



daake

Purpose-driven
branding: making
it stick among
employees.

How to instill purpose in your teams.

Businesses can no longer focus on transactions. Their power comes from connecting people to the ideas and things they care about.

The world has seen significant shifts in attitudes and behaviors over the last several years. Corporations and even mid-sized companies can no longer build an environment around economics alone. Both employees and consumers have a growing interest in the “why” that’s driving the businesses and organizations they choose to buy from and associate with.

This creates an opportunity for leaders to take a step back, reflect on the core purpose of the business and make organizational shifts to create a deeper connection with vendors, employees and existing customers—which also opens the door to engaging new audiences. When a clear, authentic purpose is serving as the North Star for your business, you have a unique opportunity to not only strengthen internal teams and operations; you can also build a more meaningful and enduring brand.

While a growing number of leaders recognize the importance and opportunities that lie within a company’s purpose, very few have the tools needed to help employees live it every day.

Find alignment between your why and theirs.

Whether you were promoted from within the company or hired from outside of the organization, there's a good chance you came into this role with a vision in mind. It could lean into a deep history, or you might feel a true transformation is needed. Regardless, the way you speak and act reflects that vision. What some leaders don't realize is that, while you can see the future you want, those around you might not be seeing the same thing.

Whether helping a start-up establish its brand or guiding a well-established corporation through a rebrand, we always carve out space to help leaders clearly articulate their vision, which is driven by purpose. From founders to owners, discovering the true motivator behind the business is the best way to build a brand that support it.

With an honest, well-written purpose in-hand, the next task becomes identifying the most successful ways to determine if and how it aligns with key players across every layer of the organization. The Daake team uses the Mars Team concept to help leaders solidify this fundamental component of their brand and business strategy.

The Mars Concept

Imagine you had the opportunity to open a location on Mars. To do this the right way, you would create a team of people who know the business, understand your goals and who feel empowered to voice their ideas. This team includes frontline staff, varying leadership roles, a tenured employee and a small handful of advocates—people who believe enough in the company to support and elevate its work.

There isn't necessarily a sweet spot in terms of the number of people selected for your Mars team. Too many and it can be challenging to have meaningful conversation. Too few and your end result could be lacking something. Focus on engaging the right people and the rest will fall into place. Whether you're able to meet in person or remotely, intentionally carve out time to talk about purpose and what motivates these team members. Why do they choose to work here versus a competitor or an entirely different organization or industry? More often than not you'll identify a common thread among the group that leans into the vision or purpose you have formulated in your mind.

These sessions will do one of two things: either solidify the purpose you're aiming for or you'll discover something even greater. Without first creating alignment among those who are most naturally attached to your organization, leaders will fall short in building a purpose-driven brand.

Identify ways to weave purpose into team members' daily lives.

After your Mars Team is on board with the purpose and overall direction of the business, ask for their guidance and help in creating a trickle-down effect among the rest of your employees. If your human resources, middle management, and even marketing staff have not been involved at this point, engage them. This is the right time to rethink how departments work together and close gaps in communication so that everyone is working toward the same goal.

Continue having conversations around what the purpose is and how it shows up during the work day:

- What behaviors are people doing that can be tied back to the purpose?
- What could be added or taken away from meetings to support the purpose?
- Identify who best embodies your purpose and why. Then consider how you can instill these same beliefs and behaviors in others.
- How can you recognize and celebrate both small and big wins through the purpose lens?

As a team (not solely the CEO or C-suite executives), work together to brainstorm ideas and outline ways to weave purpose into different areas of your organization. Examples could include empowering middle managers to shape their own meetings and recognition programs. With remote employment still coming into play, you might want to consider using your internal communications platforms as a way to send a shout out or showcase your purpose in action. While employees do need to see the top leader of a business living the purpose, it can be even more impactful if they're seeing their direct manager or peers guiding behaviors or being recognized for embracing it.

Create real, meaningful values.

The values that give life to your purpose could be the easiest way to engage teams. However, all too often leaders are drawn to words that carry very little meaning. When asked what your values are—what behaviors are most rewarded—responses typically begin with: integrity, honesty, passion... These words have been used since the dawn of time. People may know what they are but they don't actually feel anything when they hear or read them.

Rather than saying integrity is a core value, take time to brainstorm what that means to you, other leaders and even frontline staff. Ask them how they define it and whether or not it actually helps motivate others. The next white paper will go into the following points in detail but here are some key considerations for establishing your core values:

1. Your values need to support your purpose.
2. Stick to 3–5 core values.
3. Write them in your brand voice, which should resonate with your employees (speak in a language they understand).
4. Create examples of how your values are demonstrated by team members (try writing your values as verbs – i.e. actions, behaviors, etc.)
5. Encourage ongoing conversation about values and why they matter.

Like many other elements of your brand, core values can be utilized to help unite teams and recruit prospective employees.

Blur the lines between human resources and marketing.

The most successful brands work at breaking down departmental silos. This is especially important for human resources and marketing as they are both working toward attracting employees and customers. While their messages may vary, the purpose driving them is the same and should be woven through both. When departments work collaboratively, organizations of any size are more successful in attracting prospective employees and customers who have similar values and beliefs as the organization. From a human resources perspective, bringing elements of your purpose into the interview process, onboarding and ongoing training further solidifies who you are and what you stand for. When applicants or employees come in contact with your brand in the outside world, they'll have a similar experience.

As an example, consider who might be the right fit for a company such as Tom's. Sure, employees should love comfortable shoes but those who truly thrive have a deeper connection with the brand. Blake Mycoskie, founder of Tom's, created the One for One® model, which is stemmed in impact. For every pair of shoes sold, another is given to someone in need. Over time, this seemingly simple cause marketing strategy has driven the organization to bring "grassroots good" to a growing number of initiatives—and the Tom's team plays a key role in these efforts:

- Certified B Corporation™: This certification demonstrates Tom's commitment to making a positive social and environmental impact. As more people are becoming involved in these areas, this designation has the potential to elevate interest by both prospective employees and customers.
- The Tomorrow's Project: Tom's awards \$10,000 grants to employees. The intention is to empower employees to further support causes and organizations they're involved with.
- Giving Tuesday: Each year employees are given a workday to volunteer for a Tom's partner. This event brings teams together and brings Tom's purpose to life in deeply meaningful ways.

Outside of programs and activities, the Tom's brand stresses transparency and invitation across its website and social platforms. The voice and tone support a story about positive impact over profits, which can be utilized by both human resources and marketing to further build its appeal to a broader audience. Brands like Tom's, who have clearly identified their purpose and intentionally express it across both internal and external audiences have a higher chance at making it stick—which also encourages team members and customers to remain engaged.

Like branding itself, purpose isn't something leaders can check off their to-do list.

While it can be challenging to identify what's truly guiding who you are, becoming a purpose-driven brand comes down to connecting with employees on a deeper level—and keeping that connection.

Building an enduring brand is a marathon, not a sprint. The most successful businesses are those whose leaders are intentional about how the brand is expressed and celebrated. Lead by example. Encourage your Mars team to engage others. Bring your purpose to the greater community, both from a human resources perspective and from sharing your work with prospective customers. You never know, your brand's Why could be just what people are looking for.



 We're a pivotal-moment brand agency

Connect with Daake



Stay in touch with our latest work, our thinking and rebranding news and trends.
daake.com/our-thinking