

the reduction of complexity. In large classes of systems their dynamics can be described by few order parameters. This serves also as a basis for the application of catastrophe theory as well as of chaos theory because both theories are based on the use of few variables.

The mathematical theory of synergetics provides an algorithm by which the order parameters and their equations can be derived, provided the basic microscopic equations are known, and it allows one to formulate model equations in terms of order parameters if the basic equations are unknown.

Applications. Self-organizing systems are adaptive and robust. They can reconfigure themselves to changing demands and thus keep on functioning in spite of perturbations. Because of this, self-organization has been used as a paradigm to design adaptive and robust artificial systems. The main idea is to engineer elements of a system so that they find a solution or perform a desired function. This approach is useful in non-stationary or very large problem domains, where the solution is not fixed or is unknown. Thus, the engineer does not need to reach a solution, as this is sought for constantly by the self-organizing elements.

Outlook. In the science community there is an increasing awareness of the importance of the concept of self-organization and quite a number of phenomena are now seen under this aspect.

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A BRAND-NEW YOU

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Companies invest an enormous amount of time and money to develop, promote and sustain their corporate brands. Think of Coca-Cola, Apple, BMW or McDonalds. Branding is a powerful way to shape customer perceptions of products or services and to influence their buying behaviour. So, if branding works for companies, why can't it work for you as an individual? Take a few minutes to think about the following questions.

1. Why you need a personal brand. Tom Peters defined brand primarily as what other people think about us - the ideas and associations we stimulate in their minds by the way we look, sound and behave. He said that everyone has a personal brand, whether they like it or not. Some aspects of our brand will be positive, others negative.

Some benefits of personal branding: 1) greater visibility and opportunities for promotion; 2) better working partnerships inside your company; 3) higher salary; 4) the ability to attract and retain more customers; 5) greater self-confidence; 6) clearer focus on what really matters for you at work.

2. Creating a personal brand. It will be easier to create an effective personal brand if you follow these three key steps:

a) Define your personal brand vision. What do I want to become? How much do I want to earn? What kind of leader do I want to be? What kind of team do I want to work in?

b) Define your personal brand. The second step is to define a unique and impressive professional brand. Start by creating a short statement of who you are: the values you represent, your key qualities, and what makes you unique.

c) Promote your personal brand. No matter how good a brand is, it will be of little value if it isn't promoted well. It is essential to move on from creating the brand to making sure.

3. Communicating your brand. Here are various channels you can use to promote your unique personal brand in the workplace.

a) The work channel. The best way to show your talent to others is to find opportunities to work with them.

b) The people channel. One of the best forms of marketing is personal recommendation or "word of mouth". It is essential to cultivate a strong network of carefully selected people who like and respect you.

c) The emotional channel. Corporate brands use emotions to connect strongly to customer desires, such as the wish to be successful or attractive. To gain their customers' trust and loyalty, companies try to make the experience of their brand an enjoyable one.

d) The visual channel. When people see you, they should experience credibility, authority and openness.

e) The auditory channel. What do people think when they hear you? Are they inspired, or do they have mixed feelings towards you and your approach to business?

4. The culture question. Culture can play a key role in brand communication. Whatever values or information we try to transmit, the receivers of our message will see or hear us and interpret the message according to their own mental model and filters. You are likely to have a number of diverse audiences for your brand campaign at work. These may include different national cultures, departmental cultures, age and gender cultures, different business relationships. Effective personal branding requires a clear vision and message but, above all, intelligent promotion to diverse audiences.

5. Always be selling. Developing and communicating your personal brand is not enough. You also have to "walk the talk".

Remember that every encounter represents an opportunity to sell "Brand You", from first impressions in casual social encounters to taking part in international meetings or presentations.

Effective brands are consistent brands. So make sure that how you look, sound and act at all times sends a consistent message about who you are and what your unique value is.

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