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Leading by Example.

Brands are increasingly realising that acting responsibly and setting a high standard when it comes to championing diversity and social causes is integral to their success.

Consumers respect a company that leads with its conscience – 53% of shoppers in the UK and 78% of shoppers in the US say they feel better when they buy products that are sustainably produced¹.

With this in mind, forward-thinking business leaders should be looking for ways to support a diverse workforce, champion local causes and harness their team's expertise as a force for social change. But altruism-oriented messaging can do more than boost public perception of a brand, it can also attract young job seekers.

Our 2018 Global Marketing survey asked:

Would your customers describe your business as socially responsible?

46%

Socially responsible

20%

Very socially responsible

Making up 40% of the workforce by 2020, it's important to listen to the 64% of Millennials who would prefer to work at a company that has a demonstrably positive impact on the world². This young generation is less interested in perks and pay cheques, and more interested in ideals – 50% say they would accept a pay cut for a job that aligns more closely with their values.







Championing a Diverse Workforce.

Being a force for social change hinges on a company's ability to lead by example and, when it comes to diversity, the marketing industry is under mounting pressure to do better.

Just think about the public backlash experienced by two brands who recently got it wrong. The social media storm that followed **Dove's** depiction of a black woman turning into a white woman seriously undermined its previously successful body-positive Real Beauty campaign, while **Pepsi's** portrayal of a soft drink diffusing a heated protest was seen by many to trivialise the #BlackLivesMatter movement.

Communications should reflect the priorities of the communities they talk to – and yet just 13% of

the creative industry workforce³ identify as coming from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, and only 8% of senior positions have BAME representation.

Several companies have expressed a commitment to achieving a more balanced workforce, and **HP's** successful #PoweredByDiversity programme saw all of the agencies it works with (including BBDO and Fred & Farid) exceed the goal for female representation by over 5%⁴. Currently working towards targets for minority representation, HP has

³ <http://www.thedrums.com/news/2017/10/08/11-creative-leaders-highlight-bame-creators-disrupting-the-industry-inspire-next-gen>

⁴ <http://www.thedrums.com/news/2017/09/25/hp-reports-uptick-women-and-minority-hiring-result-agency-diversity-challenge>



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joined forces with other enterprises – including **Verizon** – to call for a systemic industry change.

Our survey revealed some positive moves towards a diverse workforce, with 27% of respondents saying their company is ‘very ethnically

diverse’. However, 13.7% said their company is ‘not very ethnically diverse’ and it’s clear there is still a way to go. Tackling gender inequality appears to have been more successful – 32% of respondents said their company has strong representation of women in leadership positions.

There is clearly a public appetite for companies who celebrate diversity. High-street fashion retailer **Jigsaw** received positive messages of support on social media when they took inspiration from their workforce, which consists

of 45 nationalities, to launch its Heart Immigration campaign⁵.

Mars revealed its **Maltesers** brand grew by 8%⁶ after launching three ads focused around disability, while **Unilever’s** pledge to eradicate gender stereotypes⁷ from its marketing messages resulted in a 24% increase in consumers rating the company’s ads as progressive.

⁵ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/jigsaw-immigration-new-campaign-celebration-british-values-style-high-street-fashion-brand-a7999256.html>

⁶ https://www.marketingweek.com/2017/04/06/5-ways-improve-diversity/?ct_59d373e5227ea=59d373e52288b

⁷ <http://www.thedrums.com/news/2017/06/20/has-unilevers-ambition-eradicate-gender-stereotyping-its-own-ads-been-successful>

Wearing your Heart on your Sleeve.

96%

of people believe that it is important for companies to have good social and environmental policies

Making your company's commitment to good causes clear is all very well, but intention must be supported by action. According to a recent corporate social responsibility (CSR) survey, 96% of people believe that it is important for companies to have good social and environmental policies⁸. The marketing decision-makers we spoke to clearly agree, with the majority saying their company is 'very supportive' (32%) or 'supportive' (40%) when it comes to employees taking part in charitable projects.

In a world where consumers are just as interested in a brand's values as they are in their products and services, it's never been more important to practise what you preach.

Thanks to strategic partnerships with agencies like the World Wildlife Fund, Danish toy company Lego tops the Reputation Institute's 2017 list⁹, which is compiled by taking into consideration consumers' perceptions of company governance, positive influence on society and treatment of employees.

An organisation certainly walking the talk is The Climate Group, an international not for profit that works to accelerate climate action. Christopher Brown, Head of Business Development, spoke to us about its bid to influence businesses and governments to act responsibly.

"We act as a catalyst to take innovation and solutions to scale, by bringing together powerful networks of businesses and governments that shift global markets and policies. Failing to invest in climate change initiatives carries operational risks – such as supply chain interruption that's linked to weather-related natural hazards – as well as cost and reputational risks. For example, is a business as investable if they don't manage their climate risk?"

On the positive side, Chris says it's getting easier to convince businesses to address environmental, social and governance issues alongside sustainability, and we're seeing companies across diverse sectors making a conscious decision to de-risk their operations due to climate-related issues and a clear opportunity based business case. "There has been an attempt to galvanise the purpose perspective of the marketing industry and I think in 2018 we will increasingly see a more up-to-date approach to communicating a brand's 'purpose'. It feels like audiences and channels are shifting, demanding authenticity and becoming increasingly cynical of outdated attempts at greenwash."

Understanding the Power of Social Causes.

The ability to go viral at speed has seen marketers use their talents and various platforms to raise awareness of local causes and promote social change. These campaigns are not the result of a client brief or commission, they are in response to a challenge or issue that resonates with the agency.

New York-based advertising agency, DCX, have championed several social causes. Sam Levison, Strategist at DCX, spoke to us about the agency's latest altruistic activity: "The Trump Hut campaign evolved pretty naturally. We were presented with the opportunity to do an installation for a local art show, and we knew we wanted to address something core to Donald Trump's character that spoke to a bigger issue in American society¹⁰".

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"The idea was to use irreverent humour to build conversation and bring attention to a serious cultural problem. The 'luxury protesting hut' was a collaboration with Mexican-American artist Roxana Casillas, who used nearly 100 raffia hula skirts mounted on a wooden frame to mimic Trump's iconic hairstyle. We toured a number of locations with the aim of highlighting the president's preoccupation with money and luxury, which provoked a broader discussion of wealth disparity here in the US."

"We've called our pro-bono work 'admockery', because it truly is geared toward using our agency's resources to promote free speech and conversation. We think that businesses should use whatever resources are at their disposal to contribute to society in a constructive way. The goal of a business cannot be to merely grow economically."

Meanwhile, on the west coast, Los Angeles-based agency Omelet's #H2No¹¹ is a great example of a grassroots campaign that ended up shaping public policy. Its drought-awareness messaging was picked up by the mayor's office and turned into a citywide initiative. And it's now increasingly easy to make a positive statement: in recognition of agencies' rising demand for do-good inspiration, Pimp My Cause¹² curates a number of projects that are crying out for pro-bono work.

⁸ <https://reasondigital.com/insights/corporate-social-responsibility-and-the-consumer/>

⁹ <http://europe.businesschief.com/top10/1269/Lego-group-tops-the-list-as-the-most-reputable-company-in-Europe>

¹⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/jul/11/donald-trump-hair-hut-protest-art>

¹¹ <http://www.adweek.com/brand-marketing/la-agencys-grassroots-drought-initiative-has-grown-citywide-campaign-164292/>

¹² <http://pimpmycause.org>

DIVERSE, GLOBAL AND RESPONSIVE.

Specific concerns around diversity and representation will be different depending on where you are in the world – they can also change quickly as a result of local incidents and national and international political climates. That's why cultural and local knowledge is essential to getting statements around corporate social responsibility right, because what resonates in one region might be lower on the agenda in another.

Freedman draws on the expertise of our team of on-the-ground linguists, translators and cultural experts to gain an insight into the social responsibility causes that get the most positive responses, and to ensure that a brand's content is localised in a sensitive, positive way.

