

# a branded world

PODCAST

with  
**Luiza Campos**



016 | WHAT YOU NEED TO SUCCEED AT  
BUILDING A BUSINESS AND A  
MEANINGFUL BRAND WITH RAY DEPAUL -  
PART 1

**EPISODE TRANSCRIPT**

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## A BRANDED WORLD PODCAST – 016 | WHAT YOU NEED TO SUCCEED AT BUILDING A BUSINESS AND A MEANINGFUL BRAND WITH RAY DEPAUL - PART 1

Luiza Campos:	00:00	You're listening to a branded world podcast, episode number 16.
Announcer:	00:08	Welcome to a branded world podcast where we explore great brands and give you tips, tools, hacks, and guides to create brands that captivate clients and drive growth in revenue. And now your host, Luiza Campos.
Luiza Campos:	00:28	Hello everyone. And welcome to another episode of a branded world podcast. A branded world is a member of the Alberta podcast network powered by ATB and speaking of ATB, I don't know if most people know about this, but ATB has what they call the atb booster, which is a crowd funding platform for startups and small businesses in Alberta. So anyone that has a great idea for a product or a business can apply and raise funds through this platform. And there's also booster stage events where you can have a chance to pitch your idea in front of a panel of judges and potentially get additional funding for that. So check it out at <a href="http://ATB.com">ATB.com</a> . It's a great tool for startups and small businesses. OK, so in today's episode I am talking to Ray DePaul. Raise one of those people that have so much experience and wisdom that you can talk to him for hours and hours and in fact our conversation was so rich and I think you're going to get so much out of it that I am divided it into two episodes because we actually did talk for a long time, so today is part one of my conversation with Ray DePaul now.
Luiza Campos:	01:43	Ray was the director of product planning for Research In Motion, which is obviously the company that brought us the Blackberry and he was also a successful entrepreneur with two very successful companies and he has since then dedicated his timing, helping entrepreneurs in different ways and one of the ways he's doing that is he is the director for the Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the Mount Royal University. And Ray, as I mentioned, is one of those people who have such a rich experience having built business himself and have also seen big businesses like ram or researching motion and the blackberry been launched and what happened after that. So he has great knowledge and background that provides amazing insights and tips for anyone who is

developing a business and is starting to establish their brand. So as I mentioned today is part one of my conversation with ray and next week we will release part two of this conversation. So without further ado, here, it is part one of my conversation with Ray Depaul.

- Luiza Campos: 03:02 Hi Ray. How are you?
- Luiza Campos: 03:03 I'm great. I'm looking forward to this.
- Luiza Campos: 03:06 Yeah, me too. It's so great to to have you here and we're very lucky actually to listen to your thoughts on, on some of these, some of these topics. So I just want to start by. It would be great if you could give everybody a little bit of a background, how you got to where you are today, some of your experiencing in business and just an overview of your experience.
- Luiza Campos: 03:32 Yeah. Ironically, to, to some of your listeners, my background will be considered a squashes all great creative ideas. I'm currently Mount Royal University on the director of something called the Institute for Innovation and entrepreneurship. So I've got this wonderful job where I help the next generation of entrepreneurs, some figure it out and hopefully either launch companies or join companies that are doing exciting things. I'm probably my best known for the fact that I was part of the original blackberry team. And, um, the, I hope your listeners remember that there was a, there was a hay day if you recall. Uh, so I'm from the Waterloo, Ontario region where I did my, my entire career up until I moved to Mount Royal University. And so tech tech, tech tech, so it was all tech, um, was fortunate to land at a researcher motion or rim and um, just before blackberry. And uh, then I was also fortunate to be part of a few others and did my own and sold that to Intel. And uh, I was thinking about doing it again and I was, I had a sore stomach thinking about doing it again. Um, because it's hard and you know, anybody who is out there actively trying to be an entrepreneur knows it's hard. So, um, I got this great opportunity. So I jumped at it and my wife and I moved out here about six years ago and I'm loving every minute of it.
- Luiza Campos: 05:05 One of the interesting things is, of course you have been an entrepreneur yourself. You are teaching now how to become a successful entrepreneur. So I would love to hear from you, you know, what your thoughts on, on

what does it take because it is hard as you mentioned. It's funny because in one way it's really easy to establish a business nowadays if you have a computer in a Internet access you can to that. But that's very different than you know, than building a very successful business or becoming an intrapreneur. So I would love to hear your thoughts on, you know, what are some of the most important aspects, what the s, what do in years really need to focus on to make sure that they, they will have a successful business.

- Luiza Campos: 05:51 It's been interesting to watch over the last decade. People started to figure this out. Um, the, you know, it's not about you incorporating, it's not about you getting a logo, it's not about your name. It's not, you know, all of these, um, I call those illusions of progress. Um, so they make you feel really good. It's like, look at my local look, I got business cards and um, a lot of early entrepreneurs still can't answer some fundamental questions like, what problem are you solving or what need are you fulfilling? And uh, you know, and Duke does anyone care? And that's the biggest reason startups or new companies fail is that they actually build something that nobody cares about. And so, you know, we're now spending a lot of time, um, with, with young [inaudible], old entrepreneurs actually, um, making sure they really dig into what their customer cares about or what the potential customer cares about or who is their potential customer.
- Luiza Campos: 06:49 That's the other trap. You know, everybody wants to build a, the next Google, which is, you know, Jeremy wonderfully, uh, it's a wonderful product for a whole bunch of people and everybody would die if they didn't have it. Um, the truth is you can't build google. You have to build something that solves a very specific problem for a, a, you know, a smaller group of people who are dying to solve that problem. You can grow from there. Um, but most great brands, most great companies started there. Um, you know, going way back to my blackberry days, you know, the original blackberry business plan, um, you know, I'm not a huge fan of business plans, but they have their place and had the size of the market as 1,000,000 users. That was the ambitious, you know, if we could get a million users, that'd be great. That's a big number.
- Luiza Campos: 07:41 But it's now one of the biggest markets in the world right now. Smartphones. So it always starts in a niche. So really just getting entrepreneurs to focus on kind of the triad of

what problem are you solving for whom and how was your solution uniquely solving it. And if you can answer those things, then you get to move on to things like, what would I call that? And you know, what, um, how would I get that to market and other other challenges. But until you figure those three things out, you're really on standing on quicksand and you're likely going to fail.

Luiza Campos: 08:15 I love that. Illusions of progress. Love that term because it's so true, right? We want those immediate satisfaction. So you want to feel like you're making progress, right? So these things kind of something that you can see or look or show or touch, but it's not really the, the fundamental pieces that will make your company successful. So you can be. And that's why a lot of people in my world, I see that they get really focused on thinking that a brand or the logo or the tagline or the name of the company and they forget those fundamental pieces which, which were just talking about, right?

Luiza Campos: 08:53 The new one I see all the time now, tee shirts, you know, come up with an idea step to make corporate tee shirts and had been given away and there's a place for that. But, um, uh, there's a local company which I'm helping out. And, and, uh, they're corporate teacher literally now is their old name with a sharpie eliminating the letters to make that their new name, which is, you know, trademarkable and the old name wasn't so clearly that they just jumped a little too fast on the whole t shirt purchased. Um, but I have had people point out to me, and I think this is, this is true, sometimes you need an illusion of progress because real progress is hard and it takes a long time. And every so often as an entrepreneur you need to kind of inject yourself with adrenaline, adrenaline, and if that spike, you know, going off and creating a logo and getting excited about the brand a bit. Um, you know, all I would say is just make sure you don't take your eye off the, the real progress you're supposed to need. So if you do need to throw a little, a launch party or something to make yourself feel like you're making progress and that gets you through the day, that is, that's quite all right. But, uh, stay focused on what's important as well.

Luiza Campos: 10:08 Yeah. And I can see that, you know, those little winds can really help, but as you said, you can't take your eyes away from, from that. And a lot of people still think that those launches of the brand is what the team needs, you know,

to rally behind it. But again, they forget that they need much more than that. Right? It has to be that constant reminder, that top of mind to where are they there for, what is their why, what is their purpose? And keeping those values and keeping that purpose in mind is what's really gonna, motivate the internal internally, right?

Luiza Campos: 10:39

Oh absolutely. And I think I've been part over my career, have a few launches that, that went horribly wrong, uh, in the sense that they didn't achieve what we wanted to and that, yeah, the, the launch day was fun. Um, the next three, four weeks as we watched, nothing happened was, uh, you know, did more damage than any shot of adrenaline from launch date. So I think if you don't, and things like kickstarter or a great example that now, um, it's quite easy to post things now and consider yourself. I just launched a kickstarter campaign. The amount of work you have to do leading up to that to make it a successful campaign is, is amazing. So you know, the, the, it's, it feels really good to do your video and now you're done. But I'm kickstarter is now the world's biggest mall and how do you drive people to your little teeny kiosk in that mount mall is the problem. So you've got to figure and you do that by understanding what problem you're solving, by understanding what unique value you can you can bring. And uh, you know, early in your life as an entrepreneur or as a, as a company and your brand is not the logo and the name and uh, your, your brand is tied up with what, what you accomplishing for your, your customers. And if you can do that now you have the right to tell everybody about it. The more visual side of your brand.

Luiza Campos: 12:05

Absolutely, and in fact, I think that's true throughout the lifecycle of the organization that you can't lose track of your brand new purpose. Then things start deteriorating and you lose touch of who you are as a company. I would love to hear your thoughts too on, on trust, because I've talked about this in the podcast before and it seems that, you know, we've been seeing a decline in trust from consumers from so many different institutions, government and even non-profits or NGOs and businesses. And I think this highlights the importance of really having a building a company that is focused on that purpose and that is more than the products and services that they produce that has a bigger goal in mind rather than just having profits are selling a product. And I would love to hear your thoughts on that.

- Luiza Campos: 13:00 Yeah. I mean, one of the reasons I love working with young entrepreneurs is they actually weren't schooled in kind of the old ways of business. And this is a generalization, but business used to be, you know, there's customers have money in their pockets that is rightfully mine. So, you know, I got to somehow get it out of their pockets and into mine, you know, and I'll use products and services to do that. That's like a metaphor that's used quite frequently, has been, and you know, and that, that's where these, all of a sudden, if customers are viewed as a barrier to, you know, to achieving your financial goals, you start to treat them like an adversary or you try to start to treat them like something you have to get past. And uh, you know, we're actually, I see young entrepreneurs or at least young people, I'm not have that attitude at all.
- Luiza Campos: 13:50 I was at an event last night actually where a local entrepreneur, Kevin Reed he d, he started a company called nomadic modular structures and the quite a successful company. Um, and, and he was saying to the audience that, you know, the, the key here is to put your customers, your employees, your partners above your own interests. And if you do that, you will be rewarded. And it's, it's actually an element of trust to even go down that path. Um, but I think that that kind of belief changes the game and it changes. Um, there's an awful stat that says something like 15 percent of employees have an emotional connection to the company. They work for one, five percent and you know, and it's one reason why a startups and entrepreneurs have such an advantage because if you're a five person company, I'm going to guess at least four out of five, if not five out of five have an emotional connection to that company and you know, they will do the work of [inaudible] and they will do authentic work.
- Luiza Campos: 14:56 And, it's usually not rooted in the product itself. It sometimes can be, but it's usually rooted in, you know, we're trying to change the world. And most companies start because the founder, um, you know, is almost waging a war on the status quo, on behalf of a customer. Right? So speech, they see this problem out there that no one else is solving and they get passionate about, I've got to solve that because there are thousands or tens of thousands of people that are dying for a solution to this. And, you know, it's that kind of founder's mindset that is so much easier to have in a smaller startup than it is to

try to inject into a larger organization that maybe he didn't have that purpose, um, over the last decade or so or so. Um, interesting. We actually are going to kick off some research as well around that sense of, you know, how do you inject purpose into an organization, um, because it's absolutely what, uh, the next generation wants to join a, you know, stereotype again, but they're not generally looking for just the finance, their jobs to give them financial reward alone. They looking for, um, you know, more kind of social and emotional rewards from doing the work they do.

- Luiza Campos: 16:14 And I think that's true. And I wonder if you agree, I think that's true from, from both an employee perspective. So people wanting to, uh, work for companies that they believe in the values that they hold true, that they want to be part of that bigger purpose and help achieve that. But I also think it's true from a consumer perspective, consumers want to engage with brands that are purpose driven brands. And I wonder if you agree with me that this is part because you've talked about this, this triangle, right, of your ship. So what is the problem you're trying to solve? Who is this helping you know, who's your audience and what makes it unique? What, why is your, your solution unique? And part of that uniqueness, I believe is, is that purpose that your organization has. Do you agree with that?
- Luiza Campos: 17:03 Yeah, absolutely. I think that, um, you know, when, when, when, that, when that is core to what you're doing as opposed to. I mean, it's still, it's still great if, you know, the company does x and then it gives away money to why, um, but when you can somehow, um, you know, inject that purpose as core to what you're doing. Uh, and, uh, you know, it's really easy to think of, you know, if you're a non-profit, it's obvious if you're, um, you know, doing something like God benevity, it's obvious, but, you know, it's where it gets really challenging is how do you do that in a, in a company that may not have an obvious social impact, uh, in, in their products or services. Uh, and I think it's actually than it, than it sounds, right? Because in the end, companies are just groups of people.
- Luiza Campos: 17:53 And one of the things, one of the reasons I love benevity is because what they are saying to their customers, this is my interpretation is, um, you know, you are a, a, a company of, you know, thousands of employees. Those employees have values. Those employees have, um,



organizations and causes that they want to support. Why wouldn't you as a company just back what their values and their beliefs are and you know, help them support the causes they believe in. And it really removes the notion that, you know, the, the company, uh, you know, is independent of its employees. It's like we're one in the same. And, uh, you know, one of the things I constantly say at the university is no matter what we do as a university, our brand will be defined by the students that leave are this place. So, you know, regardless of what we do and color schemes or banners or the rest of it, we can, um, you know, give more voice to, to what our students are doing.

- Luiza Campos: 18:56 But that is what our brand will be known as a. and kind of getting to that core I think is the important thing for all companies regardless of the size there. Um, I remember actually when I was in my twenties, um, I joined a company and uh, my first day there, there was this big event going on, there's probably 50 employees, um, and a huge banner like 20 foot banner that said whatever it takes. And so my first thought was, you know, that this is pretty cool. It's probably some customer service thing and we all had to go up and sign the banner. So my first day I signed it without knowing what it was and what the band, what it meant was we're going to get to \$20,000,000 in revenue this year. It was a month before the end of the year, whatever it takes. And my heart just sunk. And, you know, so they were basically telling their entire employees that the only thing that matters is we were sitting at 18,000,000 and we had to get to 20,000,000.
- Luiza Campos: 19:59 And uh, you know, I lasted a few years there, but it was never more than just a job. And uh, you know, I think those gestures, absolutely. I understand the importance. I'm, uh, you know, I've been in the private sector my entire life until now of the financial rewards, but putting that front and center, uh, cause, you know, whatever it takes, I mean, that's, that's there's a nod and a wink fair that says, you know, if that means we have to screw over a customer or if that means we have to, you know, walk and unethical line. And it was just, um, yeah, it was a real early lesson for me. And uh, I haven't, I haven't had that since.
- Luiza Campos: 20:44 And you end up shooting yourself in the foot because you diminish the value of your customers who diminish

the value of, of your employees by having statements like that and especially when, as we were talking about earlier, the importance of trust and people really looking for companies that they, they can trust to do business with that have a purpose higher than the, than the company itself or the products and services they sell. You know, they may be attracted at first, but they won't continue doing business with a company that, that has those types of focus.

- Luiza Campos: 21:22 And if you're the incumbent product that people are buying right now. And I'm a Lyft, which we don't have in Calgary. But, uh, God, I think about 30 percent market share now and growing, you know, they kind of have a me too product. But where, where, where they're completely different is their values and the way they treat their employees and what they represent versus what, what Uber Represents. And so now that is the tie. And so the incumbent is about to lose a whole lot of market share to somebody who basically has the exact same product, but a whole different set of values. And um, you know, so I think if you're, if you're looking at this and going, OK, how do I, how do I compete with an incumbent or how do I maintain my presence, my saturated doesn't encumbent, um, and you're not thinking about values and you're just focused on features and pricing and you know, you're, uh, you're gonna get sideswiped by somebody who's got a deeper meaning to what they're doing.
- Luiza Campos: 22:33 So I love that example because there's a lot of businesses out there that are existing businesses that say, OK, there's pretty much, you know, there's such high competition in any industry or in any field and how do I compete against these people? Or even if I am just beginning and there's this other company, like in the example with the Uber, Uber and Lyft who have hold of the whole market. So how do I compete against that? So I love this example because here we have a real life example of someone who is successfully competing against the, the major market holder, right?
- Luiza Campos: 23:17 I think things like, you know, gaining trust that it's not rocket science, you know, most of the stuff, uh, we, we learned when we were children, uh, and uh, you know, I think the simple answer is, you know, really treat your customer relationship the way you would treat your friendships. And now within a friendship, it's reciprocal,

right? You have to get something out of that friendship. Um, but you know, how would you build in a personal friendship? And I, and I think one that people miss a lot is, well, first off, you don't, you pick your friends carefully so you know, you can't be friends to everyone and you can't have everyone as your customer. So there are some kinds of customers that you choose not to have and that keeps you out of a lot of problems. If those pens, the customers, you can't fulfill your promise as much as other kinds of customers, um, and the, you know, then there's the classic stuff, right? Like truly isn't listen and be honest and you know, and anticipate when they need something, um, and uh, you, that's w which is really hard to do, but it's that whole, you know, what, what is best for our customer while we make this decision a, I don't know what's behind the whole apple battery crisis they're having now. Um, but certainly the feeling is that they made decisions that were better for apple than they were for their customer. Don't know if that's true but it's certainly the perception.

Luiza Campos: 24:45

And again, this goes back to that uniqueness, right to the, to the brand, because as you said with the example of mount royal and I completely agree with you, you can try and send the message of what your brand is. Your brand is really what other people say about you. So the best you can do is to be consistent with your message, but also with your actions to actually demonstrate that what you're saying you are, you are. And this goes to, to that uniqueness part of your triangle that you were talking about and what you were just mentioning here. You know, that even, even when you're faced with hard decisions, if you're not true to your values or to your brand, that's when you start deteriorating, right? That's when it starts to radiate your brand perception and your brand value.

Luiza Campos: 25:34

Yeah. I think the, um, you know, one phrase is the, you, you can't fake a brand. And I think the message to ceos and to leaders is, um, you can't just wrap a campaign around a poor product or a, a, you know, a so, so service and expect amazing results. And the message to marketers is that they actually need to earn a place at the table way before the product launches because that's when a lot of the decisions that will impact the pro, you know, whether you can deliver on the promise or not. Um, so and I think if, you know, if we can get to the point where we're, you know, we're not asked as marketers to

fake brand to create an exciting brand when there wasn't something exciting to, to, to market. Um, you know, I think that's, that's the big one here.

Luiza Campos: 26:29 And, uh, you know, in my career, and this is probably a tech industry thing, it was really hard for a brand or a marketing person to get to the table. So a lot of, uh, similar in, in some, uh, Calgary's dominated industries. And, uh, somehow we got to get that person there so that, that person who's been trained on empathy and how to understand what customers need, and again, not just that a at a functional level, uh, but you know, at a deeply emotional social level there, there's a wonderful, uh, it's probably old now, but it's called the jobs to be done theory and it's now used quite commonly in entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs where it's, you know, look out what jobs that you're actually helping your customer get done. And uh, one of the first articles was written by this Clayton Christiansen who's a icon and entrepreneurship from Harvard and it was about blackberry and I was at blackberry at the time, um, uh, which was a long time ago. So anybody who's thinking I was part of the downfall, I was way out of there before the downfall.

Luiza Campos: 27:39 It was probably 2000. And so he wrote this article, they did a bit of a study and they determined that the reason people hire blackberry, that was the way that they used the term is to help fill gaps in their day. And that was totally against what we thought the brand was. So we thought the brand of blackberry was all around productivity and, and I think actually, you know, was for some time it was all around being more productive. And uh, so we all read this thing by this icon and we went to missing it, you know, our customers are looking at how do they reply to that email faster so they have a competitive edge over their competitors. And, and it was a completely different view of things because what we missed was the fact that there was a person behind that blackberry, not just an employee or a professional.

Luiza Campos: 28:38 Um, so, you know, we, we missed what, what emotional, uh, you know, the fact that, uh, I like, I remember doing this, but it never clued in that this was important to our customers. You know, when I'm traveling now I can be in constant communication with my family. Um, we, we never considered that part of the brand. It was always about how do I get access to my work email, so I'm

staying on top of things and uh, I think just for, and it's especially important in B2B, um, we, we, you know, we, we like to think that the business to business businesses done very logically with return on investments and it can be, but we always have to remember there's an individual who's making these decisions and um, you know, they have other needs other than just functional needs.

Luiza Campos: 29:27

And that is so right. Because we always like to think that we're very logical human beings and we make decisions based on facts and data. But in fact, we make decisions based on emotion. The more we can, we can remember that or keep that in mind, the better we'll be able to actually talk to our customers and, or develop a product and service that fits them better chance of having marketers in or being part of the decision making process. I could not agree with you more. I always say that, you know, branding and marketing is not an end of the process phase. It's not something that you can come with, oh, here's the product and service you want, we want to sell now, go ahead and put some key messages and make it look pretty and salad. It has to be part and it's a fundamental part of who the company is of the brand has to be intrinsic in everything that they do. And also because it brings that perspective of the customer. Right? So he has to really be part of, as I said, with everything that the company does from the very beginning.

Ray DePaul: 30:38

Yeah. And I think that both sides are to blame here. So I think the, um, you know, let's call it be engineering, financially driven organizations, uh, absolutely need to figure out how to value that better, but the marketer marketing executives out there and need to figure out a little bit of empathy on their own part of what that group needs to hear and that you have to show empathy for the other aspects of the business that, you know, maybe you haven't in the past and obviously some do. Um, so, you know, I think the, I watched as they went through the blackberry naming exercise and uh, to come up with a blackberry and I think they paid \$50,000 to a law firm to do this. And uh, they were masterful this firm at know the people around the table that are making the decisions were either engineers or accountants and financial people.

Ray DePaul: 31:38

And they kept on bringing in, you know, they bring 50 names. Uh, and they always end. It always included.

Blackberry was in there from the beginning and the name that was the code name for the, the original blackberry, what was called pocket link. So it was just the internal name that we're using in the problem with internal names is the grow on people. Um, my advice to anyone out there who's starting something and hasn't figured out a name yet, name it something ridiculous. So you're forced to change it because otherwise it just, it starts to stick and you start to like it. And I'm so pocket link was actually quite a popular name amongst this group. So this company would just whittle it down. So here's 50 and they, you know, they got them to pick out 20 and then 10 and blackberry and pocket link.

Ray DePaul:

32:23

We're in it to like the last five. So they basically slow played them, right? So they acknowledged they did. There was never a lecture. Those never this, you know, um, you, that's an awful name. The overtime constantly just kept talking about the values of the other brands and you know, the big value of the brand or the name blackberry was that it means nothing. So you can make that, you can fill that with, you know, it's a vessel to carry whatever brand you want to carry now or into the future that, that really lit up the team. Uh, and, you know, they started to talk about what this company could be in 10 years and, you know, pocket link really didn't feel like it had the legs to get there. Whereas, you know, something as I give them so much credit, the, you know, the, the deciders where the co ceos at the time, and again, one guy's a big geeky and venture and the other guys, you know, a financial strategist, um, and you know, they, they ended up picking the right brand. Most people forget, but it was the only four. At one point in time it was the only Canadian brand in the world's top 20 brands. So yeah, it's uh, and uh, you know, the fall from grace is sad, but I do like to remember the times when it was on top.

Luiza Campos:

33:46

I hope you enjoy my conversation with Ray Depaul, director of the Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Mount Royal University. As I said before, ray has so much insight and experience to share and ray has a lot more wisdom to share, so stay tuned for part two of my conversation with Ray Depaul and to make sure you don't miss out that episode. You can subscribe on itunes or go to a branded world podcast.com and subscribe there, and if you are enjoying a branded world podcast episodes, please leave us a review on itunes. I also recommend you checking out

other podcasts at Alberta podcast network. There's a huge variety of topics covered in the podcasts that are part of the network and I am sure you will find other very interesting podcasts there as well. So thank you for listening. And until next time.

Announcer: 34:43

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