WBA

BRAND SYMMETRY

It’s unlikely that you’ve heard of ‘Brand Symmetry’ before as it’s a term I coined some years ago to explain the way in which the Brand Promise represents identical ideas and values to both the people who are buying the brand and the people who are working for the brand.

I’m going to use a simple diagram to explain this model and you’ll see how it creates a seamless connection between what is sometimes referred to as the 3 Ps – People, Product and Promotion.

So, we start by putting our Brand Promise in the centre of all activity.

(Insert Brand Promise circle)

Then, around that, we can have a constantly changing array of products and services.

(Insert ring around Brand Promise)

When I say changing, there is one limitation.

Whether it’s a new advertising campaign, a new product or a new service, whatever it is must in some way deliver or express the Brand Promise. At the very least it must be consistent with the Brand Promise.

For example, if you accept that the Brand Promise of Apple is to ‘Challenge the Status Quo through innovation’, they can’t release a product that is a copy of a rival. Even if it is a very good copy, a beautiful Apple version. Even if that copy is more affordable. Cheapness is not part of the Apple brand. For the Apple brand to remain untarnished, they need to constantly innovate or improve on innovations they have already released.

So, with those principles in place, we can look at how the Brand Promise is affecting consumers.

(Insert arrow that points to ‘Consumers’)

On this side, we can see that the Brand Promise acts as the cornerstone of our External Brand. It’s the template for all communication to the people we want to buy the brand – clients and customers and those who might influence them.

(Insert arrow that points to ‘Employees’.

And on this side, we can see the Brand Promise shapes and informs our Internal Brand, inspires the culture of our workforce and, in so doing, creates our Employer Value Proposition. This internal focus of the Brand Proposition is incredibly important as the motivation of the staff is fundamental to the profitability of the company.

Let’s leave this chart for a moment and look at the commercial power of a well-defined Brand Promise both externally and internally.

One of the recurring themes you’ll find in these modules is that a brand is not simply a powerful marketing tool.

(Insert slide that says, ‘A brand is a powerful and effective marketing tool. Then animate the red stop sign over it.)

It is a business tool, one that drives revenue and reduces cost.

(Insert slide that says Your Brand is business tool that drives revenue and reduces cost, with a green circle around it.)

Let’s take a blue quadrant approach to this claim and put some numbers and measures against it.

Here are four measurements that attest to a brands external power.

(Title slide: The external power of a brand)

(Insert slide that animates each of these claims)

1. According to research from Booz, Allen & Hamilton, 80% of companies with a strong brand focus report operating profits almost twice as high as their sector average.

2. Interbrand’s research suggests that companies with strong brand awareness have higher profit margins – 12.9% versus 1.4% for a week brand.

3. In Fortune magazines ‘most admired study’, it was revealed that clients will pay a 32% premium for products that come from a brand with a strong reputation. And while that’s an impressive figure, it’s nothing when you look into the premium category where people will pay over $100,000 for a watch!

4. And lastly, research from Superbrand and Arthur Anderson suggests that brands with a strong reputation are three times as likely to attract highly qualified employees, a fact that brings us neatly to some statistics on the power of a brand internally.

(Title slide: The internal power of a brand.)

1. CEB research shows that companies with a strong Employer Brand spend 50% less on recruitment costs. The reason being that prospective employees are baning on their door!

2. According to LinkedIn, companies with a strong Employer Brand enjoy 28% less employee churn. This is a critical statistic. The costs of staff turnover are immense. Recruitment and onboarding, temporary loss of productivity as new staff find their feet, this disruption is staggeringly expensive.

3. In the Melcrum Internal Branding report, companies with a strong Employer Brand are 18% more productive. And according to McKinsey and Co. they outperform the Stock Market Index by 22% higher than average.

4. Finally, in Nate Butki’s report, there’s a statistic that is becoming increasingly relevant. Staff who are working for a company with a strong Employer Brand are 3 times more likely to post positive commentary on their workplace online. Given the power and reach of the internet, these endorsements are very powerful in building the company’s reputation.

So, armed with some Blue Quadrant validation, let’s go back and complete the Brand Symmetry model.

(Insert Brand Symmetry model with Brand Promise and arrows to both Employees and Consumers.)

To recap, we have our Brand Promise in the centre of all activity, surrounded by products and communications that are consistent with it.

This Brand Promise, as expressed through various communication channels, is shaping how customers think and feel about the brand.

And on this side, the Brand Promise is shaping how employees and partners think and feel about working for the brand.

So, we are creating an unbroken thread between these three, all-important attributes:

(Animate ‘Motivation, Innovation, Communication’ under the arrows)

The motivation of our employees, the innovation of new products and services communication to customers and clients.

This is Brand Symmetry.

And by creating this harmony of people, product and promotion, it leads to a fourth ‘P’.

Profit.

END