

# How to become **un**matched

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A playbook for making the most of your brand and to help your business get ahead

# Introduction

You're **un**matched at what you do.

Don't believe us? Everybody is unmatched at something – so chances are, so is your business. Maybe you're not sure exactly what makes you stand out, or you can't decide how best to leverage your strengths. That's OK. This playbook is designed to help you figure out what to focus on, and how to get that message into the marketplace.

Over the course of this guide, we'll help you to:



FIND YOUR  
POINT OF  
DIFFERENCE



EMPATHISE  
WITH YOUR  
AUDIENCE

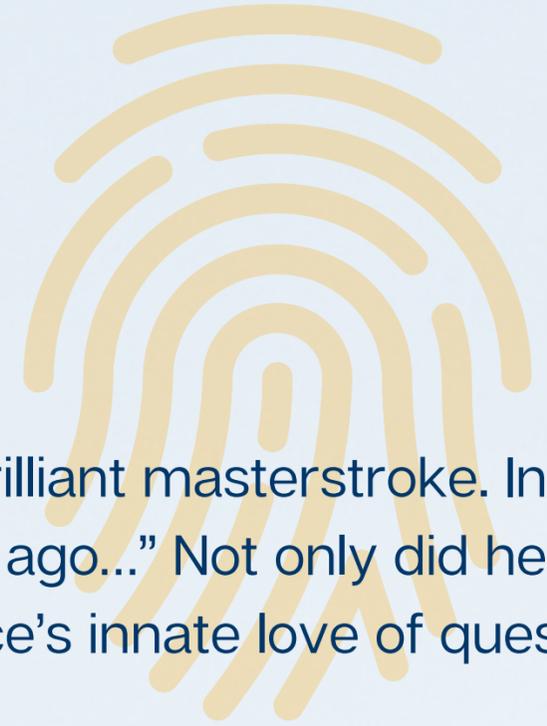


SHED LIGHT  
ON TODAY'S  
CHALLENGES



PROVE YOUR  
VALUE TO  
CUSTOMERS

# Find your point of difference



What made Star Wars unmatched? For all its characters and spectacle, George Lucas had one brilliant masterstroke. In a genre that typically set its stories in the future, Lucas began his film with the caption: “A long time ago...” Not only did he differentiate himself from everyone else, he also crafted a mythology that tapped into the audience’s innate love of quests and adventures.

## What’s your why?

The marketing guru Simon Sinek developed the concept of the golden circle, to explain why successful brands don’t focus on what they do, or how they do it – but *why* they do it. To become unmatched, your business must start with the same question. Define yourselves not as a maker of widgets, but as the provider of unrivalled experiences only possible because of the widget involved.

## Be a good match

You can’t sell to everybody, so you need to focus your communications on the businesses most likely to respond. That means getting inside their minds, to understand the challenges that keep them up at night. It could be anything from major market-shaping, earth-quaking forces to the minor niggles and distractions that prevent them doing a good job. And once you’ve done that, you’ll know which of your own strengths will be most likely to grab their attention.

## Mind the gap

In any industry, there’s a lot of overlap – which means the language businesses speak tends to merge into one. “Check out our unique, groundbreaking solution!” said every company, ever. But when you’ve found your ‘why,’ and you understand ‘why’ it matters to your customers, you can steer a path into the gaps left by your competitors. By doing so, ironically, you really will become unique.

# Find your point of difference



## **IKEA – unpacked and unmatched**

IKEA challenged the orthodoxy of the entire furniture industry when it made the decision to provide its products flat-packed for self-assembly.

The result has made IKEA instantly recognisable worldwide for its affordability and accessibility. It has made the process of creation a rewarding – if sometimes frustrating! – part of the retail experience. It's encapsulated by the proposition at the heart of IKEA's current branding:

**“To create a better everyday life for many people”**

Or, as it's more commonly known through its advertising:

**“The better, everyday.”**

## **Making the difference for our clients**

MacroArt knew it needed to build awareness of its brand by highlighting the work it was continuing to provide, despite the challenges of the pandemic.

The company was keen to take its message more widely to retail and specialist sectors and develop a strong 'advisory' reputation, whilst clearly emphasising its approachability and sustainability credentials.

Nielsen McAllister sat down with the team and identified a content campaign for PR and social media that would build the MacroArt brand through highlighting the skills and experience of the people within the business.

## **[The Art of MacroArt](#)**

### **Further reading:**

**[Simon Sinek](#)** – the website of marketing guru who devised the Golden Circle

**[Seth Godin](#)** – another key thinker on how marketing can make or break your brand

# Empathise with your audience(s)



Whatever else you are unmatched at, make sure you can quickly find common ground with your prospective customers. No matter how corporate your business infrastructure, people buy from people, so the unmatched business must clearly articulate a genuine personality. From an inspiring vision and values, to spontaneous banter on social media, empathy leads to engagement – and engagement leads to success.

## Tone of voice

What you say is undoubtedly important. How you say it might be more so. Your audience might range from boomers to zoomers, so you have to consider the language, formality and style of every piece of communication you make. Who does your content need to speak to? And what should it tell them about you? Every business has its own cadence, and this needs to come across authentically.

## ESG

A fascinating shift in brand communication has occurred in recent years. No longer do businesses talk about CSR (Corporate & Social Responsibility). Instead, the focus is on ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance). If the difference isn't obvious, it's a matter of intent. Your message can no longer be: "this is what we'll do," but: "this is what we've done." Become unmatched in your ESG activity, and you'll earn the respect of your audience.

## Follow the funnel

Who is the customer? That's a trick question, of course. There is no customer, only customers plural. Each of them will be at a different part in their buying journey. Some will know your brand well, others won't have heard of you yet. Your communications activity must reflect this diversity and be agile enough to provide the right messaging for every touchpoint on the journey.

# Empathise with your audience(s)



## IKEA – unpacked and unmatched

IKEA is cleverly positioned as an Everyman. It is neither as elitist as premium brands, nor as unsophisticated as the budget end of the market.

Cleverly, it's approach is built into its own brand guidelines, via the concept of lagom:

Meet lagom, the secret of Swedish contentment. It means 'neither too much nor too little – the right amount is perfect.' Lagom, 'the median, the middle, the appropriate' shows consumers you do not need a lot to achieve a happy lifestyle. You just need to have the right things in the right amount.

## Helping our clients to empathise

After a successful seven-year media relations campaign coordinated by us that saw it effectively positioned as one of the leading companies in its sector, Pollards was keen to enhance their image still further by utilising new opportunities for more direct communication with target audiences.

Although Pollards already had a presence on the main social media channels, we saw the potential to develop a more proactive campaign, utilising the highly visual nature of the company's packaging solutions to generate both interest and, importantly, interaction.

We introduced an ongoing content plan that ensures regular posting; to maintain interest, we mix product information with social posts on employees and non-work activities. LinkedIn remains the primary channel, with the continuing objective to increase follower numbers and build audience engagement.

## [Providing The Full Package](#)

## Further reading:

[Empathy in the workplace](#) – a white paper from diversity expert Shola Kaye

[Vocal branding](#) – a TED talk by Dr Wendy LeBorgne

# Shed light on today's challenges



The times, reckoned Bob Dylan, are a-changing. And the unprecedented upheavals of the past few years – Brexit, COVID19, war in Europe – certainly bear that out. Even so, there are several topics of conversation which predate these crises, and which will likely outlast them. These are the challenges that will almost definitely define the business world of the 21st century. If your brand can help customers to navigate these critical issues, consider yourself **unmatched**.

## Digitalisation

We've all heard talk of industry 4.0. Sounds cool, right? Yet behind the buzzword lies a brilliant, terrifying, exciting, undeniable truth. The way we do business – from how we make things, to how we market them – is changing irrevocably. The leaders of the future are those who can explain to, advise and support their customers through this period of change.

## Sustainability

Earth's ecosystem is at a tipping point. Every decision we make – individually and collectively – has an impact on what happens next. Building and maintaining a business that is both commercially viable and environmentally sensitive, requires strategic skill, bold leadership and innovative solutions. Communicating these qualities is vital for the unmatched business, in order to take a proactive, positive stance on sustainability.

## Skills & labour

The average age in many industries – such as manufacturing and construction – is rising. Critical skills are in danger of being lost. New career paths, undreamed of a generation ago, present an enticing alternative to the young. And changes to international labour make recruitment even more challenging. Whatever your business is doing to improve this situation, from training academies to apprenticeships, gives you an authoritative position from which to discuss it.

# Shed light on today's challenges



## IKEA – unpacked and unmatched

Like any major brand, IKEA is at the heart of many of society's critical issues. Cleverly, it has folded one of these, sustainability, in its overall message through the development of its ESG activity:

Sustainable everyday

This page details the many initiatives currently underway, offering a relatable vision of sustainability that is backed by the detail of the company's corporate sustainability report.

And when it comes to digitalisation, IKEA remains at the forefront of bringing its in-store experience into the virtual world, from online consultations to AI visualisations that allow you to test IKEA products in a 3D model of your own home.

## An authoritative industry voice

We worked closely with the BCMPPA (The Association for Contract Manufacturing, Packing, Fulfilment & Logistics) to create a strategic annual plan that would ensure exceptional media coverage, grab attention online and raise the association's profile in front of its target audiences.

By focusing on developing the BCMPPA as an authoritative voice for outsourcing, we targeted leading publications in the packaging, beauty, chemical, pharmaceutical, nutraceutical and logistics markets, securing a balance of editorial positions.

The non-promotional nature of the extended articles positioned the BCMPPA and its members as experts, with comment on a wide range of topics in relevant sectors.

## [An Industry Voice](#)

## Further reading:

[Sean Culey](#) – author of Transition Point, an essential read about 21st century industry  
[The Business Logic of Sustainability](#) – a TED talk by Ray Anderson

# Prove your value to customers



When you're unmatched, in theory nobody can touch you. But in the age of fake news, trust has become a luxury. It's unlikely customers will take you at your word. Which means you need to prove your capabilities and credentials. Fortunately, the sophistication of today's multi-channel marketing means there is no shortage of opportunities to show your worth.

## Made to measure

A successful business is measured in turnover and profit. A successful brand is altogether more complex to assess; your website's visibility on Google; the size of your social following; the number of publications reporting your news. All of these metrics are useful – but ultimately it comes down to: is it you that your customers think of? Find out what matters to them, and measure that.

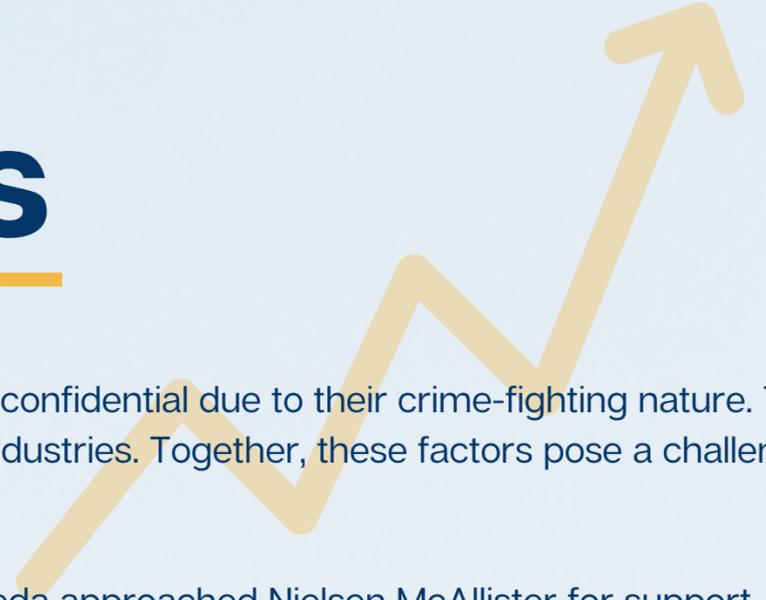
## Assume nothing

You know the adage about the tree falling down without anybody hearing it? Of course you do – because that adage has generated massive awareness. It even has its own Wikipedia page. Joking aside, there's an obvious metaphor here for brand-building. Every opportunity you have to make a positive impression, you need an audience – otherwise who's to know?

## Content breeds contentment

If you've followed the advice in this playbook, by now you'll know what to say, who to say it to, and why you're saying it. If you've really been paying attention, you'll have the when, where and how covered too. The result is that you'll be able to build a strong content strategy, one that is constantly proving your value to customers – and, in turn, generating value for you.

# Prove your value to customers



## **IKEA – unpacked and unmatched**

Whether nationally or internationally, IKEA is one of the best-known brands in the world. More importantly, it is valued.

In the 2021 Global RepTrak100, IKEA ranked #52 with a 'strong' rating. This takes in everything from innovation to ESG, and as such reflects the strength of the brand in terms of how people think and feel about it.

Closer to home, IKEA currently ranks 6th on YouGov's renowned BrandIndex of the UK's best brands, which is measured on Impression, Quality, Value, Satisfaction, Recommend and Reputation.

Further research from YouGov found that 60% of British homes have an item of IKEA furniture.

If this isn't proof of being unmatched, what is?

## **Proving our value to clients**

Anti-counterfeit business Elucedá's solutions are often confidential due to their crime-fighting nature. They are also relevant to a diverse and unconnected range of industries. Together, these factors pose a challenge to promoting the brand's work.

As a growing business seeking brand awareness Elucedá approached Nielsen McAllister for support. The fruits of this partnership are most clearly explained by our success in promoting Elucedá's new whisky authentication solution.

In the six months since the whisky authentication case study was issued, the solution's landing page received referrals from both external news coverage and social media – with page views second only to the Elucedá homepage in terms of traffic.

This coverage led to a huge amount of enquiries from whisky distilleries to investment firms to even bar owners. These were truly global, with enquiries coming in from every continent and representing a huge variety of businesses.

[Proving our value to clients.](#)

## **Further reading:**

[Maturity Measurement Mapper](#) – are you proving your value? This is where to find out.

[Integrated Evaluation Framework](#) – a great tool for planning what you want to be valued for and how to achieve it.

# Need help unmasking what makes you unmatched?

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At Nielsen McAllister, we have more than 30 years of expertise in building business reputations. By providing communications and content programmes that deliver real value, we've helped our clients to become unmatched.

Our sector experience covers virtually every area of the business world – from packaging and logistics, to construction and manufacturing, through to a variety of professional services.

And our client portfolio extends from small, local businesses to global leaders.

With our small but perfectly formed team of experts in content writing, PR, social media and SEO, we have an in-depth knowledge and an enviable contact book for the most relevant stakeholders and influencers in the sectors we serve.

In short – we are unmatched at helping you to become unmatched.

If you'd like to chat about how we can help your business, drop us a line on [unmatched@nmpr.co.uk](mailto:unmatched@nmpr.co.uk).

# Contact us for more information

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