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How to build  
the purpose-  
driven brand  
your team and  
customers want.

# Purpose is the North Star for your business and brand.

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Sit with that statement for a moment. Consider how powerful the concept of a North Star is. The idea of an inspiring object just beyond reach can guide you and your entire team to long-term success. Rather than picturing a specific destination, consider how a clearly defined purpose can help both leaders and frontline employees make decisions. Think about how it can draw teams together, foster collaboration, and instill greater confidence in your business as a whole.

Having a North Star that's true and built from human values will not only make your company's journey a smoother ride; it will also help your brand endure in the hearts and minds of your customers.

# Understanding purpose-driven branding.



Thinking of your purpose as a North Star is an easy to understand, highly visual way to approach purpose-driven branding. It helps leaders answer the question: Beyond economics, why does your business exist? Why do you get out of bed and do what you do every single day? Answering these questions seems easy enough but more often than not, we feel the need to circle back and rephrase these questions during the rebranding process before leaders can clearly define the purpose of the company.

This isn't to say that leaders don't know why the business exists, rather, it can be challenging to get past sales goals to the true DNA of the company—the human side of work. As leaders and as people we tend to spend more time fighting the urge to be vulnerable than express it as a way to connect with others. Yet a simple online search will prove that companies whose purpose is centered on human needs and values over business objectives are the brands better equipped to make the right decisions for long-term gains. When companies go all-in on purpose-driven branding, it can be felt across every element of the business, from brand identity to business strategy to employee culture.

Humans are naturally drawn to values they believe in and live by, so when brands are led by a value-rich purpose, it's much easier for employees, partners and customers to join in.

# Uncovering the true purpose of your brand.



As mentioned, there are a few different ways to sneak up on purpose. As part of Daake's rebranding process, leaders are often asked during one-on-one interviews the following questions:

- If your business closed its doors tomorrow, what would the world be missing?
- Beyond making money, why does your company exist?
- What gets you out of bed every morning to do the work you're doing today?
- Why did you choose to create your business in the first place?
- What void were you looking to fill?

If you find yourself answering these questions with more business operations in mind versus human values, go back and pose the question, "why" to each of your answers. Such as, "Why would the world be missing this if you closed your doors?" Then, follow that answer with, "Why does that matter?" Ultimately, you're searching for the deepest, most meaningful value.

This is critically important because it needs to reflect something you as a leader believe in and it should also be something that each person in your organization can easily believe in. Note the use of "easily"—if you try to infuse a value that people either don't easily understand or can't easily buy into, your path to leading people with that purpose as a North Star will be incredibly challenging.

Yet another way of approaching your purpose is to consider what statement best reflects who you are as a business, what you stand for and what you're about. All too often we assume people will figure it out. In reality, we need to express it clearly and repeatedly so it can be seen and felt by anyone who comes into contact with our brand.

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A few examples of clearly articulated purpose statements:

- Dove: to help women everywhere develop a positive relationship with the way they look, helping them realize their full potential.
- Microsoft: empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more.
- Apple: To empower creative exploration and self-expression.
- Patagonia: To save our home planet.
- Children's Hospital & Medical Center: To improve the life of every child.

Each of these examples has a clear purpose that goes well beyond the actual products they create. There's a human element to each that speaks to helping or elevating others. You need a few key elements to create an impactful purpose statement, including: clarity, focused yet flexible, emotionally resonant and enduring.

Some resources suggest keeping the customer at the center of your purpose statement. While this audience should be considered, to live and behave as a purpose-driven brand, it needs to speak to every human you come into contact with. If your top-tier leadership team doesn't believe in the purpose, they won't lead in a way that inspires others within the company to do the same. If frontline staff don't fully understand and see your company's purpose in action they can't possibly be effective in demonstrating it to your customers. If your purpose doesn't align with your partners, challenges in how you work together will likely occur. A true purpose-driven brand embraces an authentic, meaningful why to serve as its North Star.

## Extracting the *how* from your *why*.



In describing ways to identify a true purpose to guide your brand, it's important to recognize the role values play in your organization. Your purpose is the *why* that guides your decisions, both as a business and a brand. While sharing this statement with your teams, partners and customers is critical, it's not enough just to share it. You need clearly stated values to demonstrate how you're going to work and live by your purpose.

The strongest purpose-driven brands identify the values that best support their North Star and carry the most meaning with people in general (meaning, they mean something to both internal and external audiences). Your values should lean into what employees should think and how they should behave. Don't confuse this with corporate standards; rather, your core 3-5 values should tie back to your purpose and be written in a way that attracts and engages employees. These should be statements every person in a leadership position believes in and can lead by. It's impossible to expect frontline staff to behave a certain way and express your company's values if their manager isn't. Not only does this hurt your culture, it negatively impacts your brand, too.

As an example, X company's core values include Transparency. This word is painted on the entryway and it's spoken about during team meetings. However, middle managers aren't empowered to share significant business information to their employees. Over time, team members see changes happening but don't know exactly what the plan is or how it will impact their jobs. This leads to mistrust, a lot of watercooler talk and speculation, and ultimately higher turnover as people begin to fear they'll be let go. Had X company's leaders been transparent with middle management and given them the tools and greenlight to speak with frontline staff, confidence in the company and internal morale would have been preserved.

Core values are most effective when they are:

- Unique to your brand
- Actionable
- Complementary of one another
- Meaningful to both internal and external audiences

To be effective, your core values need to be woven into every facet of your business. They should be felt in your branding and play a significant role in how you hire and onboard staff, and in how you conduct reviews and choose promotions as well as reductions. Beyond marketing and human resources, your values should be reflected in how meetings are conducted and how team members interact with one another as well as business partners and customers. Your values are really tools for connecting people through beliefs and behaviors. Being intentional and diligent in adhering to them is imperative to any successful brand.

# How purpose and values drive culture.



Close your eyes and imagine your purpose as the North Star. Then, add each value as a tool intended to unify your internal teams and external audiences. Imagine people coming together, commiserating over a common belief. Their ability to collaborate, create, and move forward as a collective group strengthens. Their confidence in themselves, one another, and the company grows. This is how the strongest brands build the culture they desire.

Trying to create the culture you need to advance your brand without first considering purpose and values is a surefire way to lose staff and customers.

One way to look closer at how your purpose and values can influence culture is to sketch the experience different people have with your business. First, consider your team members. You can do this based on your company's hierarchy or start with a broader view. What's important is to identify their true experience. What does their first touch point look and feel like? Who are they interacting with and what feelings are they feeling about your brand? Explore different scenarios and take the time to consider the details. Often, it's those seemingly smaller moments that have the greatest impact. Once you've replicated the experience go back through each touch point and identify how you can bring in behaviors and communications that speak more closely to your values and purpose. This is the perfect opportunity to bring in help from across your organization. Use employee and customer feedback to drive ideas and determine what needs to happen to improve the experience.

This exercise should be repeated for external audiences, too. From customers to partners and other stakeholders; consider how even small changes in how you express your purpose and values can positively impact your organization. In turn, your culture will begin to shift and better reflect who you are and what you stand for. Creating a trickle-down effect, this will lead to lower turnover, higher advocacy, more productive teams—and more loyal customers.



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# Purpose-driven branding is taking center stage for a few reasons.

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Not only are employees and consumers demanding experiences that complement their beliefs and values, today's leaders are seeing an opportunity to make a difference in the world—all while remaining profitable.

Using your purpose as a North Star to guide the overall strategies and philosophies of your business is just part of what you need to build an enduring brand. Identifying the right values and putting in the time and energy to embed them into every area of your business is how your purpose remains the guiding force. And finally, combining the two is how great leaders influence culture and create a workplace and customer experience that people are drawn to and want to be part of for years to come. Daake can help guide you through identifying your true purpose and real values to help your brand transform into its greatest potential.



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