



Walking Your Values

For many leaders a company's mission, vision, or *values are little more than pretty words on paper*. Some leaders talk a lot about purpose but fail to make difficult business decisions in keeping with it.

Then there are brave leaders like those at CVS Health. Back in 1963, CVS Caremark changed its name to CVS Health and at the time announced its new brand purpose was "**health is everything**".

Fast forward to 2014 when CVS Health and all its major competitors in the pharmacy business **continued to sell tobacco**. In fact, CVS Health enjoyed 2 billion dollars in tobacco sales in 2014. Leaders at CVS could have continued a "business as usual" approach and functionally ignored their stated purpose (as many other leaders in their industry had done before them). However, purpose is purpose - so that group of leaders swallowed hard and discontinued all tobacco sales.

I am not moralizing about tobacco or the rights of a company to sell legal products, but I am suggesting some leaders are courageously purpose-driven and others are nominally so. Now let's fast forward again to see how CVS is doing...

According to their financial report for Q2 2016, CVS net revenues for the three months ended June 30, 2016 increased 17.6%, to \$43.7 billion, compared to the three months ended June 30, 2015. Revenues in the Pharmacy Services Segment increased 20.7% to \$29.5 billion in the three months ended June 30, 2016.

In a world where we seldom hear nice men and women finish first, that may actually be the

case at CVS!

Not only is CVS performing well financially but recent brand research (reported in **Advertising Age**) suggests that key consumer segments are also acknowledging and rewarding the courage of CVS leadership. In fact, CVS is increasingly being viewed as a leader in health promotion and the company was listed as one of the most admired in various business publications. Additionally, approximately a half million people have visited the brand's smoking cessation hub and a quarter of a million have turned to CVS pharmacies for guidance on how to quit smoking.

Leaders at CVS are quoted in **Advertising Age** as saying, "**Being purpose-driven is much more than a marketing strategy...we have embedded it in everything we do.**"

If you were in charge of CVS Health in 2014, would you have had the courage to be "purpose-driven" or would 2 billion dollars have been enough of a reason to keep "purpose" on the back burner?

More importantly can you, like CVS leaders, comfortably say that being purpose-driven is embedded in everything you do?

Timeless Wisdom

"The purpose of human life is to serve, and to show compassion and the will to help others."

- Albert Schweitzer

Watch

What Do We Want People to Feel?

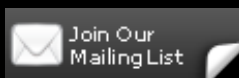


From the Blog:

The Kindness GAP: Differentiation by Practicing Civility in Uncivil Times

In addition to highly conflictual political discourse (which may have sunk to an all-time low in the US), I've recently observed a number of people making obscene gestures at one another, swearing, and ranting in stores as well as during miscellaneous business transactions.

American activist Rachel Corrie once noted, "We should be inspired by people...who show that human beings can be kind, brave, generous, beautiful, strong - even in the most difficult circumstances". I am convinced that there is a kindness gap in business today and that leaders who understand the gap can inspire their people to create differentiated human experiences. [Read More](#)



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