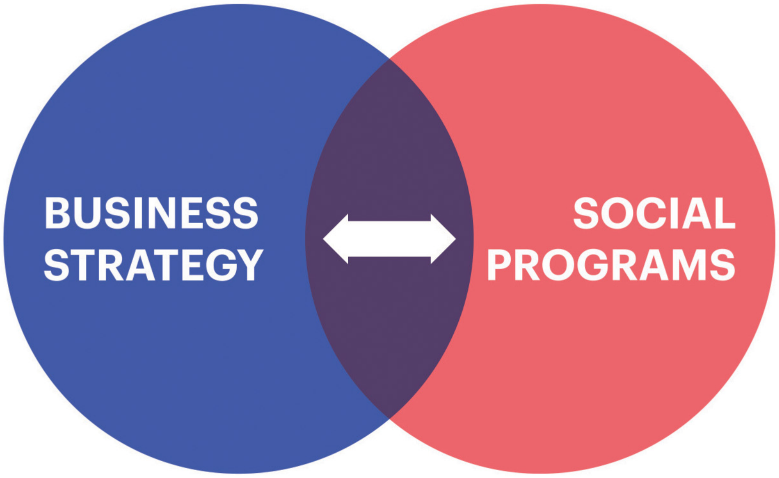
THE FUTURE OF PURPOSE-DRIVEN BRANDING


BUSINESS STRATEGY
SOCIAL PROGRAMS

SIGNATURE PROGRAMS THAT **IMPACT & INSPIRE** BOTH BUSINESS AND SOCIETY

DAVID AAKER

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Chapter 1

THE FUTURE OF PURPOSE-DRIVEN BRANDING—THREE STRATEGIC THRUSTS

What we want for work is to be a valued member of a winning team on an inspiring mission.

Graham Weston, Entrepreneur

These are remarkable times for business organizations. It is a time of opportunity, even a time for dramatic change. It is not a time to stand still and drift toward irrelevance.

The new purpose-driven revolution is leading firms beyond a focus on growing sales, profits, and shareholder return to having a business purpose that does more. One that is meaningful, admired, and worthy of respect. One that engenders pride from employees, customers, partners, and other stakeholders. One that inspires people and firms to take on challenging tasks and goals.

There is a legend that Sir Christopher Wren, the architect of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, stopped one morning to ask three different laborers on the construction site, all engaged in the same task, what they were doing. He got three different answers. The first said, "I am cutting this stone." The second answered, "I am earning three shillings, sixpence, a day." The third man straightened up, squared his shoulders and, still holding his mallet and chisel, replied. "I am helping Sir Christopher Wren build this great cathedral." People want to be building cathedrals and be associated with businesses that are doing just that.

An organization can have a purpose that goes beyond financials that does not involve addressing societal challenges. A purpose can, for example, be based on "creating insanely great products" or "offering the industry's best service." Or it can refocus from a product or service into what a product or service does. For instance, instead of trucking, we are the "lifeblood of communities" or instead of making cars, we "enable travel." These routes to a purpose can engender inspiration and, in general, elevate the opinion of a business and its brand for all its stakeholders. We here suggest that firms need to augment that perspective, to do more.

Addressing Societal Challenges

It is argued in this book that the "future of purpose-driven branding" will include addressing societal challenges with impactful programs. Sitting on the sidelines in the face of the problems and issues facing society is no longer a good option. Making great products is no longer enough to provide inspiration to a segment of employees and other stakeholders. It is now time to make sure that a business purpose or an accompanied social purpose includes addressing the serious problems, needs, and issues facing society. It is the road to being relevant in the purpose-driven era.

There are several forces that support the elevation of societal efforts for a business or firm that will be described in Chapter 4, In brief they are:

- **The stakeholder paradigm is winning.** In the battle with the "role of business is to increase shareholder wealth" business model, the good guys are winning. There are many indicators. One is the 2019 decision by the Business Round Table representing the CEOs of America's leading companies to adopt a new purpose that explicitly states that firms need to deliver value to all of the stakeholders and have a commitment to protect the environment. That means that a serious headwind to those espousing an aggressive social effort is now a soft breeze.

- **The seriousness and visibility of societal challenges.** There are enormous challenges facing society throughout the world, including climate change and inequality, that are increasingly visible and threatening. Many, especially the millennials, now believe that the threats are real and capable of dramatically affecting the quality of life and also a firm's long-term strategy and performance.
- **Businesses with resources, insights, and agility can contribute.** Firms need to be part of the solution because they are needed, they have the resources and agility to contribute, and for some issues such as obesity and inequality they have been part of the problem. Governments with political gridlock, resource limitations, and an inability to be agile and experimental, cannot do it all.
- **Employees and other stakeholders demand it.** In part, because of these three forces, many employees, particularly the younger generations, are uncomfortable in organizations that are not committed to authentic efforts to address societal challenges. They make join/leave decision based on the social purpose. Other stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, and investors are also on board. To be relevant to many stakeholders, a social purpose and programs are needed.
- **Business brands need the energy and image lift social programs provide.** A creditable set of social programs that address problems facing society have an unique ability to enhance a business brand. To get such a lift, the social programs need to stand out from the sea of sameness and represent distinctive societal leadership with authentic programs that have a "talked about" impact on societal challenges. The value of this business brand lift is particularly high when the business is bland or mature with few other ways to create interest.

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

It is argued in this book, that the "future of purpose-driven branding" will include addressing challenges facing society such as environmental threats and inequality. We will describe these challenges as societal or social challenges where societal or social means that the challenges are relevant to or related to society in general and the welfare of human beings as members of society. We refer to responsive programs as social or societal programs or efforts where again social or societal means that the programs will address society's problems, needs, and issues. So the following have virtually the same meaning:

- Social or societal challenges/programs/efforts
- Challenges/programs/efforts that impact society

There are alternatives to the use of social or societal challenges/programs/efforts, namely "sustainable," "CSR" (corporate social responsibility) and "ESG" (environmental, social, governance). The terms "social" or "societal" or "society" are used here partially because the other terms, although playing a role in the discussion, have associations that are not helpful. The sustainable term, which can be traced to the 1980s, is often restricted to environmental programs and the CSR label, that appeared in the 1950s, is associated with dated ideas and programs.

The ESG concept was developed in 2005 by the finance community to guide investors who wanted a portfolio to include firms doing social good and avoiding social bad. This effort was supported by competing efforts by various organizations to measure the ESG performance of firms usually containing hundreds of dimensions, most of which are not relevant to a given firm. These ESG measuring services have sometimes struggled to show that they are measuring what they purport to measure. Additionally, because of all the dimensions covered, they do not focus on the impact made by programs that address major societal challenges. Nor do they measure the ESG performance of business units within a firm which for this book is often the more appropriate level of analysis.

Any organization that is now using and is comfortable with one of these three terms is not wrong and should feel free to use them when describing a society challenge, a social program, or societal efforts. It is not a label competition, it is the content behind the label that counts.

Purpose vs. Mission. A purpose or mission are two routes toward a high-level message about the essence of a firm or business that reflects its ambition to go beyond growing sales and profits to something far more motivating. The purpose or mission is usually a single sentence that is punchy, clear, and memorable and often is elaborated to provide detail and interpretation. It should inspire, guide, feel authentic and credible, and have a worthy goal.

Creating a purpose statement starts by asking the "Why?" question. Why does this business exist? Why do employees come to work? The mission statement is motivated more by the "What?" question. What is the task to which the organization is committed?

It is possible to have both a purpose and mission, but in most cases, they gravitate to a single thought that often incorporates both questions. The mission for Lego, for example, to "inspire and develop the builders of tomorrow," addresses both questions and suggests social programs as well. Here we use the two labels interchangeably to be relevant to firms that have adopted one but not the other, and to avoid distracting categorization issues.

A Lot of Upside Remains

Although there has been a lot of momentum building in the past decades toward a purpose-driven future involving societal efforts, the response needs to be greater and better. Even those firms that have the appropriate purpose or mission, the culture, and the programs in place, have work to do. There is an ongoing challenge in creating programs that impact society, in communicating them effectively to different stakeholders, in building and managing the many involved brands, and in scaling what is working. As the challenges persist and evolve, even these firms are far from reaching their potential.

There are also many firms that have either not gotten the word or have simply given lip service and not made an effort that is effective or even serious. There is still a distance to go to get these firms and their leaders on board. They need to find the motivation, the resources, and the right culture. Relying on ad hoc grants and volunteering is not enough to make a difference and it's not enough to affect the organization. These firms need to join the game and for some it will mean a major transformation of its purpose, culture, strategies, structure, and people.

Toward Social Program Leadership

The "future of purpose-driven branding" thus includes robust efforts to address societal challenges such as climate change, resource conservation, inequality, and improving health and well-being. That is not only the right and responsible course, but it should be the strategic choice as well. Survival in any marketplace involves becoming and staying **relevant** to employees and other stakeholders and a path to winning is to go beyond relevance to be a **social program leader.**

Real social program leadership means a commitment to create programs that inspire, are credible, and have a "make a difference" impact. It involves recognizing and analyzing society problems and issues with depth and insight, creating or finding programs that work, and then executing them with competence and passion. Inspiration is an important target. There should be social programs that get beyond being impressive. It should merit a "Wow!" reaction that breaks out of the sameness. And it should be branded.

There is a big payout for those that get it right. In addition to feeling good about the social good that is being done, those that claim a social program leadership position will enjoy a competitive advantage. Those that miss or stumble with their social effort will lose in the branding space and in the marketplace as well.

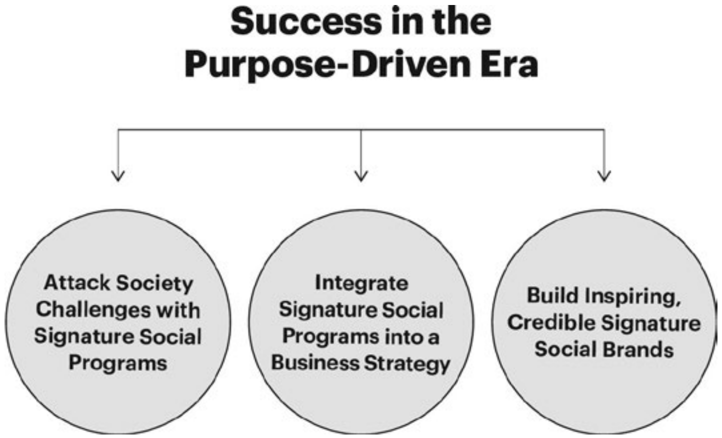
What is the future of purpose-driven branding? We can see three strategic thrusts or action plans, shown in Figure 1-1, that will represent the future for firms that strive to move beyond being relevant to being in a leadership position in the purpose-driven age.

- Attack society challenges with signature social programs
- Integrate the signature social program into a business
- Build inspiring, credible signature social brands

These will be examined in the course of the book after some context has been set in Part I in the form of two case studies and an overview of the forces diving the momentum toward social purpose enabled strategies. Parts II, III, and IV in turn introduce and analyze each of these strategic thrusts. In this chapter, a brief description of each will be presented to provide an overview of the challenge of winning in the purpose-driven age. It will conclude with an examination of the critical role of branding and a roadmap of the book.

Figure 1-1

SUCCESS IN THE PURPOSE-DRIVEN ERA


Success in the Purpose-Driven Era
Attack Society Challenges with Signature Social Programs
Integrate Signature Social Programs into a Business Strategy
Build Inspiring, Credible Signature Social Brands

The Future—Attack Society Challenges with Signature Social Programs

The "future of purpose-driven branding" includes robust efforts to address societal challenges such as climate change, resource conservation, inequality, and improving health and well-being. That is not only the right and responsible course, but it should be the strategic choice as well. Survival in any marketplace involves becoming and staying **relevant** to employees and other stakeholders and a path to winning means going beyond relevance to be a **social program leader**.

Real leadership means a commitment to create social programs that are respected, admired, credible, and have a "make a difference" impact that inspire and even stimulate a "Wow!" reaction. And they are branded. We call these programs signature social programs.

Having signature status means that a program:

- Will address a meaningful societal challenge that touches people, that feels real emotionally.
- Is credible, impactful, and committed. It will make a difference.
- Will lift the energy and image of a business brand.
- Will build a visible, inspiring brand with the help of business partners that will guide the program and lead its communication task.
- Can be an internal program or an external nonprofit partner.

Why a signature social program? For perspective, much of the social effort of a firm or business usually consists of grants and volunteering which are and feel fragmented, without direction, having little aggregate impact, very similar to the effort by other firms, and unbranded. There is often an environmental component, perhaps to reduce the CO2 emission and energy use, which does have a focus and goals but is also unbranded, looks like that of other firms, and can sound like puffery. Finding proof points and communicating them is thus often from formidable to impossible.

Signature social programs are needed because they are more likely to represent a real impact. They will have been set up to succeed by addressing a real need with a well-thought out and managed program that has focus. The programs will represent a long-term commitment which leads to improving features and operations and thus more impact. Their brand will provide direction and inspiration which is a large part of the success journey

They also provide value because a branded, focused program can communicate much easier and more effectively than a loose assortment of grants, volunteer activities and energy goals. Communication is a role that a brand plays. The signature program brand will have an uniqueness and impact story to tell about the program and about the business that it represents.

Communicating the efforts of a firm to address society challenges will only become increasingly critical. It is critical to create buy-in, engagement, and a sense of purpose among the firm stakeholders, particularly employees and customers or clients. It is critical to provide energy and inspiration to the program externally and internally. It is critical to enhance business partners. It is critical to gain visibility, to stand out from the perceived sameness around societal efforts of other firms.

The signature social programs can be an internal branded program such as Chick-fil-A's Shared Table program that provided over 10 million meals during its first decade after its founding in 2012 by a Tennessee operator. Or it can be an external partner. Costco, for example, has a "visionary partner" status for Feeding America supporting a program to supply to those in need food that otherwise would go to waste.

There is a big payout for those that get it right. In addition to feeling good about the social good that is being done, those that claim a social program leadership position will enjoy a competitive advantage. Those that miss or stumble with their social effort will lose in the branding space and in the marketplace as well.

Chapter 6 has more.

Getting a signature social program right is more likely if it is supported by an organizational purpose or mission and culture and if the right program is selected at the outset.

Create a Purpose or Mission & Culture that Nurture Social Programs

Creating or finding signature social programs and integrating them into a business starts by adjusting the DNA of the firm or business so that addressing societal problems and issues is an active part of the firm. It is just "what we do."

That means that proposals for a new or enhanced program does not have to answer the "why" question, only the efficacy standard. It means that societal challenges and programs become part of the strategy conversation and resourcing decisions. A purpose or mission (a mission can play the same role as the purpose—see the terminology insert for an explanation) and a strong culture are needed to help establish and reinforce this DNA.

A **purpose** or **mission** can be relevant for both a business strategy and its societal efforts. CVS Health is about "Helping people on the path to better health," and Foot Locker strives to "inspire and empower youth culture." When a business has a business strategy and brand position based on having an offering that is "green" or "healthy," the purpose or mission will then, of course, include a social component.

It is more common, however, to have a social purpose or mission separate from the business purpose or mission which, for some, can get diluted or distorted when an effort is made to include addressing societal challenges. When unconstrained, both can be free to be more complete, more forceful, and more credible. That does not mean that the social purpose or mission has less priority or a lesser role in the culture of the firm. Nor does it mean that they occupy different silos that are unconnected. They should be complementary, even overlapping, and have staffs and programs that interact and even intertwine.

One approach is to have multiple purpose or mission statements, one of which enables social programs. Caterpillar, for example, has four mission statements that inform strategies and decisions—to provide the best customer value, to develop and reward people, to grow, and a fourth reflecting a dedication *"to improving the quality of life while sustaining the quality of our earth. We encourage social responsibility."*

Some firms put their social purpose or mission in a companion foundation organization. Others can attach it to the corporate brand. Unilever has a mission to "aim to make sustainable living commonplace with high-performing brands that are a force for good, taking action for a more sustainable and equitable world." Each of the over 100 Unilever business units can own that social mission which gives them latitude when creating a purpose or mission for their business whether to include an explicit societal dimension.

The **organizational culture**, the "how we do things here" standard, brings the purpose or mission to life inside the firm. It is the beliefs, values, priorities, behavior, and management styles that determine how the organization and its employees view and act on issues and options that come before them. In a strong culture, there is an organizational force that provides people with an instinct as to what is comfortable and feels right. Whether it is a decision to commit to a nonprofit relationship, to start a social program, or to participate in an interest community around a societal issue, it makes a difference if it fits with the culture. To understand the culture, look to what decisions and behavior are valued, what actions or activities precipitate discomfort, and what programs are celebrated.

The challenge is to make sure that the culture of the firm permits or even celebrates the social effort. To do so, the commitment to the effort by the CEO and other leaders is critical, but not enough. Most of the organization should believe that a pressing, societal need is being addressed with credible signature programs that inspire, and numerous employees should be actively involved as volunteers or program leaders. In that case, the effort will become part of the culture and the wind will be at its back.

Chapter 5 elaborates.

Find or Develop Signature Programs that Deliver Social Impact

Businesses need to start by finding, creating, or reenergizing signature social programs. Ideas can come from a wide array of sources. The goal is to emerge with programs than touch a nerve, inspire, are credible, fit your business, and impact a real need.

One place to start is with your own assets, and offerings. How can you leverage what you have and what you do to support a social program? We shall see in Chapter 3, for example, Salesforce leveraging its software to aid nonprofits and firms that want to take sustainability efforts to a more professional level. The result is a set of programs that are credible, impactful, and ownable. They benefit from the software advances made in adjacent commercial products and from the perceived commitment of the firm's brand to these programs.

But a business is not restricted to using its own assets or having a natural fit. Some firms are not in a business with leverageable assets or with a natural connection from a social program to their business. They are then free to find a program that is needed and create a connection that reflects a passion, in-depth knowledge, and long-term commitment. In the next chapter, we will hear of the Dove's Real Beauty programs to counter misplaced judgments about women's appearance and the Dove Self-Esteem program for teens. Neither has any relationship to Dove's business but the effectiveness of the long-term campaign has made it a part of the Dove culture, personality, and image. A fit emerged.

A program can be centered around fundraising. The Avon Walk for Breast Cancer for over 12 years was the centerpiece signature social program for Avon, a skin care and cosmetics firm. The Walk and all that surrounded it—the scheduling, the training, the fund raising (nearly two-thirds of a billion dollars was raised), and the educational impact to well over 100 million women, made it all feel authentic and natural.

There is a choice between an internal, owned program and adopting a nonprofit firm as a signature social program. An internal program can be owned, managed, and resourced by the business. Its fortune is in its hands. But it can be hard to find an internal program opportunity that is "not taken," leverages the firm's assets and resources, is broad enough to be relevant to your business, and is "doable." Even if the program is perfect conceptually, it needs to be implemented right and then staffed, guided, and managed over a long period of time. Not easy.

If the right internal program or programs cannot be found of if they do not exhaust the need for signature programs, an external nonprofit can play a role. It can come with a proven approach, a strong brand, and often can be at scale. The problem is to create a fit and connection that feels right. In Chapter 11, we will see Thrivent, a financial services firm, create a long-term partnership with Habitat with Humanity which involved Thrivent employees and customers in building needed housing around the world. It had nothing to do with the offerings or operations of Thrivent but everything to do with its values, culture, employee experience, and customer connection. The result was a fit with little risk that it would be viewed as only a commercial effort to attract attention and gain respect.

Umbrella brands

In situations where there are multiple signature social programs that combine to represent an entity that has a role in the business strategy, there is a need to create an umbrella brand. That umbrella brand could be the corporate brand itself such as Salesforce (see Chapter 3), a dedicated organizational umbrella brand (see NBA Cares in Chapter 6), a foundation (e.g., the Virgin foundation from Chapter 5), or the grouping of programs (See Chapter 8 where Barclays grouped four programs under the Digital Eagles brand). It is not the case that signature social program has to carry the flag by itself.

An umbrella brand could also be a signature brand in that it is representing another brand in an important way. As a signature brand it may epitomize a dimension of another brand. NBA Cares, for example, represents the societal dimensions of the NBA itself. If there is a question as to the seriousness of the social impact effort of the NBA, NBA Cares is the answer.

More is found in Chapter 6 where the concept of signature social programs is elaborated, internal and external nonprofits are compared, and umbrella branding is discussed. Chapter 7 which has an extended discussion on how to find or create one or more signature programs for your business.

The Future—Integrate Signature Social Programs into a Business

The future needs to do more than establish a signature social program that is on an island required to be self-sufficient. Such an isolated program will not only lack adequate resources, but will be regarded by a sponsoring business as an add-on appendage. As such, it will be a dead weight on the organization taking resources away from needed strategy and tactical investments and thus vulnerable to downturns or new firm leadership.

Instead, the signature social program should be integrated into the business strategy. It should be known and valued within the business and have a blended purpose (or mission), vision, and culture. The signature program strategy should link to the business perceptually, draw on the staff and resources of the business, and integrate its communication message with the communication effort of the business. The two should be part of the same team.

The glue of the integration process is the symbiotic relationship between a business and its adopted partner, a signature social program. Each will materially help the other.

- **A signature program enhances the business.**
- **A business supports a signature program.**

It is a win-win. Further, there is the "flywheel" momentum generated when the business enhancement creates more support for the signature program which then creates more business enhancement and the process repeats. An evaluation of the signature social program that fails to consider all the ways that it creates value may make the strategic mistake of undervaluing a program or exaggerating its weakness.

How to get there? To integrate two forces that are usually separate and independent and sometimes with inconsistent or even competitive goals is not easy. It requires resources, innovative strategies, cross-silo teamwork, shared resources, operational talent, and a hybrid culture. None of these are easy or natural but there is a huge upside to getting it right.

The book will showcase several firms that have achieved a high level of business/social integration starting with Unilever and Salesforce in the following two chapters.

A Signature Program Adds Value to a Business

To be clear, Job 1 of the signature social program and its associated signature brand is to address a societal challenge and create a "make a difference" impact. The "second" or Job 2 for the signature social program, often hidden, is to add economic value primarily by enhancing the brand of a sponsoring firm or business by boosting its visibility, image, connection to employees and customers, and ability to counter "bad" publicity. In part, this is accomplished by infusing the firm or business brand with the inspiration and values that come with the signature brand and the energy and visibility that it precipitates. This role works for an external nonprofit that has been adopted by a business as well as an internal program.

Gaining energy, visibility, and an image lift is particularly useful for a brand with offerings that are taken for granted—think milk, a bank, or a detergent. Such a brand struggles to get noticed and a signature social program can change that. And if the offering is one that has annoyed, such as insurance or a supermarket that has decided to stop selling your favorite item, a signature program can provide an alternative conversation.

The book provides vivid examples as to how a signature social program can give a business an energy and image lift. Lifebuoy, described in the next chapter, was introduced in 1894 as a hygiene hand soap to fight cholera. Drawing on this legacy purpose, Lifebuoy developed the "Help a Child Reach 5" program of improved handwashing in areas without clean water. Three videos describing mothers in three villages that had experienced the program got 44 million views. Barclays, from Chapter 8, regained lost trust when they created and communicated a signature social program, the Digital Eagles, that helped people adjust and thrive in the digital world. Prior conventional ads did nothing to change the trust ditch they had created.

This Job 2 is a particularly important part of the integration of a signature social program into a business. It is, in fact, half of the integration glue. Without this glue, the signature social programs and the entire social effort that they represent would be regarded as resource drains that are annoying and expendable instead of being a helpful partner.

There is a fine line to be walked because getting the signature social program to help a business brand can engender a perception that the effort is cynical and self-serving with the dominant motivation to enhance its image and gain sales. To reduce this risk, the firm or business needs to demonstrate authentic empathy and commitment to the societal problem or issue. It could, for example, support thought leadership or make clear a long-term commitment, one that spans decades and not months.

Chapter 8 elaborates.

A Business Supports a Signature Social Program

A business that enjoys the Job 2 energy and image lift will be motivated to support the signature social program. Such support can be a game-changer. A business that is a committed active signature programs partner can provide an endorsement that generates invaluable credibility for the signature program that is very difficult to achieve by other means. Further, a signature program integrated into a business will be in a position to access its knowledge, budgets, volunteers, offerings, customer base, market knowledge, and media power. Not only will there be permission but the signature program staff will know what is there that would help and who to work with. The right set of business partners can change a bare-bones, have-baked brand-building effort to a professional, well-funded program.

The integration of the signature social program into the business means that the program is no longer an anchor that sucks resources out of a firm's "productive" investments. The signature program by adding economic value, becomes part of the team instead of a burden

This integrated partnership is important for both internal and external signature social brands. Internal brand teams need to create working relationships and channels of communication with the sponsoring business brands, especially their marketing teams, and attempt to integrate the signature program into the business strategy. External nonprofits have the same challenge but they, in addition, first need to recruit and nurture sponsoring business partners, a process that requires effort and patience.

Gaining and actively managing business partners is not easy but the payoff is high. Habitat for Humanity, for example, from chapter 9 convinced Thrivent and 19 other firms to become "legacy sponsors" to partner with Habitat's to provide housing to those around the world that are in need. These firms provided a financial commitment, volunteers, and material that have allowed Habitat and its global mission to experience spectacular growth.

More in Chapter 9.

Blending the Teams Increases the Payoff

The big payoff comes when the signature program team and the business team are blended. There is cross-organization channels of communication, relationships, projects, task forces, common goals, and shared interests.

Employees of the business will feel more pride and more professional meaning in there work when they are fully informed and even more when they are engaged as part of the effort. And signature program team will feel more confidence, experience more learning, and perform at a higher level when they are part of a combined team that includes needed skills and assets.

The Future—Build Inspiring, Credible Signature Social Brands

For all this to work, for the signature social program to do its jobs of creating impact and enhancing a business brand, it needs to build a strong signature social brand that will provide guidance, clarity, credibility, visibility, and inspiration. All are needed. In addition, Jobs 1 and 2 require communication based on a strong brand.

Note that an umbrella brand can play a signature role at least for some audiences. When that is the case, it will have the same communication tasks as that of a signature social brand and the same need for active brand building. That means that it requires an organizational brand-building home and budget which may not be currently adequate.

How do you go about this brand-building task besides enlisting the support of a business partner? There are roadblocks.

One problem is that social programs, whether internal or external, are often not staffed with people who have a branding background or even have access to those that do. Further, the staff usually have a lot on their plates and little resource slack, so branding does not get the priority it should. The value of the integration with the firm or business is thus even more visible because integration enables the signature program to access the needed talent, budgets, and communication assets.

Another related problem is that signature program staff will believe that the most efficient and effective communication is to use facts and descriptions of program elements and goals. That is usually erroneous and leads to wasteful efforts. What may be needed is a willingness and ability to think out of the box, perhaps creating in-depth stories or even flamboyant stunts to breakthrough, approaches that require getting out of a comfort zone that is not easy.

Brand building has a host of tools, concepts, and vehicles. There are segmentation strategies, positioning strategies, value propositions, points of differentiation, a brand vision, brand personalities, brand communities, and much more. Vehicles can include websites, social media, publicity stunts, blogs, podcasts, newsletters taglines, posters, and advertising. Knowing of these concepts and vehicles is not enough. Each is powerful but only if implemented with professional skill and breakthrough creativity. It is not just about spending money.

In Chapter 10, some fundamentals of brand building are reviewed including some of these concepts and vehicles. In addition, the book introduces in Chapters 11 to 15. five branding "must dos" which are often underused and sometimes unknown or ignored.

Five Branding "Must Dos"

Create a brand North Star to guide and inspire. It should include a brand purpose/mission, vision, position, and tagline. The purpose or mission provides a compact portrayal of the essence of the signature social program. The vision provides the small set of brand pillars representing what the brand stands for. The position guides the communication priorities. The tagline provides a punchy reminder of the brands essence for an external audience. Together they provide a "North Star" for the signature social program, a feeling for what is on and off brand, a direction for enhancing or augmenting the program, and guidance on priorities for operations, budgets and especially communication efforts. When on target, they will resonate and even inspire, differentiate, energize, neutralize competitor advantages, and provide credibility. Chapter 11 elaborates.

Create brand communities A powerful way to connect is to foster brand communities. These are groups of people that share interests, activities, problems, or opinions, with the brand being an active member of the group. This community provides functional information and social benefits. It is a place where experiences, stories and ideas can be shared with others. The brand website becomes the central organizing node and information source. Salesforce, for example, from Chapter 3, has more than 40 nonprofit and higher-education focused user communities around the world that are supported, financed, and managed by Salesforce. These Salesforce "success" communities provide a trusted environment for customers, partners, and prospects to get answers, share ideas, collaborate, and learn best practices. The social and functional experience can bind people to a brand more than any communication program. More on brand communities in Chapter 12.

Use stories. Beware of disinterest and counterarguing undercutting your communication efforts. The painful truth is that people, in a time in which media clutter and information overload is overwhelming, are not interested in your facts or program descriptions. They have other ways to spend their time. If they do process your facts or descriptions, they will be skeptical. Into that that environment, come stories that research shows have the ability to attract attention, gain involvement, create emotional connections, engender positive feelings, resist counter-arguing, and be remembered. The goal should be to find "signature" stories that have a WOW factor with an exceptional ability to entertain, inform, intrigue, or involve. Chapter 13 explains the why and how of stories.

Develop and use silver bullet brands. A silver bullet brand is a brand that helps another brand by providing energy, differentiation, or credibility. It can be a feature, service, founder, story, or endorser that provides an answer to the question—"why this program?" If you ask why people are drawn to your brand, and the answer is not branded, you may have missed an opportunity. If your "secret sauce" were branded, it would have the status of being "worth branding," be easier to communicate, and most importantly, would be ownable. Chapter 14 provides case studies of silver bullets in action.

Scale the program. If the program is successful at achieving real impact, consideration should be given to scaling it, so it can be replicated it to other geographies or target audiences. It may be possible to make the core idea ten times, a hundred times, or a thousand times more impactful. One way to scale is to become a partner, consultant, or the provider of support for others who want to address the same social need and could benefit from knowing how it is done. Scaling, turning local success in much more, can be difficult to staff and resource given the day-to-day needs of a program, but it is a route to a home-run impact. Chapter 15 has more.

Each of these can change the fortunes of a signature social program by supporting its brand strategy and brand activation.

The Role of Branding

Branding, its concepts and tools, play a central role in creating social program leadership and an effective "business/social" strategy. It is brands that make the firm's societal effort create synergies and clarity instead of being ad hoc and confusing. Branding is too often underappreciated, under resourced, and/or inadequately implemented in the social program world. To see the role of branding up close, we reprise the strategic thrusts through a branding lens.

Attack society challenges with signature social programs. Just the idea that a signature social program is needed to communicate the commitment of a firm or business to societal challenges to employees and other stakeholders is a significant branding decision. The selection of the societal need and responsive program requires a feel for what will resonate and what will fit the firm or business, both require a branding perspective. A purpose or mission of a firm or business is a cornerstone of its brand and adapting or augmenting it to make societal challenges thus affects the brand. Further, organizational culture is driven in large part by the organizational brand, its implementation, and communication.

Integrating signature social programs into a business. Others have suggested that a social effort will help a business but have not explicitly observed that a primary route is by elevating and strengthening the business brand. That route requires an understanding of what the brand equity of a firm or business brand consists of—namely visibility, image, and stakeholder loyalty—and how the inspiration and credibility of a signature social program might affect it.

Building inspiring, credible signature social brands. The signature social brand is the driver of the program's social impact and its ability to enhance a business and therefore needs to be strong. That means branding concepts and tools such as positioning, a brand vision, brand communities, signature stories, websites, social media, podcasts, being endorsed by a firm or business and more need to be accessed at a high level.

Brand Portfolio Synergy

The signature social brand is part of a brand portfolio or brand family. There are four sets of brand relationship that need to be managed to ensure that they create synergy and not confusion and inefficiencies.

The business partner. The signature social brand has a relationship with the sponsoring business each influencing and benefiting the other that needs to be actively managed. In addition the link between the two needs to be established. In particular, the business brand should cue the signature brand.

Other signature programs. There are almost always other, sometimes many, such signature social programs. The challenge is to manage this team to make sure that there are clarity of roles, potential brand-building synergies are achieved, opportunities to expand impact are pursued, and resources allocation among the programs is strategic. Umbrella brands have a strategic role to play and should be understood.

The signature programs silver bullet brands or "secret sauce." These are branded features, services, stories, founders, or endosers that need to be managed, resourced, and linked to the signature brand. More in Chapter 14.

Outside partner brands. Outside organizations such as the girl scouts can support or leverage a signature brand with a relevant mission. As we shall see in Chapter 12, Patagonia's social effort involves several industry organizations with similar goals.

The Book Plan

The book will discuss why each of these strategic thrusts need to be understood and also how to be successfully implemented. The book has four parts.

Part I The Context

The three chapters of Part I (chapters 2, 3, and 4) will provide a context to better understand the role of social programs. The first two of these chapters present case studies of two role model firms. The first, Unilever, is a diversified BtoC (business to consumer) firm, over a century old, with over a hundred strong brands marketed around the world. The second, Salesforce, is a BtoB (business to business) company that's just over two decades old with offerings under a single brand. These two illustrate the power of social programs; the complexity created by multiple and varied programs, societal needs, and stakeholders; and the power of integrating the social effort into the business.

The third chapter of Part I (chapter 4), will show that firm's social efforts have moved from "nice to have" to being a "must have" by analyzing five forces—the emergence of the stakeholder business paradigm; the visibility of society's problems and issues; the unique ability of firms to make meaningful impact on these problems and issues, pressure from employees, customers, and investors; and the needs of business brands that for an energy and image lift. The battle is not over and there is enormous upside still on the table, but the momentum is surging.

Part II Signature Social Programs

Part II, presents the rationale for the first strategic thrust, the signature social program and the challenges it represents.

- Chapter 5 explains how a purpose/mission and culture can enable signature social programs to be developed and thrive.
- Chapter 6 defines signature social programs and presents the internal vs external options.
- Chapter 7 discusses how to find or create signature social programs and suggests choice criteria.

Part III—Integrating the Signature Social Program into a Business.

Part III discusses the second strategic thrust, the integration of the signature program into a business strategy and the how the program enhances and received support from a business.

- Chapter 8 details how a signature social program can give a business brand a lift and why that should and can be done.
- Chapter 9 shows how a business can help a brand plus how to blend two organizations together.

Part IV—Putting Signature Social Brand on Steroids—5 Branding "Must Dos"

The remaining imperative, the subject of Part IV, puts us in the shoes of the signature social program leadership. How can they, with the help of a business partner, build a vigorous, strong brand, a brand which can help in impacting a societal need, representing a firm's social efforts, and enhancing a business brand?

Chapter 10 reviews some proven brand-building concepts and tools.

In chapters 11 to 16, five branding "must dos" are presented—creating a North Star direction, brand communities, signature stories, silver bullet brands, and ways to scale an effective program.

The book has been written for firms that are committed to a meaningful societal effort and to nonprofits that would like to be the signature social program for nonprofits organizations looking for program partners. The goal is to reach and help both by providing insights into how branding concepts and tools can help them create and manage programs that address societal needs that are both real and feel real, while also helping build the brand of a partnering business.