



Preparing for a new normal

Peter Henderson

Post pandemic, as the world heals, we may encounter new normal with kinder, caring and thoughtful companies/brands.

We are already seeing this with the recent outpouring of compassion and support from companies and displaced employees across the food chain. Examples are too many to list. Even Canadian celebrities supported Stronger Together en masse raising funds for Food Banks Canada, and recognizing the efforts of front-line workers.

When the time is right to think about a new normal, it can help to consider best practices outlined in my June 2017 Rethinking Innovation column: “10 humanized dimensions of innovation and brand building.”

To tap into the hearts and minds of consumers (and customers), 10 personified dimensions for successful brands are:

Emotional: I (the product) enjoy life and creating satisfying relationships and harmony with every touch point. I want to positively impact your well-being, and the well-being of others.

Environmental: I am sensitive to my impact on the planet’s environment.

Cost-conscious: I look for and deliver value, not a drive for profit.

Intellectual: I am stimulating, innovative, sharing what’s known.

Transparent: I am open, honest and trustworthy, and I listen.

Physical: I enjoy being touched.

Healthy: I’m in synch with your desire for sensible nourishment, activity and sleep.

Convenient: If I can’t make your life easier, and more enjoyable, I understand, but I will always try.

Social: I want to be your friend, and remain connected to you in some way that suits you.

Spiritual: I wish to expand a sense of purpose and meaning in my life.

In the same 2017 column, I featured Oatly as a humanized brand. At the time, Oatly was a niche Swedish-based business. Oatly took off in the United States in 2018 and by 2019 it had achieved US\$200,000 in global sales. In February 2020, Oatly signed an agreement with Starbucks to be their exclusive supplier in 1,300 regional (U.S.) stores and *Forbes* magazine mused they would be the next Beyond Meat with sales projections of US\$400,000 for 2021.

While Oatly’s sales outlook may have changed; their manifesto holds true:

- We promise to be a good company.
- We are not a perfect company, not even close, but our intentions are true. We would like to be judged by the good we do and not just the pretty words we say.
- Our goal is to always deliver products that have maximum nutritional value and minimal environmental impact.
- We promise to be a good company which means that our drive to help people upgrade their lives always comes before the reckless pursuit of profit.



When the time is right to think about a new normal, it can help to consider best practices

- We strive to produce the cleanest, most responsible products on the market and are continually looking for better ways to make our products even better. Got some ideas? Send them here.
- We hope to make the food industry a more honest place by declaring to be totally transparent in everything we do. Stay safe and be well! 🍓

Source: oatly.com/int/the-oatly-way

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