

6 PROVEN WAYS

TO CONNECT MEANINGFULLY WITH CUSTOMERS

by MHz Design

JUSTICE

TEMPERANCE

KNOWLEDGE + WISDOM

COURAGE

HUMANITY

TRANSCENDENCE



Today's most progressive brands understand the need to communicate with customers by creating connections based on powerful, shared values. Marketers face three challenges in this pursuit.

1. Identify what values will authentically resonate with their target audience.
2. Ensure that the values align with the brand messaging.
3. Determine how to demonstrate those values credibly with action.

To help with Step 1, a team of researchers led by positive psychologists Christopher Peterson & Martin E.P. Seligman, has successfully identified 6 universally valued virtues that span across time and culture. Could demonstrating these positive virtues also be the key to connecting with consumers? Several leading brands believe so, and are putting these virtues into action in their marketing and profiting by doing so. Let's consider each and explore how they could be integrated into your future marketing campaign.



KNOWLEDGE & WISDOM

Many companies leverage this character strength to illustrate how they make life better for their customers through the ongoing pursuit of knowledge and innovation. **IKEA's** "Swedish for common sense" tagline, and ethos, projects intelligence in a way that is both aspirational and accessible. **Apple** embraces this virtue, by emphasizing intelligent, creative design that makes life easier to manage.



MAKE IT HAPPEN:

This virtue can be integrated into your marketing campaign by emphasizing the values of a love of learning, creativity, a sense of curiosity, the ability to be open-minded and by sharing perspective and wisdom with your intended audience.



COURAGE

Nike is the poster child in terms of assuring the consumer that they have the courage to accomplish goals in the face of opposition. Their entire brand campaign is centred on bravery, persistence and vitality. Another example is **Degree** antiperspirant and their current "Do: More" campaign that emphasizes the message of doing more with confidence and courage.



MAKE IT HAPPEN:

This virtue can be integrated into your messaging by focusing on the brand character strengths of persistence, integrity, bravery and vitality.



HUMANITY

It's easy to think of several brands that draw upon the virtue of humanity. Humanity is one of **Starbucks'** core brand values and they demonstrate through the design of their retail spaces that facilitate comfortable social meetings and encouraging customers to "come together" through their brand communications. Another brand that draws upon this virtue is **Hallmark**, as it focuses its communications on helping people connect emotionally with others.



MAKE IT HAPPEN:

To infuse your next marketing campaign with humanity, emphasize the values of kindness, love and social intelligence in your messaging.



JUSTICE

Many high profile companies leverage social justice and responsibility in their marketing efforts. While some brands such as **Toms** with their "One for One" campaign focus on improving the lives of others, other brands like **Kicking Horse Coffee** and **füdi** gourmet entrees have made a commitment to socially responsible ingredients like organic fair trade beans and locally-raised and ethically-slaughtered meat. These companies are taking a leadership position and are successfully attracting socially minded consumers who value justice.



MAKE IT HAPPEN:

By aligning your brand messaging with fairness, active citizenship, loyalty, teamwork and/or a focus on building healthy communities you are leveraging powerful, shared altruistic values with consumers.



TEMPERANCE

Brands that build campaigns on this virtue focus on protection against excess, often in a pleasantly ironic manner. A prime example of this is the **Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation** with their "Know Your Limit" campaign that promotes responsible gambling. **Heineken** also employed this virtue in their "Dance More, Drink Less" global campaign, promoting responsible alcohol consumption.



MAKE IT HAPPEN:

Building campaigns on this virtue should include themes around the values of self-regulation and self-control, humility and modesty, prudence and forgiveness and mercy.



TRANSCENDENCE

One of the longest running campaigns that has successfully utilized this virtue is the **Dove** Campaign For Real Beauty; focusing on the appreciation of authentic beauty in women. Building on a sense of purpose and coherence, **Moksha Yoga** emphasizes their 7 Philosophical Pillars that build an ethically "awesome yoga foundation". Finally, gratitude is another example of this virtue, and has been successfully leveraged by both **TD Canada Trust** through their TD Canada Thank You campaign and **WestJet's** Christmas Miracle Campaign.



MAKE IT HAPPEN:

By incorporating the values of hope, humour, playfulness and spirituality into your campaign messaging you emphasize the virtue that forges connections to the larger universe and provides meaning.



If we as human beings do seek out and place value on people that embody these positive virtues, it only stands to reason that consumers will identify and embrace brands that share them as well. As you prepare for the coming year's campaigns, ask yourself which of these virtues fit naturally with your brand and be sure include them in your next creative brief.