



Alison Lewis

SVP &amp; CMO, Johnson &amp; Johnson

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AWARD

## Social Responsibility: Alison Lewis, SVP & CMO, Johnson & Johnson

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Admittedly, I'm a bit of a romantic when it comes to the notion of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). I really truly want to believe that companies that are driven by a purpose that includes the betterment of the world around them will outperform those that simply want to make a profit. As the theory goes, a clear mission translates to a more aligned and motivated workforce, a superior product/service offering that delivers against a "triple bottom line."

This is not just wishful thinking on my part. Robert Safian, Editor of FastCompany tackled this subject in his fascinating look at some mission driven companies that are indeed doing well by doing good. So it was with great interest that I interviewed Alison Lewis SVP and CMO of Johnson & Johnson on the subject of CSR. J&J has had its ups and downs in the last few years so I was quite curious to get an insider's view on how a huge business can approach CSR without coming across as self-serving or insincere. Read on and it will be clear why Lewis is a Social Responsibility award winner at The CMO Club's CMO Awards.

**Drew:** "Doing well by doing good" sounds like a great idea but it is much harder to put into practice given the complexity of running a public company with quarterly earnings reports and ever-hungry competitors. How have you approached Corporate Social Responsibility? Do you have a distinct set of metrics for CSR (vs. product sales) that help rationalize these investments?

**Alison:** As a healthcare company, caring for the health of the planet and the communities in which we operate are natural extensions of who we are. Therefore, Johnson & Johnson has been setting goals to improve the sustainability of our business for decades. Currently, our Healthy Future 2015 goals are our broadest set of goals yet. They include goals related, but not limited, to:

- Safeguarding our planet by reducing waste disposal, water consumption, and reduced fleet and facility carbon emissions
- Commitments to responsibly source ingredients throughout our consumer supply chain
- Including product sustainability information on all our beauty and baby care brand websites
- Educating the public on recycling bathroom products
- Engaging all employees throughout the company on how to live more health-conscious lives

We measure these goals in our annual progress report that is available at: <http://www.jnj.com/caring/citizenship-sustainability/performance/healthy-future-2015>.

**Drew:** CSR activities are often handled outside of the marketing team's purview yet the hope is that these activities will provide a positive halo for a company's brands. What is your role related to CSR and are there some initiatives that you think have been particularly effective?

**Alison:** Sustainability is an end-to-end value chain effort. When we make progress, our brand marketing teams can help translate that progress in a meaningful way to our consumers. Marketing can play a key role to engage consumers and help brands make a difference – Our NEUTROGENA® Naturals brand is an example of how a brand can build progress on sustainability into its consumer communications.

For the third year in a row, NEUTROGENA® Naturals launched its Every Drop Counts campaign, where the brand educates consumers on the importance of water conservation. This year, throughout the month of October, NEUTROGENA® Naturals will contribute 10% of the purchase price

of the NEUTROGENA® Naturals Purifying Cream Cleanser to the Nature Conservatory to support its water conservation efforts\*. In 2013 the NEUTROGENA® Naturals brand exceeded their goal of saving one million gallons of water by more than 300%, over 4.2 million gallons of water were saved based on consumer pledges — that's the equivalent of a swimming pool the size of nearly four football fields!

**Drew:** J&J received more than its fair share of negative publicity before your arrival. How did you make sure that your CSR initiatives came across as a sincere versus self-promotional? What advice would you give to fellow CMO's who are just getting started on CSR programs?

**Alison:** The key is consistency. Regardless of the business climate, our values and commitment to social responsibility have remained steadfast. One of Johnson & Johnson's early leaders, General Robert Wood Johnson, spoke about social and environmental responsibility long before the term "corporate social responsibility" or "sustainability" became well-known in corporate circles. My advice to other CMOs is to embed your CSR commitments into your core values (what you care about) and your business strategy (how you focus) and your brands will have a strong foundation to make a meaningful difference.

**Drew:** Handling organizational change can be tricky particularly if it involves reorganizing / replacing long-time staffers. What advice do you have for fellow CMOs when it comes to handling reorgs?

**Alison:** Just as marketing must continue to evolve to keep pace with our consumers' needs and expectations, so must marketing organizations. When it comes to change, the important thing is to always put the consumer at the center. At Johnson & Johnson, we have a long history of being guided by Our Credo values, the first tenant of which is our responsibility to the people we serve – everyone who uses our products. Change for the sake of change doesn't work but changing to meet consumer needs is always right!

**Drew:** How have you used social media to advance your

brand's overall marketing efforts? Are there any social media channels that are working better for your brand than others? If so, please elaborate.

**Alison:** Social media is about connecting with your target audience, therefore, every Consumer brand at Johnson & Johnson has a different "formula" for how to successfully engage and connect on social channels.

One example of how a Johnson & Johnson brand has utilized social to evolve our marketing efforts is on our teen focused CLEAN & CLEAR® Brand - - here, we recognized that social media channels at the core of a teens world. Knowing this, CLEAN & CLEAR® was an ideal brand to build the interconnected ecosystem of owned, earned, shared and paid content that would enable the CLEAN & CLEAR® See The Real Me™ campaign. By launching and activating several social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), we are able to listen to what teens want, engage in direct conversations with them and entertain, educate and inspire them with authentic content. By engaging with teens in the social space the brand is able to forge an emotional connection and become part of their everyday lives. We have coffee with them in the morning, provide advice to them on the go, and help them relax before bed while celebrating the confidence that they portray on a daily basis by just being themselves.

**Drew:** Storytelling is a big buzzword right now. Is your brand a good storyteller and if so, can you provide an example of how you are telling that story for one of your brands?

**Alison:** JOHNSON'S® is one recent example of how we've enhanced the story of one of our most beloved brands. Increasingly, we heard from our consumers that they had concerns about certain ingredients in our baby products. All the ingredients used in our baby care products have always been safe, and meet or exceed government standards for safety. But trust is at the heart of our baby equity, and we wanted to communicate to our consumers that we listened to their concerns and we know their trust is something that we must continue to earn. We knew that our actions would

speaking louder than our words, and we made the decision to reformulate our baby products for trust. As our reformulated products hit shelves, we launched a new campaign, “Your Promise is Our Promise” to illustrate our heartfelt commitment to the moms, dads and families that use our products.

To tell the story behind our promise, we launched our biggest social media campaign with more than 40 informative and entertaining videos that speak to our JOHNSON'S® brand promises, baby care education and the parenting journey. We've seen millions of consumers interact with our video content, comment on our social channels and learn more about what our brand stands for due to our ability to connect through storytelling.

\*up to \$50,0000

### About the author

Drew Neisser is the CEO and founder of Renegade, the NYC-based social media and marketing agency that helps inspired CMOs cut through. He is the champion of Marketing as Service, a philosophy he espouses in his writings on [FastCompany.com](http://FastCompany.com), PSFK, TheDrewBlog and The Cut, a much-appreciated monthly newsletter. If you have a CMO success story to tell, let Drew know at [dneisser@renegade.com](mailto:dneisser@renegade.com).

