



Five Steps to Building A Strong Internal Brand

"The essence of branding is promising and delivering."

It's a simple, yet incredibly powerful notion. A company or organization makes a promise to its customers. The most successful companies understand that if employees are aligned with the brand strategy, including the promise, they will deliver a consistent expression of the brand to their customers. Powerhouse companies such as GE, UPS and Apple are prime examples. Each has dedicated itself to helping its employees understand the power of the brand and have reaped the benefits of a consistent brand expression delivered at every touchpoint.

Conversely, if employees are not living the brand everyday, then growth and success of that organization will be fundamentally impeded.

So what does it take to "rally the troops" and ensure that every team member is delivering on the brand promise? Movéo has identified five essential keys to a successful internal branding effort:

1. C-level support
2. It's not an "initiative"
3. Understand who is going pay for it
4. Build it one step at a time
5. Continuing education

1. C-Level Support. A successful brand begins at the C-level. From clearly communicating a vision to being the spokesperson, leadership must be seen as the "driver" of the brand. An integrated campaign that enables leadership to effectively communicate with every employee on an ongoing basis should be developed.

This may initially include a series of "Brand Road Shows", where the leadership of an organization visits all the facilities/departments to discuss the brand. A Brand Road Show is one of the most important and effective events for building awareness and commitment to the brand. It also facilitates employee buy-in and understanding of their role in delivering the brand to the marketplace.

Putting leadership face-to-face with employees in an effort to create awareness and understanding for the brand can be very effective. Leadership is seen as an evangelist for the brand, which in turn creates brand disciples.

2. It's Not an Initiative. It's Not a Program. It's THE BRAND. Rallying management should be simple. But how do you engage and excite key personnel on the shop floor? How do you engage and excite customer service reps? Accounting?

Employees must understand where the organization is going (Vision), and how they will get there. But more importantly, they must understand their own role in delivering the brand. Without this understanding, "brand" becomes a series of posters, a CEO video, a workshop - it becomes a "program" perceived as just another motivational tactic being rolled out by management.

Thus, ongoing commitment by both management and employees is necessary to ensure that the brand is integrated into every facet of the organization.

3. Who Is Going To Pay For It? Too often, the brand becomes siloed in Advertising/MarCom. While these areas may assist in the development and execution of the brand strategy, many of the deliverables rest in other areas.

The brand should impact and play a role in every department/area in the organization. Ideally, the funding for the development, internal roll-out and ongoing education should come from the C-level.

Not only is this approach appropriate, but it also sends a signal to employees that the brand is truly "owned" by senior management. It is important

to note that while MarCom budgets may rise and fall, the commitment to the brand must remain consistent.

4. Building It One Step At A Time, Takes Time. The goal of the internal roll-out is to move employees through a process that begins with awareness and eventually migrates to modifying their behavior. The result is a clear understanding of the brand.

From the service industry to manufacturing, brands are defined by numerous touchpoints by which a customer comes in contact with the organization. The most obvious of which may be a call from a salesperson. However, touchpoints also include how efficiently requests are fulfilled by customer service, the accuracy of invoices sent by accounting, the rate at which new products are developed by R&D, etc.

Therefore, to be truly effective, the brand must be carefully introduced across every level of the organization and within each region. Like a concentric circle, the brand must be built from the inside out. This process begins with senior management, followed by department heads to each and every employee. From there, the brand is communicated to other key stakeholders such as financial contacts, media, prospective employees, etc.

5. Continuing Education. In order for any brand to thrive and grow, it must be nurtured. Brand awareness and education must become an integral part of the organization.

This may include many traditional activities such as workshops and newsletters, as well as some more innovative techniques.

For example, as part of its ongoing internal branding effort, ING Bank ran an online internal branding campaign which aimed to reinforce the brand positioning among employees. The online campaign leveraged an IP targeting technique which served banners to employees while they were surfing the internet.

If you would like to learn more about how to build your company's internal brand, contact Movéo Integrated Branding, at 630.570.4800.

Did you know?

- Studies have shown that up to 86% of employees who interface with customers are communicating inaccurate or incomplete vital information.
- Employees focused on delivering your brand stay at your company longer, work harder and deliver on-brand work every day. In addition, they build your brand outside the walls of your organization.



About Movéo Working in collaborative partnership, Movéo helps its clients build extraordinary B2B brands. The agency's integrated services—research, brand strategy and marketing communications—have helped global leaders such as Siemens, Motorola, US Robotics and CareerBuilder align their brands with their overall business strategy to produce bottom-line results. For more information on Movéo visit www.moveo.com/b2b

