



## John Noseworthy: Leadership When It Really Matters

### Part Three: Redefining the Identity of a Successful Business

With John Noseworthy, MD, Former President and CEO, Mayo Clinic and board member, AlixPartners, and Simon Freakley, Chief Executive Officer, AlixPartners

Why must even established businesses focus on branding?

#### 00:14 | John Noseworthy

Mayo Clinic was a quiet company for the first 150 years, and there was a mystique about Mayo that played very well. If it's serious, you probably need the help of the Mayo Clinic.

We're not actively managing it, and our best tool was word of mouth. When corporate marketing really took off in healthcare, being a quiet company meant that others were copying our brand, if you will, and the fact we were quiet made people wonder if we were in decline in some way or other. And so, I went to the directors and said, "I really think we need to start talking positively about Mayo and defining who we are and what we do and what differentiates us."

#### 00:58 | Simon Freakley

We have our own branding journey going on. The first challenge is that we're just famous for restructuring, particularly in North America. The second challenge is that we've been rather low key about what we do, and so we've been thinking about how do we become better known for the things that we're really good at? Accelerated transformations, responses to disruption, the need to lean into things to produce outcomes, often on a schedule – AlixPartners are well suited to do it.

Can marketing to a broader audience dilute the brand?

#### 01:26 | John Noseworthy

Well, there was some concern about that, but when one looks at why people would travel to the Mayo Clinic, if you have a serious or complex illness, we could provide you with second opinion, or a new opinion, or solve the problem quickly - that's our differentiator. It didn't dilute anything, it just solidified it.

#### 01:43 | Simon Freakley

Did you feel somehow you had to deal with maybe a perception that the Mayo was exclusive?

#### 01:48 | John Noseworthy

Many patients told us, "Oh, I'm not sick enough," or "I'm not wealthy enough," or "I'm not famous enough". And the vast majority of our patients are just like everyone else in the country, but we had to help them understand that.

I've learned this from my marketing colleagues, you have to give them brand awareness and then if they have a personal need for healthcare, they will call on that.



Does an organization's purpose connect with its brand?

**02:13 | Simon Freakley**

An organization with a strong sense of purpose also seems to be able to articulate its brand well. The Mayo has a very strong brand, but I also feel it has a very strong sense of purpose.

**02:23 | John Noseworthy**

Well, I think AlixPartners does too.

**02:25 | Simon Freakley**

So, people say to me sometimes, "What does AlixPartners do?" Fundamentally, we preserve markets, we preserve companies, we preserve jobs.

**02:31 | John Noseworthy**

With our turnaround at Mayo, almost no one lost their job – we just stopped hiring people. And we hired so many people that if you just stop spending money on hiring and you continue your revenue growth, all of a sudden you have some income that you can invest.

You have to have faith to get through this change management phase. It's tough, but by making this change and making it successfully, we could fulfill our mission much better than we were doing it before. The world will be a better place because of it.