

An Inspirational brand is an honourable business model, that is humble, noble, dignified and has a purpose.

THE LESSONS START-UPS CAN LEARN FROM SUPERBRANDS

PAUL HITCHENS

Most superbrands including Coca-Cola, Microsoft and Google began with a great idea followed by the determination and passion to succeed. One common factor to their success is focus. A focussed brand has a clear vision for its future that guides the organisation on its path to success. What does your brand stand for? What values guide you in each business decision? How can a brand follow its own moral compass to find its authentic self? We have identified seven qualities that each provide a compelling reason for brand loyalty.

PIONEERING

Pioneers are passionate, fearless and independent. They are leaders who move the market forward with their ideas; they change the way people think and break through into new territories. They are confident self-starters, courageous, energetic and dynamic. They are determined to persevere where other businesses would give up.

Pioneering is about discovery, being radical and having the energy and determination to win. Sir Richard Branson's Virgin Group epitomises the pioneering brand, bravely traversing industries from music to finance and air travel to space.

CREATIVE

Creativity can be the guiding force that helps a business achieve success. The growth and development of the brand depends on the constant supply of new ideas. Unfortunately, most businesses do not foster this resource or facilitate the generation of ideas, allowing productivity and performance to take dominance and stifle the creative process. The Apple Superbrand exudes creativity and places it at the heart of their business strategy. Jonathan Ive the talented British designer and Senior Vice President at Apple is central to the success of the iMac, iPod, iPhone and iPad.

CARING

Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) are the two 'must have'

policies for global businesses. But is CSR a charity bandwagon or really heart-felt? Either way, a lot of good causes benefit from these policies but there is a difference between believing in a cause and just doing the right thing. A hollow CSR policy will come up for scrutiny but passionate heart-felt causes could be the focus that drives a brand. Dame Anita Roddick founded the ethical beauty brand 'The Body Shop' and placed 'Against Animal Testing' on the political agenda. The brand was the first global cosmetics brand to be recognized under the Humane Cosmetics Standard.

INNOVATIVE

The job of the innovator is a challenging one. As if the task of inventing something new and useful isn't daunting enough, they then need to convince us that we actually needed the device in the first place! The stakes are high but the rewards can be huge. The innovator may succeed in creating an entirely new class of product and become the brand leader.

What is an innovative business? It is one that values clear, rational and focused thinking. Being first to market with a new concept can mean the difference between survival and failure. Sir James Dyson used his innovative products: air multiplier (bladeless fans), air blade (hand dryers) and bagless vacuum cleaners.

COMMUNICATIVE

A communicative Superbrand brings people together and improves life by enabling the exchange of ideas. Larry Page, the co-founder of the internet search engine Google, said: "The perfect search engine (...) would understand exactly what you mean and give back exactly what you want." Google have a self-proclaimed mission to organise the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful.

Not every Superbrand will get an easy ride. There has been criticism of the Street View service because it allegedly recorded the details of private wi-fi networks. How a brand behaves under crises can prove critical to building or losing its superbrand status.

KNOWLEDGEABLE

The knowledgeable brand earns its customers' trust and respect by sharing its expertise. There are certain types of retailer that have an appalling reputation for ignoring their customers, giving incorrect



information or simply being rude. If you treat people poorly, you cannot expect them to return! This is not how Superbrands are built. The Black Cab and the London Taxi Driver are cultural icons. The cab drivers are famous for their happy demeanour and encyclopaedic knowledge of the streets of London. John Lewis is a high street example of a brand celebrated for its customer service and friendly knowledgeable staff.

INSPIRATIONAL

It will make sacrifices to fulfil its high ideals. These are inspirational businesses with very high standards, working for the common good. These businesses are sensitive, are intuitive and have the courage of their convictions.

Oprah Winfrey is recognised as one of America's most powerful women. Oprah makes television out of the daily issues that affect her viewers including relationships, health, education, faith and financial matters.

Superbrands stand for something that is relevant to their customers. They add value to their customers' lives and return value to their investors. There is an opportunity for every entrepreneur and start-up to build a new Superbrand by putting faith in the qualities that matter to them - some have been guided by a desire to improve peoples' lives and many have changed the world for good.

'Create the Perfect Brand - Teach Yourself' is a guidebook for entrepreneurs and start-ups. It is written by enthusiastic branding professionals with over 40 years combined experience of working for SMEs and Superbrands.



Paul Hitchens Brand Consultant and Author of 'Create the Perfect Brand - Teach Yourself'