



# KOBE BRYANT BEYOND THE COURT

BY SELINA GO



Kobe Bryant immediately pops into your mind when you think about the legends of basketball, such that he unintentionally created a catchphrase 'KOBEEE' and turned throwing a piece of paper in the bin into the greatest show on earth. It is quite amazing to see the level of influence his reputation has achieved, yet with many taking their talents to the NBA, how did he differentiate himself and reach his level of stardom?

**A combination of various marketing principles was utilised to contribute to his success. Most importantly, the idea of brand image and reputation was paramount to the legacy he created.**

Kobe's death was news that shocked the world and shook us to our core. We all mourn the life he left behind and his brand that will never be forgotten, only championed. But his success was a result of so much more than his sporting accomplishments where he won 5 NBA championships and became one of the most decorated sportsmen of all time. For Kobe Bryant, it was less about what he accomplished and more about how he did it – a unique singularity of purpose that impressed everyone around the world. His purpose cultivated into what became a phenomenon, a legacy founded on his mentality of grit and work ethic - the **Mamba Mentality**.



He created his **own personal brand and identity**, the **Black Mamba** - a winning attitude dedicated to instill an ethos of competitiveness and confidence into people. This was a highly strategic move because it allowed him to differentiate himself in the industry by establishing an image that attracted fans because it reflects characteristics people strive for within themselves. Over the years, Kobe became prolific on the internet and social media platforms, having over 20 million Instagram followers whilst commercialising the hashtags *#mambamentality*, *#blackmamba* and *#mambaout*. **Brand image is really important in this case because it is related to the consumer behaviour and the target market of his brand whereby his success can be indicated by his net worth estimated at over \$600m.** This brand image became popularised globally and attracted people because they resonated with his desire to transform anger into inspiration and weakness into greatness, drawing fans to him as both a player and a person.

## Kobe Bryant charged with sexual assault

Bryant: 'I made the mistake of adultery'

Tuesday, December 16, 2003 Posted: 0549 GMT ( 1:49 PM HKT)

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by Phil Mustnick

10th Feb 2020 8:26 AM



## Kobe Bryant's Image Forever Tarnished?

By Bryan Robinson

8 January 2006, 02:47 • 10 min read

Case against popular NBA star Kobe Bryant could chill other athlete endorsement deals.

July 22, 2003: 3:08 PM EDT

By Chris Isidore, CNN/Money Senior Writer

Yet Kobe has also shown us the unavoidable nature and the subsequent consequences of bad publicity. From challenges concerning feuds with Shaq and his coach, his career became tumultuous and led to a series of events that tarnished both his personal and brand reputation. Kobe was hit with sexual assault allegations that had a severe impact on the public's perception of him by making global headlines. **Public perception is really important because it will either make or break your brand image.** In this case, it was the latter and led to the termination of several sponsorship contracts such as Nutella and McDonalds. Whilst good publicity can positively influence a brand's reputation, Bryant was hit with bad publicity that ultimately lost him fans and contributed to the decline in his jersey sales that resulted in him not being in the top 20.

**Whilst his life and brand image was negatively disrupted, he was effective in overcoming the negative publicity he faced through a remarkable effort at personal rebranding and this marked a shift in his mentality - a clean slate.** A step he took to repair his image was in 2006 when he changed from his famously worn No. 8 to No. 24. Nike helped him rebrand by promoting the image of him as a fighter and this was the start of his Mamba Mentality narrative. The Mamba brand originated from Kobe's interest in creating an alter ego after watching *Kill Bill*, an allusion to the deadly snake which he wanted to use for his new persona and this has proven to be an extremely successful image-rehabilitation campaign.

*"If I create this alter ego... it separates the personal stuff, right?' You're not watching David Banner -- you're watching the Hulk. "*



He relentlessly hammered away at his love and passion for basketball until something broke, often his opposition, sometimes those closest to him and after two decades, himself. As a final parting gift to solidify his legacy, he presented every attendee at his final game with a farewell letter titled *'Dear Basketball,'* increasing the global traction his retirement itself had already gained. It was a really strong PR move because it was an empathetic farewell note dedicated to his fans and supporters and this reflected his thoughts on the two decades of the world scrutinising his every move, step and chase after every loose ball. **He also embodied the marketing principle of corporate social responsibility, the idea that people and companies are dedicated to integrating societal and community interests into their operations.** This was through his investment in human potential and the future generation of basketball by creating Mamba Sports Academy which allowed him to raise awareness about the necessity of kids and women's sports. Kobe stayed true to his identity and took these steps to cement his legacy.



Kobe never wavered from his goal to wring every last drop of success from his career that was possible, hardships be damned. His success demonstrates a valuable lesson that we can all take away - a positive brand image is so much more than just accomplishments, it can also be attributed by the public's perception of you and how you can influence them in a positive light. **We at Marksoc believe that this lesson can also be applied both personally and professionally - one's perception of you or your business is dependent on the personal or brand image you reflect.**

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