



How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding

D. B. Holt

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Coca-Cola. Harley-Davidson. Nike. Budweiser. Valued by customers more for what they symbolize than for what they do, products like these are more than brands--they are cultural icons. How do managers create brands that resonate so powerfully with consumers? Based on extensive historical analyses of some of America's most successful iconic brands, including ESPN, Mountain Dew, Volkswagen, Budweiser, and Harley-Davidson, this book presents the first systematic model to explain how brands become icons. Douglas B. Holt shows how iconic brands create "identity myths" that, through powerful symbolism, soothe collective anxieties resulting from acute social change. Holt warns that icons can't be built through conventional branding strategies, which focus on benefits, brand personalities, and emotional relationships. Instead, he calls for a deeper cultural perspective on traditional marketing themes like targeting, positioning, brand equity, and brand loyalty--and outlines a distinctive set of "cultural branding" principles that will radically alter how companies approach everything from marketing strategy to market research to hiring and training managers. Until now, Holt shows, even the most successful iconic brands have emerged more by intuition and serendipity than by design. With *How Brands Become Icons*, managers can leverage the principles behind some of the most successful brands of the last half-century to build their own iconic brands. Douglas B. Holt is associate professor of Marketing at Harvard Business School.

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