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**STRAYER CONSULTING GROUP**

# Personal Brand: Positioning

“Creating a Distinctive Market Identity”

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# What is a “Brand”?



# What is a “Brand”? Promise of Experience...



# Brand Building Session Goals

- Introduce the brand concept to your career development process.
  - ▣ Begin to understand how your brand and brand promise matters & how it plays a role in your long term individual and firm success.
- Use Market Positioning to create a tag line that places you top of mind with the customers you care about.
  - ▣ Align their experience of you with needs/expectations.
- Start using your tag line/positioning statement to make choices and focus your resources.



# Why Build A Brand in Venture?

- Differentiation Why Choose You?
  - Distinguish between 100s of Investment Professionals.
  - Create a story around your personal competitive advantage/edge.
  - Define it or the market will do it for you: “Perception is Reality”.
- Thrive, not just survive in current environment (VUCA)
- Flow: “In the Zone”
  - Leverage: Maximum results @ Minimum Investment
  - Energized
  - Clarity: Strategic Focus & Alignment of Resources
    - Time, Attention (energy), Money
    - Decisions, activities and people → operational discipline
- Fulfillment: career satisfaction, sense of contribution



# The Evolution Of Trust: Building A Brand

- 1<sup>st</sup> Hand: 1:1 Trust (Can not be earned, must be given)
  - Sincerity (Intent)\*
  - Competence (Able)\*
  - Reliability (Predictable)\*
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Hand: Reputation: What others are saying
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Hand: Legendary (We can revisit this later... 😊)
  
- Brand is either designed and intentional or the market creates it for you (sometimes just a vacant stare...)

\* “Building Trust: In Business, Politics, Relationships, and Life”  
Robert C. Solomon and Fernando Flores



# Brand Development Process

- Discovery (Who/Why) → Pre-work
  - Who you are at the core, passions
  - Essence: Naturally good at... (Flow, Genius)
- Development (What)
  - Uses Market Positioning
- Deployment (How) → More on this later
  - Based upon traditional product marketing
  - Process to implement brand



# Essential/Authentic Self: What Matters?

- Uniquely Qualified to:

- ~~Excel at:~~

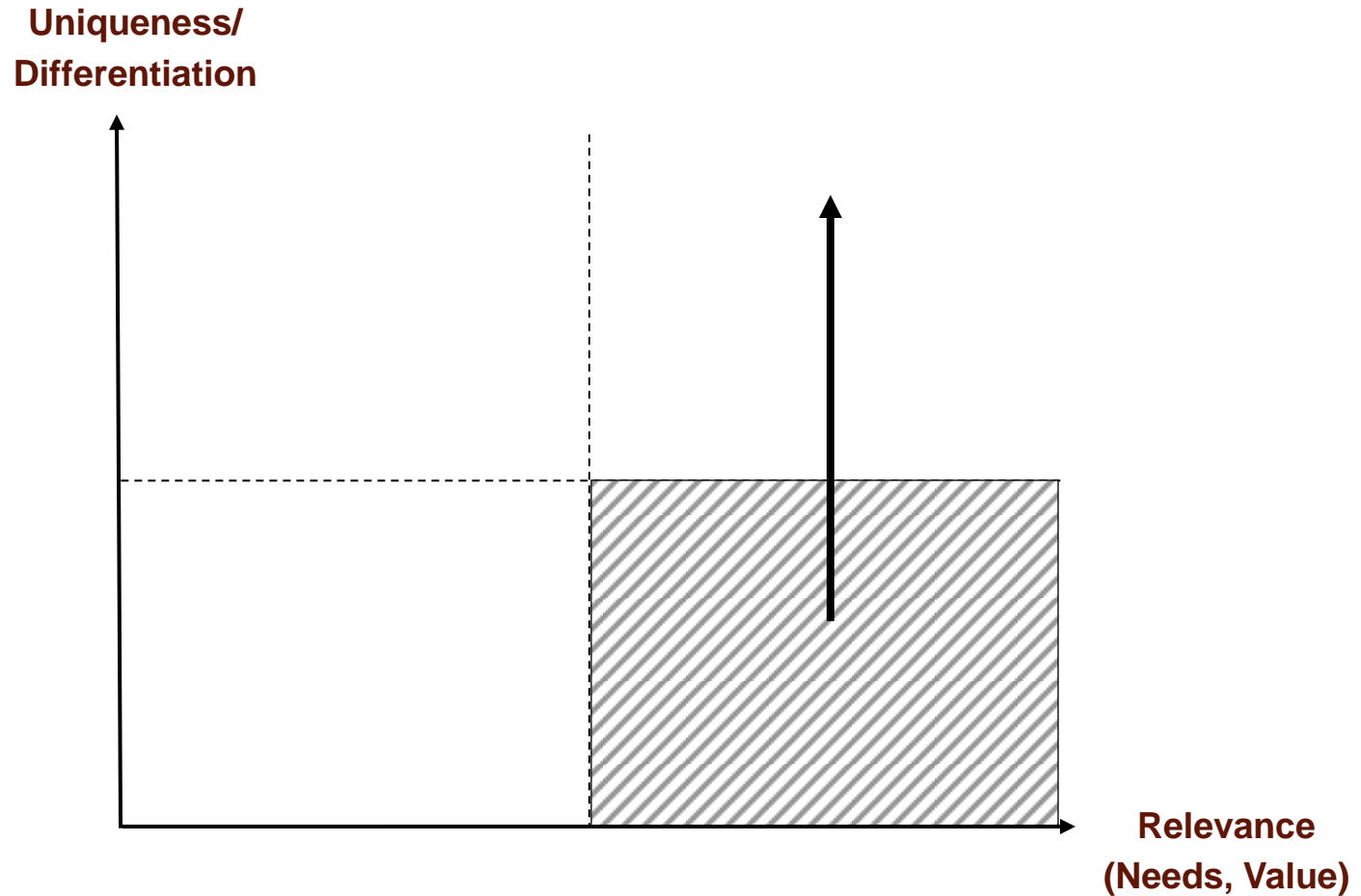
- ~~Good at:~~

- ~~Enjoy Doing:~~





# A Distinctive Market Identity



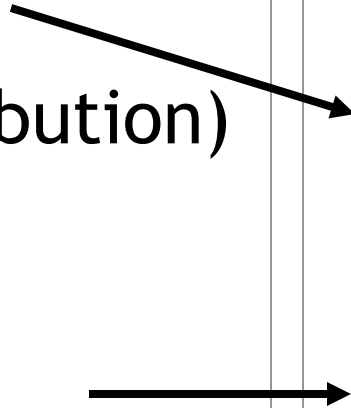
# 4Ps of Marketing & Personal Brand

## 4 Ps

- ❑ Product
- ❑ Place (Distribution)
- ❑ Price
- ❑ Promotion

## Personal Brand

- ❑ Persona (Who/How)
- ❑ Product (What)
- ❑ Packaging (How)
- ❑ Promotion (Where)
- ❑ Permission (Self)



# Leader's Edge: Leadership Brand Components

From: The Leader's Edge: Using Personal Branding to Drive Performance & Profit  
By Susan Hodgkinson

- **Persona (Personal energy & style)**
  - Visceral Reaction/Emotional connection we elicit in others
- **Product (Knowledge & Skills)**
  - Sum of our qualifications, experience, technical/functional expertise ideas, results we did/can deliver.
- **Packaging (How we present Self)**
  - The wrapping we put around our product
- **Promotion (Who Knows?)**
  - How we inform the market about our value (persona + product)
- **Permission**
  - Our sense of legitimacy, internal confidence, core belief that we have important contributions to make.



# Brand Framework: Innate Talents

## ■ Character

- Core Values, Operating Principles, Integrity

## ■ Purpose

- What's Important, What You Care About, Consistency

## ■ Style/Preferences

- Relationships, Communications, Conflict Management

## ■ Passion/Energy

- What can't not do?, Desires/Motivators, Creativity

## ■ Strengths

- Skills, training, competencies (IQ + EQ), experiences

## ■ Vision

- Your Story of the Future



# A VC's "Product Lines"

## ■ Track Record

- ❑ Success attracts success (and wannabes)
- ❑ Success has many fathers
- ❑ Success is also ephemeral ("what have you done for me lately?")

## ■ Connections & Network

- ❑ Access to Talent (executives, developers, designers, advisors)
- ❑ Access to Customers and Distribution Channels
- ❑ Access to Exit Paths (Acquirers, IPO/Capital Markets)
- ❑ Access to Follow-on Funding

## ■ Expertise & Insights

- ❑ By Vertical (ex: Gaming, Telecom, Retail, Healthcare)
- ❑ By Functional Skillset (ex: Direct Marketing, Freemium Conversion, Analytics)

## ■ Personal Style



# Table Exercise

- What did you learn about yourself from your reflections after reading the questions to ponder? Any highlights?
- What is your brand promise?
  - ▣ What do people think of when they hear your or your firm's name?
  - ▣ What makes you unique or differentiated? How do others describe you?
  - ▣ What is your current tagline? What anecdote underlies that tagline?
- What areas are you struggling with? How can the senior VCs in the room help you?
- OK, but a label (description) is not a brand (promise)...
- What traits make you stand out in a room-full of VCs?
- Who has a great brand in your venture ecosystem? Why?



# Q&A, Fellows' "Clinic"



# Thinking of Yourself as a Startup

- Think of your personal brand and VC career as a startup
- How would you write the business plan? How would you pitch yourself?
  - Past Experience, Target Market, Product, Value Proposition, Positioning,
  - Marketing, Competition, BD/Channels, Unique Differentiators, etc.
- Develop a 1/3/5 year plan for your self
  - Start with where you want to be and then work backwards and reverse engineer the steps to get there.
- Time and Focus is all you really have - where will you spend it?
  - Which Playbook Will You Utilize? Sectors vs. Stage vs. Region vs. People
  - Network: Internal vs. External
  - Domain Expertise: Industry Analysis, Original Thesis Formation
  - Deals (existing portfolio companies; new deals)
  - Marketing: Thought Leadership, Media, Speaking
  - Firm Support Activities





# Questions to Ask Yourself

- What Do You Want to be Known For?
- What's Your Passion?
  - ▣ Verticals, Horizontals, Regions, Stage
- Do You Gravitate Towards Talent, Markets, Technologies, Ideas?
- What's Your Personal Networking Style?
- How Do You Demonstrate Value? How Do You Sell?
- How Do You Ask Questions & Probe?
- How Do You Challenge or Push Back With Others?
- Who Are the 3-5 People Out There Invested in Your Success?
- Who Are Your Allies? Frenemies? Direct Rivals?
- Who Are Your Role Models?
- Who Are Your Mentors?



# Parting Thoughts (Brand Challenges)

- Personal Brand: Distinctive, Aligned with Market Needs
  - Perception is reality: Name it or others will do it for you...
- Define self specifically → cut through the noise
  - Time & attention (what gets through?)
  - Failure to communicate: Too much choice
    - Over-communicated, Overloaded, Overwhelmed
- Old School vs. New School (Style *and* Substance)
- Affects Full Ecosystem
  - Choices: Right People/Relationships, Right Companies, Right Markets
- Letting go of old ways; building for 12-18 months out
  - Personal (internal) & Professional (external) Consistency
    - Coaching: Build coping skills to perform under pressure



# Appendix



What's the Difference  
Between

**ADVERTISING**

and

**PR**

?

# Chasing vs. Creating

- Most VCs are Bandwagon Chasers...
- How do you Create and Drive Your Own Vehicle?
  - Scouting out unexplored territory:
    - Sectors, Themes, Talent Pools, Regions
  - Forming your own networks and organizations vs. trying to get into others
  - Producing your own content and events vs. fighting for airtime
  - Being more than “just a VC”?
- If You Were a Superhero... What would be your super-power?
  - Would you pattern after somebody else's?
  - Would you create an entirely new one?
  - Would you mashup and remix several others?



# Ingredients for Success

- Becoming a (Consumer) VC 2.0: Why Do You Deserve to Exist??
  - Heart:
    - Need to become a mini-celeb personality that stands out & commands attention and respect.
    - Be part of the “in club” entrepreneur group (anti-VC)
  - Help:
    - Tangible and unique value-add that other respected entrepreneurs promote!
  - Humility:
    - Be ego-less to get into right deals!
  - Head:
    - Thought leader in emerging areas - create special sauce expertise
  - Hustle:
    - How the hell will you compete with Efrusy, Cohler, Yang, Bing, Fred, Andreesen, Roelof, Fenton, David Sze, Shervin, Jeremy Liew, Jeremy Levine, David Hornik, Bill Gurley?!?

