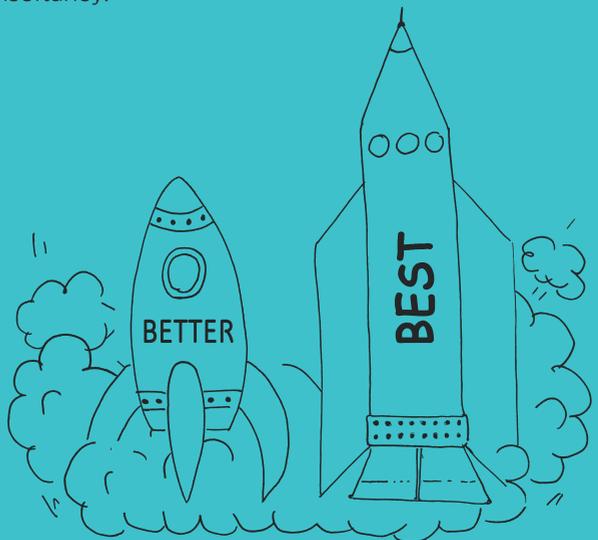


Does better guarantee better?

What do Sky, EY, Total, SAP, Bayer, Kingfisher and Walmart all have in common?

They all promise better; whether it's believing in better, saving you money so you can live better; being committed to better energy or helping the world run better. And they are not alone.

Either explicit in a strap line or contained within a brand narrative, there's a definite trend towards 'better', from FMCG to pharma, construction to management consultancy.



The world wants better

The financial crash eroded trust in the corporate world. Companies are now under great scrutiny to account for their actions; people want to know why they exist, why they should believe them, and why they should buy from them.

In response, companies are holding up their hands, acknowledging they have to do better or at least help you the consumer get better.

Promising better isn't a guarantee

When AXA launched their new promise 'redefining standards' in 2007, it was a response to the sector continually promising the earth and failing to deliver. AXA wanted to prove it and set the new industry benchmark.

The problem is once you go to market with a bold claim you can't go back. Pick up the phone to a customer and give them what they had before, or at the very least be unable to tell customers your plan to redefine, then your promise is undermined.

AXA weren't ready and their people weren't as prepared as they should have been. Timing decided AXA's decision. It was their opportunity to lay down a marker to the sector and to employees, promising a journey to make the industry better. Only customers can judge if AXA have redefined standards.

The best way to say you're better is to demonstrate it

Consider two extremes to get your brand to market.

If you boil it down, there are two approaches to getting your brand to market.

1. Outside in – lead with communication, make a splash and reveal your promise, then consider how your people deliver it. It's a more marketing-led approach.
2. Inside out – Get your people on board, help them deliver your promise and support this with communication. It's perhaps a more business-led approach.

They are both valid and will be more relevant depending on the type of business and business situation. What they both have in common is the need to deliver to be believed.

This relies on people, not marketing or brand communication. If you promise better then your people play an even greater role in demonstrating it. Better can't be just a slogan and a glossy ad.

Look within to deliver better

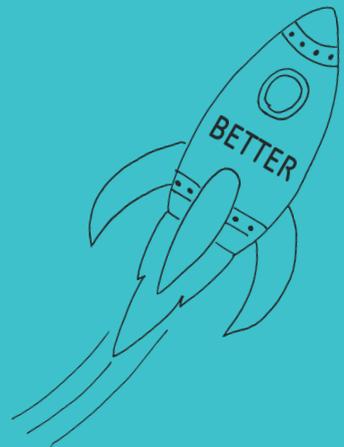
Better is a nebulous concept that means different things to different people. It needs to be owned and delivered by all employees, from front line providing a better service, designers developing better products, scientists coming up with better solutions, HR creating a better employee experience and leaders communicating better.

So perhaps before a brand launch or re-launch, companies would do well to pause and look within to define what their promise really means to their different employees. Not just that they understand it, but know what's expected of them. Invest in creating brand ambassadors who have thought about what to say and do with customers and stakeholders to create a different, memorable and better experience.

Better is a journey not a destination

Better is a bold claim. It's a commitment to the outside world, a call to action for employees, and an invitation to new recruits. It raises expectations that must be delivered. It's a constant that challenges the status quo, especially considering:

1. Companies have fewer resources to be better
2. Not everyone can be the best
3. Better is subjective



Getting your people on board to deliver your brand promise doesn't mean changing the whole organisation overnight. It's about being pragmatic; thinking about your different groups of employees; understanding their role in creating the brand experience; being selective on which group will make the biggest difference; developing a plan over time to touch all groups.

Companies can deliver better with fewer resources by prioritising what they do have, and not forgetting the small things that make the biggest difference – the everyday actions and language that shape a better experience.

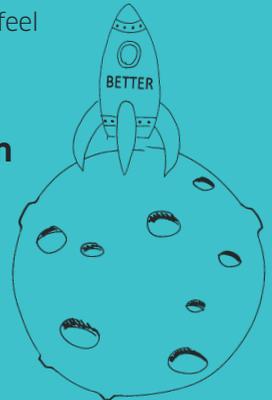
Not every company will be the best. Better is subjective and ultimately customers will judge, but those that put their money where their mouth is, and invest in their people, will be the ones who fare better.

But above all, better is a continual journey to prove to the world and your people that you care. It involves constant effort, focus, re-focus and modification.

If you are making a new promise to the outside world and feel that advertising is the only solution to change perceptions, then carry on.

If you feel your people play a critical role, then we can give you the boost you need to make your promise a reality.

We are Frank, Bright & Abel.



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Frank, Bright & Abel is a creative communications consultancy, providing strategy, design and delivery to higher education, business-to-business and financial services.