UTOPIA

Do The Right Thing

"In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing you can do is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing.

Theodore Roosevelt

Introduction

Welcome to Utopia's report, Do The Right Thing.

At our Global Social event, we brought together 35 brand leaders with leading thinkers and cultural influencers for a curated programme of insightful talks and workshops. The focus of the event was: how can we do the right thing?
This report answers that question and provides a toolkit to build more purposeful workplaces, where doing the right thing permeates across your whole business.

This is a broad aspiration, so alongside our Advisory Board, we broke this down into seven pillars of **belonging, purpose, ethical leadership, employee engagement, employee empowerment, wellbeing and continual change**. These, we believe, form the building blocks of doing the right thing for an organisation.

Headlines that resonate from the report align with these pillars. On purpose and belonging, we found that in the face of Gen Z's deep cynicism towards business, brands will have to work much harder to convince this generation that their purpose is authentic. Gen Z consumers and employees are not afraid to walk away from that partnership or purchase if it compromises their values in any way.

On leadership, engagement and wellbeing, we heard workplaces are leaving us attention-poor, stifling creativity and making us lonelier people all round — we may not be creating the right conditions within business for people to do the right thing.
The good news is: change starts with you. When we asked millennials, leading thinkers and our brand leaders, you came up with your own roadmap for change. But, in the words of Be More Pirate author and Livity co-founder Sam Conniff Allende, doing the right thing "should make you feel squeamish… You have to realise change is not going to happen unless you are scared."

In this report, we'll cover four key areas: insights into redefining purpose and belonging; redesigning the way we work and a focus on the mentally healthy workplace; finding the problems to hack the solutions; and recommendations for change.

One thing is clear: we need to reframe the old way of thinking, which pits purpose against profit. Instead, we should recognise that the two should be linked rather than ranked. This is perfectly summed up by spoken word artist Sophia Thakur who, in her closing address, told us: "Let your ethics live off the paper."

We hope this report brings to life the key take-outs from our latest annual Global Social event, but also provides hacks that you can take into your business to bring about meaningful change.

Nadya Powell, co-founder Utopia

1. Redefining Purpose and Belonging

" People talk about brands being about profit. But the way young people measure value is changing.Instead of TSR (Total Shareholder Return) we should be talking about TSI (Total Societal Impact).

Tayler Prince-Fraser

Gen Z (21-year-olds and under) are hugely cynical about businesses' commitment to purpose and, with their faith in all major institutions further eroding, they often don't know who to trust. Deloitte's 2019 Millennials survey found that just 55% of respondents believed business had a positive effect on wider society - a drop from 61% in 2018.

The survey also found Millennials and Gen Z are quicker to start and stop relationships with companies for deeply personal reasons, often "related to a company's positive or negative impact on society."

In other words, business just got a lot more personal for Millennials and Gen Z, both as employees and consumers. As Deloitte revealed in a recent survey, 73% of employees who say they work at a "purpose-driven" company say they are engaged, compared to just 23% of those who don't class their employer as "purpose-driven".

With Millennials currently comprising about 50% of the global workforce, rising to over 50% by 2025, 81% of them also expect their favourite companies to make a public declaration of corporate citizenship. (Source: Nielsen Global Sustainability Report)

It's clear that Millennials/Gen Z lean more than ever on their values, as employees and consumers. However, their levels of cynicism towards business have reached a new peak. Yet businesses and brands are doing little to allay suspicions that their purpose may not be all it's cracked up to be. The evidence lies in their everyday interactions with brands and businesses.

While many brands now recognise that engaging with young people and stating their social purpose is important, that relationship is fragile and can break down in the face of difficult questions. Student, creator and LGBTQ activist Ellen Jones told us she questions the authenticity of a brand's approach to collaborate in the first place if they are not prepared to listen. When one clothing brand reached out to Jones recently and she asked them some questions about their working practices, they immediately shut the conversation down. She hasn't heard from them since.

"Some brands don't want to engage in conversations. I limit my work by asking these questions, but if it doesn't sit right with me I can't do it," says Jones. Her most positive experiences of working with brands (even larger corporates) have been when her opinion of how to approach a campaign was genuinely sought and then listened to.

1. Redefining Purpose and Belonging

Companies and brands which have sought to harness purpose without it emerging from a place of authenticity have seen this strategy backfire, with the ensuing reputational damage that can entail. Where purpose is not embodied in everything you do **and** say, Gen Z in particular will call your commitment into question.

Unilever CEO Alan Jope put this plainly in his "woke-washing is polluting purpose" talk at Cannes Lions. He took brands to task for cashing in on causes but not "walking the talk", thus further eroding trust in business - which is already in short supply.

Unilever's Sustainable Living Brands (the 28 brands in Unilever's portfolio identified as "doing good") grew 69% faster than the rest of the business in 2018, underlining the fact that purpose is driving profit both now and into the future. When done well, the fact that purpose pays is tangible — Jope highlights 91% of millennials would switch brands for ones that champion a cause. The other brands in Unilever's portfolio, Jope said at Cannes, will be given a chance to find their "higher order role" and those that could not demonstrate this may end up being owned by someone else.

When a brand focuses on its holistic social impact, rather than solely the consumer, it pays dividends. But it has to emanate from a place of authenticity for it to resonate beyond the page or screen.

Case study: Puma "Trap" party

Puma staged its immersive House of Hustle event in partnership with JD Sports and marketing agency Urban Nerds in April 2018. It was here that the mismatch between the brand's purported purpose and its execution came into sharp focus. Invitees were sent shoe boxes containing fake money and burner phones, with business cards that instructed them to "turn on the trap line", while the event was staged in a building with blacked out windows and graffiti covering the walls.

London social worker Amber Gilbert Coutts called the entire event into question. She felt it glamorised drug culture or "trapping" at a time of heightened tensions over violent crime in the capital and to the detriment of traumatised communities.

Gal-Dem magazine characterised Puma's misfire as a "gross fetishisation of working class struggle". The sportswear brand later issued a statement apologising for any offence caused, saying the terms "trap" and "trapping" had been used to denote "hard work" and "hustle" and they did not intend any associations with drug culture.

Temi Mwale, told us Puma's approach didn't just lack subtlety but may have had a more long-lasting detrimental effect on those young people it sought to attract and supposedly support.

When brands behave in this way, young consumers understandably find it harder to discern whose purpose is authentic, leading to a loss of trust in commitment to any purpose at all. Companies and brands should use their resources to amplify the right message but will only do so successfully if they listen with humility first.

1. Redefining Purpose and Belonging

Redefining Purpose and belonging — 3 things you can do:

1) Be humble and vulnerable
— engage with consumers/employees as equals

> I would say to brands: be open to that partnership — don't go in as a big organisation — it is about relinquishing some of that power and having a proper dialogue.

Temi Mwale

2) Listen to people's ideas
— even if what you hear is uncomfortable

> Make sure you are really welcoming in people and their ideas and listen to what they have to say - even if you don't like it.

Ellen Jones

3) Live your ethics in your everyday practice

> I'm tired of hearing brands say they are going to make a change — I want to see it happen. You might have a photo shoot with people of every different colour in it and that's great but what are you doing, day-to-day, to get young people from different backgrounds involved?

Tayler Prince-Fraser

2. Redesigning Work : engagement, empowerment, leadership and wellbeing

" Stress kills our capacity to be creative, it kills the neural pathways designed to invent and innovate.

Bruce Daisley

It's clear that enabling your people to do the right thing has become more important than ever but are we creating the work environments and cultures to do just that?

The answer is a resounding no. Looking at our pillars of engagement, empowerment and wellbeing, it is evident that work cultures are unhealthy and unengaged and burnout is still all too common.

On wellbeing, a staggering 74% of UK adults say they have felt so stressed in the past year they felt overwhelmed or unable to cope (Source: Mental Health Foundation 2018 survey). And people in the creative industries are three times more likely to experience a mental health problem.

The rise of technology, though driving productivity and efficiency, is destroying social connections in the workplace. For example, workplaces are increasingly physically quieter, with fewer face-to-face social interactions and longer working days. Email alone is said to be responsible for pushing the average working day up from 7.5 to 9.5 hours.

Employees simultaneously feel mired in endless meetings that seem to be, more often than not, a platform for the loudest voice in the room. All these factors lead to unhealthy work cultures and underperformance whereas healthy ones, in which people feel "psychologically safe", lead to greater accountability. We urgently need to debunk harmful workplace myths.

Myth 1: The longer we work, the greater our productivity

Research from Utopia reveals there are four modes of work: information exchange, collaboration, deep work and "nothing at all".

By heavily concentrating on the first two modes of work, information exchange and collaboration, we are driving up hours and stress but draining creativity and productivity in the process.

Instead, we must also set time aside for the latter two. First of all, deep work:
"Deep work is the ability to focus without distraction on a cognitively demanding task. It's a skill that allows you to quickly master complicated information… and provide the sense of true fulfilment that comes from craftsmanship," says computer scientist and author Cal Newport.

2. Redesigning Work : engagement, empowerment, leadership and wellbeing

And finally, and arguably most importantly, we must allocate time for "nothing at all". When the brain is in a relaxed state and allowed to wander, it can be at its most creative and productive. Both Charles Darwin and Charles Dickens were said to only work around four hours each day but the rest of their time — spent mainly reading, walking and resting — allowed vital opportunity for the brain to reflect on and process that work.

Silicon Valley consultant and author Alex Soojung-Kim Pang argues "deliberate rest" is an investment in, rather than a tax on creativity.

Presenteeism and the extraordinary working practices of the likes of Elon Musk are a productivity fallacy. All the evidence suggests that at around 50 hours performance deteriorates and there are diminishing returns. "The lie we tell ourselves is that the mental work we do at 10 pm is as good as the work we do at 10am," says Bruce Daisley. His New Work Manifesto proposes 40 hours per week is enough and calls for a "Digital Sabbath" too.

Bruce Daisley's New Work Manifesto:

- **Presume Permission**

- **Reclaim Your Lunch**

- **Give Us Some Room**

- **Got To Be Me**

- **40 Hours Is Enough**

- **Digital Sabbath**

- **The Only Way Is Ethics**

- **Laugh**

Myth 2: That we can operate well under stress

Teams where people have faith in each other have better feedback loops. Bruce Daisley shared famed Psychological Safety researcher Amy Edmondson's research analysing prescription errors made by nurses in hospital wards which showed (somewhat counter-intuitively) that the best teams reported more errors than the worst. What that reveals is that if you are in a psychologically safe environment you are much more likely to report and amend your errors and be held accountable for them.

Ethical leaders encourage honesty about making mistakes. In a climate of fear and stress, on the other hand, where employees are more concerned about pleasing the boss than doing their best work, accountability suffers.

Our research shows us that in many workplaces a fear culture persists and doesn't just result in poor wellbeing for employees but also acts as a barrier to doing the right thing as an organisation.

Myth 3: Work is not about social connection

The days of the "water cooler moment" — a chance to gossip and catch up with colleagues — may be long gone but research now shows it is exactly these opportunities for random connection at work that can be critical to success. Put simply, wellbeing suffers without social connection, and we are just not as productive at work as a result. The death of the water cooler moment is leading to the new phenomenon of workplace loneliness.

A recent survey found that 42% of people say they do not have a friend at work. More than 9m people in the UK say they are "always" or "often" lonely (Source: Red Cross and Co-op). Gen Z are at the sharp end of this loneliness trap — the Office for National Statistics states that people aged 16-24 are three times more likely to feel lonely than older people.

Loneliness has devastating consequences (absence from work, reduced productivity, and costs associated with increased turnover of staff) and costs UK employers an estimated £2.5bn a year (Source: Co-op & New Economics Foundation). Loneliness is said to have an equivalent impact on health as smoking about fifteen cigarettes a day, with isolation far outstripping even obesity as a factor increasing a person's risk of premature death.

Technology and agile working practices which have spawned hot desking, remote working and more freelancing may have met a need for greater flexibility but it is often at the cost of human connection and social conversations. Jo Carnegie, Utopian and loneliness consultant, recommends swapping "tech points" for human "touch points" in the workplace as a way forward.

Pushing for change in workplace cultures can't be forced and letting employees have autonomy is paramount — an enforced lunch break could be as counterproductive as no lunch break.

2. Redesigning Work : engagement, empowerment, leadership and wellbeing

But if you create a workplace environment where there is a degree of autonomy and people feel listened to, it can also improve the external relationship of the customer to the brand.

Creating healthy workplaces — 4 things to do

1) Walk the talk
Encourage walking meetings to create social connections and engage in more divergent thinking. Research shows walking meetings are likely to boost collaborative performance when the goal is a creative one and simultaneously foster important social bonds.

2) Wander = Wonder
Take your team outside their usual workplace to think differently about a specific project. Simply relocating with your colleagues for a day to a different space can provide a fresh perspective on a problem.

3) Less is more
Hold fewer meetings with fewer people in them to increase candour and effectiveness. Research shows that the larger the group the less candid employees are likely to be and therefore less productive. Psychological safety doesn't necessarily "scale up".

4) Human "touch points"
Culture Code author Daniel Coyle advocates the "caves in the commons" approach: create physical spaces where regular, face-to-face social interactions can flourish at work; but also make spaces where people can retreat if they need to. A human "touch point" could be as simple as randomly matching two employees to share a coffee break together.

3. Driving continual change

As culture change can't happen in a silo, encouraging your team to become hackers and fix what is broken in the system is the only way meaningful change can happen across the organisation. Resistance is inevitable but by identifying the barriers you can find the solutions to push for change.

Barriers to change:

Short termism
A key barrier to doing the right thing is attachment to the familiar, fixed mindsets, concerns about cost implications and fear of constant change undermining the core values of the business.

Continual change was also acknowledged as being uncomfortable and could mean "stepping away from success" in the short term but allowing short-term objectives to prevail was identified as a major roadblock to doing the right thing.

Fear culture
Teams must address presenteeism, tolerance of toxic behaviour, flexible working and hot desking, performance pressure and whether the culture is supportive of mental health in general. Many cited "cliques" at work as jeopardising shared purpose.

In order for employees to feel empowered to do the right thing, they must feel that honesty and authenticity are incentivised. Currently, they feel that there is a lack of "freedom to fail", or that failure needs to be redefined/reframed.

Fears about losing authority by allowing yourself to be vulnerable, of "looking silly" and a lack of support were seen as real barriers to ethical leadership.

Putting profit before purpose
Purpose is being dilated and we must bring back the "why" for business.
"Higher purpose" is often pitted against "business purpose" and the "growth vs. doing the right thing" dynamic persists.

Profit, scaling and bureaucracy are getting in the way of purpose and, depending on the ownership model, a responsibility to shareholders can be a barrier to change. Added to this is a lack of time for leaders to live their own values and actions which undermines ethical leadership.

Change starts with you

"The biggest mistake we can make is to believe the way things are is the way things have to be, the opposite must be our mission.

Bruce Daisley

3. Driving continual change

Dr Sue Black's prescription for Ethical Leadership

- **Be brave**

- **Be yourself**

- **Show vulnerability**

- **Have diversity at your core**

- **Listen to others**

- **Collaboration, collaboration, collaboration**

5 steps to drive change

1) Practise your purpose: profit will follow
Regularly communicate and demonstrate a clear company purpose. Focus on the greater good the business can do in the world over personal ambition and return to the DNA of the brand.

2) Empathise to realise
Encourage greater empathy towards others and reward honesty about how you are feeling as well as collaboration — this will help employees feel that they belong.

3) Challenge toxic workplace culture
Create trust and a transparent culture at work so you can call out toxic behaviour and challenge cliques. Stop rationalising stress and take on more meaningful personal projects, including continual learning and volunteering.

4) Be brave — speak up
Make time to demonstrate ethical leadership through your values and actions and don't be afraid to challenge the status quo.

Take risks — changing the word "no" to "go" and challenging lack of progress within the organisation.

5) Don't just practise inclusion — internalise belonging
Celebrate differences and acknowledge unconscious bias; encourage those with privilege to be more aware and pull others up.

As one of our brand leaders told us, "If you are told there is no solution to something, just push a bit further and do the right thing."

Closing Thoughts

I do hope you have enjoyed reading Utopia's Do The Right Thing Report.
A report that could not have been more needed or timely. Why?

Because we are in a world that is swirling with fake news, fake facts and ultimately, leaders who are shameless in their peddling of falsehoods.
Contributing to the current, so-called "trust crisis".

I say, "so called" because it would be more honest to call it a crisis of leadership.
People have never really trusted financial services companies, or advertising,
and have been sceptical about their claims for generations.

But no longer knowing who to trust at all is new.

Lack of trust is the consequence of poor and dishonest leadership. Too many leaders
have contributed to the undermining of evidence-based, truthful discourse.

Business leaders and organisations are now seeking ways in which to restore confidence
in their motivations and veracity.

To be able to state a "purpose beyond profit" has the appeal of good intentions,
simplicity and single-mindedness. It also offers the potential for differentiation.
And yet, I have noticed that some companies and brands have got a bit lost.
They seem to be finding it difficult to define their purpose in a meaningful way.
Let alone follow through into operations.

One useful alternative framework within which to navigate the relationship between
purpose, communications, leadership and trust is that of "Trustworthiness". Academic
research confirms that there are four principal drivers which build trustworthiness in an
organisation. Each of which can be made tangible for leaders seeking greater
trustworthiness between stakeholders.

1.) Honesty is about words and actions matching up.
2.) Competence means your products and services must work.
3.) Reliability is delivering what you said, when you said you would,
    and providing value to customers.
4.) Benevolence is ensuring that nothing you do should harm people or the planet.

People want to know who to believe and trust, and their behaviour will be influenced by
it. This is important territory for brands to leverage. Telling the truth is powerful.
People respond positively to it.

It is not too late for a new generation of marketing leaders to grab hold of the situation
and start turning back the tide. In fact, perhaps our professional understanding of the
dynamics makes us particularly well-placed for making the correction.

Now, over to you. Be the change you want to see.

Jan Gooding
Stonewall Chair of the Board of Trustees
and President of the Marketing Association

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Bruce Daisley
Tech Supremo, author of The Joy of Work

Sam Conniff Allende
Social entrepreneur, co-founder of Livity, author of Be More Pirate

Dr Daisy Ginsberg
Artist

Temi Mwale
Social entrepreneur, founder of the 4Front Project

Ellen Jones
Student, activist and creator, Stonewall's Young Campaigner of the Year 2017

Tayler Prince-Fraser
Model and business owner, founder of Last Pick Athletics Club

Jodie Cariss
Self Space founder

Dr Sue Black
Tech evangelist and social entrepreneur, author of Saving Bletchley Park

Sophia Thakur
Spoken word artist

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About Utopia:

Utopia is a culture change business. In a business landscape where creative
thinking is the primary driver of growth, our changemakers help organisations build
more purposeful, more inclusive and more entrepreneurial cultures, fit for this age
of creativity.

We do this by disrupting, inspiring and rewiring - from the intern to the CEO,
through workshops and hacks - to create happier, inclusive, more productive workforces
that deliver competitive advantage. And we've done it for businesses across the board,
including Coca-Cola European Partners, D&AD, Google, Schneider Electric,
Spotify and Universal Music.