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ASMI's 2004 Internal Branding Summit Summary

Introductions and setting the tone of the meeting

The ASMI Internal Branding Summit chaired by Allan Steinmetz, CEO & Founder of Inward Strategic Consulting, started out with an enthusiastic commitment by the attendees to make this a successful meeting. Everyone committed to be full participants, taking responsibility to make it interesting, to ask good questions, by listening actively, by sharing experiences and ideas and to meet as many people as they could and to stay connected after the meeting.

Everyone introduced themselves to each other and explained why they came and what they hoped to gain by attending. Some of the key motivations and interest were:

- To learn what Internal Branding was verses External Branding
- How to measure it
- What was the process for doing internal branding
- How to get leadership to support the brand
- Learn the differences of being strategic, verses just being tactical.

Creating a Brand Culture – Christine Donahue – Director of Internal Communications at Pitney Bowes

Christine provided a brief summary of the PB's business and why they had recently re-launched a new brand. It was most exemplified and won leadership over by creating a "Hall of Shame" that demonstrated all the different messages, looks and personalities of all PB's materials. She explained that branding at PB was more than just new ads and tag lines and copy points. It was the universal customer experience that was portrayed in a 360 degree integrated branding strategy. It represented shaping the customer experience externally and bringing the brand alive internally as well. She built on the model of Brand Culture (Communicate, Clarify Persuade and ultimately Change Behavior).

They introduced the brand ambassador team to help in the process of launching the brand and gain understanding and acceptance internally. In addition, senior leadership was evaluated by the degree they were supporting and driving the brand initiative forward. Early results indicated a large improvement in external awareness, internal recognition and personal relevance. However, she recognized there is still a great deal of work ahead with the sales force and field representatives.

Leadership Panel: Internal Branding Best Practices

Moderated by Allan Steinmetz – CEO of Inward Strategic Consulting.

Participants: Tim Heffernan – Manager of Associate Communications – Symbol Technologies, Bill Sidwell – Director Global Brand Strategy – HP, Allison Davis – CEO, President of Davis and Company.

Each panelist started out with a five-minute introduction on one concept of internal communications that they believed was a strong contributor to effective internal branding.

Bill Sidwell – spoke about the importance of “value creation” through branding.

Tim Heffernan - spoke about the difference between tactics and strategy and how we need to make the distinction.

Allison Davis – spoke about enrolling leadership and accountability.

- A general observation was that it was important to operationize the brand internally. It was not about slogans, posters and announcements. It was about establishing metrics and measures, creating value, recognition of senior management that it contributes to shareholder value and creating a better place to work with greater participation and facilitated management.
- It was agreed that hierarchical management techniques don't work as well any more and employees need to be educated, motivated and enrolled around change.
- We also learned that there needs to be a similar brand experience internally and externally, and that there was a process to achieve this goal.
- Measurement and accountability are critical to demonstrate the value to management. It is critical to set simple and clear metrics at the beginning of the program. Bill Sidwell pointed out that in the case of HP, measurement is evaluated by shareholder equity and market cap in addition to all the other standard measures.
- You know you should consider doing an internal branding campaign when morale is low, employee surveys indicate people do not understand the business strategy, or when communications is bad or when customer satisfaction is declining.

Using Internal Branding to Improve Recruitment and Retention – Mary Cisiewski, Human Resource Manager at The Boeing Company

Mary gave a very interesting presentation demonstrating the challenges of new employee orientation. The company has come to recognize that they are able to recruit and retain better and happier employees when they take the time to educate motivate and enroll employees with better knowledge of how Boeing operates. She demonstrated their mentoring program, shared their orientation materials and gave us some of their premiums

and welcome gifts. All in all, it was all about making personal connections with the company and individuals so that new employees felt comfortable and welcome.

Measuring the Impact of Internal Branding on Employee Performance and Assessing Employee Commitment – Allison Davis, CEO of Davis & Company

We were introduced to another model of reaching and motivating employees by going through a sequential process of receiving information, understanding, believing, internalizing and acting. Allison made a telegraphic point of asking one of our participants to recite the pledge of allegiance, which she was able to do effortlessly. However, when asked what it meant, she had difficulty. The point being that there is a difference between “Communication and Meaning”. Just because someone knows the words and hears it over and over doesn’t mean they internalize it and understand the meaning. This example was cited over and over again throughout the conference. She presented an interactive discussion on assessment for three case histories.

Defining Corporate Brand Values– Randal “Brandel” Roxin, Global Manager of Branding & Marketing at Dow Corning Corporation

Randal explored the issue of brand values and how to get your employees to live the values in their every day activities. The brand values need to be aligned with the company vision and values. He also introduced an important concept called “The Moments of Truth”. These are the times in an employee’s life when it is important to link the brand behavior to every job: To Focus, Be Participative, Role Modeling and To Communicate. Also important was to match the external brand messages with internal brand messages. Corning did this by taking their regular advertising campaign and replacing the actors in the external campaign with real employees in the internal campaign. The tone and manner however, stayed the same. He also gave the group a few great lines that resonated throughout the conference. They were, “Listen, Understand and Act!” “Live it, Give it and Get it” and “Without a Skeleton, You cannot stand”.

Turning Your Employees into Brand Ambassadors – Christy Contardi, Director of Marketing for Root Learning

Christy introduced an idea of honoring your brand promises to your customer each and every time, which requires a company to bring its brand to life. This is done through defining the promise, drawing a line of site from the marketplace to the individual, envision moments of truth and helping the employee practice before they perform their roles. Additionally, it is important for the employees to find relevance to themselves in regard to the actions that are asked of them, or in other words “what does this mean to me?” Christy suggested that learning maps were a good way for employees to see the big picture and practice their behavior before they acted. She introduced a model called “ECHO”, Every Contact Has Opportunity. Using learning maps allows employees to understand the “why’s” behind the brand and major change initiatives.

Drafting and Implementing an Internal Brand Strategy – Robert Urban, Senior Manager of Associate Communications at Symbol Technologies

Rob told an engaging story of a difficult employee situation at Symbol Technologies where employees were leaving, stock prices were at the lowest ever, extremely low employee satisfaction and dissent and a total senior level management re-organization being implemented. The company had to act fast to win the employees over and get them to understand and appreciate why the company was taking a new path and why they needed to become supportive and enrolled. The communications team set goals to Change Perceptions, Change Behavior and Change Attitudes over time. Also they set key benchmark measurements to track results. In addition they embraced a “Virtual Team” model of aligning Operations, HR, and Communications to provide effective communications, provide learning and educations and measure the impact over time. The result was improving the company’s reputation and living up to the employee promise and relationship with the company. Rob went into great detail and showed specific tactics that were used to win the employees over and change perceptions over time including employee polling, a high tech suggestion box, an interactive web site, a Symbol news network and kiosks, educational curriculum and much more.

The results were outstanding where associate description of the brand and understanding improved significantly.

Measuring the ROI on Internal Brand – Michelle Mahoney, Principal Consultant for The Empower Group

Michelle defined three components to effective Branding: Marketplace Brand, Recruiting Brand and Internal Brand. She stressed that alignment of all three components are necessary for success. She suggested a four phase process that follows 1) Building a business case, 2) Baseline analysis, 3) Blueprint for engagement and 4) Demonstrating business Results. She presented several cases that employed multivariate statistical analysis that demonstrated how companies could identify the strongest contributing factors in creating both an internal and external message. Also there was an interesting case for measuring results by three factors, Employee Behavior, Customer Impressions and Revenue Growth. It demonstrated that there is strong correlation between informed employees, satisfied client and revenue growth.

Gain Leadership Commitment – Bill Sidwell, Director of Global Brand Strategy & Management at Hewlett-Packard

We heard a brief overview of the challenges of operating and managing the brand on a global basis through a mergers, consolidation of product lines and being within a technology driven company. Then Bill put forth his premise that there is only one brand. There shouldn’t be a difference between internal and external branding. It’s all about building brand equity that leads to shareholder equity. He submitted “while brands are strategic assets companies own, brand equity is created differently in the minds of customers, employees and investors”. Brand equity is the value of qualities and attributes implied by the brand name and reflected in choices made in a competitive marketplace i.e.

the ability of brands to shifts demand. This transcends to customers who are influenced in their levels of demand and mind share, to employees/labor market in regard to acquisition and retention and lastly to Investors who seek higher shareholder value.

He also talked about the evolution of functional marketing tasks/roles to becoming drivers of business that influences financial performance which means that brand need to be measured as a strategic asset not in terms of the number of marketing tactics. To achieve this mental model change, brand building requires integrating brand decisions with business design. He proposed a framework for achieving this alignment and linking it to corporate measures of success like the balanced scorecard. Next, he shared their HP brand-building case history and explained how HP was successful in following this framework. They attained alignment by building respect for branding as a business-building asset for the company and improving shareholder value.

Realigning the Brand: Dealing with Brand Issues for Mergers, Restructures and Acquisitions – Karen Kramer, President of K2 Management Consulting

Karen shared an interesting case study about the pending acquisition of Sprint by MCI WorldCom prior to it the FTC ruling against the merger. They assigned a brand merger team and Brand Champions teams to address the individual issue of integration with representation of a cross section of function and regions. Each team came up with different approaches that were later shared among the different teams and management. They arrived at key definitions and guidelines for their brand architecture process based on a master branding model. Next they segmented the market opportunities and assigned multibrands based on advantages and disadvantages. The segmentation was based on Products, Services, and Voice/Data. At the end of their process they had established a process

Brands Strategies for Motivating Your Workforce; Igniting the Brand Inside – Mary Beth Turner, Manager of Brand Strategy at Allstate Insurance

Mary Beth gave a compelling presentation based on changing the business, as expressed by the needs of the marketplace so that Allstate would remain a relevant, compelling and differentiated brand. Their challenge was to bring this new differentiating brand to life internally so that their associates would deliver the promise to their customers. They created an orientation program for leadership to understand the brand values and consequences on their business. Next, they conducted research to understand the long held beliefs that had gone “underground” such as helping people. Like many of the other cases we heard, they created an top down/bottoms up process to inform, immerse, engage, empower and reward their constituencies as they rolled the program internally. She identified the most critical success factors under each step offering suggestions and ideas for improvement. As a result of the program they put in place, Allstate is seeing significant improvement in employee attitudes, behavior and improved customer experiences.

Aligning Your Internal Brand and External Strategies – Eric Stedinger, Chief Creative Officer and Director of Brand Inside at Jack Morton Worldwide

Eric's presentation focused on the importance of emotion and relevance of the communications message while delivering it to right audience at the right time for maximum impact. He demonstrated the different motivations by differing segments of employee populations and how impactful creative communications can change attitudes. In addition, he share several global experiential communications case histories that were impressive and helpful at building tactics and on a small scale as well. Specifically, he pointed out that a brand that is relevant to an employee base must have clarity, is coherent, provide control & measures and offered a scorecard that we can use to see where we measure within our own organizations.

2004 Internal Branding Summit Wrap-Up – Allan Steinemtz, Conference Chair and CEO of Inward Strategic Consulting

Allan reviewed the original group objectives from the previous day and noted that the conference met all of them. Additionally, we achieved the goals for making the conference great in terms of participation and involvement. To sum up the conference Allan reviewed the common themes over the course of the two days and all the proceedings.

- You need to start with a clear company vision and direction
- Need leadership participation and involvement throughout the process of internal branding
- Participatory/consensus process works best
- Need external & internal brand alignment
- Need core brand and business values and principles that are aligned
- There is a sequential process that employees need to evolve around to achieve internal brand success
 - Inform
 - Educate
 - Gain Commitment
 - Change Behavior
 - Recognition & Reward
- Importance of Brand Ambassadors or Brand Champions who promote the brand internally
- Have accountable metrics and measures in place
- Set clear objectives and clarity of roles at the very beginning
- Hard, Simple, Easy – Work hard to make complex concepts and ideas simple so that they can get understood and communicated easily
- Listen, Understand and Act
- Live it, Give it and Get it
- Research your employees regularly and track the progress over time
- There's a difference between communicating and understanding a message
- Brands grow stronger when the focus is narrow
- Branding is the conscience of the employee and the customer coming together

- Brand is a process driven; long term proposition. Not a deliverable!
- Be creative and break some rules
- Power brands have Integration, synergy and cohesion
- Emotion engenders empathy
- Fight complacency; It's all about change
- Creating a sense of urgency – a burning platform so that people see no alternative to change
- Consideration for dedicated people assigned to internal change communication and internal branding
- Seek outside help from experts and consultants in the field – this is hard work, but can be done effectively

We ended the conference on a high note with a message to be advocates of change and internal branding by becoming visionaries rather than managers alone. Visionaries establish direction and vision for the future. They align people through effective communications, cooperation and action. They motivate and inspire and energize people to overcome barriers. These are the traits that produce positive change and make companies more competitive.