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TOP TIPS: Five ways to communicate your brand internally

Inspiring and maintaining trust in your products is all about getting "up close and personal." Connecting on an emotional level is just one of the ways in which you can gain internal brand loyalty.



by [Katy Eyre](#), managing director, Jacaranda.

1. Communicate company values as well as products

At first sight, brands are about products. But brands are just as much about values. Once we're convinced that a product will do its job, we buy particular brands because we engage emotionally with what they stand for. What's changing today is the way brand values apply not just to the product, but also to the company behind the product.

We expect companies to have a point of view on issues not traditionally associated with business – for example, caring for the environment and human rights issues. We see more and more shareholder meetings dominated by people voicing social and ethical dissatisfaction. But, what's fuelling this trend?

- Stakeholders are better informed.
- Stakeholders are becoming more cynical.
- Growing power of pressure groups and NGOs.
- Rise of ethical stock market.

2. Engage at an emotional level

Consumers want products that will meet their emotional as well as functional needs. Potentially, this is good news for companies that can manage and communicate their brands effectively. When consumers are bombarded with more information than they can handle, they gravitate towards brands they can trust. If you're looking to a company to reinforce your lifestyle, your relationship with the brand will be that much more personal. Engaging people at this emotional level is what good communication is all about.

3. Get stakeholders on your side: understand the needs of all the people your business touches.

It's important to understand the needs of all those people that your business touches – from suppliers and stakeholders to employees and customers, pressure groups and government departments. What you say is about communicating your values to your stakeholders in ways that get them on your side. What you do is about behaving in a way that makes your brand credible – corporate responsibility (CR).

But what does CR do for the bottom line? To reap the benefits of CR, your business needs responsible corporate behavior plus the ability to communicate

What you say is about communicating

North America

NEWS

The bottom line benefits from engaged workforce, study confirms

Engagement factor apparent in financial performance measurements

New report helps communicators drive organizational culture

Study sheds light on culture's role in creating competitive advantage.

Employee engagement not yet a reality, warns study

Less than 20 percent of employees are fully engaged, according to new report.

More news

EVENTS

Strategic Communication Management, Fall Summit

5-6 October, Scottsdale, AZ

Webinar: Engaging Employees in Change: Communicating a New Business Strategy at Cingular Wireless

Thursday, 20 July, 2006

11 am to 12:30 pm West Coast

Noon to 1:30 pm Mountain

1 pm to 2:30 pm Central Standard

2 pm to 3:30 pm East Coast

JOBS OF THE WEEK

Internal Communications Consultant, D&B - Short Hills, NJ

Communications Manager, Mayo Clinic, - Rochester, MN

Director of Internal Comms, New Century Financial - Irvine, CA

VENDOR LISTING

Get help with your communication programs

your values to your different stakeholders.

4. Motivate and inspire your employees

In the wake of downsizing, a company's competitive edge depends far more on the skills and decisions of individual employees, so their commitment and motivation is crucial.

As an employee, you want to work for a company that has good brand values and commands respect in society. At the same time, committed employees can make a powerful contribution as ambassadors for the brand. If employees are cynical, they can undo everything else you're trying to achieve in terms of building brand values.

For example, back in the 1980s, The Body Shop, a cosmetics retailer, was building orphanages in Romania, taking action on child labor in Bangladesh and also helping to save the rainforests. It communicated its activities as much as possible and in every survey, its staff was shown to have the greatest commitment to their company's values of any UK business. It subsequently

became the eighth most recognized brand in the world. This is great example of how a company was able to integrate its CR activity into its brand in such a way that the two became inseparable in the public mind.

It also underlines value of starting closest to home with your employees. They're the ones who hold the key to your brand's success.

Persuasive brands

These are exciting times for communicators. The demands are great and the stakes are high. If our brands are not persuasive, our stakeholders will be quick to take their business elsewhere. If we can communicate brand values in exciting and relevant ways, we'll discover renewed stakeholder engagement and loyalty – thus making our organizations more successful.

Other recommendations:

Preparing to communicate strategy

your values to your stakeholders in ways that get them on your side.

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