

My Creative Team THINKing

Accidental Branding

By Harry Hoover
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Oops, I've built a brand. Now what do I do? That's sort of the premise behind a new book, *Accidental Branding: How Ordinary People Build Extraordinary Brands*, that comes out March 19. I've just finished reading the galley proofs.

Author David Vinjamuri, adjunct professor of marketing at New York University, has compiled the stories of eight remarkable entrepreneurs who started out to build a business but built brands instead.

The features on each entrepreneur read like Vanity Fair profiles. So, they are entertaining as well as informative. My favorite was on John Peterman of J. Peterman fame. It was probably my favorite because like Peterman, I've always believed that brands should build a myth and spread those myths through stories and lore.

Peterman faced a unique brand challenge. After building this exclusive brand that was known primarily only by the well-heeled, the Seinfeld show hijacked the brand for the purpose of satire. It almost took down Peterman, the company.

The author sums up the book with Six Rules that I totally agree with:

- Rule No. 1 – Do sweat the small stuff.
- Rule No. 2 – Pick a fight.
- Rule No. 3 – Be your own customer.
- Rule No. 4 – Be unnaturally persistent.
- Rule No. 5 – Build a myth.
- Rule No. 6 – Be faithful.

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