Brand & Culture:
Why these buzzwords are simply synonymous

The Classic Scenario:

Your organization has diagnosed the need for major change. Whether it be driven by a new senior management team, alterations to your product line, or even consumer feedback, you have decided it's time to give your company a face-lift. Powerful buzzwords like vision, mission, culture and branding start flying and the reality of the workload required to pull this off hits you full force. You know that change of this magnitude is multi-faceted and it will require an army of dedicated resources to make it happen.

The Classic Solution:

Despite the fact that most organizational change movements are intended to increase team cohesiveness, the project manager in all of us still falls back on the divide and conquer approach. So, armed with a new vision established by your senior team, your marketing and HR managers get their marching orders to recreate a portion of the wheel. The marketing team is challenged with rebranding and overhauling the advertising plan while your human resources team is charged with improving employee morale and redefining your internal culture.

The Classic Problem:

First, even the most well articulated vision leaves room for interpretation. Setting a common goal is no guarantee the same path will be followed by both teams. Second, the brand experience had by your customers is directly driven by the cultural experience of your employees. When two separate teams are leading branding and culture initiatives the best you can hope for is two *similar* concepts. Yes, even with your monthly check-in meetings and quarterly progress reports.

HR Culture Initiative

Marketing Brand Initiative

What you really want is one brand/culture that drives the internal and external experience through and through. You see, these buzzwords (though applied differently by professionals in varying disciplines) are simply synonymous.

Brand & Culture

Orange Papers: Amplify Your Knowledge

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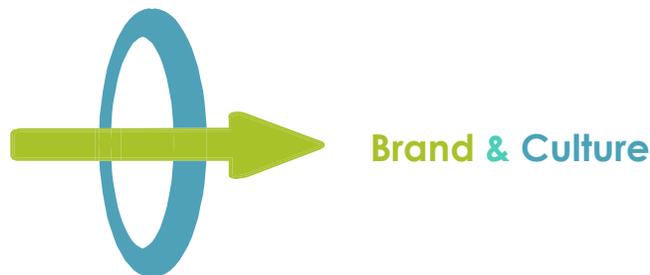
A High-Brow View of Brand and Culture:

At In-Fusion, we remind our clients that a brand is more than a logo. Scholars (researchers, geniuses, word-nerds) in the field support this notion, though they state it with a bit more eloquence. Take this view from the Journal of Advertising Research, "To create a brand ideal, a company must identify a higher calling than simply selling it's product. This ideal drives innovation and inspiration, enhances recognition, and unifies the organization in delivering against it. It not only informs business strategy: in an essential way, it *is* the business strategy."

Amplify the Message:
A brand is an ideal that unifies the organization. It is the business strategy.

Organizational culture is typically studied based on its impact upon your internal organization. Most scholars define it as the system of shared values, beliefs, and assumptions that impacts employee choice and drives desired outcomes.

Amplify the Message:
A culture is a set of values that unifies the organization. It is the business strategy.

The Academy of Marketing Science made this strong assertion regarding developing your brand ideal, "organizational culture has long been recognized as having an important impact on marketing-related decision making." So, rather than putting the cart before the horse we must know what our actual organizational identity is before we seek to describe that to our customers. The Journal of European Marketing also reinforces these intertwined concepts, "Corporate service brands need to coordinate internal branding activity to enhance their employees' identification with, commitment to, and loyalty to, the brand." There is a strong, deterministic relationship between the concepts of identification, commitment and loyalty of employees.

Amplify the Message:
Brand and culture are inseparable. They are simply synonymous.

In-Fuse Your Solution:

Boiling it all down to the simplest terms, you cannot define brand without culture nor culture without brand. Rather than assigning separate initiatives to define and unify your organization, you must approach it as one initiative and then allow each team to be driven by the implications of the outcome. This; however, doesn't mean it is an ambiguous, leaderless project. It just means you need the right leader. In-Fusion Group can bring more than 30 years experience of marketing and human resource leadership experience to your organization. In addition to facilitating your journey to brand/culture identification, we can also project manage the marketing and human resource projects that result from your outcomes.

{Contact Us: http://www.in-fusiongroup.com | info@in-fusiongroup.com | 877.224.2429**}**

Smart People We Quoted:
1) Punjaisri, K., & Wilson, A. (2011). Internal branding process: key mechanisms, outcomes and moderating factors. European Journal Of Marketing, 45(9/10), 1521-1537.
2) Simon, M. (2011). Brands In Context. Journal Of Advertising Research, 51189-194.
3) Yarbrough, L., Morgan, N., & Vorhies, D. (2011). The impact of product market strategy-organizational culture fit on business performance. Journal Of The Academy Of Marketing Science, 39(4), 555-573.

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