



MEANING MATTERS

A GUIDE TO FINDING YOUR
BRAND'S MEANING + PURPOSE
SO YOU CAN TRULY CONNECT
WITH PEOPLE + GROW YOUR GOOD

*What Do You Mean / First Edition
Thoughts from SmallGood, LTD.*

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1 / INTRODUCTION

You hear a lot about how important it is for your brand to have a purpose these days.

University of Oxford and Ernst & Young found that public dialog on purpose has increased five-fold between 1995 and 2016.

Sometimes you may wonder if it's just more hype. Is it another thing we are being sold - this time from the "purpose industry." Maybe purpose is simply the latest commodity, the latest buzzword.

Well, in some ways, it is. But that's not all it is.

There are multiple studies that have shown that brands and companies that have a clear and well-articulated purpose do better.

With their employees.

With consumers.

With their bottom line.

2 / WHY A BRAND'S MEANING MATTERS

Here are some interesting facts:

Companies with teams focused on their organization's purpose had annual growth rates nearly three times the annual rate for their entire industry.

-Korn Ferry

Unilever's 2016 sales figures show its 'Sustainable Living' brands, like Ben & Jerry's and Dove, grew 50% faster than the rest of the business and now account for 60% of total sales growth, up from 46% in 2015.

A strong sense of collective purpose drives employee satisfaction, an organization's ability to transform, and increases customer loyalty.

- Harvard Business Review

Data suggests that 92% of people would do business with a brand that shares their values.

-Christine Arena, Forbes

Should brands contribute to our wellbeing? 75% of people surveyed in one study said Yes. Only 40% believed brands were doing so. And most wouldn't care if 74% of brands disappeared.

- Havas

Meaningful, purpose-filled brands have outperformed the stock market by 206% over the last 10 years.

Havas

3 / HOW TO FIND YOUR BRAND'S MEANING

GET STARTED

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3 / HOW TO FIND YOUR BRAND'S MEANING

So how do you go about finding, naming and living your brand's purpose?

Well, as you could imagine, almost every major ad agency or marketing consultant these days has a "process." Which often costs big companies a hefty chunk of money and of course, takes a lot of time.

But what do you do when you're NOT a big corporation with loads of money and time?

Do you just give up?

How can you, as a small business owner, nonprofit, or a social good entrepreneur hope to find the purpose and meaning that your organization needs to truly grow?

We feel your pain.

That's why at SmallGood, we have a process too. But it's one we've created to be fairly simple, fast and cost effective. We made it specifically with businesses and nonprofits trying to have a positive impact on the world in mind, so we can help them grow their good.

What's the first step to getting to your brand's purpose? The willingness to start...to start asking the right questions, to start looking beyond what you make or do, into the heart of what you make or do...your why. And you can get started, right here, right now.

The most interesting (and most respected) businesses and personalities are also the ones with the strongest and most authentic purposes behind them.

Jan Bruce

3 / HOW TO FIND YOUR BRAND'S MEANING

You'll notice we use the word "meaning" a lot.

Instead of talking about "finding your purpose" we often talk about "finding your meaning."

We do that because it just seems like a question people are already asking. "What does my life mean? Why am I here?" And because people today crave more meaning in their lives.

Studies have shown that there's a meaning gap in this country. A Gallup World Poll revealed that while life satisfaction is high in wealthy, developed countries, meaning is low. And it's taking a toll.

So when people find a brand that shares their values, and helps them connect to more meaning, this brand strikes a chord. It resonates. It becomes "theirs."

Think about it. charity:water isn't just asking us to help bring clean and safe drinking water to people in developing countries. They're helping us believe we can change the world and end the water crisis in our lifetimes.

A brand like Dove isn't just selling skincare products. They're giving us something to stand for and rally behind – "real beauty."

And what brands like Dove, Patagonia, and TOMS have done in B2C, young brands like collaboration-hub Slack, and even more established ones like the environmental products and solutions company Clarke, are doing in B2B.

Brands that are viewed as meaningful are seen to contribute positively to the quality of people's lives, are significant enough to be missed if they disappear, contribute to the wellbeing of their societies, and go beyond being just a product or a service.

Tash Whitmey

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4/ IS YOUR MEANING COMING THROUGH?

CAN PEOPLE FEEL YOUR MEANING?



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4 / IS YOUR MEANING COMING THROUGH?

So are you as clear on your meaning and purpose as TOMS, charity: water, Dove, Patagonia, or Warby Parker?

And more importantly, are others clear about what you mean in the world and for the world? And why you matter?

Yes, most companies and organizations have vision and mission statements - we've all seen our share of them. But too often leaders mistake these for their meaning. The problem is, most of these kinds of statements don't mean much to anyone except perhaps the group of people who put them together.

Why not?

- + They use too many big words.
- + They are too self-focused - It's all about "Our mission." "What we do."
- + They are long and usually yawn-worthy.

In short, they aren't short and memorable and something that means something to anyone outside of the inner circle. And they don't take into consideration what actual people in the actual world might actually need from your company.

These statements often don't answer a crucial life question of most human beings: What's in it for me?

So what about your organization? Is your meaning coming through? To find out, try our quick test on the following page.

+ Newman's Own is struggling to connect with young people today because they haven't communicated their meaning to this generation. "Only 39% of millennials could identify any purpose in the brand, beyond making profit despite the company giving 100% of profits to charitable causes and championing organic food." Sebastian Buck, Fast Co.

4 / IS YOUR MEANING COMING THROUGH?

People have an 8 sec attention span...shorter than a goldfish.

So what is your brand communicating in 10 seconds or less? (We're being generous with the 10 seconds.)

1.

Show your website/logo/brochure to 2 people who've never seen it. Give them 10 seconds.

Then ask them to tell you what they take away.

2.

Do the same thing with your Instagram/Facebook page, your brochure or other key marketing materials.

In 10 seconds: What do they take away?

Do they know what you're offering?

And how it will make their lives better?

Do they have any idea WHY it matters for the world?

Do they care? Are they excited enough to tell their friends about you?

As Simon Sinek said in his very famous Ted Talk:
"People don't buy what you do. They buy why you do it." (If you haven't seen that Ted Talk, stop what you're doing right now and watch it. Seriously.)

*People don't buy
what you do. They
buy why you do it.
Simon Sinek*

If most people didn't quickly get what you're really about and feel like they wanted to join in what you're doing, or buy your product, you're not alone.

We've found that it's really difficult for businesses and organizations to identify their resonating meaning. And translate that into simple, clear and compelling messages and visuals.

Especially without some outside perspective.

We took that into consideration as we developed the process we use at SmallGood.

It's designed to quickly and efficiently help you find your brand's authentic meaning and purpose, the one that will resonate with the people who matter most to your company or organization's growth and success.

And then to also help you translate that meaning into key messages and visuals that truly connect with people. Give them a compelling reason to buy or donate or volunteer. And become one of "your people" - your loyal and engaged community.

But in case you're in a hurry, we've created this "CliffsNotes" version, as a way to get you started on finding your brand's meaning.

We call it The SmallGood 5 Question/15 Minute Meaning Finder.

Here's how you do it.

Find 15 minutes and a quiet spot. Answer these 5 questions. Don't overthink. Don't over complicate. Use your small words.

Big words (like obfuscate) often obfuscate. (See what we just did there?) OB·FUS·CATE: A big word for muddle, confuse, obscure, baffle, complicate.

Companies that enjoy enduring success have a core purpose and core values that remain fixed while their strategies and practices endlessly adapt to a changing world. Core values are an organization's essential and enduring tenets—the values it would hold even if they became a competitive disadvantage; core purpose is the organization's fundamental reason for being.

Harvard Business Review

1

What do you offer, how is it different?

If you're Airbnb, for example, you offer people an alternative to hotels by making it easy for people to find, pay for and stay in real people's homes.

2.

What do you love?

If you're Purina perhaps you love to see happy, healthy dogs and cats enjoying their people. And vice versa.

3.

What do you hate?

When we know what we hate it helps us see what we're really trying to do for the world. So maybe if you're Kotex, you hate to see all the shame and stigma associated with women's bodies and having periods.

4.

Who are you for, what do they need?

Too often companies see people as a "target audience." But they are actually people, humans with real wants and needs. Zappos, for example, is for people who want to buy shoes online but who want a personal experience.

5.

What do you want to change in the world?

You started your company or nonprofit for a reason. Money was probably a part of it. But there was also something you wanted to MAKE BETTER. What was it? The founder of the at-home DNA testing firm, 23 and Me, wanted to empower people with detailed information about their bodies so they could act on it and ultimately have a greater quality of life.

ARE YOU GROWING AS MUCH GOOD AS YOU COULD?

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We hope this was a helpful start in reflecting on your meaning and purpose.

Want to go further? We'd be honored to help.

At SmallGood, we've helped all kinds of brands find their meaning and grow their good. And we'd love to tell you more about that. And talk more about the good you're up to the world.

Perhaps over a good cup of Joe?

Get in touch with us at lenora@smallgood.net or mylene@smallgood.net for a free consultation.

*To be successful, you
have to have your
heart in your business
and your business in
your heart.*

Thomas Watson