

From Roo to You



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Branding, not just for the big guys...

During the past year I have learned a good deal about building a business, discovered how much I still need to learn, and made a few missteps along the way. Acquiring new skills has been great fun, and presenting my offering hasn't been too difficult once I connect with someone. The challenging part has been figuring out how to connect with clients in my "sweet spot", and clearly communicate my "uniques". Why should someone work with me instead of someone other consultant or larger firm? Like many start ups, I created a company name, logo and messaging without professional guidance. Was a kangaroo logo "serious enough" for a consultant? I wasn't sure, but it seemed to fit my personality, and I regularly receive curious inquiries and compliments about the kangaroo. I am convinced that Roo is my brand, and the brand is maturing a bit. Many thanks to d.i. design for the creativity, patience and guidance in bringing my brand to life

We hope this month's newsletter helps you identify your personal brand, and take steps to further it, or perhaps change it. Also consider your organization – do the internal and external brands match up? Do your recruiting, reward and management systems engage people in the brand?

As always, we welcome your input, insights and stories.

Be the Brand!

For You: Everybody has a brand

You have a brand, whether you realize it or not. This goes beyond your image or personality type. It is simply what you are "known for" by the majority of people. Hopefully your personal and professional brands line up.

What is your brand today? Are you known as the expert, influencer, coach, reliable one, the caretaker, innovator or something else? Is this what you want to be known for? If yes, be intentional and keep up the good work. If not, be purposeful in changing the perception of your brand. Just like getting in shape or

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quitting smoking, it requires commitment, intention and consistency. If you aren't sure what your brand is, reread your last performance review, think about what you have been recognized or rewarded for recently, or else ask a few coworkers what the first couple of words that come to mind are when they think of you.

Keep in mind that a particular brand isn't necessarily good or bad (although being known as the workplace bully or the gal who throws people under the bus would not be the best choice). Some organizations or individuals will embrace and promote your brand, while others may not find it appealing at all. Some like Coke, some like Pepsi....neither one is inherently good (though I do love my caffeine free diet coke.....)

Consider these examples:

- Jack is a great sales rep who delivers to the sales plan. If Jack operates as a lone wolf in one organization he is celebrated, while in a more collaborative environment he is exiled as a "cowboy".
- Janet is the creative type, always coming up with ideas. In a mature, tightly controlled environment she might be viewed as a distraction. In another organization she would be considered an innovator or thought leader.
- Dan is the "detail guy". He always follows through and is the person you want on your project team. In a company focused on process, he is a hero. In a more entrepreneurial setting he might be viewed in less favorable terms.

Jack, Janet and Dan haven't changed. They are their brands. This involves risk, because the value organizations assign to that brand may differ.

If you want to be the reliable following through person....be that.....organizations need that

If you are known as the expert....be that.....organizations need that too

Whatever brand you choose, be intentional and consistent at every level in the organization. Some people will embrace it, and others will not. But on every level, be your brand.

For Your Company: Brand Integrity, Inside and Out

Most companies have a marketing budget and likely have spent more money than they would like on branding, PR, email campaigns, etc. How many companies dedicate similar resources to promoting their internal brand? One company that does is Target. Externally, their logo is well recognized, their brand is differentiated and they extend the brand through investing in the local community. Internally, Target is equally intentional in their hiring and performance management processes. I know someone who went through five interviews before

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landing a job at Target. I took an HR course with a person from Target and she regularly spoke of how to address behavior that wasn't "Target brand".

There are other companies who project one brand on the outside, but the inner workings seem to have a totally different value system. A company will struggle if they position themselves as entrepreneurial, but require multiple level of sign offs for a basic purchase order. It is difficult to claim you are customer-intimate if you don't consider staff as internal customers. If you treat employees poorly, they don't feel valued, and thus are less invested in the customer experience. They are no longer "drinking the kool aid" you are selling to the public. Word gets out. A reputation that takes years to establish, can be destroyed in a short period of time. How would you like to be BP's PR person? What about Apple's initial response to the iphone problem of dropping calls: Go buy a \$30 case because you, Mr. User, are not holding the phone correctly. Isn't the iphone supposed to be an innovative and intuitive? A company known for innovation tells its clients to go pay more to fix the problem with their product? Steve Jobs is now in recovery mode and it will be interesting to follow the recovery process.

Companies attract candidates based on the specific opportunity, but also based on the brand. It has to appeal to the candidate and how they like to operate. New hires that find cultures and systems inconsistent with the external brand will likely become frustrated. Performance may suffer or turnover increase. Once people are onboard, how are you rewarding them? Are you celebrating the employees who build the brand? Do your performance management systems incorporate operating according the values? Are your managers and leaders living the brand in their actions internally and externally?

To identify gaps, consider a "culture audit", to compare your Human Resources and Management processes to your external brand. Are the programs and policies consistent with your external brand? Make sure your recruitment, recognition and performance management systems all support the brand. If you identify gaps, or want to reinforce your brand, take the time to make the values meaningful to employees. Instead of lofty words on a banner, includes values in your orientation or company trainings. Provide specific examples of what that value looks like in an everyday setting. Turning values into clear behavioral statements of what it means for a shipping clerk or an engineer or a sales rep to be "innovative" is a powerful exercise. As with your personal brand, your organizational brand requires attention and consistency, inside and out.