

The 3 features purpose-led brands have in common

By [Dan Mbyane](#)

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Purpose is a common goal uniting businesses - and people - today. The organisations that people choose to support, engage with and even work for need to be able to do more than just pay lip service to their commitment to create societal value - they need to be able to prove it.



Source: www.unsplash.com

[Research](#) done by Zeno Group covering 8,000 consumers and 75 companies from around the world showed that 94% of people find it critical that the companies they engage with have a strong purpose. In fact, they are four to six times more likely to buy from, trust, champion, and defend these companies – which has a ripple effect on how they perform.

Brands that lead with purpose typically have greater brand affinity and bottom-line results. Companies that make diversity, equity and inclusion a measurable business imperative, for instance, have been found to be six times more innovative in developing creative solutions that address real-world challenges.



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The figures do not lie. Purpose-led organisations think, talk and act differently – because they place their purpose at the core of their business strategy.

These businesses have three features in common:

They take the time to discover and embed their purpose

It needs to be intentional – and this doesn't happen overnight. It starts with the leadership team and requires them to take a step back and ask hard questions about the impact they want to have and the legacy they want to leave.

This means being honest, authentic, vulnerable and transparent in order to get to the root of the purpose that truly drives the business. This reason for being then needs to be embedded in the company at all levels of their operations – from changing compliance frameworks to how the business communicates with stakeholders, for instance.

Ultimately, it is about merging profit with purpose to add value and make a meaningful impact in their employees, consumers, stakeholders and society at large's lives.



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They find that purpose is a cultural change

Discovering and making purpose part of a brand's fundamental fabric is a transformational journey, rather than a linear process – making it an ongoing progression that is larger than any individual, even the CEO and board driving the change.

It is about creating a culture around purpose as the golden thread in everything the organisation does, from recruitment processes through to product development and communications. Studies show that culture is increasingly important to people, especially in South Africa: a BCG [report](#) revealed that South Africa was one of the only countries – in a survey of 209,000 people in 190 countries – where company values rank as the most important consideration for people.

Because purpose helps attract and retain the best talent, businesses need to be serious about making their purpose the driving force of their culture and company values.



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They embrace experimentation and agility

Purpose-led brands understand the gap between value and action – that is, where consumers are experiencing the most frustration, and directing their energy there.

This makes it critical for them to take the time to understand these pain points, as well as changing customer needs and behaviour, and innovate in order to adapt at speed, address these challenges and remain relevant, while keeping their purpose at the heart of the changes they are making.

Essentially, purpose-led businesses look both internally at policies and culture, and externally at stakeholder needs and an

ever-evolving business landscape, to create shared value. This creates a collective, purpose-driven ecosystem equipped to adapt with agility to a rapidly changing world.

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