

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS FOR GOOD:

HOW COMPANIES AND BRANDS
CAN EMBRACE SOCIAL ISSUES
TO CREATE IMPACTFUL CHANGE.



*Part of a Series on
Social Movements for Good*

A NOTE FROM DERRICK



What is the role of business today? The answer to this question used to be simple: Develop a strong business, hire great people, create great products and make profit. Of course, there's nothing wrong with this model, but as I recently wrote about in my book, *Social Movements for Good*, businesses are beginning to do more to help their communities and our world and consumers are expecting companies to be at the center of social movements.

There are very few people who can speak more on this topic than my friend Carol Cone. Besides being an expert and knowledgeable voice in the world of corporate social responsibility and citizenship, Carol serves as CEO of Carol Cone ON PURPOSE (CCOP), a New York based, 21st century consultancy whose mission is to move purpose to the center of business and brand strategy.

Carol has penned some incredible thoughts on how companies and brands can lead the movement for social good and sustainable change. Enjoy!



SOCIAL MOVEMENTS FOR GOOD:

How companies and brands can embrace social issues to create impactful change.

By Carol Cone

CEO, the Purpose Collaborative

In 2004, Unilever launched its “Campaign for Real Beauty.” The goal was to widen the definition of beauty beyond the largely unattainable one portrayed by industry. Dove launched a series of communications and educational programs to challenge beauty stereotypes and encourage discussion and action around the topic. Ten years later, research found that women defined beauty on a broader spectrum of qualities. Dove’s sales also increased from \$2.5 billion to \$4 billion. Their educational, self-esteem-building programs had reached over 7 million girls through regional and national partnerships such as the Girls Scouts of the USA and Girl Guides.

Like Unilever, companies have the opportunity and the capability to create social movements for good. As a pioneer of this work, I’ve guided significant campaigns for more than 30 years, evolving them from single-company initiatives to full-on social movements.

From a business perspective, these campaigns increase awareness of brands and products and differentiate them from others in their category. This is just the beginning of what they achieve because by definition, social movements for good do just that — they also improve society.

Unilever didn’t just increase its product sales, it launched a dynamic conversation around unrealistic beauty standards — in one study, 72% of girls ages 10 – 17 said they felt tremendous pressure to be beautiful. The Campaign for Real Beauty positively changed the way women and young girls viewed themselves and others.

To create this transformational change, companies and brands focus beyond profits. In doing so, organizations adopt a philosophy that developing social issue initiatives, aligned with their business, and well executed, also critically develops a relationship with their customers, employees and communities. Today these stakeholders through the power of social media have more power than ever — they can “vote” for a company or brand with their loyalty, employment, voice and wallet. Wise companies cultivate a relationship with these “citizen consumers,” partnering with them to make real social impact.

It is, of course, far simpler to state this than to execute it.

The most successful social movements have certain qualities, which are demonstrated by two real-life campaigns I helped create during my career: PNC Grow Up Great and the Avon Breast Cancer Crusade.

The most important qualities are focus, a long term commitment and innovation. Companies must set their own “true north” for the campaign – what is their goal? It should be clear, simple and connected to their brand, making it logical as well as magical to work toward. And once they have this focus, companies must continue pushing themselves – asking, “What’s next?” – so they can expand their reach and the movement’s overall impact.

PNC Grow Up Great

In 2003, PNC’s former CEO Jim Rohr asked a simple question: “Could the bank focus its philanthropy and community engagement for greater impact?” And if it could, what social issue should it focus on?

PNC employees had a strong desire to help children. After significant research, my colleagues and I identified the emerging issue of early childhood education as a unique focus area for the company. With great “institutional will” and a highly engaged executive team, PNC Grow Up Great was born.

The early days were exciting. PNC teamed up with the National Head Start Association, Sesame Workshop, the Fred Rogers Center and a stellar advisory council who helped PNC shine a light on this largely unknown social issue. In 2003, PNC was the nation’s 12th largest bank. As PNC grew to the 8th largest bank by assets, Grow Up Great was a key element of its expansion, culture and success.

PNC is now known for this pioneering \$350 million, multi-year program, which has given more than \$90 million in grants and served approximately 2.3 million children. In the last few years, thanks to the combined efforts of Grow Up Great and various cross-sector initiatives, the issue itself has gained significant momentum.

Quality pre-K is now recognized as a critical foundation for a child’s future success, reflected in recent federal and state legislation. New York Mayor Bill de Blasio has allocated \$300 million of his budget to create full-day pre-K for every child in New York City. Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel has also expressed his commitment to early childhood education. Most recently, President Obama called for universal preschool in his final State of the Union Address.

Why it Worked

PNC was undoubtedly successful in starting and fostering a social movement for good. How did they do it? They had a focus. They found a cause in early childhood education that was core to their brand. Not only was the issue important to their employees, but it was also vital to the communities in which PNC operates.

They also continuously evolved the movement — expanding beyond their original goals and developing new programming and resources, such as comprehensive kits for early learning, math, financial literacy and vocabulary.

Beyond focus and innovation, PNC also demonstrated other qualities of a successful social movement for good:

Connected Leadership: The bank's former CEO Jim Rohr championed the initiative throughout, as did the rest of the leadership team. This commitment is now embraced by PNC's current CEO, William Demchak leading a vision for Grow Up Great's next 10 years.

Employee Involvement: PNC actively involved its employees, giving them 40 hours of paid time off annually to support Grow Up Great. This has resulted in hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours over the years and a ten times greater commitment to the company overall by engaged employees, than those not participating in the early childhood education initiative.

Multi-dimensional Engagement: PNC partnered with multiple organizations serving children and families in every state where they conducted business, with program expansion continually guided by an advisory council of experts in early childhood education.

Avon Breast Cancer Crusade

When it came to choosing a cause for Avon, the company knew it wanted to focus on the betterment of women, as this is also a goal of its sales structure, which employs millions of sales representatives around the globe. Avon decided to further empower women by waging a crusade against a critical disease affecting them — breast cancer.

Avon launched its initial cause program to support breast cancer in 1992. At the time, the disease wasn't often talked about, but its impact pervasive and growing. The campaign started with the sale of a pink breast cancer awareness pin, with the profits supporting local UK charities. While effective, the movement was still in a transactional stage — focused on selling.

With the leadership of CEO James Preston, my colleagues and I worked with Avon to expand the campaign. The company engaged its then 600,000 sales representatives to spread the word about the Crusade. They approached their customers differently, starting a conversation about breast cancer awareness rather than focusing on selling products. Early on, Avon recognized that this Crusade wasn't about sales; it was about breast cancer and how to attack it.

The campaign grew rapidly when the company launched its Avon Walk for Breast Cancer, a 3-day, 39.3-mile walk to raise funds and global awareness. These walks increased the number of participants to millions, creating a community of camaraderie, inspiration and hope. Meanwhile, Avon partnered with many organizations to expand research and education.

To date, the Crusade has donated more than \$815 million to fund research and improve access to care. It has educated more than 145 million women on breast health and linked more than 18 million to early-detection programs and mammography screenings.

Why it Worked

Like PNC, Avon developed a successful, impactful social movement. Their focus on breast cancer stemmed authentically from their brand's goal of empowering women, and this strongly guided the campaign. They constantly innovated program elements to engage citizens, expanding the cause to countries around the globe, to hundreds of thousands of participants and various partner research and care organizations.

The Crusade also demonstrates other qualities of a successful social campaign, including:

Local customization: Avon's Walk is a powerful example of a program that can be adopted in many different locations. Walks took place across the world — from China to Russia to the Czech Republic and Kuala Lumpur, spreading and strengthening the cause.

10 Qualities of a Successful Social Movement

1. COMPANY AND BRAND FOCUS

Deeply understand your organization, including goals, assets and challenges. Select a issue that is aligned with your corporate values, mission and competencies and is core to its overall purpose.

2. CONNECTED LEADERSHIP

The most powerful programs are "leader-led." Consumers want to see values-based leadership from companies and brands, with a long-term commitment to addressing societal issues.

3. THOUGHTFUL CONSTRUCTION

Start with program depth versus scale. Build authentic and credible long-term plans and strategies that maximize the impact your investment can make.

4. INTEGRATED MEASUREMENT

That which gets measured gets done. Incorporate measurement into all phases of program design and activation, with balanced metrics for social and business impacts.

5. EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT

Start from the inside out: Employees become powerful social-issue ambassadors. Include them in program development, as well as execution.

6. MULTI-DIMENSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Partner with NGOs for credibility and content; with customers, consumers, communities and others to fuel a movement to advance the issue.

7. LOCAL CUSTOMIZATION

Powerful and lasting initiatives must have programmatic components and partner options that can be tailored for local adoption.

8. SHARED OWNERSHIP

Create degrees of freedom for individual consumer/volunteer activation within a set framework, to give appropriate amounts of "ownership" away. Enabling others to act independently can build bridges, passion and impact.

9. AUTHENTIC NARRATION

Storytelling is key to building emotion and engagement. Find the stories internally (from your employees, volunteers) and externally (from beneficiaries, citizens) and tell them viscerally and visually.

10. CONTINUOUS INNOVATION

Constantly evolve program elements to stay relevant, maintaining careful focus on your program's original vision and goals. Remember that goals are long-term, strategies mid-term and tactics short-term.

Shared ownership: Avon didn't try to "own" the social movement. Instead, they openly welcomed and engaged partners, such as research organizations, educators, local volunteer organizations and other ngo's involved in the breast cancer issue.

Authentic narration: A large aspect of the Crusade was its involvement of breast cancer survivors and their stories. This gave the movement a human face and kept it focused on the overall goal — fighting a deadly disease.

These two initiatives exemplify the profound impact companies can make when they commit to an issue and authentically develop a social movement around it, leveraging their employees, resources and partner organizations. Today more than ever, a company's role in society is evolving to encompass purpose beyond profits.

Carol Cone is CEO of Carol Cone ON PURPOSE (CCOP), a New York based, 21st century consultancy whose mission is to move purpose to the center of business and brand strategy. *At the core of CCOP is The Purpose Collaborative, a collective of over 30 agencies, boutiques and individuals, with deep purpose, CSR and sustainability capabilities from strategy to execution. For over 25 years, Carol has embraced a commitment to building lasting partnerships between companies, brands and social issues for deep business and societal impact. Her ground breaking work includes: Reebok Human Rights Awards, American Heart Go Red for Women, American Lung Association Lung Force, PNC Grow Up Great, Microsoft YouthSpark and most recently, The Vaseline Healing Project. Carol served as the founder, CEO and Chairman of Cone, Inc., from 1980-2010. In 2007, PR Week called her "arguably the most powerful and visible figure in the world of Cause Branding." Overall, Cone's signature cause programs have raised more than \$2 billion for various social issues.*

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