

The Development of Personal Brand in Promoting Business Resiliency in a Selected Sporting Goods Retail Company in Yunnan Province, China

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the role of personal brand development in enhancing business resiliency in a sporting goods retail company in Yunnan, China. It argues that personal branding, involving strategic self-promotion and image management, can significantly improve individual visibility, credibility, and customer trust. The study explores how the company leverages personal brands of employees to strengthen customer connections, foster loyalty, and create a resilient business model. By integrating personal branding into business strategies, the company aims to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disruptions.

KEYWORDS

Personal Branding; Business Resiliency; Sporting Goods Retail; Customer Trust; Strategy Integration

1 Introduction

In the dynamic and competitive business landscape of today, the concept of personal branding has emerged as a pivotal strategy for promoting business resiliency. Personal branding involves strategic self-promotion and image management by individuals, which can significantly enhance their visibility and credibility, as well as that of the organizations they represent (Guarino et al., 2012). This is particularly relevant in the retail industry, where the personal brand of leaders and employees can significantly influence consumer perceptions and trust.

In Yunnan Province, China, a selected sporting goods retail company is exploring innovative ways to strengthen its business resiliency through the development of personal brands among its employees. The retail sector is inherently complex and competitive, often subjected to various disruptions such as market fluctuations, economic downturns, and changing consumer preferences (Curtis, 2011). By leveraging personal branding, the company aims to build stronger connections with its customers, foster loyalty, and create a more resilient business model.

Business resiliency is defined as an organization's ability to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disruptive events (Ganguly et al., 2018). For the sporting goods retail company, this entails maintaining operational continuity, protecting revenue streams, and ensuring customer satisfaction despite challenges. Integrating personal branding into the company's strategy is seen as a means to enhance these aspects of resiliency. Chittigala (2022) highlights the importance of incorporating personal branding into disaster recovery plans and business continuity strategies to improve an organization's ability to manage and recover from disruptions.

Furthermore, the development of personal brands aligns with the broader trends of digital transformation and social media engagement. Platforms such as TikTok and Instagram have provided new avenues for individuals to showcase their expertise, values, and personalities, thereby building a distinct and influential personal brand (Wulandari & Hakim, 2023). This not only enhances the individual's professional image but also contributes to the overall reputation and resiliency of the organization.

The impact of personal branding on business resiliency is also supported by studies on entrepreneurial characteristics and resilience. Moreno (2021) found that traits such as innovation, optimism, and competitiveness play a crucial role in the resilience of micro, small, and medium enterprises. By fostering such characteristics through personal branding, the sporting goods retail company in Yunnan Province can enhance its own resilience.

2 Background of the Study

Yunnan Province, located in the southwestern region of China, is renowned for its diverse ethnic culture, rich natural resources, and rapidly growing economy. The province has experienced significant economic development over the past decades, driven by its strategic position as a gateway to Southeast Asia and its abundant natural resources. The retail industry in Yunnan, particularly the sporting goods sector, has seen robust growth fueled by an increasing interest in sports and outdoor activities among the local population and tourists.

The selected sporting goods retail company operates in this dynamic and competitive market, offering a wide range of products including sportswear, equipment, and accessories catering to various sports and outdoor activities. Given

Yunnan's unique geographical landscape, there is a high demand for quality sporting goods suitable for outdoor and adventure sports. This demand presents both opportunities and challenges for the company, as it must continuously adapt to changing market conditions and consumer preferences.

Business resiliency has become a critical focus for the company, especially in the face of frequent disruptions such as economic fluctuations, natural disasters, and public health crises. The COVID-19 pandemic, in particular, has highlighted the need for robust resiliency strategies to maintain operations and customer engagement during times of crisis. The disruptions caused by the pandemic necessitated a reevaluation of the company's business strategies to enhance resilience and sustainability.

One of the innovative strategies adopted by the company is the development of personal brands among its key personnel. By leveraging their expertise, values, and personalities, employees can build a distinct and influential professional image that strengthens the connection with customers and fosters trust and loyalty. In the context of Yunnan's sporting goods market, where customer relationships and personalized service are crucial, personal branding can significantly enhance the company's competitive edge.

The concept of personal branding has gained traction globally, with the rise of digital platforms such as social media providing new opportunities for individuals to promote themselves and their organizations. Platforms like TikTok and Instagram are particularly popular in China, allowing users to reach large audiences and engage with them interactively. By encouraging employees to develop their personal brands on these platforms, the sporting goods retail company in Yunnan aims to enhance its visibility and reputation, thereby promoting business resiliency.

Moreover, the company's focus on personal branding aligns with broader trends in entrepreneurial resilience. Research by Moreno (2021) highlights the importance of entrepreneurial characteristics such as innovation, optimism, and competitiveness in fostering resilience among small and medium enterprises. By nurturing these traits among its employees through personal branding, the company can build a more resilient organizational culture capable of adapting to and overcoming various challenges.

3 Concept, Definition, and Importance of Personal Brand Development

Personal branding has emerged as a crucial element for career success and professional development in the contemporary job market. It involves creating and managing one's reputation and public image to achieve specific career goals. Ebrahimi (2022) highlights that personal branding is not just about self-promotion but involves a comprehensive process that includes the development of a unique value proposition that differentiates individuals in the professional landscape.

The theoretical framework for personal brand development can be exemplified by the Personal Brand V.A.L.U.E. Career Development Tool, which stands for Vision, Ability, Love, Understanding, and Ecosystem (Sylvester & Donald, 2024). This tool underscores the importance of a multifaceted approach to personal branding, emphasizing the need for clarity in vision, demonstrable abilities, passion for one's work, empathy and understanding of others, and a supportive ecosystem.

Kalineć (2023) examines the interplay between social culture and personal brand development, emphasizing that socio-cultural factors such as volunteer work, professional expertise, and individual self-sufficiency play a significant role in shaping personal brands. This aligns with the broader understanding that personal brands are influenced by societal norms and values, which in turn affect an individual's ability to self-actualize and achieve professional recognition.

Stress and emotional surges also contribute significantly to personal brand development. Krykavskyy et al. (2023) find that short-term stress can motivate individuals to seek new ways of self-development through ego marketing and personal branding on social networks. This research demonstrates that the need for social support and validation during stressful periods can drive individuals to enhance their personal brand, thereby promoting self-improvement and personal growth.

In the realm of professional development, personal branding serves as more than just a promotional tool. Walczak-Skałicka (2023) argues that personal branding is a culmination of professional development efforts, involving continuous self-improvement and strategic communication of one's competencies to potential employers, colleagues, and clients.

For students and young professionals, the development of a personal brand is crucial for improving employability and career prospects. Mitrofanova et al. (2021) present a model for the formation and development of a personal HR brand, specifically targeting students and young specialists in personnel management. This model serves as an interactive navigator to help individuals build a professional development strategy and increase their market value.

The measurement of personal brand equity (PBE) further elucidates the significance of personal branding. Gorbatoev et al. (2020) developed a 12-item scale to measure PBE, which includes dimensions such as brand appeal, brand differentiation, and brand recognition. Their research demonstrates that PBE predicts perceived employability, career success, and job performance, providing a validated tool to assess and enhance personal branding efforts.

In the context of higher education, personal branding attributes can be developed through classroom activities and

curriculum design. Paul (2015) explores the integration of personal branding concepts into management education, aiming to enhance students' awareness and development of personal brand attributes.

Personal branding is a vital tool in today's professional landscape, providing a strategic advantage for career development across various fields. Kudyrko (2023) emphasizes that personal branding is particularly crucial for educators, as it helps them build a positive image that fosters trust in educational institutions. Smolarek and Dziendziora (2022) argue that personal branding has become increasingly important with the rise of social media, allowing managers to systematically build their reputation and image, facilitating career development and increasing job satisfaction and work efficiency.

Social media plays a pivotal role in personal brand development. Wu (2024) illustrates how social media platforms enable individuals to present their values and integrate them into their professional personas, thus achieving brand recognition and sustainability. The case of the Internet brand Ohkaye demonstrates that establishing a personal brand on social media involves creating a personal aesthetic and engaging with consumers to foster a two-way interaction.

Personal branding is not limited to managers and educators but is also significant for public relations professionals. Redmond (2015) outlines that professionals can benefit from personal branding by consistently presenting themselves in a manner that aligns with their career goals. This consistent self-presentation helps in building a strong professional image that can significantly enhance career prospects in the public relations field.

For student and young professional development, personal branding serves as a critical tool for enhancing employability. Kelly-Slatten (2011) discusses the importance of personal branding for communication studies students, emphasizing that developing a personal brand can help students stand out in the competitive job market.

Personal branding also intersects with big data analytics, particularly in healthcare and public health. Leyens et al. (2017) highlight that the use of data analytics can improve personal health outcomes by leveraging unstructured data. In the context of personal branding, this approach underscores the importance of integrating data-driven strategies to enhance professional credibility and effectiveness.

The strategic use of merchandise (merch) as a communication technology further exemplifies the constructs of personal branding. Podolyaka (2022) notes that merch can significantly enhance an author's personal brand by creating a tangible connection with their audience.

Athlete brand development on social media provides another perspective on personal branding. Deliautaitė et al. (2021) reveal that athletes use social networks to build their brands by showcasing their professional achievements, personal lives, and marketable lifestyles.

The development of a theoretical framework for omni-channel retailing in the fashion industry also relates to personal branding. Kaur et al. (2020) discuss how personal innovativeness and brand image influence the adoption of omni-channel retailing, highlighting the importance of a cohesive brand strategy that spans multiple channels.

Sustainable branding strategies in personal care product brands underscore the significance of brand ideals and values. Li and Lin (2024) emphasize that conveying brand ideals and committing to brand values are crucial for sustainable brand development, enhancing brand visibility and creating value for consumers.

4 Components of the Development of Personal Brand

The development of a personal brand is a multifaceted process that involves various components, each contributing to the overall image and reputation of an individual in their professional and personal spheres.

5 Social Media Engagement

One of the primary components of personal brand development is the strategic use of social media platforms. Social media offers a powerful tool for individuals to present their personal brand to a wide audience. Wulandari and Hakim (2023) highlight how communication science students use TikTok to develop their personal brand by creating engaging and innovative content. Similarly, Shutaleva et al. (2022) emphasize the role of Instagram in self-presentation, where bloggers build their personal brand through a combination of real and virtual images to maintain consumer trust and engagement.

6 Content Creation and Management

Content creation is another crucial component. The ability to produce and manage content that aligns with one's personal brand is essential. Guerrero Cano (2019) discusses how beauty micro-influencers on Instagram use various self-presentation strategies to develop their personal brand, including posting valuable reviews, storytelling, and engaging

with followers through live broadcasts and stories.

7 Professional Expertise and Personality

The incorporation of professional expertise and distinct personality traits significantly enhances personal brand development. Mortazayee et al. (2020) identify key factors such as personality, behavioral approach, communication skills, and professional expertise as critical in developing the personal brand of sports coaches in Iran.

8 Emotional Components and Perceptions

Emotional components and public perceptions also play a vital role. Alvarado-Karste and Kidwell (2021) explore how feelings of resentment and perceptions of injustice can influence brand rivalries and consumer attitudes. Understanding these emotional dynamics can help individuals craft a personal brand that resonates positively with their audience and differentiates them from competitors.

9 Trust and Reliability

Building trust and reliability is fundamental to a successful personal brand. Nazarova and Podgornaya (2022) argue that a personal brand acts as a communication channel that builds trust and ensures quality. Consistently delivering on promises and maintaining transparency are key to establishing and sustaining trust with the audience.

10 Academic and Professional Recognition

For individuals in academic and scientific fields, personal branding is essential for recognition and career advancement. Muszyńska (2024) notes that doctoral students acknowledge the importance of personal branding in gaining recognition within the academic community.

11 Strategic Positioning and Differentiation

Strategic positioning involves differentiating oneself from others in the same field. Ioan, Luca, and Sasu (2014) discuss the importance of packaging and content in personal branding, emphasizing that the presentation is important, but the substance is definitive.

12 Use of Business Models

Incorporating business models such as Ikigai and Joy-Money-Flow can help individuals reconnect with their personal brand by aligning their values and passions with their professional pursuits. Ratcliffe (2016) explains how these models can enhance personal development and business success.

13 Self-Presentation and Behavioral Consistency

Consistent self-presentation and behavior are important in maintaining a coherent personal brand. Kalineć and Krykavskyy (2023) discuss how individuals' behavior on social networks influences public perception and the development of their personal brand.

About the Author

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