



Mann Global Health

HEALTHIER PEOPLE. STRONGER GLOBAL HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS.



BRAND AND MARKETING BEST PRACTICES

Case Study Analysis: Learning & Highlights

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Our case study series includes the evaluation of 13 brand and marketing initiatives – three private sector companies, one political campaign, and nine global health and development projects. To evaluate the best practice elements across the 13 projects, we scored each element as excellent, good, or average. In cases in which we did not have enough data to inform a point of view, or where the information was conflicting, we chose not to score the best practice sub-element.¹ While there is subjectivity in evaluating branding and marketing effectiveness, we applied a systematic approach, using the standards of excellence we defined in the ***“Brand and Marketing Best Practices Framework.”*** We recognize that there are likely errors in our scoring. Nonetheless, our intent is that the overall themes we identify will be accurate and useful for the global public health and development community.

As outlined in the table below, there was strength across all elements of the best practice framework. Audience focus was the strongest element, with mostly excellent scores across all three sub-elements. The measurement section was the weakest, even excluding those organizations that we were not able to evaluate. In the sections that follow, we describe the approaches and characteristics employed by the strongest and most illustrative examples.

1) This was often our approach for the private sector companies, as many of the best practice elements involve confidential, propriety information. Similarly, we chose not to score the governance best practice area. Doing so would have required an intimate understanding of the organizational structure, staff competencies, decision-making, and culture, which was beyond the scope of this project.

	A360 Kuwa Mjanja	Airbnb	Brothers for Life	Future Fab	Mankind	MTN	MTV Shuga	NURHI Get It Together	Obama 2008	ORS Zinc	Shujaaz	Truth	Trust
Audience Focus													
Audience Identification	Excellent	Average/Poor	Excellent	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Audience Understanding	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent
Audience Insight	Excellent	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Excellent	Excellent	Good							
Brand Strategy													
Brand Vision	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good						
Brand Identity	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent
Campaign Strategy													
Communicate a Benefit	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Good
Touches the Heart, Opens the Mind	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Continuity and Marketing Vehicle Selection	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Excellent	Good	Average/Poor	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Average/Poor	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Delights the Audience	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent
Engages the Audience	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent
Measurement													
Message Effectiveness	Excellent	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Average/Poor	Excellent	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Program Results	Good	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Good	Good	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Excellent	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Excellent	Excellent	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Excellent
Brand Performance	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Excellent	Good	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Marketing Vehicle Effectiveness	Good	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Good	Good	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Good	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Excellent	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable	Excellent	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable
Governance													
Organizational Structure	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable												
Process & Decision-Making	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable												
People & Capacity	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable												
Rewards & Incentives	Insufficient Data/Non-applicable												

■ Excellent
 ■ Good
 ■ Average/Poor
 ■ Insufficient Data/Non-applicable



BEST PRACTICE #1

Audience Focus

Overall, audience focus was the strongest best practice; we scored almost all projects as “excellent” across all three sub-elements of this best practice area. Many projects benefited from a foundational research and design period that integrated multidisciplinary teams and approaches, allowing for in-depth audience understanding, which led to strong audience insights, which eventually led to strong brand strategies and marketing campaigns.

IDENTIFY THE AUDIENCE / UNDERSTAND THE AUDIENCE:

While identifying and understanding an audience are two discrete activities, we grouped them together because the process is iterative, where greater understanding of a target audience allows for additional layers of segmentation, dividing that population into smaller audience groups that share unique characteristics. The Adolescents 360² case study makes this process clear. The A360 Tanzania project team started with a broad definition of the audience – adolescent girls. Through the process of understanding the audience via qualitative and quantitative methods, they identified two specific sub-audiences: “Faridas” (less experienced, sexually active girls, approximately 16 years old) and “Bahatis” (more experienced, sexually active girls, approximately 18 years old).

The techniques used by the strongest case studies in the “identify the audience and understand the audience” best practice sub-elements include psycho-behavioral approaches, focusing on priority segments, and employing empathy.

Psycho-behavioral approaches:

In a recent article in the Stanford Social Initiative Review, authors from the Surgo Foundation³ advocate for scaling up psycho-behavioral segmentation in the development sector. They reason that this practice, adopted in the private sector in the 1960s, can help development sector initiatives be more effective. Psycho-behavioral segmentation divides people based on their behaviors, motivations, and beliefs; it is more effective than demographic segmentation because the differences between the resulting groups are relevant to the behavior in question, and “understanding why people make decisions is the most effective way to change their behavior and improve their lives.”

We recommend the Shujaaz and Airbnb case studies as examples of effective psycho-behavioral approaches. Like the A360 description above, Shujaaz⁴ is focused on Kenyan youth ages 15-24. For each communication campaign, the team develops a unique segmentation, using a “rejection-adoption” scale to define audience segments; understand their attitudes, beliefs, and persuasion opportunities; and refine behavior change objectives. We also like the example provided by Airbnb,⁵ which identified its overall target audience as “Headfirst Explorers” (people who love to discover new places but hate being tourists). We like that the Airbnb audience is identified based on its behavior and that the name brings the psychographic and behavioral characteristics to life, making it easy for anyone working on the brand to quickly understand and remember what defines this audience.

Focusing on priority audience groups or segments:

Project teams often face tension between wanting to reach everyone and picking one or two of the most important

2) A360 is an adolescent sexual and reproductive health initiative

3) Sgaier, Sema, et al., “Time to Scale Psycho-behavioral Segmentation in Global Development,” Stanford Social Innovation Review, Fall 2018.

4) Shujaaz is a multi-media platform developed to create social and economic value for Kenyan youth.

5) Airbnb is an online marketplace for arranging or offering lodging, primarily homestays, and tourism experiences

audience segments. We cite the above referenced article from the Surgo Foundation⁶ which describes criteria for prioritizing segments: (1) ease of conversion; (2) segment prevalence; and (3) segment impact. Below we describe examples from our case studies that meet these criteria:

(1) Ease of conversion (Future Fab⁷): The team at MSK originally focused on girls ages 15-19. However, during HCD prototyping, the team decided to focus on girls who were not married, had not yet had children, and were living in urban areas — a group that faces high levels of stigma deterring them from accessing contraceptive services, but also a group with whom the project was most likely to be successful.

(2) Segment Prevalence (A360): A360 originally focused on adolescent girls. Through the early stages of the project, the team identified four segments: (i) younger, less experienced girls who were not yet sexually active; (ii) younger, less experienced girls who were sexually active; (iii) older, more experienced girls who were not yet sexually active; and (iv) older, more experienced girls who were sexually active. The team made the decision to focus on the two sexually active segments, as these groups were sizeable and also had the most urgent need for contraceptives.

(3) Segment impact (Trust⁸): The target for PSKenya's Trust condom brand is men, ages 18-30. However, the team specifically targets an influential segment known as "Johnny." Johnny is an unmarried, middle-income, urban man in his mid-20s. By targeting this influential, emerging segment, the team believed that Trust condoms would also appeal to lower income men.

Key take-away: Segmentation, particularly using psycho-behavioral approaches, is helpful to strengthen audience understanding and enable the organization to focus its resources on priority segments.

Empathy:

Our standard of excellence for the "Understand the Audience" best practice involves going beyond demographics to include not only attitudes, practices, and beliefs, but also what we call "the unspoken." Based on the projects and brands we reviewed, empathetic approaches – often but not necessarily part of a Human Centered Design (HCD) process – can be helpful in revealing "the unspoken" – things about the audience that they themselves may not articulate or even be aware of. As explained by scholars Dorothy Leonard and Jeffrey Rayport, who introduced the concept of empathic design, "customers are so accustomed to current conditions that they don't think to ask for a new solution – even if they have real needs that could be addressed."⁹ Similarly, the audience may not be aware of the motivations for their behaviors or may not be able to imagine a world different from the status quo. Empathetic approaches help implementing teams reveal the latent motivations, desires, and needs that ultimately unlock new ways of approaching problems.

We recommend A360, Future Fab, Airbnb, Shujaaz, and Truth as best-in-class examples that used empathy to enable rich audience understanding. All five projects used one or more of the following approaches: (1) working with the audience as peers; (2) conducting immersive experiences; and (3) deploying diverse teams.

(1) Working with the audience as peers: As described by the A60 team, *"the consortium pursued deep partnership with young people throughout design and implementation, engaging youth not only as sources of insights but also as critical partners in gathering and making meaning of information, as intervention co-designers, and as partners in implementation."*¹⁰ For example, the name for the A360 intervention in Tanzania, Kuwa Mjanja, translates as "be smart" and has traditionally meant "be clean" as associated with menstruation and staying away from boys. As partners in the project, girls made the phrase their own and gave it new meaning: to have a sense of pride and purpose in pursuing one's dreams. Similarly, the Shujaaz team partners with the audience to help identify audience

6) Sgaier, Sema, et al., "Time to Scale Psycho-behavioral Segmentation in Global Development," Stanford Social Innovation Review, Fall 2018.

7) Future Fab is an adolescent sexual and reproductive health project led by Marie Stopes Kenya.

8) Trust is the leading condom brand in Kenya.

9) Leonard, D., and Rayport, J., "Spark Innovation through Empathic Design," Harvard Business Review, Nov-Dec 1997.

10) "Pursuing Youth-Powered, Transdisciplinary Programming for Contraceptive Service Delivery Across Three Countries: The Case of Kuwa Mjanja in Tanzania."

segments, as explained on the organization’s blog, *“Young people are brilliant at describing the different groups of their peers and the different views that make up their world. We then cross-check and triangulate these in different locations and communities to test their universality.”*¹¹

(2) Conducting Immersive Experiences: To design Airbnb Experiences, an initiative in which locals host tours and other experiences (e.g., glass-blowing or kayaking) for Airbnb travelers, Airbnb anonymously recruited a traveler to document the details of his trip to San Francisco, which included budget hotels, chain restaurants, and time spent at crowded tourist destinations. It later invited the same traveler back, this time to experience the “ideal” visit to San Francisco. After this second visit, the traveler left the city in tears of joy, describing the trip as “magical,” and “the best trip I’ve ever had.” The knowledge and empathy the team gained from these trips – and accompanying storyboards they created – became the blueprint for creating Airbnb Experiences.

To create the Future Fab Initiative, the team spent time with girls going about their everyday lives – going shopping, visiting with friends, etc. – which helped establish trust and enabled the implementing team to better understand what is important to Kenyan girls, ultimately leading the team to reframe the role of contraceptives as a means for girls to achieve their future hopes and dreams.

(3) Employing multi-disciplinary teams: Several projects deployed multi-disciplinary teams, a process that increases the breadth of what is noticed in the research phase, thereby increasing the likelihood of uncovering unarticulated motivations, needs, and desires. The A360 team was made up of adolescent-development scientists, anthropologists, experts in HCD, public health practitioners, social marketers, and youth engagement workers – in addition to the youth as research participants. Similarly, the Truth¹² Initiative team was made up of social scientists; marketing, communication, and media professionals; and tobacco control experts.

Key take-away: Empathetic approaches strengthen audience understanding, help to reveal the “unspoken” and ultimately create opportunities for marketing programs that resonate.

ARTICULATE AN INSIGHT

Insights are the foundation of strong marketing programs because they inspire the audience to think or feel differently – and the audience cannot behave differently if they do not first think or feel differently. In this section we discuss two lessons we learned about insights based on our case study analysis.

Campaigns that requires the audience to change their perspective require an audience insight:

Most problems require an insight that inspires the audience to think or feel – and ultimately behave – differently; however, there are some problems that are more straight-forward than others. For example, Aflac (American Family Life Assurance Company), an insurance company with 10% brand awareness in the late 1990s, needed potential customers to know and remember the company’s name so they would contact Aflac when they needed insurance. The Aflac duck campaign, featuring a duck that quacks “Aflac,”¹³ was so distinctive and memorable that it enabled the brand to achieve 67% awareness and double sales in less than three years.¹⁴ This campaign did require a behavior change (the audience needed to contact Aflac as opposed to some other company), but the behavior change did not require a significant change in the audience’s perspective.

Among our case studies, ORS / Zinc India¹⁵ was somewhat similar. The behavior change – get caregivers to use ORS + Zinc to treat diarrhea – did not require a significant change in the audience’s perspective; rather, it required that caregivers become aware of the benefit of ORS + Zinc to help their children recover quickly from diarrhea.

11) <http://www.welltoldstory.com/segment-segment-segment/>

12) Truth is a US-based anti-tobacco initiative

13) [AFLAC’s Duck First Commercial Park](#)

14) Amos, Daniel P. “How I Did It: Aflac’s CEO Explains How He Fell for the Duck,” *Harvard Business Review*, Jan 2019.

15) ORS / Zinc Program, initiated by the Clinton Health Access Initiative, focused on increasing coverage for both zinc and ORS for children suffering from diarrhea.

Key take-away: An audience insight is needed if the behavior change requires the audience to have a significant change in perspective.

The best insights reflect unspoken audience understanding, and are concise and easy to remember:

Almost all of the insights in our case study series reflected unspoken audience understanding, but three stood out – Airbnb, Mankind,¹⁶ and NURHI¹⁷ – because they were also concise and memorable, which makes them easy to understand and use.

“The unspoken” refers to information the audience may not articulate, as they may not be aware of the motivations for their behaviors or may not be able to imagine a world different from the status quo.

Case Study	Learning from Target Audience	Audience Insight: reflects the unspoken, concise, memorable
Airbnb	The “headfirst explorers” consider new ways to travel and local experiences as a core part of their identity. An attitude once seen mainly in younger millennials, the tendency to value experiences over things had become a global mindset that crossed geographies and demographics. ¹⁸	The “headfirst explorer” loves discovering new places, but hates being a tourist.
Mankind	Primary care doctors in rural areas and Tier II and III cities wanted low cost drugs that would enable their poor patients to access pharmaceuticals and complete their treatment regimens. However, pharmaceutical representatives did not call on these physicians; they had been neglected by the pharmaceutical industry.	Illness doesn’t discriminate between rich and poor, or where you live, but healthcare does.
NURHI	Men and women felt judged and patronized by family planning programs that suggested that families should have only 2 to 3 children.	Family planning isn’t about the right family size; it’s about having the freedom to make the right decisions for your family.

Key take-away: When crafting insights, focus on the “unspoken” findings from the audience understanding; write insights that are concise and easy to remember so that everyone on the team can understand and use them.

Lastly, excellence in the audience focus best practice area takes times. In the words of Airbnb co-founder Brian Chesky, “It’s really hard to get even 10 people to love anything. But it’s not hard if you spend a ton of time with them.”¹⁹ Several projects we developed as case studies had a relatively long foundational learning period. For example, Future Fab spent approximately 6 months understanding the audience and developing prototypes, NURHI spent 12 months in a foundational learning phase, and A360 spent 18 months. Well Told Story (WTS), the organization behind the Shujaaz media platform, has been immersed in studying Kenyan youth for the past 10 years and still spends approximately 3 months in foundational learning for each new campaign.

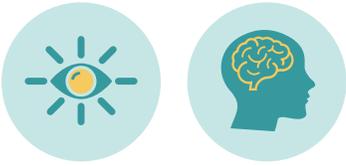
Key take-away: Doing the up front work to identify a specific audience, understand “the unspoken” and craft an audience insight takes time, but will pay off by providing clarity and guidance for project and campaign execution.

16) Mankind is an Indian Pharmaceutical company

17) Nigerian Urban Reproductive Health Initiative

18) Mildenhall, Jonathan, “How Airbnb built its brand by telling the world not to travel,” PR Week, Sept 18, 2017

19) “Airbnb’s Brian Chesky in Handcrafted” Masters of Scale Podcast with Reid Hoffman.



BEST PRACTICE #2

Brand Strategy

BRAND VISION / BRAND IDENTITY:

Throughout the course of this project, we wrestled with two overarching brand-related questions: (1) how do you know if you need a brand? and (2) how do you decide whether to use an existing brand or create a new brand? While there are few hard and fast rules, we hope this section will help practitioners think through the most important considerations and learn from our case study examples. At the end of the section, we discuss two additional brand strategy considerations: (1) brands that truly live their vision, and (2) brands that have successfully evolved over a long period of time.

What is a brand?

As outlined in our [key terms and definitions](#), there are many ways to define a brand. The definition we use – a strategic asset with a reputation – conveys several important concepts.

- A brand is a strategic asset, which implies that it has value (derived from awareness, associations, and resonance) and that it can take many forms. For example, a brand can be:
 - a. a person (2008 presidential candidate Barack Obama),
 - b. a behavior change campaign (Truth Initiative anti-smoking campaign),
 - c. a product (Trust condoms),
 - d. a service (Future Fab Diva Clinics),
 - e. a social movement (Brothers for Life efforts to mobilize men to take responsibility for their health), etc.
- A brand can be one or several of these at the same time (e.g., Truth is a campaign that is also a social movement and could create anti-smoking products). All these examples are brands because they have awareness and meaning for the audience they serve.
- We describe the meaning that brands have as a “reputation” – a term that reminds us that a brand is what the audience believes it to be, whether the associations are intended or not.
- A brand, like any other strategic asset (inventory, human resources, buildings and equipment) merits careful resource management to protect its reputation and maximize the value represented in its awareness, associations, and resonance with the audience.

Key take-away: a brand is a strategic asset with a reputation. It can be a person, behavior change campaign, product, service, social movement, place, etc.

What is the role of a brand?

A brand creates awareness, resonance, and meaning in the hearts and minds of its audience. For example, in 2000, the American Legacy Foundation (ALF) launched Truth, an anti-tobacco publicity and mass media campaign targeting American teenagers. The campaign had all the elements of a brand – a vision (end smoking), an identity (which included a distinctive personality and consistent look and feel), and strong presence (over 70% awareness among the target audience within the first year).²⁰ Jeffrey Hicks, the president at the advertising agency behind the Truth mass media campaign explained, *“If we wanted youth to really embrace our anti-tobacco effort, it made sense that we should*

20) Farrelly, et al, “Getting to the Truth: Evaluating National Tobacco Countermarketing Campaigns,” American Journal of Public Health, June 2002

deliver it just like other successful US youth products, such as Adidas, Fubu or Abercrombie—in a branded form they understood. Branding has given the [campaign] the benefit of accumulated awareness. Everything we have created builds on the awareness of the marketing components that preceded it.”

Key take-away: The primary role of the brand is to serve the audience. It creates value and meaning through offerings that help the audience fulfill their needs and desires. However, if it does this job well, it also provides value to the brand owner by enabling the owner to reach and influence the audience.

Does one always need a brand?

Short answer: yes. In the Truth example above, the team intentionally decided to create a brand, but what about examples where the campaign is not branded? In fact, when we originally drafted the best practices framework, we included the brand strategy section as “optional,” with the understanding that social and behavior change campaigns are sometimes unbranded. However, as we continued to review our case studies and reflected on the above definition of a brand, we concluded *that a brand is always part of the initiative, whether an implementer has intentionally thought about creating a brand or not*. Said differently, an implementer may try to run a campaign without its being a brand, but if the campaign is successful, programmers will find that they ended up having created a decent brand after all, as there will be something (a de-facto brand) that has awareness, meaning, and resonance for the audience (e.g., the NURHI “Get It Together” campaign).

Key take-away: By approaching marketing initiatives (whether for people, behaviors, products, services, or movements) as brands, implementers increase the likelihood of creating something that will stand out, be remembered, resonate, and ultimately have an impact.

Brand architecture: when should one use an existing brand vs. creating a new brand?

The range of successful branding approaches in our case studies suggests that there is no one “best” approach to brand architecture. However, because of the significant resource investment required to build a brand, we believe in using existing brands wherever possible, particularly in instances where the audience is already familiar with the brand (e.g., it already exists in the country). The advantages of using an existing brand are largely resource-based, but there are also advantages for the audience. For example, MTN’s²¹ global brand architecture approach yields the benefits of scale, such as global sponsorship opportunities (e.g., the FIFA World Cup) and the ability to use marketing assets across borders. But there are also advantages for the audience: global enterprise customers interact with one brand across markets, and an increasingly global consumer segment benefits from finding a trusted brand wherever they go. We recommend MTV Shuga²² as a best-in-class example of a campaign that harnessed the power of an existing brand. MTV gives the campaign access not only to the audience (MTV fans) but also to a highly relevant brand platform (a brand look and feel that is widely recognized and admired, a relevant brand personality, etc.) which helps the campaign to resonate with the audience.

In order to leverage an existing brand, there must be strong alignment in terms of both the brand’s and the new initiative’s audience – including audience understanding and insight – as well as the brand’s and the new initiative’s vision or benefit. For example, MTV Shuga aims to improve the sexual and reproductive health of young people. In season three, the campaign added a campaign about gender-based violence (GBV) as a sub-plot; this works because the target audience (African youth) and overall vision (improving sexual and reproductive health) are the same for both the MTV Shuga brand and the GBV campaign.

If there is not alignment between either audience or vision, the brand must evolve to include the initiative. For example, Mankind Pharmaceuticals had an existing erectile dysfunction brand, Manforce, which was available by prescription in both pill and gel format. The company launched condoms under the same brand because there was high alignment between the existing brand benefit (sexual performance and virility) and the desired benefit for condoms. Manforce took on the new audience, focusing on male consumers in addition to physicians.

21) MTN is a leading telecommunications company in over 20 countries in Africa and the Middle East.

22) MTV Shuga is mass media behavior change campaign aimed at improving youth sexual and reproductive health.

Finally, sometimes a brand needs to evolve its vision or benefit to take on a new initiative. The Truth Initiative, whose vision is to create a world where young people reject tobacco, recently launched a new campaign, the Truth about Opioids. The target audience – American youth – is the same, and there are similarities between the addictive nature of tobacco and opioids. However, the Truth Initiative will need to evolve its vision over time to continue to support opioid related initiatives.

Key take-away: The use of an existing brand is recommended in the following three scenarios:

- (1) There is alignment between the audiences and the brand vision (or benefit) (MTV Shuga)
- (2) There is alignment between the visions, and the audience can be broadened to embrace the new initiative (Mankind ED and condoms)
- (3) There is alignment between the audiences, and the brand vision can expand to embrace the new initiative (Truth anti-tobacco and opioids)

Brands that truly live their vision:

It is often the brand's behavior, more than vision or look and feel, that forms a brand's reputation. For example, Brothers for Life aims to mobilize men to take responsibility for their own health. Brothers for Life²³ does this not only with communications, but also by engaging ambassador role models, providing resources for men's health (hotline, toolkits), partnership with community-based organizations, training programs for local facilitators, etc.

However, there are also examples from our case studies where initiatives may need to stretch beyond their original programmatic focus to bring the vision to life. As an example, NURHI's "Get It Together" campaign aims to help couples get their lives together. While contraceptives are an obvious means to achieve the vision, one can imagine other programs – financial literacy, income generation, small loans, etc. – that would also contribute to the vision. And finally, we like Airbnb's example, whereby the vision to "create a world where people can belong anywhere" inspired innovation (local activities that help travelers experience a location "like a local") as well as social justice support (providing a system whereby displaced guests including refugees and those fleeing natural disasters can find Airbnb accommodations free of charge).

Key take-away: The best brands are committed to their vision, even if it means venturing outside their original scope.

Brands that stay relevant over time:

As brands that have existed for over two decades, both Truth and Trust needed to reinvent themselves, as their target audiences aged out of the brand categories, and the original brand propositions were not relevant to a younger generation. Both brands undertook extensive consumer research and updated their brand strategies, including their brand visions and identities, to appeal to a new generation of consumers. In the case of Trust (or a similar, donor supported brand), one can imagine a scenario whereby a stakeholder may have advocated for introducing a new brand, as the existing one was not relevant to a youthful audience. However, it is important when possible to maintain existing brands; much has been invested in their development and growth, and they have meaning for the audience. Instead of launching brands, existing brands should be continually renewed and refreshed to maintain resonance.

Key take-away: To maintain resonance, brands need to revisit their assumptions about audience understanding and insights, gain new audience perspective, and use that new learning to refresh the brand every few years.

23) Brothers for Life is a social movement aimed at inspiring men to take responsibility for their own health.



BEST PRACTICE #3

Campaign Strategy

The term *campaign* refers to a coordinated set of marketing activities designed to promote a product, service, behavior change, etc. through marketing vehicles (e.g., TV, radio, social media, grassroots outreach, peer educators, etc.). See the [key terms and definitions](#) section for further detail. A brand comes to life through a campaign (for example, the NURHI Get It Together brand came to life through the specific marketing vehicles – social media, TV and videos, community outreach, etc.).

In this section we discuss four highlights from our analysis of the campaign strategy best practice area: (1) insights come to life in campaigns; (2) well-chosen marketing vehicles help campaigns to resonate with the audience; (3) strong campaigns maintain continuity while also launching new ideas; 4) there are many ways to delight the audience and inspire engagement. We discuss each of these highlights in the context of the best practice sub-elements, as outlined below.

COMMUNICATE A BENEFIT / TOUCH THE HEART, OPEN THE MIND

Insights come to life in campaigns:

We discussed insights in the audience focus section of the best practice framework and report, and we discuss them again here because it is in the campaign that insights come to life. Insights, translated into marketing campaigns, work because they reveal something new that inspires the audience to think and feel differently. For example, the Truth Initiative identified an insight about American youth: *they want to be agents for social change and are interested in issues like the environment, income inequality, LGBTQ rights, etc. They don't think of tobacco as one of these issues, and yet it is one area where they could make an important difference.* This insight was translated into the campaign -- #FinishIt – which aimed to inspire youth to be the generation that ends smoking.

However, both insights and campaigns need to be refreshed. Once the audience is familiar with the campaign, it no longer inspires new thinking or new feelings, so that new insights are needed to remind people about the brand and appeal to rejectors. For example, a subsequent Truth Initiative campaign, #LeftSwipeDat, was based on the insight that youth are more likely to “left swipe” (i.e., reject) those who are seen with cigarettes in their dating profile pictures vs. those without cigarettes.

Key take-away: Strong insights have the potential to inspire the audience to think and feel differently, but they must be clearly translated and brought to life in a campaign in order to realize this potential. With time, new insights will be needed to sustain interest in the brand, appeal to rejectors, and introduce initiatives.

SELECT THE RIGHT MARKETING VEHICLES AND ENSURE MESSAGE CONTINUITY

The companies and projects we evaluated made good use of marketing vehicles, selecting those that made sense for both the audience and the message. The Shujaaz approach to marketing vehicles makes this point well. Shujaaz relies on radio to build awareness, but because radio does not provide enough detail to help people digest new information, the Shujaaz comic is used to provide detailed charts and graphs that bring more substance and context to a given topic. Social media is also important, as it helps people to integrate new information by sharing and learning from others.

Well-chosen marketing vehicles enable campaigns to resonate:

A few projects in our series stood out for excellent marketing vehicle selection. These projects went beyond the thoughtful selection of vehicles that make sense for the audience and message, to select vehicles that in fact

strengthened the message. The approaches employed in these examples include: (1) peer to peer marketing; (2) marketing vehicles as marketing message; and (3) opportune marketing moments.

(1) Peer to peer marketing (Obama 2008 Presidential Campaign and Brothers for Life): In developed markets, where brand authenticity is paramount, consumers increasingly trust “people like themselves” for recommendations and referrals. This “peer to peer marketing” approach isn’t new, but merits additional consideration across markets. According to Nielsen’s Global Trust in Advertising Report,²⁴ more than 85% of people in Africa, the Middle East, Asia-Pacific and Latin America completely or somewhat “trust advertising from someone I know.” While many of the projects in our case study series used peer educators or ambassadors, we liked the Obama 2008 Campaign for its use of mobile and digital tools to facilitate peer to peer marketing, and Brothers for Life’s HIV Testing and Counseling (HTC) Campaign which used real people and real stories that resonated with the audience.

The Obama team created an iPhone app which not only enabled users to access Obama content, but also organized a user’s phone contacts by state and prompted users to call contacts in swing states to encourage them to vote for Obama. Similarly, the campaign prompted Facebook users to contact friends in key states and provided suggested messaging. The campaign also provided online tools, e.g., “create your own event” or “create your own Obama group,” to further encourage peer to peer marketing, including a feature called Neighbor to Neighbor, which enabled users to identify and contact people in their own neighborhoods who were campaign targets.

The Brothers for Life HTC campaign included 9 documentary style videos featuring real people (brand ambassadors). The films, which addressed fears about HIV testing and knowledge gaps identified through research, allowed viewers to identify with the ambassadors’ experiences, which were often very similar to their own. For example, in response to a video that featured a man who had been in denial about his positive status but eventually came to both accept and manage his status through support from family and friends, a male Facebook participant commented, “We are one me and Thabo Mofokeng [the ambassador]. I love him a lot.”

(2) Marketing vehicles as marketing message (MTN): MTN sought to expand its business with small and medium sized enterprises, by creating an innovative stunt that garnered attention and demonstrated the marketing message – that MTN understands small business customers and works around the clock to support them. The stunt featured a “live” billboard on a high traffic commuter highway. For 72 hours, a well-dressed man worked in an unbranded office inside the billboard (a shipping container with a large glass window). No one knew who the man was, what company he worked for, or why he was working on display, which inspired curiosity, buzz, and social media conversations. After the third day, MTN revealed that it was the #manninthebox, thereby communicating that MTN works around the clock to support its customers. MTN subsequently showcased 7 different businesses in the live billboard, further demonstrating the company’s commitment to supporting small business customers.

(3) Opportune marketing moments (Mankind Pharmaceuticals’ Prega News): Prega News (an at home pregnancy test brand) launched two norm-challenging campaigns on national days that recognize women – Mother’s Day and Women’s Day. For example, on Mother’s Day in 2019, the brand launched #GoodNewsIsGenderFree, which featured a video that challenged the norm of wishing expectant mothers the birth of a male child -- “boy or girl, good news is always good news.” The launch timing – on Mother’s Day – helped the message to stand out; it’s somewhat unexpected and makes people think differently. It also likely enables strong media coverage, as it gives media outlets an interesting Mother’s Day story. Finally, it helps reinforce Prega News’ connection to motherhood.

Key take-away: Marketing vehicles are expected to deliver the message; an excellent choice of a marketing vehicle is one in which the vehicle not only delivers the message but also strengthens the connection with the audience.

Strong campaigns maintain continuity while also launching new ideas:

Several projects in our case study series lacked continuity, either because they were too new (A360 Kuwa Mjanja launched the year before we initiated our case study analysis), were limited to a specific timeframe (the Obama campaign

24) *Global Trust in Advertising*, Nielsen, September 2015.

ran during the months prior to the 2008 election), or were limited by available funding (Future Fab, ORS/Zinc). Among those that remained, we noted strong continuity at the overall brand level (Brothers for Life has been advocating for men to take responsibility for their health for over 10 years), which is a positive finding, as messages need to be continuously reinforced. In the words of Byron Sharp, known for evidence-based marketing based on over 40 years of research, “Even Coca-Cola’s marketers have to remind people that it’s a refreshing drink, especially when you are hot.”²⁵ However, it is unlikely that short-term campaigns (six months to two or three years) will have any significant impact beyond the lifetime of the campaign. Below we share two examples of brands that introduce new messages while consistently supporting the overall brand message.

Prega News offers a straight-forward example. Launched in 2007, Prega News is known for celebrity endorsements and the tagline, “pregnancy confirmation in just 5 minutes.” In 2017, the brand launched a new campaign, “Your Second Home,” which encourages employers to find ways to make the workplace more supportive and comfortable for expectant mothers. However, the brand didn’t step away from the benefit-focused messaging: in-store materials, social media posts, and out-of-home media continue to feature the message “pregnancy confirmation in just 5 minutes,” while videos, PR, and social media support the more emotional, thought-provoking message in the new campaign.

We also liked the example provided by MTV Shuga, which uses drama and storytelling to introduce new ideas while maintaining ongoing themes. For example, in episode 5, the show aired for the first time in South Africa (MTV Shuga Down South), where a cast of new characters, including the show’s first gay character – and new theme of homosexuality – were introduced alongside ongoing themes of HIV, relationships, etc.

Key take-away: brands can support multiple messages over time; however, the most important messages need to be consistently repeated – although in new and different ways – to appeal to new audiences (e.g., those who age into the category) and to remind the existing audience about the brand (whether it be a social movement, product, behavior change campaign, etc.).

DELIGHT THE AUDIENCE / INSPIRE AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

“Delight the audience” is the best practice sub-element we debated the most as a team, which is no surprise, as the marketing and business leadership pundits are split on this topic as well. For example, the authors of an HBR article, “Stop Trying to Delight Your Customers,”²⁶ argue that solving customers’ problems with as little effort as possible (on the part of the customer) is more important than seeking to “delight” customers, which they describe as vague and costly. Others, such as leadership guru Steve Denning, argue that customer delight is the most important organizational objective; organizations that focus on delight are more profitable than organizations that focus on profitability; organizations that focus on customer delight secure “free marketing” through word of mouth, and organizations that focus on customer delight are making ethical progress, “*Delighting other people intrinsically appeals to our hearts. Thinking about and helping other people is central to ethics.*”²⁷

In the context of global health and development, where non-profits are the norm and “thinking about and helping people” is a sine qua non, this argument for customer delight at first seems unwarranted. However, feedback from development sector stakeholders indicates that customer delight remains an opportunity, as one resource shared with us during the early phase of this project, “*We can actually change people’s behaviors by delighting them in the process. We don’t always give ourselves permission to delight people. Sometimes we are too earnest or think that education is important even though we know that emotions are what drive behavior.*”

For the purpose of this report, we grouped our analysis of audience delight and audience engagement together, as an audience that is delighted is more likely to engage.

There are many ways to delight the audience and inspire engagement:

The edutainment approach to behavior change makes for an excellent example, as delight is inherent in a successful

25) Sharp, Byron, “How Brands Grow: what marketers don’t know,” Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 207.

26) Dixon, Matthew, et al, “Stop Trying to Delight Your Customers,” Harvard Business Review, July-Aug 2010

27) Denning, Steve, “Is Customer Delight Just Hype?” Forbes, June 29, 2011.

edutainment approach; the program needs to be massively appealing to reach a large audience and keep them coming back to watch each episode. MTV Shuga achieves audience delight through extensive audience research, ensuring highly relevant and authentic content; talented actors; well written drama; and high-quality production. As explained by Biyi Bandele, director of the seasons set for MTV Shuga Naija, *“I felt that it should not be earnest, it should be entertaining. There’s nothing wrong with being entertaining even when you’re trying to educate, and that’s what we’ve done.”*²⁸

MTN provides an example of an organization that is developing innovations to improve customer experience. In spring 2019, MTN South Africa launched a WhatsApp self-service channel, which greatly improves the way customers can buy airtime, check balances and store credit, and perform other tasks that require a phone call. By using WhatsApp, MTN meets the customers where they are (approximately half of South Africans use WhatsApp) and greatly simplifies customer service. MTN also uses customer analytics to proactively identify customer service issues, reach out to customers to acknowledge the issue, and implement a solution – without the customer having to initiate contact with MTN.

Audience engagement, as defined in our best practice standard of excellence, requires not only that the audience participates in the brand (e.g., views the campaign, “likes” or “comments” on social media, or uses the product or services), but also that the audience shares their enthusiasm with others. This standard of excellence is based on the findings of Les Binet and Peter Feld, renowned marketing effectiveness experts, who conclude that “...campaigns that emotionally inspire consumers to the degree that they share their enthusiasm with others ... are the most effective and efficient of all.”²⁹

All the brands and campaigns we reviewed employed programs to inspire audience engagement; for example, the NURHI “Get It Together” project sponsored two of Nigeria’s most popular musical artists to record a song. In the words of the NURHI project director, “we call on the public to listen to the song, pass it along and spread the message...”³⁰ Prega News created a pledge drive online, encouraging the audience to pledge to make life more comfortable for expectant mothers.

Our favorite examples of audience engagement come from MTN and the Obama 2008 campaign, both of which created content that was so relevant that it inspired the audience to engage.

In 2013, MTN Nigeria ran a campaign about “number portability” – the ability to change carriers without having to change one’s phone number. The campaign featured a popular TV character “Saka” who had previously been the celebrity face of Etisalat, MTN’s competitor, but had now decamped to MTN. The ad drove significant buzz for several reasons, including timeliness (it was launched the same day that the communications commission approved mobile number portability); surprise (Saka’s identity was concealed with his back to the camera for most of the ad; when he turned to face the camera, making his identity known, his clothing subtly changed from green, the color for Etisalat, to MTN yellow), and cleverness (if the competition’s celebrity spokesperson switches to MTN, maybe you should too).

Our example from the Obama campaign comes from candidate Obama’s “Yes We Can” speech, which had so moved Wil.i.am, lead singer for the Black Eyed Peas, that he put it to music, recruited his celebrity friends to direct, perform, and film it, and released it to the internet, where it was viewed nearly 1 million times within the first week and became the most popular online video of the 2008 political campaign.³¹ The circumstances behind this viral video were extraordinary: candidate Obama was both charismatic and an excellent orator; Wil.i.am and friends were talented, well-known, and inspired to work for free; and the song was written, recorded, and released within three days – in time to impact

28) Palmer, Tamara, “The Best International Drama You aren’t Watching – Yet,” *Shondaland*, Feb 14, 2019

29) Benet, Les, and Field, Peter, “The Long and Short of It: Balancing Short and Long-Term Marketing Strategies,” IPA, 2013.

30) Kott, Anne, “‘Get It Together’ Family Planning Song is YouTube Sensation,” *Johns Hopkins CCP*

31) Wallsten, Kevin, “‘Yes We Can’: How Online Viewership, Blog Discussion, Campaign Statements, and Mainstream Media Coverage Produced a Viral Video Phenomenon,” *Journal of Information Technology and Politics*, May 2010.

the upcoming primaries. Nonetheless, the underlying lesson – create content that resonates – is something the best marketers will aspire to.

Key take-away: The most effective and efficient campaigns inspire the audience to share their enthusiasm with others. Based on our case studies, elements that inspire audience engagement include delight, an element of surprise, timeliness, and relevance.



BEST PRACTICE #4

Measurement

Overall, excellence in this best practice area is challenged by the complexities inherent in definitively measuring the impact of brand and marketing components. Excluding the private sector examples, which we did not score (measurement data are typically confidential), there was strength in two of the four sub-elements – testing message effectiveness and evaluating program results; however, the second two areas, measuring brand performance and marketing vehicle effectiveness, represent opportunities for improvement.

TEST MESSAGE EFFECTIVENESS

Without testing marketing messages and approaches, practitioners cannot be certain whether the messages are indeed clear and persuasive, or whether the approaches have the desired effect. This seems clear, as this was the strongest best practice sub element that we evaluated. All organizations tested marketing elements before launch. The Brothers for Life TestaBoy campaign, the one example that we did not score favorably, seems to have been an anomaly, as there were other Brothers for Life campaigns that had been tested and improved before launch.

There was considerable variability in the type of testing methodology, which is appropriate given the diversity in the types of campaigns. For example, A360 Kuwa Mjanja and Future Fab, programs that relied heavily on interpersonal communications and events, used an adaptive approach, whereby the programs were consistently monitored and adjusted based on the teams' ongoing learning. MTV Shuga and Shujaaz, two edutainment programs, both relied on qualitative research to ensure comprehension and authenticity prior to launch. They both also monitored social media to identify areas of confusion or other issues, which were then addressed in social media and / or in subsequent episodes. Most of the programs that used mass media, including Trust and Truth, used traditional copy testing techniques.

Key take-away: The type of test and resources allocated to testing depend on the investment in marketing vehicles, with expensive, mass media campaigns requiring more rigorous testing. For testing to be effective, implementers must allocate time and resources to adjust marketing communications and programs based on learning resulting from message testing.

EVALUATE PROGRAM RESULTS

Program evaluation is a key step in determining whether a campaign has been effective. However, statistically validated study designs can be expensive, time-consuming, or potentially inappropriate for program goals, meaning that many brands and campaigns tend to report service delivery statistics in lieu of more objective measures. Additionally, while donors rely on program evaluations to determine whether investments have been worthwhile, not every team or initiative has the necessary expertise to execute an independent evaluation. The case studies included in this report highlight the many tensions and challenges of measuring program results, including designing evaluations, determining which statistics matter most, and identifying the correct timing of evaluations given how long it takes to change behaviors.

Designing the evaluation:

In many cases for branded campaigns, the “gold standard” of a randomized control trial will be impractical or inappropriate, and will almost certainly add more costs. In only one of the case studies, MTV Shuga, did they use a control group with a placebo television program to compare exposure to MTV Shuga against program objectives. There are many alternative quasi-experimental designs that can be used to measure program results. For example, ORS/zinc implemented a difference-in-difference technique to measure the impact of their mass media initiative.

Service delivery statistics are not the same as evaluations:

The majority of case studies that we reviewed reported service delivery statistics as evidence of their program results. For example, A360 reports that they exceeded their target distribution of 20,000 contraceptive methods by 250% over the project period. However, these program data do not tell us whether the campaign was the driver of this increase, or if their initial targets were too low from the beginning.

Program exposure vs. Program evaluation:

As has been discussed elsewhere in this report, lasting behavior change can take years or even decades to take root, as is the case with the Truth campaign that originally launched in 2000. Yet most programs are designed to fit donor funding cycles of 3-5 years, meaning that, in order to receive continued funding, interventions are forced to report success within a very short time span. The result of this tension between behavior change timelines and donor funding cycles is that the short-term metrics that are chosen to measure program objectives may not reflect real behavior change.

The case studies highlight the room for improvement in the realm of program evaluation. Some key takeaways from the various examples we reviewed include:

- Donors and program implementers alike should remember that lasting behavior change takes time. Evaluations should therefore select indicators that can realistically be measured within the project period. For larger scale projects, more complex evaluation methods may be necessary. For example, NURHI had an ambitious goal of raising contraceptive use at the population level. An evaluation of this scope therefore required an extensive door-to-door survey technique that would not be feasible in projects of a larger scale and scope.
- Evaluations of media campaigns should move beyond knowledge and awareness surveys to evaluate exposure. Instead, more creative survey methods such as focus group discussions and more interactive survey designs should ask probing questions about whether and how exposure may have influenced behavior.
- Program design should include and budget for program evaluation specialists at the outset of the campaign in order to ensure that evaluations are scientifically grounded and can be implemented in tandem with program activities. Programs such as Shujaaz that attempt to evaluate their programs after project launch will be limited in the conclusions that they can draw.

We recommend MTV Shuga, NURHI, Shujaaz, ORS/zinc, and Truth as examples of program evaluations that used statistically valid methods to conclude that they had achieved their intended results. In many of these cases, the program implementer partnered with an external research organization with expertise in program evaluation. The more successful examples also set out with a pre-determined evaluation method and conducted baseline surveys before the launch of their initiatives.

Key takeaway: In order to prove the effectiveness of an initiative, programs should include program evaluation expertise, budget, and time in their initial designs. Donors and program implementers should remember that behavior change takes time, and evaluation designs should reflect this fact.

MEASURE BRAND PERFORMANCE

Most programs measured brand awareness, often to assess brand or campaign exposure; however, few measured brand attributes, which is a miss. Measuring brand attributes helps implementers understand whether the brand is working as intended. For example, over time, the Trust brand lost relevance with a younger generation of potential users. As Trust worked to appeal to this new audience, it became important to monitor brand attributes, such as “is a brand for youth” or “is used by people like yourself.”

We highlight the Truth Initiative as a best-in-class example for this best practice. Based on a study of the original Truth campaign that launched in 2000, researchers had demonstrated that higher brand equity scores were associated with lower levels of smoking uptake: *“Brand equity in truth mediated the effects of campaign exposure (measured by*

confirmed recall of campaign ads) through specific targeted attitudes about tobacco industry manipulation and a desire to remain independent of tobacco from advertising on adolescent smoking uptake.”³² In 2016, Evans et al developed a brand equity model for the FinishIt campaign, with the intent of understanding whether “changes in brand equity over time may predict tobacco use behavior at a later time point.”³³ The study includes 18 questions that help assess four overall constructs (brand loyalty, leadership/popularity, brand personality, and brand awareness) and were added to waves 3 and 4 of the Truth longitudinal cohort study. Study results showed that FinishIt brand equity “predicts increased anti-tobacco attitudes and reduced tobacco use behavior over time (at six months).”³⁴ In addition, implementers can use the study results to understand how they can tweak marketing programs. For example, if – hypothetically – brand loyalty were to fall over time, the program team could diagnose the marketing elements to determine what might have contributed to the decline, and how best to restore it.

We recognize that most programs do not have resources or systems in place to conduct such a study; nonetheless, practitioners should add questions to evaluation studies to confirm whether the brand is working in the way it was intended. For example, the ORS/Zinc project included six questions to understand attitudes about ORS and zinc that the campaign was intended to address (e.g., “ORS and zinc is recommended by health providers,” “ORS and zinc is more effective than home remedies”).

Several of the projects we assessed (e.g., NURHI, Brothers for Life, Shujaaz) were grounded in learning that the audience had felt judged by other “finger wagging” programs. Several of the questions that Shujaaz includes in audience surveys, e.g., “I have a positive image of Shujaaz,” “Shujaaz has a positive impact on my life” and “I trust Shujaaz,” can help implementers understand whether the brand is a positive source of inspiration and encouragement, a finger-wagging health program, or somewhere in between. We also like the question, “I have recommended Shujaaz to other people.” As Frederick Reichheld described in the HBR, “When customers act as a reference, they do more than indicate that they’ve received good economic value from a company; they put their own reputation on the line. And they will risk their reputations only if they feel intense loyalty.”³⁵

Key take-away: Project teams do a good job of assessing awareness but need to routinely measure brand associations. In the absence of a robust brand equity model, implementers should develop questions to assess whether the audience perceives the brand the way it is intended.

EVALUATE MARKETING VEHICLE EFFECTIVENESS

Very few programs evaluated marketing vehicle effectiveness, likely due to the limited number of marketing vehicles used by many of the programs in our case study series, as well as challenges of collecting accurate data. Those that did include such an evaluation relied on self-reported data, which has obvious limitations, but is also the most practical approach. Some programs, such as Brothers for Life, did a detailed evaluation of a specific vehicle (e.g., Facebook), to understand how well the videos shown on the social media site – as well as the resulting conversations – affected audience behavior. What is lacking is a comprehensive evaluation that assesses the relative importance of each vehicle in terms of reach, impact, and cost.

Key take-away: In the absence of robust data that prove audience viewership and link exposure to behavior, measuring marketing vehicle effectiveness remains a challenge. Project teams should seek to understand not only where the audience may have been exposed to a particular message, but the degree to which each vehicle influenced behavior.

32) Evans, et al, “Effects of the truth finishit campaign on tobacco outcomes,” *Prev Med Rep*, Dec 2, 2017

33) *Ibid*.

34) *Ibid*.

35) Reichheld, Frederick, “The One Number You Need to Grow,” *Harvard Business Review*, December 2003.



BEST PRACTICE #5

Governance

“Governance” refers to the overarching structure surrounding brand and marketing projects. In order to be successful, brand and marketing activities require a clear organizational structure, decision-making systems, experienced practitioners and leaders, and rewards and incentives. Among the brands we reviewed in our case study series, we noted five qualities that contributed to strong governance, as outlined below:

(1) A visionary leader who has continuity with the organization: Half of the projects we reviewed have existed for more than ten years. Almost all of these have benefited from the visionary leadership of a passionate founder — someone who saw an opportunity to address an unmet need, had the leadership courage to bring their vision to life, inspired others to join the cause, and sustained the organization with consistent leadership throughout crises and triumphs alike. A few examples:

- Georgia Arnold, the Executive Director of the MTV Staying Alive Foundation and the Executive Producer of MTV Shuga, has been credited with the long-term success of both the Foundation and the show. Working at MTV over 20 years ago, she was inspired by a young HIV-positive community activist, had the idea to use the resources of the MTV brand to support his work, and made it happen, creating the MTV Staying Alive Foundation. Over 20 years later, the Foundation, which supports HIV activists through small grants and influences youth behavior and norms through real-life storytelling, has reached over 720 million households and has been associated with a significant increase in HIV testing.
- Rob Burnet, a media industry veteran, was motivated by the riots following the 2007 Kenyan presidential elections, started Shujaaz – a youth-focused comic and radio program that aims to create social and economic value for Kenyan youth. Burnet has led Shujaaz since its inception in 2010, where his industry experience, passion, and commitment have been the backbone of the Shujaaz brand. Shujaaz has been associated with positive outcomes in contraception, abstinence, and money hustles (i.e., income generation).
- Rajeev Juneja’s experience as a pharmaceutical representative in India led him in 2005 to create a new kind of pharmaceutical company that would focus on doctors and their patients in Tier II and III cities. Juneja continues to serve as Chairman, while his younger brother, who co-founded the company with him, serves as CEO. The two have shared overall responsibilities for the company and have guided its growth to a top 10 Indian pharmaceutical company by focusing on addressing underserved segments, cost management, disruptive marketing, and aggressive promotions.
- Brian Chesky, who co-founded Airbnb in 2008, experienced the loneliness of courageous leadership during the company’s first major crisis in 2011. Against the advice of experienced investors and advisors, Chesky (who was 29 at the time) accepted responsibility when a renter destroyed a property hosted on Airbnb. He issued a public apology and committed funds to reimburse renters whose homes had been damaged through Airbnb, restoring public confidence in the company, reinforcing company values, and setting an example for employees.

Key take-away: A visionary leader – often but not necessarily the founder – plays a critical role in creating innovative solutions to complex problems, inspiring employees, making hard decisions, and establishing an organizational culture.

(2) Bringing the voice of the audience into the organization: Audience understanding is arguably the most important best practice. Our case study analysis revealed at least three organizations that designed structures and systems to bring the audience perspective to the center of decision-making. For example, whereas many large

companies have a consumer or audience research team that serves as a support function for the organization, at Airbnb the research team is embedded directly into project teams; researchers partner with engineering, design, and other functions to create products and services. The A360 Kuwa Mjanja project brought the audience into the decision-making process directly. As the project moved out of the early stages, girls who had been participating in the design process transitioned to supervisory and feedback roles, where they advised on program implementation and ensured brand authenticity. Mankind took a different approach to bringing the audience into the decision-making process: family members who work at the company (four of the top six executives) have spent time in field sales roles, where they learned the needs and realities of the physicians who are their primary target audience.

Key take-away: Audience understanding is more than an up-front activity conducted to design interventions. Organizations that find ways to bring the audience perspective into ongoing activities seem most likely to make decisions that will resonate with the audience.

(3) Employee Engagement: According to an MIT study, organizations that rank in the top 25% in terms of employee experience achieve significantly stronger results than organizations that rank in the bottom 25% in employee experience – double the number of innovations, twice the customer satisfaction, and 25% higher profits.³⁶

MTN recognized an opportunity to improve employee engagement. As described by CEO Rob Shuter, “We are a firm believer that to achieve the best customer experience, we have to start with our employees having the best employee experience.”³⁷ This belief inspired company leadership to create a unique program – the EX (employee experience) strategy -- grounded in three focus areas: performance management with care and empathy; experiential onboarding to enhance the first impression for new employees; and agile learning, which equips employees with skills for career growth and business impact. MTN’s strategy involved the creation of an employee experience center of expertise, internal audit, cross functional support beyond HR, and the creation a “global rewards day” during which 12,000 people were publicly rewarded and recognized across the organization. Similarly, PS Kenya identified the opportunity to strengthen the PS Kenya brand as part of its five-year strategic plan and focused on two enabling factors: having the right talent and making PS Kenya a great place to work. This led to the development of an Employee Value Proposition, with four key elements: quality of life, compensation and benefits, career and personal growth, and rewards and recognition.³⁸

Key take-away: At the heart of every successful organization is a passionate group of employees who believe in the vision and are committed and enabled to go above and beyond to bring the vision to life.

(4) Multidisciplinary teams, collaborative approaches, and stakeholder engagement: We discussed the importance of multidisciplinary teams in the audience focus section of our report. Those projects that employed multidisciplinary teams excelled at audience understanding, likely resulting from the various perspectives and approaches that come from a diverse team. The second strength of the multidisciplinary approach is stakeholder engagement. Several projects in our series benefited from particularly strong support across multiple organizations and stakeholders (donors, government, other implementing partners, etc.). Human Centered Design (HCD), an approach that draws on the participation of multiple stakeholders (including the audience) throughout the design and implementation process, seems to be successful in establishing a strong, shared understanding of the issues and collaborative environment among stakeholders.

Key take-away: Projects designed and implemented through multidisciplinary teams have the benefit of diverse perspectives and strong organizational trust and collaboration.

(5) A culture of continuous learning and adaptation: Many of the projects we reviewed seemed to have an organizational culture that rewards learning and improving vs. implementing as planned. These teams allowed for

36) Kristine Dery and Ina Sebastian, “Building Business Value with Employee Experience,” MIT CISR Research Briefing, 2017.

37) “The MTN Group Story, From Employee Experience to Customer Experience: Putting Meaning Back into Work,” YouTube, May 2019

38) PS Kenya Employee Value Proposition, pskenya.org/careers

time to test, learn, and adapt throughout the project, using tools such as rapid prototyping, social listening, etc. For example, A360 used an “adaptive implementation” approach, whereby the team adapted content based on audience feedback; the Truth Initiative conducted a weekly survey of 140 teens and young adults and used these data to refine campaign exposure targets, optimize the media plan, and confirm message relevancy. Likewise, Shujaaz has processes built into their approach, including message pre-testing, script revisions, and follow-up social media conversations, to assess audience understanding and address points of confusion.

Key take-away: An adaptive approach has many benefits: it allows for stronger programs and campaigns (by continuously learning and improving) and creates an organizational culture that fosters trust and rewards learning and growth.