



INSIGHT

Required Reading: Learn the New Rules for Building Brands *The lessons to be learned from "accidental" marketers.*

by Christopher Musico
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Caution: *Accidental Branding* is not a step-by-step guide to building a surefire brand that will stand the test of time and make millions in the process. There are too many of those books promising success, and too many of them leave readers disappointed and defeated. What David Vinjamuri decided to do in writing this book was speak with "accidental" marketers, from Gert Boyle of Columbia Sportswear to Craig Newmark of Craigslist fame. Vinjamuri uncovered six rules these successful marketers all followed: sweat the small stuff; pick a fight; be your own customer; be unnaturally persistent; build a myth; and be faithful. While Vinjamuri doesn't guarantee automatic success, he says readers will learn volumes on building a brand in today's world. *CRM* magazine's Christopher Musico had the opportunity to speak with Vinjamuri.

CRM magazine: *What inspired you to write this book?*

David Vinjamuri: It came from a class I was teaching at NYU on brand positioning. My students are working professionals from big companies, but mostly people who come from finance, sales, or operations. [They] don't have a marketing background or an MBA. I noticed many of the students felt they were at a disadvantage when competing with those with MBAs and strong marketing backgrounds, so I wanted to do an assignment for the class to give them a little bit of hope. I asked them to write a paper on an entrepreneur who built a very large brand without the benefit of any marketing background. When I read the papers, I was really struck by the fact that they were all great brands -- even the small ones I had never heard of, including [Roxanne] Quimby [of Burt's Bees] and [John] Peterman [of the J. Peterman catalog].

CRM: *Which rule is the most important and why?*

DV: I think that I would probably say two: do sweat the small stuff, and build a myth. In the book, I use the example of The Art of Shaving. There are many true reasons explaining why they started that company. From the time this couple [Myriam Zaoui and Eric Malka] met, they had been talking about opening a business. Myriam Zaoui had actually worked for a spa company in France and was very interested in opening a spa of some kind. Early on in their relationship, Myriam noticed her husband shaved at night because of razor burn. These reasons may be co-equal, but the founders realized [that] telling the story by talking about what she did for her husband made a very different myth. Understanding how people are going to talk about your business and highlighting the shareable part of that is really important.

CRM: *What's the one thing you'd like readers to take away from the book?*

DV: Anybody can build a great brand if they have passion for it. There's an underlying thread of passion, and it doesn't mean you have to be an entrepreneur. You can do this within corporate systems, but you just have to stay close to who your actual user is.

CRM: *What will readers find most interesting?*

DV: I actually tried to write a travel book instead of a business book, and so that's why my experiences with the entrepreneurs are in it. My theory coming into it was when you're dealing with brands started by entrepreneurs, their personalities are so infused into the brand that the better you know the entrepreneurs, the more you'll understand the brand.

Other Page-Turners:

- Just as Six Sigma changed the way manufacturing defined quality, John H. Fleming and Jim Asplund hope to create excellence, revolutionize businesses, and boost profits for sales and service organizations with their new book ***Human Sigma***. The book also offers an approach that combines a method to assess the health of the employee-customer encounter with a process to improve it. *Human Sigma* provides five new rules to help businesses successfully manage those employee-customer interactions.
- Worried about the statistics that show nearly two-thirds of all American employees are either actively looking for new jobs or just going through the motions at their current places of employment? You should be. Judith Bardwick's ***One Foot Out the Door*** offers ways for

employers to combat high turnover, low productivity, and lackluster performance caused by what she terms "the psychological recession."

- Every purchasing decision comes with its own limits on how much time a consumer is willing to spend in the actual process of buying the product or service. ***Stopwatch Marketing***, written by John Rosen and AnnaMaria Turano, reveals a way to capitalize on four different types of shopping "stopwatches" -- impatient, reluctant, painstaking, and recreational. The book also provides case studies from companies -- including Roto-Rooter, Lexus, and Microsoft -- that profited from *Stopwatch Marketing's* concepts.

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