

## **A SYMPHONIC MASTERPIECE: THE ROI OF INTERNAL BRAND ALIGNMENT**

*Learn to profit from the synchronicity of brand harmony  
and rhythm within your organization.*

By Suzanne Tulien, Principal & Co-Founder

They say that music is a universal language. That all humans can relate to rhythms, beats, and tones and pace at an emotional level. We all know that music can cause an eruption of tears, build heightened states of energy, slow things down, and relax even the most wound up children. Why is this important and how does it relate to your brand? Good question.

The music concept is important in the creation of a highly relevant analogy that will creatively explain the underlying value of conscious, strategic internal brand strategies within your business. It relates to your brand because everything you do in your business contributes too, or takes away from the value of your brand.

I started thinking about this analogy when a prospective client asked a simple question regarding one of our proposed approaches to defining and aligning his internal brand with his external marketing promises. He asked, "What is my return on investment?" It was then I realized I had to put it into simpler terms and get them beyond thinking about just the bottom-line, at any given snapshot in time, and more about the organization as a whole. So I started thinking...

The very next day, while I was flipping through our XM channels trying to get a sense for what genre I was in the mood for, I came across a station playing popular symphonies. I happen to tune in during a live interview being broadcast from a music hall with the highly recognizable sounds of musicians individually tuning and rehearsing for the next set. You know, that random collection of various instruments practicing from a different area of the sheet music all at the same time. That's when it struck me!

### THE POWER OF THE COLLECTIVE.

When I thought about the internal operations, the culture, the systems and processes of many of business brands, I realized I could liken them to the individual musicians tuning and rehearsing their own instruments prior to joining the orchestra. You see, each musician has their own part they play, their own expertise they provide, and their own sound contribution. Like a business with several departments, areas of expertise, and a variety of functions each employee plays, they are each responsible for providing their

own contribution to the overall brand. But what brings these employees together to function efficiently, productively, and energetically tuned specifically for the overall benefit of the brand?

When the orchestra musicians are satisfied with their tuning, they come together, each to the same page of music, and eagerly await the maestro's masterful guidance in aligning them to play in perfect unison, creating a symphonic masterpiece, such as in Beethoven's No. 9. The outputs result in an amazing experience for the audience, often taking their breath away and leaving them with an explosive and beautiful auditory and visual experience.

Who within your Business Brand is your maestro? Are your employees constantly tuning their own areas of expertise or are they working in unison to compose and deliver an unforgettable customer experience?

### **WALKING YOUR BRAND TALK.**

Steve Mckee, President of McKee Wallwork Cleveland Advertising, recently wrote an article stating the seven key reasons 'Why Your Advertising Isn't Working.' In the seventh reason he hit one of the most common, but least attended to issues of dissonance customers have with a brand...

7. ***"It's not an advertising problem. A common mistake many companies make is trying to use advertising to fix another problem. It may be faulty or outdated product design, an uncompetitive cost structure, customer service letdowns, or any number of other things. It's not as if they do so intentionally; it's just that it's a whole lot easier to put on a new coat of paint than it is to fix the foundation that's causing the drywall to crack. No company executes flawlessly, but until you can maintain a solid track record of excellence, spend your money on internal improvements rather than advertising. Paint may mask the problem for a short time, but soon new cracks will begin to appear."***

His point is powerful and clearly stated, but unfortunately sorely attended to within organizations generally because it is difficult to know where to begin within the brand to bring the 'orchestra of employees' together to create the masterpiece experience for the customer, consistently.

We see this all the time. Advertising and marketing dollars are continuously used in efforts to mitigate a growth problem and it becomes a never-ending game of customer acquisition. Instead we ask that you consider the alternative; by focusing on customer retention techniques through internal brand definition and strategic implementation throughout all facets of the organization. An action such as this will engage your employees, provide a crystal clear branded 'symphony' to play from, and create

positive, beautiful outputs that move your customers to buy more, return more often and tell their friends. What is our learning point? Stop marketing, for now, start BRANDING...from the inside out. Build a branded foundational masterpiece that will increase your marketing ROI by aligning its operations and behaviors to empower your brand to walk its talk.

Remember, 94% of your customers WANT TO BE LOYAL. Enhance their reasons to.

Here are a few things you can do now to kick-start the process:

1. Implement a customer 'touch-point' audit and discover all the areas and stages your brand reaches the customer (e.g., phone, invoice, on-site environment, employees, follow-up, referral programs, special events, transactional experiences, etc.)
2. Get your leadership team together and ask the question: 'What ONE WORD do we want to own in the minds of our market?'
3. Get creative! Use that word as your basis for creating relevant behaviors and actions that express and elevate it through each of those 'touch-point' areas you listed in your touch-point audit.

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE OVER WHEN THE FAT LADY SINGS, IT COULD BE JUST THE BEGINNING.



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