

How brands with purpose unlock true business value

By Leigh Andrews

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There's no denying purpose-led marketing is a hot topic at the moment, here's how your business can strive towards shared value.



A scene from the masterclass. © Al Ncoll, Gallo Images.

In 2018, a brand needs to focus on more than just the bottom line to win favour with ever-fickle customers, for whom brand loyalty is no longer a must.

Tiekie Barnard, CEO and founder of Shift Social Development and the Shared Value Africa Initiative (SVAI), says it's about more than just plugging in a corporate social responsibility channel - brands need to work at creating shared value to truly succeed.

Hence the topic of her Loeries masterclass: 'Are profit and purpose uneasy bedfellows?'



#Loeries2018: Profit and purpose - uneasy bedfellows?

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Barnard began with a brief explanation of the Shared Value Africa Initiative and its aim of reducing the inequality gap in business, while building the biggest collaborative shared-value network across the continent.

Brands: Be creative and caring

Putting her ad-land hat on, Barnard said there's enormous responsibility for the creative industry as we take products to market and influence consumers, so we need to be accountable for that.

We ought to look at all the work we do and take a step back, as the beautiful campaigns we create also need to have a positive social impact.

Barnard spoke of Unilever CEO Paul Polman as someone who has taken this to heart, having even received this year's Cannes Lionheart Award, in recognition of his commitment to building sustainability into the heart of Unilever's operations.



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Barnard added that 'shared value' is a foreign concept to some, with a large level of misunderstanding as to what it truly means. She then introduced three speakers, who further addressed the concept of shared value and how it creates value for both business and society alike.

First up was Dinesh Govender, CEO of Vitality at Discovery. He said you can certainly use the shared value idea for a campaign, but that it won't fundamentally shift society. Rather use it to influence your own business.

“ Loving the [@SVAltweets](#) Masterclass session. [@TiekieB](#) introduced [@dineshgovender](#) of [@Discovery_SA](#)'s [@TeamVitalitySA](#), sharing lessons from a born [#sharedvalue](#) business. Up to the 2000s, the business of business was making money, only now are we focused on helping society... pic.twitter.com/UfdFFMN1EY— *Rambling Litchi (@Leigh_Andrews)* [August 16, 2018](#) ”

Adding some perspective, Govender said that up until the 2000's, the business of business was about making money. Only then did we start picking up on inequality - sadly, we didn't make any drastic changes at the time.

We continued with business as usual, but wrote out cheques, made donations to make up for any possible harmful outputs, and started to set up foundations. Only now is there notable thinking about actually changing the business model and creating value for society.

Govender concluded that having a focus on shared value has the added benefit of helping brands realise the true size of their reputation.

Shared value in terms of people, planet and profit

The next speaker was Sanda Ojiambo of Safaricom Kenya, who spoke of the power of not just sharing existing value but also in creating additional, shared value in terms of people, planet and profit.

Ojiambo added that the focus on shared value isn't meant to replace a business focus on CSR and CSI - there's still a place for those initiatives, as shared value means a rethink of long-term strategy overall.

“ Wow, this resonates. [@SandaOjiambo](#) of [@SafaricomPLC](#) Kenya has climbed Kili and says at the [@loeries @SVAItweets](#) masterclass that in 2018, you can't define the true value of your business by your balance sheet. [#sharedvalue pic.twitter.com/NuhTSogdIV](#)— Rambling Litchi ([@Leigh_Andrews](#)) [August 16, 2018](#) ”

The last speaker of the session was Shobna Persadh, corporate affairs and sustainable business director at Unilever.

She explained that Unilever has created brands with purpose from its very beginning in 1885 and said we can't answer to the question of whether purpose pays without first looking at ourselves from a personal perspective.

She draws on such inspirational greats as Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King and Gandhi to guide her personal purpose.

“ The speakers [@TiekieB's @SVAItweets #SharedValueAfrica](#) selected for their [@loeries](#) masterclass on [#sharedvalue](#) are something else! 🎯🎯 Next up, [@ShobnaPersadh](#) of [@UnileverSA](#), who holds a black belt and says how can we help others find their purpose if we haven't found our own? [pic.twitter.com/QHPQYhBS4](#)— Rambling Litchi ([@Leigh_Andrews](#)) [August 16, 2018](#) ”

Persadh said that for the creative industry to be successful at purpose-driven marketing and shared value, they need to start with a problem that faces the country and their company alike, and look at how to potentially marry those and still generate a profit.

It's only through identifying your own purpose that you'll truly make a difference to others - that's the essence of shared value.

Keep an eye on our [Loeries special section](#) for all the latest updates and live coverage of the 40th annual Loerie Awards, taking place in Durban from 16 to 19 August 2018.

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ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at [@Leigh_Andrews](#).

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