



When & how to do  
Cause Advertising.

**Three things.**

# DIGGING DEEPER

With the world becoming more socially conscious, businesses face pressure to take stances on more social, environmental & even political issues.

However, even if brands are eager to attach their names to a particular cause for genuine reasons — which isn't always the case — consumers don't always perceive good intentions.

We checked in with consumers & uncovered learnings as to why — or why not — certain brands came out on top & how consumers really feel about cause marketing efforts.

# #1 There needs to be brand & cause congruence.



“Patagonia helps the environment and make their clothing in a humane way.”

“Apple has always made a point of trying to do as much for the environment as possible. They highlight the environmental impact and how they've minimized it for each new product launch, they use as many recycled materials as possible, redesigned packaging to be more conscious of the environment.”

“Olive Garden gives back to food bank and shelters. BP also gives back to people who need financial assistance when natural disasters happen.”

# #2

## Consumer suspicion of cause advertising can impact brand perception.



“I’ve heard some damning things about “pink-washing” in sports leagues and how the charity behind it is ineffective at directing funds to cancer research like they say.”

“Most brand-cause partnerships feel incredibly shallow and self serving. The brand just wants people to think they are a moral company, so that people will buy more from them. At Walgreens, many of their own employees make for less than a living wage, so maybe they should focus on keeping their own employees out of poverty first. I genuinely cannot think of a brand that has pulled this off well.”

“A lot of corporate/brand charity efforts feel a little self-serving at their core and ring hollow, it’s hard to avoid that and requires a tight integration between the product and the cause.”



# #3

## Cause advertising has unintended brand impact. Understanding your customer is more important than ever.



“Nike is a brand that contributes to social injustices and social inequality. It understands people.”



“Nike - all the donations in the world aren't going to make up for those sweat shops.”

“Toms shoe company gives back a pair of shoes for every pair purchased. They are giving shoes to people who can't afford them.”



“Toms shoes contributed so many pairs of free shoes to some villages that is shut down local businesses.”

“Dawn is committed to the care and welfare of wildlife while being a standard household product.”



“Dawn dish soap is actually really bad for birds.”

# Capturing the Whole Human

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An understanding of a brand's core customer is key when trying to support a cause, ensuring the brand doesn't come off as tone-deaf or select a cause that's a poor fit for business.

If done right, the opportunity is still rich for savvy brands to leverage cause marketing to their advantage, support impactful movements & build more robust corporate social responsibility programs.

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*Sympler is an insights platform for customers that want to unearth deeper, emotional insights into habits, feelings & beliefs. While other consumer research solutions provide the outer layers of the personality stack, Sympler goes deeper to capture the whole human. It solves the biggest challenge in research: how to scale & speed up qualitative research without losing depth, nuance & humanity.*

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