



Jody Ordioni is the Chief Brand Officer of Brandemix, a marketing and communications agency with extensive expertise in developing creative solutions that support business initiatives. Bridging the traditional gap between marketing, advertising, internal communications and human resources, Brandemix creates consistent, relevant and brand-aligned messages across all print and interactive channels, forming a line of sight from strategy to talent, investors, clients and consumers.

USING BRANDING TO CREATE A FULLY ENGAGED WORKFORCE

"I urge CEOs and other executives who may not know why or how to authentically connect talent to their strategic objectives to read *The Talent Brand*. Ordioni is a branding thought-leader with deep expertise in helping companies solve business challenges through defining their culture and unique value proposition as an Employer. She has deftly crafted a hands-on guide that can be easily implemented within any culture and leadership model. By following her clear path forward, organizations can realize a swift and significant impact to their bottom line."

Marshall Goldsmith, New York Times #1 bestselling author of *Triggers* and *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*

"*The Talent Brand* is a must read. Direct in her approach, Jody Ordioni explores the art of making a strong emotional connection throughout an entire organization to drive businesses forward."

Pat Wadors, Senior Vice President, LinkedIn

"*The Talent Brand* is an important new release from branding thought-leader Jody Ordioni. It is an instructional guide to building an authentic, compelling talent brand, Employer Value Proposition and talent attraction framework that can be strategically implemented within any business. Successful executives and business leaders understand that the fastest and surest way for organizations to drive their business results is to leverage the power of their talent. This book details the critical process for capturing the hearts and minds of your current and future talent to build engagement and unleash the potential of your greatest competitive advantage — your talent."

Michael Cox, Senior Vice President, Comcast Talent Solutions

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THE TALENT BRAND

JODY ORDIONI



JODY ORDIONI

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO CREATING EMOTIONAL EMPLOYEE BUY-IN FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION



The 21st century is now seeing consumer loyalty predicated on brand affinity, trust, transparency and authenticity.

The Talent Brand takes this notion one step further and explores the art of creating a strong emotional connection to your organization and its culture through the engagement of the talent that drives business forward.

Direct in its approach, the book argues that everything from hiring employees to internal communications must be in line with a company's brand and that anything less than that will have costly consequences.

Broken down into four easily-digestible parts, this is a breakthrough and highly accessible read for leaders interested in realizing significant and sustained profitability and growth.



AN INTRODUCTION TO **JODY ORDIONI**

Jody Ordioni is the founder and chief brand officer of Brandemix, a branding agency that solves business challenges through defining and marketing organizational culture to the people who drive business forward.

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And finally, extreme love and gratefulness to Vincent and our family for indulging me, loving me, and allowing me the freedom to pursue my passions and live in Jody-land.



INTRODUCTION

Time is moving quickly and organizations that are fast to change and seize opportunities are realizing greater financial rewards. And yet, the greatest barrier to change is creating understanding and emotional support in the hearts and minds of the talented employees responsible for achieving it.

How can branding help?

The essence of branding is the successful alignment of the rational and emotive sides of our brains, creating rapid acceptance of new ways of thinking and acting.

Someone once described the optimal state of talent engagement as a CEO, a dog and a frisbee. Wherever the CEO throws the frisbee, the dog is there to catch it – running joyously, deftly changing course and returning it with a wagging tail. But now consider if instead of one dog, there were a thousand eager canines. Think of the impact we could have if we could harness such positive energy, and create such an agile army of talent, ready to pivot, change direction and chase down new opportunities.

If this sounds like the kind of impact you'd like to make within your workplace, then congratulations. You're ready to enter the exciting world of talent branding.

Your talent brand is the next iteration of your organization's employer brand. Aimed at branding the unique appeal of your firm's culture and employment opportunities, it also takes into consideration what people are already feeling, saying and sharing socially about your organization as a place to work.

If a brand is the promise we make to all audiences, the talent brand is the promise we make to employees and potential employees.

My name is Jody Ordioni and I am the founder and chief branding officer of Brandemix, a New York-based branding and communications agency. Our clients are professionals in a variety of roles, including human resources, marketing, communications, employer branding, talent acquisition and talent management, and they work globally, across a wide range of industries, including non-profit, technology, retail, financial services and healthcare.

They come to us seeking to create awareness, consideration and preference of their products, services or career opportunities and capture market share through branding. And despite this range of activities, we are able to deliver on these objectives because we employ the same best-practice branding principles and methodologies across all of the work that we do.

This book will guide you through our carefully constructed process, and provide you with complete access to the branding tools, templates and resources we use. It is my hope that it becomes a timeless and important resource for you and I look forward to beginning a meaningful dialogue and hearing more about your successes.

So, if you're ready, let's get started.



PART 1

BRANDING



WHAT IS BRANDING?

WHAT IS BRANDING?

Before we start with the specifics of talent branding, let's back up a bit and learn more about branding itself. Brands and branding can take many forms.

Different types of brands

Consumer brands – Whether you're marketing direct to the consumer or reaching out to other businesses, chances are you fall into one of these categories:

- Product brand: think Apple, Nike or Dyson.
- Service brand: think AT&T, Visa or Bank of China.

There are subcategories too, such as luxury brands and NPOs (non-profit and not-for-profit organizations) looking to differentiate their cause and increase their share of donations, grants and volunteers.

Personal brands – Whether you're a speaker, a jobseeker or an entrepreneur, your personal brand will shine a spotlight on the qualities that make you the best choice for anything you'd like to do.

Celebrity brands – Celebrities shape what you think about products and/or services when you hear the name of the endorser. Athletes, actors and artists, and many other buzzworthy people, with or without talent, have elevated their personal brands and reaped huge rewards. In 2003, the soccer star David Beckham signed a lifetime endorsement deal with Adidas worth \$160 million. In 2014, he made heads turn with his life-size figure that was placed on display for H&M. Which celebrities would you buy products from and why?

Different types of branding

Just as there are different types of brands, there are different types of branding as well.

B2C (business-to-consumer) branding – Probably the branding that is most evident in our lives, this is the methodology that companies employ when trying to increase their client and customer base.

B2B (business-to-business) branding – This represents the efforts put forth by businesses to attract other businesses to their products and/or services.

Corporate branding – You don't have to be a Microsoft, FedEx or Google to implement a strong corporate brand identity. Along with marketing to consumers and/or other businesses, corporate branding includes the efforts of organizations looking to promote themselves to investors.

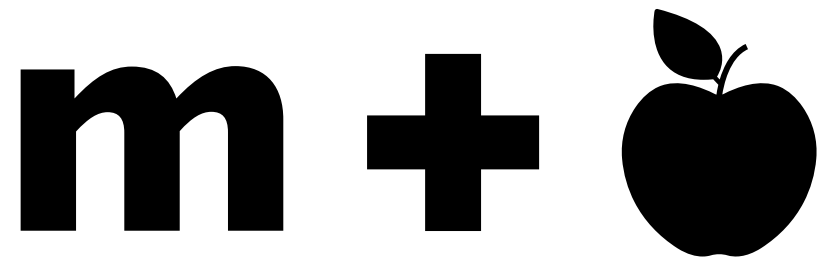
Talent branding and employer branding – At the intersection of marketing, recruitment and internal communications, your talent brand is a socialized iteration of your employer brand. It reflects your culture, reminds employees about what they love about working for your organization, and reveals to potential candidates what it is really like working for your organization.

But what is branding?

The following is a good, general-purpose definition of branding: “The process involved in creating a unique name and image for a product in the consumer’s mind, mainly through advertising campaigns with a consistent theme. Branding aims to establish a significant and differentiated presence in the market that attracts and retains loyal customers.”¹

In simpler terms, branding describes the method we use to decipher the millions of messages we receive each day, and how we categorize them in a hierarchy of importance. And we start this process at a very early age. A 2010 study found that while children ages 3-5 were not yet able to read, they often knew exactly which logo corresponded with which brand.²

Dubious? Then let's play a game. Look at the three symbols below and you tell me what organizations come to mind.



1 “Definition, branding,” Accessed December 03 2017, <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/branding.html>

2 Anna R. McAlister, and T. Battina Cornwell, “Children's brand symbolism understanding: Links to theory of mind and executive functioning,” *Psychology & Marketing* (2010): 203-228.

Did you say McDonald's, The Red Cross and/or Apple? If so, you've been brandwashed.

Here's what I mean. You saw a the letter 'M', a plus sign and a piece of fruit. Although none of these symbols are actual company logos, global brands invest billions of dollars in marketing to make sure they are the first thing you think of when you see familiar symbols. That's the power of branding.

And branding is big business.

Consider this: according to the 2016 Interbrand rankings,³ setting aside the value of the actual company (assets, sales, etc.), the Coca-Cola™ brand name was worth more than \$73 billion. That's the advantage they gain from their ability to create consumer preference and loyalty through their name and recognizable identity, and they also held the #3 position on Interbrand's 2016 Best Global Brands list.

On the other hand, Pepsi came in at #23 on the same list with a brand valuation of just over \$20 billion. What's the \$50 billion difference?

3 "Anatomy of Growth," Accessed June, 2017, <http://interbrand.com/best-brands/best-global-brands/2016/>



Source: Interbrand Best Global Brands 2016

Perhaps it's what we think of when we think Coca-Cola: Santa Claus, polar bears, Norman Rockwell. From early on, Coke has tied its brand to the imagery of America itself. On the other hand, Pepsi has been "the choice of a new generation", with previous campaigns featuring Brittany Spears, Ray Charles and Michael Jackson, to name a few. Are you old enough to remember Michael Jackson's hair catching fire while filming a Pepsi commercial?

THE TALENT BRAND

It's also of note that from 1975 through 2010 Pepsi hosted 'The Pepsi Challenge', a blind taste test of the two sodas set up at shopping malls and other public venues. Pepsi emerged as the clear winner. So, all things considered, is branding the \$50 billion difference?

Branded products sell at a premium thanks to consumer demand and loyalty. For further proof, look to the pharmaceutical industry, where on average the cost of a generic drug is 80-85% lower than the brand-name product.⁴

To summarize, the brands we wear, drive and even eat make a statement about who we are, and how we want to appear to the world. And as the competition for our time increases along with our choices of products, brands help to shorten the purchase decision-making process and leave us feeling smart, satisfied and secure.

And, of equal importance, brands deliver a promise to us. We form an emotional connection with the companies behind them, we trust the products and we come to expect the same experience from each of our interactions.

⁴ "Generic Drug Facts," Accessed June, 2017, <http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/UnderstandingGenericDrugs/ucm167991.htm/>



ONE BRAND - BRANDING vs TALENT BRANDING

Although this book is devoted to talent branding, in reality there is really no such thing. Your company only gets to have one brand. It's not as if you can have a consumer brand that targets consumers, a talent brand that targets employees and an investor brand that targets investors or donors.

The reason for this is that you only get one reputation.

We don't isolate our opinion of a company when considering it as an employer, a product maker or service provider. We distill, weigh and assess everything we know about a company and formulate one attitude toward it.

Walmart's dubious reputation as an employer doesn't just hurt its talent acquisition efforts; it deters some people from shopping there. Similarly, the Samsung Galaxy Note recall didn't just hurt the South Korean conglomerate's sales figures; it made attracting top software engineering talent very difficult.

There is a high correlation between consumers' admiration for a company's products and services, and their desire to work for that company. In fact, according to LinkedIn, North America's 2015 Top 100 InDemand Employers are Google, Apple and Facebook.⁵

It's no surprise, then, that these companies are among the top 25 brands in the world.

5 "Announcing North America's Top 100 Most InDemand Employers," Accessed June, 2017, <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/indemand-north-america-2015/>

There is tremendous mutuality between a consumer (or product) brand, and the talent brand. In 1994, the *Harvard Business Review* wrote about the **service-profit chain**.⁶ The underlying premise was that employee job satisfaction drives employee retention, customer satisfaction, loyalty and revenue growth. This relationship still holds true today.

Think about your own recent service experiences. Do you have a favourite store that you visit frequently, where the employees know your name and your buying preferences? What about the barista at Starbucks who knows just how you like your coffee? Doesn't this keep you coming back?

That's why the benchmark of a truly successful talent brand is how well it's aligned with the consumer/product brand.

⁶ James L. Heskett, Early W. Sasser, and Joe Wheeler, "The Ownership Quotient: Putting the Service Profit Chain to Work for Unbeatable Competitive Advantage," *Harvard Business Review* (2008): 413-417.

How important is talent branding to an effective corporate marketing strategy?

It's critically important. Here's why. Every company has a brand. Every brand has value. Millions of marketing dollars are spent each year on establishing brand awareness in the minds of consumers. But it is the employees who have the greatest power to make or break a brand. Employees shift the message from a concept to a positive or negative customer experience. Employees generate the energy and ideas that produce business outcomes.

Savvy Chief Marketing Officers (CMOs) are starting to pay attention to this. They're dedicating campaign budgets to setting up the Brand Promise – the consumer's expectation of the type of experience they will have. This is called the customer experience. Think American Express; think Emirates Airlines.

In some cases, it's woven into the message of their marketing campaign. "Shop here because our knowledgeable team of professionals will simplify the process of buying a car." Or vitamins. Or appliances for your new home. Some companies (like the online shoe retailer Zappos) may have a harder task of trying to create an exceptional virtual customer experience. But in each of these examples, success or failure lies in how well employees perform. And it begins with hiring the right people.

What role can the head of HR play in furthering marketing goals?

If you are recruiting new employees, or even if you're not, talent branding plays an important part in the organization's broader branding efforts, and within high-performing companies there is a strong partnership between HR and marketing.

CMOs of large retail organizations often conduct employee research that reflects their desire to understand the customer through the lens of the employees.

They also understand that, thanks to employee discounts and their affinity for their company's products, it is the employees who might make up the largest customer segment within multi-store retail chains. As the face of the brand to customers, these employees are also key to bringing the brand to life. In these instances, HR truly comprehends how marketing efforts are furthering the business goals of the company.

But in other companies, HR may view the CMO or marketing team as a group that's typically too busy to assist with their talent acquisition or employee communications needs, and is only called upon to approve logos, colours and fonts.

To foster more collaboration between these two groups, start with knowing your organization's brand drivers and consider how they intersect with employee actions – either customer-facing employees or internal teams that support the business. (Think customer service, billing, etc.) Then make sure that employees know the customer promise, understand what is expected of them in delivering it and feel that they can personally make a difference. Remember that how we shape our internal communications can keep employees inspired to buy more or sell more.

Where talent branding fits

As noted, talent branding makes a strong emotional connection between an organization and its culture, and the talent it needs to drive business forward. A powerful talent brand will help you reach the right audience with the right messages, to hire and keep the right talent to help your business achieve its goals.

And today, that's more important than ever. Unemployment has fallen to low levels. It's a seller's market if you're a nurse, an industrial engineer or a software developer looking for a job virtually anywhere in the world. And once great people have been hired, the work does not end there. It's just as important to retain them and to keep them motivated. According to the Conference Board, just over half of US workers said they felt dissatisfied with their jobs in 2014.⁷ It's no wonder that when CEOs were asked about the biggest challenges facing their organization, they answered, "talent management".⁸

Hiring and retention have become increasingly difficult as we are bombarded with more competition for our time, and countless overlapping outlets and options for message delivery. Added to the challenge, we are marketing to a new generation in the workplace, and as we know, millennials consume, process and spread these messages in a completely different way.

That's why, as business leaders, we need to learn how to build a talent brand. This will be a critical driver in attracting top resources and fostering employee engagement.

7 Ben Cheng, Michelle Kan, Gad Levanon, and Rebecca L. Ray, *Job Satisfaction: 2014 Edition* (The Conference Board, 2014).

8 "The 3 Things CEOs Worry About the Most," Accessed June, 2017, <https://hbr.org/2015/03/the-3-things-ceos-worry-about-the-most/>