

# Purpose Marketing

*Against a stupidity  
that is fashionable at  
the moment,  
there is no wisdom.*

Why selling has  
become uncool

\*Theodor Fontane

**Purpose Marketing** \*Theodor Fontane demonstrated foresight.  
And spare me a trigger warning, you guess what you're getting into.

**M**arks must show Purpose! Because that's the way it is. When you read articles on this topic then this is not proven, but repeated in a self-refuting manner. A phenomenon that the psychologist Le Bon recognised at the beginning of 1911: "The more definite an assertion, the freer it is from evidence and proof, the more awe it inspires. (...) What is repeated becomes so firmly fixed in people's minds that it is finally accepted as a proven truth." One hundred years later, Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kahneman confirms this phenomenon: For the time being, there is no cure for herd belief.

Do you remember the new marketing "law" at the start of social media? That consumers would now seek direct contact with the brand? That mass advertising was doomed to failure? Anyone who doubted this was laughed at as being glib. Companies have paid a lot of dues for these new laws. Yes, social media is important for brands. As an advertising medium, not as a retention medium.

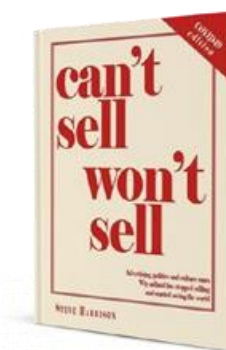
Former creative director Steve Harrison has won more Cannes Lions than anyone else-

re and has written a very well-researched book on Purpose that I recommend to anyone who still dares to question the story. The title: *Can't Sell, Won't Sell. Why Adland has stopped selling and started saving the world.* He argues that it is more satisfying for many marketers to be able to save the world with marketing budgets instead of selling seemingly bar profanities.

Do people expect companies to care about improving the common good? Or otherwise stop buying? In the middle of last year, under the impression of the pandemic, very many

Do people expect  
companies to care  
about improving  
the common good?  
Or else not buy  
more?

Advisor loudly proclaims. There down marketing guru Lindstrom. They were of a completely new, ethical behaviour of people in and after the pan-



Steve Harrison:  
Can't Sell Won't Sell -  
Advertising, politics and  
culture wars. Why adland  
has stopped selling and  
started saving the world  
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demy. In the meantime, they are happy to put the matter of oblivion over their wrong predictions.

It is true: more and more people agree that companies should contribute to improving the common good. Why should they answer it any other way? After all, it is practical to delegate one's own responsibility.

But does the brand really benefit from offering social "added value"? Do the shopper's ethical attitudes translate into appropriate buying behaviour? Despite the findings of behavioural science, many marketers do not know that this correlation is extremely weak in real life. So the fact that

The decision to buy is often driven by other factors than the good ratings.

My favourite example is animal welfare. Emotionally much closer to the buyer than, say, melting glaciers, boat refugees or LGBTQI. A sales campaign by Edeka with striking animal welfare information directly at the

freezer had hardly any effect on the purchase of more expensive meat from better farms. Al di and Lidl had expected clear behavioural effects with the introduction of animal welfare levels - and were disappointed.

Nevertheless, Purpose is considered THE right universal strategy. The consultant and former P&G manager Jim Stengel provided the basis for this: *Grow: How*

*Ideals Power Growth and Profit at the World's 50 Greatest Companies.* He claims to have proven a causal link between company valuation and the ideals (purpose) of the brands. The behavioural scientist Richard Shotton has examined Stengel's work and reached a damning verdict. Stengel constructed the links. For example, the increased share price of Coca-Cola was justified by its purpose brand Innocent. In-

nocent, however, is only one per cent of the Group's business.

Of course, the refutation of Stengel's evidence does not prove that brand-purpose does not work. But: Most people think of the baker

It's better for your self-esteem if you support important social issues with your brand work. At Cannes, almost only campaigns with a social stance get the coveted lions. And the themes change quickly. Short

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Marketing expert Mark Ritson

not about social issues. They think of themselves first and foremost. Because many people's month has more days than money. And for many others, their desires exceed their income. Marketing expert Mark Ritson puts it clearly: "We marketers live in a brand bubble of our own making. (...) We believe the bullshit that our brands make a difference to society and that this difference would be an important part of our job."

Ritson thus touches on what is probably the most important motivator for the hype around brand purpose: it is not about the needs of the customers, it is about the needs of many people in marketing, agencies and consulting. Selling through advertising has become uncool. Trust in advertising is at an all-time low. Who still likes to tell their friends that they advertise deodorant or fast food? It is so much

it was the refugees, then "Black Lives Matter. Now diversity and climate are in vogue. In the zeal for purpose, one thing is often underestimated: these topics are extremely complex. Kahneman: When confronted with a high level of complexity, our brain likes to answer a simpler question without us noticing. At the beginning of the flood disaster, Twitter was trending at 130 km/h on the autoroads. It was only later that we became aware of what had gone wrong. Nutrient-poor almond "Milk" costs more than twice as much as organic milk. Richard Branson does not offer meat products on the Virgin FLIGHTS. Because of climate protection. And sells flights into space to the super-rich. Nike and others find "Black Lives Matter". Very few have black C-level managers. Many international corporations celebrate purpose - and do their

best to avoid paying appropriate taxes in their countries. But what can it mean for a community better than for companies to pay their taxes fairly? What is the fastest growing textile retailer in America? Shein. Fast fashion with turbo drive. Lowest prices. From China. Controlled by artificial intelligence. Purpose?

Many international corporations celebrate Purpose - and avoid paying - appropriate taxes in the countries to the best of their ability.

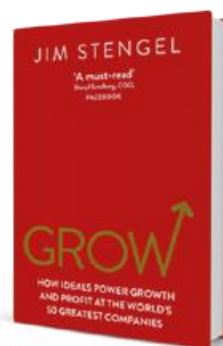
Not a chance. Now also in Europe. According to the proclaimed Purpose Laws, polluters Volkswagen will no longer be able to be bought. After a manageable slump, the brand with record sales and profits.

Do you remember when the Greens were soaring? The market crash in the last few months is not due to a lack of footnotes or a lack of purpose. So mainstream voters are beginning to understand that they may be asked to make greater sacrifices than they can muster for the good cause. I expect this to become even clearer on election day. Diversity and climate protection are currently important in a modern urban elite. The mainstream is experiencing more pressing problems for itself: a worldwide Gallup study shows continuously rising social stress levels - long

before Corona. Minimum wages are no longer even enough for social rents. Pension funds are at their limits. The future looks bleak for many in the middle class. Yet artificial intelligence is only just catching its breath. Purpose-benefits are likely in this context, the use of the new technology is more likely to limit the market potential than to expand the target group. So how can marketers best make society a better place? They should sell good offers, thereby contributing to economic growth (necessary to finance climate measures), thereby contributing to full employment. In making more money for everyone, you contribute to making the world a better place for everyone. I have great respect for entrepreneurs who sacrifice reach for their ideals. When some marketers "sell" purpose to their management as an imperative, I rarely applaud it.



Jim Stengel:  
*Grow - How Ideals Power Growth and Profit at the World's 50 Greatest Companies*  
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Author: Ralph Ohnemus, CEO K&A BrandResearch AG