

From Selling to Solving

**Embracing People,
Planet and Profit to
Redefine Value
Propositions**

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FROM SELLING TO SOLVING

Embracing People, Planet and Profit to Redefine Value Propositions

In today's rapidly evolving marketplace, the role of the marketer is being influenced by one trend that looms larger than any other: the imperative of global environmental impact. This trend impacts not just consumer demand and supply chain security, but retailer relationships and even the future potential of categories themselves. Ignoring it is simply not an option. So, it can either become a formidable barrier or a massive opportunity for growth. This requires a new marketing mindset, one that not only acknowledges the necessity of this shift but embraces it as a core operational principle.

The New Definition of Value

The good news is that the skills that helped contribute to this issue by "selling lots of stuff", can also be repurposed to help marketers be the force for good that we can and must be. Marketing, at its core, has always been about creating value for people. However, we must pivot the parameters of what defines value in our 3P world (People, Planet and Profit) as well as the people we create value for. More volume does not always equal more value.

This does not signify an end to profitability or growth; instead, it marks a shift towards a more holistic approach that measures success not just in financial terms but in social and environmental impact as well. This redefined value is not about selling less, but about selling smarter.

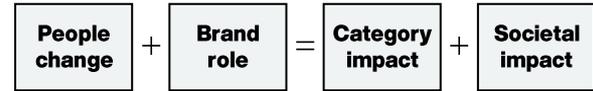
Aligning Brand and Category to Maximize Impact

Companies that have successfully put people, planet and profit at the heart of their commercial strategy have done it by linking to category benefits. To understand the role your brand can play across the 3Ps, you must start by identifying the implications of climate change on the future of your category.

- How does integrating People, Planet, and Profit change the traditional role and consumer needs within your category?
- How will adopting a 3P framework amplify or alter existing trends within your category?
- How can your category's offerings contribute to societal well-being and tackle key challenges?

By defining the category challenge you can more accurately determine the behavior change required and the role that your brand can play to help resolve it. The formula is straightforward yet profound:

CATEGORY CHALLENGE



This approach involves acknowledging the seismic shifts required in consumer behavior and identifying how a brand can uniquely solve these changes. This path leads to category performance and a positive benefit for people and planet.



Click here to see how Tony's Chocolonely used a Triple Bottom Line approach to positively impact people, planet and profit

Embedding TBL into your brand's value proposition

The journey starts with clarity on how your brand creates comprehensive value across all people, planet and profit. This requires a broader view of the definition of people. It is not just about your consumers, shoppers and retailers, it is also about the people impacted by your brand. This will vary by industry but could range from healthcare providers to farmers to broader society. Think upstream and downstream.

It's about solving category-specific problems by providing meaningful benefits that meet a range of physical and psychological needs. This approach not only positively impacts the planet, but also creates significant value for people.

By defining the category challenge you can more accurately determine the behavior change required and the role that your brand can play to help resolve it. The formula is straightforward yet profound:

For people who....



For each of these unique stakeholders, consider these questions:

- What problems does your product solve?
- Which product benefits are most relevant to the problem and what makes them superior?
- How is the impact on the planet minimized or mitigated?
- What is the total value you create as a result?

JARGON BUSTER

TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE 101

The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework¹ was introduced by John Elkington as a challenge for business to rethink capitalism. Instead of focusing exclusively on profit, emphasizes three main pillars: People, Planet, and Profit. It encourages organizations to extend their focus beyond financial performance to also consider social and environmental impacts. Here's a concise overview of each pillar:

People | Social Responsibility

This pillar focuses on the impact an organization has on its employees, customers, and the wider community. It promotes fair labor practices, community engagement, health, safety, and well-being.

Planet | Environmental Sustainability

This aspect emphasizes the importance of sustainable environmental practices. It encourages companies to reduce their ecological footprint by managing resource use, reducing pollution and waste, and protecting natural habitats.

Profit | Economic Performance

While traditional business models focus solely on financial gain, the TBL framework includes profit as one of three equally important outcomes. It stresses that businesses should achieve economic performance without sacrificing social and environmental responsibilities.

1. John Elkington, Cannibals with Forks: The Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business, Capstone, 1997.

Developing your green blueprint to TBL integration

Integrating the TBL framework into a brand's value proposition is a strategic process that involves embedding social, environmental, and economic considerations into the core of a brand's identity and operations. The following steps are interdependent and collectively lead to a more comprehensive integration of TBL into a brand's value proposition. The goal is to ensure that sustainability is not just a peripheral aspect of the business but a core driver of the brand's identity, operations, and future direction.

As the marketplace shifts under the weight of environmental concerns, marketers have a unique opportunity to redefine value within their strategies. Embracing the Triple Bottom Line satisfies the modern consumer's expectations, strengthens supply chain resilience, and enriches retailer relationships. Shifting from selling to solving can lead to products that better meet market demands and contribute positively to societal and environmental outcomes. Ultimately, putting businesses on a path to sustainable growth and enhanced category impact.

Lead from the top

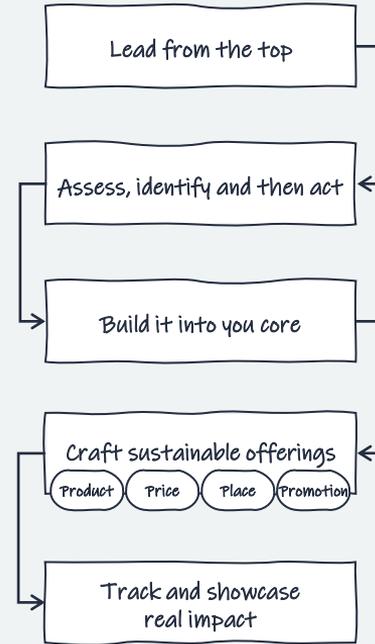
Ensure strong commitment from the top leadership and establish governance structures to oversee TBL integration. Leadership buy-in is critical for driving organizational change, allocating resources, and embedding TBL principles into the company culture and decision-making processes.

Build it into your core

Embed TBL principles into the core brand mission and values. This foundational step ensures that the commitment to social, environmental, and economic sustainability is clear and guides all future actions and decisions.

Track and showcase real impact

Establish robust metrics to measure performance in social, environmental, and economic areas. Regular, transparent reporting using recognized frameworks demonstrates accountability and progress in TBL objectives, essential for stakeholder trust and brand reputation.



Assess, identify, and then act

Before making any changes, a brand must understand its current impact on the environment, society, and its financial health. This involves assessing emissions and waste production across the entire value chain and product lifecycle. The audit should also identify areas for improvement and potential opportunities for sustainability initiatives.

Craft sustainable offerings

Focus on developing products or services that reflect TBL principles. This could involve sustainable sourcing, ethical production methods, and designing products with lower environmental impacts, which are key to aligning your offerings with TBL objectives.

Product

In which ways will your product demonstrate a story of sustainability?

Place

How can your entire supply chain incorporate sustainability? From preferred partners who are stewards of the environment to transportation methods that minimize impact.

Price

How will your pricing model go beyond just covering costs to communicating total value? It's not just about a premium price point; it's about investing in a better world.

Promotion

How can your campaigns and promotions move beyond just advertising products to advocating a lifestyle? Your content can be used to engage your community and tell stories that demonstrate the benefits of a sustainable life.

CASE STUDY

A Triple Bottom Line
approach to positively impact
people, planet and profit





Challenge

The chocolate industry has historically been challenged with issues like child labor, slavery, and unsustainable farming practices, mainly in West Africa, which produce a significant portion of the global cocoa supply. These issues are deeply ingrained, making them challenging to address and require a radical approach for change

Triple Bottom Line Strategy

PEOPLE

Social Impact | Eradicating Child Labor and Slavery

Central to Tony's value proposition is its commitment to eliminate child labor and slavery from the cocoa supply chain. This is operationalized through direct, equitable trade practices, offering farmers significantly higher prices to promote fair labor conditions

Community Engagement | Investing in Local Communities

By investing in local community infrastructures such as schools and healthcare facilities, Tony's strengthens the socioeconomic fabric of cocoa-producing areas, ensuring sustainable community growth and reducing reliance on child labor

PLANET

Environmental Impact | Promotion of Agroforestry

Tony's advocates for and implements agroforestry, helping maintain ecological balance and enhancing the biodiversity of cocoa farms

Sustainable Practices | Eco-Friendly Packaging

All packaging used by Tony's is 100% recyclable, emphasizing the brand's commitment to sustainability and reducing environmental footprints

PROFIT

Economic Impact | Fair and Transparent Profit Sharing

Tony's unique profit-sharing model ensures that a portion of the profits is returned to the farmers, fostering economic stability in the cocoa farming communities

Ethical Profitability | Market Expansion

Despite higher production costs associated with ethical practices, Tony's has successfully scaled its business model, proving that ethical profitability is achievable and inspiring other companies to adopt a similar stance





Brand Value Proposition

Tony's Chocolonely's brand value proposition is built on the promise of 100% slave-free chocolate. This promise is not just a tagline but a comprehensive commitment that influences every operational decision of the brand. This includes their sourcing strategies, production methods, and even their marketing tactics. The distinctive, colorful packaging of Tony's bars, each color representing a different flavor and story, serves as a constant reminder of the brand's mission against inequality and exploitation in the chocolate industry



Outcomes

Consumer Behavior Change

Tony's effectively leverages its brand story and ethical stance to educate consumers and alter consumption patterns. The transparency in their operations, illustrated through detailed storytelling on packaging and robust marketing campaigns, empowers consumers to make informed choices that align with their values

Category Impact

Tony's has set a new standard in the chocolate industry, compelling other brands to reassess their supply chains and adopt more ethical practices. Their success underlines the commercial viability of sustainable and equitable business models

Societal Impact

The brand's activities significantly contribute to broader societal goals, such as eradicating child labor, enhancing living standards in farming communities, and promoting sustainable agricultural practices

Conclusion

Tony's Chocolonely demonstrates an exemplary application of the Triple Bottom Line approach, tightly interwoven with its brand value proposition. Their strategy illustrates that a firm commitment to social, environmental, and economic sustainability can be a potent driver of brand identity, operational excellence, and market differentiation. Through its principled approach, Tony's not only champions a cause but also reshapes industry standards, making a profound societal impact

About the author

Aaron Newhouse

Aaron is passionate about building brands through collaboration and simplicity. With a strong commercial foundation, he uses his expertise to forge connections between brands, consumers, and retailers, identifying growth opportunities that benefit all. Aaron thrives on making big ideas happen, together.

Outside of work, Aaron is committed to supporting local animal shelters through volunteerism and fostering. His family has fostered over a dozen dogs, including a memorable experience helping a pregnant dog mom deliver 11 puppies at our home.



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