

GREG VERDINO'S MARKETING BLOG

Accidents will Happen (Book Review)

By Greg Verdino

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I had the pleasure of meeting David Vinjamuri last year, when he booked me into a speaker series to take a bunch of New York marketing types on a no holds barred tour of Second Life. As David puts it, my tour was the first time he saw someone successfully navigate the virtual world without falling prey to a bout of unexpected avatar nudity. So much fo no holds barred. *But I digress.*

David is a good guy. He is President of a firm called [Thirdway Brand Trainers](#), focused on helping some of the world's biggest brands get smart about new media and marketing. He also teaches marketing at New York University and has done stints as a brand manager at Coca-Cola and Johnson & Johnson.

He's the kind of guy you'd expect to write a book. In fact, he's the kind of guy you'd expect to write a book about how the big boys make marketing happen. The kind of book that's loaded with talk of focus groups and brand houses and media mix modeling. He has the credibility and the experience.

But David wrote **Accidental Branding** instead. And that's a good thing.

So what's the book about? Well, it's about great, enduring **brands built by people who aren't schooled in the fundamentals of Capital-B branding**. It's about wildy successful, one of a kind companies that are built by passionate individuals who are just trying to create something that they themselves would like to consume, even if all the marketing textbooks in the world might forecast failure. In fact, it doesn't matter what the textbooks say, because these brand-builders probably haven't read them. They are simply committed entrepreneurs who don't carry any of the marketing baggage that holds so many corporate brand gurus back in the world of new marketing.

What isn't it about? Accidents. While success might *seem* accidental for these guys who don't follow (or even know) the widely accepted rules of marketing, it actually requires quite a bit of discipline and persistence, dedication and business smarts. And, based on a series of in-depth interviews that David undertook with seven accidental brand builders, there are in fact **some consistent and powerful rules for accidental brand success**:

1. **Do sweat the small stuff, obsessively** - because the details can make all the difference in the world.

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2. **Pick a fight** - in other words, be prepared to go head-to-head with the de facto market leader and be prepared to buck the status quo. After all, if you're passionate about what you do, there's no reason to kick back and play a distant number 2 to the same ol' same ol',
3. **Be your own customer** - solve a problem you have personally, make a product you'd love to buy, be your own best customer. I believe we unaccidental branders might call this authenticity.
4. **Be unnaturally persistent** - overnight success, ain't. It can take years if not decades to create an enduring accidental brand.
5. **Build a myth** - as David writes, "brands start with a story and end with a promise." Understand your brand's story and know how it will be shared from brand to consumer and among consumers.
6. **Be faithful** - to your best customers. Listen to them, give them what they really want and stay focused.

David discovered these 6 rules over the course of a series of in-depth interviews with notable accidental brand makers like [Craig Newmark](#), [Julie Aiger-Clark](#) and [Clif Bar's Gary Erickson](#). In fact, **the details from his deep dives with seven entrepreneurs (and wildly successful accidental brand mavens) make up the bulk of the book and show how the 6 rules come to life when they form the basis of a new, growing and ultimately successful brands.** And David's look into the minds and businesses of these successful entrepreneurs make Accidental Branding compelling and well worth a read, even for (*especially for*) the lowly but well trained brand manager toiling away to make a difference inside even the largest traditional marketing behemoth.

Accidental Branding by David Vinjamuri is available now from Wiley. [Buy it at Amazon](#) or wherever fine books are sold (or whatever crap they say in book ads.)

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