

Harnessing Purpose: A Marketer's Guide to Inspiring Connection

Melissa Fors Shackelford

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Reviewed by Tammy Ruggles for Reader Views (04/2025)

5*- The Perfect Approach to Marketing

"Harnessing Purpose: A Marketer's Guide to Inspiring Connection" by Melissa Fors Shackelford is one of the most positive, unique marketing books you'll ever read. That's because it puts forth a different approach to marketing than most guides available today. Some marketing books can come off as dry or redundant, but this one stands out as striving for a different approach to crafting strategies and increasing sales. That approach is inspiring, connecting, and making a lasting and meaningful impact on potential customers.

Marketers sometimes focus more on the business side of things, like numbers and profit, and that works for some. But what if there was a marketer who had your specific, personal goals in mind? What if the marketer is concerned about how your life impacts your goals, and how your goals impact your life? This author brings her 25 years of marketing expertise to this book, showing how marketing can have a purpose, a reason. This book teaches marketers how to dovetail the personal with the organizational.

Shackelford's guidance is practical and meant to be used in day-to-day marketing life. Her approaches can lead to a lifetime of loyalty and proven results. As you read through the chapters with topics such as professional purpose, encouraging creativity, understanding and supporting the work-life balance, utilizing inclusive and ethical marketing, the value of cause marketing, leadership, growth, and building strategies that represent a brand's core, you will see that this author's approach is revolutionizing the world of marketing. And it isn't just about the individual marketer going to the next level. The author includes strategies that work for teams and the challenges they face. Think of this book as a marketer's blueprint for success. It contains real-life stories of real-life professionals who adopted this thoughtful way of marketing, like Ben & Jerry's, Starbucks, and Procter & Gamble.

Maybe you're planning a startup, or are a seasoned pro accustomed to traditional practices. Either way, this book with fresh ideas will inspire you to add new dimensions to your marketing toolbox. There is definitely something for every marketer here. It's still about the customer, but with more awareness of the customer's and community's needs and desires, helping them to solve a problem.

One of the strongest takeaways is paraphrasing the Steve Jobs quote in the book's introduction: Do what you love, and love what you do. But a direct excerpt from the author gets at the heart of this book best:

When marketers feel a deep connection to the brand's purpose and believe that their efforts are making a meaningful difference, they are more likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction, lower stress levels, and a greater sense of overall fulfillment. This, in turn, can lead to improved mental and physical health, as well as increased longevity and resilience in the face of the inherent challenges of the marketing profession.

This is an easy read that flies by because it's so engrossing and packed with nuggets of advice you can start using today. The ideas are well-organized, thorough, and presented in a friendly, personal way. If you've considered marketing as a career but aren't sure if it's right for you or are looking to expand your knowledge and experience base, "Harnessing Purpose: A Marketer's Guide to Inspiring Connection" by Melissa Fors Shackelford is the perfect book for you.