



**Book review: Kevin Lane Keller and Vanitha Swaminathan (2020). Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity, 5th edition, Pearson Education Limited, ISBN 978-0-13-489249-8**

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What are brands? Brands are intangible assets that are invaluable for an organization. Though, creating and bringing up strong brands over a while against immense competition is a hard task and a challenge for managers. Creating and nurturing a huge brand doesn't happen overnight. Sound plans for the brand are essential in nurturing a strong brand and it consumes a considerable period. Just planning to build strong brands is not sufficient to generate yield on the investment. But powerful strategies are a must to endure strong brands over the huge competition in the digital era. Thus, all-powerful marketing thinking should be directed at strengthening the brand to generate yield on investment. It has been implied that a comprehensive and cohesive system is fundamental to fostering an outstanding brand.

The main determination of this book can be highlighted as providing a comprehensive and holistic approach to looking after brands, brand equity, and designing marketing agendas and actions to develop, assess and maintain brand equity. The authors highlight the ways and means of creating, assessing and managing a brand over some time. Further to mention it explains concepts and techniques that can be used to improve brand equity and ensure long-term profitability. The content goes into its possible maximum breadth, depth and relevance. The entire book has been comprised of six sections which compile sixteen chapters altogether and could be the first-ranked interesting book for any marketer. While reviewing this study, the reviewers employed the academic approach used by Gamage (2021), Iddagoda and Dewasiri (2021) and Peiris et al. (2020).

Part I has been dedicated to the opening perspective of the book which gives a detailed view of brands and brand equity. Only a single chapter had been included in part I that introduces brands, the concept of brand equity, types of things which could be branded, confrontations faced by branding and the strategic brand management process.

Part II of the book formulates a discussion on developing a brand strategy which consists of two chapters namely customer-based brand equity (CBBE) with brand positioning and the brand resonance along with the brand value chain. Chapter two explains CBBE, sources of brand equity, identification and establishment of brand positioning, and guidelines to develop mantras for brands. The authors introduce the CBBE model which creates a path to understand how brand equity is being developed from the consumer or customer perspective. How strong brand knowledge is accumulated around the associative network memory model has been highlighted well in this chapter. This chapter highlights the identification and usage of Points of Difference associations (PODs) and Point of Parity associations (POPs) and strategies of such to create unique positive beliefs, perceptions, memories, and attitudes about the brand in consumers' minds. Chapter three elaborates on brand resonance and brand value chain which helps the reader to understand the steps and building blocks of raising a strong brand equity. In this sense, the brand resonance pyramid and brand value chain have been detailed properly. Dimensions in the brand resonance pyramid are salience (deep awareness), performance, imagery, judgements, feelings and resonance (deep relationships) which had been stressed as the main and vital building blocks of building a strong brand in the chapter. The next important concept in building and measuring brands that has been laid down in the chapter is the brand value chain. The brand value chain specifies the foundations of brand equity and the consequences of such together with approaches of brand value creation.

Five chapters have been put together in part III which is devoted to describing crafting and executing marketing plans for brands. Picking brand features to develop brand equity, drawing marketing plans to raise brand equity, blending marketing communication to foster brand equity, branding and digital landscape, and connecting secondary brand associations to nurture brand equity are the main chapters included in this section. Chapter four in Section III has been devoted to describing the selection of brand elements to build strong brand equity. Conditions to pick brand features and choices available for brand elements (brand names, URLs, logos, symbols, characters, slogans, jingles and packages) have been lined up in the chapter. Chapter Five delivers knowledge and insights on the integration of product, pricing and distribution strategies to improve brand awareness, increase brand image, elicit positive feedback and establish strong brand resonance. Chapter five has been followed by a description of the types of marketing communication techniques to nurture brand equity that attempts to provide a broad knowledge of means

(advertising, direct advertising, sales promotion, mobile advertising, digital marketing, event marketing) by which marketers try to convince consumers.

Branding in the digital era is chapter seven which builds a discussion on the main concerns of brands struggling in the digital world (changes in the consumer decision journey and growth of online retailing), brand engagement pyramid, digital communication, social media paid channels, mobile marketing, influencer marketing, content marketing, and co-creation of brands. Finally, chapter eight in section three presents detailed content on combining secondary brand affiliations to raise brand equity. The chapter sheds light on sources of secondary brand associations, leveraging processes and guidelines to link secondary attachments to foster brand equity.

Part IV canvass quantifying and interpreting brand performance over three chapters. It permits businesses to assess the efficacy of their branding efforts and comprehend how customers perceive their brand. Chapter nine is devoted to establishing a brand equity measurement and management system, stressing brand audits, brand tracking studies, big data and marketing analytics, and a brand equity management system. Following that, assessing the sources of brand equity by attracting the customers' mindset has been discussed in chapter ten. Qualitative and quantitative research techniques and social media listening and monitoring methods have been extensively discussed there. The eleventh chapter presents comparative and holistic methods of quantifying results of brand equity while catching the market performances of brands through systematic brand valuation.

As the growth and sustainability of brand equity is a critical objective for any company aiming to build a strong and successful brand, Part V of the book is dedicated to the theme "Growing and Sustaining Brand Equity". Four chapters anchor on addressing the same, namely: designing and implementing brand architecture strategies, introducing and naming new products and brand extensions, managing brands over time, and managing brands over geographic boundaries and market segments. Accordingly, this section persisted in making informed decisions to improve brand equity and overall performance.

Section VI extends a cherished and meaningful conclusion to the book, overlooking the closing perspectives of strategic brand management. The ending remark of the chapter has been enriched with an outstanding, noteworthy discussion on "How will branding change in the coming years?"

In essence, this book synthesizes comprehensive and contemporary thinking on strategic brand management, providing worthwhile insights and practical approaches for creating and maintaining strong brands. Though some of the elementary themes in the book have been discussed in other venues, this work does an exceptional job of consolidating the essential aspects of strategic branding, delivering the reader

enough insights and concrete methods of applying the concepts explained. Every chapter begins with highlighting the intended learning objectives of the section, followed by a preview. The majority of the significant concepts have been deliberated using appealing case studies. Ending note of each chapter remark with a chapter review and discussion questions. Exceptionally, each chapter is nourished with a supplementary section called “Brand Focus”, devoted to the real-world applications of the discussed concepts, which stimulates the readers to understand the inclusion more elaborately while bringing extra value to the book.

“Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity” is widely used in academic settings as a reference for marketing and brand management. Indeed, this would be more suitable for undergraduates and postgraduates because of the logical and precise presentation of the content. Furthermore, this is a precious gift for marketing professionals and brand managers seeking practical insights into building and managing successful brands.

## REFERENCES

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