

7 Things to Consider When Creating Your Brand Values

Every brand stands for something, but some may not fully understand what. Or they may need to re-evaluate their corporate identity – and the values they hold are an essential part of that.

Here are 7 things to consider when creating or refreshing your brand values:

1. What matters to you?

Customers can tell when you're being authentic or just going through the motions to appear virtuous. When creating your brand's values, make sure they are values that truly echo your beliefs. Never pretend; no company will be able to keep up a charade forever.

If your values are genuine and part of your brand identity, they will attract customers who feel the same way.

2. Identify your purpose

You'll have started your business for a reason; what is your purpose and unique selling point? Do you have an ultimate goal in mind or a worthy cause you support? We don't mean simply donating to charity or raising awareness about specific issues. We're talking about your brand's reason for existing. A crusade you may be on?

What is it you bring to the table, and how do your values shape your goals? Does your company mission statement reflect what you actually do - or initially set out to do? If not, then reevaluate your purpose to discover your values.

3. What are your customer's values?

While your values need to be genuine, they also need to echo that of your customer base. Otherwise, you'll not attract any. Learn who your customers are through in-depth analysis. Look at their demographics. Is there anything connecting them as a group of people? If you can learn who your customers are (typically) then you can also gain insight into their values.

This way you can appeal to these values through your marketing and corporate identity. Be the brand that reaffirms your customer's values to them. Reassure them and confirm that you feel strongly about these matters too. But make sure you take action to demonstrate this. And always make sure that the values you support are genuinely good-natured and uncontroversial.

4. What are your competitor's values?

Examine what your competitor's values are and how prominently they're addressed/featured. Do your competitors simply claim to hold these values? Or does it permeate from every inch of their marketing materials? Try to identify if they are genuine. They may hold ground you want to occupy, as you may both be competing to be the champion of the same values. Or to be the company that embodies them the most.

Can you represent these values in a more thorough and genuine manner? They may just be an afterthought for your competitor. Or can you represent new and emerging values that a large portion of your customer base holds? Do your research and present yourself in whichever way is most advantageous.

5. Read the marketplace

As we mentioned above, how are the values of society and your customers evolving? Values that once held true may no longer be relevant or important to your customer base. They may have moved on and now support new issues and ideas. Your industry (and society itself) won't be resistant to the changing moods of the day.

If your values are outdated (just look at some of the horrifically sexist marketing campaigns from the 1950s), or losing relevance in a modern world, then refresh them. The industry you're in may now be concerned with new challenges and issues. How can you get out in front of them?

6. Engage in brand storytelling

Weave your corporate identity, history, mission statement, goals and values into one consistent narrative. Brand storytelling helps you tie all these things together. It represents the best way to ensure your values are synonymous with your brand.

Through brand storytelling, when a customer thinks of you, they'll think of your values. They'll know your brand's story and why you're in business. If they hold similar values, they'll be keen to support you over your competitors. Storytelling is what inspires people and elicits their interest and empathy.

7. Remain consistent – never waiver from your values

Unless your values are tired and out of date, never waiver from them. Doing so can make you appear disingenuous at best – and lead to scandal at worst. Be the champions of your cause and never compromise your integrity for short-term gain.

This would expose you as a company that only holds their values to manipulate your customer base. While every company uses their brand values to aid their marketing efforts, the best of them genuinely hold these values and consider them sacred.