

Bigger Than This: How to Turn Any Venture into an Admired Brand

Fabian Geyrhalter

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Bigger Than This has just the right mix of big ideas and practical examples.

Fabian Geyrhalter's intriguing and provocative book, *Bigger Than This*, illustrates how even commodity brands can stand out.

A brand strategist and consultant, Geyrhalter compellingly argues that "a new wave of commodity brands is winning hearts and is teaching us how to turn any product into an admired brand." Much attention seems to be given to innovative and high-tech brands, but commodities are, in fact, more challenging products from a brand marketing perspective, he shows.

Geyrhalter identifies eight "brand traits" of successful commodity brands: Story, Belief, Cause, Heritage, Delight, Transparency, Solidarity, and Individuality. For each of these traits, the author offers a concise overview, a relevant case study, and "commandments" (tips on strategies and tactics for implementing the trait).

The eight traits identified by Geyrhalter are, in and of themselves, valuable for guiding large and small brands alike. They are indicative of a very contemporary approach to branding: the brand's backstory, along with social responsibility and accountability, become just as important as product characteristics. The attention paid to such traits is a distinguishing strength of *Bigger Than This*.

Unlike with case studies typical to most brand books, the focus here is on smaller brands, many likely unknown to readers. These case studies are particularly fascinating; they are about true commodities, including shoes, socks, watches, and inexpensive office supplies. For example, the case study that supports the first brand trait, Story, concerns Fishpeople Seafood.

Fishpeople's story is authentic because of the company's "trace your fish" feature. Consumers can use a code shown on every package to learn all about the fish they're purchasing simply by going to the company's website; they can find out "the exact place a fish was caught, by whom and on what boat." The company's website further involves the consumer by offering recipes, a blog, and merchandise. In the book's appendix, Geyrhalter demonstrates how this brand puts all eight brand traits to good use.

Bigger Than This has just the right mix of big ideas and practical examples. Each trait is deftly described and illustrated in text that is short yet highly descriptive.

The book is beautifully designed. Important text is highlighted by both increasing type sizes and reversing the type to white on a black background, and each case study is graphically set apart from the rest of the chapter. Simple but effective line illustrations representing commodity products are used to identify and differentiate each of the brand traits; the "Story" chapter, for example, is preceded by a page filled with a school of fish.

Fabian Geyrhalter's book does a superb job of illuminating modern-day branding in a format that makes reading it a

pleasure.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (January 12, 2018)

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