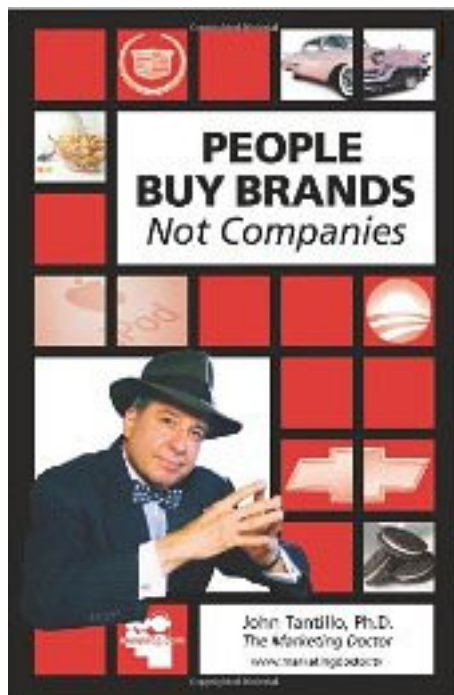


Book Review : People Buy Brands, Not Companies

Written by Kam Williams



“Once I was like a lot of people who think that marketing is just a way of convincing people to buy a whole bunch of things they don’t need... Yes, I was in the marketing-is-about-creating-need camp... But, you know what, the buyer can’t be misled forever. You can’t create need no matter how hard you try. You can only discover the need and then find a way to meet it.

When Fed Ex launched its now legendary, ‘When it absolutely, positively, has to get there overnight’ campaign, they weren’t creating a need, they were filling one. Marketing at its best is about making things happen through creativity, intelligence and adaptability that would never have happened had someone not had the vision or the drive to market...

[Once] you’ve got a successful brand, things just happen. A brand is one of the closest things to magic on Earth. It’s not that you don’t have to work hard to make it successful and keep it successful, it’s just that in many ways a great brand sells itself.

So, that’s the context for this book and our marketing mission, but the essence of this book is clear from the title: people buy brands.” -- Excerpted from the Introduction (pgs. 2-7)

It’s been said that good things come in small packages, as is the case with this succinctly-stated amalgamation of marketing insights. When I attended law and business school, a popular method of teaching was via the case method, meaning that the professor would have us study case histories in order to learn not only from perfection but from failure, too.

This is the sensible approach employed by John Tantillo, Ph.D., aka The Marketing Doctor, in dispensing bite-sized morsels of wisdom in *People Buy Brands, Not Companies*. I’ll tell you right off the bat why I heartily recommend this book. Honestly, it’s because after reading it, I came away from it with a few solid ideas about how to improve the “Kam Williams” brand. And if any one of them helps me gain a competitive edge, the modest investment in the opus in terms of

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money and time will have easily been made worth the while.

In easy-to-read layman's terms augmented by a glossary, Dr. Tantillo examines branding and marketing strategies from a variety of angles, including the individual, the corporate and the political. One of his most fascinating analyses is that of the previous presidential campaign during which he claims that "the Democratic Party was as much or more of a stumbling block than John McCain." for brand Obama. The author also praises the President as a brilliant politician who "knows the difference between his brand and the Democratic party." So, he wouldn't be surprised to see Obama rise to the challenges posed by a re-election effort in 2012.

But this how-to tome is really about you, the reader, and the fact that, "Like it or not, you've already got a brand," whether it's a business or merely your name. For the point driven home here repeatedly is the importance of appreciating the value of building that brand and of channeling your resources in the direction most likely to maximize your return on any financial, emotional and sweat of the brow investments in yourself.

This brings to mind the sage lament of Iago in Shakespeare's Othello, "Who steals my purse, steals trash... But he that filches from me my good name robs me of that which not enriches him, and makes me poor indeed." In sum, methinks those wise words make as much sense today as they did when scripted by The Bard of Avon.

People Buy Brands, Not Companies

by John Tantillo, Ph.D. – The Marketing Doctor

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