

*CHG Book Review:*

## **A New Brand World, 8 Principles for Achieving Brand Leadership in the 21st Century**

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Author: Scott Bedbury with Stephen Fenichell © 2003, Penguin USA

Scott Bedbury was fortunate enough to be at two companies where the timing couldn't have been better in terms of his ability to make a mark—Nike and Starbucks. His discussion focuses on the importance of companies truly understanding what it is that they do or have to offer and a keen sense of the impact of trends and the public's or the targeted customer's view of the company and/or products offered.

“ . . . If you understand your brand—its values, its mission, its reason for being—and integrate it consistently into everything you do,” he says, “your entire organization will know how to behave in virtually any and all situations.” This speaks to a cultural shift in terms of branding within a company, one more difficult than just simply increasing spending.

While this book is promoted as a “how-to,” it's more a discussion of changing one's view of branding from that of top-of-mind awareness to that of seeing the emotional impact a brand can have upon a consumer and the power that can have within a company for employees as well.

So, why write about branding now? While it's a popular topic, Bedbury mentions three basic reasons:

1. We are awash as never before with products, services, companies, and brands, all aiming to set themselves apart from the pack, to be distinct, and most of all to be loved and desired.
2. The most valuable assets of a company are no longer physical.
3. There is and will continue to be increasing pressure on corporations, especially the large ones, to behave more

responsibly as citizens—a trait I’ve labeled elsewhere “using your superhuman powers for good.”

Having come from Nike and Starbucks, two companies that have made a mark in terms of being world citizens and “doing good,” Bedbury offers a great deal of information in terms of public relations and goodwill, as well as grassroots efforts and the importance of core values, number five being “humanity.”

This becomes even more relevant in a post-9/11 and Enron world. He quotes a November 2001 keynote address to a global gathering of representatives for Business for Social Responsibility, delivered by Starbucks CEO Howard Schulz:

“The opportunity to do the right thing has never been as important as it is right now. Building a sustainable enterprise is about having a conscience and having heart . . . As a business you care about doing the right thing because it is who you are, not because it is good press. Those with the backbone to do the right thing will sustain greatness in their business.”

Bedbury closes his book by saying, “. . . I make the case that clearly defined and broadly shared brand values provide a much better organizing principle for an enterprise than an EPS target, market share goal, or stock price. The latter are merely financial performance measures. They don’t tell us anything about how to get there. If we take one step further and envision a future in which brands will be more closely scrutinized and held more accountable for their global impact, then it is inevitable that they will also become a conscience for companies.”

Read Bedbury’s book not as a how to in terms of getting to a better branding strategy, instead read it for a sense of “inculturating” your brand and getting to the heart of your company. It’s more of a journey of discovery than most in marketing (and I daresay those they report to) can realize.

Cydney Koukol often consults for the Corporate Health Group team. In this capacity she provides account coordination for clients; market evaluation and planning for advertising and public relations strategies; presentations; copywriting, public relations and market research. A writer and marketing strategist located in Omaha, she may be reached at [ckoukol@corporatehealthgroup.com](mailto:ckoukol@corporatehealthgroup.com)