial success. It has been running for 30 years, and its database now covers 100,000 brands in 50 countries.**

By analyzing this database, Ogilvy and BAV have identified the combination of variables that best explain a brand’s impact on society and in business. The result is the Ogilvy Brand Impact Index, an algorithm that correlates particular attributes with a brand’s overall impact.

Key findings from the Ogilvy Brand Impact Index include:

- Brands with high impact for People scores are acting as “personal heroes” for consumers, making their lives better, easier and more efficient. People are passionate about these brands and willing to spread their love for them. Preference for these brands is 3x higher than the all-brand average.

Brands with high impact for Planet scores are acting as “citizens of the future” by making our communities and the world a better place. People see these brands as trustworthy, forward-thinking and willing to disrupt the status quo for the sake of generations to come. Compared to the average brand, they are 1.5x more likely to be seen as leaders.

- Brands with high impact for Performance scores are acting as “Most Valuable Players” in the marketplace. They offer strong value propositions for which people are willing to pay a premium. Perception of these brands as being “the best” is 1.8x greater than the all-brand average.

The results show a clear correspondence between a brand’s impact score and its financial performance. Looking at the period between 2015 and 2020, a brand’s ranking on the Ogilvy Brand Impact Index closely tracked its position on the Standard & Poor’s Index.

The tool will be formally launched soon.

# Five questions every brand should ask itself.



**Measurement is critical. But what's even more critical are the actions that flow from the findings.**

**If the end goal is increased impact, the starting point is finding the answers to 5 important questions:**

1.

**How much impact does Brand X deliver today?**

This should be evaluated against both “people” and “planet,” and then correlated with brand KPIs such as market share, rate of growth and profitability. If you manage a portfolio of brands, map the results for each to see what patterns emerge. Explore ways to benchmark the findings against your principal competitors: tools like the Ogilvy Brand Impact Index can help.

2.

**How much impact could Brand X be delivering today?**

Many brands already possess the wherewithal to deliver greater impact. It's simply a matter of finding the right key. Audit your communications, organizational behaviors and internal practices to find areas of unrealized potential. It helps to involve employees and customers in this process. They can provide additional insight into what's credible for the brand.

3.

**Where are the biggest opportunities for Brand X to increase impact?**

Model where and how increases in impact will generate commercial upside in both the short and long term. Consider all relevant KPIs: brand equity, consumer sentiment, customer response rates, market penetration, purchase frequency, loyalty, pricing power and margin. Brand X is unlikely to have a perfectly balanced scorecard. Relatively speaking, it'll either be over- or under-performing on the key dimensions of “people,” “planet” and “performance.” Should you build on strength or address weakness?

4.

**How is demand for impact likely to change?**

Even if you need to play catch-up in some areas, positioning Brand X ahead of the curve will give you a chance to leapfrog the competition. What significant changes do you anticipate in market needs, customer wants or consumer attitudes? What actions could you take now to prepare for these? In what ways will moving early allow you to maximize “return on impact”?

5.

**What needs to be fixed in how Brand X acts and shows before it can increase impact?**

Brands can't afford to be found guilty of greenwashing, blackwashing or rainbow-washing. Be brutally honest in identifying problem areas within the organization and develop plans to resolve them. Be cautious about jumping to comms solutions before your house is in order. While these fixes are a non-negotiable investment in the future, the answers to Question 3 should hopefully show that the benefits outweigh the costs.



## Re-capping the story.

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Across Western democracies, the bond between the people and the state is badly fractured. There is a trust vacuum, which brands have the potential to fill.

The opportunity is significant, but many brands are failing to seize it. Wherever you look, you can see brands struggling to win the mental availability they need to prosper. In turn, they're unable to increase their physical availability through distribution gains or by penetrating new sales channels effectively. Just 47% of brands are seen as trustworthy.

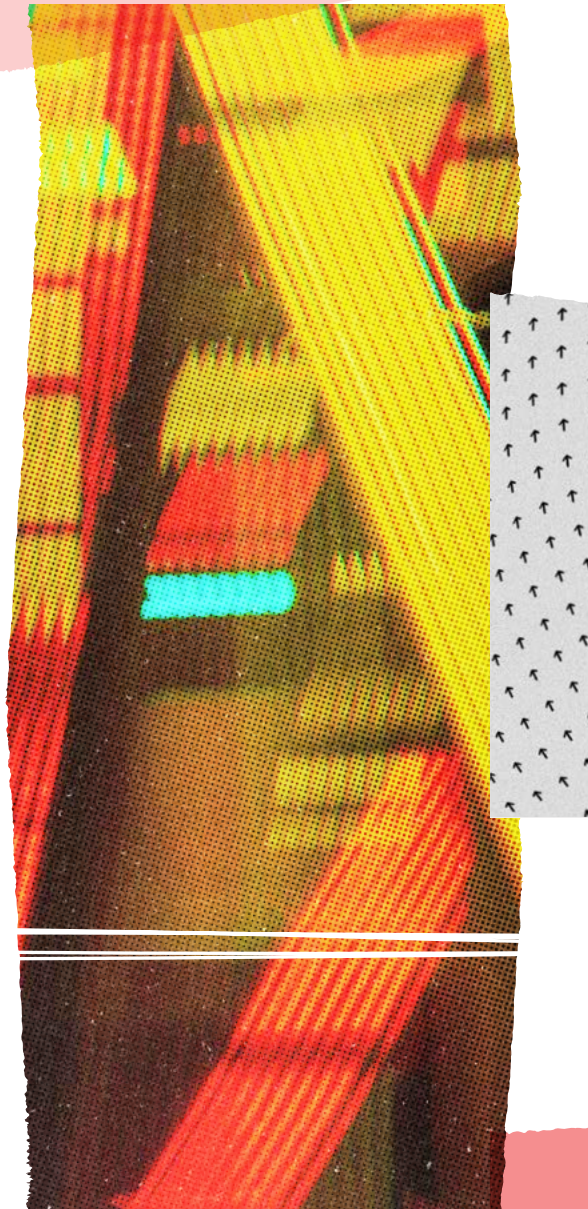
We have argued that an obsession with image has taken these brands as far as they can go. They must also prioritize impact.

Impact needs to be evident in terms of what the brand does "for me" (in order to earn a bigger role in my life) and what it does "for us" (in order to enhance the well-being of the planet, society and future generations). Brands need to deliver impact on both levels if they're to satisfy consumers' emerging needs and drive performance.

As people seek to adjust to a fast-changing world, they are being pulled in different directions at once. This is throwing up a series of tensions:

- how individuals define their central identity versus how they are defined through (and by) others;
- how individuals insist on their absolute uniqueness while also insisting on absolute equality for all;

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- how individuals simultaneously demand personalized experiences and shared experiences.

These tensions create intersections: points where people are wrestling with contradictory forces or seeking to transition to new modes of being. Intersections represent areas of high opportunity for brands—but the majority will need to shift stance and strategy if they're to grasp it.

In the past, brands could operate as lighthouses. Even if their radiance was occasional, it was enough to attract people's attention and draw them in. But today's consumers want brands to be flashlights, helping them find a way forward. They may not be interested in brands as friends, but

they do want them to be companions who contribute on an on-going basis.

To generate the impact required to grow, brands need to pay equal attention to how they show and how they act.

### How brands show

Today's world is increasingly fragmented. People are defining their identity in ever more diverse ways. Culture is splintering into a thousand shards. And large sections of society feel more stressed and less secure. In response, brands need to manifest true empathy. **Instead of mirroring mass trends, they should shift towards being magnets for individuals.**

As consumers become more insistent on their absolute uniqueness, they are less willing to be defined by the badging on which brands used to rely. Rather than be fixed symbols of success, brands need to provide the fuel that helps people reach their potential. **The requisite shift is from being aspirational to being inspirational.**

Historically, marketers tried to ensure all communications were uniform in shape and form in order to build the desired brand image. As the number of channels and platforms has multiplied, such control is no longer possible—nor desirable. Instead, brands

need to be ruthlessly clear about the role they want to play. **This necessitates a shift from consistency to coherence.**

### How brands act

Many brands were built in an era where communication only flowed one way. To a large extent, marketing was an impenetrable veil. But digital and social have torn the veil to shreds. Brands must now be transparent: what they say must match what they do. **They should shift from being platforms for assertion and strive to be pinnacles of authenticity.**

Brands used to position themselves as markers of status, promising consumers a sunnier, more glamorous life. People still want to look and feel good...but they also want to show how much they care. To help their audience live more ethically and sustainably, **brands should shift from acting conspicuously to acting consciously.**

In prioritizing image, brands portrayed themselves as not being “for everyone.” Now they need to demonstrate that they provide a safe home for multiple different lifestyles and identities. They must prove they share their audience's belief that the same rules and opportunities should exist for all. **Rather than lean into exclusivity, the shift is towards behaving inclusively.**

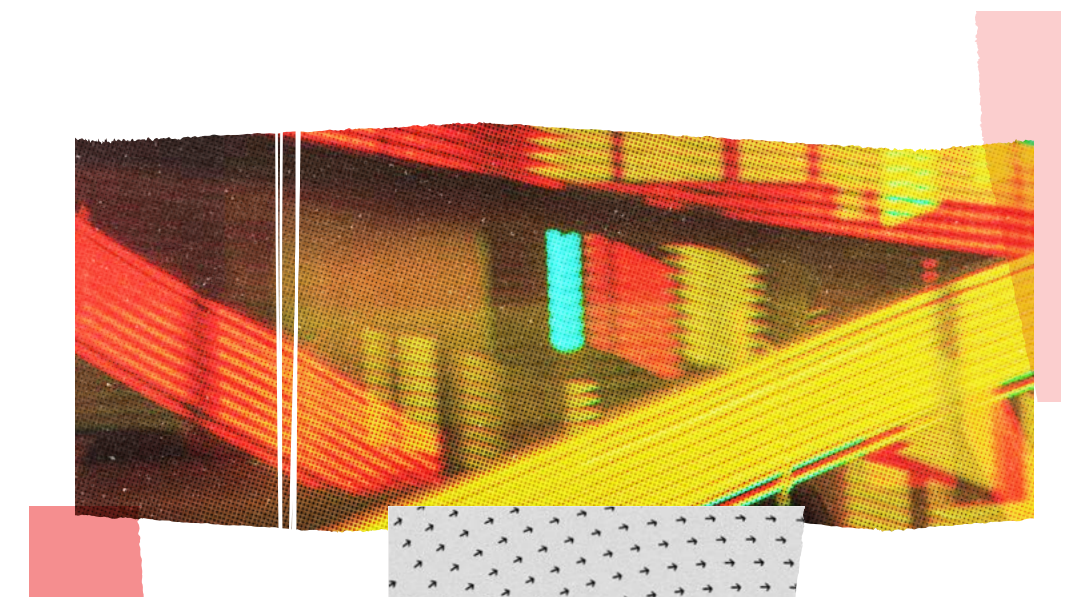
To win in today's noisy, hyper-competitive marketplaces, brands can prosper by standing out and standing up.

With consumer choices being far less driven by category comparison, brands must show in ways that are truly distinctive. Differentiation can provide strong uplift, but it's increasingly elusive. Distinctiveness is more resonant, multi-dimensional and defensible.

Brands are now judged by their actions as well as their words; they can no longer hide

behind the veneer of image. They must be seen to make a positive difference.

The brands that currently feel most meaningful and indispensable, like Dove and IKEA, have succeeded in shifting from image to impact. Their contribution to both “people” and “planet” is recognized and embraced by consumers. Their reward is an unfair share of mental availability and the permission to profit and grow.



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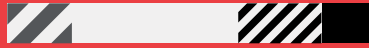
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#### ABOUT OGILVY

**Ogilvy inspires brands and people to impact the world, creating iconic, culture-changing, value-driving ideas for clients since David Ogilvy founded the company in 1948.**

**We continue building on that rich legacy through our borderless creativity—operating, innovating, and creating at the intersection of talent and capabilities.**

Our experts in Advertising, Experience, Public Relations, Health, and Consulting work fluidly across 131 offices in 93 countries to bring forth world-class creative solutions for our clients.

For two years running, Ogilvy has led WARC's Creative 100, earning designation as the top creative agency network in the world, and in 2022 was named the 2nd most effective agency network in the world by WARC's Effective 100.

#### ABOUT WARC

**WARC's purpose is to save the world from ineffective marketing by putting evidence at the heart of every marketing decision.**

**WARC believes that effective marketing is based on facts and not opinions.**

Since 1985, WARC has brought confidence to marketing decisions through the most trusted research, case studies, best practice, data and inspiration.

Today, WARC helps 75,000+ marketers across 100+ countries. Their clients include the world's leading brands, advertising and media agencies, media owners, research companies and universities – including the top-five largest agency groups and top-five largest advertisers in the world.

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