Review Article

Journal of Brand Management – Year end review 2015

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ABSTRACT A review and reflection on the research published in the *Journal of Brand Management* throughout 2015 that included two ground breaking special issues focused on the themes of: (i) Development and management of brands in China; (ii) Corporate heritage brands. Five other themes are also identified within the Volume; (iii) Brand measurement; (iv) Brand naming; (v) Rebranding; (vi) Brand and line extensions; and (vii) Anti-branding.
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INTRODUCTION

At the conclusion of Volume 21 the *Journal of Brand Management* (*JBM*) published a special issue celebrating the previous 21 years, along with a consideration of future challenges and opportunities in brand management. The issue featured seven articles from some of the leading thinkers in the field and delineated five relevant challenges and opportunities to help improve the practical impact of research in the field. Within it concluded that the area 'remains incredibly exciting, vibrant and challenging to operate and research within' (Powell, 2014, p. 698) – and also 'requires rethinking, reformulation, and

repositioning of some existing ideas and concepts carried over from the last century, but there is also a need for the preservation and optimisation of some proven concepts and strategies' (Brexendorf *et al*, 2014, p. 685).

As Volume 22 draws to a close it offers a similar opportunity to review and reflect on the research published in *JBM* throughout the past year.

Taking an overview, Volume 22 included two stimulating special issues (SI) focused upon the themes of: (i) Development and management of brands in China; (ii) Corporate heritage brands. Five other themes can also be tentatively delineated within the

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Table 1: Additional articles published within *JBM* Volume 22 (2015)

Building self-brand connections: Exploring brand stories through a transmedia perspective (Granitz and Forman, 2015)	Sonic branding: A consumer oriented literature review (Gustafsson, 2015)	Kill it or keep it?: The weak brand retain-or-discard decision in brand portfolio management (Shah, 2015)
The impact of brand strength on satisfaction, loyalty and WOM: An empirical examination in the higher education sector (Casidy and Wymer, 2015)	Three's company: Investigating cognitive and sentiment unit imbalance in co-branding partnerships (Baxter and Ilicic, 2015)	Measuring the short-term spill over impact of a product recall on a brand ecosystem (Mackalski and Belisle, 2015)
A conceptual framework for the assessment of brand congruent sensory modalities (Stach, 2015)	Hip to be cool: A Gen Y view of counterfeit luxury products (Francis et al, 2015)	'You'll never tweet alone': Managing sports brands through social media (Parganas et al, 2015)
Measuring consumer design perceptions for digital devices: A multi-dimensional scale (Mishra et al, 2015)	Global brands in emerging markets: The cultural antecedents of global brand preference (Dalmoro et al, 2015)	Consumer–brand relationships within the luxury cosmetic domain (Hodge et al, 2015)
Brand personification and symbolic consumption among ethnic minority teenage consumers: An empirical study (Gbadamosi, 2015)	Using social media to communicate employer brand identity: The impact on corporate image and employer attractiveness (Kissel and Buettgen, 2015)	

Volume: (iii) Brand measurement; (iv) Brand naming; (v) Rebranding; (vi) Brand and line extensions; (vii) Anti-branding. A number of other insightful and thought provoking topics were also published throughout the year as indicated in Table 1. The remainder of this review synthesises and summarises the seven themes identified above.

DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF BRANDS IN CHINA

Issue 3 was a guest edited special issue dedicated to brand management in China and opened with a holistic consideration of brand development and corporate brand communication strategies for brands in China. It outlined how the rapid growth of interest in the area had occurred for at least seven reasons, and identifies various core themes within the literature. A Chinese corporate brand communications Framework was subsequently proposed (Balmer and Chen, 2015a). The special issue moved on to discuss various illuminating case studies including the famous Chinese brand Tong Ren Tang (Balmer and Chen, 2015b), numerous luxury brands (Heine

and Gutsatz, 2015; Walley and Li, 2015), cultural brands (Schroeder et al, 2015) plus a corporate retail brand (Lin and He, 2015).

CORPORATE HERITAGE, CORPORATE HERITAGE BRANDS AND ORGANISATIONAL HERITAGE

Issue 5 was also a guest edited special issue dedicated to a relatively new field of exploration termed corporate heritage brand management, beginning with a thorough overview of the field and discussion of the latest developments by Balmer and Burghausen (2015a). The issue further considered: the interlinking of corporate heritage, organisational identity and organisational memory (Balmer and Burghausen, 2015b); corporate heritage brands versus contemporary corporate brands (Cooper et al, 2015a); role of corporate architecture for financial corporate heritage brands (Bargenda, 2015); luxury corporate heritage brands that decline and then achieve restoration (Cooper et al, 2015b); the interconnection between a consumers' corporate image heritage and a company's corporate brand heritage (Rindell et al, 2015).

BRAND AND LINE EXTENSIONS

In Issue 6, Athanasopoulou *et al* (2015) considered marketing strategies for brand extension success for fast moving consumer goods in order to determine those that lead to success. Their research found five significant marketing strategy components. Similarly in the same issue the identification of some product extension dilemmas led to a number of valuable insights being provided for managers by Wilkie *et al* (2015). In Issue 8 the effects of sub-brands and brand name structure on extension evaluation were considered within a Chinese cultural context, concluding that symbolic brands are more appropriate for sub-brands with symbolic semantic names. Functional brands being more suitable for sub-brands with functional semantic names (Chen *et al*, 2015). Finally, picking up that the majority of prior publications address extensions for either goods or services, than for goods to services and services to goods, in Issue 9 a useful comparison was provided between 'goods to goods' brand extensions versus 'goods to services' (Ramanathan and Velayudhan, 2015). The findings indicated that brand extensions from goods to goods are preferable than brand extensions from goods to services – under particular conditions.

BRAND MEASUREMENT

Brand measurement is considered from various perspectives within Volume 22. At the start of Issue 1, Guido and Peluso (2015, p. 1) conceptualised brand anthropomorphism 'as a property of branded products in regards to the extent to which these objects are perceived as if they were actual human beings'. The authors further developed a scale for its measurement and demonstrated its predictive power over brand personality and brand loyalty. In Issue 4 a behavioural long-term based measurement was also introduced, based on longitudinal data spanning from 2002 to 2011

and called the Brand Health Index. The Index is designed to aid accountability and the evaluation of long-term brand building effort (Mirzaei *et al*, 2015).

BRAND NAMING

Arguing that brand naming has recently taken centre stage in marketing, in Issue 2 Arora *et al* (2015) proposed a comprehensive framework of brand name classification, based on a review of the literature, as well as naming methods in use by practitioners. A content analysis was also conducted of the top 500 global brand names to better understand the current trends in the naming of brands. The newly defined categories as presented will be of use for practitioners as an aid for creating distinctive brand names. In Issue 6, five experiments were conducted to investigate consumers' evaluation of letter versus number changes in alphanumeric brand names by Kara *et al* (2015). Four key findings were delineated which will be of value to practitioners charged with naming brand extensions.

REBRANDING

In Issue 4, Roy and Sarkar (2015) used experimental design to study the effects of evolutionary rebranding for mobile phones on brand equity and consumer attitudes, in an emerging market and developing nation context. Calling upon cue utilization theory and information integration theory, along with the rebranding literature, one of the findings concluded that a market leader or an established brand may face a negative effect of rebranding from the consumers' perspective. In Issue 7, Chad (2015) utilises a change management perspective to examine the implementation of corporate rebranding in the relatively under researched context of non-profit small-to-medium sized enterprises (SMEs), utilising a case study in the Australian health insurance industry. His research suggests various refinements to the corporate

rebranding process for such SMEs that will be useful for rebranding practitioners.

ANTI-BRANDING

In Issue 1 and drawing on prior research on consumer resistance, the structures of brand and anti-brand meaning are considered by Østergaard *et al* (2015). Their research insightfully suggests some reasons why conventional anti-brand campaigning might not be effective. In Issue 2, Demirbag-Kaplan *et al* (2015) consider some of the reasons why consumers continue to purchase disliked brands. They identify that nostalgia may play an important role in maintaining an otherwise failed brand relationship. In addition, how brand moral violations lead to consumer anti-brand activism was considered in Issue 8 by Romani *et al* (2015). Their research offers a model underpinned by affective and cognitive elements to aid understanding regarding the handling of anti-brand activity, which will be of use for scholars, managers and activists alike.

In addition to the seven themes above the remaining topics published in Volume 22 are presented in Table 1 with each offering significant and further insight into related areas of Brand Management.

CONCLUSION

Volume 22 has drawn together a host of original manuscripts offering cutting-edge analysis and some of the latest thinking in the field of brand management from International experts in academia and industry. Further, two special issues (SI) addressed some of the Journal objectives, namely: (i) to add value to topical research areas and discussions within academia and/or industry via the SI focused upon the development and management of brands in China (see Issue 3); (ii) provide access and support for new and important topics in the field of brand management as found in the SI covering corporate heritage, corporate heritage brands and organisational heritage (see Issue 5). Both are excellent examples of the kind of SI *JBM* wishes to publish moving forward.

The Journal will continue to encourage submission of original and insightful articles as well as industry-based case studies, plus invited expert commentaries and editorials which rigorously considers:

- Models and theories effectively used in brand management research and practice.
- How the world's leading companies are managing their brands.

Table 2: Specific topics of interest for future submissions to JBM

Online or Digital Branding	Brand Metrics and/or Analytics	Luxury Branding	Brand Ethics and/or Corporate Social Responsibility	Brand and Finance
Brand Reputation, Identity and Image	Brand Relationship, Loyalty or Love	Branding and Technology	Branding, Innovation and/or R&D	Brand Valuation
Integrated Brand Communication	Brand Management	Brand Equity	Brand Community (Online)	Product Branding
Service Branding	Business-to-Business Branding	Retail Branding	Private Label Branding	Brand Heritage and History
Qualitative and Quantitative Brand Research	Brand Architecture and Portfolios	Brand Alliances and Mergers	Corporate Brand Management	Brand Experience
Brand Crises	Brand Counterfeits	Brand and Law	Brand Extension and Brand Growth	Brand Credibility and Trust
Open Brand Management	Brand Elements (Logo, Naming, Packaging, etc.)	Branding for Profit and Non-Profit Organisations	Brand Co-creation	Brand Research Methods

- The latest thinking, techniques and initiatives used by agencies and consultants.
- Current case studies which explore leading organisations' practical experiences, the problems faced and the lessons learned.
- Applied research from leading business schools, research institutes and universities.

In addition, Table 2 outlines specific topics of interest (but are not limited to) for future submissions.

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