



Marketing Semiotics: Signs, Strategies, and Brand Value

By Laura R. Oswald

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Everyday consumers buy into the concept of brands and their associated meanings--the perception of quality, a symbolic relationship, a vicarious experience, or even a sense of identity. *Marketing Semiotics* suggests that the extent to which consumers recognize, internalize, and relate to brand meanings is not only an academic question. These meanings contribute to "brand equity", the financial value of intangible brand benefits that exceed the use value of goods, and impacts upon a firm's financial performance. Therefore, the management of brand equity demands first and foremost the management of brand meanings, or semiotics.

The book uses structural semiotics, a discipline that extends the laws of structural linguistics to the analysis of verbal, visual, and spatial sign systems, to shed light on the cultural codes and discourse of brands. It proposes that semiotic research should form the cornerstone of brand equity management, since brands rely so heavily on sign systems that contribute to profitability by distinguishing brands from simple commodities, from competitors, and engaging consumers in the brand world.

The book includes dozens of global business cases where semiotics has been used to refocus, reposition, or extend the brand to new products, customers, and markets. Drawing upon twenty years of academic and consulting experience, the book provides actionable direction for steering brands through technological and cultural change, differentiating brands in the competitive environment, and counteracting the natural depletion of brand meaning over time.

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