

Be more human and win the future for your brand

By [Rogan Jansen](#), issued by [Dash Digital Studio](#)

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In marketing and advertising, making a meaningful connection with consumers is a moving target. As consumer desires and behaviours shift as rapidly as the hybrid digital landscape they inhabit, how do brands build deeper connections with specific demographics? There are more ways to reach consumers than ever before. But that also means there's more clutter to contend with. Connection begins with empathy - the foundation of all solid relationships. That means knowing and understanding your target market better than other brands do.



We live in an age characterised by the fastest digital adoption in history. More recently, free, accessible and increasingly powerful AI has been added to the mix, democratising access to fast, disruptive communication technology – for brands, agencies and consumers. As a result, consumers are being bombarded with more messages than ever before.

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Added to this are all the other disruptors either causing a roadblock or alternatively providing a launchpad for brands. Consider global or regional disruptive events such as pandemics, wars, financial markets in turmoil, new scientific discoveries and more. Our world and our target markets are in continual flux.

Human truths and branding

The one constant that holds true at the core of our humanity, however, is our ability to provide true context, emotion and personal understanding of our environment. That is something a machine can't do – at least not yet.

The shifts in consumer behaviour we are seeing are influenced by the flux. But the human truth never changes. Humanity is driven by culture, by access and by desire. We are organic – in our physical makeup and responses to the world around us, and brands can use digital transformation to establish more organic connections through data.

AI and data have become increasingly important elements of brand communication. We should not be running away from these new innovations. We should be embracing them as tools. To win the race in capturing consumer hearts and minds,

brands that will succeed are those whose brand story and messaging are rooted deeply in not only profit, but purpose too. That is purpose that data insights have shown us, allowing us to connect more organically with the people we want to speak to.

Looking forward, brands need to be strategic in their intent and adaptable in their actions. Brands have an ongoing problem. How do they rise above the clutter, embrace and leverage the evolutionary environment, engage effectively with targeted audiences and deliver on objectives?

To drive deep connections with consumers and build true affinity, brands need to be responsible, transparent and adaptable, while at the same expounding values and ethics which resonate deeply with evolving consumers. In a cluttered environment, consumers expect the highest levels of service, quality products and engaging experiences in the physical world, and increasingly at the touch of a button in the digital space. And they want it from brands they believe in – brands that live and define, by their actions, the values, behaviours and ethics consumers hold dear.

Your brand – a who, not a what

Creating a brand identity, delivering a brand promise and engaging consumers requires strategic intent, rigour, research and process. This is the superpower of effective agency partners. Through data and technology, we clarify our objectives, understand the intrinsic nature of the brand, of its values, its ethics. Then, and only then, should a brand identity be developed.

Brand identity is not just about creating a logo. It's about creating a story – a visual identity that transcends the entire process, from strategy through to execution. And importantly, is therefore well placed to have adaptability built into it for the uncertainties of the future that may impact upon it.

When you build a solid, strategic and informed brand identity, your brand is primed to make the right connections, simply because of *who* it represents. Start with the strategy, do the research, decide on the personality that fits – and once you've got that right, it's easier to translate that personality into experiences that fit the consumer. The 'who' of your brand is the 'golden thread' that carries through the entire brand communication process.

Brands have to be like humans today more than ever. In many ways, like humans, ethics, values, tone and personality define a brand. Consumers are increasingly seeking out brands that they identify with – that mirror their lifestyle, their beliefs and their actions. And it is precisely when a brand translates its own ethics and values through defined brand identity and communication that it comes across as authentic, natural, almost human-like.

Brands should be built from the inside, from the bottom, from their core. this is what guides the targeted communications, gives the visual identity meaning, the experiences authenticity and ultimately delivers on marketing objectives.

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