

The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding

Al Ries, Laura Ries

Book Review

By Anne & Robert Brunner

What do you think of when I say “cola”? Chances are the most well known brand in the world comes to mind, Coke. How many past Coke slogans or commercials can you remember? Quite a few! Branding is essentially owning a portion of your prospects’ minds, hopefully, prior to their making a buying decision. When a prospect thinks “soda” he thinks “Coke”. Companies spend billions to accomplish this simple goal.

How much business do we all lose because a prospect can’t remember our name? A client would have used us, but they couldn’t remember how to contact us! Creating a strong recognizable brand is directly related to the success of your product or service. From REALTORS to automobiles, the most prosperous businesses have created a unique and memorable brand.

“Don’t count on quality alone to build your brand.” “A brand is nothing more than a name.” “Credentials are the collateral put up to guarantee the performance of your brand.” “Sooner or later a leader has to shift its branding strategy from publicity to advertising.” These are just a few of the twenty two laws that Al and Laura Ries believe will bring a company brand to the forefront of their prospects’ minds. The basic theory here is that advertising does not create a brand, publicity does. Advertising can support and enhance an existing brand, it does but not create one. Brands are diminished by sub branding. For example: Budweiser, Bud Light, Bud Ice, Bud Dry, Bud Tasteless, and Budless. You get the point? The strength of the brand means less when it means everything. Dell means mail order custom built computers at a good value. Harley Davidson means quality American made motorcycles. Harley Davidson does not make Barbie furniture or beer. They make “bare knuckled” motorcycles.

Al Ries has preached branding since the early 70’s and he collaborates with by his daughter in something akin to The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Branding Universe. The 22 Immutable Laws are a great primer to learning the basic concepts of creating a brand. It is easy to read, entertaining and is broken up into short, digestible chapters. Ries and Ries incorporate many real life examples of strategic successes and failures to support their laws. The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding is an excellent addition to your business library.