

# Foreword

Brands are an important part of all cultures across the planet, as well as in the business world. Brands help people make decisions, small ones, as well as big ones. They enable you to trust the *Bordeaux* you drink, the *Mercedes* you drive, and the *GE Jet Engine* that lifts the plane you count on to take you places. Brands are the ideas, perceptions, expectations and beliefs that are in the mind of consumers, your potential customers or any individual who can effect your enterprise.

We live in an interconnected world, made more transparent by the proliferation of new communications technologies. Today, a person, a company, a brand, even a nation, is increasingly accessible and exposed to the observation of the citizens of the world. Strong brands go far beyond just creating awareness; they accurately expose the corporate soul and brand promise for all to see. I believe consumer understanding dominates everything in the business world. Today, consumers have greater access and control over the information from which their perceptions about a brand are created. The ideas and impressions we might hope the consumer to have about our brands are subject to the competing ideas, which are available for consumer perception.

This is a new age of consumerism, one that has evolved into a higher order of brand relationship and accountability. It is a business world where examples like *Enron* have resulted in greater consumer mistrust of the information coming from brands and companies. It is a business environment I call ecologism – where a brand, a company or its leaders cannot hide behind inaccurate pretenses. The truth about your company will always be discovered. It

is simply no longer an option to be silent about exposing what your company values, mission or relevancy is. While there are only local consumers, the accessibility of information, this transparency, makes all brands globally susceptible to scrutiny.

The **best brands** consistently win two **crucial moments of truth**. The first moment occurs when customers choose, select or sign the contract to buy after having evaluated all other offerings of the competition. The second moment occurs at the customers' homes, offices or production sites when they use the brand, when they experience it and are satisfied or not satisfied. Brands that consistently win these moments of truth earn a special place in the customers' minds and hearts. These brands are remembered and the re-buy occurs more readily and more profitably. The value of trust earned between the brand promise and the brand experience realized has always been the simple foundation in any sustainable commercial endeavor.

Some **industrial brands** focus intensely on winning these moments of truth. They do this by being in touch with their clients and customers, and by understanding not only their engineering and application requirements but also their brand expectations. We have learned that brands like *IBM* don't stand only for mainframe computer servers or IT software, but for operating a bank or airline 24 hours and 365 days. *Apple* is more than its technology; it is a brand that continuously thinks differently. P&G goes beyond making everyday household and personal care products, by touching lives, improving life. Nissan shifts things – a person, a life, the world, or simply the way you move through it.

It's no coincidence that many of these brands are thriving after their management has listened to the speeches or lectures of Philip Kotler or Waldemar Pfoertsch. Many have read the books and articles of the authors and come back to their workplaces inspired to apply their management principles. Their passionate belief in marketing and brand management is inspirational and effective. It is helping reinvent how we think about creating and fostering our own B2B brands.

This first comprehensive book on B2B brand management will provide even the most experienced business manager with a new way of looking at B2B branding. It provides proven case studies that bring B2B brand management to life. It will provoke the reader to think about a systematic approach to branding, based on facts, rather than personal judgment. Focused branding moves you closer to your customers. Professors Kotler and Pfoertsch encourage us to look for more differentiation without neglecting the competition and they encourage us to get top management attention for the branding decisions on a continuous basis.

In short, this is the ultimate book for managers and customers in the B2B2C value chain.

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