

Building Your Personal Brand

“What is the first thing people think of when they see or hear your name?”

The key to influence, your career, and getting
things done

Copyright 2022 Rich Trombetta
rich@popculturetrainingcompany.com
978-266-0012

Overview

This guide is designed to help individuals build a 'Personal Brand' and learn how to leverage this brand to increase his or her influence in an organization and to increase their overall effectiveness with respect to projects, leadership, and overall career management.

After completing this workbook the expectation is that you will have a greater appreciation for how influence and the way you are perceived in the 'marketplace' can have a significant impact on your career and your ability to accomplish your organizational and personal goals.

It should be stressed that this is not about self-promotion. It is about being sincere, authentic, and doing work that you want to do.

What is a brand?

It is a pretty recognizable brand name. Originally it was "Jerry's Guide to the World Wide Web" but we settled on "Yahoo".

- Jerry Yang, Founder of Yahoo!

Introduction

What exactly is a brand and why is it so important to a company or, for the purposes of this workshop, an individual? Interbrand, a leading consulting company in the area of brand management, mentions in its book, *Brands and Branding*, that “almost irrespective of how the word is used today, it has always meant, in its passive form, the object by which an impression is formed, and in its active form the process of forming this impression.” It has also been said that a brand is **“an expectation that a promise will be kept.”**

A brand, in a sense, is a form of influence and persuasion. The effects of a brand have a tremendous impact on buying decisions, credibility, trust, and even the overall price which a product or service can demand in the marketplace.

Questions and exercises

1. When you hear the phrase ‘a company’s brand’ what do you think of?
2. What are three brands you respect and trust? Why?
3. What are three brands you do not respect or trust? Why?
4. Why do some argue that brand management is one of the most critical aspects to a company’s success?

What is a personal brand?

Introduction

Why do some voicemails get answered before others? Why do some emails get acted upon right away while others sit in an inbox for days? Why is it that you may find yourself willingly helping one person and begrudgingly assisting another? Why do you anxiously look forward to one person's meetings and desperately look for ways to avoid meetings led by others. Why do you often put high levels of trust in one group and low levels of trust in other teams?

The answer is brand.

In 1962, the world watched anxiously as The United States and The Soviet Union engaged in what has become known as The Cuban Missile Crisis. At one point during this tense situation, a set of photographs was presented to the French government to show that the Soviet Union was indeed constructing a missile system in Cuba. When the photographs were offered, the French representative pushed the envelope back and replied, "If the President of The United States says it is true, then I don't need to see the pictures."

This is an amazing illustration of the power and influence a brand can have on decision-making. The brand in this example could be The United States or possibly the President at that time, John F. Kennedy. The important things to note here are the speed at which support was gained and the trust and respect that was in place to facilitate this decision.

This workshop is not a class on political science and there is no need to get into a debate on current or recent administrations and the relationship to the story above. With that said however, think about how much a politician's brand influences your vote.

Questions and exercises

1. Why does your personal brand in effect make or break your career?
2. How does personal brand impact influence?

Building Your Personal Brand

A brand for a company is like a reputation for a person. You earn a reputation by trying to do hard things well.

Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon.com

Introduction

Let's start building your own personal brand. To do so, please answer the following questions:

1. If you were a retailer, would you rather be Wal-Mart or Neiman Marcus?
2. If you were a car, would you rather be a Ford or a Volvo?
3. Paper or plastic?

What is the first thing you think of when you read the following names?

1. Bill Belichick
2. John Bardeen
3. Oprah Winfrey

Think of three individuals you admire within or outside your company. How would you describe their personal brand? Why do you admire them?

Think of three individuals you DO NOT admire within or outside your company. How would you describe their personal brand? Why DON'T you admire them?

Questions and exercises

A. Write down the top 5 things you want people to think of when they see or hear your name.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

B. From the list above pick your top three.

C. From the list above pick your very most important item.

What have you learned from this exercise?

D. Write down the top 5 things you DON'T want people to think of when they see or hear your name BUT MAY ACTUALLY BE A PERCEPTION PEOPLE HAVE ABOUT YOU.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

E. From the list above pick your top three.

F. From the list above pick your very most important item.

What have you learned from this exercise?

Note that we have not talked about specifically who is seeing or hearing your name. Nor have we mentioned where he or she is seeing or hearing your name. Your brand is your brand regardless of time, location, or audience. In fact, this exercise begs the question, “what if someone doesn’t know who I am?” That raises a significant issue – are you promoting your brand in the best way possible? If your goal is to one day become CFO and your personal brand portrays poor fiscal management, what do you think the chances are of achieving your goal? Conversely, if you possess outstanding financial management skills but no one knows this, what is the overall benefit to you and the organization?

The goal of building a personal brand is not simply to ‘climb the company ladder’ or advance your career. **A successfully built and managed personal brand will allow you to obtain positions that you truly enjoy and are a great fit for you and your company.** If your personality is one in which you are not very detail oriented and you have no interest in becoming so, then trying to position yourself as such may work in the very short term but will eventually implode in the long term. A person who wants to be known as relaxed and altruistic probably does not want to build a brand that will lead them down a path to becoming a bond trader on Wall Street.

BMW does not attempt to be the low cost supplier of new cars in the automobile industry. They have a very targeted market and brand themselves in a very particular way. By contrast, Hyundai does not attempt to be known as the premier luxury vehicle. Both, however, promote their brand to the right people, at the right time, with the right frequency - and both are profitable.

Everyone has strengths and talents to meet the needs of an organization or the marketplace. It is a matter of branding yourself properly. You, like a product or a company, can’t be everything to everyone.

Building and managing a successful brand takes time and is a carefully thought out process. It is not an event with a short-term outlook.

Brands do change, but not overnight. How does this statement relate to you?

Drawing your logo

Take a few moments to think of the logos of various companies and organizations. Draw some in the space below.

Now, using the items we have discussed so far, draw *your* logo in the space below.

What is your tagline?

Building off the logo exercise, think of some taglines for companies or organizations. For example, BMW's tagline was 'The Ultimate Driving Machine.'

What is your tagline?

Who would be your spokesperson?

Why does Hanes pay Michael Jordan to promote its tee-shirts? Who would you want to represent your brand? Why?

Your brand in a digital and social world

Let's try this...

1. Take a moment and Google yourself. What do you see?
2. Take a moment and Google Northeastern University. What do you see?
3. Look at Northeastern's social media accounts. Look at yours. What do you see?

What have you taken away from this exercise?

How about LinkedIn?

- Here is a link to an article on LinkedIn.
<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/linkedin-beginner-all-star-8-easy-steps-clifford-wessel/>
- Review your LinkedIn profile (assuming you have one) and identify edits and changes you need to make.

Brand Promotion and Marketing

When the idea came up, (Newman's Own) I said, "Are you crazy? Stick my face on the label of salad dressing?" And then, of course, we got the whole idea of exploitation and how circular it is. Why not, really, go to the fullest length, and the silliest length, in exploiting yourself and turn the proceeds back to the community?

- Paul Newman

Introduction

Once you have developed a clear strategy for what you want your personal brand to be, the next step is to create a plan to market and promote your personal brand. It must be stressed again that the goal here is not to promote yourself to simply 'get ahead' or 'climb the corporate ladder.' It is promoting yourself to help you achieve your personal and professional goals while increasing your effectiveness within your organization.

What is brand promotion? As mentioned before, it is critical to promote your brand in the right manner. For example, you may need to consider with whom you are associating yourself. For example, think of times when sponsors have removed advertisements from television or radio programs because they do not want consumers associating the company's brand with something or someone that is not representative of the company's values.

You may also need to explore exactly what you are doing each and every day from a tactical standpoint to promote your personal brand. Do you need a Blog? A Podcast? Your own web page? Are you involved in community events or special corporate projects?

How about the way you dress? The way you communicate? Your handle on your emotions? Your attention to detail? Your ability to work well with others? All of these items are not simply part of your brand, they help you promote your brand. The best news about this is... items such as these are free.

Questions

1. What creative means can you use to promote and market your personal brand?
2. What will you do starting today to promote your brand?

Brand Management

The music industry is a strange combination of having real and intangible assets: pop bands are brand names in themselves, and at a given stage in their careers their name alone can practically guarantee hit records.

- Richard Branson, Virgin Records

Introduction

Brand management is the application of marketing techniques to a specific product, product line, or brand. It seeks to increase the product's *perceived value to the customer* and thereby increase brand franchise and brand equity. Marketers see a brand as an implied promise that the level of quality people have come to expect from a brand will continue with present and future purchases of the same product. This may increase sales by making a comparison with competing products more favorable. It may also enable the manufacturer to charge more for the product. The value of the brand is determined by the amount of profit it generates for the manufacturer. This results from a combination of increased sales and increased price.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brand_management

Questions

1. What is your plan to constantly assess your personal brand and manage it appropriately as you move forward?
2. Why is personal brand management such a critical element to the overall personal brand process?
3. What events or items could arise that could result in you needing to more actively manage your personal brand?

Brand Loyalty

Your premium brand had better be delivering something special, or it's not going to get the business.

- Warren Buffett

Introduction

Brand loyalty has been proclaimed by some to be the ultimate goal of marketing. In marketing, brand loyalty consists of a consumer's commitment to repurchase the brand and can be demonstrated by repeated buying of a product or service or other positive behaviors such as word of mouth advocacy. True brand loyalty implies that the consumer is willing, at least on occasion, to put aside their own desires in the interest of the brand.

Brand loyalty is more than simple repurchasing, however. Customers may repurchase a brand due to situational constraints, a lack of viable alternatives, or out of convenience. Such loyalty is referred to as "spurious loyalty". True brand loyalty exists when customers have a high relative attitude toward the brand which is then exhibited through repurchase behavior. This type of loyalty can be a great asset to the firm: customers are willing to pay higher prices, they may cost less to serve, and can bring new customers to the firm. For example, if Joe has brand loyalty to Company A he will purchase Company A's products even if Company B's are cheaper and/or of a higher quality.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brand_loyalty

Questions and exercises

1. Based on the statements above, how does brand loyalty affect a personal brand?
2. How does brand loyalty affect the ability to get things done in a competitive environment?
3. What will you do to build personal brand loyalty?

Brand Extensions

Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods are really part of a very big advertising program, and the fact that they make so much money is because the markets have dictated that they get that money, and the fact that they endorse our products allows us to sell more products and create more jobs.

- Phil Knight, CEO of Nike

Introduction

Brand extension or brand stretching is a marketing strategy in which a firm that markets a product with a well-developed image uses the same brand name but in a different product category. Brands use this as a strategy to increase and leverage equity (definition: the net worth and long-term sustainability just from the renowned name). An example of a brand extension is Jello-gelatin creating Jello pudding pops. It increases awareness of the brand name and increases profitability from offerings in more than one product category. However, a brand's "extendibility" depends on how strong consumer's associations are to the brand's values and goals. Ralph Lauren's Polo brand successfully extended from just clothing to home furnishings like bedding and towels. Both clothing and bedding are made of linen and fulfill a similar consumer function of comfort and homeliness. Arm & Hammer leveraged its well-known brand equities—from basic baking soda into the oral care and laundry care categories. By emphasizing its key attributes, the cleaning and deodorizing properties of its core product, Arm & Hammer was able to leverage those attributes into new categories with success.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brand_extension

Questions and exercises

1. How can you use the concept of brand extensions to enhance your personal brand?
2. What risks are associated with the creation of brand extensions with respect to personal brand?

Putting it all together and next steps

What are three things that you will do as a result of this workshop?

What	By when

