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If Trump's Brand Was a Stock; Buy or Sell?

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The Trump business brand has long been synonymous with luxury: [High-end hotels](#), exclusive [golf courses](#), premium vodka, even fine chocolates.

President-elect Donald Trump has spent decades building a brand that caters to the world's moneyed elite – if you are swinging golf clubs at one of his 18 courses or buying a Trump condominium, chances are that you are paying a premium to enjoy some bragging rights.

But now that Trump is moving into the White House, marketing and business experts are wondering what kind of impact that will have on a brand he spent years so carefully crafting. His performance as president will not just affect his political fate -- it will also determine the future of his business brand.

"If he's successful as president, the brand's going to benefit," said Eric Yaverbaum, a public relations expert and chairman of Ericho Communications. "If not, the brand's going to get hurt. There's just no way around it."

But the answer may not be all that simple, particularly with someone like Trump -- who experts say has defied conventional wisdom time and time again.

"There's nothing about his victory that was predictable," said Yaverbaum. "He broke every rule in the book and he's about to be president of the United States. I would say the same thing about his brand – they can break every single rule in the book and still win."

Robert Passikoff from Brand Keys has been tracking the value of the Trump Brand for 25 years. Passikoff focuses on seven categories of the Trump brand: TV and entertainment, golf and country clubs, real estate, suits, ties, dress shirts and jewelry.

"He was one of those celebrities that we focused in on that seemed to have a smart sense of what he was doing with his brand," Passikoff told FOXBusiness.com.

Earlier this month Trump tweeted that he'll leave the Trump organization before he takes office and that his children will take over the business. Currently, Trump is the chairman and president of the Trump Organization. Donald Jr., Ivanka, and Eric are executive vice presidents for development and acquisitions.

"In a company like this, titles are pretty meaningless, to be honest," said Peter Reinhart, Director of Monmouth University's Kislak Real Estate Institute and former General Counsel to Hovnanian Enterprises Inc. "All it signals is that they're very close to the CEO. It's more about: how prepared have they been?"

The Trump brand is extremely valuable according to Passikoff's research. Adding the Trump name to a product like suits, ties, dress shirts and jewelry gives about 25 percent added value. Adding the Trump name to real estate gives an even bigger added value, about 43 percent. As a reference, attaching an A-list celebrity's name to a product typically creates a 12 to 15 percent lift.

But the Trump brand is not entirely immune to controversy. The bruising presidential campaign did make the business brand take a hit.

Leading up to the election, Trump made controversial comments about immigration, Mexico and Muslims.

That led people – including some high-profile celebrities – to boycott his products, hotels and

golf courses. And the release of a controversial tape of Trump and Access Hollywood host Billy Bush disrespecting women did not help his business interests – the brand took a hit, Passikoff said. But, he added, it jumped back up after he won the election.

“I’d say this is from a branding perspective – that’s significant for us because most of the time when human brands take the type of hit that he took with the Access Hollywood tape release, they don’t generally come back as strong,” Passikoff said. “So it’s something we were calling the President-Elect effect.”

Most of the time, he said, when human brands get into trouble, they never come back as strong as they were. And the Trump brand, in just about every category, is up significantly, he said.

“And from a logic perspective I guess it makes sense that when you become the most powerful man in the world, it does something for your brand,” he said.

As per boycotts of the Trump brand, Passikoff doesn’t think it’s going to last. He believes most of the boycotts are emotional and will wear off. He also thinks at some point it will be very cool for people to be at a hotel that was built by the president – or former president – of the United States.

Now that the presidential seal is attached to the brand, Passikoff believes it will only get stronger. Passikoff said whether he’s involved with the brand or not, it’s now impossible to separate the two.

“If you want me to guess, I’d guess the numbers go up. If this were stock, I’d buy it,” he said. “I assume that the brand will be stronger than it ever was – no matter what.”

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