



A Conceptual Framework for the Management of a Personal Leadership Brand within the Tourism and Hospitality Industry

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to establish a conceptual framework for the management of a personal leadership brand within the tourism and hospitality industry within the context of literature reviewed, as well as from the perspective of key business decision-makers and market research analysts. To achieve this objective a comprehensive literature study was performed to determine the extent of existing knowledge on personal branding. In reviewing the problem in context, the following emerging components were uncovered and were considered in designing the conceptual framework for a positive leadership brand i.e.: how is your brand recognized; how is your brand observed; how is your brand established; how will you endorse your brand and how will you foster your brand to derive benefits. An exploratory qualitative design was adopted for this study. The information obtained from the literature review and from the participants resulted in a few useful recommendations and conclusions. In general, the business landscape is shifting and in order to remain relevant the process of developing your personal brand cannot remain static. In order to achieve insurmountable benefit from your personal brand there must be a deliberate effort from leadership to augment their personal brands and through a robust brand positively influence perceptions of leadership outwardly thereby establishing your business as the preferential choice.

Keywords: brand identity; brand appraisal; brand methodology; brand advancement, brand benefit

Introduction

The South African hotel market faces a number of challenges, but arguably has the potential to compete, adapt and succeed, especially as the global economy continues to improve following the recent economic uncertainty. Temkin (2016) reported that there is an expectation that growth in travel and tourism is also estimated to boost growth in the accommodation industry across the African continent during the next five years. In the Tourism and Hospitality Industry places often compete in attracting visitors, residents, and businesses. A place that holds a positive reputation does not have to compete for attention, resources, people, jobs, and money. Usually such a place builds competitiveness and reinforces a place as somewhere worth visiting (Morgan, Pritchard &



Pride, 2011). According to Florida (2002) and Jansson and Power (2006), places which have a robust and vibrant brand has an easier time appealing to customers.

Attaining new customers is costly because of advertising, promotion, and start-up operating costs. Therefore, it is arguably imperative to be perceived as an eligible leader, leading with a good brand to naturally attract loyal customers. A good example of this is reported by Van Niekerk (2017), Nomalungelo Sotyingwe from Lungi's BnB in Khayelitsha, lost her job as a domestic worker in 2008. Mrs Sotyingwe actively pursued a business opportunity and began to inaugurate a brand for herself. Mrs Sotyingwe has since become a successful business woman who runs one of the most visited BnB's in Khayelitsha. She has done well to make a deliberate effort to establish her brand and further communicate her brand. This has resulted in her BnB becoming one of the famous township guesthouses in Cape Town (Van Niekerk, 2017).

A leadership brand augments the value you offer as an individual and expresses your uniqueness as a leader (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2007). The authors further stated that it is essential to have an appropriate leadership brand for the role you currently in or desire to be in, only then will your work have the desired impact it should have. A robust personal leadership brand will create visibility and enables everything that is influential and real about a person's leadership to become recognizable within his or her environment (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2007). This study will provide a deeper understanding and appreciation for the development of a personal leadership brand irrespective of which industry a leader operates in.

This article is grounded on the following key objectives: first, to explore the awareness and understanding of the concepts Personal Leadership Brand as perceived by selected Top Management / key business decision makers. Second, to identify the relevant concepts that describe personal leadership branding as perceived by selected leaders of organisations and finally to construct a conceptual framework of Personal leadership branding that could be used in leadership development interventions within the tourism and hospitality industry, thus providing the organisation with a competitive edge. The purpose is to apply the results as a management tool for further establishing a leadership development program. Leadership brands generally help build confidence, attract followers and appeal to innovative prospects (Ulrich, 2013).

Literature review and conceptual framework

The phrase 'leadership brand' was devised by Ulrich and Smallwood (2007). They recognised the robust relationship between an external brand and delighting your customers which is achieved through a focused emphasis on leadership development. The same authors further pointed out that instead of creating 'good' leaders, organisations should focus on establishing leaders with unique capabilities that are specifically targeted towards meeting the expectations of investors and customers. As the need for authentic leadership continues to grow the theory of leadership brand is becoming increasingly essential. Organisations with an attractive outlook are no longer the only reason for prospective customers or employees; they now seek leaders that they would like to be associated with (Global Leadership Foundation, 2016).

In this study there will be a significant focus on brand oriented leadership which is considered to be an imperative basis of branding internally. Internal branding is influenced through leadership behaviour which consists of non-verbal communication as well as verbal communication (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006). Leadership philosophy generally points out that leaders should be able to walk the talk and this should be reinforced with the appropriate leadership conduct. Such conduct is usually recognised in leaders through the demonstration of commitment;



signifying trust and embodying brand ideals (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006). Furthermore, effective leaders are committed to living the brand promise and consistently communicate messages to personnel and customers about their uniqueness and assurance to actively personify the brand's promise (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006). It is not actual behaviour that crafts a prejudice evaluation of leaders but rather the observer's opinion (Forsyth, Heiney & Wright, 1997). Therefore, it is essential to understand what informs perceptions of leadership behaviour.

Perceptions of leadership behaviour

Organisations trust leaders to engage with employees to ensure that the organisation objectives materialize (Otara, 2011). The environment in any organization is generally shaped by the perceptions of leaders, managers and employees given that perception focuses on how individuals interpret their reality (Otara, 2011). Irrespective of the size of the organisation, a useful tool in leadership is communication. Therefore, leadership must optimize on this tool to positively influence perceptions (Otara, 2011). The ability to manage both perceptions and people issues distinguishes a leader from a manager (Otara, 2011).

Similarly, Lavelle, Brockner, Konovsky, Price, Henley, Taneja, and Vinekar (2009) argued that a leader's behaviour underpins the environment created and a positive perception of such behaviour will result in an empowering environment where employees will offer more than expected. Our interpretation of experiences underpins our perception. However difficult human behaviour might be to interpret, leaders must remain cognisant of the fact that all individuals have diverse perceptions. An accurate perception is accentuated when diversification is nurtured and competency as well as productivity is consistently intensifying (Otara, 2011). Globally leaders are confronted with unique problems and opportunities, which necessitate a reliance on employees and customers having a positive impression of leadership behavior (Lavelle, *et al.*, 2009).

The development of a leadership brand

Leaders must be able to establish credibility in demonstrating their qualities through certain critical components of leadership which are not uncommon to effective leaders i.e. be thought leaders that look futuristically, stay engaged and regulate the organisation (Ulrich, 2013). Branded leadership is more effective when reinforced with clarity on what a leader has to identify, action, and provide juxtaposed to leader's qualities and proficiencies (Ulrich, 2013). Leaders are generally highly skilled, highly competent and exhibit success both in their personal lives and in the organization. Arguably however, leaders are not perceived by the broader community as having strong personal brands.

McKenna (2015) argues that a leadership brand at the core relates to your reputation. McKenna defines reputation as the perception of you as a leader and a profession which is deemed to be the most significant asset in your possession. Your reputation is interpreted by what others see and believe about you as opposed to who you are. The task of establishing and managing a profitable leadership brand remains the responsibility of every leader. A brand of such calibre can drastically increase the scope of your influence and undoubtedly augment your organisations reputation (McKenna, 2015). It is important for a leader to identify the kind of leader they are becoming. A business can enhance the levels of trust through a concentrated effort on personal branding. The higher the levels of trusted personal reputations the more willing people are to do business with you or trust the products and service you offer. Trust is a critical component in that it builds credibility and increases customer portfolio (Scrimgeour, 2015). The author went on to say that your reputation is your brand- it is depicted by what is said about you in your absence.



Employees and customers are generally attracted to organisations that are resourced with successful leaders that brand themselves to a cause (Meyer & Boninelli, 2004). In attracting the right calibre of people, this could arguably increase job retention and result in employee job satisfaction. Organisations leverage “branded leaders” to enhance investor and customer confidence such as Microsoft and Apple. Leadership carries a dynamic role and therefore it is essential to develop leadership brands that align to the company’s values, develop leaders that are empowered and equipped with the right skills and to ensure that through the process of development and up skilling the ultimate results yield employee job satisfaction which has a direct impact on job retention (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2007).

Phenomenal examples of famous leadership brands are that of Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi. As a leader, Nelson Mandela’s name was associated with a set of values i.e. integrity, persistence, collaborative, kind, flexible, dedicated, humble, patient, and forgiving. This is what represents his reputation as an effective leader. Nelson Mandela believed deeply in the goodness of all human beings. There was a strong correlation between how his values were aligned to his words and actions. If there is anything that distinguished Mandela from other leaders, it is the fact that he was passionate about living by what he believed in (Kalungu-Banda, 2011). Nelson Mandela developed a strong brand by living out his values by caring, being kind and demonstrating humility, e.g. The Nelson Mandela Children’s Fund was a charitable organisation founded by Nelson Mandela (amongst many other things) to help children particularly orphans of the AIDS crisis.

Likewise, Gandhi’s uniqueness was established through his unique visual identity and his ways of operation (fasts, silent days) (Drypen, 2009). Gandhi validated the importance of brand consistency very simply through his visual identity i.e. wearing his dhoti and shawls in the cold of England, even at the risk of his own inconvenience (Drypen, 2009). Gandhi demonstrated his personal attributes in his brand and emphatically lived out his values i.e., tolerance, trustworthiness, resolute and focused. Arguably it can be established, that consistently doing the same thing, portraying the same behaviour based on a value or personal attribute, one may build a personal brand.

In other words, in the same way that a company brand is built, personal leadership brand is built through a value system. The brand Volvo for example stands for values such as trustworthiness, safety, performance and luxury etc. In order to keep the brand real and meaningful, Volvo had to continuously demonstrate their signature talents and emphasise their values such as safety, quality and care for the environment.

Perceptions of leadership

Africa is predominantly a progressive continent and is confronted with risk in respect of “judgement” on leadership, which could aversely be contaminated by observations from war-disrupted dictatorships (Smit, 2010). The author further reported that whilst transparency and accountability remain key pillars for development, African leaders are rigorously challenging corruption with the understanding that this is a prerequisite for progression. In Africa there is a perception that there is a great demand for leadership and that leadership education needs exceeds the resources available (Smit, 2010). Relative to India and China, the African market represents the last untapped Western frontier for the world’s business schools whereas in India and China the economic development is strongly underpinned by leadership and management development (Smit, 2010).

Research on South African leaders has shown that employees’ perception of top leadership in their organisations has an impact on their general attitudes towards the organisation (Bell & Steyn,



2016). Negative employee perceptions of an organisation's leadership can consequently diminish employee optimism, job contentment and productivity (Bell & Steyn, 2016). Research also revealed that top leadership in South African organisations are not spending sufficient time communicating with staff and are not communicating clearly. Public sector is, however, significantly less likely to perceive top leadership in their organisations as trustworthy when compared with private sector leaders (Bell & Steyn, 2016). South African leaders are arguably not placing significant emphasis on defining their brands.

Knowing who you are and secondly knowing what message you are communicating to others through verbal and non-verbal communication is essential in crafting and managing the perceptions of others. Those perceptions are usually fashioned through your relations with others, how you present yourself, and the value you provide to your colleagues or employer (Thomas, 2007). Thomas further pointed out that the way you present yourself or the way you communicate i.e. your dialect or the way you dress is all encompassed in your brand. The author continued to point out that these perceptions fuel the strength of your personal brand. A leader's presence in terms of how they show up can promote their brand either negatively or positively.

Participants in this study revealed that executives within the Tourism and Hospitality industry are generally perceived as "*...being untouchable, high end employees, having certain privileges that other normal mortals do not have, or that there is no one better than them...*". Arguably development of a personal brand could positively change such perceptions.

Defining a personal brand

According to Lair, Sullivan and Cheney (cited in Khedher, 2014) in the late 1990s the concept "personal branding" emerged and this was as a result of economic forces that impacted on product branding. The very same way marketers presented their products, job seekers mirrored this process by means of branding as a technique to position themselves as credible candidates for employment (Khedher, 2014). The individual sees himself as his own manager or enterpriser, responsible for study -based identicalness believing that if he invests in establishing a personal brand, he will have a riposte in human capital, social capital and economic capital, just like any other investor Du Gay and Rose (cited in Khedher, 2014).

Peters (cited in Khedher, 2014) pointed out that the original idea of personal branding coined by Peters did not focus specifically on the exhibition of an online identity, but concentrated more on individuals and their demeanor in business. The premise that underpins personal branding is that each person has a personal brand however not everyone is mindful of their brand and therefore it is not managed purposefully, constantly, and efficiently (Ramparsad, 2008). A key marketing proposition is the fear that if individuals do not focus on managing their own brand, then someone else will manage it for them: "If you don't brand yourself, someone else will", writes Kaputa (cited in Khedher, 2014), who continues to state that you will be giving the power to other people to brand you if you don't do it yourself (Khedher, 2014). Ulrich and Smallwood (2012) propose that organisations focused on sustaining a competitive advantage could enhance their position through their unique and distinctive organisation leadership simultaneously augmenting business value. The organisation leadership is impacted by the collective influence of staff personal brands specifically personnel in leadership roles (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2012). Leaders should remain cognisant of their brands and focus on their unique and distinctive disposition.



Aruda (2009) defined personal branding as the ability to identify what is unique about yourself and be able to distinguish yourself and to allow this understanding to guide your progression plans. To achieve your goals becomes seamless in that you will naturally attract what is required for you to achieve your goals as you continue to unearth the true you and regularly live your personal brand (Zarkada, 2012). Flemings (2007) related personal branding to unraveling your innermost prodigy and linking it to what you are passionate about which will yield positive results i.e. psychologically, spiritually, or economically. The amalgamation of the personality or personal brand of the leader to that of the brand or branding of the business underpins leadership branding. By leveraging on the leadership quality of the business owners, the organisation can be rewarded considerably for their branding and stakeholder activities (Ahmad, Omar, Rasid & Amin, 2012). When a leader's attributes are viewed positively this then augments a leader's brand.

There is more to a brand than simply a unique name, logo or symbol which is meant to identify goods or services but rather a combination of tangible and intangible characteristics (Ahmad, et al., 2012). Personal brand development is underpinned by the desire to be someone of worth and to establish an identity both personally and publically which enables you to present yourself as being unique (Bastos & Levy, 2012). The means of self-expression in branding one-self could be represented in different ways (e.g., emblem, naming conventions, and body marking) that are practical, social, and appealing in purpose (Bastos & Levy, 2012). Like any product or firm brand, it requires that the basics are done well, so that a leadership brand distinguishes itself from other brands (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2012). Ulrich and Smallwood suggests that building a leadership brand focuses on being practical, building capacity and capabilities, developing the next generation of talent and investing in yourself, in other words establishing your reputation. A leader should concentrate on building their reputations which definitively strengthens their brand.

Benefits to having a personal brand

The benefits to leadership branding seem to be many. It establishes high levels of assurance among the stakeholders, stockholders, state owned entities and other impacted associates (Rao, 2015). It also enriches a leader's dynamism, passion, and level of commitment thus increasing stakeholder satisfaction and confidence. Leadership branding assists others in remembering you effortlessly from a precise perspective as well as aiding the process of memory recall. Above all, leadership branding augments the legitimacy of the organization (Rao, 2015). As Christensen and Cheney (2000:246) observed, "The market of today seems to be demanding well-crafted identities, identities that are able to stand out and break through the clutter". Arguably those who are capable of living out their brand and managing their personal brand will earn greater levels of confidence and admiration in any situation.

Branding paves the way forward for people by creating a paradigm shift conducive to a progressive mind-set where one naturally raises their expectations. Leaders are generally not content with their existing state of affairs and by concentrating their efforts on their personal branding raises their fortitude and ideals and propels their teams forward (Saltzman, 2015). Taking ownership and developing a personal brand sets the trend of a distinctive personal and professional history that instantaneously stands out (Saltzman, 2015).

A personal brand could be regarded as an intangible asset i.e. a trademark, one that should be protected and yet constantly modelling and configuring it. Your personal brand being an asset should be developed with the intention of extracting value for yourself and benefiting others that are associated with you or serve with you (Llopis, 2013). Having a personal brand empowers you to be an effective authentic leader that can broaden their sphere of impact (Llopis, 2013). In defining your brand and living up to your brand, leaders naturally establish executive presence



and as such possibly find themselves progressing swiftly in the corporate environment (Llopis, 2013).

Identifying the fundamental constituents in your personal brand helps derive several benefits i.e.:

- Gives you visibility on the value you afford your customers or your organisation;
- Provides you with higher levels of reliability and confidence to pursue other prospects in the market that are appropriate for you and
- Affords you the groundwork for establishing an influential and sustainable personal brand (Thomas, 2007).

The Impact of personal branding on an organisation

Building one's brand involves participation in training programs in order to invest more in one's skills (Ulrich, 2013). Similarly Speak (2008) argues that training initiatives that exemplify personal development activities allow employees to develop positive feelings personally and in respect of their organization. A focused approach to up skilling the leader would arguably result in greater job satisfaction and owning a robust personal brand can enable promotions, increase sales and enhance the perception of your expertise which could result in you demanding greater compensation (Rao, 2015). This would arguably address the challenge organisations have in dealing with attraction and retention of critical skills.

Providing employees with an effective leader is one of the fastest and most dependable ways of improving employee fulfillment and commitment (Folkman, 2010). Folkman further pointed out that those employees who acquire new and innovative skills, become more productive and more promotable. However, job candidates will only be attractive to those potential employers and current employees will only obtain desired promotions if they understand their unique promise of value and how it can help them achieve their goals (Arruda, 2009). This idea is summed up nicely by Arruda (2013) who pointed out that what makes you unique, makes you successful and that knowledgeable, people-centric organizations comprehend that employees are an authentic part of the face of business and they need to obtain the best from their people, not the most.

Research design and methods

Since the aim of this study was to gain insights regarding perceptions of leadership behaviour and the understanding of the consciousness of a personal leadership brand as well as to identify the pertinent concepts that defined personal leadership branding as perceived by selected leaders of organisations, a qualitative approach was adopted. The nature of this study was exploratory to ensure the researcher met the research objectives.

This research involved the gathering, investigation and explanation of data that was qualitative in nature, that is information that cannot be deduced to numbers. Qualitative interviews are very useful given that the objective of the study was to detect the meanings participants attach to perceptions of leadership behavior (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2014). The researcher sought to obtain a solid account of what participants thought about this specific phenomenon. The researcher cross-checked the interpretations of the obtained information with the participants. As it is not known upfront what the answers will be and which interpretations will be cross checked, unstructured interviews provided the necessary insights (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

Interviews were guided with a discussion guide consisting of designed open ended questions. These questions related to relevant concepts such as the image of a leader and what is top of mind when the concept personal branding is mentioned as well as the value perceived in personal



branding and what is believed to be the building blocks for establishing a personal brand. Responses to the above mentioned were based on the participants own human behaviour and experience. Participants answering in their own words provided greater opportunity for the researcher to probe further and gained a more in depth understanding on various concepts.

Population, sample framework and sampling technique

Purposive sampling was the selected sampling method for this study. This method is known to be a common sampling strategy that involves the grouping of participants in relation to specific criteria relevant to a particular research question (Mack, 2005). The study's objectives, resources and the availability of time informs the sample sizes which were not necessarily fixed prior to data collection. Theoretical saturation formed the basis for purposive sample sizes. Data review and analysis, when done in conjunction with data collection, generally results in purposive sampling being most successful (Mack, 2005).

Purposive sampling (also known as judgment, selective or subjective sampling) is a sampling technique in which the researcher relied on her own judgment for choosing members of the population to participate in the study (Prusan, 2016). The qualitative study sought to justify the value personal leadership branding has on leadership behaviour and to explore in depth insights from leading people in the industry.

Data collection method and research instrument

The researcher conducted a total of 12 face-to-face interviews with key decision makers and leaders within the private and public sector.

All open-ended questions in the discussion guide were exploratory in nature. The researcher allowed participants to provide spontaneous and natural responses, as this gave the researcher the opportunity to gain insights regarding their perceptions of a personal leadership brand.

Face to face interviews were conducted of at least 45 minutes with the participants. A pre-tested discussion guide was constructed based on the literature review to elicit responses with open ended questions. Pilot interviews prior to the actual data collection phase is essential, as it enables the researcher to test the length, appropriateness, complexity and content of the research questions (Charlesworth, Lewis, Vivien & Taylor, 2003). Piloting the discussion guide enabled the researcher to assess whether it allows her to gather and analyse the data that is required. These pilot interviews allowed the researcher to establish the relevant concepts to be probed more in depth during the face to face interviews. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and prepared for data analysis. The researcher was able to assess body language and facial expressions more clearly and the researcher was able to probe for explanations of responses.

Data analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis often begins during, or subsequently to the first data collected, although this process is on-going and is modified throughout the study (Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008). The original analysis of the data may present opportunities to further enlighten data collected subsequently. For example, in light of emerging findings, interview schedules may be marginally adjusted as a result of supplementary explanations needed (Burnard, *et al.*, 2008).

Thematic content analysis encompasses identifying themes and categories that 'emerge from the data' regardless of whether data are analysed manually or using computer software. In this



analysis the researcher discovered themes in the interview transcripts and endeavoured to authenticate; approve and qualify them by examining the data and repeating the process to identify further themes and categories (Burnard, *et al.*, 2008).

Ethical considerations

This study was conducted after ethical consideration was obtained from participants. Research ethics must be the central concern for all social science researchers in the planning, designing, execution, and reporting of research with human participants. Participants' privacy and anonymity was maintained through the use of artificial naming conventions and coding procedures. Data obtained (e.g., interview recordings, transcripts and email communications) throughout the research process was securely stored and the researcher has sole access to such material.

Results and discussion

Theme 1: Brand Identity

Participants described a personal brand as having the ability to inspire others and that your personal brand is based on how people perceive you. Personal brands are defined by what the outside world sees and interprets. A brand is also influenced by your perception of yourself in other words what drives you.

“A leader is a person who can inspire other people to be the best they can. The brand is the way people perceive the leader, which can be created by perceptions based on reality or sometimes incorrect perceptions. It can also be created by an event that can make or break the brand (e.g. Brian Molefe and the Saxonwold shebeen – he will probably forever be associated with this and it has tainted his brand if not become his “brand”).” (Participant 9)

Participants placed a weighted emphasis on being distinctive. Leaders believed that their distinctiveness lies in their character. A leader should be able to portray themselves in a particular way. Your personal identity and your distinctiveness as a leader communicates the value you offer as a leader to the organisation. It is important to not just replicate behaviour but create your own image as a leader. There has to be those personal attributes that you depict as a leader that automatically allows people to gravitate towards you. This was coined by participant 1 as “...your personal brand is like having gravitas”.

“...how you market yourself and put yourself out as a leader, I think needs to be aligned with your corporate brand and I think it needs to be distinctive to make a difference” (Participant 4).

“...so your brand is what you bring and what makes you unique, that uniqueness is what you must understand and leverage in terms of your role as a leader...” (Participant 1).

All participants unequivocally focused on maintaining a credible value system. Leaders viewed their intrinsic core values as the foundation for their brands. Values shaped past experiences and continue to shape the present and the future. Participants were cognisant of what put them up front and centre, they were able to articulate specific values that augmented their positions. Throughout the interviews participants encapsulated the branding process to be underpinned by strong values.

“What defines your brand at the end of the day, basically, are the things that you believe in, the foundation of your beliefs ultimately shapes the kind of person that



you want people to perceive you to be...personal values as a foundation will inform what sort of leadership style..." (Participant 2).

"...strong value systems, discipline, respect for people and trust...you are passionate and stand your ground for what you believe in..." (Participant 8)

More than specialized skills, participants alluded to advanced skills that when combined with their experiences, knowledge, and talents, they were as unique and distinctive as their own signatures (Thomas, 2007). Participants focused on establishing high levels of confidence through their expertise. They pointed out that your brand is defined by your signature talents; this is what opens the door for you to be yourself. Participants argued that leaders should continue to empower themselves to remain experts in their fields and they must become the "go to" person therefore leaders must make a conscientious effort to stay ahead. Some participants revealed that they would like to be perceived as having robust conceptual ability and the ability to solve complex problems.

"...brand revolves around your work, experience, knowledge of the job and how you deal with people...it's how you carry yourself in the environment with theoretical knowledge that you gain from your educational background." (Participant 3)

"...you have to have in-depth knowledge of that particular area and that's the expertise I am talking about, you must be able to talk confidently regarding that expertise." (Participant 7)

"...often business problems are not complex business problems and not insurmountable and it is a matter of how are you diagnosing, how have you mobilised to deliver." (Participant 5)

"...being acknowledged for my conceptual ability is part of the reason for having got to the CEO's post." (Participant 7)

Participants categorically emphasised a leader's ability to be decisive. A leader must be able to make decisions quickly and effectively. How decisive you are as a leader determines the strength of your brand. A leader cannot be seen to make reckless decisions. Participants further argued that decisions should be well thought out consistently evaluating the pros and cons and that a leader should be perceived to be making calculated and well informed decisions. To a large extent participants pointed out that leaders must remain agile and adaptive as this influences the decision making process and defines your brand. Participants agreed that as leaders they would like to be perceived as being the right leader for the right time.

"Leaders need to take the time to make decisions that are important, without fail call them to make choices that impact the organisation as well as the very people that they lead." (Participant 6)

"...calculate the appropriate response and how to package it..." (Participant 2)

"A person who is strong enough who can take unpopular decisions, if necessary." (Participant 9)

"Agility, and what I mean by agility is that you understand that you have to reshape yourself many times, you work in dynamic environments, you have got to have a very high EQ." (Participant 1)

"...I can trust the person to always make decisions that is the best for the bigger good, trust in all aspects (the person will have an unwavering value system that will not be compromised)". (Participant 9)

'...if I can put it in a colloquial term, in the face of absolute adversity, go unflinching...'. (Participant 10)

The overarching principle that defines a brand was depicted as your reputation. Participants unalterably indicated that leaders should be able to lead by example given that when leaders follow through with the appropriate action it builds their reputation and that the quality of your work influences your reputation. Participants argued that your personal attributes are a major contributor to building your reputation and your credibility as a leader. All participants were of the view that leadership attributes have a significant impact on the perception of your leadership.

"Brand is your reputation which is quite important it is something that sets you apart as a leader from anybody else, or on a personal level and obviously this contributes to an institution as well..." (Participant 8)

"Leadership attributes is at the core of the brand. It creates the perception of the leader and that will become his or her brand." (Participant 9)

"It is not about advertising, it is about being able to come across in the market and with clients as someone that they want to do business with..." (Participant 4)

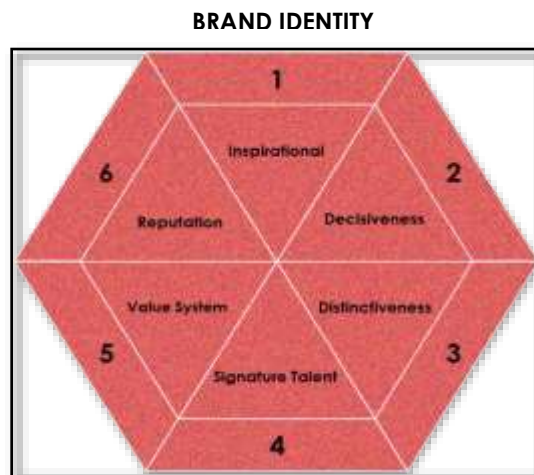


Figure 5: Summary on how a brand is acknowledged i.e. Brand Identity. Source: Researcher's own

Theme 2: Brand appraisal

Participants are very much aware of how they should evaluate a brand or how they would like for their brands to be observed. Participants were able to articulate their point of view from both a negative and positive outlook and to a large extent common views were identified in respect of how participants would like to be perceived as leaders i.e. maintaining a high value system, owning signature talents, being inspirational, a decisive leader, being innovative and having the ability to conceptualise.

Table 5 below illustrates a summary of the positive and negative outlook articulated by the participants. Participants believed this influences the perception of their brands.

Table 8: Positive and Negative Outlook. Source: Researcher's own

POSITIVE OUTLOOK	NEGATIVE OUTLOOK
Hardworking	Autocratic Leadership
Action Orientated	Overly defensive
Moral Compass in check	Lack of Awareness
Enabler	Indecisive
Service Driven	Completely oblivious
Empathetic	Not goal orientated
Focused on Continuous Learning	Fails to monitor performance
Systematic	Fails to meet objectives
Passionate	Lack of empathy
Progressive Leader	Unprofessional behaviour
Approachable	Dishonesty
Accountable	Lack of vision
High Emotional Intelligence	Inability to listen
Delivering on Promises	Very aggressive
Intelligent	Self-cantered
Very engaging	Very oppressive
Have a rapport	Misleading people
Encourage diversification	Narcissistic
Have a broader perspective	Settles for Mediocre
Manage constructive criticism positively	Selfish
Trustworthiness	Disconnected from the group they lead
Leading for the good of other people	Poor communication
Giving back to others (mentoring etc.)	Conniving
Leader sacrifices	Know it all
Self-Awareness	Stay in Power no matter the cost
Flexible	All about me attitude
Innovative	Ruthless
Collaborative	
Loyalty	
Dynamic	

As perceived by top management / key business decision makers, there is a positive understanding of the concepts of personal leadership branding. A good proportion of leaders are aware of their brand identity as well as how they would prefer for their brands to be assessed. Most leaders are aware of how their behaviour defines their brand and how such behaviour underpins the perception of their brand.

Theme 3: Brand methodology

Being deliberate and conscious of how you establish your brand, i.e. your brand methodology, was apparent amongst all participants. Each participant had a specific area of interest. Participants focused on how they could be practical in building capacity and capabilities by investing in themselves and ultimately augmenting their reputations.

There appeared to be cohesion amongst leaders i.e. being ambitious, equipping themselves, being able to link your brand to that of the firm, being innovative, remaining top of mind, focusing on the quality of work and being influential. Most participants were of the view that leaders need to make a concerted effort in building their brands. Participants believed that there should be deliberate efforts fixated on creating a positive and exciting environment, building technical ability, developing competencies and very importantly, learn from others to refine their own styles.



“...you have got to go out of your way to build that is not something that just happens on its own, you got to work at it.” (Participant 4)

“Keep yourself aware of all the changes that are happening...keeping an open mind, equipping yourself through studying, research...sacrifice time to research and to read.” (Participant 7)

“...learning that can be done from other people, from people who have done things like this before, from our global networks so through that process you know you build your brand...some of their behaviours I like and try to emulate that...” (Participant 4)

“...a leader makes people excited about life and about their jobs...” (Participant 8)

“...you need to be an ambassador for that brand.” (Participant 11)

Common to all participants was the need to reinforce communication. The emphasis was not only placed on the ease with which you communicate but also the ability to be understood. Participants believed that they should speak with confidence and with authority. The majority of the participants paid attention to how they are communicating, timing of communication and the manner in which their communication is being received. Feedback was an essential component in their building process as leaders sought to use feedback from others positively. Communication was clarified as being a significant constituent in building their brands. Some participants detailed the various tools enabling the communication process.

“How is this person communicating and did he communicate on time and do they communicate with respect...with people, do they understand what you are trying to do...” (Participant 5)

“Communication- the way you interacting with other people, there is a very short time they have to get a snapshot of you...” (Participant 2)

“...speak confidently and with authority if you are an expert in that field...” (Participant 7)

“...articles to the staff, in services training, joined rudiment groups in terms of professional bodies; presentations to boards...the actual brand that we are trying to sell out there is consistent all the time.” (Participant 6)

Participants argued that the way in which you present yourself and create a presence is a critical component in building your brand. Participants were adamant that leaders are continuously networking and should always remain cognisant of the fact that you only have a limited time to market yourself to remain top of mind.

“A leader has to have a presence, you have to look the part and if you look the part then you command respect and people will follow you.” (Participant 8)

“...how you sell yourself the five minutes or two minutes you’ve got to present this brand...” (Participant 2)

“...overall presence including, like your dress, your presence, your posture, your voice and articulation of thoughts...actively keep ourselves top of mind in the organisation.” (Participant 6)

Relationship building was acknowledged as fundamental in building your brand. Some participants felt that people need to experience you and that having a positive attitude and being confident enables the process of building relationships and linked to this was the aspect of networking. Majority of the participants also believed that building trust enriches relationships and strengthens your brand. Some argued that by building relationships you begin to demonstrate to your people that you care about them.

“...open mindedness, understand you are dealing with three parties in this industry i.e. guest, staff and the company. Relationship building is one of the most important things...within the hospitality industry that's where you build long lasting relationships.” (participant 12)

“...I think people need to feel that you care for them you care about their career; you value their input. I think those are the building blocks...” (Participant 5)

“...so if you building that brand...how you build trust in people and how you relate to them first on a personal level and secondly how do you relate to them on a professional level.” (Participant 7)

“Relationship building I would think would be an important one, I think whether it is relationship building both upwards or downwards or on a peer level, that is quite critical...” (Participant 5)

BRAND METHODOLOGY

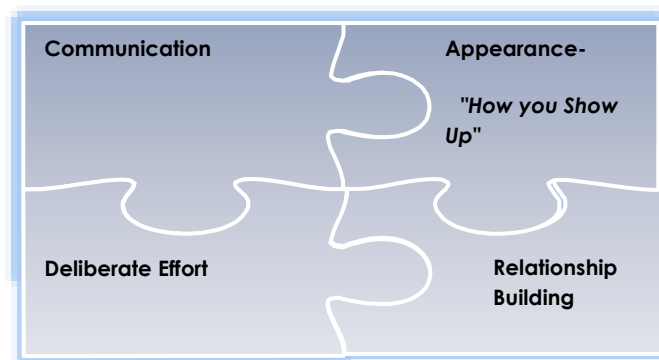


Figure 6: Summary on how to establish your brand i.e. Brand Methodology. Source: Researcher's own

Theme 4: Brand advancement

To endorse their brands Participants concentrated on how they should lead by example and demonstrate their values. Participants were of the view that honest leaders inspire through their actions not just words. Generally, participants were acquainted with their disposition versus their positions and how that should be perceived by stakeholders.

“Being a Hotelier, firstly I sit in this chair but that does not mean that I do not waiter, I sit in this chair that does not mean that I am not a chef...” (Participant 11)

“...if you have integrity, if you set clear goals, if you lead by example, if you have a clear vision, these things define you and give your subordinates direction...people want to look up to you and be like that.” (Participant 3)

“People will only aspire to be led by someone or to be directed by someone if they can identify with the values.” (Participant 7)

“You want to be something that will create a positive image for your people.” (Participant 4)

“Obviously the values are on the wall, what makes a difference now is the leadership leading those values.” (Participant 2)

“By showing them that I can do it, you can do it. Leadership branding is taking your people and making them understand the company core values and living it out.”. (Participant 10)

Active engagement with employees and stakeholders was highlighted by most participants. It was suggested by various participants that this take the form of having a presence on the ground, making time to regularly stay in touch, providing useful assistance as well as being innovative. Participants argued that you have to remain top of mind to promote your brand.



One participant made a very good analogy, *“What would you like to be remembered by, and people often talk about what is the inscription on your tombstone. Think about it, what you would want to be written there, and that is the way I would advise as a client in a commercial relationship as well, what is it you want to be written on the front page of the newspaper as the last thing said about you.”* (Participant 1)

“...being able to position that this is what I can do and when someone is thinking...wherever you are, you remain top of mind.” (Participant 5)

Participants also argued that building trust and acting with integrity is critical in upholding your brand. Leaders must be able to deliver and follow through on their promises. Participants believed that their on-going delivery of excellent service builds customer satisfaction and promotes their brand. Some participants argued that when you actively support your employees you are endorsing your brand and simultaneously earning the trust of your people. Generally, participants focused on how essential it is to recognise and reward your people and in so doing building trust.

“Are you actually delivering on what you’re supposed to...?” (Participant 5)

“...I am supporting them a lot providing them with encouragement...I think you need to be in touch with the people who work for you...does impact on the kind of brand you are building for yourself.” (Participant 4)

“...I give them a reward; the team nominates someone who has done something exceptional...what is important is to recognise people amongst peers...” (Participant 4)

Communication featured frequently amongst participants. Participants believed that it is critical to stay in touch with the people who work for you. Communication is not limited to formal communication only. Participants were of the view that stakeholders want to see leaders acknowledge their mistakes and communicate how they will fix things. Equally important is feedback, majority of the participants congruently believed that feedback is essential to their development and consequently builds their brand. Employees want to be taken seriously and their ideas and thoughts besought should be put to use.

“I think you need to be in touch with the people who work for you.” (Participant 4)

“...evaluate your people, how you are able to react to their needs, create a positive environment so that they can thrive...” (Participant 7)

“...kind of informal, how you come in the morning, speak to your team members, say hi, what are you doing, show some interest in them, stay in touch with them...” (Participant 4)

“...but they also want the honesty of that leader to be able to feedback when things are going well and when things are not going so well...” (Participant 1)

“...they provide thoughtful feedback, constructive feedback and they always have short-term and long-term goals...good leaders with these attributes drive the team’s objectives.” (Participant 6)



Brand Management

Figure 7: Summary on how to endorse your brand i.e. Brand Advancement. Source: Researcher's own

Theme 5: Brand benefit

Some participants understood that owning a well-established brand derives certain benefits. Participants alleged that your brand creates unlimited loyalty, commitment and pride derived from your employees and externally. They also pointed out that your brand produces elevated levels of confidence in stakeholders towards your organisation and you as the leader. Thus the organisation is taken seriously and people tend to know how to deal with you.

"...people relate to you better and then you can honestly get the best out of their performance in that sense..." (Participant 2)

"...having that brand" "...loyalty, pride, I would say it is commitment and dedication as well..." (Participant 6)

"...value, I think it's around people or clients that have got confidence in you..." (Participant 5)

"...people are now interested in us, they want to talk to us I think it also starts to instil confidence in management and even the staff..." (Participant 7)

"...brand image which is my personal one but now also the organisation is also viewed in that light...I mean the stakeholders in those entities that I spoke about that we need to work with, taking the organisation seriously for the first time..." (Participant 7)

Participants pointed out that people want to see the organisations are being led and they want to see the calibre of the leader leading. They were of the view that when your brand is visible your stakeholders have peace of mind, there is an increased level of support and both the leader and the organisation are given recognition. One participant used an exceptional illustration, "...what good is a diamond no one can see, so if there's any good in that brand it must be out there for people to see it." (Participant 2)



“I think the value is the peace of mind that you give either your shareholder, your customers...people would know that within this organisation this is the calibre of leader profile that they have because you would have given them exposure...”
(Participant 5)

“...evidenced itself in different ways in terms of messages of support...people who previously did not want to meet with you are now looking for slots and setting up meetings...biggest value people are taking us seriously.” (Participant 7)

Majority of the participants pointed out indisputably that job satisfaction was as a benefit for owing a recognised brand. Participants placed an emphasis on productivity, increased performance, a motivated workforce, amplified sense of loyalty and employees are well engaged. With a recognised brand, participants argued that employees are seen to be perceptive of their behaviours, have a positive morale and find their working environments more pleasurable.

“...it creates a motivated workforce a sense of belonging to the organisation...I can make a positive contribution in the organisation, what I say matters in which it creates a sense of loyalty...employees are well engaged then they are aligned, committed and energetic...” (Participant 2)

“...very positive, it brings the staff together very closely...creates a very positive atmosphere...they do tell me yes we love it here...we love the fact that you have an open door policy...” (Participant 6)

“Employees will be more satisfied and this will have a positive effect on stakeholders involved e.g. Satisfied customers, loyal suppliers...a company/division/department that is well led, will function better and excel in all aspects.” (Participant 9)

Participants mutually stressed that a reputable brand augments job retention. Most participants suggested that job retention is symbolic of work like integration or work life balance, greater ownership and reduced flight risk. Participants argued that when employees perceive leadership to be creating a developing environment or focused on creating professionalism, employees take pride in their organisation and job retention accelerates.

“...not in an arrogant way, but I have had some people say to me if it were not for me they would not stay...” (Participant 4)

“...job retention it impacts positively because ...all stakeholders feel they are a part of the organisation, their opinion, their ideas are valued and taken into consideration” (Participant 6)

“...everyone wants to work for reputable company at the end of the day...on a personal level also to have job security and it adds to the stability of your life...”
(Participant 8)

“...speaks to the retention of the skills because if people don't have a sense of belonging because they are excluded or side lined, then they become a flight risk.” (Participant 2)



Figure 8: Summary of brand value i.e. Brand Benefit. Source: Researcher's own

In developing the framework, each step was linked to a main theme and was constructed based on responses' relating to the question of how a leader should behave and what behaviour is necessary i.e. what will impact the brand positively.

Step 1- Brand identity: the focus was on how a brand is recognised. This identity is predominantly shaped by the leader's behaviour. A leader's brand is perceived in relation to their behaviour. The summary of such behaviour focused on a leader being: inspirational; distinctive; strong value system; signature talents; decisiveness and reputation.

Step 2 – Brand appraisal: leaders must always remain cognisant of how they would like for their behaviour to be observed. Participants delineated the leadership behaviour that can be perceived either positively or negatively.

Step 3- Brand methodology: Participants were able to articulate what is required from leadership to establish a brand. The onus is upon leadership to demonstrate through their behaviour that they are making a deliberate effort; communication is prominent; focused on appearance i.e. how you show up and focused on relationship building.

Step 4 – Brand advancement: certain behavioural patterns are necessary for leadership to elevate their brands and implore followers. Participants argued that this can be achieved if leaders can evidence in their behaviour that they lead by example i.e. demonstrate your values; leaders have a presence and remain top of mind; they accentuate value on communication and feedback and are able to build trust whilst acting with integrity.

Step 5 – Brand benefit: how you foster a brand will determine the benefits a brand can deliver. Participants pointed out that certain leadership behaviour can impact on a brand positively. When a leader is able to lead with actions in other words people know how to deal with you it builds confidence for stakeholders. When you are transparent as a leader and you create heightened visibility, it creates peace of mind. The manner in which you live up to your robust brand determines the level of job satisfaction and job retention.

Figure 9 below provides a visual presentation of this conceptual framework.

THE PERSONAL BRANDING PROCESS



Figure 9: Conceptual Framework for the management of a Personal Leadership Brand. Source: Researcher's own

Summary of findings

Public Sector vs Private Sector- leaders within the public sector have a different focus as opposed to private sector. Public sector leaders are focused heavily on deliverables and arguably are still transitioning out of an autocratic leadership style. Private sector leaders are focused on the people. They are motivated to create a conducive working environment to enable better performance. Although both sectors revealed that leaders are focusing more on work life integration and empowering employees, this was more prevalent within the private sector. This was delivered through a specific leadership style.

Value Systems – Overwhelmingly all participants focused on their value systems. Some emphasized this more than others. Participants were confident that their past experiences shaped their behavior patterns. Values were interpreted as a key constituent in shaping their brands. To a large extent participants pointed out that the manner in which they live out their values and how that is interpreted impacts on the perception of their leadership ability.

Perception of Leadership brands- when participants were asked “how would you identify characteristics of a positive leadership brand”, majority of the participants interpreted this perception through their own leadership disposition. A participant’s value system as well as their own personal brands influenced how other brands were perceived.

Leadership styles- all participants categorically agreed that leadership styles have a definite impact on your brand. The most common leadership style identified by the participants was a Participative Inclusive leadership style. Existing studies argued that Transformation leadership style occupied center stage in research over the last two decades, however the results from this study revealed otherwise. Due to the shifting landscape and the dynamic environment leadership has to operate in; it requires leadership to navigate the terrain to remain relevant. In this research the style that is most prevalent with executive’s/top business decision makers is Participative Leadership Style. Figure 10 below is a graphic illustration of the % of the dominant leadership style.



Figure 10: Graphic illustration of the % of the dominant leadership styles. Source: Researcher’s own

Majority of the participants believed that owning a well-established brand has an impact on their followers or subordinates. This was revealed in the level of job satisfaction and job retention. The majority of participants alleged that when a brand is perceived positively by the people it builds loyalty, commitment and creates a motivated workforce. Most participants argued that recognition and rewards are significant contributors to job satisfaction and job retention coupled with your leadership brand and how that brand is perceived. Participants pointed out that followers look up to you as they seek to extract patterns that can be emulated, therefore participants concurred on living a brand that is perceived positively.

Signature talents were highly emphasized by most participants. Participants agreed that when employees and stakeholders construe your signature talents positively, it has huge benefits for the organisation. Therefore, leaders have to ensure that they create visibility on their signature talents. Being able to hold true to those signature talents is what sets great leaders apart. The researcher observed the correlation between the participants leading by example in terms of their academic achievements and mobilizing the development of their signature talents.

Participants consistently placed emphasis on leaders being decisive. When stakeholders interpret your brand positively as a result of your decisive nature, it impacts your organisation positively. Thus stakeholders including employees have higher levels of confidence in your leadership aptitude and are generally more trusting of the leader’s brand.



Discussion of findings

Empirical research on the perceptions of leader behaviour and how this is influenced by a personal brand was found to some extent common in terms of awareness and understanding. The raw data was categorised into pattern of meanings or common themes. These were defined as brand definition; perception of behaviour in other words how is your brand assessed; building a personal brand i.e. brand strategy and the value that a personal brand derives in respect of brand benefits. The researcher was able to establish what was common to theories outlined by different authors as well as those that are uncommon.

Defining a personal brand

Regarding the establishment of a personal brand, authors Ulrich and Smallwood (2007) argued that a leadership brand was defined by unique and distinctive capabilities. Zarkada (2012) also argued that a personal brand was also grounded on what is unique about a person and the ability to distinguish oneself from others. Several participants highlighted distinctiveness as part of their brand identity as well. According to authors Rampersad (2008), Montoya, Vandehey and Vitii (2002) as well as McNally and Speak (2002) your value proposition, in other words the values and qualities that you stand for, defined a personal brand. Congruent to this theory, all participants categorically stated that their brand is underpinned by their value systems. Consistent with the theory of reputation in defining your brand which was suggested by authors McKenna (2015), Schawbel (2009) and Ulrich & Smallwood (2007), several participants were of the same view. Participants placed extensive reliance on their reputations to define their personal brands.

In addition to the theories suggested by the leadership brand experts the following theories were uncommon to existing studies. Participants highlighted inspiration, signature talents and decisiveness as key components in defining a personal brand i.e. establishing a leadership brand identity. The researcher identified a preliminary conceptual framework and found only two common constituents amongst the participants namely values and signature talents. Although a few participants alluded to passions and accomplishments these were not common to most participants.

Perception of leadership behaviour

Existing studies on perception of leadership behaviour focuses on how the possession of a robust vision or mission improves perceptions as argued by author Rao (2015). Smit (2010) pointed out that a personal brand is interpreted by how leadership is observed and all the participants had the same view. Participants were able to articulate both the positive and the negative outlook that is observed that influences how their brand is perceived. Collectively the list was exhaustive in respect of how participants would like for their brands to be perceived. A significant proportion of participants are aware of how they would like for their brand identities to be perceived such as being progressive leaders, encouraging diversification, focused on continuous learning as well as sacrificial leaders. Contrary to this, participants do not want to be perceived as being autocratic leaders, unprofessional, narcissistic and disconnected from the group they lead.

Building a brand

Prevailing theories on how a brand should be built, was outlined by authors Rao (2015), Ward and Yates (2013); Bastos and Levy (2012); McKenna (2015) and Ulrich and Smallwood (2007) in this study. These authors suggested that a brand is built by disentangling and emphasising your appropriate characteristics or focusing on your progression plans or extending a concentrated effort in personal branding as well as being practical in building your capabilities in other words



investing in yourself. Contrary to what literature discloses, participants mutually pointed out that a brand is built through a robust communication, your appearance in respect of how you show up and an emphasis on relationship building. Common to the principal theories, a significant percentage of participants focused on building a personal brand as a deliberate effort.

Promoting your brand

In promoting a personal leadership brand Vallaster and de Chernatony (2006) as well as Otara (2011) argued that communication both verbal and non-verbal were imperative features. Vallaster and de Chernatony (2006) and Davis and Leon (2014) also pointed out that a leader leading by example is essential in promoting your brand. Scrimgeour (2015) emphasised building trust and Thomas (2007) referred to the manner in which a leader presents him or herself and the authenticity thereof as critical rudiments in endorsing a personal leadership brand. Participant's views were closely aligned to current theories in that collectively participants in this study focused on leading by example and demonstrating their values, communicating and obtaining feedback, building trust and acting with integrity as well as remaining top of mind as key markers to promoting their brand.

Brand value

Current theories are explicit in respect of the value a personal brand delivers. Ulrich and Smallwood (2007) as well as Thomas (2007) focused on the visibility a brand creates. Bates (2016); (Lavelle, *et al.*, 2009); Yukl (2013), Gall (2010) and (Sageer, *et al.*, 2012) concentrated on the impression a brand has on employees which ultimately impacts positively on job satisfaction. Rao (2015), Thomas (2007) and Christensen and Cheney (2000) pointed out that there are higher levels of confidence among stakeholders. Kashyap and Rangnekar (2014) as well as Bell and Steyn (2016) maintained that a positive brand is associated with higher employee retention rates. Llopis (2013) emphasised that a well-recognised brand accelerates your progression plans. Majority of the participants pointed out similar benefits to owning a recognised brand. Participants alleged undoubtedly that a distinguishable brand builds confidence amongst stakeholders, creates heightened visibility, augments job satisfaction and reinforces job retention

Recommendations

This study was limited to the awareness and understanding of personal leadership branding at top management level. Leaders are developed at grassroots level and therefore further research can be conducted at different levels of management to decipher the gaps in respect of the understanding and the consciousness of personal branding and the impact such branding has on the perception of leadership behaviour.

The final conceptual framework has outlined different steps to the personal branding process to achieve successful branding. Given that the Tourism and Hospitality Industry is physically demanding and they are various cultures to be considered within the sphere of operations, it is recommended that further studies be completed to extrapolate each step as a single component. A questionnaire could be designed to analyse each concept towards developing a personal leadership brand. The ensuing results collectively could be combined and sold as a consulting tool for further leadership development initiatives. It is further recommended that another component be incorporated into the framework, i.e. cultural impact.



Authors Biswas and Suar (2013) pointed out that organisations have an obligation to reconsider their retention strategies and talent attraction. It is therefore recommended that the conceptual framework for management of a personal leadership brand be employed as a tool to augment the retention strategy. This will further enrich the innovative branding initiatives.

The conceptual framework should be applied by coaches; mentors or HR specialist to conduct leadership development interventions with individuals and also groups, to test if the framework is conducive for the working environment and if the framework yields positive results. Such a framework can assist in leadership training programs designed to equip participants with the knowledge, skill-set and resources to be effective in leading change at the grassroots level and further upstream. Deployment of such a framework as a tool for training initiatives will allow employees to derive personal gratification for their own growth. Further to that, development of an effective leader will indisputably improve employee commitment as pointed out by Folkman (2010).

Conclusion

Arguably the greatest challenge that leaders within the Tourism and Hospitality industry have ever encountered, is to lead today in the presence of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA). We are dealing with an ever-changing landscape in the business world, where the future is less predictable. Leading with just a vision is not enough anymore, leaders are required to be more decisive, more agile and adaptive, assess the environment as part of their deliberate efforts i.e. heightened awareness and focus on their personal brands. Personal brands underpin the perception of leadership behaviour and can either positively or negatively influence your stakeholders downstream or your customer portfolio. A focused emphasis on your personal brand can enable you to position yourself accurately to transition you from a great to a prodigious leader.

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