Can Brand Trump Become President Trump?

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Joe McGinniss wrote The Selling of the President, analyzing the marketing of Richard M. Nixon during the 1968 Presidential campaign. It was the first-of-its-kind introduction to the concept of stage-managed Presidential campaigns to the public and a primer for how to turn a candidate into a brand, in that instance the creation of the â€œnew Nixon.â€• Forty-seven (47) years later the American electorate faces a new paradigm shift; changing a â€˜human brandâ€™ into a candidate, this time the creation of candidate Donald Trump. No matter how you feel about Mr. Trump, his political positions, his standings in the polls, or even his hairstyle, one thing is undeniable â€“ Donald Trump is a human brand extraordinaire!

Weâ€™re talking real â€œHuman Brand,â€• folks. Not a celebrity only, but an actual human being who represents 100% of the values of the company he represents. â€œHuman Brandâ€• is a designation representing the highest level of imbued meaning, values, and differentiation any brand can be. And, despite how many marketers prattle on about everything and everyone being a â€œbrand,â€• Mr. Trump is one of a very, very small club of Human Brands, with values and qualities that allow him to successfully expand into multiple and diverse categories, well beyond foundation products like real-estate and TV shows. Hereâ€™s just a few: catering, sales and leasing, hospitality, golf, home furnishings, ice-cream, vodka, wine, menâ€™s apparel, ties, jewelry, fragrances, books, bottled water, and the list goes on.

Trump Brand Name Adds Substantial Value
When it comes to added-value â€“ a critical obligation of 21st century brands, and the ultimate acid test of Human Brands â€“ depending on the category â€“ adding the Trump name increases the perceived value of a product or service anywhere from 20% to 37%, enviable by any category standards. And in terms of consumer emotional engagement adding the Trump brand causes the product or service to be seen as better able to meet consumer expectations for the values that drive positive behavior in a particular category.

So hereâ€™s the question: Can brand Trump become President Trump?

To answer that we looked at the category engagement drivers for how consumers see their Ideal President. These have been validated in every Presidential election cycle since 1980.

The order of engagement drivers (and the expectations voters hold for each) varies in terms of whatâ€™s important to members of different political parties, thus reflecting different party views and affiliations. But generally speaking, the drivers (presented alphabetically) can be concisely described as follows:

Action:
Does the candidate have a realistic, well-considered plan or capability for solving the problems facing the country?

Compassion:
Does the candidate care about all the people?

Perception:
Does the candidate have an understanding of the problems facing the county?

Resolve:
Does the candidate have the strength and leadership to guide the country?

Republicans view their Ideal President hierarchically:
1.Â Â Â Resolve
2.Â Â Â Perception
3.Â Â Â Action
4.Â Â Â Compassion
While the Republicans seem to have lots of politicians talking themselves red, white, and blue in the face, if one were to voice the Ideal Republican Presidential candidate, based on how the Republican electorate sees them, he or she might sound like this:

â€œI have been successful solving all the problems Iâ€™ve faced over the years.Â I look at solutions and have learned to focus on what will provide results. Things are broken and they need to be fixed. We need to make America great again. One measure of our greatness is its ability to show concern for all citizens in fair and equitable ways.â€•

Sound familiar? Keep in mind that during a Presidential campaign the air is full of speeches â€“ and vice versa. So if you

were to sift through all the current political rhetoric, the sound bites and tweets, underplay a bit of the bombast, and overlook some of the more unpleasant and belligerent statements, who does that sound like to you?

Anyway, back to the original question of whether brand Trump could become President Trump?

To answer that we asked 1,350 registered Republicans in the nine U.S. Census Regions to assess Mr. Trump using our emotional engagement questionnaire. We then compared those results to the Republican Ideal for President. To facilitate comparisons, the Idealâ€™s category drivers have been calibrated to100%, with Brand Trump measuring up as follows:

Resolve:Â Â Â Â Â Â 84%
Perception:Â Â Â 89%
Action:Â Â Â Â Â Â 82%
Compassion:Â Â Â 79%

On the basis of those assessments, the answer to the original question would be â€œyes,â€• it is possible to migrate this particular Human Brand to Presidential Brand.

For those of you who had other parties and candidates in mind, remember thatâ€™s only one variable, in the absence of a Democratic challenger, 413 days before Election Day. A lot can happen in that time.

Just ask a candidate like Hillary Clinton. Or a brand like McDonaldâ€™s!