

What Happens When Brand Truly Leads Business

with Steve Robinson, former CMO of Chick-Fil-A



- There is a truly emotional foundation by which to build a brand.
 - Chick-Fil-A was fortunate to have a founder in Truett Cathy that fundamentally understood and believe in this. Therefore, he built the brand on grace, citing that there are more important things in life than numbers and dollars. And then he modeled this for his employees and created a culture of grace through the lens of what it meant to him, keeping it simple. Smile, eye contact, personal connection, genuine interest in all people.
 - This is what we would call "starting from the top". Whether it is a single founder situation, a board, a C-suite, etc. it has to come authentically from them. They have to believe it, and then lead it in a way that everyone that works for them believes it too.
 - Commitment and consistency are essential for this- and it isn't always easy. Which leads us to our next point.
- Brand legacy is built alongside building revenue.
 - When you think successful company, you think numbers. And yes, of course this is important. But it cannot be the sole focus. Truett understood this and therefore he embraced the long game and again the essence of grace that would pave the way for bigger financial success. This is what we mean when we talk about the brand leading the business. Too many companies are too focused on the bottom line, and when things aren't going the way they think they should, they start making short term decisions that may do more harm than good. Having the brand as the lens eliminates this and build confidence because there is an overall plan and parameters to achievement.
 - By flipping the perspective to be on the brand, this is where you build loyalty, longevity and an authentic experience for the customers. And the numbers come- and they are more impressive by the limiting perspective of starting there.
 - It is also about intentional scale. Truett was diligent to borrow as little money as possible. This is a good approach because you maintain peace of mind and control. But whatever your approach, intentionality is KEY to successfully building a business through brand. It builds discipline, so that you never knee-jerk decisions. You always have a compass to guide you, and that is the brand itself. We have talked about this before, but at FRp, we are built on a foundation of doing the right things on behalf of our clients by being direct, but never disrespectful. And this is the lens by which we vet our clients. We don't take on clients that are not interested in doing what is right for their business.
- Brand fuels customer acquisition by giving the audience the ability to identify an emotional level.
 - There is nothing like WOM and loyal fans. When people begin speaking on your behalf, you know you have made it. And this only happens if you start from the brand foundation.
 - When you have the proper foundation built, and you lead from that place, to the previous two points, your business takes off at a scale that cannot be obtained by just chasing numbers and quick wins.
 - At FRp, we live what we preach. We have been patiently cultivation our brand for two years now, and we are taking off in a way that can only be explained by the focus on brand. We don't get distracted by shiny work, a quick buck, or clients for the sake of clients. It is about building authentic relationships that keep people coming back, and continuing to foster our brand to mature with the growth of business.
- The brand is your launch-pad to top-line growth.
 - This is where the discipline of building the relationships from the previous point comes in really specifically. If you take the time to identify your target customer or consumer and then deliver on what THEY WANT vs. what you want to give them, you are starting from the place of brand.
 - And then you need to build a constant feedback loop so you are keeping in touch, hearing them, and optimizing accordingly. This does not mean you take every piece of feedback and implement it- that is the knee jerk approach. But what does it mean is that you are keeping the pulse on how things are going through the lens of your consumer and making intentional changes where needed, and/or continuing things that are working.
 - Truett is another great example of this- in fact, he closed the second location of his business when consumer feedback was highly negative. The brand wasn't ready because the infrastructure wasn't there yet. So, he took a step back, regrouped, and found another better path, which led to the HIGHLY successful implementation of the brand in malls with the original chicken sandwich.