

Finding your brand purpose

Ahmad Abu Zannad and Sally Ballout

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Explains the roles that a sceptic and enthusiast can play in helping to find and develop a brand purpose.

- A brand purpose is built on a specific point of view about the world we live in and has beliefs, attitudes, a tone, a personality, and, most importantly, a mission.
- Associating a brand with a higher purpose has been shown to have huge business implications, with purposeful brands gaining 48% more share of wallet than lower-rated brands.
- The sceptical thinker will deconstruct every preconceived notion or stated 'truth', and will ask 'why?' until they reach a deeper understanding, while the enthusiast works to relieve the brand tensions.
- A case study from UAE telco client, du, demonstrates the sceptic and enthusiast in action.

A sceptic and an enthusiast walk into a bar... They walk out with a new brand resolution. That might not be the funniest joke you've ever heard. Well, it's not meant to be one. Read on to find out how these two polarising characters land on a more purpose-driven brand role.

For a brand to survive and thrive in an increasingly commoditised world, it needs to justify its existence in people's lives. A brand purpose is built on a specific point of view about the world we live in. It has beliefs, attitudes, a tone, a personality, and, most importantly, a mission. It identifies a real source of tension affecting people's behaviour and is committed to resolving it.

The immediate, short-term benefit of finding that unique brand purpose is that it inspires greater creative work, differentiating a brand from its competitors. By identifying a brand purpose, you expand the boundaries of a brand's offerings into uncharted territory, tapping into creative potential that goes way beyond what a brand offers or how it offers it. In the long run, it builds greater affinity and engagement, which can have a major impact on returns. Most importantly, associating a brand with a higher purpose has been shown to have huge business implications.

According to the Havas Group 2017 Meaningful Brands study, purposeful brands outperform the stock market by 206%, gain 48% more share of wallet, and achieve marketing results up to 137% higher than those of lower-rated brands. These findings are nothing new. Leo Burnett's 2014 HumanKind Quotient Global Study –

conducted across 11 countries, 155 categories and 778 brands – revealed that brands with purpose had, on average, double the market share and double the behavioural loyalty. In May 2015, Unilever stated that its 'brands with purpose' were growing at twice the speed of others in its portfolio.

So all the talk about brand purpose is worth it. And, honestly, we shouldn't need to dwell much on convincing you. The ultimate question, though, remains: how does one find a unique brand purpose? How does one identify a real human tension and then a solution a brand can offer its audience?

We have several tools to do so at Leo Burnett that have been tried and tested; however, rather than retread them here, we will explore a playful method that is still in its experimental phase. It was discovered accidentally following a heated debate over a sub-brand's greater reason to exist. Thankfully, that debate led us to stumble upon a new, effective approach.

After much analysis of our own thought processes and dynamics, we realised that, when tackling this exercise, there were two roles that we had subconsciously adopted: one of a sceptic and one of an enthusiast.

The method: The journey of a sceptic and an enthusiast

The first step of this method is one of destruction and exploration. Adopting a sceptical lens, you begin by exploring the desires, attitudes, and behaviours of the people with whom the brand aims to build a connection. The second step is one of building and identifying opportunities where the brand can contribute to people's lives, for which we assume the role of an enthusiast.

The sceptical approach: Exploring human tensions

A strategist looking through a sceptical lens is never satisfied with where they land. It's not just about observing or analysing people's behaviour to find the obvious patterns. For a sceptical thinker, it's about finding a deeper issue that needs to be resolved. They want to look at everything that is wrong in these people's worlds, question it, and, occasionally, even feel hate towards it. A sceptical thinker will deconstruct every preconceived notion or stated 'truth', and they will continue to ask 'why?' until they reach a deeper understanding. Throughout the process of deconstruction, scepticism, and refusing to settle for a simple response, they chip away at misconceptions to reveal hidden gems.

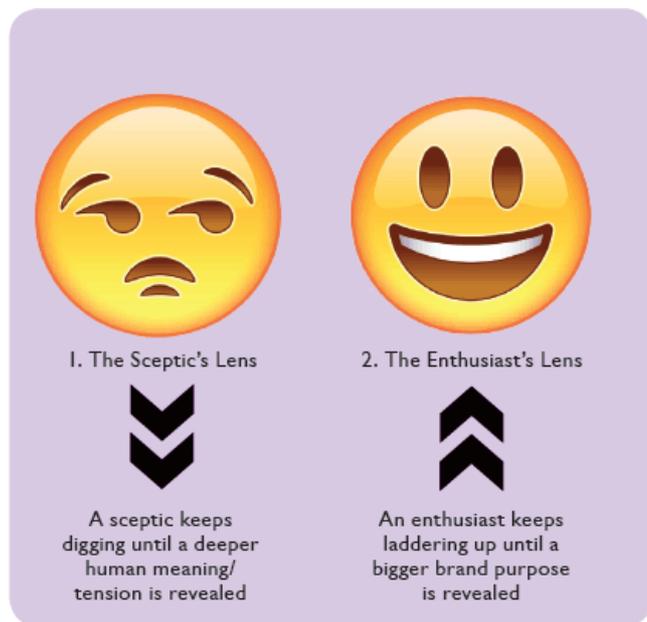
Working in reverse, this exploratory process could be used to identify some of the tensions that have been addressed by existing purposeful brands. For example, Dove has built its brand purpose around the fact that 96% of women describe themselves as average looking, while Always has tackled the issue of girls' confidence dropping at puberty, which falls at double the rate it does for boys. Sceptical thinking from the Special K brand revealed how the process of attempting to lose weight can leave you with a sense of defeat. Even when considering something like childhood, where most would see the positives, the sceptical strategists working on Ragu saw it through the eyes of a child as a devastating period, in which you have no money, you are obliged to do whatever people say, and you are stuck in school all day.

The enthusiastic approach: Exploring solutions

Once the sceptic has identified the human tensions, the enthusiast comes in. Armed with knowledge of the equities and assets of the brand at hand, they figure out what the brand can do to resolve these tensions. An enthusiastic assessment doesn't stop at what the product can functionally deliver: it ladders up from a product's practical benefit to reach a higher emotional level and, ultimately, an aspirational level.

When faced with the same tensions identified above, an enthusiast looks at Dove, a personal care brand, and ladders up its benefit to make women realise their real beauty, while Always moves beyond its role as a source of feminine hygiene products in order to encourage girls to embrace womanhood positively. Similarly, Special K promotes its diet cereals by helping women feel victorious, and Ragu suggests its pasta sauce as a source of relief after 'a long day of childhood'. Figure 1 illustrates both approaches.

Figure 1: The sceptic's vs. the enthusiast's lens



Case study: A sceptic and an enthusiast in action

It all started when our telco client, du, briefed us on a bundle targeting the United Arab Emirates' Filipino segment. It offered unlimited calls and chatting among members of the bundle for a daily subscription of 3 AED.

The Filipino population in the UAE consists of 950,000 people, boasting a unique cultural identity. Whenever there is an offer targeting an expatriate group, the local convention is to stick the offer on the community's national flag and launch a below-the-line campaign. This time, we felt there was a chance to create a larger impact. Fortunately for us, du is a receptive client that is always willing to challenge conventions, making this the perfect opportunity to apply the sceptical and enthusiastic method.

First, the sceptic started digging. On the surface, we observed that Filipinos in the UAE almost always hang out together in big groups, demonstrating an amazing communal bond. Digging a bit deeper, we learned that, for Filipinos living far from home, where family and friends play a major part in their very collectivistic culture, the UAE is a difficult place for them to establish and nurture the kind of close friendships they have grown used to.

Filipino expats face three main obstacles to friendship: they move here at an age beyond their formative years; they work long hours in rotating shifts; and they typically live in company accommodation where they can't invite

their friends. So, from a sceptical standpoint, we determined that they either had to settle for these single-serving, shallow, and short-lived friendships – which they hate – or they had to work damn hard on their social lives.

So, from a group of people spending a lot of time together, to people struggling to form the kind of relationships they're used to having back home – that's how a sceptic lens works.

From there, the enthusiast began to work. We had a bundle offering unlimited calls and chat; as enthusiasts, we believed this benefit could be laddered up. On the first level, the brand could help Filipinos stay constantly connected, but, taking this concept even further, we found a higher purpose for the brand: making them feel at home by enabling them to form strong, long-lasting friendships.

So, from a simple tariff plan that gives calls and chat, to an enabler of relationships – that's how an enthusiast works.

The creative interpretation of these ideas came in the platform 'Tropa for Life'. Derived from the Spanish word for 'troop', a tropa is a group of friends that you would almost die for – your gang or squad. To young Filipinos, friends are one thing, but the tropa is on another level, manifesting just how close and important these friendships are. Stressing that this gang is 'for life' is a reflection of the brand's commitment to ensuring that these relationships will last forever. Given that the du mother brand aims to 'add life to life', here we have a sub-brand that can comfortably exist under this bigger purpose by offering lifelong connections.

In summary, the campaign achieved 110% increase in daily revenue, 24% increase in subscriber base over six months, and 300% increase in online engagement among the target audience.

It takes a sceptic to dig deep to unearth a human tension, and, at the same time, it takes an enthusiast to keep laddering up until a bigger brand purpose is revealed. This method has been working well for us and has the potential to have wide-reaching implications in our industry.

About the authors

Ahmad Abu Zannad

Regional strategy director, Leo Burnett MENA

Regional strategy director at Leo Burnett MENA, he is a passionate advocate for raising the level of strategic thinking in brand building, marketing and communication in the MENA region.

Sally Ballout

Strategic planning director, Leo Burnett Dubai

An eternal student of human behaviour, Sally's educational background is in sociology, psychology and neurolinguistics.

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Americas: 2233 Wisconsin Ave NW, Suite 535, Washington, DC 20007, United States - Tel: +1 202 778 0680

APAC: 20A Teck Lim Road, 088391, Singapore - Tel: +65 3157 6200

EMEA: 85 Newman Street, London, United Kingdom, W1T 3EU - Tel: +44 (0)20 7467 8100

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