The definition of an authentic brand

You need to talk to someone you can trust. There are two men standing there, one is wearing a long black robe with a cross around his neck. The other is wearing a t-shirt with a skull on the front and a pair of ripped jeans. The question is, whom do you choose?

Got it?

Now, I should also tell you, one of them is wearing clothes he borrowed from someone else.

This exact scenario is how many companies build their brands - they ask someone else if they can borrow their clothes.

Some companies like to copy what has worked for a company they admire - like copying Apple's aesthtic when designing their products.

Worse, many companies go into the market to ask their customers what they want...what they believe. Some clever marketers will take all that wonderful data and mine it for insights which become the basis upon which they will build their brand - how they will show up in the market.

Is the company presenting who they really are or are they telling people what they really believe or stand for? Or is the company simply borrowing what they heard with the hope that people will trust them more if they say those things?

In the case of the clergyman and the ruffian, a quick conversation with both will immediately reveal the fraud - the one who is simply dressing the part verus being who we expected them to be. An authentic brand is the same. A few interactions with the company quickly reveals if their marketing and branding is simply saying what they think will appeal to us instead of telling us what they really think. The difference is authenticity.