

# Purpose



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**DESIGN WITH SUBSTANCE**

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**YOUR PEOPLE, YOUR BRAND**

**GILES REDMAYNE  
EFFECTIVENESS DIRECTOR**

**Truly great brands – large or small, business or consumer – are the sum of many parts. All too often, one of the most important of these elements is under invested in, poorly communicated with or worse still – totally overlooked. This ‘element’ is the people who make up and represent the business and the brand.**



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**DESIGN WITH SUBSTANCE**

We believe that a company that positions themselves as consultants must have an opinion. We hope to encourage readers to challenge, colour and inform our thinking. Why not get in touch [opinion@purpose.co.uk](mailto:opinion@purpose.co.uk)

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**Giles Redmayne**

**A great brand doesn't simply broadcast its communications from a marketing department via a plethora of different agencies and media channels. It is something that is manifest throughout its business. It's not just part of the culture – it drives the culture.**

Time and again the word 'brand' is used when what is really being referred to is the visual identity. A brand is not a logo, some colours and typefaces, an image library or even some crafted tone of voice guidelines. If you really have a brand at all, a simple test is to ask those around your business what it is. If you are met with a sea of blank expressions or conflicting answers you have to question what it is that you really have. If those inside the business don't know, then the ones you want to engage with outside of it have next to no chance.

It makes little difference if you run a huge chain of shops where your customers are coming face to face with your staff every day, or you run a stationery business where the most anyone comes in touch with your staff is making a telephone order and receiving a delivery. Your staff must understand what your brand (or the brand you are trying to build) is all about.

Assuming you agree at this point, take a moment to push back your chair and consider the business in which you work. Consider all the potential people that come in to contact with your customers: board directors, telesales, delivery drivers, finance department, receptionist, IT department, canteen staff, sales reps, product designers, office manager, cleaners, the chairman, the security – everyone. I think you'd be pretty hard pushed to find anyone or any job role where knowing, understanding and buying into the brand isn't important. Everyone has a role to play in ensuring you build and maintain a consistent reputation with those that you need to influence the most.

Who do you need to influence the most? Depending on the type of business there is always the obvious answer in 'clients/customers' – but there are others that need to be considered: shareholders, investors, partners, suppliers, etc. All are vital to your business and all need to experience your 'brand'.

Often the staff that are deemed to be the least important are in fact the most important. Many of my clients and colleagues are growing slightly tired of me wheeling out this now rather old (but good) example of understanding how important your staff are to your brand and which staff can matter most.

The example comes from a conversation with the Senior Partner of a major accountancy firm. He asked if I could present the 'new brand' to the fifty or so other partners in the business before we officially launched it. I of course doffed my cap and agreed – but I was bold enough to ask why it was only the partners that would be attending this session. "Who else would you suggest?" he responded.

I simply asked him to imagine a meeting where one of his heavyweight clients was coming over to their gleaming offices for a meeting with him. I asked him to also consider who that client would meet from his firm during that visit. We narrowed it down to four people: the main receptionist, the security guard by the lifts, the conference room receptionist and the person providing tea and coffee. While noting my impertinence he did take the point on board and the story does have a happy ending.

The other side of this point is not simply who you tell – but how you tell them. Getting employees to truly buy into the brand is about much more than top down communication, an intranet site, some brand guidelines or a one size fits all presentation.

Getting this right is essential. However, too often it has been portrayed to many employees as just another directive. The language is often foreign to what individuals actually do – and few if any relevant examples are given. Many are left thinking, brand is the same as Marketing and is therefore 'not their department'. This is a battle of hearts and minds. Employees need to feel good about it, really get it and understand where they make a real difference in delivering it.

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Yes, getting this right costs money – but nowhere near as much as not doing it – or doing a poor job of it. You're thinking of investing, or have invested, a considerable sum in building the foundations on which to build a great brand – if the funds are not available to instil this in those that matter most, there is an argument that there is little point in starting the exercise.

It is the 'reputation' you build on those foundations that is your brand and this will come from the inside out. All manner of skilled agencies can help build a perception of your brand, but only you and those around you can affirm it and maintain it.

**Giles Redmayne**  
Effectiveness Director  
giles@purpose.co.uk

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Giles deals with 'effectiveness' on a number of levels: helping clients make commercially sound decisions, reviewing the results of our work and monitoring how we run our own business. A Founding Partner of Purpose, Giles was also a founding partner of Reef Design Management building a very successful business over 13 years – prior to merging with Purpose. Giles has formerly worked in marketing specific roles and holds a good understanding of the 'bigger picture' that confronts clients.



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**Purpose is a brand communications consultancy specialising in brand identity and marketing communications.**

**Our strategic, design and production skills enable clients to communicate more effectively – to stand out, to connect, and to prosper.**

**We're over thirty strong – we're independent – and we're listed in the Design Week league table of Top 10 UK Creative Award winning agencies.**

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**Contact us**

**[www.purpose.co.uk](http://www.purpose.co.uk)  
+44 (0)20 7724 5890  
[opinion@purpose.co.uk](mailto:opinion@purpose.co.uk)**