

How to Use the Power of Purpose to Market Your Franchise

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Anyone who has spent time around young children knows that one of their favorite words is “why.” Why is the sky blue? Why can’t I have that? Why do I have to go to school? “Why” is an important question to ask no matter how old you are, especially in the world of business and, increasingly, franchise development and brand marketing.

The “why” behind a brand is something more consumers and investors are paying attention to, which makes it essential to not only share your brand’s story, but also its purpose. When you can define and articulate your brand’s purpose, you have the potential to reach more people who will respond more authentically to what it is you have to offer.

People don’t buy what you do. They buy why you do it.

A brand’s purpose is its reason for being beyond making money, the initiatives it puts forth to do business and simultaneously do right by society. The purpose of an ice cream brand, for example, might be to sell ice cream *and* encourage quality time with family and friends; a shoe brand’s purpose might be to sell shoes while helping people stay comfortable on their life’s journey. When a brand can dovetail its business needs with the public’s emotional needs, people respond. Author and leadership expert Simon Sinek put it best:

people don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it.

Sinek has built a whole theory around this idea, called The Golden Circle, that gives a brand the framework to differentiate its value propositions, starting with its purpose. Many highly successful brands have seen the wisdom in defining and articulating theirs: Nike wants to "bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world," no matter who that athlete might be. Starbucks strives to "inspire and nurture the human spirit – one person, one cup, and one neighborhood at a time." These aren't just slogans. They're words meant to embody a desire to make a difference while making a living, and people are paying attention on a number of levels.

A recent industry analysis found, for example, that while 75% of consumers are more likely to trust a purpose-driven company, nearly 80% stated they'd be more inclined to want to work for a company with a strongly defined purpose. Clearly, purpose matters, and in many ways, it matters uniquely to potential franchisees, people who may be trying to fulfill their own purpose, their own why, through small-business ownership.

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The Fifth P

Franchise brands have an arguably enviable place in the American business landscape. They're set up with systems and guidelines that allow others to buy into their vision, which in turn allows many thousands of people every year to become small-business owners. In short, a lot is at stake. When a franchise can identify and articulate its why through brand marketing, everybody's job gets a whole lot easier because everyone has a point of reference to guide them.

All brands are defined by certain basics, as identified by

Philip Kotler, often cited as the father of marketing. He reduced these basics to four Ps:

- Product: what it is you make.
- Price: how much you sell it for.
- Place: where you can buy it.
- Promotion: how you market it.

He has since added a fifth: purpose. Without this fifth P, a brand will struggle with the other four. Purpose allows a brand to develop not just itself but its relationships with consumers, employees and, in the case of franchise brands, investors. Without a core purpose, a franchise brand runs the risk of wasting valuable time and money as it struggles to define itself, realize its potential and reach its best customer.

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The purpose-driven investor

Franchise marketing and development is all about brand growth and attracting franchisee candidates. As the CEO of a franchise digital-marketing agency, I've noticed that more and more of those candidates are purpose-driven investors looking for brands that align with their own goals, interests and ethics. I've worked with dozens of franchises that are both well-established and up-and-coming. The most successful are almost always the ones with a well-realized purpose, and it doesn't matter what they're selling. It could be an organic juice brand promoting better health, a used car dealership brand encouraging personal freedom and independence, or a children's preschool brand celebrating knowledge and preparedness. These franchise brands are invariably able to connect with people on an emotional level, and they're attracting investors as a result.

When it comes to how to market your brand, every franchisor

should strive for an emotional connection with franchisee candidates. A clearly defined brand purpose can facilitate that and help you reach more and better-qualified investors. Taking the time to develop and share your purpose speaks to how prepared your brand is and how committed you are to the support of your franchisees. It also reassures potential franchise partners that your brand is focused on growth and on the needs of the public and community. These are all things smart franchise investors take into consideration as they weigh their options and perform due diligence.

Aligning your marketing efforts

Because the why behind a franchise brand is so important, it's essential as a brand leader to make sure your marketing is aligned with your purpose and that it gets communicated clearly and at every opportunity through a variety of channels. An experienced franchise digital-marketing agency with a full suite of services can help you do that. Their job, among many, will be to make sure that marketing your franchise includes developing an engaging franchise-development website and that its content speaks clearly to your purpose while highlighting your value propositions. It will answer important questions about your brand that will educate visitors and compel them to want to find out more. Blogs, social posts, downloads and more should all reiterate your brand's purpose so that potential investors clearly understand who you are and what motivates you to be the best.

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As a franchise marketer, understanding the purpose behind a brand well enough to craft meaningful and targeted marketing strategies is not an overnight process. It takes ongoing immersion in that brand and regular engagement with its leaders. But experienced and dedicated marketing partners will always take the time to do so and will always help you see the

value in it. In a very real sense, the why behind the best franchise digital marketers is all about encouraging and championing a brand's purpose so that it can enjoy one other important P: profit.

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