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ZAG: The #1 Strategy Of High-Performance Brands (One-Off)



Synopsis

"When everybody zigs, zag," says Marty Neumeier in this fresh view of brand strategy. ZAG follows the ultra-clear "whiteboard overview" style of the author's first book, THE BRAND GAP, but drills deeper into the question of how brands can harness the power of differentiation. The author argues that in an extremely cluttered marketplace, traditional differentiation is no longer enough—today companies need radical differentiation to create lasting value for their shareholders and customers. In an entertaining 3-hour read you'll learn: - why me-too brands are doomed to fail- how to "read" customer feedback on new products and messages- the 17 steps for designing difference into your brand- how to turn your brand's online presence into a true line to drive synergy- the secrets of naming products, services, and companies- the four deadly dangers faced by brand portfolios- how to stretch your brand without breaking it- how to succeed at all three stages of the competition cycle

From the back cover: In an age of me-too products and instant communications, keeping up with the competition is no longer a winning strategy. Today you have to out-position, out-maneuver, and out-design the competition. The new rule? When everybody zigs, zag. In his first book, THE BRAND GAP, Neumeier showed companies how to bridge the distance between business strategy and design. In ZAG, he illustrates the number-one strategy of high-performance brands—radical differentiation. ZAG is an AIGA Design Press book, published under Peachpit's New Riders imprint in partnership with AIGA. For a quick peek inside ZAG, go to www.zagbook.com.

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Customer Reviews

had to get this book for a class in my marketing program. what a great read and would recommend this to anyone who wants to learn more about Zag

One of the most direct, well communicated, and immediately applicable handbooks of brand building, brand loyalty building, and buyer building principles I've ever read. A superior companion to "The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding" [which were not really 'immutable' by the way] by Al Ries & Jack Trout. This is a must have reference book for all business people whether connected to marketing or not. Every job in any business is in some way connected to the success of a product.

You have to read Zag like you read the bible- it tells a great story but you often are better served not delving too deeply into the statements made by the author to support his points (i.e. the fact that 11 million people went to Europe in 2006 versus 8 million in 1964 as evidence of a shift in American society- though as a percent of the population it is almost no change at all in Americans traveling abroad). Such is the nature of writing about a topic where 1) the author makes his money selling branding services; 2) he doesn't believe in hard numbers to prove points, harboring the predictable anti-research position that is both a great strength and weakness of this book and books like this (i.e. Blink). It also may be the most acceptable way to write a book that is not so dry and academic that nobody would want to read it. But the story being told is a great one and it is really well told. Neumeier needs to get a lot of credit for presenting ideas simply (not simplistically) which many other authors would make very complicated. The book is also just really well thought out so that it is thoroughly enjoyable to read even as you get into some pretty important topics that others might get bogged down in jargon or overly long explanations. The book also gets high marks for not only discussing what a "zag" is but also showing you how you can get there if you follow his clearly outlined process. So while the book is clearly a campaign for what he believes versus an objective look at branding, it is a great read and I would recommend it for anyone working in

marketing/branding that wants a refresher or reminder about what you should be thinking about in our ever-changing world.

Excellent

good

In a previous book, *The Brand Gap*, Marty Neumeier explains how companies can bridge the gap between business strategy and customer experience, noting that brand-building isn't a series of isolated activities; rather, it is a complete system in which five disciplines - differentiation, collaboration, innovation, validation, and cultivation - "combine to produce a sustainable competitive advantage." His intent in *Zag* "is to zoom in on differentiation to reveal the system within the system." Initially, he observes that the human mind deals with clutter the best way it can: by blocking it out. As a result, "the newest barriers to competition are the mental walls that customers erect to keep out clutter. For the first time in history, the most powerful barriers to competition are not controlled by companies, but by customers. Those little boxes they build in their minds determine the boundaries of brands." (Thomas H. Davenport and John C. Beck also have much of value to say about these boundaries and barriers in *The Attention Economy: Understanding the New Currency of Business*.) In his latest book, Neumeier explains how to overcome these barriers with radical innovation - "the engine for a high performance brand" - that requires mastery of four disciplines: 1. Finding your zag 2. Designing your zag 3. Building your zag 4. Renewing your zag Everything begins with identifying the zag. That is, offering something that combines the qualities of both good and different. "When focus is paired with differentiation, supported by a trend, and surrounded by compelling communications, you have the basic ingredients of a zag." OK, but how to do that? Neumeier provides a design process that consists of 17 checkpoints, each formulated as a question. He explains how to answer each of them correctly (i.e. an answer most appropriate to the given organization) by proceeding through a sequence of 17 checkpoints, each of which evokes a question to be answered correctly (i.e. appropriate to the given organization), with the first two previously posed as a trilogy in *The Brand Gap*: "Who are you?" and "What do you do?" Responding to them may prove far more difficult than it may first seem and a correct (i.e. appropriate) answer to each is essential to achieving radical innovation. The third question posed previously, "Why should I care?" creates an even greater challenge. Fortunately, a correct (i.e. appropriate) answer to that question will be revealed by carefully proceeding through the remaining

15 checkpoints. It is truly remarkable how much substance and how many thought-provoking questions Neumeier provides within a narrative of less than 200 pages. With both rigor and eloquence, he explains how radical innovation can break through ever-increasing clutter in a competitive marketplace, whatever and wherever it may be. Special note should also be made of the book's production values. All of his core concepts, checklists, key points, observations, and recommendations are presented within a visually appealing context. The last time I checked, there are about 34,000 business books on the general subject of brands. Neumeier has written two of the most valuable among them. Bravo!

I am disappointed in the printing. For some reason the book is printed on a slant. I am not sure if this is the printer doing or just how this book is printed. Did anyone else experience this, where the margins are not used and the pages are printed on a slant.

ZAG while everyone else ZIGS would be the headline to this wonderful marketing strategy book. This book is every bit as concise and to the point there is to exploring business strategy on creating a brand. The author purposely made the book a short read and I appreciate it. It takes out a lot of extra useless information and retains exactly what is needed. Great examples, great references for further study and letting you, the reader know, that your business strategy needs to be sharp and focused like a sword. There are concepts in this book for all businesses from established brands looking to innovate to businesses looking to grow and for the entrepreneur. If you're interested in learning more about brand identity and strategy, this is the perfect book as a starting point for all.

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