

Personal branding in leadership and its impact on business



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Leadership is central to the success of every organisation. It is a vital part of the organization that helps provide clarity of purpose, and then guide and motivate the organization to achieve its goals.

To a large extent, the skills and decisions of leaders influence a number of positive outcomes for the business; from increased sales, to customer satisfaction, employee commitment/loyalty, as well as the growth, survival and further expansion of the business.

Around the world, great business leaders are notable for the impact they create. They initiate significant positive influence on their business, employees, customers, investors and the external audience through the personal brand they have built over the years.

In our world today, the reputation and status of a leader say a lot about the organization he is leading. People often attribute certain level of prestige to a brand based on the profile of the leaders. This is true because, people don't only buy the products, they buy the people. They are influenced by the faces behind the brand in addition to the products; they want to be a part of your personal story.

In Nigeria for example, when companies like Konga, Globacom, Dangote groups, Tony Elumelu's foundation and Forte Oil are mentioned, people visualize the founders' profile and attribute the brand to them. They are also eager to know the personal story of the founders. How did they make it to success? What are the stories behind their start-up and their choice of products?

Similarly, before investors make decisions to invest in a company, they make choices based on the leadership of the organisation in addition to other business characteristics. They want to find out, "who the founders of the brand are", "what people say about them" and even "their level of influence".

All of this speaks to personal branding. Although branding as a word is usually associated with an organisation or firm, it's far-reaching. Personal branding has become a self-marketing strategy. It is an intentional act of influencing the perception of others about an individual. Personal branding convey the distinct identities, values and goals of a leader which translates to impact and generates maximum value for both the business and the leaders.

It is the best strategy for leaders to create a global presence, reach more audience and create a unique connection with stakeholders. Global and African/Nigerian personalities like Elon Musk, Mitchell Obama, Mark Zuckerberg, Wole Soyinka, Nnamdi Ezeigbo and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie have become household names and have attracted awards and partnership over time due to the quality of brand they have created for themselves.

One profound reality about these brands is their ability to influence and raise individuals who are also willing to follow the same pathway and build a good personal brand. As a result, their footprints are abiding in the society.

However, it is important to note that, when a leader decides to build and promote a good personal brand, it has a number of implications. It implies that first, the individual is known for a specific service or activity. It also means that the

individual has been consistent with what they do.

For example, Tony Elumelu's foundation is popularly known for developing young entrepreneurs across Africa and has been consistently devoted to that course from inception. In personal branding, consistency is key. People lose faith in leaders/entrepreneurs that are inconsistent. It speaks a lot about the level of commitment of the leader and the extent to which they can be trusted.

Although, an entrepreneur can be diversified and could create inter-related products and services just like the Dangote groups. What counts, is the level of mastery and consistency. It is also an important criterion for gaining customer's trust and potential investors. Meanwhile, the significance of building a personal leadership brand cannot be over-emphasized.

Clearly put together, below are some of the ways personal leadership branding impacts the business:

- It makes the business stand out and sets it apart from other competitors
- It helps to build trust and credibility for the business
- Personal branding bolsters the perceived value of the company, its status, recognition as well as reputation
- It also creates a unique way to attract and interact with customers, thereby building good customer relationship.

Further, organisational leaders are encouraged to create a good personal brand for themselves. A company leader who has successfully achieved this could use his personal brand statement to communicate what drives the business to external audience and even tell a story about the purpose of the business and the impact they intend to create through their products and services.

These usually hold great benefits like building successful teams at work, and improving company relevance and competitive advantage above other related businesses in the sector. In the long run, a leader who has a good personal brand has created an easy pathway for the business to thrive. What brand are you building? Do you have a consistent track record?

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