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Branding With the Stars: Celebrity Tactics for Business Owners



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Celebrities seem to possess a secret magic outside of their known talent that can turn them from someone with a hit show into someone with a business empire.

The Kimye wedding is just another reminder of how powerful celebrity brands can be. Stars such as Kim Kardashian and Kanye West often embody qualities that “regular people” wish they could express more clearly. Even more importantly, we feel like we know them and we feel like we can judge them.

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Everyday businesses can take tips from the stars on how they build their brands and fans. Here are the elements of a celebrity brand a business can replicate:

1. Clear uniqueness. Companies should have a clear vision of what they stand for. It is crucial to stay true to those values. For example, Taylor Swift's brand speaks elegance, as does a Chanel purse. Celebrity uniqueness is often associated with authenticity.

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“Communicate a clear sense of uniqueness so that customers can take ownership of the brand and feel that some of the qualities will rub off on them if they buy it,” says Lee Runchey, vice president of Chrome PR in Beverly Hills, who has worked with a range of celebrities, such as KISS, Tito Ortiz and Mariel Hemingway.

2. Image consistency. Packaging, design, websites and advertising/marketing campaigns are important to ensure that all aspects of your product consistently embody the image. It is also important for owners to embody the image of their product.

“Be what your product says you are,” Runchey says. “You and your example are your own best salesperson.”

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3. Always on. Branding occurs 24/7. It is important to live the lifestyle you create for your product. Brand image does not stop when an owner leaves the office. The camera never stops rolling. For example, Roger Federer has a completely scandal-free public life. This boosts his worth, making him, among many things, the face of Rolex.

4. Transparency. Business transparency is more important than ever before, as customers have increased interest in where their products come from.

"Lady Gaga's fans know what she stands for before she even speaks," Runchey says. "Your customers should know the same with you."

5. Network. The stars are constantly moving in every direction to create larger, more successful companies.

"Ensure you meet people from all walks of life and outside of your team to remain inspired," says Jeetendr Sehdev, author of the upcoming book *Superstar: The Art & Science of Celebrity Branding*.

A great example of this is music collaboration. Nobody could forget the year at the Grammy's when Eminem shared the stage with Elton John.

6. Public speaking. Public speaking can increase visibility and charge a product forward, according to David Newman, author of *Do It! Marketing*. Celebrities deliver whenever they make public appearances.

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7. Publish regularly. Publishing can turn a regular business owner into a person seen as an expert in their field, Newman says. For someone with a brand new business, this can be accomplished with a simple blog. If you are looking to expand further, see what trade publications and newsletters colleagues and customers are reading. Spread your writing through social-media channels.

8. Social media. Social media is an important piece of the puzzle for celebrities as well as companies big and small. A social-media platform helps to create a fan base for your product.

“Celebrities are masters of creating moments on social media that feel both authentic and personal,” Sehdev says.

The celebrity most synonymous with social media is Ashton Kutcher. While he typically plays goofball roles on television, in real life he is a tech venture capitalist and owns stakes in companies including Foursquare. His followers on Twitter are 16 million and growing.

9. Assemble a team. Celebrities have countless assistants and coaches to make their projects and their life run smoothly. Any business owner can build out a network of trusted vendors and advisors that can mirror this idea. Putting together a team around any business takes work and dedication.

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Customers can also be valued members of your team.

“If it fits with your brand, invite customers to send photos of themselves using your product to post to your website/social networks,” Runchey says. “This not only reminds your customers that they are special and invites them to share in the image of your brand, but this is inadvertently a great source of testimonials too.”