

PERSONAL BRANDING BLOG

Is It Possible To Brand Yourself By Accident?

By Dan Schawbel

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I get a lot of [books by authors](#) looking to promote on my blog. Sometimes I receive press releases, or a PR person contacts me without being authentic. When an author contacts me directly, with a personalized message, then I take more interest, especially when they send me a copy of their book (**see right**). I will discuss how to pitch a blogger/magazine publisher in the future, but today, it brings me great pleasure to endorse my friend's book.

David Vinjamuri is an adjunct Professor of Marketing at NYU ([New York University](#)) and President of [ThirdWay, Inc.](#) David has over 15 years of corporate experience, half of which was at Johnson & Johnson and Coca-Cola in brand management and marketing. He also blogs about advertising and brands at [thirdwayblog.com](#). Today, I'm going to speak with David about his new book, [Accidental Branding: How ordinary people build extraordinary brands](#).

Podcast Interview Script

I have many hats right now, as a blogger, magazine publisher, soon to be author, full-time employee and much more. How do you manage a blog, a business and a book (the 3 b's)?

Honestly, I haven't done a great job managing the [blog](#) in the past 6 months. I used to write 1,000 word posts 3 times a week and now it's 1 per week. I'm on the edge of being credible in the [blogosphere](#) these days. It's a balancing act and as an individual, you must do what makes sense for you. As a [small business owner](#), a lot of time is spent with clients selling and it helps having a ton of meetings to spend your time on.

Reflecting back, what good personal brand choices did you make when you were younger that really paid off?

The most important decision that I made (more than 20 years ago) was that I really wanted to learn about different areas of business from some of the best people. I wanted to work with companies that were great teachers. I spent 2 years working after graduate school at Citibank, where I was put through an extensive training program. I learned the online space from Double Click, but also worked with Johnson & Johnson and Coca Cola.

How do you define an "accidental brand" and who are the examples you use in the book?

A brand that is started by an individual who is not an MBA, nor a formal marketing background. He or she must spend at least 10 years building a brand, but not intending to start a brand. They actually solve a problem that they experienced. All the examples in the book, such as Columbia Sports Wear, are all businesses that were started with a lucky accident, where the [entrepreneur](#) realizes that they can solve a problem and are uniquely positioned to do so.

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In your book, you share 6 rules of the accidental brand. Rule #4 is my favorite because it's something that I speak about all the time, not just on my blog, but to all my peers. What does it mean to be unnaturally persistent?

When you talk to these entrepreneurs that are successful, you realize that it takes a lot more work and a lot longer than you could ever imagine. 50% of small businesses fail in the first 4 years because people give up before they can succeed. It's hard to know your in a business that will succeed or fail. You have to be willing to keep trying and have a passion for what you're doing.

You wrote an article on branding called "what's in a name", which appeared in the September 2004 issue of the Journal for Non-Profit Management. Can you give me a sense of what that article was about?

People would constantly change their name or logo. I laid out the fundamentals of branding, by first understanding the offering and how it's unique in the marketplace, relative to competitors. It's very important how you tell your story, build your logo and name. It all comes out of the brand position.

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