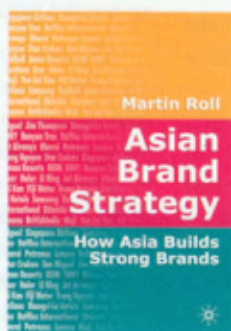


Boardroom Buy-in & Branding

Asian Brand Strategy
– How Asia Builds Strong Brands

By: Martin Roll
Publisher: Macmillan
Price: \$59.95



Coincidence can be serendipitous. Just as I started to browse Martin Roll's new book *Asian Brand Strategy*

– *How Asia Builds Strong Brands*, the head of Tourism New Zealand, George Hickton, came onto the radio, discussing the ongoing potency of 100% PURE for this country's tourism industry.

That coincidence explains better than I ever could why – despite the Asian focus – Roll's book deserves a spot on boardroom bookshelves here: good branding is global. It doesn't matter whether you're looking at a case study of Jet Airways (India's largest domestic carrier) or Air New Zealand; Haier Group (China's leading domestic appliance

manufacturer) or Fisher & Paykel; Jollibee (The Philippines' dominant fast food outlet) or Wattie's. Sure, strong brands and their markets differ greatly – but the foundations they're built on are universal.

As such, Roll undersells his book when he writes in the introduction "The book is aimed primarily at two groups of readers:

Asian business leaders and Western observers." To that, I think he could reasonably have added "or anyone else who wants to maximise the power of their brand". You've only got to glance through a few of the (pleasingly clear and accessible) topic sections to see the international relevance. "Branding drives shareholder value"; "Boardroom mindset and beliefs"; "Being different like everybody else"; "Export branding"; and so on.

Indeed, Roll writes from a global perspective. He's now CEO of Singapore-headquartered branding agency Venture

Republic, but has also held leadership roles outside the region, in technology and e-healthcare. For a decade he was an account director with advertising agencies Bates and DDB Needham Worldwide. His book has insight and depth and it's loaded with suggestions to implement the thinking.

Of course, there's additional value for anyone with a specific interest in Asia. Roll explains that Asian companies have traditionally invested in tangible assets (such as manufacturing capacity) rather than the intangible (such as building brand). To attract consumers, they've often just slashed costs. As a result, only a fraction of the world's strong brands are Asian. But that's changing fast. "Shareholder value and brand strategy to drive value will move up the boardroom agenda and become one of the most prominent drivers of value in Asia Pacific," he predicts. I suspect businesses exporting to Asia – or those who have Asian businesses as their competitors – ignore this book at their peril. JR M

