

HOW BRANDS CAN MAKE A (SOCIAL) IMPACT

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Historically, taking a position on social issues was not considered good business because controversy could affect the bottom line. Now it's a lack of responsiveness to critical issues that can impact the success of a brand.

Consumers know they can demand change through choosing what they consume, and want to support the causes that bring meaning to their lives.

Last summer, there was a flurry of frivolous support from brands in response to another wave of police violence: poetic re-worded mission statements, newly created equity working groups, and diverse staff hires. Yet few brands go beyond empty words, statistics, or a superficial alliance with social justice.

To talk about an issue without taking action is a reflection of white supremacy. Not promoting equity and justice or activating meaningful change perpetuates systems of oppression that cause deep harm in society.

Brands cannot serve the cause of social justice from the sidelines. Business leaders must use their power, platforms, and resources to help their employees and communities overcome social injustice and build a better world.

This is why brand activism matters. When a brand takes a stand to drive social change based on its beliefs, purpose, and values, it moves from performative allyship to substantive impact. The result is a more sustainable and just economy.

Here are the first steps to make your brand a change agent for social justice:

Define (or redefine) your purpose and values.

Stand for something before taking a stand. How are your brand's values reflected in your response to social issues? Are your guiding values a solid platform for social justice initiatives, or is it time to re-evaluate?

Show, don't tell.

It's not about what you say; it's about what you do. Be prepared to be held accountable if your brand doesn't live its proclaimed values. Develop a plan of action that produces quantifiable results from meaningful action. What happens after your tweets and Instagram posts?

Your business carries power in your community. Use your power for good: be a purpose-driven brand in the fight for social justice.

