

BRAND EQUITY 10 Years of T

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Now Or Never

PURPOSE CAN MAKE STRANGERS CONSUMERS AND CONSUMERS ADVOCATES



As the world around us embraces new changes every day, the context in which brands are built is reaching an inflexion point. Consumers we target and the markets we operate in are now becoming challenging in more ways than ever before. Why now? Now is when consumers, employees, business partners and stakeholders are increasingly concerned with what they're buying into. They are increasingly searching for meaning in how they spend their time and money. Now is when consumers' cynicism and distrust in business is at its highest and they are asking more questions. The consumer now has unlimited information accessible at his or her fingertips as increased access to the Internet makes transparency a way of life.

The time has come for brand-building to re-invent itself as both an art and a science. It is time to make the transition from 'market-

ing' to 'serving', inspired and unified by a clear purpose. Purpose-driven growth can be achieved by a company when it is ingrained in the mind, body and soul of its brands. When a brand's 'heart' is set in defining a benefit that will serve the consumer, it is when purpose-inspired marketing is at work. A brand's purpose is derived from its heritage and its 'body' demonstrates this at every touchpoint at which it connects with the consumer. However, purpose cannot merely be words on a plaque, a *mantra* or a feelgood slogan — it needs to be ingrained in the very DNA of any company that is built to last.

At P&G, for instance, our Purpose calls on us to touch and improve the lives of more of the world's consumers now and for generations to come, and this has stood unchanged over P&G's 172-year history of growth. As we at P&G think about the four billion people we connect with on the planet, or the billions more we aim to reach, it is indeed very humbling. It causes us to realise how empathic we need to be to connect with all of the world's people in order to innovate and develop the products that improve their lives.

Often in discussions like this, the question of earning profit and doing business through consumers is posed as a conflict to the philosophy of serving consumers. Undoubtedly, companies are in business to earn a profit and return value to shareholders. At P&G, for instance, the profit comes from fulfilling our purpose and the difference lies in the fact that we aim to earn profit by improving lives and not in order to improve lives. At P&G, we don't treat philanthropy and sustainability as something separate from our business. It's integrated across our growth pillars of sustainability and innovation. Our environmental sustainability efforts are also a great source of pride. Since 2002, P&G has reduced its energy and water usage by nearly 50%. In addition, our global 'Live, Learn and Thrive' program has been helping over 200 million children get off to a healthy start and overcome disadvantages every year.

Every P&G brand lives and breathes a purpose that grows beyond its functional benefit. The purpose of our diaper brand 'Pampers', for instance, is not just providing uninterrupted sleep for babies but actually to help ensure healthy and holistic development of young children. The purpose of our brand 'Always' (Whisper in India), is not merely sanitary protection but that of empowerment of women. Allow me to cite an example of one of our global initiatives where this purpose of the brand comes to life. It has been well established that beyond hygiene, lack of adequate sanitary protection has a direct impact on female literacy; data clearly shows that girls miss anywhere up to a month of schooling in a year on account of their periods, with fear of soiling and lack of proper sanitation facilities being among the key reasons. Going beyond merely providing affordable sanitary protection, the Always' Protecting Futures — Keeping Girls in School' program provides the right puberty education and the appropriate infrastructure and sanitation facilities to over 20 million girls across the world, with a focus on developing countries.

In India, too, we have been driving the purpose of our global 'Live, Learn and Thrive' corporate philanthropy program by helping women and children develop in disadvantaged or underprivileged contexts. Whether it is our Whisper School Program that has been educating and providing nearly eight million young girls with good feminine hygiene or our flagship outreach program Shiksha, which has provided access to education for more than 150,000 children in India, the purpose of improving lives has been the unifying intent.

The power of Purpose lies in its ability to turn strangers into consumers and consumers into advocates. The philosophy of serving others to make life better has a cascading impact in bigger ideas, more loyal customers, inspired employees and better results. And it is now that the world's markets need to embrace this idea of purpose-inspired growth more than ever before.