

The Franchise

The Leadership Challenge is the top selling book on leadership in the U.S., We were engaged by their publishers, Jossey-Bass/Wiley, to assess the state of the franchise brand and to develop a Brand Strategy, before the release of the third edition of The Leadership Challenge.



The Business Challenge

The full potential of this successful franchise was not being realized, for several reasons: new product flow was impeded by a lack of brand strategy; the authors had limited time to devote to promotion; and products in the franchise had been developed without a unifying brand identity. A strong brand positioning and strategy was needed to launch the new title.

The Solution, the Results

We conducted Brand Interview attribute research with Leadership Challenge users in different U.S. markets, and analyzed their feedback and experiences with TLC products. BrandSequencing attribute research identified the key elements of the brand's competitive positioning, and led to brand strategy recommendations, which were subsequently adopted by the marketing team. The Leadership Challenge 3rd Edition was a BusinessWeek best seller in 2002, and other franchise titles continue to win industry awards and receive critical acclaim. TLC franchise products now have an integrated brand architecture, and sales remain strong.

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The Leadership Challenge: Renewed Focus for a Trusted Franchise

Leaders in Leadership

The Leadership Challenge (TLC) already enjoyed a dominant position in this business publishing category by virtue of the extensive research done by authors James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner on leadership. The original title has generated three editions and a complete franchise of products and services based on their five practices of Exemplary Leadership.

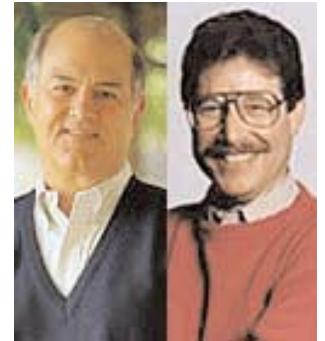
The business book market was (and continues to be) crowded with competing titles, but none with comparable brand equity or product potential. Still, TLC was at the point where it needed a clarification of brand strategy in order to defend its positioning from competitive offerings.

The Brand interviews

We conducted Brand Interviews with a balanced mix of TLC's Brandscape: its current constituency; publishers; partners like the Tom Peters Company; and prospective customers.

Key Findings

- Customers' main reported benefit from TLC was that it is easy to use and understand. This helps it to be adapted and accepted into their organizations.
- TLC is much more than a single book to people, and represents a complete learning method.
- TLC is widely trusted and respected largely because of the unparalleled credibility of the research upon which the book and teaching methods are based.
- Pricing issues were irrelevant, as virtually every customer reported receiving great value from TLC products.
- Customers were very pragmatic and results-oriented.



Authors Jim Kouzes (left) and Barry Posner (right).

Positioning

Our recommended positioning was "the most trusted learning method for becoming a better leader." This touches on basic elements of TLC's Brand DNA: 1.) High credibility 2.) Unique Category identity (it's more than a book, it's a movement) 3.) Answering customers' need for pragmatic, dependable guidance on developing leadership skills within companies.

Brand Strategy

Our strategy recommendations included reorganizing TLC's brand architecture to promote faster, more coherent product development; communicating the Brand DNA to the entire Brandscape, and providing clear priorities for franchise product planning.