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Business & Economics

Brand Together: How Co-creation Generates Innovation and Re-energizes Brands
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Each year, countless books address brands, brand strategy, and brand marketing, so it is exceedingly difficult to come up with a perspective on branding that is truly unique. *Brand Together* accomplishes that feat, largely because it pinpoints a relatively new phenomenon in "co-creation."

It is more than a curious fact that three authors worked together on the book, as collaboration is central to the theme. The authors write that *Brand Together* "has itself been co-created by community members and experts." In the opening pages, the authors acknowledge a long list of both participating professionals and members of the "Brand Together Community."

The premise of the book is that the brand "creates a focus and framework for innovation," and that, often, innovations are developed by groups of people. In a well-organized and scrupulously researched work, Ind, Fuller and Trevail guide the reader first through the cultural changes that have led to co-creation and then its fundamental principles. The authors point out that "Generation C" (the connected generation) is helping to drive co-creation not just because it is "brand aware and willing to participate, but it is also networked."

The second part of the book takes the reader on a journey through co-creation implementation. While it may come as no surprise that brands have encouraged collaborative thinking on their behalf, this book demonstrates how truly innovative brands co-create innovations with their customers. Intuit's approach to co-creation, for example, began in 2005, spurred by a desire to stimulate new revenues. The company picked four groups to participate—start ups, suppliers, universities, and crowd sourcing—and began an innovative program that included events, an external solutions website, a focus on internal ideation and brainstorming, and a prototyping process so customers could participate in marketplace

experiments. Jan Bosch, Intuit's VP of Engineering Process, told the authors, "The intent is to move, as much as possible, to a model where customers are involved from the beginning in determining what is most important in a problem space and in helping to develop a particular solution."

The authors include numerous detailed case studies supporting their argument that co-creation generates innovation. In a particularly useful chapter, "The Co-creation Toolkit," they provide what amounts to a blueprint, describing the discovery, ideation, and development and filtration phases of co-creation. Another key chapter discusses measuring the benefits of co-creation. The authors end the book with some observations from their "co-creators," members of the *Brand Together* community.

Every brand manager should find the wisdom and guidance they need to make the most effective use of co-creation in this excellent book.

Barry Silverstein