BLVR®

Building Brand Trust and The Say-Do Gap

The Say-Do Gap refers to a disconnect between what an organization claims to believe and the behaviors it puts into practice. It occurs when an organization makes promises, commitments, or claims based on its stated belief but fails to walk its talk. This gap can erode trust and credibility with customers, employees, and stakeholders and damage an organization's reputation. Closing the Say-Do gap requires an organization to align its actions with its stated belief and values and to ensure that it is communicating honestly and transparently with all stakeholders. An organization can help build trust, strengthen relationships, and improve overall business performance by consistently exhibiting behaviors and actions aligned with its stated belief and values.

INTRODUCTION

AUDITING YOUR SAY-DO GAP

So where do brands begin to identify and ultimately close their Say-Do Gap? It begins with understanding an organization's beliefs and how it aligns with their actions.

At BLVR, we like to run a workshop with our Clients to help identify their Say-Do Gap. We begin by reviewing the belief at the center of their organization — the deeply held conviction that influences everything from the brand strategy to the business strategy. Using belief as our compass, we identify the actions that bring their belief to life across five key areas of a business, noting what they are excelling in and where they are falling short:

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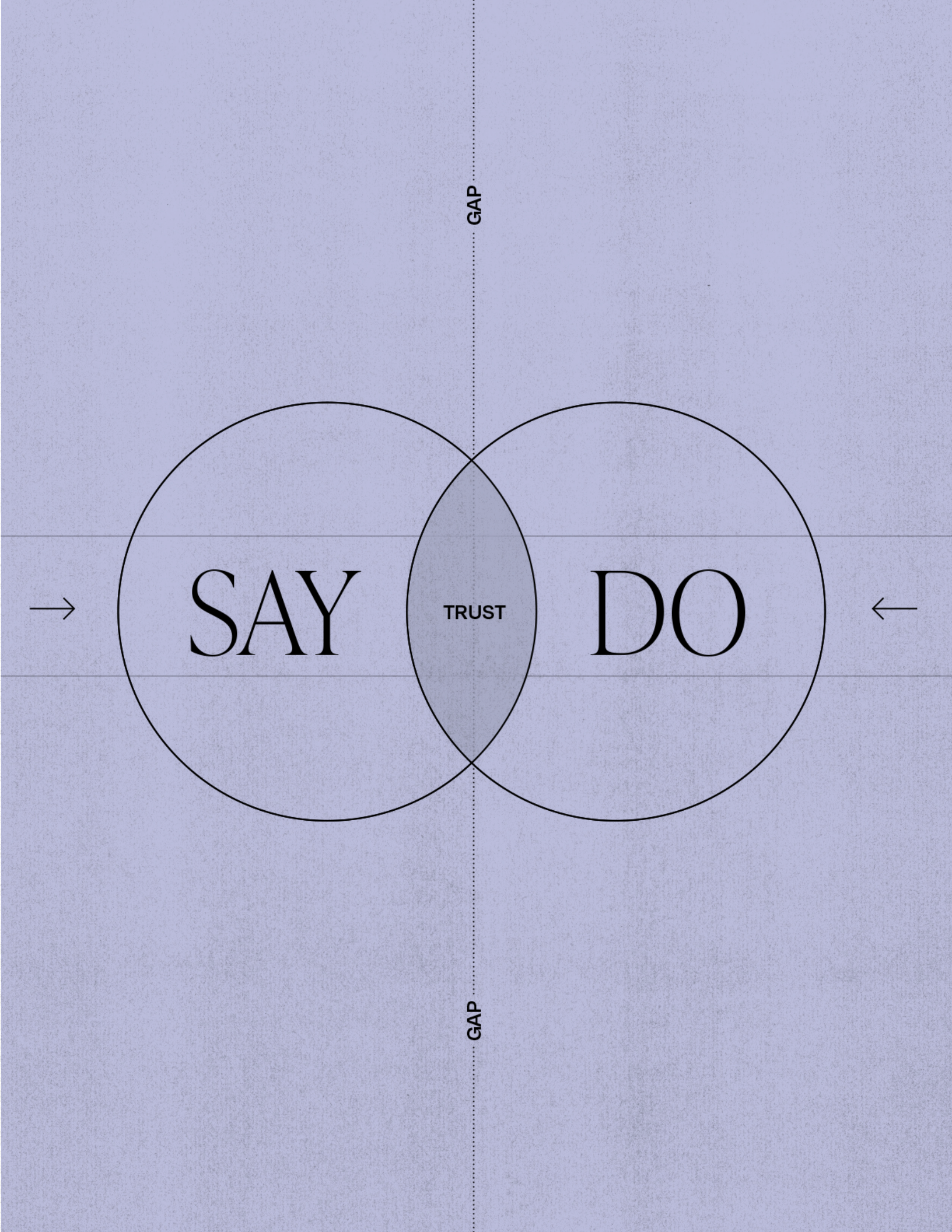
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01

Sales & Marketing Programs

When reviewing a brand's sales and marketing programs for the Say-Do Gap, it is essential to assess the alignment between the brand's claims and the actual actions and behaviors exhibited in these programs. Here are some key steps to consider:

Evaluate Brand Messaging
Begin by examining the brand's messaging across various marketing channels, such as advertisements, social media campaigns, and website content. Look for any claims or promises made regarding the brand's belief, values, and commitments. Assess whether these claims are consistent with the brand's practices and behaviors.

Analyze Marketing Collateral
Review the brand's marketing collateral, including brochures, product packaging, and promotional materials. Check for any sustainability claims, social responsibility statements, or other commitments. Evaluate whether these claims are substantiated by evidence and whether the brand follows through on them in practice.

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Assess Marketing Campaigns
Analyze the brand's past and current marketing campaigns. Pay attention to the messages communicated, the visuals used, and the overall brand image projected. Consider whether these campaigns align with the brand's stated beliefs and values and whether they reflect the brand's actions and behaviors.

Establish a system for regular audits of the brand's sales and marketing programs to ensure ongoing alignment.

Examine Sales Practices
Evaluate the brand's sales practices and interactions with customers. Are the sales representatives trained to communicate the brand's values and commitments accurately? Assess whether the brand's sales strategies align with its stated beliefs. For example, if a brand emphasizes fair trade practices, are its sales representatives knowledgeable about sourcing products and able to provide accurate information to customers?

Review Partnerships and Sponsorships
Assess the brand's partnerships and sponsorships with other organizations. Evaluate whether these collaborations align with the brand's values and commitments. For instance, if a brand claims to prioritize environmental sustainability, it should avoid partnering with organizations known for harmful environmental practices.

Seek Feedback from Customers
Engage with customers to gather their perceptions and experiences. Conduct surveys, focus groups, or interviews to understand their expectations and whether the brand's actions align with their perceived promises. This feedback can provide valuable insights into potential gaps between the brand's claims and what customers observe.

Monitor Social Media and Online Reviews
Monitor social media platforms and online review websites for customer feedback and discussions about the brand. Pay attention to discrepancies between the brand's messaging and customers' experiences. Address negative feedback promptly and transparently, demonstrating a commitment to bridging the Say-Do Gap.

Implement Regular Audits
Establish a system for regular audits of the brand's sales and marketing programs to ensure ongoing alignment. This includes evaluating the effectiveness of messaging, assessing the impact of campaigns, and reviewing sales practices. Regular audits help identify and rectify gaps between what the brand claims and what it delivers.

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02

Product Development

When reviewing a brand's product development practices for the Say-Do Gap, it is essential to assess the alignment between the belief that guides your organization and how the product is ideated and developed. Here are some key steps to consider:

Evaluate Supply Chain Practices
Review the brand's supply chain practices and evaluate whether they align with its stated beliefs and commitments. Assess factors such as ethical sourcing, fair labor practices, and responsible manufacturing processes. Ensure that the brand's claims regarding supply chain sustainability are substantiated by evidence.

Consider Product Lifecycle
Analyze the brand's approach to the entire product lifecycle, from raw materials to disposal. Evaluate whether the brand considers environmental impact at each stage of the product's life, including material sourcing, production, packaging, distribution, and end-of-life management. Assess whether the brand's actions align with its deeper convictions.

Examine Packaging Practices:
Evaluate the brand's packaging practices in terms of environmental impact. Consider whether the brand uses excessive packaging, non-recyclable materials, or harmful substances in its packaging. Assess whether the brand's packaging aligns with its claims of being eco-friendly or sustainable.

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Certifications can provide independent validation of the brand's claims and help bridge the Say-Do Gap.

Review Innovation and Research
Assess the brand's investment in innovation and research for sustainable product development. Review whether the brand actively seeks environmentally friendly alternatives, explores renewable materials, or implements new technologies that reduce environmental impact. Evaluate whether the brand's R&D efforts align with its claims and commitments.

Seek Third-Party Certifications
Look for third-party certifications or verifications related to sustainable product development. These certifications can validate the brand's claims independently and help bridge the Say-Do Gap. Examples of relevant certifications include organic, Fair Trade, LEED, or Cradle-to-Cradle certifications.

Engage with Stakeholders
Involve stakeholders such as customers, employees, and industry experts in the review process. Seek their feedback on the brand's products, specifically regarding if the development and production processes are aligned with the belief that guides the organization. Incorporate their perspectives and insights into evaluating the brand's product development practices.

Establish Metrics and Goals
Set clear success metrics and goals for product development. Define key performance indicators (KPIs) that measure community impact, social responsibility, and ethical practices. Regularly track and report progress against these metrics to demonstrate a commitment to closing the Say-Do Gap.

Continuous Improvement
Establish a culture of continuous improvement in product development. Encourage feedback from customers and stakeholders to identify areas where the brand can further align its products with its stated beliefs. Actively seek opportunities to innovate and implement sustainable practices throughout the product development process.

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03

Customer Experience

When reviewing customer experience initiatives for the Say-Do Gap, it is important to assess various aspects of the brand's efforts to ensure that what is promised aligns with what is delivered to customers. Here are key steps that should be reviewed:

Define Customer Experience Promises
Start by assessing your brand's belief and how it should influence customer commitments regarding the customer experience. These promises could include aspects like personalized service, quick response times, hassle-free returns, or exceptional support.

Evaluate Customer Touchpoints
Review all the touchpoints where customers interact with the brand, including physical locations, websites, mobile apps, social media channels, and customer service centers. Assess whether the customer experience delivered at each touchpoint aligns with the brand's belief or if there is a Say-Do Gap.

Mystery Shopping and User Testing
Conduct mystery shopping exercises and user testing to assess the actual customer experience. This involves anonymously evaluating the brand's customer service, responsiveness, knowledge, and overall satisfaction. Compare the findings with the brand's strategy to identify gaps between your true conviction and what is experienced.

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Analyze Customer Feedback
Review customer feedback from various sources, such as surveys, online reviews, social media comments, and direct customer interactions. Look for recurring themes or patterns that indicate a potential Say-Do Gap. Pay attention to instances where customers mention experiences that do not align with the brand's promise.

Assess Employee Training and Behavior
Evaluate the training programs and guidelines provided to employees regarding the customer experience. Assess whether employees clearly understand the brand's belief and are equipped to deliver on them. Observe employee behaviors to identify inconsistencies between the desired customer experience and actual behaviors.

Align Internal Processes
Review the brand's internal processes and systems to ensure they support the desired customer experience. Assess whether the processes are designed to deliver on the brand's belief and whether they are consistently followed. Identify any bottlenecks or gaps in the processes that may result in discrepancies between promises and actions.

Engage with Customers
Engage directly with customers through focus groups, surveys, or interviews to gather their perspectives on their experiences. Seek their feedback on how well the brand is delivering on its promises. Identify areas for improvement and opportunities to bridge the Say-Do Gap based on customer insights.

Monitor Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
Establish key performance indicators (KPIs) related to the customer experience and regularly monitor them. These could include customer satisfaction scores, net promoter scores (NPS), response times, or resolution rates. Assess whether the brand meets its targets and whether improvements are needed to bridge gaps.

Take Corrective Actions
Based on the review findings, develop an action plan to address any identified gaps in the customer experience. This may involve refining internal processes, enhancing employee training, improving communication strategies, or implementing technology solutions to deliver on the brand's promises. Regularly monitor the impact of these actions and make adjustments as needed.

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04

Employee Experience

When reviewing employee experience initiatives for the Say-Do Gap, it is important to assess the alignment between what the organization claims to provide in terms of employee experience and the actual experiences of its employees. Here are key initiatives that should be reviewed:

Onboarding and Training
Evaluate the organization's onboarding and training processes. Assess whether the organization delivers on its promises of thorough and effective onboarding, comprehensive training programs, and opportunities for skill development. Look for gaps between what is communicated and what employees experience during their onboarding and training periods.

Leadership and Management Practices
Review the leadership and management practices within the organization. Assess whether leaders and managers uphold the organization's stated values, communicate transparently, and provide the support and guidance promised to employees. Look for discrepancies between the organization's claims and the behaviors and practices of its leaders and managers.

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Work-Life Balance
Evaluate the organization's efforts to promote work-life balance. Assess whether the organization respects employees' personal time, offers flexible work arrangements as promised, and provides support for managing workloads. Look for gaps in work-life balance practices and discrepancies between what is promised and what employees experience.

Recognition and Rewards
Assess the organization's recognition and rewards programs. Evaluate whether the organization acknowledges and rewards employees' contributions and achievements as promised. Look for discrepancies between the organization's recognition claims and the actual recognition practices in place.

Communication and Feedback
Review the organization's communication channels and feedback mechanisms. Assess whether the organization encourages open and transparent communication, provides opportunities for employee feedback, and acts on that feedback as promised. Look for gaps in communication practices and whether the organization follows through on its commitments to address employee concerns and suggestions.

Career Development and Growth
Evaluate the organization's commitment to employee career development and growth opportunities. Assess whether the organization provides the promised avenues for advancement, training programs, and mentorship or coaching initiatives. Look for gaps between the organization's claims and available support and opportunities to employees.

Diversity and Inclusion
Review the organization's efforts to foster a diverse and inclusive work environment. Assess whether the organization upholds its promises of equality, inclusivity, and a respectful workplace. Look for discrepancies between the organization's claims and the experiences of employees from diverse backgrounds.

Health and Wellbeing Programs
Evaluate the organization's health and well-being initiatives. Assess whether the organization provides the promised programs and resources to support employee well-being, such as wellness programs, mental health support, and work environment improvements. Look for gaps between what is promised and what is available to employees.

Employee Feedback and Engagement
Assess whether the organization actively seeks employee feedback and measures employee engagement. Evaluate whether the organization follows through on its promises to address employee concerns, take action based on feedback, and create a positive work environment. Look for gaps in the organization's ability to engage employees and align their experiences with its stated commitments.

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05

Social Good

When reviewing social good initiatives for the Say-Do gap, several key aspects should be considered:

Alignment with Purpose
Evaluate whether the initiatives align with the brand's stated purpose and values. Do they reflect the brand's genuine commitment to making a positive impact? Assess if the initiatives go beyond tokenism and demonstrate a deep-rooted dedication to social good.

Impact Measurement
Review the actual impact of the initiatives. Are they achieving the desired outcomes and creating meaningful change? Assess the metrics, data, and evaluation methods employed to measure the effectiveness of the initiatives. This helps determine if the brand's actions align with its stated goals.

Transparency and Accountability
Examine how transparent the brand communicates the progress and results of its social good initiatives. Are they openly sharing information about their activities, partnerships, and impact? Brands should be accountable for their actions and provide evidence of their efforts to avoid any perception of empty promises or superficial engagement.

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Meaningful engagement ensures that initiatives are designed to address real needs and have a lasting impact.

Consistency and Longevity
Consider the consistency and longevity of the brand's social good initiatives. Are they pursuing sustained efforts or engaging in short-term campaigns? Sustainable impact requires ongoing commitment rather than sporadic actions. Review the brand's track record to assess if they consistently deliver on their social good promises.

Stakeholder Engagement
Evaluate how the brand engages with stakeholders in their social good initiatives. Are they collaborating with relevant organizations, communities, or experts? Meaningful engagement ensures initiatives are designed to address real needs and have a lasting impact. Assess whether the brand actively involves stakeholders in the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes.

Authenticity of Messaging
Assess the brand's communication and messaging around their social good initiatives. Do they accurately represent the initiatives and their impact? Are they avoiding greenwashing or causing marketing that lacks substance? Brands should ensure their messaging is authentic, transparent, and focused on the real-world outcomes of their initiatives.

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