

From Brand Vision to Brand Evaluation. The Strategic Process of Growing and Strengthening Brands

Leslie de Chernatony, Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 3rd Edition, 2010; 376 pp.; £ 29.99; paperback; ISBN 978-1-85617-773-3

When Professor Leslie de Chernatony published his first edition of "From Brand Vision to Brand Evaluation" in 2001, he was one of the first scholars who addressed the importance of the internal perspective of brand management. Instead of looking at brand management solely from the external perspective of the market based view, he accented the importance of integrating all stakeholders into the branding process. Thus, he added the internal perspective, focussing on the most crucial and most neglected part of brand management: the successful implementation of brand strategies in the company. His theoretical foundation is therefore based on the market as well as on the resource- and competence-based view. In the following years, the topic of internal brand management became of major importance in the academic world.

The third edition still follows this approach, putting the employees at the centre of the brand management process. Based on actual research and numerous international consultancy projects, Professor de Chernatony has completely revised his book with fresh materials and new findings. The result is a brilliant textbook for both practitioners and students. While illustrating his framework, he does not remain superficial, but brings the content to life by adding lots of examples, advertisements, applicable instructions ("Brand Marketing Action Checklist") and exercises. Hence, the book is more than just a theoretical approach: it is a guideline for brand managers. Furthermore, the book is backed up by over two and a half hours of on-line video from Oxford Learning (<http://www.oxlearn.com>).

The book is divided into three parts. Part one is entitled "The Changed Notion of Brand Management". At the beginning of the first part, the author introduces the reader to the concept of brands from both external and internal perspectives. He points out the necessity to broaden the too narrow external focus on customer needs of traditional branding approaches. Using the metaphor of a "branding iceberg", the author describes the multifaceted concepts of a brand. While most managers consider brands as the visible 15% above the water (e.g. logo, name, marketing communications), they ignore the 85% below the water level (e.g. core competencies, positioning strategy, culture, personality strategy). This hinders the growth of brands! To ensure that all employees pull in the same direction, it is therefore necessary to have a common understanding of brands as holistic entities. In practice, this common understanding is not well established. On the contrary, a jumble of different definitions of brands exists amongst the managers and employees of a company. Addressing this issue, the author describes in detail the diverse interpretations of "Brand" and develops a process to enable managers to reach consensus in their company about a unified approach.

The second part describes "A Strategic Process for Building Integrated Brands". The focus of this part is the integrated process of building and sustaining brands. This is of major importance due to the many departments that are involved in branding decisions. At the beginning, the author presents several models (e.g., the corporate branding tool kit by Hatch & Schultz 2001) to enhance integrated branding. Afterwards, he develops a process of seven stages from brand vision to brand evaluation. This is both the structure and name of the book. His model starts with a brand vision formulated by staff from all parts of the firm and ends with assessing the impact from motivated employees committed to delivering the desired brand promise. This approach characterises the author's humanistic approach to brand management. Professor de Chernatony frequently uses the term "orchestrated" to demonstrate that his book is not just about mechanistic branding and controlling

employees. By contrast, he describes the CEO as a “metaphorical conductor”, who integrates and empowers employees to deliver the brand promise. He breaks away from traditional ideas of how companies may work. His approach is therefore also helpful for integrating external target groups of the brand, for example brand fans in the Web 2.0.

Part three is the heart of the book. Professor de Chernatony investigates the seven stages of brand building in detail. He calls this part “Employing the Brand-building Process”. At the beginning of part three, the author describes the importance and three components of a powerful brand vision (envisioned future, brand purpose and brand values). He points out the relevance of aligning brand and staff values and gives practical advice. Stage two deals with the topic of corporate culture, which can help or hinder the brand’s development. Given the daunting size of the corporate culture literature, the author presents a precise overview and introduces tools to audit organisational culture. For instance, he presents the Competing Values Framework by Cameron & Quinn (2006). After discussing the topics of sub- and merged cultures, the writer illustrates the impact corporate culture has on brand performance and highlights significant pitfalls. Setting brand objectives is the third stage. The author elaborates how to break down long-term objectives into shorter-term goals and shows several ways to reach the objective of growing brand value. Analysing the external environment is the content of stage 4. Here Professor de Chernatony introduces the “five forces of the brandsphere”, namely the corporation, distributors, customers, competitors, and the macro-environment. A lot of fruitful and up-to-date insights into the decision-making process of B2C and B2B customers is presented. Stage five is called “Brand Essence”. Due to the multiple facets of a brand, the key task of this step is to define the core nature of a brand. The author discusses the concepts of brand identity, brand personality and brand positioning while always stressing the importance of integrating the employees in this important decision. Afterwards, managers have to implement and to resource a brand (stages 6 and 7). The author distinguishes between mechanistic and humanistic implementation. On the one hand, mechanistic implementation is underpinned by value chain analysis, strategic outsourcing, core competencies and service blueprints. This drives the functional value of a brand. On the other hand, the emotional value is influenced by the humanistic implementation, for example shared values and empowerment of employees. Finally, the author develops a holistic approach to evaluate brands based on his multifaceted understanding of “brand”. Brand evaluation is necessary for continuous improvements; therefore, it is rather the starting point than the end of the process.

“From Brand Vision to Brand Evaluation” is an easily digestible textbook that describes all the important stages of the brand management process. It is full of visual demonstrations, exercises, and applicable advice. The additional videos are both helpful and motivating. Students get a perfect introduction into the thrilling topic and multiple facets of brand management. Practitioners receive a step-by-step checklist to increase their brand’s value. In contrast to many other books, the author does not just explain brand strategies; he is teaching the reader how to implement them successfully. Professor de Chernatony underlines his position as one of the world’s leading academics in brand management. There is no question about it: this book is a must for every student, practitioner, and researcher.

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