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## Book Review: Accidental Branding: How Ordinary People Build Extraordinary Brands

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I was lucky enough to get an advanced copy of David Vinjamuri's *Accidental Branding*. What I really loved about the book is that it's about the people behind these extraordinary companies and brands.

I find that to be so interesting. The first thing I do when I go to a website or read through a catalog, or a book, or anything for that matter; is to read the 'about us' page or to see if they have a blog. I want to know who I'm dealing with and what they're about.

You'll meet John Peterman of the legendary J. Peterman catalog; Craig Newmark, founder of craigslist.org; Gary Erickson, inventor of the Clif Bar; Myriam Zaoui and Eric Malka, founders of The Art of Shaving stores; "Mother" Gert Boyle of Columbia Sportswear; Julie Aigner-Clark, founder of Baby Einstein; and Roxanne Quimby of Burt's Bees.

Vinjamuri does an incredible job of getting into the personalities of these entrepreneurs delving into what makes these people tick, what their core motivations are, how they live, what they believe, and so many other fascinating things that you'd be curious about any mega successful entrepreneur.

David defines an accidental brand by the following 3 characteristics:

1. An individual who is not trained in marketing must create the brand.
2. This individual must experience the problem that the brand is solving.
3. The individual must control the brand for at least 10 years.

He also has 6 rules for you to follow to increase your chances of creating an extraordinary brand.

Rule #1 : DO Sweat the small stuff – Every single entrepreneur is a perfectionist. And not just when it comes to the big stuff. It's also very important to delegate but only to people who are just as detailed oriented as you are and training them to see things as you do.

How do you make that happen? Only hire people who experience the problem your company solves. (And any great company solves a problem.)

Rule #2 : Pick a fight! – You have to create something genuinely new. You can't just create a me too product. They all took a stand against something. Whether it's against another company or an entirely new way of doing something. For example, Gary of Clif Bar couldn't stand to eat another Power Bar.

Rule #3 : Be your own customer – Every one of these people solved a problem they experienced themselves. Enough said.

Rule #4 : Be unnaturally persistent! – Most of the brands in this book took between 10 and 20 years to reach the \$20 million mark having had exceptionally slow and humble beginnings. Most people give up or just don't have the patience to build the company of their dreams. How much do you believe in what you're doing?

Rule #5 : Build a myth – What David means is to create a story behind your company and why you started it but that doesn't mean you can just make something up. Consumers are looking for authenticity and consistency in brands.

If you're an entrepreneur solving your own problem, you do have a story! Why did you start your company? What's the pain you're solving?

Rule #6 : Be Faithful – David says, "Stick with the one that brought you to the dance." Brands constantly forget about the consumers that made them great. They get into trouble when they forget about their core consumers and try to be everything to everyone.

Should I buy this book Adam?

Yes! Without a question. David is an incredible storyteller and if you find yourself very interested in extraordinary entrepreneurs this book is definitely for you. It's entertaining and very detailed making for a great, interesting and fun read!

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