



Brand Credibility: The CEO and The Company

Both the CEO and corporation's credibility is earned based on action and reputation. The popular and aspirational company positionings discussed below are advanced or undermined by business practices implemented at organizations of every size.

Marketing and communications permeates operations and policies beyond seasonal campaigns and catchy slogans. Therefore, it is helpful to engage marketing professionals to conceptualize how policies and practices build the company brand. Likewise, there is great benefit to enlisting their feedback on practices that detract from the brand.

Positioning: Quality is Top Priority

Advance Reputation

- If a product breaks, have a policy to repair or replace it
- Back your products with a money back guarantee
- Ensure that employees have the authority to address customer key concerns
- Be sure customer service agents are trained to answer questions

Undermine Credibility

- Budget priorities mean often broken down computers and office equipment
- Inconsistent information is provided in response to customer inquiries
- Customers have to wait long spells on hold!
- If a product breaks, the customer bears full responsibility to get it fixed or replaced

Positioning: Corporate Responsibility

Advance Reputation

- Corporate foundation is contributing to communities where you conduct business in a meaningful way and to causes beyond corporate products
- Recycle production parts and excess materials
- Strong employee policies and programs that advocate for health and family
- Encourage employees to volunteer

Undermine Credibility

- A flaw in a product has potential to harm and no policy to replace, repair or reimburse
- CEO employs undocumented workers at home and avoids paying social security
- CEO does not meaningfully contribute time or resources to any social cause
- No support for employees when new parents or sick family members
- Company portfolio is filled with stock in industries contrary to mission

Positioning: Create Shareholder Value

Advance Reputation

- Fund ample market research to make decisions based on objective feedback from customers and other market indicators
- Employee performance standards reward initiative and quality and hold weak links accountable
- Communicate an understanding of the strategy and market beyond quarterly earnings reports

Undermine Credibility

- Select business partners based on personal relationships without researching alternatives
- Hire relatives and avoid competitive recruitment
- Over promise and under deliver
- Purchase a fleet of luxury cars on the company dime

Positioning: Employees First

Advance Reputation

- Communicating with employees about the company's ups and downs makes them part of the company, rather than the last to know
- Provide comprehensive health benefits from long-term disability to flu vaccines on-site that support employee health
- Support continuing education of employees with on-site training and tuition reimbursement

Undermine Credibility

- Delay plans for emergency evacuation procedures
- Hire outsiders as managers consistently without creating opportunities for internal advancement
- Ignore ergonomic standards
- Waiting to share bad news with employees until after it becomes public generates bad will and rumors