

Brands on a Mission: How to Achieve Social Impact and Business Growth through Purpose

Myriam Sidibe

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Brands on a Mission is a valuable marketing text aimed at inspiring corporate leaders to harness the power of their brands to improve lives and promote social justice.

Myriam Sidibe's action-oriented business book *Brands on a Mission* explores how commercial enterprises can profit from leveraging their marketing expertise to promote social causes.

Sidibe grew up in Mali and went to university in the UK, where she studied the hygiene of schoolchildren in developing countries. After graduation, she worked in marketing with Unilever, and her experiences there are drawn upon to make a strong case for why brands need social missions: to differentiate themselves from competitors, alleviate global suffering by aligning their brand aspirations with a social cause, and improve social conditions for millions in ways that governments and nonprofits cannot.

A series of case studies show how various companies adapted their products and marketing strategies to address social causes. These represent an impressive array of social causes, including HIV prevention, domestic violence reduction, and the promotion of healthy food consumption, handwashing, and sanitation. Together, they illustrate the risks and rewards facing corporate leaders, with insights into the inner workings of brand marketing and numerous examples of brand successes and failures.

One of Unilever's successful brands is Dove, which started as a soap and now encompasses products aimed at girls and women around the world. The story of Dove's marketing evolution toward its Real Beauty campaign is personal and emotional. Skeptical Unilever executives weren't convinced that girls were unhappy with their bodies until Dove's marketing managers presented evidence from interviews with those executives' young daughters. In other case studies, the book suggests practical approaches to mitigate executives' resistance to adopting social causes related to condom use and healthy eating habits.

The book is a helpful primer for corporate leaders and marketing managers who want to do good in the world. Its case studies are rich, detailed, and thorough, and they are complemented by practical suggestions for working with outside partners, like academic and government agencies. The book's useful recommendations are designed to enhance brand advocacy strategies and win approval from internal corporate decision makers.

The text's extensive discussions of the challenges of changing consumer behavior help to place its case studies in a solid context of marketing theory and practice. The difficulties and benefits of persuading corporate leaders to shift marketing strategies toward social cause marketing are well explained, believable, and actionable. The book is optimistic but realistic: a chapter on how to evaluate marketing results warns of potential pitfalls in measuring inputs and outcomes.

The book's language is professional yet conversational, helping to make its messages all the more clear and understandable. Its photographs of products, advertisements, and consumers using the products, as well as

numerous charts and illustrations, break up its text well and energize its discussions. Its extensive lists of references at the end of each chapter give credence to its assertions, while its numerous exercises inspire thought and action and enhance the book's utility.

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CAROL BOOTON (August 17, 2020)

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