Book Review

The Definitive Book of Branding, Kartikeya Kompella, Sage Publications, 2014, 407 pages, INR 895.

The Definitive Book of Branding is an edited book by Karthikeya Kompella, a brand consultant and columnist. This book has articles from 18 authors. The entire book is organized into five sections covering a wide range of brand-related topics.

The first section titled 'Building Blocks', features articles from Al Ries and Mark Batey. Al Ries writes on his favorite topic of positioning. The article takes the readers through the basic steps of positioning. He never forgets to write about the pitfalls of extensions and touches upon the basic positioning strategies. The second chapter written by Mark Batey elaborates on the concept of brand meaning. The author takes the reader through the basic understanding of brand meaning and introduces a model developed by him. The article is rich with examples and concepts related to brand meaning like brand idea, brand storytelling, brand personality etc.

The second section titled, 'From Niche to Mainstream' features seven articles whose themes vary from storytelling to cause marketing. The section starts with the article, "The Power of Words and Stories" by John Simmons which reinforces the importance of storytelling in brand building. Quoting the examples of Starbucks, the author tries to impress upon the readers the importance of verbal and visual identity in branding. This is followed by the article, "All Together Now: The New and Vital Strategy of Community" by Douglas Atkin which delves upon one of the hot topics in the branding domain – building brand communities. In the first part of the article, the author elaborates on the advantages of having a strong community of brand lovers. Quoting the examples of AirBnB and Harley Davidson, the author conveys that it is possible to build vibrant brand communities through careful planning. He likens community to a contact sport by saying, "the more people rub together, the stickier they become". One interesting concept in the article is "the community commitment curve" where the stages of development of a community and the actions that can be expected in each stage is very clearly presented.

The section progresses with an article "What Really Means to Be a Challenger in Today's World" written by Adam Morgan. The article talks about the challenger

brands – the brands which challenge the established players of the industry. The author defines the challenger as a state of mind rather than a state of market. The article elaborates on 8 core principles that the challengers live and thrive by. The highlight of the 8 credos is the concept of the "lighthouse identity". The author says, "The challengers take their own position and have a very clear sense of where they stand and why they stand there. Like a lighthouse they tend to project that sense of where they stand in the form of a point of view about the way the world is, or the way the world would be if they ran it." The author then continues to give ten narratives that challenger brands take ranging from the classic underdog positioning to the game-changer positioning.

The next article in the section written by Michael Beverland delves on building brand authenticity. The author starts with defining authenticity and then proceeds to list the advantages of having authenticity as a brand value. The author prescribes six strategies for building authenticity which include – building community, challenging conventions, sticking to the roots, love of crafts, amateurism and ignoring consumers (consumer rarely knows what they want). The article is prescriptive in nature but provides sound insights for brand managers who want to build an authentic trust-worthy brand.

Chapter 7 of the book deals with the emotional part of the brand building process. Author Daryl Travis tries to make sense of the irrationality of consumers in the purchase process. The author in the article attempts to link neuro-science and the emotional side of the consumer. Drawing extensively from literature, the author gives a very exhaustive narrative about how consumers make emotional decisions. The author exhorts, "Forget the voice of the customer and focus on the mind of the customer".

In the article "Brands and Innovation" the author, Jean-Noel Kapferer refers to a very critical element of the marketing process - innovation. In his usual style, Kapferer fills the article with extensive range of data and examples to impress upon the reader the importance of innovation in the process of brand building. Moving on, the article touches upon the basics of brand architecture and some aspects of naming extensions.

The final article in the section is "Branding with a Cause" by the editor Kartikeya Kompella. The article takes the readers through various classifications of cause-related branding. The way brands associate with a cause range from cause-promotion to socially relevant business practices. The author then moves on to examine the strategic aspects of cause-branding. According to Kompella, brands

should be careful in choosing the cause for the branding programmes. He says "the cause should be based on brand's larger purpose and brand's objective in associating with the cause".

Section 3 of the book is titled "Branding beyond Marketing". In four articles, this section covers areas like internal branding, employer branding, global branding and brand valuation. The first article "Living the Brand" by Nicholas Ind throws light on the important aspect of internal branding. The article highlights the importance of employees in building brands. The employees interact with the outside world and converse with external stakeholders. Hence brands should engage the employees. The author proceeds to highlight two critical aspects of internal branding – simplicity and participation. The section then rightfully proceeds to the next article on "employer brand management" by Richard Mosely. The employer branding is where the firm markets itself to prospective employees. It is similar to the internal branding concept elaborated in the previous article. The author pushes his model of employee value proposition (EVP) which answers the questions, "why should people join you? and "why should they stay?" The author suggests key steps in creating and communicating the value proposition to the target group. The article then shows how this plan is executed using the case study of Coca Cola Hellenic (CCH) which is the second largest company within the Coca-Cola company's bottling and distribution partners.

The section then progresses with the article "Global Branding: Strategy, Creativity, and Leadership" by Sicco van Gelder. This chapter argues that the combination of strategy, creativity and leadership will determine the competitiveness of global brands in the coming decade. The final chapter in the section is on brand valuation by Jan Linderman. This article highlights the importance of economic value of brands in the overall business context. The article lists common practices in brand valuation like market-based valuation and brand-specific valuation approaches. The author then proposes a brand valuation framework which consists of six steps elaborated in the chapter.

The fourth section of the book is themed "Together We Stand". The theme of the section is about collaboration narrated through two articles. The first article is about "co-branding" by Tom Blackett. Co-branding is a collaborative venture designed to advance the interest of two or more parties in a considered, strategic fashion. The article takes the readers through the history of co-branding. The article then classifies co-branding into various types: reach-awareness, values' endorsement, ingredient, complementary competence co-branding, etc. The article then proceeds to elaborate on the advantages and risks involved in this

strategy. The author takes the reader through the two routes of co-branding strategy – top down and bottom-up route. The next article titled, "The Guide to Co-creation "by Clare Fuller and Arunima Kapoor throws light on the concept of co-creation. The authors define co-creation as the collaborative process between an organization and its customers, staff and other stakeholders, which create mutual value. The article highlights the example of British Airways to prove the efficacy of this strategy. The authors suggest a five-stage process for co-creation. They are: scooping, immersion, up-skilling, co-creation and implementation. The authors share a set of powerful techniques for building consumer engagement and extract the wisdom of consumers.

The final section of the book deals with the theme, "Building Brands on Belief". The section has three articles which focus on building strong brand beliefs. The first article has an unusual title, "What Chatterjee said: Designing Brands from the Inside Out" and is written by Patrick Hanlon. The article is written as a Q&A session between the author and a marketing manager, Mr Chatterjee. The article starts with a very pertinent question, "why we believe in some brands and not in others?" and proceeds with the author's explanation. The author proposes the building of a belief system using a coded construct that includes seven elements: creation story, creed, icons, rituals, special lexicon, non-believers and leader. The author fills the article with examples from iconic brands like Coke, Google, Tom's Shoes, and Nike to reinforce the importance of the seven elements.

Chapter 17 of the book deals with "Passion Brands" written by Helen Edwards and Derek Day. The article starts with the question, "what is a brand for?" The authors then introduce the concept of passion brands which are those brands that have character and authenticity. Authors define the passion brand as a brand with a clear belief, a deep understanding of people and the capability, confidence and exuberance to connect the two. The article outlines a process of building passion brands. The authors suggest a framework which consists of two internal forces - capability and ideology and two external forces - consumer and environment. The authors suggest that firms create multi-disciplinary teams that would work towards building a passion brand.

The final chapter in the book titled, "Lovemarks in the Age of Now" is written by Kevin Roberts. The author tries to explain how brands move from being irreplaceable to irresistible. The author introduces the concept of 'lovemark' which is used to explain the stage of brand-engagement where the consumer loves and owns the brand. The author uses a quadrant to explain this phenomenon. The quadrant with Love/Respect axis classifies everything of value to brands,

products, fads and lovemarks. Lovemarks are those brands which have high love and high respect. The author then proceeds to explain the process through which products can move to this ideal stage of high love and high respect. The author talks about the vital ingredients of lovemarks such as performance, trust, reputation, mystery, sensuality and intimacy. Another highlight of the article is the lovemark's profiler which contains a set of twenty three questions which gives the brand manager a very candid profile of where the brand stands in terms of the journey towards the lovemark.

The Definitive Book of Branding is a good read targeted at both professionals and marketing students. The editor is successful in getting an impressive range of articles covering a wide range of important brand-building concepts. For an edited book, it is very difficult to establish a common thread connecting the article from various authors. Kompella should be credited for establishing a link between the articles and the general theme of the book. Another aspect of the book is the minimal overlap between the articles. Generally it is difficult to prevent overlaps especially when dealing with a topic of branding but the editor has ensured that each article stands apart in terms of quality and scope of coverage. The book is indeed a good one providing a lot of interesting, workable insights into brand building.

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