



WARC

Brand Purpose Report

Lessons from the 2017 WARC Awards

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Themes from this report

1

Brands are improving their use of purpose

P&G's former Global Marketing Officer, *Grow* author and jury chair, Jim Stengel, believes that WARC's Best Use of Brand Purpose winners indicate an improvement in the use of purpose, which he defines as "the reason a business exists beyond making money." The Awards show that purpose-led strategies help brands achieve commercial objectives. 71% of finalists, including Lifebuoy, described the success of their campaign in achieving primary objectives as 'considerable.'



2

Low interest brands are using purpose to connect with consumers

Financial services and household / domestic brands were strongly represented on the 2017 shortlist, with Emirates NBD, Huggies and Whirlpool going on to win. Some judges felt all brands should have a purpose. BBDO India's Rajat Mendhi, says: "An opportunity exists for every brand to find a context where both their brand and their product can authentically play a role in terms of creating social change."



3

Measurement needs to improve

Robust metrics need to prove both the social and commercial case for a brand purpose strategy to be implemented. As MullenLowe London's Laurence Green says: "Purpose advocates need to make an ongoing commercial case in the boardroom, not just the moral case in the corridor." Soft metrics need to make way for harder evidence that brand purpose strategies work, such as sales, market share increases and profit gains. One example is Kotex which claims its purposeful effort increased sales by 3%.



4

Integrate within the organisation

WARC's research based on 2017 finalists showed that purpose campaigns were not well integrated into the marketing mix. Yet, to be effective, purpose needs to run through the entire enterprise. When identifying a brand purpose, DigitasLBI's David Chriswick, author of the Grand Prix-winning Whirlpool paper, recommends looking "in the origins and the anchorage of a brand" and many judges flagged up that employees must be stakeholders.



Purpose hasn't peaked

A judge on the inaugural panel for Brand Purpose at the 2017 WARC Awards, Laurence Green writes that brand purpose is alive and well and "busy restoring the broken link between business and society."

Laurence Green, Executive Partner,
MullenLowe London

“In these febrile times, ‘purpose’ has enjoyed something of a rollercoaster ride: its initial, explosive trajectory as the strategic soundbite *de nos jours* was soon tempered by scepticism.”
Laurence Green



Self-congratulatory as marketing awards may appear at the prize-giving jamborees that conclude them, the judging that precedes the jolly is typically conducted with due earnestness. Judges take their responsibilities seriously: not just to honour the efforts of the entrants, but because they are aware that their choices (and their rationale for those choices) help to set the future tramlines of our business.

That responsibility weighs even more heavily when judging the inaugural session of any new awards scheme, which are inevitably still in beta mode, and when the topic at hand is socially as well as commercially charged. And so it proved for my peers and I as judges of the Brand Purpose category of the first ever WARC Awards.

In these febrile times, ‘purpose’ has enjoyed something of a rollercoaster ride: its initial, explosive trajectory as the strategic soundbite *de nos jours* was soon tempered by scepticism, perhaps helpfully so?

That first, excitable wave was powered by the inspiring example of Unilever and others – businesses and brands committing to (and in many cases

re-discovering) their social mission – and underpinned by the thought leadership of charismatic commentators like *Start With Why* author Simon Sinek. The inevitable counter-wave was partly rooted in the presentation of purpose as a commercial panacea and/or its trivialisation as a creative awards-pleaser.

Peak purpose?

"It's quite possible that 2016 marked peak purpose", Saatchi and Saatchi's UK Chairman Richard Huntington [suggested in March 2017](#), just as WARC was introducing this category to help set the tramlines for purpose best practice: as a patient and serious long-term undertaking.

More specifically, according to WARC's guidance to entrants, the example of the '[Stengel 50](#)': to sort the deep, organisation-wide commitment from the shallow; and to sift the enduring strategic platforms from more episodic creative showboating. Or, in Richard Huntington's words, "something that a business sees as central to its future and not a set of pleasant words that burnish its present."

In that spirit, the easiest papers for the judges to set to one side were those

Purpose hasn't peaked

that failed to evidence that deeper commitment to purpose. However well-intended they may have been, one-off campaigns and activations untethered to an ongoing social mission at 'enterprise level' were not the droids we were looking for. Our goal was to reward the strategic offspring of brand purpose rather than its creative orphans.

Business and social outcomes

And so to the more finely calibrated conversations around the papers that flowed from a truer, higher order version of 'purpose'. Here, our conversations crystallised around whether the authors could evidence genuinely improved business outcomes on the one hand and tangible social impact on the other.

Taking each in turn, we were inevitably drawn to those case studies that went beyond the intermediate 'comms' measures of reach, awareness, purchase intent, of shares and likes. We wanted to see sales gains, share swings and ideally profit returns that would not have materialised otherwise. The papers that demonstrated this crept to the top of the pile, if only because the advocates of purpose need to make an ongoing



Detergent brand Ariel built on its #ShareTheLoad message by inspiring dads to lead by example.

commercial case in the boardroom, not just the moral case in the corridor.

To our surprise, very few papers evidenced the internal effects of brand purpose: on morale, retention and recruitment. Not only do we know these effects to be strong (witness Unilever's popularity as an employer brand) but we also know that they crystallise quickly, typically well ahead of sales: if only because the company has been 'briefed' well in advance of the consumer. An obvious opportunity for 2018's authors!

It would be fair to say that social impact was also variably reported. There was plenty of 'near in' evidence



Feminine hygiene brand Kotex exposed the misconceptions surrounding the behaviour of menstruating women.

of monies raised, lives touched and 'conversations started' but less of the 'farther out' statistics you might hope to see as the broader, more emphatic social return on purpose investment. As WARC's Lucy Aitken [has written](#) separately, "how many men are now doing more domestic chores in India as a result of (Ariel's) Share The Load? To what extent has Kotex helped smash the taboos around periods? This is where it will get really interesting."

Sharpening best practice

The winners were drawn from the relatively small batch of papers that

tethered campaign activity to company purpose and boasted hard effects in the real world: commercial and social.

The 2018 Awards will further cement 'what good looks like', with the emphasis on *Effective Use of Brand Purpose*. Guidance to entrants states that "judges will want to see evidence that brands are integrating purpose into their marketing and *their wider enterprise...* of how a purpose-led approach is producing a *tangible return...* and has also had some *societal benefit* too."

This year's special awards speak to the further sharpening of best practice in this area. The 'Evaluation' and 'Employee Engagement' prizes hopefully speak for themselves given the above context; the 'Smart Spender' special award is specifically designed to reward those smaller brands and businesses profiting from purpose, not just the consumer goods giants with the resource and footprint to drive change.

We congratulate the 2017 inaugural winners and look forward to further evidence that – far from 'peaking' – brand purpose is alive and well, and busy restoring the broken bond between business and society.

Judging Panel



Jim Stengel

Chair – President and CEO,
The Jim Stengel Company



Maria Garrido

Chief Insights
and Analytics Officer,
Havas Media Group



Thomas Kolster

Author, Goodvertising



Sam Conniff Allende

Chief Purpose Officer,
Livity



Laurence Green

Executive Partner,
MullenLowe London



Andy Last

Co-Founder,
MullenLowe salt



Leila Fataar

Founder,
Platform 13



Tom Knox

Chairman,
MullenLowe London



Susan Machtiger

President, Brand and
Marketing Strategy,
OgilvyRED

Judging Panel



Rajat Mendhi
Executive Vice
President, Planning,
BBDO Mumbai



Jonathan Wise
Co-Founder,
The Comms Lab



Leslie Pascaud
Executive VP Purpose
Branding and Innovation,
Kantar Added Value



Freya Williams
CEO, Futerra
North America

**Interested in judging our Awards
in 2018? Please get in touch.**

Lucy Aitken, Case Study Editor
lucy.aitken@warc.com

Chiara Manco, Editorial Assistant
chiara.manco@warc.com

Six tips to more effective purpose

Jim Stengel, President & CEO, The Jim Stengel Company and former Global Marketing Officer at Procter & Gamble, chaired the inaugural year of the WARC Awards' Best Use of Brand Purpose category. Here, he talks about how brand purpose continues to evolve and ties this into WARC's proprietary research that examined data around all the shortlisted entrants for the 2017 Awards.

**Jim Stengel, President and CEO,
The Jim Stengel Company**



Brands that focus their business on improving people's lives outperform their competitors. Having an inspiring purpose statement is just a first step: winning brands activate their purpose in all they do, not just in marketing campaigns. As we can see in the winning case studies in the Best Use of Brand Purpose category at the 2017 WARC Awards, the brands that understand this are constantly raising their standards, anticipating what consumers care most about, and are becoming role models for the industry.

In late 2011, when I published *Grow: How Ideals Power Growth and Profit at the World's Greatest Companies*, I partnered with Millward Brown to study the business case for purpose. We conducted a 10-year growth study involving 50,000 brands. We selected 50 brands with extraordinary growth over the 2000s and benchmarked them against their competition. In pure financial terms, the 'Stengel 50' as a whole grew three times faster over the 2000s than their competitors. There was a plausible relationship between financial performance and these brands' ability to connect through purpose.

Since 2011, there have been many

more studies that show similar findings – including The EY Beacon Institute 'The Business Case for Purpose' in partnership with *Harvard Business Review*, and Interbrand's 2017 'Best Global Brands,' which showed that having a clear strategic mission and a meaningful purpose is a vital characteristic of top brands.

The data is compelling. Brands with a strong purpose win in the marketplace by improving the lives of those who they serve. What's more, from a commercial perspective, purpose-led marketing campaigns are strong performers. The WARC research indicates that these campaigns were effective at achieving their primary objective, with nearly three-quarters (71%) of finalists describing their success as 'considerable' (see p.16).

Defining purpose

Purpose is the reason a business exists beyond making money; it is what inspires, motivates and retains employees and customers. A strong purpose connects the core beliefs and values of the people inside a company with the people they serve. And it needs to be reflected in how a company or brand communicates

Six tips to more effective purpose

with the world. Brands are getting better at this, as reflected in the winning case studies (pp.23-33).

The preferred creative strategy for shortlisted entrants chart (p.19) shows emotion as the preferred way for purpose-led brands to bring their strategy to life. Those familiar with the [work of Les Binet and Peter Field](#) will be aware that emotional campaigns that have an investment in the long-term drive brand preference. This was showcased in this year's WARC Awards, particularly with campaigns from detergent brand Ariel and personal care brand Lifebuoy: both brands demonstrated the value of a long-term commitment to a purpose-led campaign.

Lifebuoy is about making a brighter future for the world, and that is activated in Future Child (p.27). Meanwhile, Ariel stands for gender equality and tells that compelling story with Dads Share the Load (p.26). Compared with the other categories in the 2017 WARC Awards – Effective Social Strategy and Effective Content Strategy, shortlisted campaigns tended to be longer in market: 43% were defined as long-term, i.e., six months or longer (p.17).

However, it takes more than creative work that supports a belief or a cause. It needs to be authentic to the brand. All purpose-driven brands yield a social or societal benefit, but if it isn't aligned with the character of the brand, it won't work.

How do you know if your brand purpose is on track?

How can you communicate your brand's higher ideal authentically so it resonates with consumers?

Here's our checklist:

1 **Does the purpose reflect your business's fundamental reason for being, its people's core beliefs, its customers' values?**

A key part of this is being certain your purpose is consistent with your heritage and true to the core business. The best purpose cases are when the brand's values and the values of their customers are aligned. Do your customers know and understand what you stand for? Does your purpose represent what is important to them?

2 **Is the purpose impacting lives or genuinely improving something?**

Purpose can actively improve lives through activation inside your company, or outside, with customers. As a result, all functions should be involved in the process of creating and living a purpose. Everyone is in the business of improvement – improving life, process, technology, and more. Are your business initiatives and improvements making an impact?

3 **Does the leadership buy into it?**

Your team culture starts with your leadership and spreads throughout the organisation. When everyone represents the ideal, or purpose, your brand begins to live it. Are your leaders looking to your purpose when making every business decision?

4 **Does it inspire your employees?**

One way to inspire is to focus on recognising times and places when a company's purpose is being activated. Start each meeting by sharing a story and recognising a

team for its efforts in living up to the purpose. Do your employees come to work every day understanding their purpose, their role in making an impact on the world?

5 **Does the business bring it to life across all its systems and all touchpoints with stakeholders?**

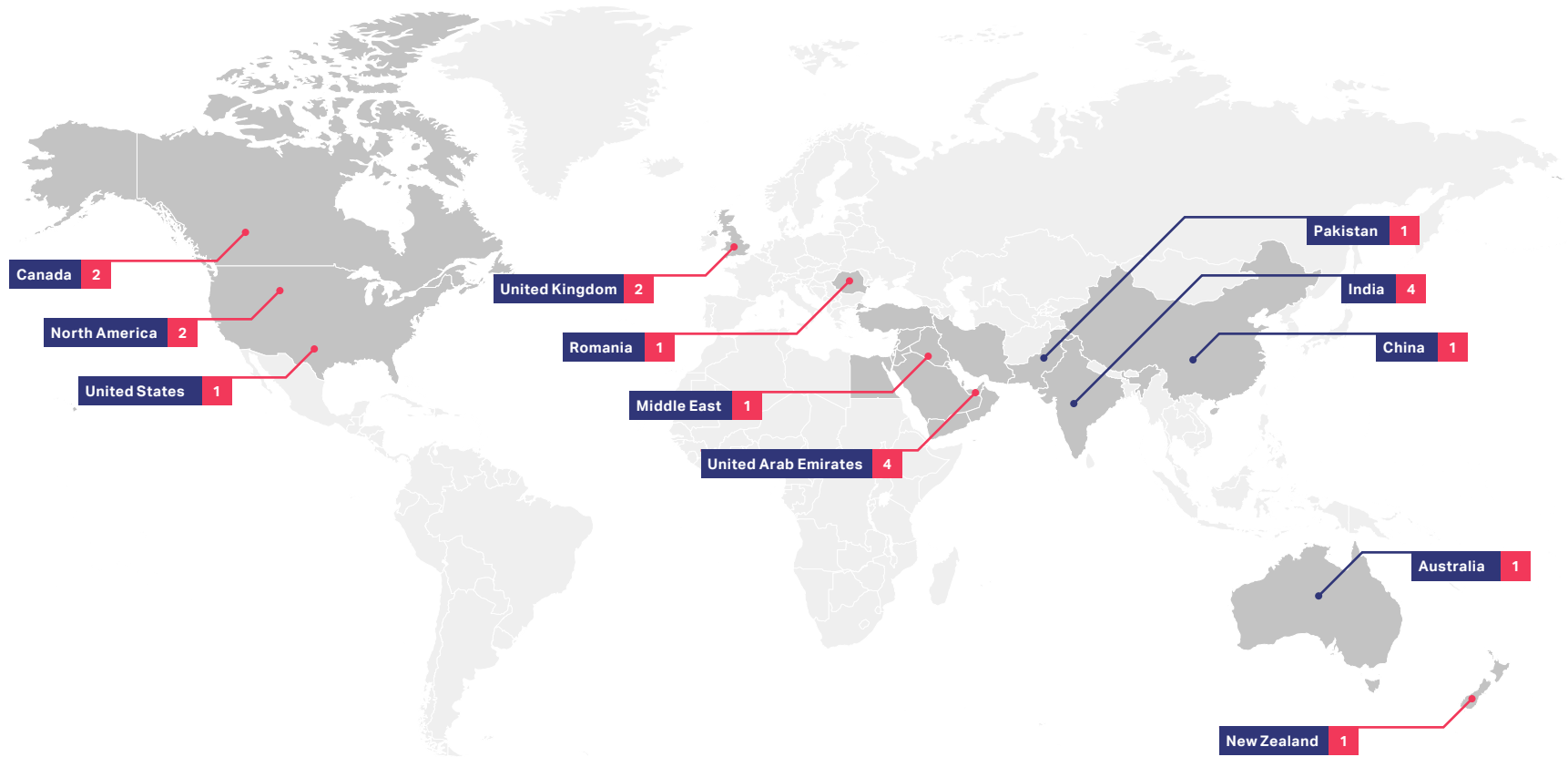
Your communication should reflect your purpose – in your customer service, in your social media posts, on your packaging, in your ads, in the way you make and present your product or service. Does your communication align with your purpose?

6 **Does the business measure what matters most and evaluate its operations and people in terms of the purpose?**

Every decision made should reflect the higher ideal of the brand or company. Does your brand regularly get together to evaluate how well the purpose is being activated and the impact is it having internally and externally against pre-identified measures?

Case study countries

Where did the shortlisted case studies come from?



Whirlpool: Care Counts – Brand purpose can make a difference

GRAND PRIX AND PARTNERSHIP SPECIAL AWARD

Lead Agency: DigitasLBI

Contributing Agencies:

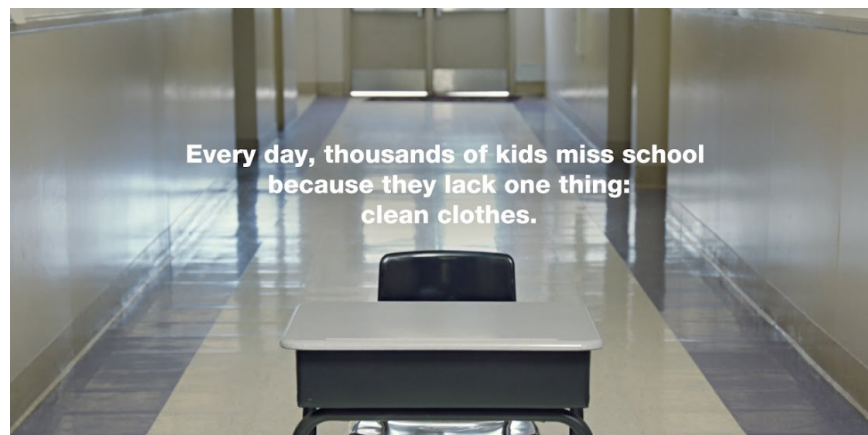
Ketchum, Goodstory Films,
C41 Media, Cutters Studios

Advertiser: Whirlpool
(Whirlpool Corporation)

Market: North America

Appliances brand Whirlpool regained relevance and lifted purchase intent with a purpose-led campaign that helped reduce truancy in US high schools.

“It is a brand that's trying to be in a different place, behind purpose, and I applaud them for that.”
Jim Stengel – President and CEO,
The Jim Stengel Company



Challenge

Foreign brands were threatening Whirlpool's comfortable market position, dazzling consumers with cutting-edge technology. The brand knew it could not rely solely on its heritage anymore, and needed to offer something more than intriguing product innovation.

Solution

With 2014 campaign 'Every day, care', Whirlpool established its brand purpose, highlighting its appliances as a means through which to express care, protection and love. To reinforce

this positioning, Whirlpool focussed on research showing that one in five children in America struggles to access the right appliances to clean their clothes and thousands miss school on account of this. Whirlpool's strategy was to combat truancy by eliminating the emotional barriers keeping children from attending, such as the impact of bullying due to unclean clothes. With Care Counts, Whirlpool installed washers and dryers in 17 schools. Teachers, school administrators and volunteers collected dirty clothes from the participants, washing and returning them

when needed. Attendance rates and the performance of participating students were tracked over the course of a school year. A documentary-style series of video and online content was shot during the experiment, featuring interviews with teachers, students, the experimentation team and academics.

Results

More than 90% of tracked students showed an increase in attendance, with 95% of participants being more motivated in class and 89% improving their classroom participation. The Care Counts programme has expanded to 47 schools and, as of 2017, more than 1,000 schools have requested to join. Social sentiment for Whirlpool increased 3.98 points, brand preference grew by 36% and purchase intent by 57%.

[VIEW FULL CASE STUDY](#)



SPC Goulburn Valley: #MyFamilyCan

GOLD

Lead Agencies: Leo Burnett Melbourne, Studio Pancho

Contributing Agency: Slingshot Media

Advertiser: SPC / Goulburn Valley / Ardmona (SPC Ardmona)

Market: Australia

Food company SPC grew sales by 26% through an emotional campaign putting Australian farming families in the spotlight.

“I found it moving and it really had the ring of authenticity about it. The business case is tremendous and it comes from the heart of the brand.”

Tom Knox – Chairman, MullenLowe London

Challenge

Packaged food brand SPC was being pushed out of the market by major foreign competitors in Australia that tempted consumers with lower prices. When a hepatitis outbreak was caused by imported food, the brand saw an opportunity to start a conversation about country of origin food labelling.

Solution

Not being able to reduce the price of its products, SPC decided to appeal to consumers' desire to know where their food came from. It was important to know the provenance of food. With #MyFamilyCan, the brand redesigned its products' labels to feature Australia's farming families, and launched an emotional film telling their stories.



#MyFamilyCan

A FAMILY OF CANS THAT SHOWED AUSTRALIA EXACTLY WHERE THEIR FOOD IS FROM



Influencer outreach and branded content on owned and earned channels fuelled the conversation and triggered a surge of support.

Results

Due to its success, #MyFamilyCan became a permanent fixture across SPC's range. Market share reached 24% (against the 20% objective) and sales grew by 26% over the target. 12 weeks after the campaign, the Prime Minister

introduced new labelling legislation making company-of-origin labelling compulsory for all Australian products.

[VIEW FULL CASE STUDY](#)

“We have a lot of clients trying to figure out supply chains and this is a nice human way of doing it.”

Freya Williams – CEO, Futerra North America

Inspired?

WARC runs four free-to-enter case study competitions throughout the year. Got a great case study you want to enter? Our awards deadlines for 2018 are below. Please contact us if you have any queries.

WARC Awards 2018

Deadline for entries: 12 February 2018
warcawards@warc.com

WARC Prize for MENA Strategy 2018

Deadline for entries: 5 April 2018
menaprize@warc.com

WARC Prize for Asian Strategy 2018

Deadline for entries: 10 July 2018
warcprizeasia@warc.com

WARC Media Awards 2018

Deadline for entries: 19 September 2018
mediaawards@warc.com

WARC

Lucy Aitken, Case Study Editor

lucy.aitken@warc.com

+44 (0)20 7467 8154

Chiara Manco, Editorial Assistant (Awards)

chiara.manco@warc.com

+44 (0)20 7467 8168

More from WARC

Our Awards

WARC runs four annual case study competitions:

- 🕒 The WARC Media Awards
- 🕒 The WARC Awards
- 🕒 The WARC Prize for Asian Strategy
- 🕒 The WARC Prize for MENA Strategy

More about all of WARC Award schemes can be found [here](#).

Case Finder

You can find all WARC case studies, including those cited in this report, by searching our unrivalled database, which is organised by campaign objective, country, industry sector, audience, media channels, budget and campaign duration. Find a case.

About WARC

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Contact Us

London
85 Newman Street
London
W1T 3EU
United Kingdom
+44 (0) 20 7467 8100
enquiries@warc.com

Washington DC
2233 Wisconsin Ave NW
Suite 535
Washington, DC 20007
United States
+1 202 778 0680
americas@warc.com

Singapore
20A Teck Lim Road
Singapore
088391
+65 3157 6200
asiapacific@warc.com

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