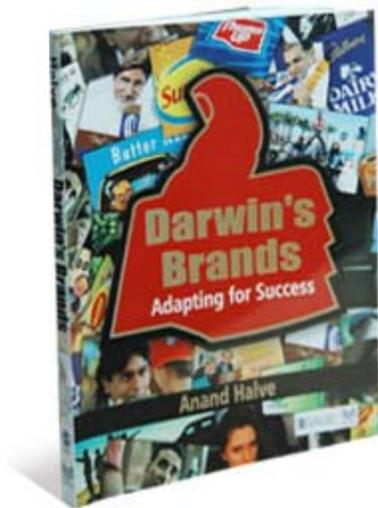


**Darwin's Brands is simple but not simplistic**



There are certain brands in the marketplace that have stood the test of time and have emerged as winners in the perception of consumers. 'Darwin's Brands' by Anand Halve traces the journey of such brands that have made their presence felt due to their ever evolving and time-relevant communication. Going by Darwin's theory of 'survival of the fittest' the book enlists brands which have managed to stay fresh and alive. With a total of 168 pages, the book explores the journey of brands such as Thums Up, Cadbury, Amul, Titan, Femina and Airtel.

Divided in four main parts, the book looks at the interplay of forces that created the environment in which the brands operated and the strategies they adopted. The first section of the book covers six brands under the category of consumer goods; the second section takes into account four brands under the category of home improvement and durables and the last two sections look at the categories of media and services.



Anand Halve

Halve focuses the reader's attention on the fact that despite digital becoming the preferred media for advertising, 'print and TV are still the media of choice to reach out and touch large numbers of consumers and prospects.' His observation about the changing scenario of the Indian society becomes clear when he writes, 'Slowly but surely, Indians were learning to live well. And not feel guilty about it.' He related such changes to the subsequent modifications in the communication strategies of brands.

Despite being the author's personal choice, the brands taken up fulfill the criteria of longevity, flexibility to adapt to changes and brands that have proven to be game-changers. Each of the case-studies shares a common thread running through the evolution of the brands' strategies and actions.

The case-study of Thums Up throws light on what made the brand face challenges that came into being due to the coming in of players like Pepsi. Halve's interview with Ashok Kurien, the MD of Ambience Advertising, the agency handling the Thums Up account gives insights into the positioning and communication of the brand.

'Kurien says, "We knew Pepsi wouldn't do anything out of the box... or book! Since Pepsi's basic platform was 'the choicest of the new generation', we looked for someone who could meet the criterion..." It was then that the brand brought Salman Khan on-board as its brand endorser. The story behind the 'Taste the thunder' punch line is another one that a reader wouldn't want to miss.

The Asian Paints case-study is one which would immediately capture the reader's attention. The opening paragraph does the trick. 'It was said that the company used to put a one rupee coin inside every tin of Asian Paints. Painters got to know this through word of mouth, and would extol the virtues of the brand to householders who were unsure about which brand paint to use, and sought the painter's advice.'

The style of writing makes the strategies simple but not simplistic. Halve, who is the co-founder and director of chlorophyll brand and communications consultancy has taken great effort in chronologically weaving together the brand strategies with the product category's progress and status.

The author has made sure that he gives the reader a complete overview about the category in which the brand functions. In the case-study on Hero Honda, he also talks about what was happening with Bajaj as a brand. He speaks about the 'family approach' that Hero Honda took up as against Bajaj's strategy of keeping names at the 'umbrella Bajaj level.'

The inquisitive minds who would want to know the why and how behind their favorite campaigns would be captivated by every word written. Further, the colloquial style of writing seasoned with the author's personal anecdotes makes it an easy and interesting read. The in-depth research gone behind the book seems evident when one's presumptions turn out to be myths while reading the case-studies.

The book proves the point that it is the capacity to adapt to changes and formulate effective strategies that determines who survives in the hyper-competitive marketplace of today. It is a good read for people it has been targeted at- brand practitioners, students and business managers.

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