

The Values of Branding: Driving Your Business Impact and Enhancing Your Personal Career Development

By Linn Hjortsberg, Project Manager, Archimed Medical Communication

Novartis, Basel July 29th 2009. Close to 70 women (and men) were attracted to the Novartis campus in Basel to attend this provocative event, presenting a parallelism aiming at growing your business and personal success.

Rebecca Robins, Global Marketing Director at Interbrand Health in London opened the evening by introducing the concept of brands, brand value, how brand value can be evaluated to drive business impact and how brand managers can use the evaluation to optimize their brand's performance.



The Values of Branding– continued

So, what is a brand? “Our brand is what people say about us when we are not in the room”. A brand is a value exchange. The brand owner provides tangible and intangible benefits that are highly valued by the key customers. In turn, the brand's constituents return value to its owner (revenue, loyalty, partnership, word-of-mouth recommendations). A brand is a relationship that creates and secures future earnings by growing customer preference and loyalty.

This relationship with the customer is highly dynamic and dependent on a number of factors including products, name, advertising, corporate identity and design, as well as standard of service, company reputation, staff and pricing.

What brand could you not live without, was one of Rebecca's inquisitive questions to the audience. The answers were many; Apple, Lancôme, BlackBerry...Me! Me, a brand? According to the second speaker of the evening, John Glasspool, Head of Global Pricing, Market Access, and Commercial Operations at Novartis the answer is, yes absolutely! Our brand is what people say about us, remember?

With a strong personal brand one can enhance one's recognition and career development potential. **How can one apply branding principles to create a powerful personal brand?** Firstly, be careful of being “average”. A brand stands for something and makes it (you) stand out from the crowd. Plain vanilla doesn't leave a lasting impression. Then build up a reputation (your brand image) so that people have a positive perception of you, already before introduction.

Assess yourself and what you want from life to discover your strengths and core values. These strengths are your assets. That is what you want to focus on. We are often reminded of our weaknesses and told to work on improving these areas. But rather than wasting energy on disguising or fixing flaws, put the effort into leveraging your strengths (your brand assets) instead. Now, when you know who you are and what you stand for – live up the brand promise. Enjoy what you do and who you are – it has to be “you” to be sustainable.

Arriving as a product, leaving as a brand? Maybe, maybe not, but the topic of the evening provoked vivid discussions that lasted long after the canapés were gone and the sun was beginning to set behind the Forum building.

