

# How to align your brand with purpose-driven consumers

Today's discerning customers have high expectations from the brands they choose to associate with. According to the 2020 Consumer Culture Report, 71% of customers prefer to buy from brands that align with their values, while 83% of millennials stress the importance of value alignment. When values don't align, customers will shift quickly and are not afraid to permanently boycott brands because of their stance on issues.



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Aside from ensuring sustainability by reducing the impact on the environment and positively uplifting the communities in which they operate, it's important that your marketing efforts communicate those values effectively and authentically.

"When brands operate with a conscience and place their customers and the greater good at the centre of everything they do, they will build trust and deliver real value to their customers, communities, and ultimately their bottom line," said Desirée Gullan, cofounder and ECD of G&G Digital.

Gullan adds that at the core of ethical marketing is authentic empathy and true purpose. "When brands prioritise long-term values over short-term financial gain, they become more meaningful, trustworthy and build enduring loyalty."

## 4 ways brands should demonstrate values

### 1. Get to know customers

Step into your customers' shoes. Use analytics, surveys, and customer feedback to gain an understanding of their demographics and behaviours. In addition, get out there and connect with customers. Events, experiences (whether online or offline), customer service and social media are excellent vehicles to gain valuable insights into your customers as people not data sets.

## **2. Authentic conversations**

Customers will skip over highly processed content in the search for meaningful, authentic experiences and messages. Get your brand out of its glass case. Staid and monotonous key messaging according to static brand strategies can become irrelevant quickly. Be real, authentic, tell it like it is. Get your customers to do the talking for you.

## **3. Make emotional connections**

The point isn't to drive customers to tears but to resonate. When brands commit - from the heart - to operate in a world they care about with content that is true and adds value, they will reap rewards, more than just financial. This includes owning your mistakes, for example, should you face quality or service issues, or let a customer down, honesty is important, own your mistakes, apologise even, with authenticity. This humanises your brand and will earn respect.

## **4. Journey with your customers**

Pivot away from industry best practices and expected initiatives. Leave jargon out of it and rather seek out real connections. Facilitate spaces for your customers to make their own memories with your brand at their side and be consistent in tone and sentiment across all touchpoints.

Consumers of all ages have evolved, particularly since the pandemic. People favour scrutiny, are less quick to part with their money, are over insincere marketing initiatives, and are less trusting of big business. Your consumers are looking for real connections. The sooner brands get real with their customers and get real with their responsibility to the sustainability of the planet, the sooner they will not only make an impact in their people's lives but also to the greater good.

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