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“CXO and the need for a Brand”



Personal Profile

- 25 years in Executive Search at Whitehead Mann & Odgers
- 2 years running own firm Alan Mumby Limited
- 5 years running an award-winning software house
- 9 years in computer audit and IT leadership
- Degree in the spectacularly irrelevant Philosophy, Politics & Economics

Work Undertaken in last 25 years

- UK Government CIO three times
 - Centrica Group CIO & CISO
 - Schroders Group CIO
 - UBM group CIO
 - HMRC CIO & Digital Leader
 - eFront CTO and CISO
 - Cambridge University CIO
 - GoCompare CTO
- ...and several hundred other roles over the years

So what is a Brand?

- “A person's perception of a product, service, experience or organisation”
- Emanates from 1880's branding of cattle to identify and differentiate them
- In recent years however brand has become more intangible and elusive than a stamp on cowhide



The CXO Brief

- Identify opportunities and deficiencies in the ability of systems & processes to add value, plan to improve, sell the idea, agree the budget, act, deliver.
- REPEAT

Why does a CXO need a brand?

- To sell something
- To attract someone
- To differentiate
- To promote something
- To communicate something

Getting Noticed

Wave your own?



Let your Brand talk?

- What you have done
- What you appear like
- What others say of you
- What your attributes are

CXO

- In order to influence and persuade then a brand helps in building momentum and affinity in the stakeholder community
- Sell your work, your ideas and yourself/team
- However, there are pitfalls

Brand distribution channels

- You physically
- How and what you communicate F2F
- Your written output on web/social media/reports/memos/emails
- Your video output and sharing choices
- Your likes and dislikes
- What you have done – your legacy
- Family and friends and colleagues perspectives



So who are your stakeholders?

- Employer
- Manager
- Subordinates and team
- Peers and colleagues
- “Connections”
- Family
- Suppliers
- Potential employers
- Potential Managers
- Alumni
- Referees

Probably many more than you imagined. Can a brand appeal to them all?

Pitfalls of CXO branding

- Reality clearly falls short of expectation
- Your idea of brand values may be idiosyncratic and even have negative effects
 - The Qualification/membership dilemma
 - Strutting the boards
 - Sowing the seeds of distrust
 - Brands meaning changes over time
 - Differentiation becomes redundant

Social Media

- In general be very, very cautious
- Never mix private and work in a channel
- Be very careful with your private channels and with your friends' channels on-line
- It may seem OK now but will it in 10 years?
- Might your opinion change? If yes, shut up now
- Don't become just repetitive noise & truisms



Don't forget

- Truth and integrity are #1 virtue of a brand
- Understand clearly who you are aiming at in your stakeholder community
- Work to understand how you can be misunderstood

2020 Personal Qualities

- Integrity and openness (B)
- Board level commercial knowledge and communications (B)
- Refined emotional intelligence (B)
- Able and happy to talk cogently to anyone including customers (B)
- Team builder, leader and player (B)
- Focussed on outcomes above all else, then people second (B)
- Strategic when needed but tactically strong (B)
- Supreme stakeholder manager (B)
- Engaging, positive and likeable(BB+)

Tips

- Brands are about feelings which needs Emotional Intelligence – do you have it?
- Be yourself at all times – you cannot act a brand
- Ensure your brand and your organisation brand happily co-exist
- Test your brand – ask people to describe their thoughts on you.
- NEVER write your own opinion of yourself – its not going to be correct!!!

