

MARKETING FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Beth Perl Berman

Business leaders and marketing professionals have a much broader job to do than ever before if they want people to buy in... and buy. To achieve increased productivity, customer spending, and profitability, messaging must focus first within organizations and then be directed toward their targeted external audiences. Leaders need to connect in a meaningful way, with their own people as well as with their customers, clients, influencers, and investors.

INSPIRING TEAM MEMBERS

Employee engagement is a hot topic these days, and should be viewed at not only as an internal concern, but as a key marketing challenge. Savvy leaders recognize the implications of an average employee turnover rate of 33% with 9 of 10 people separating because of attitude (Forbes) are foreboding. Savvy leaders also know they need to cultivate an engaged culture where their people are passionate about the company, fully engaged in the company, and are inspired to contribute to its vision. All leaders who want to achieve high-engagement cultures must appreciate this: In order to create stickiness – especially with their Gen X and Gen Y team members – they need to do three things: connect their employees to what the organization stands for, connect each team member to the value they bring to the organization, and connect their people to each other.

ENGAGING THROUGH THE “WHY”

In essence, leaders must crystalize and communicate their personal WHY – i.e., how they are hardwired and what drives them, and learn/capitalize upon the WHY’s of their team members. With this intelligence, leaders can appreciate their employees’ gifts and place them in (or move them to) the “right seats” – in seats that will motivate them to excel.

When WHAT they do is aligned with WHY they do it, employees develop passion for their work and alignment with the organization's cause. Per Gallup, companies in the top 25% in terms of engagement yield 22% higher profitability and 21% higher productivity. Imagine what that looks like at companies in the top 5 or 10% of the engagement scale.

PURPOSE-DRIVEN ECONOMY

Similarly, as we transition to a purpose-driven economy, organizations must connect authentically with their external audiences – with ideal clients, customers, stakeholders, and investors. Near-ubiquitous access to online information, primarily via mobile devices, enables buyers to compare features and benefits of alternative options with little or no effort, creating new marketing paradigms.

To avoid becoming commoditized, organizations that formerly touted features and benefits of their products and services must now differentiate based on their greater cause. Equally important, for-profit and non-profit concerns alike must be authentic in each and every one of their interactions, or the online community will swiftly call them out. Understanding, and then clearly communicating, the organization's WHY is the path to achieving this authenticity and connecting deeply with their various segments.

WHY-BASED MARKETING

To net this out, when employees and team members identify with the visionary leader's individual and organizational WHY, they become ambassadors for the cause. Clear, WHY-based communications converts "9-5'ers" to aligned team members who – at every customer touch point – can clearly articulate and advocate for what the organization stands for and inspire others to buy in, and buy. WHY-based organizations have the tools, and the mojo," to create powerful messaging and brand alignment.

Brand alignment, according to Gallup, translates to a 20% increase in wallet share – that’s a 20% increase in spending from your current customer/client/stakeholder base. It also attracts and engages ideal clients and customers in a meaningful, positive, emotionally charged way.

When companies and organizations identify and express WHY they do WHAT they do, people sign on. They buy into the cause. They buy into the organization. They become raving fans. In a time when authenticity counts and connecting on a deeper level is essential, the WHY is foundational to achieving Buy-Me Metrics™.