8. A future for branding?

Robert Jones

Branding, although an old practice, has recently become a big topic, a boardroom priority, and a field of academic research. Its scope has expanded into culture, politics, education, cities, countries, and celebrities. But how is the practice of branding changing? Has it reached its peak? Does it have a long future ahead of it? ‘A future for branding?’ outlines three areas in which change is happening: the scope, target, and spirit of branding. In each of these, there is no simple transition from the old to the new. Instead, there is a conflict between two forces. It concludes, traditional branding is now challenged by a newer, less corporate alternative.

10. Organ donation and the ownership of body parts

Charles Foster

‘Organ donation and the ownership of body parts’ shows that in many countries, body parts and the products of bodies are regarded as property if that gives the ‘right answer’. The trading of body parts, commodification, and the Council of Europe's Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine (1997), which prohibits commercial dealings in human body parts, are considered. The debate on organ donation is then outlined, including living donors, opt in and opt out donation, and the issue of autonomy. Finally, intellectual property rights and the patentability of human material are addressed and it is argued that the law of confidentiality, not of property, should be used when considering the human body.

3. The history of branding

Robert Jones
‘The history of branding’ outlines the five different versions of branding seen over history. The first dates back to the Ancient Egyptians who, with the branding of cattle, demonstrated the earliest form of commercial branding. This was followed by organizational branding: hallmarks to show a product’s quality and companies stamping their ‘brand’ onto products. Probably the most dominant kind of branding is cultural branding—the technique of giving products deeper, more emotional associations, promising pleasure or enhanced self-esteem. There is also business-to-business and luxury branding. With all these different kinds of branding in play, almost anything can now be branded. What varies is the degree of control and complexity involved.

Branding: A Very Short Introduction
Robert Jones

Branding: A Very Short Introduction discusses the rising omnipresence of brands, and analyses how they work their magic. It considers the incredible potency of brands as a commercial, social, and cultural force, and looks at the many different kinds of brands that exist—from products, services, and artistic properties, to companies, charities, sports clubs, and political parties. Defining what we mean by the word ‘brand’, this VSI explores both the positive and negative aspects of brands. Finally, it considers the business of branding, and asks whether the idea of brands and branding is starting to decline, or whether it has a long future ahead.

1. Born free: a brief history of news media
Ian Hargreaves

In the last decade almost 600 journalists have been killed, chiefly in wars, in acts of political assassination, or by gangsters. ‘Born free: a brief history of news media’ charts the danger journalists face when reporting from war zones and from countries facing dramatic political upheaval. The growth of new media has also triggered a repressive backlash by authoritarian regimes. A brief history of journalism is provided: from the invention of printing by Johannes Gutenberg in the 15th century, through the birth of the news industry in the 18th century, to the impact of radio and television in the 20th century, and to the age of the Internet.

5. Up to a point, Lord Copper’s: who owns journalists?
Ian Hargreaves
Traditionally, we imagine journalists to be free-spirited mavericks unbound by rules and regulation. However, most modern journalism takes place within a corporate setting. ‘Up to a point, Lord Copper’s: who owns journalists?’ explores issues of news media ownership, noting the decline of the press baron. There are many good political, economic, and cultural reasons to care about who owns the institutions from which we get our journalism. Can any conclusions be drawn about which ownership conditions make for a great newspaper or a great TV news channel? Experience says that the goal should be to achieve the greatest diversity of institutional form possible.

8. Critical perspectives on management
John Hendry

‘Critical perspectives on management’ explores how, from a critical perspective, management can seem deeply political and far from value free. For many blue-collar workers and those on the political left, managers have always been representatives of financial capital and agents of exploitation. More recently, professionals in education and health services and the arts have seen managers as their ideological opponents. Any business manager has both a responsibility to the owners or shareholders of a company for maximizing its profits and a duty of care in respect of its employees. Managers are almost inevitably stuck in the middle between capital and labour, and between the class interests associated with these.

3. How did we get here?
James Fulcher

Capitalism has transformed considerably since it started. We are now in a very distinct stage of its development. ‘How did we get here?’ examines the development of industrial capitalism and divides it into three stages: anarchic capitalism, managed capitalism, and remarketed capitalism. The deficiencies and conflicts of anarchic capitalism led to the development of a managed capitalism, which showed that it is possible to protect people from the worst consequences of free market forces with state intervention and regulation. Managed capitalism generated its own problems, however, and a second transformation to remarketed capitalism has provided greater choice and more freedom for the individual, but also a less secure life, intensified work pressures, and greater inequality.
The word ‘capitalism’ is heard and used frequently, but what is capitalism about, and what does it mean? Capitalism: A Very Short Introduction discusses the history and development of capitalism through several detailed case studies, ranging from the ‘tulipomania’ of 17th-century Holland, the Great Depression of the 1930s, and the impact of the global financial crisis that started in 2007–8. It looks at the different forms that capitalism takes in Britain, Japan, Sweden, and the United States, and explores whether capitalism has escaped the nation-state by going global. It asks whether there is an alternative to capitalism, discussing socialism, communal and cooperative experiments, and the alternatives proposed by environmentalists.

1. What is capitalism?

‘What is capitalism?’ examines the different forms that capitalism has taken, from the merchant capitalism of the 17th-century, through capitalist production in the 19th, to the financial capitalism of the present day. As the investment of money to make more money, capitalism has long existed but it was when production was financed in this way that a transformative capitalism came into being. Capitalist production depends on the exploitation of wage labour, which also crucially fuels the consumption of the goods and services produced by capitalist enterprises. Production and consumption are linked by the markets that come to mediate all economic activities in a capitalist society.

4. Changes in the countryside

Archaeologists argue that the Vikings' origins lay in a process of gradual settlement evolution, as well as a growing complexity in settlement types. ‘Changes in the countryside’ looks at how Scandinavia developed from the Iron Age onwards and examines rural settlement patterns during the Viking Age in Norway, various parts of Sweden, and Denmark. There were major changes in rural activities taking place during the Viking Age, reflecting a growing social complexity and increasing hierarchies and specialization of site
functions. These changes underpinned the establishment of the Scandinavian nation states and provided the basis for overseas expansion.

Medical Law: A Very Short Introduction
Charles Foster

Medical law is concerned with our bodies, and what happens to them during and after our lives. The core issues of medical law — organ transplantation, abortion, withdrawal of treatment, euthanasia, confidentiality, research on humans — affect us all. Medical Law: A Very Short Introduction explores different examples of these issues to illustrate the key problems and principles of medical law. When things go wrong with our bodies, we want to know what our rights are, and what governs the conduct of the clinicians into whose hands we put our lives and limbs. Dealing with matters of life and death, it can therefore have a fundamental impact on medical practice.