Re-branding as a Decision for Professional Librarians in Nigeria

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By

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In Nigeria today, re-branding is a well known term which has penetrated deep into the mindset of individuals owing to the fact that the Minister of Information and Communications, Prof. Dora Akunyili has left no stone unturned in order to take the message of re-branding everywhere she can reach. The Minister believes in “change and redirection” of the people’s mindset within and outside the country, as well as a change in the attitude of Nigerians as fundamental to national development. There is also need for personal development and personal rebranding among individuals that make up Nigeria as a country. It is a decision which humans from different walks of life can make, in order to move the country forward. The re-branding bandwagon is but a familiar campaign in Nigeria which many sectors of this country have therefore, tried to imbibe. These include the Health, police force, business and education sectors, respectively.

In education, the library is like a pivot stand, in which case the library supports all educational activities in the country. Libraries are managed by librarians, whether professionals or para-professionals. The professional librarian is that librarian that studied library and information science at certain level in the university; a graduate librarian.

Rebranding according to Wikipedia, is the process by which a product or service developed with one brand, company or product line affiliation is marketed or distributed. To rebrand is to change the brand name, logo, or image of a product or company (en.wiktionary.org/wiki/rebrand). Another source defined rebranding as the process of taking an existing brand and reworking the brand into something different and better than before (www.brandegy.com/glossary.htm).

The writer defines rebranding as a customized self-tagging by an individual, as conceived in the mind which is intended to make for a representation of the individual. Primarily, this intention comes in the affirmative. There exists little or no individual who may wish to be represented in the negative brand. As professionals, librarians are expected to come in a positive brand, as their activities affect the lives of vast individuals in the Nigerian society. The position of this article is to make professional librarians get familiar with the rebranding move in the country, and flow with the tide. Rebranding calls for a retouch on existing branding of many professional librarians and librarians in the making. Hence, librarians are expected to come up with personal branding philosophy. It is a decision which has to be made by librarians in order to serve their clients better. Decision making can be regarded as the mental processes resulting in the selection of a course of action among several alternatives. Every decision making process produces a final choice (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decision_making). This write-up comes as an encouragement to librarians to thread the path of re-branding, in order to improve their relevance in the education sector of Nigeria.

Personal Branding Philosophy

Personal Brand - A personal identity that stimulates precise, meaningful perceptions in its audience about the values and qualities that person stands for. (Peter Montoya).

Branding guru, Tom Peters started the personal branding movement with an essay that appeared in Fast Company in 1997 under the title "The Brand Called You.” Peter Montoya, author of The Brand Called You, believes the key to personal branding knows how you are perceived by others. Montoya writes,
"Personal branding lets you control how other people perceive you... You're telling them what you stand for -- but in a way that's so organic and unobtrusive that they think they've developed that perception all by themselves…. When done right, it's irresistible.” (Personal Branding Press, 2002).

**Merits of Personal Branding**

Steve Van, author of Get Slightly Famous, points out the following advantages of branding oneself:

- Confers “top of mind” status
- Increases authority and credence of decisions
- Places you in a leadership role
- Enhances prestige
- Attracts the right people and opportunities
- Adds perceived value to what you are marketing
- Earns recognition
- Associates you with a trend
- Increases earning potential

**Timing for brand development**

This asks the question, ‘when should I develop a brand for myself’? Peter Montoya suggests that an individual should develop a Personal Brand:

- When you feel unrecognized for accomplishments
- When others are achieving goals you set for yourself
- When you feel you have gone as far as you can conventionally
- When you want an edge over your competition.

**Eight Laws of Personal Branding**

Peter Montoya has developed eight laws or principles for successful personal brands. (http://www.petermontoya.com/mt_what_is_personal_branding/laws.htm)

1. The Law of Specialization
2. The Law of Leadership
3. The Law of Personality:
4. The Law of Distinctiveness
5. The Law of Visibility:
6. The Law of Unity:
7. The Law of Persistence
8. The Law of Goodwill

**Proposed Eight M’s for personal rebranding**

The writer proposes Eight M’s for personal rebranding of professional librarians as:

1. Mainly Create a Google footprint about yourself
2. Market yourself using social network platforms
3. Make out time to interview your clients about you
4. Model after librarians of quality brands
5. Make a regular update on yourself
6. Manage your brand
7. Mind your own brand
8. Make yourself a professional to be identified with
**Conclusion**
The librarian in the practicing profession is by no means, an icon in the heart of every institution which is the library. Therefore, there is need for quality personality traits. The branding and re-branding issue is very vital in the journey of becoming quality librarians that ought to serve the clients qualitatively. There is need for personal branding philosophy and looking at the advantages of personal branding and other features listed above, it is crystal clear that librarians should sit up and respond to the rebranding wake-up call which comes in Eight M’s as proposed by the writer.