

THE IMPORTANCE OF CORPORATE BRANDING FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES INDUSTRY

Author: [Ir. Justin Lai Woon Fatt](#) | 19 August, 2017

An interesting conversation between me and an engineer took place sometime last month over a cup of coffee. Let's call this engineer Mr. K, an expert in Electrical Engineering and partner of Mr. T, who is an expert in Mechanical Engineering. The conversation went like this:

Mr. K : IPM has been doing so much corporate branding activities recently. No doubt people might feel IPM is very professional and doing very well too. Anyway, in my opinion, corporate branding should be done only by large scale companies.

Me : Sir, how would you describe your company?

Mr. K : A partnership Electrical and Mechanical Engineering consulting firm.

Me : So how will your company operate if Mr. T leaves and joins another company for the reasons that it has a clearer vision, good management system, and good corporate image?

Mr. K : ...

From the conversation, I realised there is a huge divergence between the mindsets of an engineer and an *entregineer* (*engineer with entrepreneur mindset*). Engineer strives to develop his technical knowledge but *entregineer* strives to achieve his dream for the betterment of community by making use of the technical knowledge of a group of experts.

Napoleon Hill, the author of 'Think and Grow Rich' mentioned that "An educated man is not, necessarily, one who has an abundance of general or specialised knowledge. An educated man is one who has so developed the faculties of his mind that he may acquire anything he wants, or its equivalent, without violating the rights of others. KNOWLEDGE will not attract money, unless it is organised, and intelligently directed, through practical PLANS OF ACTION, to the DEFINITE END of accumulation of money. Lack of understanding of this fact has been the source of confusion to millions of people who falsely believe that "knowledge is power." It is nothing of the sort! Knowledge is only potential power. It becomes power only when, and if, it is organised into definite plans of action, and directed to a definite end."

Hospital without doctors and patients is just a building. Consulting firm without a group of experts is just an empty shell. It is important to retain valuable talents to gain sustainable competitive advantage. Therefore, in my opinion, the main focus now should be on how to attract and retain talents instead of focusing only on enhancing your own technical knowledge. Many organisations have been practising corporate branding to stimulate brand loyalty in customers. Increasingly, branding activities are being expanded to differentiate themselves and make themselves desirable from an employee's perspective.

At a micro level, potential recruits rely on employer's branding developed through marketing, personal experience, word of mouth, and their perceptions of the brand to assist their decision making when evaluating or comparing potential employers. Applicants value the contribution that a strong corporate brand would make to their curriculum vitae. At a macro level, corporate branding is important in attracting the human capital that is required to contribute to the strategic objectives and financial performance of the organisation. Not only does branding provide a framework to simplify and focus on priorities and increase productivity; it is also important for improving recruitment, retention, and commitment of employees. Employers should promote company's vision and show how employees' works could contribute to that vision to keep them engaged. People can easily leave for better pay and benefits, but it is hard to leave if they feel responsible to

achieve the company's vision. Knowing that their works are making a difference in the bigger setting will create a positive impact. Employers should tie the business objectives and the works of employees to a "noble why" so that they are always being reminded of the importance of their works and will always connect to the company's vision.

Branding is, in short, one of the most effective methods of marketing and advertising not only for business purpose but also for attracting and retaining the right talents. And this is why branding development is now one of the key activities of IPM Group. IPM has implemented corporate branding since 2013 and was awarded the certification of National Mark of Malaysian Brand by SME Corporation Malaysia and Sirim QAS International Sdn Bhd in 2014 after went through a series of evaluations and audits, where strict adherence to quality standards and criteria was accessed. Among the prerequisites for participating in the certification programme, organisations must first achieve a minimum of 3-Star rating under SME Corp's SCORE rating programme and must have in place an existing quality standards programme such as ISO9001. In the same year, IPM was also officially recognised as the 'First Engineering Consultancy Services Provider Certified under the National Mark of Malaysian Brand'.

The certification of National Mark of Malaysian Brand was launched by SME Corp in the hope that more Malaysian brands will have the opportunity to build brand equity and to dispel the perception of being of inferior quality compared to foreign brands. The National Mark of Malaysian Brand carries with it the endorsement of quality from the Malaysian Government, through SME Corp and its partners behind the certification programme. Through this effort, the Malaysian Government hopes to provide Malaysian Brands with some assistance to penetrate international markets and become competitive on a global platform.

Consequently, the certification of IPM with National Mark of Malaysian Brand has also contributed significantly to the honouring of Enterprise 50 Award by SME Corp and Franchise License by the Ministry of Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism (Franchise Development Division) of the Malaysian Government in 2014 and 2016 respectively. On top of that, IPM was further certified by Malaysia Book of Records as the 'First Engineering Consultancy Firm to Obtain Franchise License' this year. Without any doubt, IPM's branding has played substantial role in achieving these successes. Our corporate branding has created a strong identity that clearly differentiates ourselves from others in this competitive market, through the conveyance of qualities, values, purposes, strengths, and passions. IPM brand is one of the most valuable assets of our business, which was refined to ensure it represents our business properly and authentically. It makes IPM stands apart from others in order to be noticed, make an impression, and ultimately to be preferred. These achievements have strengthened the morale and team spirit of IPM stakeholders and became the stepping stones towards achieving greater height, the IPO.

Corporate branding has evidently become one of the key factors in determining the future success of an organisation. This is why businesses, including small businesses, cannot underestimate the power of creating, building, and developing a brand. Your company brand speaks volumes about your business both to other businesses and to the general public.

Ir. Justin Lai

Founder

IPM Group