

BIG THINK

Marketing By Accident

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Ben McConnell of the Church of the Customer blog features [10 Questions with David Vinjamuri](#) author of the new book “Accidental Branding,” which he looks at inexperienced entrepreneurs who nonetheless built well-known brands (Clif Bars, Columbia Sportswear).

A couple of Vinjamuri’s better comments from the Q&A on how ‘accidental’ businesses get built up:

Accidental branders do not have the resources that corporate brands do, so they’re forced to rely on their customers for word of mouth. Along the way they see that treating customers as the messengers actually works better. And they realize that employees, vendors, suppliers, friends and family are also important conduits for the brand message.

There are many happy accidents in business, but an accident alone won’t build a multimillion dollar brand. The book is called “Accidental Branding” because in each case there was some fortuitous accident (like Roxanne Quimby thumbing a ride from beekeeper Burt Shavitz or Gary Erickson choking on his 6th Power Bar) that caused the entrepreneur to realize that he or she was uniquely positioned to solve a problem. What followed was a huge amount of sweat and hard work. That’s why solving your own problem — something you uniquely understand — is so important.

The book seems to extend the high-tech concept of viral marketing to consumer goods and services (McConnell calls this ‘citizen marketing’). Have you read it? Give us a comment on it.

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