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Chasing Cool: Standing Out In Today's Cluttered Marketplace



Synopsis

Cool isn't just a state of mind, a celebrity fad, or an American obsession—it's a business. In boardrooms across America, product managers are examining vodka bottles and candy bars, tissue boxes and hamburgers, wondering how do we make this thing cool? How do we make this gadget into the iPod of our industry? How do we do what Nike did? How do we get what Target got? How do we infuse this product with that very desirable, nearly unattainable it factor? In this wide-ranging exploration the authors Noah Kerner, a celebrated marketing maverick, and Gene Pressman, legendary creative visionary and former co-CEO of Barneys New York, have uncovered surprising and universal patterns and trends. They systematically parse the successes and failures of the last few decades—in music and fashion, magazines and food, spirits and hip-hop culture. Their discoveries are pulled together in this definitive book on the commerce of cool. Nike and Target endure as relevant brands not because of a shortsighted and gimmicky campaign. A dash of bling and a viral website don't amass long-term value. Brands are effectively developed when companies take substantial risk—and face the possibility of real failure—in order to open up the opportunity for real success. Chasing Cool includes interviews with more than seventy of today's most respected innovators from Tom Ford and Russell Simmons to Ian Schrager and Christina Aguilera. And through this accomplished assemblage, Pressman and Kerner dig beneath the surface and reveal how emphasizing long-lasting relevance trumps a fleeting preoccupation with what's hot and what's not. In a multidimensional, entertaining, and eminently readable book that redefines how to appeal to today's savvy consumer, Kerner and Pressman explore the lessons to be learned by America's ongoing search for the ever-changing concept of cool. Readers will learn how to apply these lessons to their own businesses and creative projects in order to stand out in today's cluttered marketplace.

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Customer Reviews

In a "Cluttered Marketplace" like marketing books, "Chasing Cool" does not stand out. In an effort to isolate the intangible "cool," (which they admit is impossible) the authors cite interviews with artists and business people (mostly from the music and fashion industries) that they believe to be influential as well as relying on their own experiences. Instead of teaching laypeople and marketers what to do, they mostly tip us on what not to do. This would be great if this wasn't the tactic of countless other books. Vague advice like be the first to do something new (or be second, or just be the best), be authentic, take risks etc. is not groundbreaking -- for anyone who has read anything about marketing, or has followed a few top marketing blogs for at least a week, it's downright stale. While the personal experiences developing the Barney's brand, and being a respected DJ are the high points of the book, they are also rather isolated viewpoints. The interviews vary the experiences, but not by much. Companies who don't make designer products probably wouldn't benefit. Ditto for companies that don't cater to hipsters; most of the examples (Apple, Grey Goose, Starbucks, Quiksilver, nightclubs, hotels) fit a certain type. This is not a problem unless your work is completely different, then you are left with irrelevant examples and meaningless statements like "In the final analysis, cool is really about achieving relevance--to a particular group, small or large" (226). Gee whiz, what insight! Moving away from the content, the book is written in a straightforward manner that makes it easy to scan and a quick read. The design also aids in this with clear headings and readable text.

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