

Book Review

Reputation Management & Branding: With Nigerian Case Studies, by Jossy Nkwocha

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There is a popular saying in the corporate circle that a company's reputation is its most valuable asset. It is often said that reputation is everything. Effective reputation management and branding is therefore a very crucial factor in the success of corporate organizations, governments and individuals. The survival and growth of an organization depends, to a large extent on how well it manages its reputation. Unfortunately, some organizations and some important personalities have little or no idea of what reputation management is all about and consequently little or no attention is paid to reputation management in many organizations. Therefore, it is important that the book, Reputation Management and Branding With Nigerian Case Studies by Jossy Nkwocha, x-rayed vital corporate management issues.

The book presents the essentials of corporate reputation management and branding. The book has thirteen chapters divided into two parts. Part one covers chapters 1-7 while part two covers chapters 8-13.

Chapter one of the book deals with conceptual clarification of corporate reputation management and branding. In this chapter, the author examined the concept of corporate reputation management (CRM) through an extensive review of related literature.

Chapter two explores the multi-disciplinary nature of corporate reputation by excavating its links to sociology, psychology, economics, marketing, human resources management and public relations. It shows how broad corporate reputation is and why it must be managed effectively.

In chapter three, the author examines the differences between reputation, image and brand. It looked at arguments that are put up by various scholars as to why reputation is superior to image, and why brand and branding have somehow become the widely used concepts. Three case studies were used for illustration.

The key drivers and benefits of corporate reputation were the focus of chapter four. It was made clear in the chapter that good reputation enhances profitability, corporate survival and business growth. It explains that corporate reputation enables critical stakeholders to be favourably disposed towards an organization or government.

Major strategies in reputation management were discussed in chapter five. Such strategies include corporate identity programming, strategic communication of an organizations activities and policies, effective stakeholder's engagement, corporate publication, corporate social responsibility (CSR), corporate websites, issues and crises management as well as events management and protocols.

Chapter six gives great insight into the specialized branches of reputation management, namely corporate affairs, media relations employee relations and communications, customer relations and communications, community relations and development, government relations, financial/investors relations, public affairs/political public relations among others.

In chapter seven, the author delves into strategic communication in reputation management. The variables and benefits of strategic communication were highlighted, among other things.

Part two of the book begins with chapter eight which is an expose on building Brand Nigeria. The author argues that, like product brands, nation brands also need branding and reputation management. In this chapter, three case studies were used to illustrate the subject matter.

The three case studies are:

1. The Jonathan They Don't Know, (A syndicated newspaper article written by Dr. Reuben Abati as Special Adviser (Media and Publicity) to President Goodluck Jonathan in response to critics of the President).
2. PR Perspective of Abati's Article, "The Jonathan They Don't Know" (A newspaper article written by Mr. Chido Nwakanma as a rejoinder to Dr. Abati's article)
3. The Phones No Longer Ring (A newspaper article by Dr. Reuben Abati, former Special Adviser (Media and Publicity) to President Jonathan reflecting on his experiences as S.A. to the President).

Chapter nine deals with producing house journals, a CRM strategy which the author says is overlooked by some corporate organizations. Effective events management takes centre stage in chapter ten while planning models in reputation management is in chapter eleven. Both chapters provide a guide to organizing important corporate functions that enhance corporate reputation.

Chapter twelve focused on professional ethics and how it affects corporate reputation management. This chapter interprets the 12 Articles of the Code of Ethics of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR).

In chapter thirteen which is the concluding chapter, the author evaluated the effectiveness of major CRM strategies used in selected oil and gas companies in Nigeria.

The book is a bold attempt to help students, practitioners, policy makers and Chief Executive Officers to gain thorough knowledge of corporate reputation management and brand building. In fact, Dr. Nkwocha's work, Reputation Management

and Branding has simplified the task of brand building and reputation management and will obviously go a long way in popularizing this important discipline. As the publisher noted on the blurb, “This book, Reputation Management & Branding: With Nigerian Case Studies, is a recipe for addressing image and reputational challenges in business, government and non-governmental organizations. It is an effective combination of theory and practice”.

A unique feature of this book is the addition of relevant case studies that have Nigerian background. Reacting to this, a distinguished scholar, Prof. Pat Utomi, who wrote the foreword to the book said “the unique selling point of this book is the addition of case studies which are hardly found in most published works in Nigeria”.

In the preface to the book, Prof. Justie O. Nwabuko of the Department of Marketing, and Dean, Faculty of Business Administration, University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus noted that the application of reputation management and branding was succinctly explained in this book, pointing out that Presidents of Nations, Executive Governors of States, and other top personalities would record amazing success in their endeavours through reputation management and branding.

Another interesting feature of the book is the exceptionally high aesthetic quality of the print production and cover design of the book.

On the whole, the book is a master piece: well researched, well edited, concise and easy to understand. This is not a surprise, considering the author’s background as a writer, veteran journalist, seasoned public relations practitioner, lecturer, counselor and conference speaker. The author, Dr. Jossy Nkwocha, was in 2007 appointed Head of Corporate Communications in a multinational oil and gas company, Indorama Eleme Petrochemicals, Port Harcourt before he was elevated to the position of Special Adviser to the Managing Director of the Company in 2010. Little wonder the book was described as a combination of theory and practice. In view of the outstanding quality of the book, I strongly recommend it to students and teachers of Mass Communication, Marketing, Business and Public Administration. Practitioners, policy makers, Chief Executives of Corporate Organizations, Politicians, administrators, industrialists and entrepreneurs will also find the book very useful.

Reviewer

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