

Brands with purpose will change South Africa for the better

By [Michael Baretta](#)

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Despite great efforts from government and NGOs, South Africa still faces a number of societal and environmental challenges.



Michael Baretta, founder and MD of [dot]GOOD

A new wave of socially aware and tech savvy consumers are looking to businesses to act as a force for positive change. This, combined with the rise of the social entrepreneur and the socially aware employee, is driving an important shift in the role that brands must play in society.

A business that demonstrates authentic investment in its community and its environment helps to build trust and ultimately leads to loyal consumers. Similarly, brands that communicate passion and emotion, rather than functional benefits, have a greater chance of convincing consumers to purchase their products.

Doing good while doing well

In South Africa, industry forerunners such as Discovery, Unilever and Woolworths are leading this trend. These companies believe in doing good while doing well; this will soon become the benchmark in a country where there is extreme economic inequality between the wealthy and poor.

It is a longstanding notion that the way a brand positions itself is more important than what they do. By bringing purpose to the fore of their operations, businesses are able to tell compelling stories and cut through the clutter to connect with customers on a deeper and more meaningful level.

It is clear that brands with purpose do better:

- Brands with a clear purpose grow up to three times faster than their competitors*
- 8 out of 10 people are more loyal to purpose-driven brands**

A brand purpose is how a company intends to change the world for the better but doesn't necessarily need to relate to social investment. In fact, I believe the ones that consider their context, beyond traditional corporate social investment, are far more likely to succeed.

Strategic partnerships

The key to this success lies in strategic partnerships. It must be a carefully identified long term partnership with a relevant cause that relates to a brand. Importantly, the partnership must evolve and grow for the mutual benefit of the cause and the business.

These forward-thinking campaigns require specialised skills in for-good and cause marketing; campaigns may take the form of initiatives in partnership with the public sector, NGOs and other industry players, which can provide technical expertise, clout as well as access to a larger target audience.

It is encouraging to see brands recognising that really engaging with the South African consumer means investing in their community. By making purposeful engagement good business, corporates are competing to stay relevant to consumers' changing needs, building their brand, increasing sales and making South Africa a more prosperous place all at the same time.

**Grow: How Ideals Power Growth and Profit at the World's Greatest Companies*

***2018 Cone/Porter Novelli Purpose Study*

ABOUT MICHAEL BARETTA

Michael Baretta is an experienced creative thinker who is deeply committed to changing the world for the better through innovative marketing and communications. Baretta is the founder of [dot]GOOD, South Africa's first and foremost for-good marketing agency.

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