

“rhubarb”: Maximising the Market Value of “rhubarb”

Challenge

“rhubarb” was a business that had grown fast, successfully diversifying into new market areas.

However, we had 2 problems to address:

1. Were those extensions right for the brand longer term?

2. How should we think of that brand in the first place?

In under a month the Emporium answered both those questions...”

Clive Beharrell, plural Chairman and entrepreneur, summing up the challenge facing the business prior to taking on MR TAYLOR’S BRAND EMPORIUM.

“rhubarb” was a well known, high-end & highly regarded ‘events caterer’ for private and corporate clients. But that sector can be volatile. And the company had needed to evolve into more market sectors with greater stability: iconic fixed venues, like the Royal Albert Hall, restaurants like Gallery Mess and Fenwick’s Bond & Brook and the travel industry sector at airports and onboard flights, delivering food for first & business class.

It was a particularly important and timely challenge given an opportunity to fund future growth through the injection of Private Equity behind a potential MBO.



Thinking

Clarity, coherence & consistency... who wouldn't want it, what business doesn't need it?

People seek simplicity, demand differentiation and crave clarity.

Clarity helps to attract interest in what a business does from consumers, clients, employees and investors alike.

Achieving Clarity is critical because people don't like risk. They don't like ambiguity, they fear complexity and they are often overwhelmed with choice.

Clarity fosters trust that you are who you say you are, and do what you say you do. And trust is the fundamental dynamic at the heart of all-powerful brands.

Whilst Clarity helps sells companies, it takes energy, experience and provocation. And often outside objectivity to identify it, shape it & articulate it... brilliantly.

The challenge and opportunity was to review the business, in the context of its market and competition, talk to clients across all areas of the business and formulate a view on what made "rhubarb" special. Then to articulate that in a way that would provide clarity & cohesion for the entire business, at every level, expressed across all collateral, to ensure potential advisors and investors were in no doubt as to where "rhubarb's" essential competitive offer and investment potential lay.

A series of initiatives were advised following discussion with the "rhubarb" management team.

The process was bespoke but based on proven principles and approaches designed to generate insight and get under the skin of a business. These included:

- Face-to-face key people interviews (using interview techniques drawn from the worlds of psychology, journalism and good old fashioned advertising interrogation of the product!)
- Small workshops with groups of employees within the business, to define operational reality and cultural integrity
 - Client interviews with the different market sectors of the "rhubarb" business
 - Desk research on the core markets, competition, clients and trends in premium & experience delivery
 - Detailed customer journey mapping
 - Time in the business, observing meetings, talking to employees

The catalytic process took less than 4 weeks from start to delivery of a clear & compelling brand story:

"He was able to catch the zeitgeist of our business and the essence of a very valuable brand in a time I didn't think possible..."

The work resulted in the creation of a number of essential defining brand-business statements of clarity for everyone to share.

These provide a 'rune stone & rudder' by which to steer any business. They became the core of brand thinking for "rhubarb". Providing cohesiveness for the "rhubarb" brand, internally to all employees and to the outside world, including suppliers, clients and of course potential investors.

“...He proposed a very fresh and compelling way of looking at ourselves as a brand and a business.”

Clive Beharrell

1. The elevator pitch: a clear and concise statement of what the brand is all about, what makes it different and inspiring, that anyone in the business can use...

“rhubarb” is the premium food experience brand which takes on some of the world’s most daunting challenges, with a signature approach that is always vibrant, playful and brave. “rhubarb” relishes diversity across events, iconic venues and higher end travel and always sets out never to be set in its ways.

2. The purpose: what the business is striving to achieve or be in the world, beyond obvious profit & growth (confidential)

3. The Big Idea: that evocatively sums up the brand, providing a rallying-point & agenda for everyone across a complex business, to share and ‘buy-into’. Big Ideas are more distinctive & powerful than just product proposition or service promise. They allow a brand to venture into new commercial territories & markets with more confidence and control.

“rhubarb’s” Big Idea is:

BRAVERY

4. Cultural values: were confirmed and articulated, leading to a brand personality and tone of voice to steer all issues of how the company comes across to clients

5. Brand communications: a lexicon was developed to help embed brand consistency across the organization and its collateral, both internally and externally. Providing a crucial level of ‘brand cohesiveness’ and integrity for the business.

“The Premium Food Experience Brand”

6. Commercial brand extension ‘rules’: clear direction on how & where the brand could & should extend its franchise over time. A set of easy to understand & simple to use ‘rules of engagement’ for brand extension.

“Mark was quick to appreciate us and what we do.

And then help us uniquely express that in a way that really energized the business and our people. He provided self-awareness, analysis and clarity at an important point in our development and it has re-shaped how we see ourselves and what we do in the face of all opportunities and challenges presented to us.’

PB Jacobse, MD

7. The Brand brought to life: a series of initiatives, internally and externally, enabled by the clarity brought by MR TAYLOR'S BRAND EMPORIUM, ensuring cohesiveness of brand delivery to customers, clients & employees alike... including internal engagement programs, external website re-development, new copy tone of voice, new collateral, uniforms and last but not least, a design identity re-fresh.



Impact

“After the brand work was conducted, the management team was able to clearly communicate what the business was all about, even a complex B-to-B and B-to-C one like “rhubarb” ...It made our proposition stronger because it was clear what the business stood for, delivers and where it can go.”

PB Jacobse

- Dramatically enhanced clarity & confidence around brand/business positioning and differentiation
 - Clear, coherent and compelling IM and investor presentations
 - Enhanced success in high profile new business pitches
 - Clarity and direction on commercial/brand extension possibilities
 - Improved employee engagement within the entire business
 - More coherent communications

Subsequently, “rhubarb” accelerated its MBO plans and enjoyed:

- High interest in the Information Memorandum issued by the business
 - 27 PE houses
 - 7 presentations
 - Business valuation of £32m
 - £12 million investment from ECI
- Huge potential to double value through brand extension & exploitation internationally

“I think it’s fair to say he helped “rhubarb” achieve a very healthy multiple.”

PB Jacobse

“The clarity of the “rhubarb” business/brand story and the consistency of its telling from end to end certainly helped us to reach a positive investment decision”

Chris Warren, Partner, ECI

Extra new business was deemed secured with the brand clarity achieved, including the win of the “Walkie-Talkie” contract worth several million pounds to “rhubarb”.

As was set out within the Information Memorandum:

“rhubarb” is a clearly defined brand with a wealth of markets and opportunities potentially falling within its broad footprint.”

Finally...

“The clarity of thought about “rhubarb” has infused the entire company with a new sense of confidence and enthusiasm.

I would recommend Mark Taylor to any company looking to define their businesses’ secret sauce, so that internal teams and others on the outside can fully appreciate then unlock the true potential and value of their brand.”

Clive Beharrell, plural Chairman & entrepreneur, Deputy Chairman “rhubarb”

Key services delivered

Brand definition, cultural audit, research, employee workshops, customer journey mapping, market analysis, brand lexicon and tone of voice.