

Book review

Brand New: The Shape of Brands to Come

Wally Olins
Thames and Hudson
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In his book of *Brand New: The Shape of Brands to Come*, Olins discusses his point of view about how authenticity may reduce the complication of artificial conceptualisation on brand and branding disclosure. To date, brand and branding disclosures have been written from different perspectives and context. A specific book that discusses the interconnection of brand and branding realm into context of the shape of destination marketing to come has offered frameworks that dealt with integrated marketing communication on tourism context (e.g. Pike, 2008). In addition, the shape of tourism and hospitality industry to come and its interconnected with future sustainable tourism brand and branding realm is comprehensively explored by Ian Yeoman (2008, 2012). Olin's book *Brand New: The Shape of Brands to Come* basically explores further implication of applying the issue of authenticity on tourism as experience-based industry; along with export and foreign direct investment and its effect on accelerating national positioning at the global market.

Although, explicitly the title of the book are pretty much about brand and branding, implicitly it discusses about how globalisation has generated homogenisation in business world. In this sense, business, corporation, and even competition among nations are arguably inevitable that it is profoundly important for them to stay authentic and go along the constant changes.

Consisting of eight chapters, the book essentially draws the basic concept of brand and branding and its intertwining relationship with the role of authenticity and corporate social responsibility disclosure in the context of new zeitgeist. As I predicted, the book offers a lot more than regular perspective of contemporary brand and branding. Beyond that, the book poses thought-provoking questions which make readers feeling not tired after reading it; as a matter of fact, this book may not only inspire students who are interested in the realm of brand and branding in general, but also for those who are interested in adapting the contemporary of brand and branding notion into other context (e.g. branding the nation/nation branding).

The beginning of the book explores the authenticity issue as brand differentiation which is applicable for branding the product offering and/or nation branding. It is argued that in the era where of information rich-time poor, authenticity of the product offering (in general) and authenticity in branding the nation context (specifically) are relevant as nowadays people rely on brand image. Coverage of the cases that being studied is moderately comprehensive. For instance, case studies in chapter three about Ryanair, Tesco, Cigarette, and Coca Cola are several holistic explorations on applying authenticity in the new zeitgeist for all types of business can be considered well explained (p. 59). In addition, Olins explores the issue of brand differentiation as for not only to stand out from the crowd but also essentially to stand out for shared values, which is believed more essential (pp. 68-89). One of witty examples is provided in pages 74 and 75 that would be a windfall for readers in absorbing on how some companies are posing inauthentic behaviour. Instead of being authentic for shared values that are promised, some companies like to think that they are

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listening to customers. Clearly, the exploration on case of multinational companies and nation branding context are very relevant, contextual, and up-to-date. However, as the book promises a discussion of globalisation and nation branding perspective, unfortunately exploration of cases are very much focus on western world. Typically, in the case of the exposure on South East Asia region merely focuses on Singapore. Presumably, it would be more thought-provoking to link authenticity with the other South East Asia nations as they are more complex (in terms of nation branding) and may be good examples on how contemporary brand and branding theory are applicable for branding the place (in general) and nation branding in the context of emerging nation (in particular). Especially, as this region is becoming the next big thing for global tourists and foreign direct investment.

In this book, Olins only discusses the issue of nation branding in 21 pages (pp. 132-53) along within the realm of branding the place in 20 pages (pp. 154-74, includes two exposure pictures of Turkey and Singapore). He starts the discussion by pointing out that well-liked nations attract more tourists and more investment and can charge more for their export than little-liked/little-known. This basically indicates the intertwining variables (e.g. authenticity and national identity as brand differentiation) that establish nation branding. In addition, technical strategy on how to be a competitive nation (pp. 138-47) and how to accelerate nation's positioning (pp. 150-3) are presented from historical perspective into current context. Unfortunately, the basic distinction and conceptualisation of nation brand, nation branding, and brand image to a nation seem to be solely explained implicitly. Other than that, the issues of proposed national dimensions (e.g. tourism, foreign direct investment, and export) seem to be too general. Considering these are the elements that arguably may not only accelerate national positioning but also foreseen as dimensions in which would establish brand image to a nation; more

insightful exploration would have enlightens readers' perspective on the issue of branding the nation. Given the fact that specific book of nation branding in the market is limited, these issues should have more proportion.

Furthermore, as the issue of authenticity in the context of tourism and export are arguably as national dimensions that may shape nation brand to come, further work could emphasis on first, the fact that superior positioning of experiential-based consumption as Gilovich *et al.* (2014) suggested; second, the fact that travel visitation essentially relies on the desire to feel a sense of belonging akin to that felt by a nation's people and its culture; third, exploration on both tourism and export dimensions should highlight not only the premium functionality generated from the branded attributes but more importantly is about the prestige feelings that frames happiness and satisfaction. In this sense, authenticity in the future spectrum would be emerging as superiority that not only signifies for WHAT a nation stands for but also, most importantly is for WHY a nation stands for. This would involve vigorous examination on organic image and induced image; and the conceptualisation of authentic tourism and superiority of product origin. Overall, it can be said that "Brand New: the shape of brands to come" is clearly written as a reference book that enlightens brand and branding perspectives in general.

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