

Marketing leadership in the new world

By  Danette Breitenbach

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A brand is a symbol of the organisation, but reputation is the overall trust and appreciation that observers feel for the organisation. Marketers focus on the identity and brand of an organisation, but externally the image of the organisation is the perception of observers.



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“It is these expectations that marketers have to concern and align themselves with,” says Dr Andrew Brough, chartered marketer CM(SA) and international leadership and organisational development expert.

He argues that there is a direct correlation between marketing leadership and corporate reputation. “If we understand that, then the ultimate results are possible,” he told delegates at a recent Marketing Association of South Africa (MS(SA)) masterclass on marketing leadership in today’s world, held at Monash South Africa.

To achieve this, first the context in which marketing is taking place, and how its process and influence work, must be understood. “Marketing leadership is about understanding what is happening around you. If you do not understand the context you are working in, you will fail. This is not a new concept.”

To understand the context of marketing leadership the concepts of volatility, uncertain, complexity and ambiguity (Vuca) must be understood. “Marketing in the new world will require a clear vision as well as much more understanding, working with other departments that might not have been necessary before, and communicating through channels and mediums that are engaging, which will require us to be more agile in how we work. Agility is about execution.”

A key challenge for marketing leaders is calling on departments over which they have no authority to achieve their objectives. “Marketing leadership is on the basis of authority and influence, and while both are sources of power, how do you lead when you do not have authority?”

To have influence, you must be authentic. Assigned leadership is based on occupying a position within an organisation, while emergent leadership is when an individual is perceived by others as influential within an organisation regardless of their title. “There are numerous influencing currencies – technical expertise, shared knowledge, sharing resources, external relationships – and we have to choose the most appropriate one given the situation.”

There are four styles of influence:

- *Push directing* which is typical of those in authority. While there is a place for this, it is less so in the world we are living in.
- *Push reasoning*: being an expert, sharing information, knowledge and technical expertise. “This is moving into the new world of work.”
- *Pull collaboration* is about alliances, coalitions, relationships and networking.
- *Pull visioning* is about having clarity and the ability to see possibility in the environment we are working in (which is preferred), while not being blind to the present but probable future (which is most likely).

As we move from brand to reputation leadership, how we use these are really important, he emphasises. “They must stem from ethical leadership or influence, and not manipulation. Influencing is informal power, authority is formal power and manipulation is trying to influence by deceptive means hiding your true interests.”

Ultimately, for stakeholders to trust you, you must deliver. There are seven key deliverables: products, services, innovation, workplace, governance, citizenship, leadership and performance. “These seven will move you from brand to reputation leadership, but only if you understand the emotions these evoke in stakeholders,” he says.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

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