

Pio Schunkur Blog Full Transcript

Recorded February 12 2016

Question 1

You joined Samsung Mobile one year ago. What were your initial goals when you joined the company?

Pio Schunker:

Well, the goals were set very clearly by senior management when I joined and those were twofold. One was to take this incredibly famous engineering company and make it into one of the world's most loved brands. It was to actually help the brand stand for one singular point of view that would be understood by consumers no matter where they were in the world and for the brand to express itself in both an emotional and visual language that could get translated across any region that the brand was present in.

How have those changed based on what you've learned about the brand and the industry in the past year?

Pio Schunker:

I don't think the goals changed as much as I think what drastically changed is how we got to those goals. There were two things that really surprised me. I think in typical, very large companies, when you're looking to create a global brand and a global brand marketing effort it typically tends to happen from the top down in a command and control way. And I think what was so unusual for Samsung is that is absolutely not how Samsung will work and function effectively. And so from the very start we actually worked with the regions in collaboration with HQ to actually realize this vision. So for the very first month I was with HQ, really understanding from senior management exactly what they wanted to do and what they wanted to achieve. And then for the next seven or eight months, I was absolutely on the road working with every region trying to get the input into how we would create this brand.

The second thing that absolutely astounded me and I think separates Samsung from any company I've actually worked at, was the fact that it moves at the speed of technology. Most big companies are incredibly strategic but ultimately at a very considerate pace as they execute this strategy. Once

we had the strategy nailed down with the regions, we moved to execute with the speed that I think only a Samsung can execute at.

Question 2

What unique perspective did you bring to Samsung Mobile that has influenced your approach to market?

Pio Schunker:

I think two things. One is the experience that comes from having been on both sides of the fence of creating a global brand. And I think I've had the great fortune of learning from the very best that's out there and I've also had the fortune of learning from my own mistakes. And when global brands work, they work for one reason, which is collaboration or lack thereof. And I think that that is the understanding that I hopefully will bring to the table on this.

The second one is the art of storytelling -- because ultimately for us to succeed it's not about features but it's about how these products and features actually create a meaning in people's lives and that relies on telling a story that means something to consumers.

Question 3

Samsung Mobile is one of the most recognized brands in the world. How did you approach this effort to preserve and build on the company's brand strength and industry leadership?

Pio Schunker:

I was hired to bring in an external point of view, a fresh point of view, a fresh sense of objectivity but the biggest danger of anyone coming in from the outside is to walk in on day one with an external bias that they're ready to impose on everyone. And the only way to succeed in building a true brand that lasts in the company -- and that is the critical word, "that lasts" -- is to base it on something that is inherently true of the DNA of the company and the very behavior of that company. So what I looked at first was how that company organically believed and what they believed in -- which was this notion of engineering, technology, ingenuity, this ability to adapt so quickly to what was

happening externally and completely change what is a massive, massive company in line with that vision of what was happening externally.

That is inherently who Samsung is. And so the real point was to build on top of that foundational element of innovation, of ingenuity, of speed to get to something that would then be relevant to consumers on an everyday basis. All I've done is taken what is inherently true of the company and made it manifest in a way that is emotionally relevant to today's consumers.

Question 4

How has that experience shifted Samsung Mobile's approach to marketing?

Pio Schunker:

The biggest shift I think you're going to notice this year -- starting with the film we are releasing today and continuing through all of our consecutive flagship ventures -- will be more storytelling. And the first story we're going to kick off with is the story of our legacy of innovation. It's something quite honestly we have not told enough of even though we've had a history of firsts, all the way back to when we first started in the mobile category. But it's just something we never talked about and, therefore, never got our fair share of credit for.

And moving forward you're going to see a very big shift from us -- because when we do talk about our products and features, they're no longer going to be just the techs and specs that perhaps we have been very guilty of previously. We're going to talk about our products within the context of what they mean in your everyday life and you will see that these aren't just innovations created for their own sake, these are innovations that truly have been created to have a purpose and meaning in people's lives. And we're going to base that on universal human insights and truths that I really believe will contribute to making this brand a loved brand.

Question 5

where did you find inspiration? Did you draw from other brands that you admire?

Pio Schunker:

Yes, of course, walking in, having worked on some of the biggest brands out there -- you do look at the Cokes and the Nikes of the world. You do look to brands; to businesses that are absolutely fundamentally changing the economy like in AirBnB. And you do want to look to brands like Mini Cooper that have absolutely redefined how a brand interacts with its consumers.

But those are all, I think, the cliché places that a marketer goes to -- and the expected places that you would go to. And what surprised me the most and what was the most inspiring for me was my very first day coming onboard at Samsung and being given the employee orientation by HR. Because literally in that employee orientation was an understanding and the realization that this company wasn't just a tech company. That it had actually been created with the intent of being of benefit to its fellow human beings and of to mankind. And this notion of collective human progress was a crucial foundational element for the company's creation and point of origination. To even know that the name Samsung meant "three stars" and the notion of shining brightly forever, which was about the legacy the company wanted to leave behind for itself and for humankind. That immediately set the blueprint for the brand that I knew we were going to create together.

[There is no question 6 -- it was deleted]

Question 7

Your first marketing film ends with "Who knows where progress will take us?" What does that mean?

Pio Schunker:

That was very intentional. We're an engineering company. That's the core of our DNA. So in part the film really is a celebration of all the places we have been and all the innovations we've created as well as a look forward to all the places we will go. And it really is a celebration of that idea. But every great brand and every great company has an enemy. It fights against something and the thing I found out in my very first day at Samsung is Samsung considers complacency to be its number one enemy. And I think what this film just subtly touches is this ongoing drive to never be satisfied with the status quo and to constantly keep inventing so that we push and redefine the boundaries.

And I think the film absolutely, emotionally, is a celebration of that. What it begins to lean into the eternal debate on whether the smartphone market has truly matured. And this is truly a rallying-cry against that -- to say no, with this flagship we are going to absolutely redefine the boundaries of what a phone can do.

Question 8

Do you feel that rules are meant to be broken? What rules have you re-written at Samsung?

Pio Schunker:

The rules of engagement are being rewritten about how we work together. And what is true about how the company succeeds -- because it always listens to its consumers -- is equally true about how HQ wants to have a collaborate two-way relationship with its regions. And this brand will succeed based on that two-way engagement.

Question 9

Where do you see the brand going in the next five years?

Pio Schunker:

I'd say this is the three to five year journey and vision to redefine our brand, our company. This is not an ad campaign where we will shift on an annual basis. This is a journey we're on. We will course-correct when needed but this is how big, bold brands are created and how big brands endure.

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