→ HOW ADVERTISING WILL HEAL THE WORLD AND YOUR BUSINESS

The consumer's universal search for meaning calls for a new type of brand and company. This book unveils new insights and practical knowledge that will make your brand grow and bring about a huge positive impact on our world.

By more than 24,000 very friendly people and Mark Woerde

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How Advertising Will Heal the World and Your Business

Mark Woerde

"Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile."

Albert Einstein[1]

The five-second elevator pitch:

Make this world a better place, win a Nobel Prize, and sell more.

To CEOs: The recent financial crisis left many reevaluating capitalism and its role in our society. The old capitalist credo, "survival of the fittest" is gradually giving way to a stronger, bolder and, indeed, fitter counter: "survival of the kindest". Profit maximization alone is no longer a sustainable motive as people are asking for more and better from the companies they choose to buy from. Embracing new prosocial values can help you move more products, attract and keep top employees, and make a huge impact on the world. Just imagine what would happen if even a fraction of the US $450 billion spent annually on advertising, instead, went into prosocial marketing?

To marketeers: The time has come for a radical paradigm shift in branding as we know it. Where in the past branding has seemed mainly focused on fulfilling hedonistic individual needs, it's gradually becoming clear: people *are waiting* for brands to facilitate them to help others. And, in doing so, these so-called 'Meaningful Prosocial Brands' help fulfill a basic, strong and growing need: the need to live a meaningful life. This book, and the research it was based on, unveil new insights and practical knowledge that can make your brands grow *and* bring about a huge positive impact on our world.

To advertising professionals: Building Meaningful Prosocial Brands requires big, bold, new ideas. Never before has creativity been so important. Our focus has to widen beyond selling *things*, to facilitate people to live a meaningful life by helping others. The goal of this book is to inspire you and give you the tools to unleash the huge potential of Prosocial Brands. Forget about those

Letsheal: Radical paradigm shift in branding, people are waiting for brands to facilitate them to help others

typical ad-industry awards… focus on something bigger (like, say, the Nobel Prize) and you'll be amazed how inspired your work will be.

To NGOs: It is only natural for NGOs to be in the business of helping people, but why not brands? Meaningful Prosocial Brands, that can motivate people to help others, can offer a great deal to their communities and the world, but they will need your help. NGOs offer the understanding and experience that can make Prosocial Brands truly meaningful. Forging cooperative relationships with brands can prove very rewarding to your organization and its mission.

The book in 2.5 pages

I'd like to start by thanking you for reading this book. It's probably not going to win me any literary awards and, since I'm putting it out for free, I don't think it's going to make me a fortune to retire on. But, really, I am grateful that you're reading this book, because I believe that your interest could help in making this world a better place for all of us.

This book lays the foundation for a radical paradigm shift in branding as we know it. Where branding has seemed mainly focused on fulfilling hedonistic individual needs throughout the years, it's now becoming clear: people are waiting for brands that can help them help others.

Helping others gives their lives the meaning in life they are looking for. This is a unique chance for brands to play a meaningful role and gain relevance. If you decide to follow the outline of this book, you can turn your brand into what I call a 'Meaningful Prosocial Brand', with huge positive effects on society and business.

Research in the 16 biggest economies[2] in the fourth quarter of 2010, which formed the basis of this book, shows how people today have a strong, fundamental and increasing desire to live a meaningful life. But what I find really remarkable is what respondents said *gives their lives meaning:* 74% of the people indicate helping others is their way of finding meaning in life. Incredibly, only 16% are not actively searching for a significant life.

All over the world, people want to do more for others; 60% of us say that we'd like to do more than simply donate to good causes. But lack of time, money or opportunities can prevent peo-

ple from doing this, possibly leaving them feeling detached, their healing potential left untapped.

The study found high levels of empathy in every country surveyed, indicating that those who want to help do have the ability to recognize people in need. And, although this book highlights interesting differences on a country and sub-category level on different topics, when it comes down to true altruism, several scientific publications have proven that it is in our very nature to help others. For our species, often it's not survival of the fittest, but survival of the *kindest*[3].

Meaningful Prosocial Brands go beyond 'social responsibility'. These brands use their marketing power and engage target groups to the max and facilitate them to help other people by tackling small or big societal issues. These efforts can yield tremendous effects. To provide a glimpse of the potential power, over $450 billion USD will be spent on advertising this year[4]. Only a fraction of that amount would be needed to tackle some of the world's most harrowing challenges. These brands are overwhelmingly welcomed by the public: 64% state that it makes sense to buy so-called Prosocial Brands over normal brands, and 70% of people would prefer to work for a meaningful company.

In this book, I will share with you a validated model to create successful Prosocial Brands yourself. I will also introduce different Prosocial Brand types, and for each type, we'll explore the strengths and potential pitfalls, all made clear to us by the more than 24,000 people who participated in the research. There is one universal pitfall for wannabe Prosocial Brands. A company that fakes good intentions may be able to sell more without being caught, because people are not able to immediately recognize fake

intentions. Although consumers are not always able to differentiate between honest and fake intentions, they are suspicious. This is why 74% state that it's a good idea for an independent organization to watch companies' intentions and effectiveness. Please bear in mind that we are not talking about the next generation of marketing tricks here, but about real impact on the lives of many people.

Never before have CEOs, marketers and advertising professionals had such a clear and straightforward call to change the world. There is a great deal of opportunity in answering this call through truly meaningful branding.

It would be great if you joined me, and I would love to hear from you via #letsheal or www.letsheal.org.

Contents

Chapter one provides an in-depth insight into the need to live a meaningful life and what people actually believe a meaningful life to be. Chapters two through four seek to apply these concepts of meaning to your brand and explore how doing so can create both positive change and success in your business.

Preface

A vacation is often the perfect time for self-reflection, and during my 2009 summer holiday, I found myself spending more time in thought than in the pool. As founder and strategy director of Lemz, an advertising agency that has achieved success beyond my wildest expectations, I've felt very fortunate to have carved out a place for myself. Still, when I began to contemplate my ultimate goals in life, I realized they lay beyond even family, business, or my budding career as an unknown jazz pianist. I began thinking, at heart, I could achieve the greatest satisfaction by working toward making the world a better place.

My initial instincts pointed me toward the establishment of my own NGO of some sort. After conceiving, reviewing and eventually rejecting the first batch of ridiculous ideas I had, it suddenly struck me: The most successful campaigns and brands I've worked on (i.e. Sara Lee, IKEA and Unilever) were a success because they put meaning over making money. As a result, these brands did not only find success in monetary terms, but were also able to improve lives, at various levels, often on a very large scale. Brands can mean so much more than we used to think. Brands and hence creativity or to put it simply, advertising, can heal the world.

I'd seen brands do remarkable things; from increasing the interaction between neighbours at a national level, to working to improve the self-esteem of women. What would happen if brands all over the world were to actually use their tremendous power to help people lead more meaningful lives?

To provide a glimpse of that power, according to the London-

based global advertising research center Warc[4] over US $450 billion will be spent this year on advertising. Only a fraction of that would be needed to stave off global starvation or prevent the spread of malaria. To put it in a bit more perspective, the entire annual budget of UNICEF is around US $3 billion.

As a first step in investigating the potential power of brands, I began by looking in the mirror. I wondered whether my personal desire to lead a more meaningful life by helping others was only a by-product of having accomplished a certain level of financial independence. Could the search for meaning be a luxury? Could the success of the various campaigns have been flukes or one-offs? From two sources, I got my first set of answers.

I studied the work of various philosophers on this theme, and found that 'having meaning in life' can, in many ways, be considered a basic need. And, helping others in our local communities or in the world as a whole seems to be in the top two of what people think makes for a meaningful life. Further confirmation of these findings came in the form of two pilot studies I commissioned in October 2009 and June 2010 in the UK and US. I was struck by the results, especially people's belief in the ability of brands to help others.

With these results in hand, I interviewed different marketing executives responsible for an estimated advertising budget of around US $1 billion annually. I noticed that they immediately became enthusiastic upon finding out that people are both wanting and waiting for them to act and that they are allowed to put big social issues at the heart of their commercial activities. The model I developed proved and tested with them proved extremely useful in generating new brand concepts.

Then the question was how to really inspire businesses all over the world to make their brands more meaningful. The research we carried out to answer this question has been independently verified by my accomplished advisory board.

I'm very grateful to Professor Dirk Salomons, the director of the Program for Humanitarian Affairs at the School of International Public Affairs Columbia University, for being part of my advisory board. We had several inspiring meetings and I can say that without Dirk the research would not be as solid as it is now.

Robert van Ossenbruggen, a top methodologist and statistical wizard, was a critical player in the advisory board as well. The same goes for my dear friend Hans Lingeman, who provided me with not only his never-ending optimism and research experience, but also the international infrastructure of his research company Winkle. There are many more people to thank, and I will do so at the end of this book.

However I cannot proceed without expressing my deepest thanks to Matthias Stausberg, spokesperson of United Nations Global Compact. His knowledge, energy and enthusiasm proved very helpful in crafting the idea of the research and book. I'm grateful for the opportunity to share my insights with un Global Compact, an organization with over 5300 associated prominent businesses in 130 countries committed to aligning their operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.

And, of course I'm very grateful to the over 24,000 research participants who donated 30 minutes of their time to help me find the right answers.

The goals of the publication are ambitious, but easily within reach; for the first year, the goal is to see a shift in budgets of 0.5% from traditional advertising to more meaningful activities. The results of this shift would hopefully create a snowball effect for the subsequent years. This, in turn, could lead to the ultimate goal of improving the lives of people in communities around the world, close by or far away.

Which brings me to you. No matter whether you are working in the advertising industry, marketing or management of a company or in the charity business, I'm extremely thankful that you picked up this copy. I hope you will be inspired and I'm very much looking forward to your feedback, ideas and action. Let us know via twitter #letsheal and letsheal.org.

Although it might not be an intrinsic motivator for you, I checked with the Nobel Prize organization and companies and brands are actually allowed to win a Nobel Prize.

Mark Woerde
Amsterdam/Haarlem/New York

PS. I think it's good to know that there was and will be no financial support from businesses for this book/the Letsheal initiative.

Chapter 1

The meaning of life

Chapter 1: The meaning of life

This book is about how brands can help people to help each other. Additionally, it's about how these altruistic brands will be more successful. But more than anything, this book is about the opportunity brands have to fulfill our inherent need for meaning, *by helping us help each other.*

I'd like to discuss the somewhat broad topic of 'living a meaningful life'. What is a meaningful life and how important is it to have one? After posing such questions in worldwide research, the results were tallied from the study, and the data made it clear: very important. The search for meaning, it appears, is more than something you start to look for once your other needs are fulfilled; it is, in fact, a basic need.

If you recall Maslow's Hierarchy[5], the pyramid many consider to be the last word on human need, you will find things like air, food, and water at the bottom, but not 'meaning'. Was Maslow wrong, then? I believe, partly, yes. Meaning can, and should, form the solid foundation on which rest of the pyramid can be built.

And here's where the opportunity lies: research has found that a large majority of people are looking for more ways to give their lives meaning.

But, what *is* meaning? How can we define 'living a meaningful life'? In the research, 'helping others' was found to have a very strong link with feelings of meaning and fulfillment. Again and again, the data has shown, one of the easiest way to add meaning is by helping others. And, likely related to the financial crisis, this feeling has only been intensifying since 2008.

To figure out *why* we might have this desire to help others, in

addition to the quantitative research in 16 countries, I've also gone to a number of sources: old philosophers with modern thoughts, leading biologists who have found answers in our genes, mainstream religions and even popular music. You can find examples just about everywhere. I learned, for example, that helping others releases soothing, feel-good hormones. I also discovered that most people would love to do more for others, but too often lack the time, the money, or the right kind of motivation. This is where I see a big opportunity for brands.

Let's start by finding out how important it is to experience meaning in life.

Table 1: Living a meaningful life is important to me (country)*

	Total	NL	US	ES	GB	FR	BE	CA	IT	DE	JP	AU	BR	MX	CH	IN	RU
N	24.227	1.738	1.327	1.598	2.016	1.704	1.599	1.741	1.088	1.698	2.358	1.927	1.092	1.179	1.071	1.109	982
Strongly disagree	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	5%
Tend to disagree	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	5%	3%	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	4%
Neither agree nor disagree	11%	17%	9%	11%	18%	16%	13%	12%	13%	11%	17%	15%	4%	3%	12%	4%	3%
Tend to agree	45%	43%	42%	44%	48%	68%	57%	45%	48%	48%	59%	47%	26%	25%	51%	23%	37%
Strongly agree	41%	37%	47%	43%	30%	9%	25%	41%	36%	37%	22%	36%	68%	71%	36%	71%	51%
Top box other	11%	17%	9%	11%	18%	16%	13%	12%	13%	11%	17%	15%	4%	3%	12%	4%	3%
Top 2 box	85%	80%	89%	87%	78%	77%	82%	86%	84%	85%	81%	83%	94%	96%	87%	94%	87%
Bottom 2 box	3%	4%	2%	2%	3%	7%	5%	2%	3%	4%	2%	3%	1%	1%	1%	2%	9%

Table 2: Living a meaningful life is important to me (background)*

	Total	Gender		Age				Has Child(ren)		Education				Urbanisation level				
		Man	Woman	16-17	up to 34	35-54	>54	no	yes	low	middle	high	unknown	rural	residential	suburban	city	unknown
N	24.227	12.370	11.854	764	9.406	10.129	3.927	13.911	10.316	2.057	9.069	10.034	3.067	2.719	2.623	3.322	4.241	11.322
Strongly disagree	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Tend to disagree	2%	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%	3%
Neither agree nor disagree	11%	14%	9%	19%	11%	11%	10%	12%	10%	17%	12%	11%	6%	11%	10%	12%	10%	12%
Tend to agree	45%	45%	44%	43%	43%	46%	46%	46%	44%	47%	47%	46%	34%	52%	46%	50%	43%	42%
Strongly agree	41%	37%	44%	33%	42%	40%	42%	39%	43%	33%	37%	40%	55%	35%	42%	35%	45%	41%
Top box other	11%	14%	9%	19%	11%	11%	10%	12%	10%	17%	12%	11%	6%	11%	10%	12%	10%	12%
Top 2 box	85%	83%	88%	76%	85%	86%	88%	84%	87%	79%	85%	86%	89%	87%	88%	85%	88%	83%
Bottom 2 box	3%	4%	3%	5%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%	2%	5%	2%	2%	3%	2%	4%

* Please see chapter 5 for the research design.

1.1 The importance of meaning in life

Fortunately I'm not alone: 85.4% of the respondents believe that 'living a meaningful life' is important. That's 88% of women and 83% of men. Only 3.3% do not find it important at all, and 11.3% are unsure. There was variance between countries, ranging from the relatively low figures of 77% in France, up to 96% in Mexico.

The disparities between different backgrounds were surprisingly low. Young people (16 and 17 year olds) and people with less education tended to weigh meaning a bit lower (76% and 79% respectively). In contrast, though, with a group we refer to as 'social transformers' (25% of the population), we found that 95% find meaning important. We'll discuss later on who these individuals are and why they matter.

> **Living a meaningful life is important to me:**
>
> 85% Agree
> 11% Neither agree or disagree
> 3%   Disagree

1.2 What makes your life meaningful?

One of the big challenges in a study of this nature is finding questions that both get to the heart of the issue while still being clear and balanced. I'm incredibly grateful to Michael F. Steger PhD, a leading researcher at Colorado State University's Laboratory for the Study of Meaning and Quality of Life. He was kind enough to let us use his Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) Scale[6] in our research. The MLQ is a reliable way to measure the presence of meaning and the search for meaning.

Overall, 74% of respondents indicated having a good sense of 'what makes their lives meaningful'. On this topic, a few countries stood out. In Japan, only 44% feel they have this understanding. Compare this to countries like India, Brazil, and Mexico, where the figures are at 90%. The country breakdown is available on the next page, in table 3.

We found a similar difference between young people and older adults (see table 4). Young people tended to have a less clear sense of what makes their lives meaningful. Only 60% of 16 and 17 year olds claim to know what gives their lives meaning, compared to people 54 years and older, who averaged at 77%. These differences become smaller at higher income levels (from 68% to 74%).

Letsheal: I know what makes my life meaningful: 74% agree

Table 3: I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful (country)*

	Total	NL	US	ES	GB	FR	BE	CA	IT	DE	JP	AU	BR	MX	CH	IN	RU
N	24.227	1.738	1.327	1.598	2.016	1.704	1.599	1.741	1.088	1.698	2.358	1.927	1.092	1.179	1.071	1.109	982
Absolutely untrue	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Mostly untrue	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	3%	2%	2%	1%	2%	5%	2%	1%	1%	2%	0%	2%
Somewhat untrue	6%	8%	6%	3%	7%	9%	9%	4%	5%	7%	17%	4%	1%	2%	2%	2%	5%
Can't say true or false	17%	19%	15%	18%	22%	23%	17%	17%	23%	18%	31%	18%	7%	5%	13%	7%	15%
Somewhat true	30%	36%	30%	35%	35%	31%	34%	35%	36%	31%	31%	35%	20%	18%	26%	28%	18%
Mostly true	28%	25%	28%	28%	22%	24%	26%	26%	23%	23%	9%	26%	34%	38%	42%	37%	43%
Absolutely true	16%	9%	19%	13%	10%	8%	9%	15%	10%	16%	4%	14%	36%	35%	15%	26%	16%
Top box other	17%	19%	15%	18%	22%	23%	17%	17%	23%	18%	31%	18%	7%	5%	13%	7%	15%
Top 3 box	74%	70%	76%	76%	67%	63%	70%	76%	69%	71%	44%	74%	89%	92%	83%	90%	77%
Bottom 3 box	9%	11%	9%	6%	10%	14%	13%	7%	7%	11%	25%	8%	3%	3%	4%	3%	7%

Table 4: I have a good sense what makes my life meaningful (subgroup)

	Total	Gender		Age				Has Child(ren)		Education				Urbanisation level				
		Man	Woman	16-17	up to 34	35-54	>54	no	yes	low	middle	high	unknown	rural	residential	suburban	city	unknown
N	24.227	12.370	11.854	764	9.406	10.129	3.927	13.911	10.316	2.057	9.069	10.034	3.067	2.719	2.623	3.322	4.241	11.322
Absolutely untrue	1%	2%	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Mostly untrue	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Somewhat untrue	6%	6%	6%	8%	7%	5%	5%	6%	5%	5%	6%	6%	4%	8%	6%	7%	5%	6%
Can't say true or false	17%	19%	15%	26%	17%	17%	16%	18%	16%	23%	18%	16%	13%	19%	16%	19%	14%	17%
Somewhat true	30%	31%	30%	26%	29%	31%	33%	32%	29%	34%	31%	30%	28%	34%	31%	32%	28%	30%
Mostly true	28%	26%	30%	18%	28%	29%	29%	27%	30%	20%	25%	30%	36%	25%	28%	25%	31%	28%
Absolutely true	16%	15%	18%	16%	17%	15%	15%	14%	18%	13%	16%	15%	19%	11%	17%	14%	20%	15%
Top box other	17%	19%	15%	26%	17%	17%	16%	18%	16%	23%	18%	16%	13%	19%	16%	19%	14%	17%
Top 3 box	74%	72%	76%	60%	73%	75%	77%	72%	76%	68%	72%	74%	81%	70%	75%	70%	78%	74%
Bottom 3 box	9%	10%	8%	13%	10%	9%	7%	10%	8%	9%	10%	9%	6%	11%	9%	10%	7%	9%

* Please see chapter 5 for the research design.

1.3 Our search for meaning

What struck me from the research is that 66% indicated that they are *searching* for something to make their life feel more significant (table 5). Or, looking at it from the other side, *only 16%* say they aren't. A large group, 57%, even indicated that they are actively searching for meaning, while only 23% indicate that they are not (table 6). It should be noted, though, that these figures only include individuals who are self-aware enough to acknowledge their own search for meaning.

Those who believe their life to be meaningful are less depressed, feel greater satisfaction with their lives, have greater self-esteem, more optimism and a more positive attitude[2].

As shown by the broad demographics represented in the study, striving for a meaningful life is not simply for the elite or happy few; something to look out at after climbing to the top of Maslow's pyramid. For so many surveyed, meaning is fundamental; it is the groundwork.

In *Man's Search for Meaning*[7], a worldwide best-seller with over 12 million copies sold, neurologist and psychiatrist Viktor E. Frankl pondered these same questions and came up with some intriguing answers.

Letsheal: Only 16% are NOT actively searching for a significant life

Table 5: I'm always searching for something that makes my life feel significant (country)*

	Total	NL	US	ES	GB	FR	BE	CA	IT	DE	JP	AU	BR	MX	CH	IN	RU
N	24,227	1,738	1,327	1,598	2,016	1,704	1,599	1,741	1,088	1,698	2,358	1,927	1,092	1,179	1,071	1,109	982
Absolutely untrue	4%	3%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	2%	5%	1%	4%	7%	6%	1%	2%	3%
Mostly untrue	4%	4%	6%	4%	5%	4%	4%	5%	3%	4%	4%	7%	3%	4%	2%	2%	5%
Somewhat untrue	8%	13%	8%	10%	12%	9%	11%	10%	5%	13%	9%	11%	4%	6%	2%	3%	8%
Can't say true or false	17%	16%	20%	19%	26%	21%	18%	22%	19%	19%	25%	24%	6%	8%	13%	8%	14%
Somewhat true	31%	39%	30%	31%	30%	36%	37%	33%	34%	31%	43%	31%	21%	18%	24%	27%	21%
Mostly true	23%	19%	19%	21%	15%	17%	20%	18%	23%	18%	13%	13%	30%	31%	41%	35%	36%
Absolutely true	13%	7%	12%	12%	8%	9%	8%	9%	14%	10%	5%	8%	28%	27%	18%	24%	12%
Top box other	17%	16%	20%	19%	26%	21%	18%	22%	19%	19%	25%	24%	6%	8%	13%	8%	14%
Top 3 box	68%	65%	61%	63%	53%	61%	65%	59%	71%	60%	61%	53%	79%	76%	83%	86%	70%
Bottom 3 box	16%	19%	18%	18%	21%	18%	18%	19%	11%	21%	14%	23%	15%	16%	4%	6%	16%

Table 6: I'm searching for a meaning in my life (country)*

	Total	NL	US	ES	GB	FR	BE	CA	IT	DE	JP	AU	BR	MX	CH	IN	RU
N	24,227	1,738	1,327	1,598	2,016	1,704	1,599	1,741	1,088	1,698	2,358	1,927	1,092	1,179	1,071	1,109	982
Absolutely untrue	6%	5%	7%	5%	7%	9%	6%	6%	5%	7%	2%	7%	13%	6%	2%	4%	3%
Mostly untrue	6%	6%	8%	5%	7%	8%	6%	7%	5%	5%	4%	8%	5%	3%	2%	5%	3%
Somewhat untrue	11%	20%	12%	8%	15%	15%	16%	11%	10%	17%	9%	14%	7%	5%	17%	8%	8%
Can't say true or false	20%	18%	22%	17%	30%	23%	19%	26%	25%	23%	25%	28%	8%	7%	17%	14%	12%
Somewhat true	28%	31%	27%	31%	24%	28%	32%	29%	30%	27%	42%	26%	25%	18%	28%	26%	18%
Mostly true	18%	15%	13%	21%	10%	11%	15%	13%	16%	12%	13%	9%	23%	30%	36%	25%	37%
Absolutely true	11%	6%	10%	14%	7%	7%	6%	8%	9%	9%	5%	7%	19%	31%	13%	18%	19%
Top box other	20%	18%	22%	17%	30%	23%	19%	26%	25%	23%	25%	28%	8%	7%	17%	14%	12%
Top 3 box	57%	52%	50%	66%	41%	45%	53%	50%	55%	48%	60%	43%	67%	79%	76%	68%	75%
Bottom 3 box	23%	30%	27%	17%	29%	32%	28%	24%	19%	29%	15%	29%	25%	14%	6%	18%	13%

* Please see chapter 5 for the research design.

Writing in the introduction to Frankl's book[7], the prominent American Rabbi and author Harold S. Kushner offers a clear interpretation of Frankl's work:

> Between 1942 and 1945 Viktor Frankl was cast into four different concentration and extermination camps. Miraculously, he survived. In his book, first of all a book about survival, he describes those prisoners who gave up on life, who had lost all hope for a future and were inevitably the first to die. They died less from lack of food or medicine than from something to live for. Frankl kept himself alive and kept hope alive by summoning up thoughts of his wife and the prospect of seeing her again and by dreaming at one point of lecturing after the war about the psychological lessons to be learned from the Auschwitz experience. Clearly many prisoners who desperately wanted to live did die, some from disease, some in the crematoria. But Frankl's concern is less with the question of why most died, than it is with the question of why anyone at all survived. Terrible as it was, his experience in Auschwitz reinforced what was already one of his key ideas: Life is not primarily a quest for pleasure, as Freud believed, nor a quest for power, as Alfred Adler taught, but a quest for meaning. The greatest task for any person is to find meaning in his or her life. Or as Nietzsche wrote: "He who has a Why to live for can bear almost any How."

A meaningful life is not simply a form of self-actualization. In fact, it can be a key condition for existence. As Frankl describes, the people who reach out to others in some way (through art, sharing food, giving comfort) manage to go beyond their own deprivation and the camp's social conditioning and find meaning in life, thereby increasing their chances of survival.

Letsheal: Maslow was wrong. Experiencing meaning in life is a more basic human need than having food or shelter

It might, therefore, not be a bad idea to revise Maslow's Pyramid a bit. Even Maslow showed some regret toward the over-simplification of his hierarchy and wondered whether his pyramid ought to be turned upside down[8]. However, adding a layer to the bottom of the pyramid is probably the most straightforward enhancement.
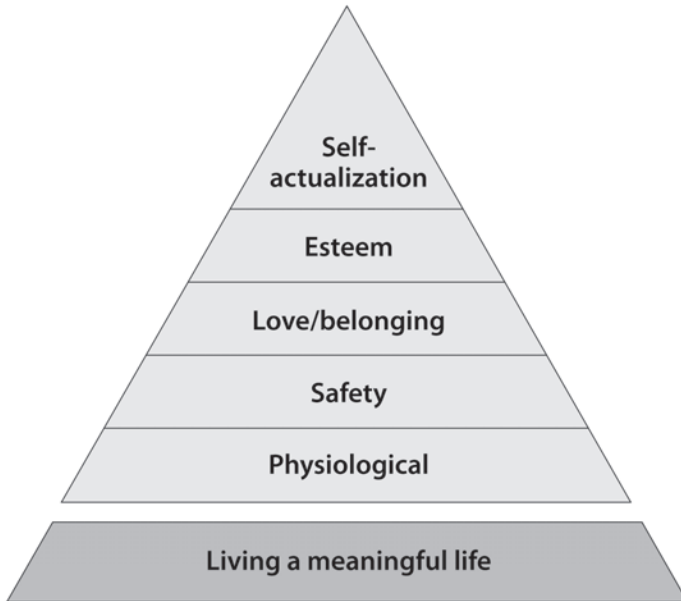

Figure 1. A new basis for Maslow's Pyramid

Now it's clear that having a meaningful life is important, let's move on to *what* people think is a meaningful life and see how brands can help fulfill this need.

1.4 What is the meaning of life?

We've just read about the importance of living a meaningful life and how 66% of people are searching for more significance. Before we discuss the opportunities present in this information, we should clarify the interpretation of 'a meaningful life'.

> 'O Deep Thought Computer, the task we have designed you to perform is this. We want you to tell us... the Answer'.
> 'The Answer?' said Deep Thought. 'The Answer to what?'
> Life!, The Universe, Everything!'
> Deep Thought pauses for a moment's reflection.
> 'Yes,' said Deep Thought. 'Life, the Universe and Everything. There is an answer. But,' he added, I'll have to think about it. The program will take me a little while to run. Return to this place in seven and a half million years.'
>
> Seven and a half million years later:
>
> 'All right,' said Deep Thought.
> 'The Answer to the Great Question...'
> 'Yes...'
> 'Is...'
> 'Forty-two,' said Deep Thought, with infinite majesty and calm.
> *From The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy by Douglas Adams[9]*

Well, that's a good question, isn't it? "What is the meaning of life?" It's a question that comes up a lot in adolescence and in periods of reflection, or as a result of a personal crisis or a tragic incident.

It's an essential question because the answer will determine the principles by which a person will live and, consequently, his or her goals and priorities[6].

What would you answer? It's on the tip of your tongue, right? Am I going to pretend to have the answer? Well, yes! But it's not just one answer.

In our research, we asked well over 24,000 people the question: What do you think is the meaning of life? Thanks to Professor Richard T. Kinnier, Professor of Counselling Psychology at Arizona State University (ASU)[1], we could provide respondents with clear answer categories. Kinnier and his team analysed 238 quotations from 195 eminent people regarding their beliefs about the meaning of life. From these quotes, they created answer categories, and with those categories in hand, we were able to provide validated answer categories to this difficult question.

Close your eyes for a moment and think about what gives meaning to *your* life. Below, you'll find six descriptions from Kinnier's publication *What Eminent People Have Said About The Meaning of Life*. Just for the record: we left out some categories that proved less relevant in pilot studies.

Count to ten and turn the page…

Question: What is the meaning of your life?

To *enjoy* or experience life

Enjoy the moment, the journey. Some well-known subscribers of this ideology include the American lecturer, essayist, and poet, Ralph Waldo Emerson, the millionaire and magazine publisher, Malcolm Forbes, and singer-songwriter, Janis Joplin. Emerson encouraged his readers to "laugh often and much" and to appreciate beauty. Forbes observed that life "is a very short trip; while alive, live!" And one of the lyrics that Joplin is best known for is "you gotta get it while you can."

To love, *help*, or serve others

Meaning stems from showing or experiencing compassion. This theme was endorsed by Albert Einstein, Mohandas Gandhi, the Dalai Lama, Albert Schweitzer, and Jean Jacques Rousseau. For example, Einstein stated that "only a life lived for others" is a life worthwhile.

Life is *meaningless*

This theme was endorsed by Sigmund Freud, Franz Kafka, Bertrand Russell, Jean Paul Sartre. Sartre proclaimed that it is meaningless that we are born; it is meaningless that we die.

Letsheal: Are you here to enjoy life?

To serve or *worship God* and/or prepare for the next (or after-) life

Not surprisingly, this theme was endorsed by spiritual leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Mother Teresa, and the Dalai Lama. Perhaps more surprisingly, the boxer, Muhammed Ali also subscribed to this statement of purpose. Desmond Tutu said that in life we should "give God glory by reflecting His beauty and His love. That is why we are here and that is the purpose of our lives".

To *contribute* to something that is greater than ourselves

This theme was endorsed by Benjamin Franklin and the U.S. educational reformer Horace Mann. Mann said that "you should be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity".

To become *self-actualized*

To develop or evolve as a person or as a species. To pursue truth(s), wisdom, or a higher level of being. This theme was endorsed by Frederick Nietzsche and Plato. For psychologist Erich Fromm, "Man's main task in life is to give birth to himself, to become what he potentially is".

And the winner is …

Letsheal: Or are you here to help others, to worship God, to contribute to something greater, to become self actualized, or is your life meaningless?

33

1.5 The top six interpretations

Here's what more than 24,000 people said the meaning of life is:

1. To enjoy life (81%)
2. To help others (74%)
3. To contribute to something that is greater than ourselves (73%)
4. To become self-actualized (71%)
5. To worship God (32%)
6. Life is meaningless (12%)

While there were some differences between individual countries, these top six were surprisingly consistent across the board. Number five, "to worship God", ranked low in Japan (10%), but relatively high in Brazil and India (74 and 69%). And "to become self-actualized" was the highest ranked in Russia.

See tables 8 and 9 on the next page for a glimpse of how these interpretations vary per country.

What I find important to note, however, is that each category is not created equal, some are more open to interpretation than others. Also, between categories, there is a great deal of overlap[10].

Number one, "to enjoy life," is no surprise. Who among us does not want an enjoyable life? Enjoyment is something we inherently seek out. But, "enjoying life" is incredibly open to interpretation, taking on a unique definition for any one individual.

Number two, "to help others," is more clearly defined. There are certainly millions of ways to help others, but all involve some common characteristics. It strikes me as odd that so many people

Letsheal: The top six interpretations are close to universal

(74%!) would characterize this as a motivating factor in their lives, when at the same time, I can think of so few companies or brands that consider it a factor in their business. All too often, brands focus on delivering individual enjoyment alone. There is a similar void of concepts concerning "helping others" in marketing literature, which in many ways is where this book hopes to contribute.

I prefer to focus on this "helping others" interpretation because it not only ranks high among the top six, but is also more clear cut than the other altruistic interpretations. Additionally, the results showed a more intrinsic motivation over number three, "to contribute to something that is greater than ourselves", making interpretation number two "helping others" more straight forward. Interpretations five and six are certainly worth exploring in advertising, but I found the results to be too small to focus on here.

To better understand the amount of overlap between the six interpretations, we conducted a correlation analysis[10]. We found a correlation between numbers one and two (0.26), indicating that a number of people who seek enjoyment find it in helping others. There was also a strong correlation between "helping others" and number three, "to contribute to something that is greater than ourselves," (0.46). Similarly, "to worship God" showed a correlation with "helping others" (0.33).

To understand the relationships between interpretations even further, we ran a factor analysis to categorize and characterize the interpretations. We broke down the interpretations into the following factors: A pure altruistic factor (five, three and two), a self-actualization factor (two, three and five), a hedonistic or ego factor (one) and the life-is-meaningless-factor (six). All these factors

are narrowly defined and offer food for thought. As you can see in table 7, "helping others" for instance has connections to both altruism and the ego, but more so to altruism. In the next part of this chapter, we will try to find the causes behind these seemingly opposite motivators.

Table 7: Factor analysis				
	"Altruistic" Factor	"Self-actualization" factor	"Hedonistic" factor	"Meaningless" factor
1. To enjoy life			0.97	
2. To help others	0.65	0.31		
3. To contribute to something that is greater than ourselves	0.53	0.58		
4. To worship God	0.88			
5. To become self-actualized		0.92		
6. Life is meaningless				0.99

Letsheal: "Helping others" has connections to ego and altruistic drivers

Table 8: Meaning is to help others (country)*

	Total	NL	US	ES	GB	FR	BE	CA	IT	DE	JP	AU	BR	MX	CH	IN	RU
N	24.227	1.738	1.327	1.598	2.016	1.704	1.599	1.741	1.088	1.698	2.358	1.927	1.092	1.179	1.071	1.109	982
Disagree completely	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%
Disagree	5%	8%	3%	12%	5%	5%	7%	3%	5%	6%	5%	3%	4%	3%	2%	2%	4%
Neutral	19%	26%	16%	27%	23%	25%	24%	20%	16%	18%	38%	21%	9%	10%	14%	8%	8%
Agree	50%	49%	48%	42%	49%	52%	48%	48%	50%	52%	48%	51%	50%	47%	58%	46%	60%
Agree completely	24%	14%	31%	17%	22%	17%	18%	28%	28%	21%	7%	23%	36%	39%	26%	44%	26%
Top box other	19%	26%	16%	27%	23%	25%	24%	20%	16%	18%	38%	21%	9%	10%	14%	8%	8%
Top 2 box	74%	63%	80%	59%	71%	68%	67%	76%	78%	73%	55%	74%	86%	86%	84%	90%	87%
Bottom 2 box	6%	10%	4%	14%	6%	7%	9%	4%	6%	9%	7%	5%	5%	4%	2%	2%	5%

Table 9: Meaning is to help others (background)*

	Total	Gender		Age				Has Child(ren)		Education				Urbanisation level				
		Man	Woman	16-17	up to 34	35-54	>54	no	yes	low	middle	high	unknown	rural	residential	suburban	city	unknown
N	24.227	12.370	11.854	764	9.406	10.129	3.927	13.911	10.316	2.057	9.069	10.034	3.067	2.719	2.623	3.322	4.241	11.322
Disagree completely	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Disagree	5%	5%	5%	6%	5%	5%	4%	5%	5%	6%	5%	5%	4%	5%	5%	5%	4%	5%
Neutral	19%	22%	17%	30%	20%	18%	17%	20%	18%	26%	20%	20%	12%	21%	18%	21%	17%	20%
Agree	50%	49%	51%	39%	50%	51%	51%	50%	49%	45%	49%	50%	52%	52%	50%	51%	50%	49%
Agree completely	24%	23%	27%	23%	23%	25%	27%	23%	26%	21%	23%	24%	32%	21%	25%	21%	27%	25%
Top box other	19%	22%	17%	30%	20%	18%	17%	20%	18%	26%	20%	20%	12%	21%	18%	21%	17%	20%
Top 2 box	74%	71%	78%	62%	73%	75%	78%	73%	76%	66%	73%	74%	84%	73%	76%	72%	78%	73%
Bottom 2 box	6%	7%	6%	9%	7%	6%	5%	7%	6%	9%	7%	6%	5%	6%	6%	6%	5%	7%

1.6 Why do we want to help others?

The desire to help others may feel like second nature to you. For many, there doesn't have to be *why* behind helping someone in need. Empathy, compassion or love are often instinctive emotions, just like hunger, joy, or pride. To me, that just about says it all, but, understanding where these feelings come from is important if we seek to encourage them.

As I investigated these topics, I added a new word to my vocabulary, one typically in use among psychologists and sociologists to describe "helping others": prosocial. In the book *The Social Psychology of Prosocial Behavior*[11] authors Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder, and Penner, four leading researchers in the field, explain that the word can be used for a broad range of beneficial actions. Prosocial behavior includes: **helping,** where the wellbeing of one or more people is improved by the actions of another; **altruism**, a specific type of help where the benefactor provides aid without the anticipation of rewards from external sources; and **cooperation**, where people come together to work toward a common goal that will benefit all concerned. In the same book, this well-articulated definition of prosocial behavior is given:

Letsheal: 'Prosocial' comprises helping others, altruism and cooperation

Prosocial behavior is the label for a broad category of actions that are defined by society as generally beneficial to other people and to the ongoing political system.

First, prosocial behavior is necessarily an interpersonal act. There must be a benefactor and one (or more) recipient(s) of the benefits for a prosocial act to occur.

Second, the phrase defined by society implies that a given behavior is not inherently or universally prosocial (or antisocial for that matter). Rather, this is a social judgment that could change dramatically as the result of changes in the circumstances or historical and political context in which the behavior takes place.

For instance, taking something from a store without paying for it would normally be considered an antisocial action, but many people would view taking desperately needed medical supplies from the wreckage of a neighborhood drugstore following some devastating natural disaster as a prosocial action and the person who did this might be viewed as a hero.

So, now that it's clear what prosocial behavior *is,* the question remains: where does it come from? Is it nurture, nature, or both?

It's in our nature, the evolutionary perspective

In his book *Good Natured, The Origins of Right and Wrong in Humans and Other Animals,* biologist Frans de Waal[3] writes that friendliness is not an evolutionary error. He proves that prosocial behavior is "as much a matter of evolution as any other trait, in humans and animals alike". The evolutionary conditions that bring about altruism and group interdependence are the same that motivate the finding of food, shelter and protection.

Animals with close social cohesion have the ability to share and help the weaker animals in the group. These animals, in turn, identify with each other and are more sensitive to the emotions of one another. The most impressive way of helping is sacrifice, something surprisingly common in wildlife. With an example he illustrates that this is not about self-interest:

> Take a mongoose standing on a termite mound to warn others if a bird of prey is coming. This draws attention to itself and the mongoose risks his own life. It is inconceivable to the biologist that the mongoose can somehow see what the benefits for himself can be. The mongoose does something that entails huge risks and he gives a favor to the other mongooses.

In other words, Darwin's selfish gene has discovered that the most successful approach is to behave unselfishly. This shines another light on the traditional evolutionary concept of "survival of the fittest." Modern research shows that altruism may be essential to the survival of all animals (including humans). So, perhaps, Frans de Waal is right: It's not about survival of the fittest but survival of the kindest.
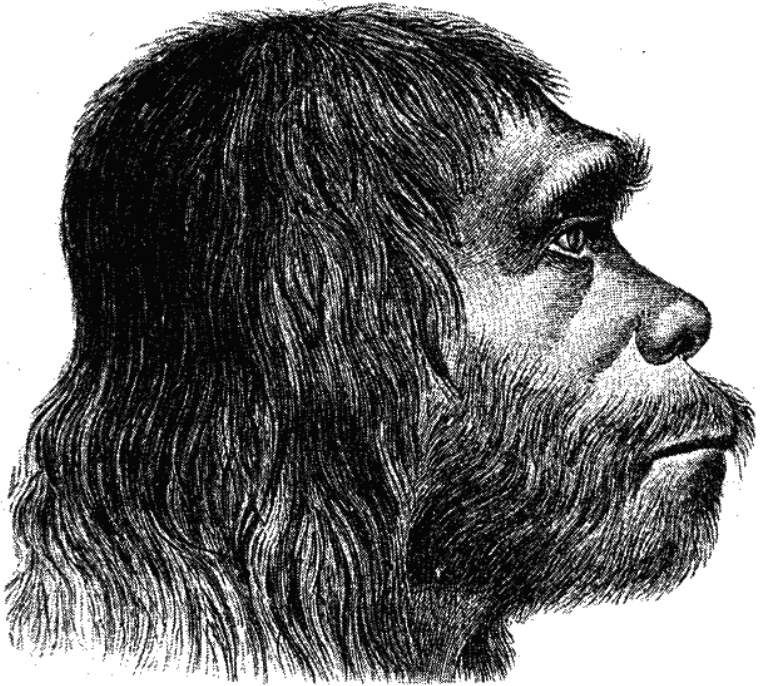
Figure 2. First reconstruction of Neanderthal Man. Photo courtesy of the Neanderthal Fund via Wikipedia.

From very recent research published in October 2010 by Dr. P. Spikins, H.E. Rutherford, and A.P. Needham from the University of York, we now know that Neanderthals likely belied their primitive reputation and had a deep-seated sense of compassion. The team was kind enough to share their findings. The text below is their brief summary of the research[12].

They examined archaeological evidence for the way emotions began to emerge in our ancestors six million years ago and then developed from earliest times to more recent humans such as Neanderthals and modern people like ourselves. They used new research developments, such as neuro-imaging, that have enabled archaeologists to attempt a scientific explanation of what were once intangible feelings of ancient humans. It begins six million years ago when the common ancestor of humans and chimpanzees experienced the first awakenings of an empathy for others and motivation to 'help' them, perhaps with a gesture of comfort or moving a branch to allow them to pass.

The second stage from 1.8 million years ago sees compassion in Homo erectus beginning to be regulated as an emotion integrated with rational thought. Care of sick individuals represented an extensive compassionate investment while the emergence of special treatment of the dead suggested grief at the loss of a loved one and a desire to soothe others feelings.

In Europe between around 500,000 and 40,000 years ago, early humans such as Homo Heidelbergensis and Neanderthals developed deep-seated commitments to the welfare of others illustrated by a long adolescence and a dependence on hunting together. There is also archaeological evidence of the routine care of the injured or infirm over extended periods. These include the remains of a child with a congenital brain abnormality who was not abandoned but lived until five or six years old and those of a Neanderthal with a withered arm, deformed feet and blindness in one eye who must have been cared for, perhaps for as long as twenty years. In modern humans starting 120,000 years ago, compassion was extended to strangers, animals, objects and abstract concepts.

It's nature: the philosophy of man in relation to others
Humans are social beings, dependent on each other for warmth, food, shelter, safety, appreciation and self-esteem. With the exception of the turbulent years around puberty, most individuals have a strong desire to be part of a social system.

We are naturally affectionate and dependent on others, from the start of our lives until the end. And, even though we no longer live in close social entities of around 150 people as was common 150,000 years ago, our brains may still be wired for social groups of that scale. Most of us live in areas with hundreds of thousands of people, but only regularly maintain close contact with 150 individuals at the maximum[13].

While our social bonds have become increasingly more flexible, they have not disappeared. Successes like Facebook and LinkedIn are striking examples. Today's society is not a collection of disparate individuals; we have developed different structures and patterns of cross-links and bonds between people. Our sense of 'we' may have changed in the last few decades, but our need for social contact hasn't.[14]

The French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) suggests that our "sense of self", often thought of as an internal and individual sense, is dependent on others. He states; "I become myself in the face of the other." Levinas reflects that there can be no "I" without others, and even more specifically, without the physical presence of other people.[15]

Levinas's concepts are well-illustrated in the 2000 film 'Cast Away'. Tom Hanks plays a character who washes ashore on a desert island and is forced to survive in solitude. Seeking companionship, he draws a face on a volleyball and begins to regularly

converse with his new 'friend'. As time passes on the island, the character demands more and more from his volleyball-companion, but since the face remains impassive, eventually, the man becomes enraged[16].

The push toward being prosocial is found in philosophy, physiology, and also in our arts and culture.

It's nurture: folktales and parables as promoters of prosocial behavior

In all cultures, prosocial behavior is promoted via stories. These stories stress the value of helping one another and warn of the trouble that can result from being selfish and greedy. Today, the oral tradition may be garnering less influence, but the prosocial message has found its way to other media, such as popular music and movies.

I asked musical expert Peter Marinus to do a scan on prosocial messages among songs in the recent Top-100. In western countries, we see a share of 10-15% of songs containing prosocial themes on the list. Think, "We Are the World", "Imagine", "Another Day in Paradise", "Ebony and Ivory", or more recently "Wake-up!" by John Legend & The Roots or the "Hands in Hands and Tomorrow Will be Better" lyrics from the Chinese version of Popstars and known by almost all Chinese people.

It's nurture: religion as promoter of prosocial-behavior

Common among the moral values promoted by all major religions is a concern for others. The term "Good Samaritan" has become short-hand for an individual who demonstrates prosocial behavior. This 2000-year old parable is still illustrative today. From Luke 10:25-37 (New International Version):

Letsheal: Prosocial music ranks high in hitlists

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"
"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'"
"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied "Do this and you will live." But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?"
In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'
"Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"
The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

In February 2010 I visited the United Nations for the first time to discuss the outcome of the pilot studies for this book. Sitting in the UN Headquarters, I was engaged in a discussion with my contact Matthias, over the interpretation of "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." Also known as "the Golden Rule," this simple maxim is the lesson to be learned from the Samaritan story. At some point Matthias started smiling and said "Why don't you take a look at the wall behind you?" Then I found out that we were discussing "the Golden Rule" *in front* of "the Golden Rule," a Norman Rockwell mosaic! As it turned out, the ideals epitomized by "the Golden Rule" and embodied by Rockwell's artwork were exactly why my contact-person had joined the UN in the first place.
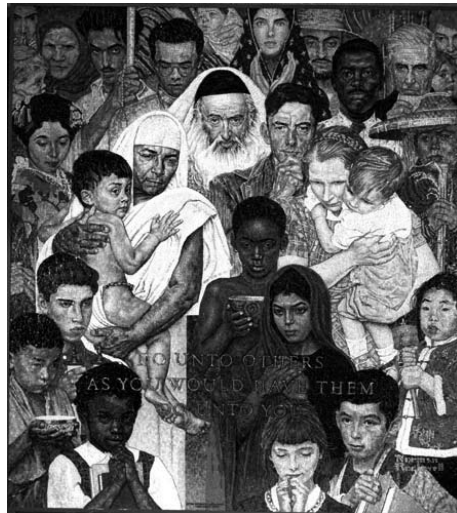

Figure 3. Norman Rockwell; Golden Rule. Copyright © 2001 United Nations: un.org/cyberschoolbus/untour/subnor.htm

Letsheal: The Golden Rule: Brilliant

While the "Good Samaritan" is found in the New Testament, all mainstream religions have similar stories and dictums that promote prosocial behavior. Dovidio et al's *Social Psychology of Prosocial Behavior* gives the following examples:

In the religion of Islam, the Qur'anic word Zakah refers to charity and voluntary contributions as expressions of kindness and as a means to comfort those less fortunate; moreover, it reflects a balance of responsibilities between the individual and society. The teachings of Lao-Tze, which serve as the basis for Taoism, also advise that one should deal positively with others. The Jewish version of the prescription for prosocial behavior may be found in the Old Testament book of Leviticus: "You should love your neighbour as yourself). In the Buddhist tradition: Consider others as yourself and in Hinduism; Do naught to others which if done to thee would cause the pain: this is the sum of duty.

Earlier in this chapter, I examined the strong correlation (0.33)[10] between helping others and serving or worshipping God. For years, religions have provided a great deal of motivation for individuals to engage in prosocial behavior. But, especially in western parts of the world, religion's influence is declining, making it a declining force for the stimulation of prosocial behavior.

While in many countries with a Muslim majority, religion is a consistent presence in culture, society and politics, in the 20th century, the influence of Christianity began to take a lessened role in public life in increasingly secular cultures in Western Europe. To a lesser extent this also applies to North America and later in

Letsheal: Will the declining influence of religions in Western parts have impact on prosocial behavior?

Eastern Europe under the communist governments of the 20th century. In countries like Japan and China, throughout history, religion has often taken a smaller role in public life than in Europe. What effect will less religion around the world have on prosocial behavior?

It's nurture: the role of the immediate surroundings

Social behaviors can *and must* be learned. Interactions with parents are the first type of social exchange infants experience, so the role of parents is extremely important in developing prosocial skills. Later, teachers play a key role. But ultimately, at all ages, friends are crucial in the development of prosocial behavior.

Sometimes, peer pressure is used to stimulate prosocial behavior. Blood donors, for example, almost never donate independently, but instead, are influenced and encouraged by group members[17].

It's nature: physiological, the feeling of helping and being helped

The act of assisting another person can have a strong physiological effect. When we are genuinely motivated to unselfishly help someone, a flood of oxytocin, a soothing 'feel-good' hormone, is released in the brain[12]. This means compassion and empathy, the emotional motivators to be altruistic, go deeper than morals or social-norms. As humans, we have evolved a biological "caring response" that actually *feels good*. Oxytocin is also the hormone that is released before and after an orgasm.

Since this concept is all about encouraging brands to become more prosocial and even facilitate prosocial behavior, this insight

Letsheal: Family, friends and school extremely important in developing prosocial skills

could breathe new life into the old saying "sex sells". What a great feeling to attach to a brand!

However, although the giver might feel great, receiving help can potentially be damaging to the self-esteem of receivers. In section 1.15 we will further discuss the impact on those who receive help.

1.7 Empathy sparks prosocial behavior

On October 13th 2010, more than a billion people around the world were transfixed by the dramatic rescue of 33 Chilean miners who had spent 69 days trapped underground.

It seems clear that prosocial behavior has a number of genetic and cultural roots, but what triggers us to actually act on these impulses? Prosocial action stems from empathy, the capacity to feel emotional responses to another person's misfortune or distress. It is this same sense of empathy that led so many to watch and revel in the successes of the Chilean rescue operation.

We adapted the University of Chicago's Davis Empathy Scale (18) model to rate the human capacity to feel empathic emotions along a simple range from zero (least empathic) to 15 (most empathic).
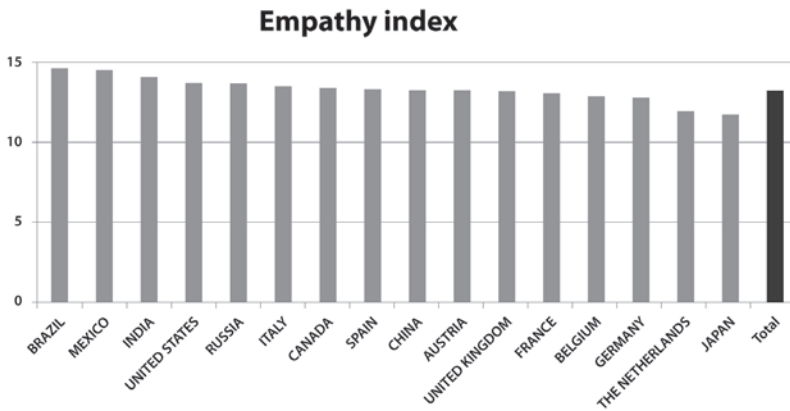
Figure 4. Empathy index. Letsheal.org 2010-2011

Letsheal: empathy is the driving force behind prosocial behavior

With the exception of Japan and the Netherlands, this graph indicates a relatively small variance between countries. If you look at the questions on which the Empathy Scale is based, I think the majority of us could be described as empathic.

- I am often quite touched by things that I see happen (73% agree)
- I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me (69% agree)
- When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them (75% agree)
- I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person (68% agree)

In general, women tended to show higher rates of empathy (between 6% and 12% higher than men on the items above). Another disparity can be found between the results of young people and adults. The findings show empathy comes with years. (If you want a more in depth look at the figures, please download the research report available at letsheal.org)

But why would the results be lower in Japan and the Netherlands? With regards to Japan, David Matsumoto, Professor of Psychology and Director of the Culture and Emotion Research Laboratory at San Francisco State University provides some insight[19]: "[The lower rate of empathy] probably reflects the reliance in Japances culture on immediate personal relationships with 'ingroup' members, and the distancing of empathy and emotion with persons or events outside one's primary group. Because things that occur in the 'world' would not necessarily have immediate,

personal impact on one's relationships with ingroup others, such events would be much less likely to produce sadness. Americans and Europeans, who make far fewer distinctions between ingroup and outgroup others, would be more likely to feel emotion at disturbing world news, however little it affected one in a personal way."

But, what about the Netherlands? Although its deviation from other countries is smaller than that of Japan, as a Dutchman, I found the results very surprising. Traditionally, The Netherlands ranks among the highest in the world in volunteer-work and charitable donations. One would assume such activities would require above-average empathy. After the initial results came in, we repeated the research with another sample, but it yielded the same results. We couldn't find a clear explanation in the data.

My best guess is that these results reflect a radical change in Dutch politics that coincided with the timing of the research. In the fall of 2010, a subgroup of Dutch society, not typically represented by the political system, dominated mainstream media with their "new" ideas. This group heavily promoted antisocial themes, advocating for "ingroup" support at the expense of "outgroup" members (immigrants and minorities). Their message received a disproportionally large share of media attention during the election season which may have coloured the way Dutch citizens regarded empathy in the research. I'm curious to see future results and whether or not national politics can play into feelings of empathy.

Letsheal: Japan and the Netherlands score slightly below par on empathy

1.8 Actual prosocial behavior

To better understand how people engage in prosocial behavior, we constructed a scale based on the "Self-Report Altruism Scale," a measure of the "altruistic" personality designed in 1981 by J.P. Rushton, R.D. Chrisjohn, and G.C. Fekken[20]. Based on the scale, we asked respondents to indicate the frequency with which they have performed prosocial behaviors (from "never" to "very often") in the three previous months. The scale consists of the following items:

- I have given someone directions (77% once or more)
- I have given money to someone who needed it (or asked for it) (68% once or more)
- I have done volunteer work for charity (41% once or more)
- I have allowed someone ahead of me in a line (in a supermarket, during registration, et cetera.) (81% once or more)
- I have let someone borrow an item of some value to me (clothes, jewellery, stereo, et cetera.) (56% once or more)
- I have offered my seat in a crowded room or on a train or bus to someone who was standing (65% once or more)
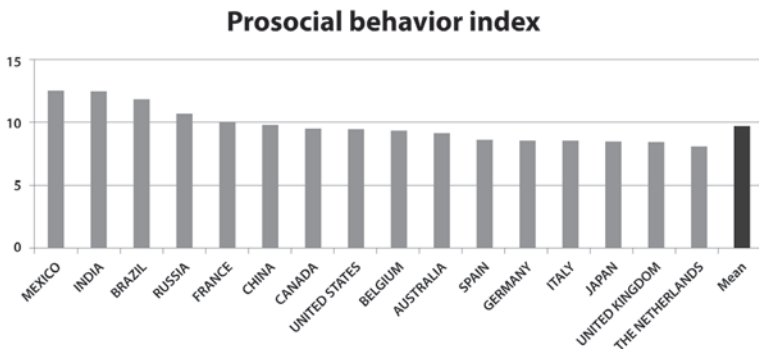
Figure 5. Prosocial behavior index. Letsheal.org 2010-2011

In these results, three countries stand out: Mexico, India and Brazil. The explanation can be found in cultural differences. These cultures are textbook collective cultures compared to the more individualistic cultures[21].

I would therefore prefer to take a look at the variations within countries rather than between them. Women, in general, and people with children have been found to show more prosocial behavior. Young people, between 16 and 17, tend to be a little less prosocial.

In taking a closer look at the data, I took a keen interest in the results from the two groups: those savvy with social media and a group I call Social Transformers.

Our research showed that people who are most connected and on the cutting edge of social media tended to be more prosocial in real life. They, on the whole, do more volunteer work, were more likely to offer their seats in crowded spaces, lend possessions to others, give directions, et cetera.

The group I labeled "Social Transformers" make up almost one quarter of the population. This group is extremely driven to help others to make this world a better place which is reflected in their above average empathetic abilities and prosocial behavior. They consist of 58% of women and are somewhat older than average (>35 years).

We will explore these two group in more detail Section 2.2.

Letsheal: 25% of the population can be described as Social Transformers with an above average drive to make this world a better place

1.9 Prosocial for something in return?

During public discussions of the ideas in this book, I often heard the suggestion that individuals are only willing to help others because they want something in return. My response: what's the big deal? Does it really matter what the motivation is? If people want a more meaningful life and being prosocial can help them achieve it, does it matter if, ultimately, it's ego-driven?

It is especially interesting from a marketing standpoint to get a grip on the ego-aspect of altruism. One could argue that true altruism does not exist. Earlier, we discussed the feel-good hormones that are released upon helping others, which implies that even for the most sincere altruists, there are still internal rewards.

Also, another person's distress doesn't take place in a bubble. Witnessing someone in distress can easily create a domino effect of distress among others. Reducing your own stress in the face of someone else's is as good a reason as any to help. To label something as "altruistic" doesn't need to imply that it is entirely dominated by unselfish intentions.

So what kind of factors determine different people's empathic or non-empathic responses? Here's what we were told:

Table 10: It is important to know them personally (country)*

	Total	NL	US	ES	GB	FR	BE	CA	IT	DE	JP	AU	BR	MX	CH	IN	RU
N	24.227	1.738	1.327	1.598	2.016	1.704	1.599	1.741	1.088	1.698	2.358	1.927	1.092	1.179	1.071	1.109	982
Yes	33%	40%	18%	42%	19%	36%	38%	20%	42%	35%	53%	22%	40%	29%	13%	40%	40%
No	44%	30%	61%	36%	53%	40%	36%	59%	38%	44%	24%	54%	39%	47%	70%	38%	42%
A little	23%	29%	21%	22%	28%	24%	27%	21%	20%	21%	24%	24%	21%	23%	17%	22%	18%

Table 11: I expect that I get something in return (country)*

	Total	NL	US	ES	GB	FR	BE	CA	IT	DE	JP	AU	BR	MX	CH	IN	RU
N	24.227	1.738	1.327	1.598	2.016	1.704	1.599	1.741	1.088	1.698	2.358	1.927	1.092	1.179	1.071	1.109	982
Yes	8%	9%	6%	7%	8%	9%	8%	7%	10%	15%	10%	8%	4%	3%	8%	12%	4%
No	78%	70%	86%	82%	79%	77%	75%	83%	78%	61%	65%	78%	90%	91%	81%	80%	81%
A little	14%	21%	8%	11%	13%	14%	17%	10%	13%	25%	25%	14%	6%	6%	12%	7%	15%

Table 12: I expect them to return the favor when I need it (country)*

	Total	NL	US	ES	GB	FR	BE	CA	IT	DE	JP	AU	BR	MX	CH	IN	RU
N	24.227	1.738	1.327	1.598	2.016	1.704	1.599	1.741	1.088	1.698	2.358	1.927	1.092	1.179	1.071	1.109	982
Yes	20%	18%	13%	18%	14%	24%	19%	14%	19%	40%	23%	14%	14%	9%	30%	16%	34%
No	56%	54%	67%	60%	63%	49%	52%	63%	57%	32%	49%	62%	70%	76%	43%	68%	35%
A little	24%	29%	20%	22%	23%	27%	29%	23%	24%	28%	28%	24%	16%	14%	27%	16%	32%

Table 13: I want others to know that I do so (country)*

	Total	NL	US	ES	GB	FR	BE	CA	IT	DE	JP	AU	BR	MX	CH	IN	RU
N	24.227	1.738	1.327	1.598	2.016	1.704	1.599	1.741	1.088	1.698	2.358	1.927	1.092	1.179	1.071	1.109	982
Yes	17%	21%	14%	14%	16%	18%	21%	18%	17%	16%	20%	16%	14%	7%	28%	22%	17%
No	62%	56%	65%	70%	63%	62%	59%	61%	65%	64%	56%	61%	72%	79%	44%	62%	58%
A little	20%	24%	21%	17%	20%	20%	20%	21%	18%	20%	24%	23%	14%	14%	27%	16%	24%

* Please see chapter 5 for the research design.

Table 14: It is important to know them personally (background)*

	Total	Gender		Age				Has Child(ren)		Education				Urbanisation level				
		Man	Woman	16-17	up to 34	35-54	>54	no	yes	low	middle	high	unknown	rural	residential	suburban	city	unknown
N	24.227	12.370	11.854	764	9.406	10.129	3.927	13.911	10.316	2.057	9.069	10.034	3.067	2.719	2.623	3.322	4.241	11.322
Yes	33%	35%	30%	39%	35%	31%	33%	33%	33%	37%	35%	29%	37%	33%	33%	30%	33%	34%
No	44%	42%	47%	32%	41%	47%	48%	45%	44%	42%	42%	49%	41%	44%	44%	45%	46%	43%
A little	23%	22%	23%	29%	24%	22%	19%	23%	23%	21%	24%	22%	22%	23%	22%	25%	21%	23%

Table 15: It is important that I get something in return (background)*

	Total	Gender		Age				Has Child(ren)		Education				Urbanisation level				
		Man	Woman	16-17	up to 34	35-54	>54	no	yes	low	middle	high	unknown	rural	residential	suburban	city	unknown
N	24.227	12.370	11.854	764	9.406	10.129	3.927	13.911	10.316	2.057	9.069	10.034	3.067	2.719	2.623	3.322	4.241	11.322
Yes	8%	11%	5%	18%	10%	6%	4%	7%	9%	10%	8%	7%	9%	5%	5%	7%	6%	10%
No	78%	75%	83%	57%	74%	82%	86%	79%	78%	76%	78%	79%	80%	81%	81%	79%	82%	76%
A little	14%	15%	12%	25%	16%	12%	10%	14%	13%	13%	14%	14%	12%	14%	14%	14%	12%	14%

Table 16: I expect them to return the favor when I need it (background)*

	Total	Gender		Age				Has Child(ren)		Education				Urbanisation level				
		Man	Woman	16-17	up to 34	35-54	>54	no	yes	low	middle	high	unknown	rural	residential	suburban	city	unknown
N	24.227	12.370	11.854	764	9.406	10.129	3.927	13.911	10.316	2.057	9.069	10.034	3.067	2.719	2.623	3.322	4.241	11.322
Yes	20%	23%	16%	36%	24%	17%	13%	18%	22%	22%	20%	18%	24%	17%	17%	17%	18%	22%
No	56%	53%	60%	34%	49%	60%	68%	57%	55%	53%	56%	59%	52%	56%	60%	59%	59%	53%
A little	24%	24%	24%	29%	26%	23%	21%	24%	23%	24%	24%	24%	24%	27%	23%	23%	23%	24%

Table 17: I want others to know that I do so (background)*

	Total	Gender		Age				Has Child(ren)		Education				Urbanisation level				
		Man	Woman	16-17	up to 34	35-54	>54	no	yes	low	middle	high	unknown	rural	residential	suburban	city	unknown
N	24.227	12.370	11.854	764	9.406	10.129	3.927	13.911	10.316	2.057	9.069	10.034	3.067	2.719	2.623	3.322	4.241	11.322
Yes	17%	21%	14%	38%	22%	14%	9%	15%	20%	21%	17%	16%	19%	12%	15%	14%	16%	21%
No	62%	58%	67%	31%	54%	67%	76%	65%	59%	59%	63%	63%	61%	71%	66%	66%	66%	57%
A little	20%	21%	19%	31%	24%	18%	14%	20%	21%	21%	19%	21%	20%	18%	19%	20%	19%	22%

A factor that determines an individual's willingness to give assistance is whether or not the person in need is known personally. In the study, we found big differences between countries. Respondents from China (70%), the United States (61%) and Canada (59%) put less weight on the importance of personally knowing those they decide to assist (please see table 10).

The type of help given to those with whom a previous relationship does not exist will often be more calculated. This means, for instance, that the contribution tends to be smaller than the situation actually requires. It's only logical to think that if your neighbour's house is washed away, you will probably do more than if there is a flood on the other side of the world. Your neighbour is also more likely to be in a position to return the favor down the road, which will likely influence your decision. Proximity matters. When it comes down to marketing, then, it would be wise to focus on introducing the people in need and try to establish (the feeling of) proximity, or a relation between people in need and the potential helper.

The great majority don't expect anything in return directly (78% no, 14% a little, see table 11). However a larger percentage expects the favour to be returned when needed (yes 20%, a little 24%, see table 12). It is also desirable for some to receive credit for their good deeds. 17% said that they want others to know that they've helped and 20% want a little acknowledgement. China ranks first when comes down to "I want others to know that I helped, at 28% agreeing and 27% agreeing a little (see table 13).

In our study, women tended to show significantly higher levels of altruism; but even beyond gender, the biggest determiner in

Letsheal: 80% are not looking for something in return

these levels was age. The older people get, the more altruistic they become (see tables 14-17). Not surprisingly, people who indicated that their interpretation of a meaningful life is to help others score significantly higher on altruistic values.

Letsheal: The older people get, the more altruistic. Younger people like others to know that they've helped

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1.10 Helping becomes more important

When asked if the desire to help others has "become stronger or more pronounced during the last 3 years," 37% of the people indicate that it has. For a number of reasons, we have seen increases in the wish to live a meaningful life and to help others in particular.

A reason for this shift may be the gradual deterioration of neoliberalism as faith. Key to neoliberal doctrine is the concept that free markets are better equipped to realize societal goals than organizations controlled or led by government. This free market ideology has also led to the propagation of profit maximization as an ideal. For many, capitalism and neoliberalism have encouraged people to seek money as a primary goal in life. The financial crisis of the last few years has led many to revaluate this thinking. The realization that this "greatest" source of happiness, money, can suddenly disappear can be deeply troubling. The financial crisis seemed to have been a wake-up call to many to realize that there is much more to life than just money[14]. This appears to be reflected in the increased search for meaning via helping others.

This sharp increase over the last three years echoes the heightening of the financial crisis and its effects on the mainstream (see table 18 on the next page).

For people older than 54 years, there has been a more gradual increase in these feelings. The same goes for people without children, people with less education and those residing in rural areas (see table 19).

Letsheal: Strong increases in the desire to help others: A big opportunity for humanity

1.11 What do we care about?

If we translate this question into monetary giving, we can take a look at the good causes people donate to.

Table 20 on the next page offers a good first impression on what we think is important. Health is the number one, followed by nature/environment (China 74%!) and children's rights 36%. Children's rights appear to be extremely important in India and China, scoring 60 and 57% respectively.

There is a huge variation in the amount given towards education between countries, ranging from 12% in Italy and Germany, up to 74% in India. These differences must be seen in the light of the local system. The school system in Germany is accessible to every German, something you cannot say of India. It is logical, then, that the sense of urgency would be greater in India.

Those who indicate that helping others gives them the most meaning in life score significantly higher on all types of charitable giving. Women tend to give more. Having children leads to higher gifts toward education, sports and children's rights (42% against 30%). People in urban areas tend to give more than those in rural areas. With age comes greater generosity in the fields of health, international solidarity, and nature/environment.

Younger people tend to give more to animal rights and sports/recreation.

Table 18: Has this feeling become stronger or more pronounced during the last 3 years (country)*

	Total	NL	US	ES	GB	FR	BE	CA	IT	DE	JP	AU	BR	MX	CH	IN	RU
N	24.227	1.738	1.327	1.598	2.016	1.704	1.599	1.741	1.088	1.698	2.358	1.927	1.092	1.179	1.071	1.109	982
much less stronger	3%	4%	2%	5%	2%	5%	5%	2%	5%	4%	3%	2%	3%	4%	3%	2%	4%
the same	60%	72%	63%	65%	68%	64%	65%	66%	60%	66%	74%	65%	46%	45%	46%	34%	52%
much stronger	37%	24%	35%	30%	30%	30%	30%	32%	36%	30%	23%	33%	50%	52%	52%	64%	44%

Table 19: Has this feeling become stronger or more pronounced during the last 3 years (background)*

	Total	Gender		Age				Has Child(ren)		Education				Urbanisation level				
		Man	Woman	16-17	up to 34	35-54	>54	no	yes	low	middle	high	unknown	rural	residential	suburban	city	unknown
N	24.227	12.370	11.854	764	9.406	10.129	3.927	13.911	10.316	2.057	9.069	10.034	3.067	2.719	2.623	3.322	4.241	11.322
much less stronger	3%	4%	3%	5%	4%	3%	2%	3%	4%	5%	4%	3%	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	4%
the same	60%	61%	59%	54%	56%	61%	67%	64%	55%	64%	63%	61%	47%	68%	61%	65%	57%	58%
much stronger	37%	35%	38%	40%	40%	36%	31%	33%	41%	31%	33%	36%	49%	28%	36%	32%	40%	38%

Table 20: What subjects do you support? Either by giving money or by doing volunteer work (background)*

	Total	Gender		Age				Has Child(ren)		Education				Urbanisation level				
		Man	Woman	16-17	up to 34	35-54	>54	no	yes	low	middle	high	unknown	rural	residential	suburban	city	unknown
N	24.227	12.370	11.854	764	9.406	10.129	3.927	13.911	10.316	2.057	9.069	10.034	3.067	2.719	2.623	3.322	4.241	11.322
Religion	17%	17%	17%	13%	17%	17%	19%	16%	18%	11%	15%	18%	25%	11%	17%	13%	19%	19%
Health	38%	36%	41%	30%	38%	39%	40%	37%	39%	32%	35%	42%	37%	35%	39%	37%	44%	37%
International solidarity	24%	23%	24%	19%	23%	24%	26%	24%	24%	18%	22%	29%	17%	27%	27%	26%	33%	18%
Nature/environment	36%	35%	36%	30%	37%	36%	36%	35%	37%	24%	31%	42%	39%	35%	41%	35%	45%	32%
Children's Rights	36%	32%	40%	29%	37%	37%	32%	30%	42%	29%	34%	38%	39%	31%	38%	34%	41%	35%
Animal Rights	28%	24%	32%	31%	30%	27%	25%	28%	27%	27%	28%	28%	26%	26%	27%	25%	28%	29%
Education	30%	30%	30%	32%	36%	29%	22%	25%	37%	18%	24%	36%	41%	21%	29%	26%	38%	31%
Arts and Culture	14%	15%	13%	17%	17%	12%	13%	14%	14%	9%	11%	18%	15%	10%	15%	12%	19%	14%
Sports and recreation	17%	21%	12%	32%	20%	15%	11%	14%	20%	17%	17%	17%	17%	12%	15%	14%	17%	19%
Other	8%	8%	8%	10%	7%	8%	10%	9%	8%	9%	8%	8%	9%	6%	8%	8%	7%	10%
None	19%	20%	18%	22%	19%	19%	17%	20%	17%	27%	22%	15%	16%	21%	19%	21%	15%	19%

* Please see chapter 5 for the research design.

Besides the topics found directly in the research, there are other themes we, as a global community, care about. These priorities were given voice in the inspiring and challenging Millennium Development Goals.

In September 2000, world leaders came together at the UN Headquarters in New York to adopt the United Nations Millennium Declaration, committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting out a series of time-bound targets – with a deadline of 2015 – that have become known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MGDs are the most broadly supported, comprehensive and specific development goals the world has ever agreed upon. Secretary-General of United Nations, Ban Ki-moon wrote in The Millennium Development Goals Report 2010[22]:

> The goals represent human needs and basic rights that every individual around the world should be able to enjoy – freedom from extreme poverty and hunger; quality education, productive and decent employment, good health and shelter; the right of women to give birth without risking their lives; and a world where environmental sustainability is a priority, and women and men live in equality. Leaders also pledged to forge a wide-ranging global partnership for development to achieve these universal objectives.
> This report shows how much progress has been made. Perhaps most important, it shows that the Goals are achievable when nationally owned development strategies, policies and programmes are supported by international development partners. At the same time, it is clear that improvements in the

lives of the poor have been unacceptably slow, and some hard-won gains are being eroded by the climate, food and economic crises.

The world possesses the resources and knowledge to ensure that even the poorest countries, and others held back by disease, geographic isolation or civil strife, can be empowered to achieve the MDGs. Meeting the goals is everyone's business. Falling short would multiply the dangers of our world – from instability to epidemic diseases to environmental degradation. But achieving the goals will put us on a fast track to a world that is more stable, more just, and more secure. Billions of people are looking to the international community to realize the great vision embodied in the Millennium Declaration. Let us keep that promise.

Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs writes, "The Millennium Development Goals are still attainable. The critical question today is how to transform the pace of change from what we have seen over the last decade into dramatically faster progress."

There are eight different goals and you are more than invited to help achieve them. In chapter two, I will present a model with which you can see whether it makes sense to go for one of the millennium goals (http://www.un.org/ millenniumgoals).

The summary below gives a quick overview of the world's biggest challenges, as identified by the UN. These goals should serve as an inspiration for how brands and companies might contribute to tackling the world's biggest problems. Needless to say, there would be no objections for aiming beyond these goals.

It could all seem daunting, but let's not feel overwhelmed. I

Letsheal: Meeting the goals is everyone's business. Falling short would multiply the dangers of our world

see these broad issues as opportunities for us to begin the work of facilitating people to help others.

GOAL 1

ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than US$1 a day. This translates into around 920 million people living under the international poverty line by 2015.

Achieve, full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people.

Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. In 2005-2007, the last period assessed, 830 million people were still undernourished, an increase from 817 million in 1990-1992.

GOAL 2

ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

GOAL 3

PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN

Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

GOAL 4

REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate. The mortality rate for children under age five in

Letsheal: Let's ensure that 'only' 920 million people have to live on US$1.25. Let's try to halve the proportion of 830 million people who suffer from hunger

developing countries is 72 per 1,000 live births in 2008 leading to 8.8 million under-five deaths in total.

GOAL 5

IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio. Achieving good maternal health requires quality reproductive health services and a series of well-timed interventions to ensure a women's safe passage to motherhood. Failure to provide these results in hundreds of thousands of needless deaths each year – a sad reminder of the low status accorded to women in many societies.

Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health. Only one in three rural women in developing regions receive the recommended care during pregnancy.

Satisfying women's unmet need for family planning, that is, facilitating access to modern contraceptives by women who desire to delay or avoid pregnancy but who are currently not using contraception—could also improve maternal health and reduce the number of maternal deaths. Recent estimates indicate that meeting that need could result in a 27 percent drop in maternal deaths each year by reducing the annual number of unintended pregnancies from 75 million to 22 million.

GOAL 6

COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA & OTHER DISEASES

Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS. The latest epidemiological data indicate that, globally, the spread of HIV appears to have peaked in 1996, when 3.5 million peo-

ple were newly infected. By 2008, that number had dropped to an estimated 2.7 million. AIDS-related mortality peaked in 2004, with 2.2 million deaths. By 2008, that toll had dropped to 2 million, although HIV remains the world's leading infectious killer. The epidemic appears to have stabilized in most regions, although prevalence continues to rise in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and other parts of Asia due to a high rate of new HIV infections. Sub-Saharan Africa remains the most heavily affected region, accounting for 72 per cent of all new HIV infections in 2008. An estimated 33.4 million people were living with HIV in 2008, of whom 22.4 million are in sub-Saharan Africa. Understanding how to prevent transmission of HIV is the first step to avoiding infection. This is especially important for young people (aged 15 to 24), who, in 2008, accounted for 40 per cent of new HIV infections among adults worldwide.

An estimated 17.5 million children (under age 18) lost one or both parents to AIDS in 2008. Children orphaned by AIDS are at greater risk of poor health, education and protection than children who have lost parents for other reasons. They are also more likely to be malnourished, sick, or subject to child labor, abuse and neglect, or sexual exploitation – all of which increase their vulnerability to HIV infection. Such children frequently suffer from stigma and discrimination and may be denied access to basic services such as education and shelter as well as opportunities for play.

Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it. This target has not been achieved because of the rate of new HIV infections continues. For every two individuals who start treatment each year, five people are newly infected with HIV.

Letsheal: In 2008 alone 17.5 million kids lost one or both parents to AIDS. Let's give these kids a future.

Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases. Half the world's population is at risk of malaria, and an estimated 243 million cases led to nearly 863,000 deaths in 2008. Of these, 767,000 (89 per cent) occurred in Africa. Sustained malaria control is central to achieving many of the MDGs. Total funding for malaria still falls far short of the estimated US $6 billion needed in 2010 alone for global implementation of malaria-control interventions.

Tuberculosis remains the second leading killer after HIV. Although more and more tuberculosis patients are being cured, millions will remain ill because they lack access to high-quality care. Tuberculosis remains second only to HIV in the number of people it kills. In 2008, 1.8 million people died from the disease, half of whom were living with HIV. Many of these deaths resulted from the lack of antiretroviral therapy.

GOAL 7

ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources. The rate of deforestation is still alarmingly high. A decisive response to climate change is urgently needed.

Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss. The world has missed the 2010 target for biodiversity conservation, with potentially grave consequences. Key habitats for threatened species are not being adequately protected. The number of species facing extinction is growing by the day, especially in developing countries the negative impact of fisheries is increasing. Only about 20% of fish

stocks were moderately exploited or underexploited, with the possibility of producing more.

Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. Rural drinking water coverage has risen to 76% in 2008. Globally, eight out of 10 people who are still without access to an improved (safe) drinking water source live in rural areas.

At the current rate of progress, the world will miss the target of halving the proportion of people without access to basic sanitation. In 2008, an estimated 2.6 billion people around the world lacked access to an improved sanitation facility. If the trend continues, that number will grow to 2.7 billion by 2015.

The practice of open defecation by 1.1 billion people is an affront to human dignity. Moreover, indiscriminate defecation is the root cause of fecal-oral transmission of disease, which can have lethal consequences for the most vulnerable members of society – young children. If open defecation rates continue to decline, the impact on reducing child deaths could be enormous, primarily by preventing diarrheal diseases and the stunting and undernutrition that tend to follow.

By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

GOAL 8
DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

In 2009, net disbursements of official development assistance (ODA) amounted to US$119.6 billion, or 0.31% of the combined national income of developed countries.

Address the special needs of the least developed countries,

landlocked countries and small island developing states.

Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, nondiscriminatory trading and financial system. Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt.

In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.

Though these goals are clearly admirable, I would like to share my own observation here that 'peace' and peace movements are far too often off the radar. Maybe this is because we have accepted armed conflicts as a sad fact of life, but their impact cannot be understated.

In 2010 alone, there was a total of 363 conflicts observed. Among these, there were six wars and 22 severe crises, amounting to 28 highly-violent altercations, i.e. conflicts fought out with the use of massive violence[23].

Peace can be a very interesting and extremely positive new territory for brands, yet somehow it has gone unexploited.

I, for one, would love to see brands make a real and concerted push toward creating a more peaceful world. And, I don't think I'm alone.

Letsheal: 2.6 billion people lack access to proper sanitation
Letsheal: Peace!

1.12 Want to do more for others?

The study makes it clear that people around the globe have a strong desire to live a meaningful life and that helping others is one of the best ways to achieve this. But, does this translate into an eagerness to do more than simply giving money?

59% of the respondents said they'd like to do more for others beyond donating to charitable causes. For people who felt that meaning is helping others, this impulse was even stronger: 68%.

There are strong differences between countries. In India, China, Brazil and Mexico the percentage goes well beyond 80%. In the Netherlands and Germany, where there are already high rates of volunteerism, 30 to 35% of the population indicated a willingness to do even more than donating. See tables 21-23 on the next pages.

1.13 What keeps us from doing more?

First let's take a look at the practical reasons. Not surprisingly, the two biggest obstacles preventing people from doing more are: money and time. Similarly, people tend to commit less to donating or volunteering due to their hectic lives. See table 24.

What also may serve as a limiting factor is the perception that people are less concerned about each other nowadays (74%), a belief that can become something of a feedback loop. People believe that society is growing less supportive and as a result become less willing to engage in helping others, leading society to, in fact, be less supportive. See table 25.

The optimist in me believes that if such a large percentage think that society is in danger because of egoism, it might not be so bad. It's likely only the way it's perceived, not reality.

In earlier research I conducted in the Netherlands, I discovered a perfect opportunity to encourage prosocial behavior by piggybacking on people's misconceptions about each other. I found that people were under the impression that others were not interested in them, so they therefore remained somewhat isolated.

At the same time, our research showed that a vast majority would have loved to have had more contact with others. All people needed was a challenge to their preconceived notions in order to make new and positive connections within their communities.

Letsheal: A majority of people care for society, but believe that others don't. Let's cut this feedback loop

Table 21: Would you like to do more for others? Or for society in general? Other than giving money (for example giving blood, volunteering). (country)*

	Total	NL	US	ES	GB	FR	BE	CA	IT	DE	JP	AU	BR	MX	CH	IN	RU
N	24.227	1.738	1.327	1.598	2.016	1.704	1.599	1.741	1.088	1.698	2.358	1.927	1.092	1.179	1.071	1.109	982
Yes	59%	30%	61%	61%	44%	47%	47%	59%	66%	35%	53%	49%	84%	82%	86%	87%	60%
No	15%	43%	15%	10%	25%	17%	21%	14%	7%	26%	15%	17%	3%	3%	3%	4%	7%
Don't know	27%	27%	25%	29%	31%	36%	32%	27%	27%	40%	32%	34%	13%	15%	11%	9%	33%

Table 22: Would you like to do more for others? Or for society in general? Other than giving money (for example giving blood, volunteering). (background)*

	Total	Gender		Age				Has Child(ren)		Education				Urbanisation level				
		Man	Woman	16-17	up to 34	35-54	>54	no	yes	low	middle	high	unknown	rural	residential	suburban	city	unknown
N	24.227	12.370	11.854	764	9.406	10.129	3.927	13.911	10.316	2.057	9.069	10.034	3.067	2.719	2.623	3.322	4.241	11.322
Yes	59%	56%	61%	49%	65%	58%	52%	56%	62%	45%	53%	63%	69%	52%	61%	58%	70%	55%
No	15%	17%	13%	15%	12%	15%	20%	17%	12%	21%	17%	14%	8%	16%	15%	15%	9%	16%
Don't know	27%	27%	26%	35%	23%	27%	29%	28%	26%	34%	30%	23%	23%	32%	24%	27%	21%	28%

Table 23: Would you like to do more for others? Or for society in general? Other than giving money (for example giving blood, volunteering). (subgroups)*

	Total	Meaning is to help others (& life is not meaningless)		Current mood		Social transformer		SocialMediaSavvy		Prosocial behaviour scale			Empathy scale		
		no	yes	enjoy-ment	other	no	yes	no	yes	low	middle	high	low	middle	high
N	24.227	10.727	13.500	2.829	21.398	18.211	6.016	20.944	3.283	9.073	7.076	8.078	8.595	8.555	7.077
Yes	59%	46%	68%	61%	58%	53%	73%	55%	80%	44%	62%	71%	40%	61%	76%
No	15%	21%	10%	15%	15%	17%	7%	16%	7%	22%	13%	9%	25%	12%	6%
Don't know	27%	32%	22%	23%	27%	29%	19%	29%	13%	35%	25%	19%	34%	27%	18%

* Please see chapter 5 for the research design.

Table 24: Why are you unable to do more for others? (subgroups)*

	Total	Meaning is to help others (& life is not meaningless)		Current mood		Social trans-former		SocialMedia&Savvy		Prosocial behaviour scale			Empathy scale		
		no	yes	enjoyment	other	no	yes	no	yes	low	middle	high	low	middle	high
N	24.227	10.727	13.500	2.829	21.398	18.211	6.016	20.944	3.283	9.073	7.076	8.078	8.595	8.555	7.077
No time	37%	36%	38%	37%	37%	37%	36%	36%	42%	37%	37%	37%	36%	38%	37%
No energy	18%	19%	16%	14%	18%	18%	16%	17%	20%	20%	18%	15%	19%	18%	16%
No money	49%	47%	51%	45%	50%	48%	53%	48%	54%	47%	49%	51%	42%	51%	55%
Do not know how	18%	17%	19%	20%	18%	18%	20%	17%	25%	16%	19%	20%	15%	19%	21%
Doesn't make any difference	5%	8%	2%	5%	5%	6%	1%	5%	6%	7%	4%	4%	9%	4%	2%
I am not asked	8%	9%	7%	7%	8%	9%	5%	7%	10%	7%	8%	8%	9%	8%	7%
I simply forget	5%	6%	4%	5%	5%	5%	4%	5%	6%	6%	5%	5%	6%	5%	4%
I'm doing enough for others	17%	17%	17%	21%	16%	17%	16%	17%	16%	16%	17%	18%	19%	17%	16%
Other	7%	7%	7%	6%	7%	6%	10%	7%	5%	8%	7%	6%	7%	6%	8%

Table 25: Society is in danger because people are less concerned about each other nowadays (country)*

	Total	NL	US	ES	GB	FR	BE	CA	IT	DE	JP	AU	BR	MX	CH	IN	RU
N	24.227	1.738	1.327	1.598	2.016	1.704	1.599	1.741	1.088	1.698	2.358	1.927	1.092	1.179	1.071	1.109	982
Disagree completely	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%
Disagree	7%	11%	7%	8%	5%	7%	8%	7%	6%	8%	8%	6%	3%	5%	6%	6%	10%
Neutral	18%	24%	16%	17%	19%	21%	20%	19%	17%	20%	29%	19%	6%	10%	18%	13%	10%
Agree	48%	49%	43%	47%	49%	47%	47%	47%	47%	46%	49%	49%	42%	44%	55%	47%	59%
Agree completely	26%	14%	32%	26%	26%	24%	22%	26%	29%	24%	12%	25%	47%	40%	19%	33%	20%
Top box other	18%	24%	16%	17%	19%	21%	20%	19%	17%	20%	29%	19%	6%	10%	18%	13%	10%
Top 2 box	74%	63%	75%	73%	75%	71%	70%	73%	75%	70%	61%	74%	89%	84%	75%	80%	79%
Bottom 2 box	9%	13%	9%	10%	6%	9%	10%	9%	7%	10%	10%	7%	5%	6%	8%	7%	11%

* Please see chapter 5 for the research design.

1.14 Ways to give more?

There are many ways to support others beyond donating money to charity. Volunteering one's time or donating blood are well-known examples, but the field is much wider.

With so many ways of offering support, the opportunities for brands to take on a rewarding role are vast.

Robert S. Weiss explored these further means of support in his article, *The Provisions of Social Relationships*[24]:

- **Emotional Support:** This type of support often involves physical comfort such as hugs or pats on the back, as well as listening and empathizing. With emotional support, a friend or spouse might give you a big hug and listen to your problems, letting you know that they've felt the same way.
- **Esteem Support:** This type of social support is expressed through expressions of confidence or encouragement. Someone offering esteem support might point out the strengths you've forgotten you have, or just let you know that they believe in you.
- **Informational Support:** Those offering informational support do so in the form of advice-giving, or in gathering and sharing information.
- **Tangible Support:** Tangible support includes taking on responsibilities for someone else so they can deal with a problem or in other ways taking an active stance to help someone manage a problem they're experiencing. Someone who offers you tangible support may bring you dinner when you're sick, help you brainstorm solutions (rather than telling you what

you should do, as with informational support), or in other ways help you actively deal with the issue at hand.

Weiss's[23] examination of the basic social needs that people try to fulfill via relationships are also very inspirational to tap into:

- **Attachment:** A sense of emotional closeness and security, usually provided by a spouse or lover.
- **Social integration:** A sense of belonging to a group of people who share common interests and recreational activities, usually obtained from friends.
- **Reassurance of worth:** Acknowledgment of one's competence and skill, usually obtained by coworkers.
- **Reliable alliance:** The assurance that one can count on others for assistance under any circumstances, usually obtained from family members.
- **Guidance:** Advice and information, usually obtained from teachers, mentors or parent figures.
- **Opportunity for nurturance:** A sense of responsibility for the wellbeing of another, usually obtained from one's children.

Letsheal: There are a number of basic social needs that can be tapped into to help others

1.15 What to give and how?

At first, this might sound like a silly question. You may think, "I decide how and what to give, it's as simple as that." But there is more to it. After analyzing thousands of answers on the open questions from the survey, it appears that we all seem to share some universal rules that apply to giving, especially when we look at how others give. When we apply this to brands in chapter two we can give clear guidelines especially on what not to do.

With some liberties taken, today's ethics of giving shows a great correlation with the Golden Ladder of Charity. The Golden Ladder was developed by Moses Maimonides, a 12th century philosopher, doctor and academic who influenced both the western and Arabic world. The ladder will help us to categorize different types of helping and, in chapter two, will even help us to identify different types of Prosocial Brands.

It's amazing to see that the work of Maimonides from over 800 years ago still holds true today. The Golden Ladder of Charity not only specifies the types of help that one should give but also shines a light on how help can effect the self-image and esteem of the beneficiary.

Letsheal: the 12th century "Golden Ladder" about the moral aspects of giving are still valid and inspirational to brands that want to heal the world

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In 1826 Hyman Hurwitz described Maimonides' Golden Ladder[25] as follows:

There are eight degrees or steps, says Maimonides in the duty of charity. The first and lowest degree is to give, but with reluctance or regret. This is the gift of the hand, but not of the heart. The second is, to give cheerfully, but not proportionately to the distress of the sufferer.

The third is, to give cheerfully and proportionally, but not until we are solicited.

The fourth is, to give cheerfully, proportionally, and even unsolicited; but to put it in the poor man's hand: thereby exciting in him the painful emotion of shame.

The fifth is, to give charity in such a way that the distressed may receive the bounty, and know their benefactor, without their being known to him. Such was the conduct of some of our ancestors, who used to tie up money in the hind-corners of their cloaks, so that the poor might take it unperceived.

The sixth, which rises still higher, is to know the objects of our bounty, but remain unknown to them. Such was the conduct of those of our ancestors, who used to convey their charitable gifts into poor people's dwellings: taking care that their own persons and names should remain unknown.

The seventh is still more meritorious; namely, to bestow charity in such a way, that the benefactor may not know the relieved objects, nor they know the name of their benefactor. As was done by our charitable forefathers during the existence of the Temple. For there was in that holy building a place called the Chamber of Silence or Inostentation; wherein the good deposited secretly whatever their generous hearts suggested; and from which the most respectable poor families were maintained with equal secrecy.

Letsheal: There are 8 steps on the ladder of charity, but it's more important to take it one step at a time, than try to jump to the highest step at once

Lastly the eighth and the most meritorious of all, is to anticipate charity, by preventing poverty; namely, to assist the reduced brother, either by a considerable gift, or a loan of money, or by teaching him a trade, or by putting him in the way of business, so that he may earn an honest livelihood; and not be forced to the dreadful alternative of holding up his hand for charity. This is highest step and the summit of charity's Golden Ladder.

So, how can brands use these insights to grow their business while healing the world?

Letsheal: If 12th century philosopher Maimonides was a 21th century marketeer, he would hope that one day his Meaningful Prosocial Brand was no longer needed

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Chapter 2

Companies, brands and meaning

Chapter 2: Companies, brands and meaning

To recap the findings in chapter one:

- People have a desire to find meaning in their lives.
- Helping others has been proven as an effective source of meaning.
- People are empathic and recognize the needs of others.
- People want to do more for others than simply giving money.

This presents a tremendous opportunity for businesses and has a real potential to improve the world. Can you imagine what the positive effects would be if, say, the marketing budgets (an estimated US $450 billion for 2010 alone[4]) would be applied more prosocially? Global problems like poverty and hunger could be tackled, while, on the local level, real social improvements could be made.

Total Global Adspend, 1999 - 2008
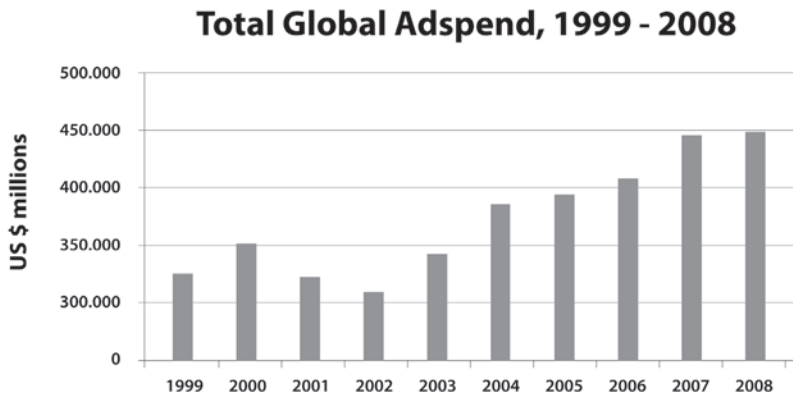
Figure 6. Global Adspend. Source Warc.com 2010

Letsheal: we spend US$450 billion on advertising a year. Imagine what would happen if it went toward healing the world

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What I like most about brands leading this charge is that their power goes beyond their financial capacities. Brands already operate as a hybrid of creative and marketing forces. If applied to societal needs, their influence could be even greater, as fulfilling unmet needs leads to growth in business.

This year I spoke with several CEOs of both big and smaller companies, in total responsible for around US $1 billion of advertising spending. What struck me was their immediate enthusiasm for increasing the prosocial footprint of brands.

At the moment prosocial activities are a side dish for most companies. What my research shows is that prosocial causes can be made the main course of your brand or even of your company. Of course there will be some new rules of the game if you were to follow my advice. But if applied carefully, your impact on the world and your business's growth could be significant.

Letsheal: Brands that lead this charge have power that goes beyond their financial capacities

2.1 Can and should brands help?

More than three-quarters (76%) of our respondents indicated that brands *should* support good causes, and if certain preconditions are met, the number of supporters jumps to 93% (table 27). Only 11% of the respondents indicate that brands are *not* allowed to support good causes. Again, if certain preconditons are met, this percentage drops to a tiny minority. See table 26. We will examine these preconditons later in the chapter.

The majority, 61% of respondents, stated that brands should be able to use good causes in their marketing. Again, with preconditions there is a shift among the group that disagrees or is neutral so this percentage could be as high as 90%.

In general, women are more receptive to brands that embrace good causes. There is also a correlation between higher levels of education and the willingness of an individual to react positively to Prosocial Brands. Regional differences were also present in these results; with 79% of people living in cities indicating that brands should support good causes compared to 67% in rural areas (again, these percentages will be higher when all preconditions are met).

Table 26: Companies and brands are not allowed to support good causes (country)*

	Total	NL	US	ES	GB	FR	BE	CA	IT	DE	JP	AU	BR	MX	CH	IN	RU
N	24.227	1.738	1.327	1.598	2.016	1.704	1.599	1.741	1.088	1.698	2.358	1.927	1.092	1.179	1.071	1.109	982
Disagree completely	26%	20%	39%	16%	25%	28%	28%	32%	26%	38%	22%	27%	33%	18%	25%	17%	26%
Disagree	42%	44%	40%	40%	42%	39%	40%	41%	38%	33%	47%	45%	44%	46%	41%	43%	58%
Neutral	20%	26%	15%	32%	25%	21%	22%	17%	19%	17%	25%	20%	13%	26%	14%	21%	10%
Agree	8%	7%	4%	9%	6%	8%	7%	6%	12%	8%	5%	6%	8%	7%	17%	14%	4%
Agree completely	3%	4%	2%	4%	2%	4%	3%	3%	4%	5%	1%	2%	3%	4%	3%	5%	2%
Top box other	20%	26%	15%	32%	25%	21%	22%	17%	19%	17%	25%	20%	13%	26%	14%	21%	10%
Top 2 box	11%	11%	6%	13%	8%	12%	10%	9%	16%	13%	6%	8%	11%	10%	20%	20%	6%
Bottom 2 box	69%	64%	79%	56%	67%	67%	68%	74%	64%	70%	69%	72%	76%	64%	66%	60%	84%

Table 27: Companies and brands should support good causes (country)*

	Total	NL	US	ES	GB	FR	BE	CA	IT	DE	JP	AU	BR	MX	CH	IN	RU
N	24.227	1.738	1.327	1.598	2.016	1.704	1.599	1.741	1.088	1.698	2.358	1.927	1.092	1.179	1.071	1.109	982
Disagree completely	2%	4%	1%	1%	1%	5%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Disagree	4%	11%	2%	1%	2%	9%	8%	1%	3%	3%	4%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%
Neutral	17%	34%	15%	18%	20%	21%	26%	17%	20%	15%	34%	19%	4%	8%	11%	8%	5%
Agree	49%	42%	52%	49%	53%	38%	45%	52%	52%	52%	50%	55%	43%	48%	60%	51%	62%
Agree completely	27%	10%	31%	31%	24%	27%	19%	29%	25%	28%	11%	24%	50%	43%	28%	39%	31%
Top box other	17%	34%	15%	18%	20%	21%	26%	17%	20%	15%	34%	19%	4%	8%	11%	8%	5%
Top 2 box	76%	51%	83%	80%	77%	65%	64%	81%	77%	80%	61%	79%	94%	91%	88%	90%	93%
Bottom 2 box	6%	14%	2%	2%	3%	14%	10%	2%	4%	5%	5%	3%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%

* Please see chapter 5 for the research design.

Table 28: Companies and brands are allowed to use good causes in their marketing (country)*

	Total	NL	US	ES	GB	FR	BE	CA	IT	DE	JP	AU	BR	MX	CH	IN	RU
N	24.227	1.738	1.327	1.598	2.016	1.704	1.599	1.741	1.088	1.698	2.358	1.927	1.092	1.179	1.071	1.109	982
Disagree completely	2%	9%	0%	1%	2%	3%	5%	2%	2%	3%	3%	1%	2%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Disagree	8%	23%	4%	5%	5%	6%	15%	5%	9%	8%	12%	6%	7%	7%	5%	5%	13%
Neutral	29%	32%	24%	36%	32%	39%	35%	28%	32%	23%	45%	32%	17%	23%	22%	17%	15%
Agree	48%	32%	53%	45%	50%	40%	37%	52%	45%	51%	35%	51%	53%	52%	60%	57%	60%
Agree completely	13%	5%	19%	12%	11%	13%	8%	13%	11%	15%	4%	11%	22%	18%	13%	21%	11%
Top box other	29%	32%	24%	36%	32%	39%	35%	28%	32%	23%	45%	32%	17%	23%	22%	17%	15%
Top 2 box	61%	36%	71%	58%	61%	53%	45%	64%	57%	66%	40%	61%	75%	69%	73%	78%	71%
Bottom 2 box	11%	31%	4%	6%	7%	9%	20%	8%	11%	10%	15%	7%	9%	8%	5%	5%	14%

Table 29: It would make sense to buy a brand that supports good causes instead of brands that don't (country)*

	Total	NL	US	ES	GB	FR	BE	CA	IT	DE	JP	AU	BR	MX	CH	IN	RU
N	24.227	1.738	1.327	1.598	2.016	1.704	1.599	1.741	1.088	1.698	2.358	1.927	1.092	1.179	1.071	1.109	982
Disagree completely	2%	5%	1%	2%	2%	3%	3%	1%	1%	3%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Disagree	7%	16%	4%	5%	5%	7%	11%	4%	4%	6%	8%	4%	3%	3%	8%	4%	12%
Neutral	27%	44%	24%	23%	28%	32%	39%	26%	26%	28%	43%	24%	11%	16%	37%	17%	14%
Agree	47%	30%	50%	49%	49%	45%	35%	50%	49%	47%	41%	54%	49%	47%	45%	54%	58%
Agree completely	17%	5%	20%	21%	16%	13%	11%	19%	19%	17%	5%	16%	36%	33%	9%	24%	16%
Top box other	27%	44%	24%	23%	28%	32%	39%	26%	26%	28%	43%	24%	11%	16%	37%	17%	14%
Top 2 box	64%	35%	71%	70%	65%	58%	46%	69%	68%	63%	47%	70%	85%	80%	54%	78%	73%
Bottom 2 box	8%	21%	5%	7%	7%	10%	14%	5%	5%	9%	10%	5%	4%	4%	9%	5%	13%

* Please see chapter 5 for the research design.

2.2 Will it help my business?

In general we could say yes! Close to two-thirds (64% of those surveyed) stated that it makes sense to buy Prosocial Brands over brands that are not. In countries where there was less enthusiasm, but from the open answers, it appears that this has less to do with brands being prosocial but more with a fear of being misled. Later in this chapter we will take a closer look at the subject of trust.

For people who chose "helping others" as their main meaning in life, we see an even greater support for Prosocial Brands: around 72%. Women tended to be more responsive than men (68% versus 61%) and the same goes for people living in urban areas (68%) versus people in rural areas (61%).

Earlier, we mentioned that individuals savvy with social media tended to be more prosocial in real life. They do more volunteer work, offer seats in crowded places, lend stuff to others, give directions et cetera. It is also the case that people active on social networks are more likely to buy Prosocial Brands than people who are not. Almost three out of four (72%) of the social media savvy prefer to buy Prosocial Brands instead of the 61% of people less engaged in social media.

Those savvy with social media also tend to prefer working for a Prosocial company (81%) more than most (61%). The social media savvy also indicate that they are more willing to do more for others (80% versus 55%). They are also a group that cannot be fooled with fake 'good' intentions. 64% think they can "recognize companies and brands faking good intentions when it comes down to supporting good causes, whilst they only try to sell more products."

Letsheal: People active on social media prefer buying Prosocial Brands. Interesting also from a communication perspective

It may feel like it makes sense to promote Prosocial Brands via social media, but please keep in mind *only* 13% of the population can be labelled as social media savvy. It is clear, however, that Prosocial Brands can benefit more from social networks than ordinary brands.

A second and larger group that I find interesting is one that we labeled earlier as Social Transformers, making up 25% of the population. These are the hardcore altruists, those who showed themselves to be intrinsically motivated to help others no matter who and where they are, asking nothing in return for themselves. Their extreme drive to help others is also reflected in their above average empathic abilities and prosocial behavior.

The vast majority (78%) of this group states that it makes sense to buy Prosocial Brands over ordinary brands. This groups consists of 58% women and is mostly middle aged (>35 years). Their enthusiasm is above average when it comes to Prosocial Brands and companies, but they also tend to be more cautious and, I suspect, a bit more critical. For instance, 86% believe that when brands use good causes in their marketing, it's important that an independent organization monitors the brand's true intentions and effectiveness in supporting the cause. Since Social Transformers have highest standards, it would be wise to use them as a reference group.

Letsheal: Social Transformers, the most altruistic people on earth, set high standards for brands that support good causes

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2.3 Prosocial Brand categories

A meaningful brand is prosocial by definition, but a Prosocial Brand isn't necessarily meaningful. A cow is an animal, but an animal isn't necessarily a cow. Brands (or the company behind the brand) can be prosocial in many ways; almost all brands do *something* prosocially. After making the connection between living a meaningful life and helping others, it makes sense to interpret *Meaningful* Prosocial Brands as brands that facilitate consumers to help others, ideally with more than simply money. Developing these brands can be a huge challenge, but can also be very rewarding.

Confusing? Probably, but from the open-answer questions of the research study, I was able to categorize and label the different types of Prosocial Brands. Each category has its own merits, do's and dont's, as well as a number of real-world examples. Here, however, I've tried to keep the number of examples to a minimum. This may sound a bit strange, but while presenting this information at advertising festivals in Cannes and Amsterdam, I found that people can potentially get hung up on examples, missing the larger point. I therefore decided to skip most of the examples and, instead, focus on the building blocks that can go into creating your own Prosocial Brand.

An excellent resource for assessing brands and judging the impact of their prosocial activities is an initiative called Brandkarma, the world's first brand-centric social media platform. Brandkarma was founded and personally funded by Craig Davis (chief creative officer at Publicis Mojo Australia).

Its mission is straightforward, "to help everyone make better brand choices and influence brand behavior for good."

Letsheal: Prosocial Brands: brands that do good. Meaningful Prosocial Brands: brands that also facilitate others to do good.

It's designed to bring together important information about how brands behave, so that people can easily evaluate and rate them. The goal is to make brand owners more accountable to all their stakeholders – Customers, Employees, Suppliers, Investors and the Planet. Please go to Brandkarma.com and find out for yourself.
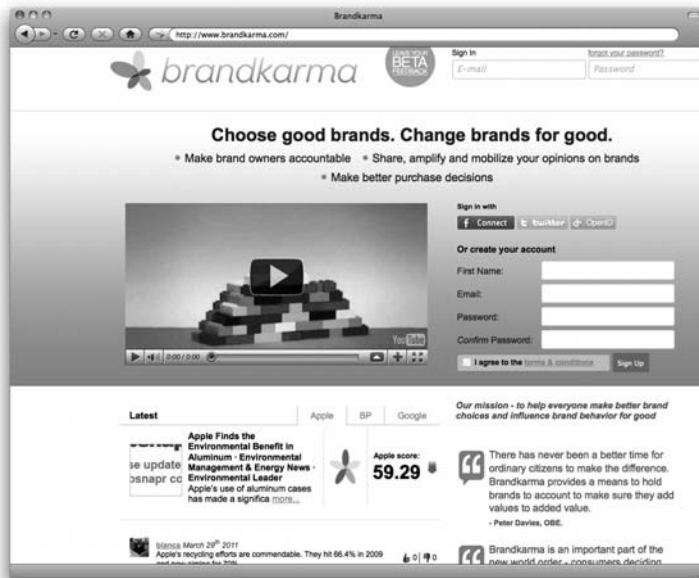
Figure 7. Brandkarma.com

Broadly, I see two main categorizations of brands that embrace good causes:

Prosocial Brands, brands that do good without active target group participation and **Meaningful Prosocial Brands** where the target group is active and engaged with the prosocial activities. It's no secret that I'm especially interested in Meaningful Prosocial Brands

Letsheal: Want to know the perceived level of your brand's meaning? Or get inspired by other brands? Take a look at Brandkarma.com

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in particular, because rather than just helping others, they facilitate their consumers to help others and in doing this, they can mobilize a large force for good. These brands can, in turn, help their customers fulfill an important need: our need to live a meaningful life.

Below I have broken down the different Prosocial Brandtypes. Before we continue, I would like to point out that this categorization is somewhat arbitrary, with a great deal of overlap and hybrid forms possible. But, since respondents from the study were quite clear when giving their opinion on brands, I based this breakdown on their input.

Prosocial Brands:
- Responsible Prosocial Brands
- Donating Prosocial Brands
- Prosocial Service Brands

Meaningful Prosocial Brands (MPBS):
- Aimed at fund raising
- Beyond fund raising

Let's start with the Prosocial Brands.

Responsible Prosocial Brands
These brands try to limit their footprint on all fronts, from the production process to product usage. From the open answers I'm under the impression that most of us expect brands and companies to act responsibly. Unfortunately with low industry standards and profit as a singular goal, our expectations often go unmet. For certain industries, a simple move toward greater responsibility is a

Letsheal: Responsibility is the bare minimum for a brand to be prosocial

logical first step (think the auto industry and their investment in hybrid technology). This category, however, is not the main focus of this publication.

Donating Prosocial Brands

These brands donate money or offer voluntary activity to aid the needy or for general social betterment. Most brands participate in this type of prosocial activity, but, as we will discuss later, it's a best bet to avoid using this information for marketing or promotional purposes.

Prosocial Service Brands

In this case, the brand offers a free service closely related to their business for free to the community (not only to their clients).

And the second category:

Meaningful Prosocial Brands (MPBS)

This type comes in two forms.

- Aimed at fund raising
- Beyond fund raising

In this category of Prosocial Brands, marketing power is used to solve social issues together with their target group. There are two types of meaningful Prosocial Brands. The ones that use their marketing power to raise funds for good causes, and the brands that go beyond fund raising, enabling their target group to participate with more than money.

Letsheal: Meaningful Prosocial Brands can use their marketing power to raise funds for good causes or enable their target group to participate with more than money

2.4 Donating Prosocial Brands

Every year brands donate billions to charity, in money and products. It's the traditional way of doing good.

Figure 8. Ad in Wallpaper Magazine December 2010

In most cases, these types of charitable contributions are not featured in a brand's marketing and advertising, causing these efforts to go largely unnoticed by consumers. For a number of reasons, I consider that a good thing (please see the 'warnings' later in this chapter). I regularly see causes supported due to the personal interests of the management/ownership than anything else. In these situations, it usually makes more sense to start a 'personal' foundation. A good model of this is the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (gatesfoundation.org).

Bill and Melinda Gates' reputation as effective fundraisers reached such legendary proportions that, last September, there were reports of billionaires avoiding dinners hosted by the Gates for fear of being buttonholed for donations to charity!

Letsheal: Donating is good; featuring it in advertising is not

2.5 Prosocial Service Brands

Here, a free service is offered to the community. Once a brand is serving more people outside of their target market, the initiative has gone beyond the 'ordinary' service marketing. A mobile phone manufacturer, for instance, who offers a recharging service for any brand for free at airports is a good example of service marketing. However this does not make it a prosocial company, because the benefit will still be mainly for the sales target demographic. The example below comes from an initiative led by Toyota to place traffic signs in rural Africa, where otherwise no signs would be. This constituted a service to the whole community, not limited to Toyota drivers.

Figure 9. Road sign in Ghana. Photograph by Bas Vlugt

The good thing about these prosocial examples is that you can relate to the feeling of doing good by using these brands. But there is a type of category that offers a bigger level of participation. Since we saw in the prior chapter how critical our collective need to live a meaningful life is, this category deserves particular attention.

Letsheal: Toyota placing traffic signs in Ghana: a good example of a Prosocial Service Brand

2.6 Meaningful Prosocial Brands

After studying a number of examples, I've split this category into two types of Meaningful Prosocial Brands: brands that fund raise by donating a percentage of the sales of a product or service and brands that go beyond and offer a greater level of participation, enabling people to do more than give money.

Typically in these cases, the cause will be used in marketing, which is usually a positive thing as it raises awareness for the cause. Where the brands vary is at the level of commitment. There are examples where cause-related targets are linked to the brands' marketing for the long-term. For example, Pampers (diapers) has committed itself to ridding the world of tetanus by the year 2013 and has made the issue key to its brand. This has required an enormous effort on both the marketing front and in engagement with the cause.

Figure 10. Pampers and UNICEF *Campaign*

On the other hand there are numerous short-term or one-off campaigns, which may prove effective as sales promotions, but in the end, neither build real brand equity nor benefit the cause in the long-term. While of course there's nothing wrong with making money from a successful campaign, a brand attempting to exploit a cause for financial gain could be putting their integrity into question. This is best avoided.

Letsheal: Good illustration of a Meaningful Prosocial Brand: Pampers cooperating with UNICEF to eradicate tetanus by the year 2013

MPBS beyond fund raising

These brands offer a level of participation that goes further than donating money associated with purchasing. These brands, in the most fundamental ways, try to solve a social issue together with their target group. The marketing facilitates the group to do more than simply transfer money. These brands fulfill an important need within both the target group and the community as a whole. The number of brands doing this is still fairly small, mainly due to the amount of creativity needed to engage a target group in such a way. With the right balance, however, there can be enormous positive outcomes for both causes and brands. The magic really happens when a brand's marketing is able to leverage an individual's contribution to meaningful action. If the brand's effort is core to its operations, it should also satisfy any questions over the brand's motivation.

Pampers, for example, added a level of participation to their "1 Pack = 1 Vaccine" campaign. Through the Pampers Big Kiss campaign, anyone can be part of the global movement to help eliminate maternal and newborn tetanus, simply by sending a "virtual goodnight kiss" with the click of a mouse. For every kiss sent, Pampers will make an additional donation to UNICEF. In Chapter three I will show how to build Meaningful Prosocial Brands and illustrate in more detail with another example.

Another very recent example is Google's People Finder, an initiative from Google Crisis Response. The goal of People Finder is to make critical information more accessible in the aftermath of natural disasters and humanitarian crises such as hurricanes and earthquakes. This service became an invaluable tool to the many displaced in the wake of the Japanese Tsunami. Google also rou-

Letsheal: Meaningful Prosocial Brands that enable target groups to do more can really take off

tinely posts critical information on its main search page, as it did with tsunami warnings as the disaster was taking place. Of course these applications only work if people participate.
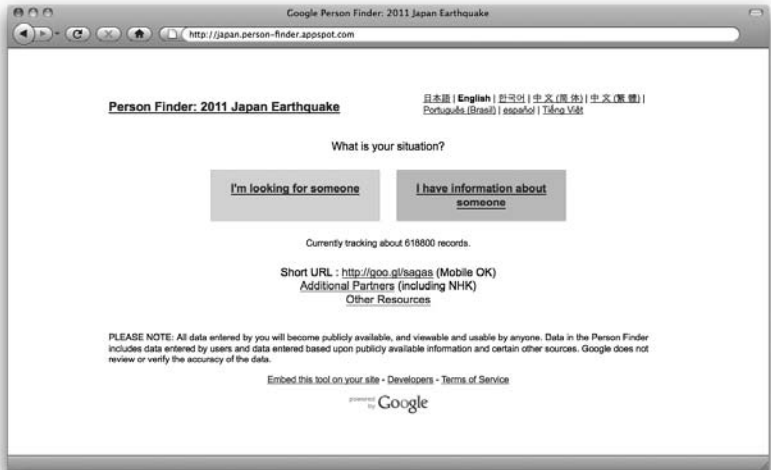
Figure 11. Google Crisis Response: Person Finder

2.7 The Social Business Enterprise

For most companies, attempts to make their brands more prosocial or even meaningful are regularly part of marketing operations. One could, however, take it a step further and either transform entirely or start a new company that has a core social purpose in mind right from the outset.

The Nobel Prize-winning Bangladeshi economist Muhammad Yunus (founder of the Grameen Bank, an institution that provides microcredit to the poor) named this category: Social Business Enterprise (SBE). The basic factor determining whether a company can be considered a SBE depends on whether its social goals remain primary to its business objectives, and if these goals are clearly reflected in its decisions. I personally believe that these types of businesses have a great future ahead of them. In many ways, an SBE combines the best of both worlds; the social power of NGOs with a clear and focused business mindset.

Dr. Philip Kotler, Hermawan Kartajaya and Iwan Setiawan share a few excellent examples and clear assessments of SBEs in their book, *Marketing 3.0*[26]. Kotler et al. have created a framework for measuring the success of an SBE in relation to strengthening the economic foundation of their communities.

Below are three examples that Kotler et al. shared in their book. A standout example is Unilever's Annapurna affordable iodized salt. Before the product was widely available, 30% of children under five in Africa had iodine deficiency disorder due to the consumption of cheaper non-iodized salt. In Bangladesh, telecoms company Grameenphone used US $812 million of its profits to create around 250,000 new income-generating opportunities which primarily

Letsheal: Social Business Enterprises have a core social purpose

benefited women living in rural areas." One of the interesting outcomes was that the success of their technological growth led to rural farmers having better access to information on prices, allowing them be more competitive, thus further reducing poverty. Another great example is the One Laptop per Child initiative (laptop.org). They estimate up to two million elementary school children in 31 countries including Peru, Afghanistan, Mongolia and Ethiopia are using laptops provided by the project.

While SBEs are not new, they've garnered a great deal of attention lately, especially as a driving economic force in less developed countries. But, this type of business can also succeed in western countries. Take, for example, the famous Spanish lottery, ONCE. Spain's National Organisation for the Blind was founded in the 1930s and focuses its activities on improving the quality of life for people with blindness or severe visual impairment. ONCE and its Foundation employs over 125,000 workers, and in 2009, it reached the milestone of helping 100,000 disabled individuals. ONCE and its Foundation have invested almost €1 billion in social action, largely in the fields of education, employment, rehabilitation, accessible technology, removing barriers and solidarity with other disabilities.

I can imagine business leaders thinking, "Thanks for the information, but my company has no presence in developing countries, and I can't see how my company could become a Social Business Enterprise." Of course, a company cannot instantly become an SBE overnight, but change starts when a company finds ways to make its brands more prosocial.

Aspects of the Social Business Enterprise can be added as modules to just about any business.

Letsheal: Social Business Enterprises are not only found in developing countries but also in western countries. Take ONCE, the lottery, investing €1 billion in social action

Figure 12. Lady Selling ONCE Tickets by Christophe Dune

The Social Business Enterprise Module

When I received my first results from preliminary studies in 2009, I wondered how companies would react. I went on a brief tour and spoke with a number of CEOs of small and large businesses. For them, the concept of Prosocial Brands was a no-brainer. Let's face it, who would not want to embrace the idea of more sales and a better world? It did, however, become a bit more challenging for these CEOs to actually imagine their companies as a Social Business Enterprise. Many could not look past the number of radical changes that would need to take place in order to thoroughly transform their business entirely into an SBE.

But, moving in a prosocial direction can be relatively easy, by creating meaningful individual Prosocial Brands. After that, implementing elements of an SBE into the core company can be introduced in smaller, logical steps.

On tour, I visited executives at a large European bank. The bank has quietly become one of the most influential microfinancing organizations in the world. The bank had no intention to turn

Letsheal: Converting an existing company into a Social Business Enterprise is possible

its microfinance division into a profitable one, but, rather, they see it as their responsibility to help people build businesses, especially in emerging economies. It was decided that their involvement in third world microfinance should not be included in their advertising, keeping their good deeds and public face separate. But, in doing so, they've also kept their customers out of the equation, missing an excellent opportunity for engagement.

Factoring in our collective search for meaning unlocks a great deal of potential. Looking back at the example, with the knowledge that an individual bank customer likely has the desire to help others, why not link their checking/savings accounts with the microfinance investments? Why not give the customers the ability to participate in and interact with the brand's good work?

Now, consider the business you're in: How could you make your products and/or service more prosocial? There is clearly a need. How to transform an existing company into a SBE, step by step, is an interesting field for new research. Anyone?

2.8 24,000 WARNINGS

In section 1.15 we discussed Maimonides' wonderful Ladder of Charity. He described a continuum of charity, which ranged from:

1. *To give, but with reluctance of regret.* This is the gift of the hand, but not of the heart.
2. *To give cheerfully, but not proportionately to the distress of the sufferer.*

and skipping ahead…

8. *To anticipate charity by preventing poverty*; namely, to assist a reduced brother/sister so that he/she may earn an honest livelihood and not be forced to the dreadful alternative of holding up his/her hand for charity.

It's amazing to see here that his thoughts on giving from so long ago can still offer insight on today's morality. Equally amazing, as the results from the study began to trickle in, it became clear that individuals from 16 countries surveyed are still offering the same advice to Prosocial Brands.

So, please, take their advice and heed their warning: don't act prosocially as a marketing trick. In the end, brands that act prosocially out of opportunism or greed will only make action more difficult for the honest players.

Before we zoom in on the different types of Prosocial Brands and specific warnings, let's consider the common denominator for success: take your prosocial role seriously and *do it from the heart*.

Letsheal: The warnings given to Prosocial Brands by 24,000 people today are almost identical to those from eight centuries back

If this still seems too vague, it means that the effects of a Prosocial Brand should be:

- Measurable
- Big (cannot be achieved without considerable effort)
- Transparent
- Fundamental to business goals (the prosocial goals should not only be in a marketing plan, but also part of the company's annual report)

Matthias Stausberg, UN Global Compact, Head of Public Affairs & Media Relations and Spokesperson added an important precondition for success: "It's important to understand that any value this brings to the brand can be easily undermined by questionable business practices. Being prosocial not only means to be generous in spending your money, but also to be responsible in how you make it."

Now let's take a look at some specific warnings for "wannabe" Prosocial Brands:

Warning to: Responsible Prosocial Brands

Building a Responsible Prosocial Brand is difficult. Responsibility should be standard practice and fully transparent. Bragging about responsibility in advertising evokes reactions like: *"Yes of course you're responsible otherwise you would be criminals!"* Only in cases where industry standards are particularly low, could this be a viable option. Even then, I would advise businesses to attach a major, long-term goal to its "responsibility"; a dream not only for the business, but also for the industry as a whole. Otherwise, it's best to avoid using such claims in marketing activities other than in disclaimers.

Letsheal: Warning to Responsible Prosocial Brands: Don't brag about responsibility. It should be standard practice

Warning to: Donating Prosocial Brands

Building a brand that donates money, products or people to a good cause without actively involving the brand's target group will likely earn the reaction: *"good for you."* If you're trying to be prosocial solely via charitable donations, it is best to avoid patting yourself on the back with advertising your donation; but rather, to make the contribution so significant that the overwhelmed recipient will publicize their gratitude. With luck, this could become a big story with a greater impact than any marketing campaign. This, too, would represent the higher rung on Maimonides' Ladder. Would you dare to give something, even with the possibility of getting nothing back in return?

Warning to: Prosocial Service Brands

Brands that offer free services to the community must make an effort to ensure their services are as accessible as possible. Marketeers and advertisers are specialists in making small things appear larger-than-life in the media. But, if the goal is honest prosocial action and building brand equity, the services must be available to as many as possible.

Warning to: Meaningful Prosocial Brands

One of the easiest ways to make a brand both prosocial *and* meaningful is by utilizing the simple mechanism of associating the purchase of a product with a prosocial end. This is something con-

Letsheal: Warning to Donating Prosocial Brands: Avoid patting yourself on the back for it. Rather make the contribution so significant, that it's news

sumers instantly recognize and it's a very easy way of satisfying the desire for meaning.

In the end it's a beautiful mechanism; it can be a quick way to collect money for a good cause, whilst the marketing activities also help to promote it. But in all its simplicity, this method also runs the risk of exploiting the cause for sales. Since it will almost always lead to higher sales, it can be easily misused. I personally begin to doubt the intentions of a brand if they're supporting an unknown cause or if the amount donated is fairly small.

Figure 13. Fundraising with small amount and unclear goal.

2.9 Fake intentions

One might expect people to instantly be able to recognize a brand that tries to exploit good causes for financial gain, but the research showed this isn't really the case. A clear indicator to me would be if a brand touted its work towards the advance of a good cause while, in reality, only donating a small sum of money. But even this obvious sign of fake intentions tended to go unreported with the frequency I expected.

Only 35% (40% of the men and 30% of the women) of respondents had faith in their own ability to instantly tell if a brand or company is attempting to misuse a good cause simply to sell products. Regarding age, the younger they are, the better they claim to be able to know when brands and companies misuse good causes in marketing. At the same time, 56% of people believe they've seen companies faking good intentions. My conclusion here is that people can't really put their finger on how to judge a brand's intentions, but somehow, they can sense it when they aren't sincere. Please see tables 30 and 31 on the next page.

Table 30: I know instantly when brands and companies misuse good causes to sell products (country)*

	Total	NL	US	ES	GB	FR	BE	CA	IT	DE	JP	AU	BR	MX	CH	IN	RU
N	24.227	1.738	1.327	1.598	2.016	1.704	1.599	1.741	1.088	1.698	2.358	1.927	1.092	1.179	1.071	1.109	982
Disagree completely	3%	3%	6%	3%	4%	3%	2%	4%	4%	5%	4%	4%	4%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Disagree	19%	20%	29%	15%	24%	17%	17%	24%	16%	22%	23%	26%	22%	10%	6%	14%	19%
Neutral	42%	50%	42%	44%	46%	46%	50%	45%	48%	47%	56%	45%	24%	31%	37%	33%	27%
Agree	28%	21%	18%	29%	22%	27%	24%	20%	26%	19%	14%	20%	40%	43%	48%	41%	45%
Agree completely	7%	5%	5%	10%	5%	7%	6%	6%	6%	8%	3%	5%	11%	14%	7%	11%	9%
Top box other	42%	50%	42%	44%	46%	46%	50%	45%	48%	47%	56%	45%	24%	31%	37%	33%	27%
Top 2 box	35%	26%	23%	39%	27%	34%	30%	26%	32%	27%	17%	25%	50%	57%	55%	52%	53%
Bottom 2 box	22%	23%	35%	18%	28%	20%	20%	29%	20%	26%	27%	29%	25%	12%	8%	15%	19%

Table 31: I see many companies and brands faking good intentions when comes down to supporting good causes, whilst they only try to sell more products (country)*

	Total	NL	US	ES	GB	FR	BE	CA	IT	DE	JP	AU	BR	MX	CH	IN	RU
N	24.227	1.738	1.327	1.598	2.016	1.704	1.599	1.741	1.088	1.698	2.358	1.927	1.092	1.179	1.071	1.109	982
Disagree completely	1%	1%	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Disagree	9%	6%	13%	6%	9%	5%	6%	10%	6%	8%	13%	10%	10%	8%	5%	6%	19%
Neutral	35%	40%	41%	32%	44%	33%	38%	40%	31%	35%	55%	41%	16%	23%	25%	29%	25%
Agree	41%	41%	33%	43%	35%	42%	42%	37%	45%	39%	26%	38%	49%	46%	54%	48%	44%
Agree completely	14%	11%	11%	18%	11%	19%	14%	12%	17%	16%	5%	11%	24%	22%	15%	16%	11%
Top box other	35%	40%	41%	32%	44%	33%	38%	40%	31%	35%	55%	41%	16%	23%	25%	29%	25%
Top 2 box	56%	52%	43%	61%	46%	60%	55%	49%	62%	55%	31%	48%	73%	69%	69%	64%	55%
Bottom 2 box	10%	8%	15%	7%	10%	6%	7%	12%	8%	10%	14%	11%	11%	9%	5%	7%	19%

* Please see chapter 5 for the research design.

Rules of thumb for success

A fundraising Meaningful Prosocial Brand can be built successfully when respecting the following rules of thumb to avoid being accused of fake intentions:

- Set and share an ambitious goal. Not only the amount of money to be raised but also how the money contributes to the solution. (Think Pampers: We can get rid of tetanus by the year 2013. Every pack of diapers you buy equals one vaccination). It would make sense for these goals to also be a part of the business plan.
- Make the contribution significant per package. At least 10% of the price should be donated.
- Link the brand in a fundamental way to good causes.
- Your brand should establish a mutually beneficial relationship with good causes.
- Advertising should go beyond trying to sell products. Advertising should also give room to the cause.
- All aspects of the promotions and donations should be transparent and measurable. And, please, don't forget to share the positive results!

Another good idea from the respondents

We are living in an era where interpersonal trust is at an all time low. Governments, NGOs, and companies all receive low marks on perceived trust. Trust must be taken seriously, as the concept of 'meaning' in many ways requires an intrinsic trust in humanity. This being the case, honesty, integrity and transparency require more emphasis than what we see in normal marketing.

Letsheal: Make the brand's contribution significant

I tend not to believe people who say, "just trust me," and start immediately looking for the catch. Or, as Jeffrey Gitomer in his *Little Teal Book of Trust*[27] put it, "The reason you have to say 'Trust me!' is that you haven't earned it and are forced to ask for it – bad move."

This thinking was also reflected in the outcome of the research. 74% of the respondents (81% of respondents whose meaning in life is helping others) stated that they'd like to see an independent organization established to monitor companies' intentions and effectiveness. Only 35% of the respondents think they can recognize fake intentions, but 56% think they are being misled by companies faking good intentions. Trust is at stake here, especially for those companies who are actually sincere. That being said, it might not be a bad idea to safeguard people's trust with the help of an independent organization. To achieve trust, it is critical that businesses be transparent with their objectives regarding a cause they support. To help maintain this transparency, a business could work with an independent advisory board consisting of high-profile, trustworthy people or involve a national consumer group. For ambitious worldwide initiatives, I can even imagine the United Nations Global Compact division playing a rewarding role. (Table 32).

Table 32: When brands support good causes and use it in their marketing, it's important for me that an independent organization watches their real intentions and effectiveness in supporting the cause.*

	Total	NL	US	ES	GB	FR	BE	CA	IT	DE	JP	AU	BR	MX	CH	IN	RU
N	24.227	1.738	1.327	1.598	2.016	1.704	1.599	1.741	1.088	1.698	2.358	1.927	1.092	1.179	1.071	1.109	982
Disagree completely	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%
Disagree	3%	4%	4%	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%	7%	3%	3%	2%	1%	2%	6%
Neutral	22%	27%	28%	22%	26%	24%	24%	26%	18%	19%	48%	25%	11%	13%	13%	14%	11%
Agree	49%	49%	51%	49%	48%	48%	47%	49%	45%	48%	38%	48%	53%	47%	60%	53%	55%
Agree completely	25%	19%	18%	26%	23%	24%	25%	20%	34%	28%	6%	22%	33%	37%	25%	31%	27%
Top box other	22%	27%	26%	22%	26%	24%	24%	26%	18%	19%	48%	25%	11%	13%	13%	14%	11%
Top 2 box	74%	67%	69%	75%	71%	72%	72%	69%	79%	76%	44%	70%	86%	85%	85%	84%	82%
Bottom 2 box	4%	6%	5%	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	8%	4%	4%	2%	1%	2%	7%

	Total	Gender		Age				Has Child(ren)		Education			
		Man	Woman	16-17	up to 34	35-54	>54	no	yes	low	middle	high	unknown
N	24.227	12.370	11.854	764	9.406	10.129	3.927	13.911	10.316	2.057	9.069	10.034	3.067
Disagree completely	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Disagree	3%	4%	3%	6%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	5%	3%	3%	3%
Neutral	22%	23%	21%	35%	24%	20%	19%	22%	22%	28%	24%	21%	15%
Agree	49%	47%	51%	35%	46%	51%	54%	49%	48%	45%	48%	50%	53%
Agree completely	25%	25%	25%	21%	26%	25%	23%	25%	25%	21%	24%	25%	28%
Top box other	22%	23%	21%	35%	24%	20%	19%	22%	22%	28%	24%	21%	15%
Top 2 box	74%	72%	76%	56%	72%	76%	77%	74%	74%	66%	72%	75%	80%
Bottom 2 box	4%	5%	3%	9%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	6%	4%	4%	4%

	Total	Urbanisation level				
		rural	residential	suburban	city	unknown
N	24.227	2.719	2.623	3.322	4.241	11.322
Disagree completely	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Disagree	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	4%
Neutral	22%	22%	20%	23%	18%	24%
Agree	49%	49%	50%	49%	51%	48%
Agree completely	25%	26%	26%	24%	28%	23%
Top box other	22%	22%	20%	23%	18%	24%
Top 2 box	74%	75%	76%	73%	79%	71%
Bottom 2 box	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	5%

	Total	Meaning is to help others (& life is not meaningless)		Current mood		Social transformer		SocialMediaSavvy		Prosocial behaviour scale			Empathy scale		
		no	yes	enjoyment	other	no	yes	no	yes	low	middle	high	low	middle	high
N	24.227	10.727	13.500	2.829	21.398	18.211	6.016	20.944	3.283	9.073	7.076	8.078	8.595	8.555	7.077
Disagree completely	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%
Disagree	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	4%	2%	3%	2%	4%	3%	3%	5%	2%	2%
Neutral	22%	30%	16%	20%	22%	26%	11%	23%	16%	28%	19%	18%	37%	18%	10%
Agree	49%	43%	53%	50%	49%	47%	54%	49%	50%	47%	51%	49%	43%	60%	43%
Agree completely	25%	21%	28%	26%	25%	22%	32%	24%	31%	20%	25%	30%	12%	20%	44%
Top box other	22%	30%	16%	20%	22%	26%	11%	23%	16%	28%	19%	18%	37%	18%	10%
Top 2 box	74%	64%	81%	76%	74%	69%	86%	73%	81%	67%	76%	79%	55%	79%	87%
Bottom 2 box	4%	6%	3%	4%	4%	5%	2%	4%	3%	5%	4%	3%	7%	3%	3%

* Please see chapter 5 for the research design.

2.10 Great side effects for stakeholders

Besides the positive effects on society and business, a Prosocial Brand is one that people are more enthusiastic to work for and with. In the summer of 2009, I was overwhelmed by a performance by John Zorn, the American composer, alto saxophonist and conceptualist, at the North Sea Jazz Festival.

Figure 14. John Zorn Cobra by William Veerbeek

I have never seen so much joy, concentration, companionship, freedom and inspiration at the same moment. Take a look at a video of John Zorn Cobra[28] and note the way the orchestra interacts with each other; the way this particular combo is being led

Letsheal: Prosocial Brands and companies not only affect sales and society positively, but employees and other stakeholders as well

is very special. After the concert, I asked John whether he had any thoughts on how his way of conducting could be applied to the management of businesses. Many workplaces are full of vibrant energy, with team-members playing off of each other, but can people in business interact with the same dynamic as these musicians? John Zorn was quite clear on this:

> Accomplishing such things in the world outside of artistic creativity is hard... even within it! Because we share a deep and abiding respect for the eternal spirit of creativity, as experienced in art, we are part of, and believe in, a continuum much BIGGER than ourselves… this binds us in a common quest... also, dedication to an instrument is a helpful and humbling discipline for the individual...
>
> In business, it's always seemed to me that money gets confused as an end in itself (think Bernie Madoff), rather than a tool to achieve a personal vision... one that ultimately (if not immediately) makes the world a better place...
>
> And, we are not talking entertainment here... no pandering to the masses... but education and spiritual uplift ... transcendence. That may sound crazy considering the sound of the music we make... but music is not about sound, it is about people... and ultimately it is about love and respect...

Zorn believes the same energy present in music can be released in business, that is, if a company is willing to set its goals beyond making money. These higher goals not only offer marketing and world-healing prospects, but could also have a positive effect on employees and internal relations as well. Current staff-members will enjoy renewed energy while, at the same time, it will become

easier to attract better, more highly motivated candidates. The research shows that Meaningful Prosocial Brands can count on a higher-than-average interest in recruitment.

Almost 70% of the people surveyed would prefer to work for a prosocial company (in the questionnaire such a company is described as "a company that embraces good causes"). People with higher income, and a stunning 81% of the social-media savvy, would prefer to work for a company that embraces good causes. Those on the cutting edge of social-media are a particularly appealing group to have on-board, as they function as a PR-machine, without the need to run a campaign. Please see table 33 on the next page.

A big advantage of making meaning primary to your organization is the ability to turn "chronos" into "kairos." Let me explain: the ancient Greeks had two words for time, ***chronos,*** referring to simple chronological time, and ***kairos***, the less quantitative time in which something special happens. Kairos is the time where life is truly experienced, time that doesn't slip through your fingers. If your organization can offer *kairos* as working-hours, employees won't feel like working is only to make a living, but instead, to live a significant life. And *kairos*-time is exactly what meaningful organizations offer, because each job is part of larger, meaningful goals.

For the organization as a whole, an honest push to make the world a better place will improve relations with other stakeholders in the chain. Created due to investor demand, the Dow Jones Sustainability Index, is a measure of sustainability initiatives (including social). As of November 2010, Dow Jones Sustainability World Enlarged Index has tracked the performance of 20% of the most sustainable companies of the 2,500 largest companies in the Dow Jones Global Total Stock Market Index.

Letsheal: 70% of people would prefer to work for a meaningful prosocial company

Table 33: I would prefer to work for a company that embraces good causes*

	Total	NL	US	ES	GB	FR	BE	CA	IT	DE	JP	AU	BR	MX	CH	IN	RU
N	24.227	1.738	1.327	1.598	2.016	1.704	1.599	1.741	1.088	1.698	2.358	1.927	1.092	1.179	1.071	1.109	982
Disagree completely	2%	5%	1%	1%	2%	3%	2%	1%	1%	2%	3%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Disagree	4%	12%	1%	4%	3%	6%	7%	1%	2%	4%	9%	2%	1%	3%	1%	3%	3%
Neutral	26%	46%	19%	24%	30%	32%	43%	22%	23%	29%	55%	25%	8%	15%	17%	13%	12%
Agree	47%	30%	50%	48%	47%	44%	37%	52%	52%	46%	29%	53%	48%	47%	63%	51%	62%
Agree completely	21%	7%	28%	24%	18%	15%	11%	23%	22%	19%	3%	18%	42%	34%	18%	33%	23%
Top box other	26%	46%	19%	24%	30%	32%	43%	22%	23%	29%	55%	25%	8%	15%	17%	13%	12%
Top 2 box	68%	37%	78%	71%	65%	59%	48%	76%	74%	65%	33%	71%	90%	81%	82%	84%	85%
Bottom 2 box	6%	17%	3%	5%	5%	9%	10%	2%	3%	6%	12%	4%	2%	4%	1%	4%	3%

	Total	Meaning is to help others (& life is not meaningless)		Current mood		Social transformer		SocialMediaSavvy		Prosocial behaviour scale			Empathy scale		
		no	yes	enjoyment	other	no	yes	no	yes	low	middle	high	low	middle	high
N	24.227	10.727	13.500	2.829	21.398	18.211	6.016	20.944	3.283	9.073	7.076	8.078	8.595	8.555	7.077
Disagree completely	2%	3%	1%	1%	2%	2%	0%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	3%	1%	1%
Disagree	4%	6%	3%	4%	4%	5%	2%	4%	2%	5%	4%	3%	7%	3%	2%
Neutral	26%	36%	19%	23%	27%	31%	13%	28%	16%	36%	24%	19%	46%	21%	11%
Agree	47%	40%	53%	49%	47%	45%	54%	47%	48%	43%	51%	48%	37%	61%	43%
Agree completely	21%	16%	25%	22%	21%	17%	30%	19%	33%	14%	20%	29%	7%	14%	44%
Top box other	26%	36%	19%	23%	27%	31%	13%	28%	16%	36%	24%	19%	46%	21%	11%
Top 2 box	68%	55%	77%	71%	68%	62%	84%	66%	81%	57%	71%	77%	43%	75%	86%
Bottom 2 box	6%	8%	4%	5%	6%	7%	2%	6%	4%	7%	5%	4%	11%	4%	2%

* Please see chapter 5 for the research design.

2.11 I don't like this idea

During my try-outs and conversations along the way while drafting this book, I found that some people, especially amongst the baby boomers, were somewhat resistant and apprehensive to the idea of companies and brands becoming more prosocial. For them, companies are nothing but big organisations aiming only for profit. Some even fear that prosocial marketing is no more than a trick for corporations to gain even more control. And, looking at recent history, it isn't easy to offer a good argument in response to these notions.

However not everyone is as sceptical as some that I've I met, and this healthy scepticism can, in part, explain the large numbers that indicated support for the idea of an independent watchdog organisation that can help verify a company's intentions.

Personally, possibly naively, I believe that goodness always prevails and, since corporations ultimately consist of people, many of whom find meaning in helping others. I think all will be all right. The recent financial crisis only strengthened my belief that the old corporate goal of profit maximization is giving way to a better, more prosocial future.

Another concern I'd hear is that prosocial marketing may threaten the work of NGOs. It's true that for some NGOs, robust Meaningful Prosocial Brands may prove to be fierce competition, given their size, scope and ability to focus. For the vast majority of NGOs, though, Prosocial Brands represent a unique opportunity to not only attract new funds but also to work in close cooperation with new partners. NGOs can focus on the actual work in the field while brands work to raise money and awareness. This could

be especially important as international governments continue to tighten their belts.

I know from experience that NGOs are often hesitant to partner with commercial interests. The culture of a typical NGO is certainly quite different from that of a business. But, as long as both sides offer a clear commitment to a prosocial goal, this shared value can work as a perfect bridge, allowing both sides to benefit from the best of each.

Chapter 3

Building Meaningful Prosocial Brands

Chapter 3: Building Meaningful Prosocial Brands

I often find myself a bit embarrassed when telling people that I'm in advertising. Although I'm hooked on the power of creativity, I know our industry is still dominated by advertising that hasn't evolved much from the early days of town criers and street-corner salesmen: the louder the message, the better. Fortunately, I see a strong force emerging with the power to quiet the shouting and take advertising a level further, beyond simple messaging; advertising so strong, that attention for the brand isn't bought, but earned.

It's not difficult to add an extra dimension to the way brands come to life and in doing so, end the outmoded and shallow means of brand building. Our job as marketeers and creatives is to find this extra dimension based on real and sincere passions that can resonate with the brand. In every brand, there are social convictions waiting to be put forward; while they're not always obvious in the brand itself, they can most certainly be found in people behind the brand. What I like about these convictions is that they give the brand a story; one that will allow the brand to campaign even without advertising. Then it's just a matter of creativity to build on these convictions by inventing a series of easily accessible and desired experiences for the target group of the business. Brands that pull this off can achieve incredible rewards. Their success can be explained by an old saying attributed to Chinese thinker and philosopher Confucius (551-479 BC) (and slightly updated for the marketing world):

Brands you hear, you forget

Brands you see, you remember

Brands you experience, you buy

My main focus as a brand strategist is to find the compelling insights in consumers' lives that can be translated into these wanted experiences. The search for a more meaningful life and the desire to help others combined with the brand's conviction can become a very powerful force.

The most important things in life cannot be bought or sold. Though there are millions of ways to help others that are unrelated to money, few brands tend to explore these avenues. It's certainly worth considering given the findings in section 1.12: people like to do more than giving money. While this type of prosocial activity will require more creativity and inventiveness, there are plenty of options available.

A brand could make a unique impact by facilitating emotional support (offering a listening ear, empathizing), esteem support (expressions of confidence or encouragement), informational support (advice) or, of course, tangible support. The way the brand enables their target group to participate here should be accessible, simple and positive. Interactive media could play a crucial role in facilitating prosocial activities. New media can allow brands to *do something* as opposed to simply saying something, as was the case with traditional media. Let's take a look at the strategic model that leads to Meaningful Prosocial Brands:

Letsheal: Brands you hear, you forget. Brand you see, you remember. Brands you experience, you buy, especially Meaningful Prosocial Brands

3.1 The model

So how do we build brands that lead to meaningful actions? Well first we have to develop what I call the Activated Brand Essence, a short phrase that brings together societal values and business insights that strike at the heart of the brand. This essence is not picked at random but mixed from three important ingredients: the key driver for business, a real brand value and societal insight.

In the past few years I've been able to develop a solid, surprisingly straight-forward and easy-to-use model. I applied it to many brands from regional insurance companies to large multinationals.
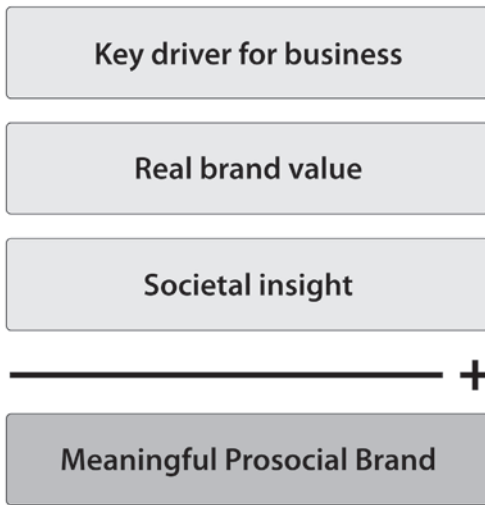
Figure 15. The model to create MPBs

A case study on the implementation of this model can be seen with the campaign of the SaraLee coffee brand Douwe Egberts. The Netherlands's largest coffee brand, Douwe Egberts boasts an

estimated annual revenue of over €300 million. In 2005 one of the most award-winning cases of Meaningful Prosocial Brand activation was: Neighbourday. Although Neighbourday is a good example that illustrates how brands can take on a more meaningful role, it's far more interesting to see how to develop a brand essence that is the basis for spot on meaningful prosocial action. Let's zoom in on the different ingredients and use Douwe Egberts as an illustration.

Ingredient 1: The key driver for business
Does profit mean bad karma? As I see it, there's nothing wrong with being profitable; focusing on revenue is healthy and necessary as it leads to sustainability. Also, the more money you make, the more there is to invest in making the world a better place. So maximizing business potential (which doesn't equal excessive bonuses) is of paramount importance.

The key drivers for business are *not about* things like: selling more, increasing market share, building trust, raising awareness, etc. A key driver for business describes *what* makes a business grow. Let's go back to the coffee brand Douwe Egberts. What could their key driver for business be?

Our surveys showed that coffee, especially in the Netherlands, is a very social drink, but that opportunities for people to enjoy coffee together were decreasing. In short, it would make sense for the brand to try to bring people together again; because when people get together, coffee is on the table. So, Douwe Egberts's key driver for business is: **bring people together.**

Sounds simple? Good, that's exactly how it should be. If it's not possible to catch your key driver for business in a few words, it's probably not right.

Letsheal: MPB Ingredient #1: What's the key driver for your business?

Where can one find the best key driver for business? Of course, it will work differently for every marketeer. It's good to start by making a few common sense deductions and a few outside-the-box assumptions based on value canvassing. "Value Canvassing" is a technique where the possible drivers of a business are compared to those of its competitors.

The assumptions are then challenged in sessions with salespeople, marketeers and consumers. With the first set of assumptions in hand, some quantitative checking is done. Then it's time to imagine how these drivers can be linked to a social issue.

I bet you'll find two or three very valuable and distinctive key drivers. Most of the times these drivers are sequential, allowing them to be expanded on in the future.

Ingredient 2: The real brand value
The real brand value is the authentic emotion your target group should feel when encountering the brand. This value should originate straight from the heart of the brand and the people behind it. It has to be real; this cannot be something you invent. Adding meaning allows for the widening of the emotional palate, since the marketing is no longer limited to the standard emotional responses sought by advertisers. With more ways to make an emotional connection, more nuance can be achieved. Focusing on a social value has another advantage: it makes your brand's story stand out. All other brand values in your brand house, brand pyramid and brandkey still hold their merits, but are overshadowed by the real brand value.

But, how can you find this unique brand value?

Letsheal: MPB Ingredient #2: What's your brand's real value?

Organize a brand biographical session

The famous Danish philosopher and theologian Soren Kierkegaard, (1813-1855), said that: "Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards."

Invite a cross section of the company for this session, ranging from management to production and from every age group; with ten people max. The goal of this session is not to invent a value, but to unify and define a brand's values. What are these values and why are they so important for the brand? Gaining insight into a brand's authenticity and giving meaning to previously un-explained choices leads to the real brand value.

The session leader begins by asking everyone in the group to answer a series of questions. It's important that speaking time is secured for everyone without allowing too much *thinking time*; the answers should come straight from the heart. The setting should be open and comfortable, allowing individuals to answer without fear of "giving an incorrect answer." The discussion fol-lowing each answer-session should also prove valuable.

- What is the most extraordinary thing your company or brand has ever done? And why is this extraordinary?

In every one of these sessions I've conducted, not once has some-one offered an advertising campaign as an answer to this question. You will be astonished to find out how often these answers point some way the company or brand participated in delivering a con-tribution to the greater good!

Letsheal: Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards. Time to organize a brand biographical session

- Who do you consider to be your heroes? Who do you consider to be *your company's* heroes? Why?

This is an important question to identify if the company has courage and commitment in its genes. This will help gauge the direction and the type of emotion *attached to the brand*. Will it be performance, caring, transforming, or what?

- When has the company been the best it can be, and why? What was something the company did that now seems completely off the mark?

It's very important to hear what emotions are really encapsulated by the brand. It's not about evaluating company activities or effectiveness, but more about that small gesture in a commercial, or a feeling you got from a twenty year old print ad, it could be anything.

- When you think of your brand/company, what makes you particularly proud?

This question will put the answers from the other questions into perspective.

Once all answers are given, it shouldn't be too difficult to find a common denominator. It's critical to narrow it down as much as possible. I've done dozens of these sessions and my report always comes down to just one word. Because of the collaborative nature of the process, I've never encountered any disagreement regarding

the outcome. At the end of the process, the group has decided on one or two words that can sum up the heart of the brand. These words tend not to be found in the brand's existing marketing, which is often deliberately ambiguous or unclear to achieve some sense of "universality." But, in my opinion, an honest assessment of the brand is far more potent.

In the case of Douwe Egberts the real brand value was: "gezelligheid," a unique Dutch word that means cozy and comfortable, a word associated with familiar places, friends and family. If these are the core values of the company, why isn't the brand working to create more of these cozy, comfortable situations?

With the key driver for the business decided on, the next step is to bring in a societal insight that relates to the heart of the brand.

Ingredient 3: The societal insight

Although the model is pretty straightforward, this part requires a level of strategic creativity. The art here is to have a good sense for current trends and the ability to predict ones that have yet to surface. A societal insight, or how a brand can interact with the community to add prosocial meaning, ensures the brand essence a more profound character. The societal insight amplifies the key driver and brings real brand value. It provides the brand its societal role. But where can one find this insight? In chapter one, you can find various themes that can be explored (1.11) and more detailed data can be found in the free research report (www.letsheal.org).

It's also worth noting that prosocial insights can vary from an insight that's purely altruistic up to contributing, where the target

group actually is part of the group being helped. Next to this there are many ways to help (see chapter 1.14).

Although finding the societal insight is the biggest creative challenge, the three steps below can help you brainstorm and isolate it out:

1. Choose a theme based on a combination of the key driver and real brand value.
2. Make it more specific and try to find the shared undercurrents. Expand from there.
3. Determine what to facilitate based on the target groups' specific need for meaning (purely altruistic, contributing, et cetera.)

Let's go back to our Douwe Egberts example. If the key driver is bringing people together and our real brand value is "*gezelligheid*" or feelings of coziness and comfort, what then could be a relevant societal insight?

The social issue found was that inhabitants of the Netherlands, for various reasons, began to believe that they were less close with their neighbours and interacted less with people in general. They believed that people were growing less interested in each other and less attached. The fact that this was a shared feeling indicated a strong need for greater social cohesion. So the societal insight was: people think that the country is becoming more atomised. Douwe Egberts, whose real brand value involved bringing people together, was able to play an essential and rewarding role. Now it's time to bring it all together.

The activated brand essence

The activated brand essence brings all ingredients together into one sentence that points out what the brand will do. It's based on an instantly recognizable yet remarkable insight that strengthens the core feeling of the brand and gives you the reason to buy it. For Douwe Egberts it came down to: We let you experience that your community can be much closer, more comfortable and welcoming than you thought.

One of the meaningful actions to bring the activated brand essence to life was "Neighbourday". This unique national party is a celebration of our neighbours and neighbourhoods. Neighbours were encouraged to get together, have a cup of coffee and think about ways to make our neighbourhoods even nicer. After four Neighbourdays, each September, it became the second largest national celebration in the Netherlands, right after Queen's day. With more than 1,000,000 neighbours celebrating and over 15,000 local activities throughout the entire country, Neighbourday became a success story, both for Douwe Egberts and the Netherlands as a whole. After three years, Neighbourday even earned the participation of the Dutch Royal Family. Neighbourday led to a stronger feeling of social cohesion with participants engaging in real, unscripted positive interactions. It also had a strong impact on brand values, and more than 10 million extra cups of coffee were sold. Thanks, in part, to Neighbourday, Douwe Egberts was named the 2008 Fast Mover A-Brand by the global market research group GfK.

Letsheal: The Activated Brand Essence: the sentence that brings societal insights, business insights and true values together in a wanted and actionable manner

Figure 16. One of the 15,000 local activities on Neighbourday

Personally, the greatest result of Neighbourday was receiving five Christmas cards from neighbours I hadn't previously known!

Some thoughts on activated brand essences

1) It may shift your competitive arena

Even if you develop your meaningful prosocial ideas from a solid key driver and a real brand value, the societal insight may already be claimed or could be taken over in the future by other brands. The insight will probably remain unique among direct competitors, but in society as a whole, the insight could have already reached its saturation point. It helps to be as specific as possible. If other players pop up hoping to achieve similar prosocial goals,

they should not be seen as competition. Don't hesitate to work together.

2) Mileage

It is important that the ideas have long term relevancy. This period should be a minimum of three years. It would be wise to be sure of the creativity of an activated brand essence before advancing with it.

3) Positive & full of hope

It's important that Prosocial Brands provide hope for a better future. With the exception of occasional press releases, where a negative headline can be an attention-getter, communication should be positive. Ideally, brands should focus on casting social challenges in a positive and uplifting light, encouraging its target group to take meaningful, constructive action.

4) Accessible

As mentioned before, a brand's experience must be easily accessible for the total target group. If it is socially relevant, it will be attractive, but the concept must ensure that everyone can participate without barriers.

5) Campaigning instead of advertising

Campaign like activists. If your marketing department believes

in the mission, it will create a bigger, more passionate campaign than ever before. But, your work isn't done when the TV ads are running. PR will be more important than ever. The second you start sharing your convictions with the outside world, there will be cynicism that will need combating. If you and the members of your organization are determined, your intentions will shine through. And, as always, if you are and can stay sincere, any pressure shouldn't be a problem.

6) Brand memory

Facilitating meaningful prosocial behavior means greater consumer interaction. For most brands, it is most logical to facilitate these experiences through interactive media. It would be great if these experiences became more personal with each interaction. Although it may be a little beyond the scope of this book, I would add some memory to the brand and see how the different interactions could sharpen the brand essence on a more individual level over time. This brand memory has the nice side effect of helping to stimulate vertical integration, and thus synergy, by developing relations between different disciplines over time (from insight generating research, interaction facilitating organizations, creative companies, media agencies and of course the marketing manager).
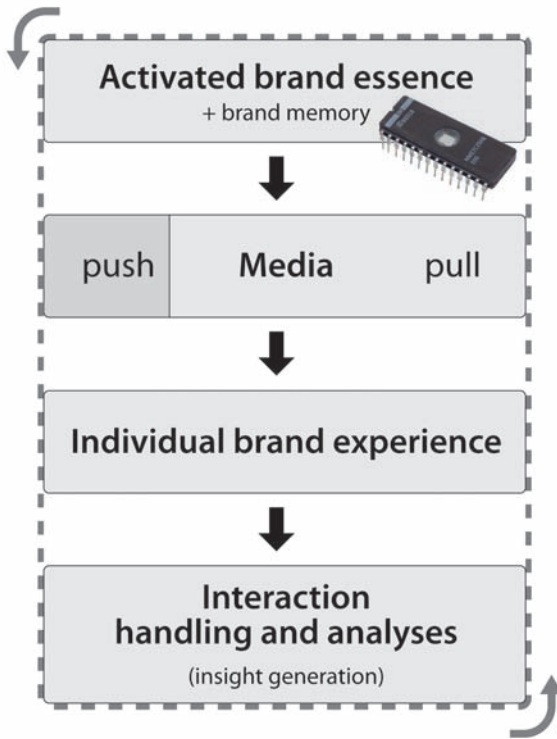
Figure 17. Vertical integration, a little off-topic, but interesting.

I really hope that you are inspired and decide to join and rise to the challenge. But you're not alone, let's do this together…

Letsheal: MPBS with brand memory can realize huge synergetic effects

Chapter 4

Let's do this together

Chapter 4: Let's do this together

The goal of this research and publication is not just to promote prosocial marketing, but also to encourage people like you to become advocates for the cause. Certainly, prosocial marketing can be of great use to your company, but what I find even more exciting is the potential impact we, the CEOs, marketeers and advertising professionals of the world, can have in spreading the message and motivating change.

There aren't very many meaningful Prosocial Brands out there yet, so if you and your business take up the challenge, I'd be thrilled if you'd share your experience on the letsheal.org site. I really hope the research (available on the site) can help you find the right angle to approach incorporating prosocial ideas into your work. Please feel free to contact me (via the website, or @letsheal) if you need a little help.

It would also be great if you could help spread the word so the concepts contained in the book reach as many business leaders as possible. For my part, I plan on publishing the ideas in as many channels as possible. But, if you agree that brands and business should work to better society, your words and actions within your company, school, or among your professional peers will speak louder than mine can any day.

I've tried to make it easy to not only download the book and research, but also to help spread the word. On letsheal.org, we offer a seven-slide SlideShare presentation that can be embedded on LinkedIn, Facebook, or Twitter. And of course, we'd be very thankful if you were to promote the book with a banner on your site (available at letsheal.org), or if you could donate a tweet or

become a fan on Facebook. At letsheal.org, we're even encouraging supporters to become 'official' speakers on the book's behalf.

And, since we're all consumers, it wouldn't be bad to encourage your favorite brands to be more prosocial.

www.letsheal.org

Coming soon to letsheal.org:

- New updated versions on the book based on your input
- New countries added to the research
- New cases
- Local events to promote the idea

Thanks for helping!

Chapter 5

Research design

5.1 Countries in the research

While this publication is intended to be globally relevant, the research took place in October-November 2010 in a selected number of countries. The countries chosen for the research were those with the highest Gross Domestic Product in 2009[2]. These countries statistically show the highest level of spending on advertising. Brands operating within the sample countries will by estimate account for around 80% of the US $450 billion spent annually on advertising[4].

nr	Country	GDP 2009 millions of USD	Internet penetration
1	United States	$ 14,256,300	74%
2	Japan	$ 5,067,526	76%
3	China	$ 4,984,731	27%
4	Germany	$ 3,346,702	66%
5	France	$ 2,649,390	69%
6	United Kingdom	$ 2,174,530	76%
7	Italy	$ 2,112,780	52%
8	Brazil	$ 1,571,979	34%
9	Spain	$ 1,460,250	72%
10	Canada	$ 1,336,067	75%
11	India	$ 1,310,171	7%
12	Russia	$ 1,230,726	32%
13	Mexico	$ 874,902	25%
14	Australia	$ 924,843	80%
15	South Korea	$ 832,512	77%
(South Korea is excluded from research)			
16	Netherlands	$ 792,128	86%
20	Belgium	$ 468,552	70%
(Belgium is added to research)			

South Korea (number 15 on the list) was excluded from the research because of budget reasons. Since Belgium is closely linked to Germany, France and the Netherlands it was logical to include it in the study.

5.2 Research method

In order to exclude differences rooted in the so-called modality effects of using varied methods, the research was done via online surveys solely. The Internet penetration of the population is an important determinant when considering online research[29]. In countries with Internet penetration levels of 70% or higher, access panels are available that have existed for over a decade, guaranteeing balanced samples. In countries with lower penetration rates (30-70%) these panels are also available, but have a possible overrepresentation by respondents with higher incomes and education. This potential skew can be corrected by weighting. In countries such as China, India and Mexico, with low Internet penetration (<30%), fully representative research via online surveys is likely unattainable.

For these countries, a general overview of need, relating to meaning and brands, can be considered acceptable for representing the total population. The degree of distortion originating from the skew of samples would be chiefly due to the level of technological adoption. In countries with low Internet penetration, so-called innovators and early adopters will be overrepresented, however, these groups are also often early adopters regarding new brands. Given that, the results from these countries can therefore be inferred as future indicators of the total population[29]. Global survey research is still a difficult task. In most countries the willingness to participate has decreased which is a threat to the representativeness of the sample[29]. Additionally, there are indications that online research using access panels suffers from data quality issues[30]. This implies that fieldwork from this research can only be granted and executed by a partner abiding by the ESOMAR codes of conduct, guaranteeing data quality[31].

5.3 Research partners

The partner for developing, programming and hosting the interactive questionnaires is Winkle (www.winklingworld.eu). Winkle has offices in the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Australia and Canada and delivers cutting edge market research technology and advice in the fields of product- and services innovation and marketing communication.

The partner chosen for the sample set is SSI, Survey Sampling International. SSI has an international team of more than 400 employees representing 50 nationalities and 35 languages. The company offers access to research respondents in 54 countries SSI serves more than 1,800 clients, including nearly three-quarters of the top marketing research firms worldwide.

Letsheal: Winkle and SSI are our research partners

5.4 Validated basis for Questionnaire

Having Dirk Salomons from Columbia University on the advisory board was crucial to the design of a thorough and unbiased questionnaire, largely due to his wish to use as many validated questions and scales as possible. The implication of this of course was that we had to find already validated questions. I'm so grateful to the very warm and kind cooperation of the owners and founders of the following different scales and questions:

1. The MQL question. Developed by Michael F. Steger, PhD, Assistant Professor, Counselling Psychology/Applied Social Psychology, Director, Laboratory for the Study of Meaning and Quality of Life. Colorado State University. The MQL question is validated in 8 different languages.
   The MQL is used to develop understanding of level of actual feeling of leading a meaningful life.
2. What is the meaning of life? This question is to measure aided recognition of the meaning of life. Developed by Richard Kinnier, College of Education, Arizona State University. Published in the Journal of Humanistic Psychology, Vol. 43 No. 1, Winter 2003. The categories are based on a total of 238 quotations. These published quotes were either publicly stated or written by 195 eminent people (144 men and 51 women). Nine people were identified as having an African heritage, the rest were White. Most had lived during the 20th century, but 27 lived mostly during the 19th century and 23 had lived prior to the 19th century. Many of the eminent people had more than one professional identification (e.g., spiritual leader and

writer). The most frequently identified profession was writer and/or philosopher (n = 126). Other professional identities included artist/musician/actor (n = 23), scientist/inventor (n = 20), political or business leader (n = 17), and spiritual leader (n = 11). Two were prominent in the sports world. This question is used to measure aided recognition of the meaning of life. After pilot testing, we left three interpretations out of the formal study for reasons of comparability and clarity. They were "Life is a struggle to create your own meaning," "Life is absurd," and "Life is a mystery".

3. To measure empathy, we adapted Davis's Empathic Concern (EC) scale 11. This index was used in the 2002 and 2004 General Social Surveys (GSS's) run by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago.

4. To measure our respondents' level of motivation to help others, we used the social responsibility scale developed by Theo Schuyt, Professor of Philanthropy at VU University, Amsterdam.

5. To measure the different causes supported we used validated categories devised by US market analysts Mediad Research. These are geared towards macro-level research, such as the annual Giving USA reports (www.givingusareports.org) into philanthropy in the US by the Association of Fundraising Counsel (AAFRC).

6. To measure actual prosocial behavior, we used modified aspects from "The Altruistic Personality and the Self-Report Altruism Scale." This scale was devised by social psychologists J.P. Rushton, R.D. Chrisjohn, and G.C. Fekken in 1981, and used in the GSSs by the National Data Program for Social Sciences.

In addition to these validated questions we developed and tested questions to measure attitudes and intentions towards brands in relation to their prosocial behavior based on questions as used in Yu-Shan Chen's 2010 article "The Drivers of Green Brand Equity: Green Brand Image, Green Satisfaction and Green Trust."

We measured "why and how people give" based on Maimonides' Golden Ladder of Charity. All the other questions we employed are commonly used in socio-economic and demographic research.

5.5 Overview questionnaires
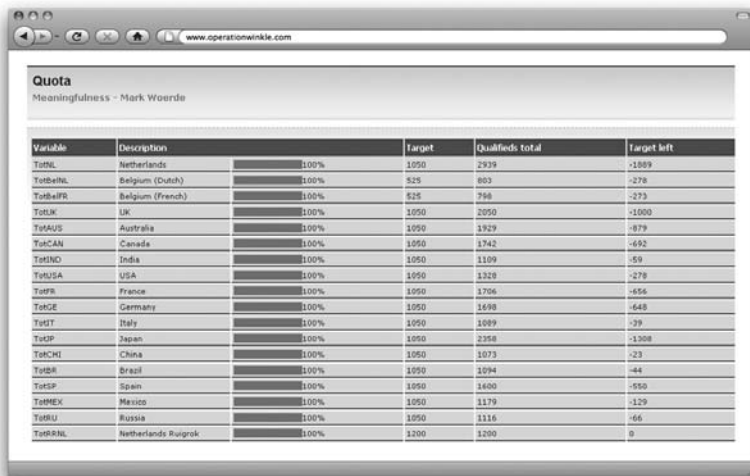
On www.letsheal.org you will find the links to the questionnaires in the different languages – just download "research report" and click sheet tab "questionnaires".

The questionnaire was translated by Todo Linquistic Services, a member of ATA (Association of Translation Agencies), into the following languages: Dutch, French, Brazilian-Portuguese, Chinese, German, Italian, Japanese, Spanish (Mexico & Spain) and Russian.

5.6 Fieldwork

The fieldwork was conducted in October - November 2010. A total of 24,224 respondents completed the research. An extra 1,200 Dutch people were questioned through the Ruigrok Netpanel to verify the Dutch outcome. This verification however yielded the same results so we decided to base all our conclusions on the initial SSI data. Prior to the actual fieldwork in October different pilot studies were conducted. With a total sample size of N=4000 the questionnaires were tested during various test periods in 2010.

Variable	Description		Target	Qualifieds total	Target left
TotNL	Netherlands	100%	1050	2939	-1889
TotbelNL	Belgium (Dutch)	100%	525	803	-278
TotbelFR	Belgium (French)	100%	525	798	-273
TotUK	UK	100%	1050	2050	-1000
TotAUS	Australia	100%	1050	1929	-879
TotCAN	Canada	100%	1050	1742	-692
TotIND	India	100%	1050	1109	-59
TotUSA	USA	100%	1050	1328	-278
TotFR	France	100%	1050	1706	-656
TotGE	Germany	100%	1050	1698	-648
TotIT	Italy	100%	1050	1089	-39
TotJP	Japan	100%	1050	2358	-1308
TotCHI	China	100%	1050	1073	-23
TotBR	Brazil	100%	1050	1094	-44
TotSP	Spain	100%	1050	1600	-550
TotMEX	Mexico	100%	1050	1179	-129
TotRU	Russia	100%	1050	1116	-66
TotRRNL	Netherlands Ruigrok	100%	1200	1200	0

Completes per country final research

5.7 Weighting and significance levels

The first step was to weigh the data by country. Responses varied between countries, but we wanted to make sure all countries were given equal weight on the total scores. Second, the data was weighted by gender and age to conform to the population statistics per country. In some countries, however, the low response rate of younger people resulted in slight imbalances in the data. In order to prevent having too few respondents having too much impact on the country scores, weighting factors above 3 were cut off (to 3.0). The result of this procedure was that for the United States, Italy, Japan, Brazil, Mexico, China, India and Russia, younger individuals are still underrepresented in the weighted samples. However, as the youngest cohort (16-24 yrs.) is less then 10% of the total population, the possible bias caused by this underrepresented group is marginal. All differences mentioned in the book are significant.

Letsheal: Results were carefully weighted by country, gender and age

5.8 RESEARCH REPORT TABLE OF CONTENTS

On letsheal.org you can download the entire research for free. Results are shown:

- Per country
- By background variables (gender, age, children, education, urbanisation level)
- By subgroups (meaning is to help others, current mood, social transformer, social media savviness, prosocial behavior and empathy)
- Per country (meaning is to help others, gender, age, children, education, urbanisation level)
- The prosocial behavior and empathy index per country

The various subgroup definitions can also be found in the research report.

The research outcomes are split in the following categories:
A. Demographics, media consumption and mood
B. The meaning of life
C. Empathy
D. Why and how do we give?
E. Prosocial behavior
F. Brands and companies

The research report can be viewed in Microsoft Excel and Google Docs. Navigating between the various topics is made easy via hyperlinks.

Notes and references

Along the way I got inspiration and answers from many sources. I did my best to contact all copyright holders. If something is missing, please contact me through www.letsheal.org.

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13. Dunbar's number is a theoretical cognitive limit to the number of people with whom one can maintain stable social relationships. These are relationships in which an individual knows who each person is, and how each person relates to every other person. Proponents assert that numbers larger than this generally require more restrictive rules, laws, and enforced norms to maintain a stable, cohesive group. No precise value has been proposed for Dunbar's number. It has been proposed to lie between 100 and 230, with a commonly used value of 150 (source Wikipedia).

14. Inspired by a meeting by the end of 2010 with René Gude (Director The International School of Philosophy).

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And before I proceed to thank the many other special people who made this project possible, I feel I must acknowledge Vint Cerf and Bob Kahn, the "fathers of the Internet." Their impact on the world surpasses imagination: from conducting 16-country research in just a matter of weeks to facilitating a revolution in Tunisia.

I'm very grateful to the members of my research advisory board, Professor Dirk Salomons, Robert van Ossenbruggen, and Hans Lingeman. I had several very good and inspiring meetings with Professor Salomons, Director of the Program for Humanitarian Affairs at the School of International Public Affairs, Columbia University, and I can wholeheartedly say, without Dirk, the research would not be as solid as it is now. Dirk insisted on using scientific and validated research methods, leading to a far more credible research design. The research also would have ended up nowhere without the help of Robert van Ossenbruggen. I would like to thank my dear friend Hans Lingeman, who provided me with not only his never-ending optimism and research experience, but also with the international infrastructure of his research company, Winkle.

I also feel incredibly honoured by the opportunity I got to discuss this publication with Nobel Prize winner and economist Prof. Edmund Phelps, of Columbia University. In this unforgettable session he made the link between macro economics and the universal search for meaningful lives even more clear and robust. I'm also humbled by the kindness and generosity expressed

describe my love for my wonderful wife Milja, my son Levi and daughter Sara. I find myself grateful for, inspired by, proud of and more in love with you each and every day.

This brings me to you, the reader. Thank you for picking up and sharing this book! I would love to hear your comments via letsheal.org or #letsheal on Twitter. And finally, on behalf of the world, a very big thank you to all (new) Prosocial Brands. Together, we really can change lives and our world for the better.

About the author

Mark Woerde (picture Judith Jockel)

Mark Woerde (1973) is the co-founder and strategy director of the award-winning Dutch advertising agency Lemz. He has worked as a consultant to many notable organizations, including IKEA, Doctors without Borders, Unilever and Sara Lee. After receiving a degree in economics from the University of Amsterdam, Woerde quickly earned a reputation for creating successful and rewarding campaigns that realize both business and social goals. Mark continually ranks high in various Dutch 'Who is the Best Strategist?' polls.

He is a renowned national and international speaker, as well as a contributing author to various marketing trade publications. His greatest energy and passion currently goes toward promoting prosocial, meaningful and interactive marketing. For Mark, achieving commercial success and helping others is no trick; it is, in fact, in his very nature. Mark first demonstrated this penchant early on when, aged six, he gathered crowds, working to rack up the highest sales among his peers at his village's annual garage sale fair. That day, the tiny salesman earned heaps of praise emptying the jar of money he'd made at the fair's Amnesty International stand.

His competitive drive and desire to help others lives on to-

day as Mark has devoted his time to researching and writing on Prosocial Brands as well as his work at Lemz. He's launched let-sheal.org, an initiative that is intended to be a launching off point for promoting prosocial and meaningful marketing. Additionally, he is working on an ambitious international prosocial business initiative being prepped for a launch in 2013. And although he sometimes dreams of a career as a jazz piano player, Mark also devotes his time to his lovely wife Milja, and two children, Levi and Sara. See Mark's LinkedIn profile: tinyurl.com/6xexy2d

The time has come for a radical paradigm shift in branding as we know it. Where, in the past, branding has seemed mainly focused on fulfilling hedonistic individual needs, it's gradually becoming clear: people are waiting for brands to help them help others. And, in doing so, these so-called "Meaningful Prosocial Brands" help fulfill a basic, strong and growing need: the need to live a meaningful life. This book, based on extensive research in the world's 16 biggest economies, unveils new insights and practical knowledge that can make your brand grow and bring about a huge positive impact on our world.

Just imagine what would happen if even a fraction of the US $450 billion spent annually on advertising, instead, went into prosocial marketing?

"Soon, kindness will be a gobal brand, bridging the chasm between compassion and commerce, and prosocialism will carry the day. Mark Woerde and his 24,000 friendly people have brought a new ethical dimension to the world of advertising!" – *Professor Dirk Salomons, Director of the Program for Humanitarian Affairs at the School of International Public Affairs, Columbia University.*

"Mark Woerde shows how to use power of brands to make the world a better place - one of the most inspiring books I know!" – *Kate Roberts, Founder of YouthAIDS and Five & Alive, Vice President PSI.org and "Young Global Leader of the World 2007" by The World Economic Forum.*

"Here's a book that might help you look your children in the eye. People are looking for brands to positively contribute to society and they'll vote for them with their money. It turns out you can make money and make a difference at the same time." – *Craig Davis, Chief Creative Officer Publicis Mojo Australia and New Zealand, Ex-CCO JWT worldwide, Founder of Brandkarma.com*

1 of the 24,000 warnings in this book:
"It's important to understand that any value this brings to the brand can be easily undermined by questionable business practices. Being prosocial not only means to be generous in spending your money, but also to be responsible in how you make it." – Matthias Stausberg, Head of Public Affairs & Media Relations and Spokesperson United Nations Global Compact

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Thank you for picking up this book! It would also be great if you could help spread the word so the concepts contained in the book reach as many business leaders as possible. Please visit letsheal.org, an Amsterdam based independent non-profit organization aimed at providing insights in how to transform brands into Meaningful Prosocial Brands.

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Kansrijk uitgeven voor iedereen