



Marketing

CURRENT ISSUE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

May 22/29, 2006

Rationalistic Drivel



Barry L. Linetsky
Partner

Re: "Amusement and astonishment," letter from Ricardo Alleyne, May 8, p. 3.

Mr. Alleyne should not be too surprised that marketers today hold the idea "that companies exist for the purpose of creating great brands and that their failure to do so is some abdication of a fundamental responsibility."

Today's marketers get this from pop marketing books like Ries and Ries's *The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding* (1998). They get it from a misunderstanding or purposeful bastardizing of the likes of Drucker, Levitt and Kotler.

One need not read past page two of *The 22 Immutable Laws* to be told that "marketing is branding" and that "the two concepts are so inextricably linked that it is impossible to separate them." Further, "Marketing is what a company is in business to do. Marketing is a company's ultimate objective." From this Ries and Ries conclude that "If the entire company is the marketing company, then the entire company is the branding department... As illogical as it might seem," they write, "we can visualize a time when the marketing concept itself will become obsolete, to be replaced by a new concept called 'branding.' "

Well, this is pure rationalistic drivel derived from the fallacy that marketing and branding are synonymous.

This is where the worst marketing managers get the notion that everything is branding and that companies and shareholder investment exists to create great brands, as if a great brand is an end in itself. What is so irritating about marketing managers who spout this kind of stuff is that when you ask them how well they know their customers, the answer is inevitably 'not very well at all.' The fact is that very few companies do decent customer and consumer research. Most feel it's not worth the investment.

There's a lot more to business and marketing than branding and building great brands. The graveyard of business history is piled high with great brands.

Barry Linetsky
Partner
The Strategic Planning Group
Toronto

Barry Linetsky is a Partner with The Strategic Planning Group (T.S.P.G.), a full service consulting firm that provides executives and their organizations with a wide range of advice, business tools and solutions. At T.S.P.G. our focus is on helping our clients solve their complex issues to realize their ultimate business potential, whether we are helping to set the overall strategy for the organization or assisting in a particular functional area. Our practical-results-oriented approach to solving business problems, combined with our personal commitment and dedication to providing great value for our clients, makes us the consultants of choice to blue-chip executives across North America.

Visit our website at www.tspg-consulting.com