

WALLY OLINS. ON B[®]AND.

Book of the Week

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Relationship Marketing

In this book, Wally Olins deconstructs the complex idea of brand and makes it so simple you wonder why you hadn't worked it out for yourself. He gives an overview of where brands came from, where they are going and why they are not always what you think they are.

Brands are wispy, insubstantial things, which can be hard to get a grip on. And the speed at which they appear, dominate and decline is increasing. In fact, Olins is trying to photograph a ghost, something which he achieves with aplomb.

Successful brands, he suggests, often happen by chance. They can be created and destroyed in spite of the people in charge of them and the millions spent promoting them. His premise is simple: consumers make or break brands. Olins writes in an entertaining way - I didn't expect to laugh out loud at this book, but I did. He has a keen eye for corporate puffery.

There is a great section on how to create and sustain brands and, most importantly, how to make money from them. The final chapter on the future of brands is both perceptive and challenging.

An essential read, whether you are in charge of a brand or responsible for sustaining them in any way - that'll be all of us then.