

FIVE WAYS

EMPATHY BENEFITS YOUR BRAND, PERFORMANCE AND CULTURE

How Cash Flow, Creativity, and Compassion
Co-Exist for Your Success



Maria Ross

Empathy is not just good for society, it is good for your organization

Empathy has been shown to have a direct impact on everything from customer loyalty to innovation to profits. When embraced with genuine intent and not simply as a glossy PR veneer, empathy can offer your organization countless benefits beyond just, well, being a good corporate citizen and doing the right thing for people! Here are some of the proven benefits.

- 1 Empathy spurs innovation:** When you understand your customers, you can keep pace with changing needs and desires. Internal studies at Google found that their most innovative and profitable ideas came from teams leading with soft skills, such as empathy.
- 2 Empathy aligns you with customer wants and needs:** The more in tune you are with your customers, the faster you can deliver best-fit products or services before your competitors catch on. In order to know what customers desire, you must see things from their perspective. Building an ideal customer profile will help you know what their life is like. Steve Jobs, for instance, focused on understanding a customer so well that Apple's product designers knew what the customer wanted before they did.
- 3 Empathy improves employee performance:** Employees with more empathy and collaboration skills can often outperform and advance faster than those with purely the technical skills to succeed. Organizations find that having these skills aids in team members' individual successes.
- 4 Empathetic brands — and workplaces — appeal to millennials and Gen Z:** As professionals, they are among the most diverse generations in the workforce and seek to leverage diverse perspectives to solve tough business challenges. They stick with employers who embrace new perspectives and value their points of view. As consumers, they're loyal to companies and brands that care and make a difference.
- 5 Empathy drives sales, growth, and market performance:** The best and most progressive corporations have begun to adopt and employ compassionate business tactics, which have improved their standing in the market. Many companies report improved metrics such as a healthier stock price, higher valuation and increased revenue.

The Benefits of Empathetic Leadership

Leaders at every level can propel an organization and brand to become more empathetic. But being an empathetic leader also offers numerous benefits for the individual.

● **Empathy can be a catalyst for entrepreneurship:**

Some businesses are founded by a single person who's had a transformative experience; that person's drive to help the world fuels the business. Other businesses are created by a visionary who sees pain or suffering and reacts to it by creating a company that facilitates action. Joy McBrien created Fair Anita as a way to give women a safe space to talk about their experiences while supporting them in selling their crafts in the marketplace.



● **Empathetic leaders engender loyalty:** Leaders who display genuine empathy can put their teams at ease. Leaders who take the time to get to know their employees and customers, see things from their perspectives, and act accordingly are far better poised to achieve their own goals.

● **Empathetic leaders can make good decisions:** They collect information from various perspectives, consider their options, and act decisively. They are able to see the big picture from multiple angles and make critical decisions from an informed perspective.

● **Empathetic leaders are agile and connected:** They are constantly attuned to the needs of their teams as well as the customers they serve, which equips them to react better and faster to make those relationships more productive. They can meet people where they are, motivate them based on individual preferences, and consider various viewpoints when making decisions.

● **Empathetic leaders are adaptable:** Being an empathetic leader can make you more open to changing customer needs and enable you to adapt with more confidence. When you create a healthy dialogue—whether with your own internal team or your external stakeholders—new ideas can take root. You get continuous feedback and input. You are able to adjust your actions and ensure that your products change and grow to meet new customer needs.

The Benefits of an Empathetic Culture

Your employees are the most important brand assets you have. If your culture does not enable your people to practice what you preach in their daily interactions with each other and your customers, the brand facade will soon crumble. Your internal culture must align with the external brand promise you want to convey in the market. Here are some benefits of an empathetic culture.

Higher retention, less turnover: In a tight labor market where competition for the best-skilled candidates is fierce, companies that fail to genuinely exhibit empathy and employ actionable policies that show they are committed to compassionate action will experience higher turnover and struggle to attract top talent. Empathetic cultures make good, talented people want to stay longer and work harder. Organizations that have trouble demonstrating empathy face lower employee morale, reduced retention, and potentially business loss.



More productivity and financial gain: Happy employees lead to happy customers. Some studies suggest that CEOs link financial performance to empathetic environments. Leaders who make empathy part of their business have reported better performance from their employees and better overall business health.

One study finds that a more empathetic, engaged workforce could reduce absenteeism, increase productivity, and decrease turnover by significant percentages. Encouraging an empathetic culture in any organizational environment can save the company from angry customers who might sue but also can lead to happy customers who leave good reviews, refer their friends, bring repeat business, and build customer lifetime value for the company.

Better customer service: Here again, happy employees equal happy customers. If the company culture is supportive and solution-focused, customer service workers are encouraged to reflect empathy toward the customers they serve. When they feel listened to, valued, and inspired by fellow employees and company values, they're empowered to pass those feelings along.

The Benefits of an Empathetic Brand

Brand is really the distillation of business performance. Your company's brand is its heart and soul, the essence of its mission, and the core of its conduct. Empathetic leadership, empathetic culture, and empathetic branding build on and feed off each other because a high-performing brand starts from the inside out, not the other way around. You can't have an empathetic brand reputation unless there are empathetic leaders and employees driving it. Once you authentically walk your talk, here are the benefits of building an empathetic brand reputation:



Healthy market performance and longevity: When your brand is genuinely empathetic, it means you can cultivate customer loyalty for the long haul and continually absorb new market segments.

Increased customer retention and loyalty: Internal leadership and culture both have a huge impact on external customer brand experience. When the brand is empathetic, so are the employees, and that environment impacts the customer base.

Forgiveness when you fail (and you will): When your organization is lockstep with its customers and they feel like your brand is one that truly gets them, you become part of the fabric of their lives. Put another way, if customers feel like you have their backs, they will have yours. When things go wrong and the brand slips up, banked brand goodwill can withstand the misstep and allow customers to give you another chance.

Good press and word-of-mouth referrals: Acting with empathy can give your brand a visibility boost since customers will be inclined to talk about you more often. And the press loves covering stories of companies who break the mold and do something extraordinary.

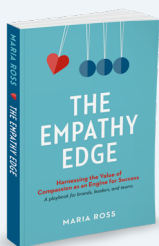
Now that you know the benefits of empathy for your brand, leadership style and team culture, just how do you get there?

Read *The Empathy Edge: Harnessing the Value of Compassion as an Engine for Success: (A playbook for brands, leaders, and teams)*

Being empathetic at work means seeing the situation from another's perspective, and using that vantage point to shape your leadership style, workplace culture, and branding strategy. Pairing her knowledge as a branding expert with proven research and fascinating stories from executives, change-makers and community leaders, Maria Ross reveals exactly how empathy makes brands and organizations stronger and more successful.

Ross shows why your business needs to cultivate more empathy now, and shares the habits and traits of empathetic leaders who foster more productivity and loyalty. She gives practical tips, big and small, for how to align your mission and values and hire the right people, cultivating a more empathetic—and innovative—workplace culture. Finally, she gives you the goods on building your empathetic brand in an authentic and proactive way, and shows how doing so results in happier customers, innovative work cultures and increased profits.

In this practical playbook for businesses of all types, Maria Ross proves that empathy is not just good for society — it's great for business, and may transform you at a personal level, too.



Visit www.theempathyedge.com to learn more, sign up for updates and access resources to help you start achieving these empathy benefits - and create a thriving organization that balances cash flow with compassion.

Praise for *The Empathy Edge*:

"In today's crowded and noisy marketplace, humanity wins. Maria Ross' compelling new book shows - through research, case studies, and practical advice - how compassion and cultivating an empathetic mindset can help leaders and brands stand out."

- **Dorie Clark**, author of *Stand Out and Reinventing You*, and adjunct professor, Duke University Fuqua School of Business

"Today, the products and services of Company A and Company B are often engineered and optimized until they are indistinguishable. But one differentiator remains: empathy. This is a wise, passionate, motivating book that's a must-read for every manager and executive."

- **Jay Baer**, founder of Convince & Convert and co-author of *Talk Triggers*

"Maria Ross shares hard-won lessons about the power of empathy from her experiences in the healthcare system and her years as a brand strategist to some of the top brands in the world to empower leaders and businesses of all kinds to treat their stakeholders with the compassion and care required to build customers for life. She provides practical steps for any organization to shift their cultural mindset in ways that will not only increase their productivity, retention and financial success, but also improve their personal interactions, too. This book is exactly what we need right now to ensure our world is a lot more livable for all of us."

- **Denise Brosseau**, CEO, Thought Leadership Lab, and Best Selling Author of *Ready to Be a Thought Leader?*

"In the new world where top talent seeks not just a paycheck, but purpose and fulfillment at work, Maria Ross shows us that empathy is the foundation of thriving careers and cultures. Those organizations that figure it out will be the ones that succeed in the new economy and those that don't will be increasingly irrelevant - losing talent, productivity, and market demand. This book goes beyond theory to lay out specific actions leaders can take to build the brands and cultures of the future."

- **Aaron Hurst**, co-founder and CEO, Imperative and best-selling author of *The Purpose Economy*.

"The workplace is now more diverse than ever before. Building a stronger culture starts by relating to each other, regardless of background, age or life experience. Maria Ross shows that empathy can be your super-power if you want to achieve your goals. She gives you solid tips to help you build your emotional intelligence, and harness the power of diverse perspectives if you want your organization to thrive."

- **Chip Conley**, Hospitality Entrepreneur and New York Times bestselling author

"Ross's insightful book couldn't have come at a better time. She shows why empathy is an intangible good that customers will happily pay for. The Empathy Edge is a wave worth riding."

- **Marty Neumeier**, author of *The Brand Gap*

About the Author



Maria Ross is the founder of Red Slice, a consultancy that advises entrepreneurs, startups, and fast-growth businesses on how to build an irresistible brand story and authentically connect with customers. She is a keynote speaker who regularly speaks to audiences on marketing and building an

engaging brand story that drives growth and impact. She is the author of several business books: *The Empathy Edge*, *Branding Basics for Small Business* and *The Juicy Guide Series for Entrepreneurs*.

Maria started her career as a management consultant with Accenture and went on to build marketing and brand strategies for multiple companies, including Discovery Communications, Monster.com, BusinessObjects (now SAP) and many other startups and technology leaders, before starting her own business. As a brand strategist, she has worked with brands such as Microsoft, Dropbox, Alteryx, and GSK, as well as many smaller leaders in niche industries.

Maria has been featured in and written for numerous media outlets, including MSNBC, Entrepreneur, Huffington Post and Forbes.com

Maria understands the power of empathy at both a brand and personal level: in 2008, six months after launching her business, she suffered a ruptured brain aneurysm that almost killed her. Her humorous and heartfelt memoir about surviving this health crisis, *Rebooting My Brain*, has received worldwide praise.

Maria lives with her husband, young son, and precocious black lab mutt in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Want to craft a market-winning brand story that conveys your organization's values, stands out in a crowded market, and attracts the perfect employees and customers?

Contact Maria today to discuss your goals and how she and her team can effectively and efficiently get you there:
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