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A global brand?

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This book review of Nigel Hollis's *The Global Brand* (Palgrave MacMillan, 272 pages) provides a thorough summary of the book's contents, as well as a discussion of the myth of the "one-size-fits-all" approach to branding. Also discussed is the value of building an "aligned organization." The author describes how Hollis succeeds by providing concepts and perspectives that are strongly supported by research, personal experience and industry examples, enabling *The Global Brand* to appeal to a wide range of individuals.

With years of first and second hand experience working with, researching and following global brands, Nigel Hollis' attempts, in his book *The Global Brand*, to answer the multi-layered question of how to create and develop lasting brand value on a global scale. Adding his knowledge to that of industry colleagues, Hollis details the value created, challenges faced and practices employed when carrying a brand to the global stage.

The Global Brand is organized into three parts, each catering to a different element of the global brand issue at hand. Smartly, *Part One; Strong Global Brands Create Lasting Value* is used to lay the framework on which the remainder of the book is based. This setting-of-the-stage approach allows *The Global Brand* to appeal to a broad range of readers, as opposed to being solely focused on those with industry knowledge. Use of real-world examples and cases allows readers to make a direct connection between concepts and practices and with the recognizable global brands who have employed them. This approach strengthens the facts and opinions presented, and builds a scenario that is imaginable, and in some cases, recallable to the reader endeavoring to develop a

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powerful message and concrete understanding. The only downside with this approach is that some brands are used repetitiously and almost all examples are success stories. A wider variety of global brands and a few mediocre or unsuccessful examples would have allowed the reader to learn from faults, as well as from successes.

The heart of *The Global Brand* is focused on demystifying the impression that global brands can take the one-size-fits-all approach when reaching out to markets anywhere in the world. In essence, *The Global Brand* is very good at showing that regardless of a company's size, power or reach, there is little chance of success on the global level without a clear and strong understanding of "needs, wants and desires at the local level." *Part Two: Building Strong Global Brands Is Challenging* introduces the concept that local consumers are integral to the success of global brands and focuses intently on the role culture plays in the relationship between global brands and local consumers. To assist with this point, Hollis introduces Hofstede's "cultural dimensions" and compares countries against one another on each dimension, thus clearly illustrating differences in cultural norms. To further crystalize this point, Hollis uses cultural, demographic and economic differences to provide a brief introduction to the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China). Hollis explains why companies are looking to target the BRIC and gain market share in the coming years, but acknowledges that a company's approach must be tailored to specific cultural norms in order to achieve market share. As a result, *The Global Brand* is successful in conveying the impact cultural differences can have on how a brand is perceived and received in various countries though examples and exploration of cultural norms and tendencies. Through this, readers gain a strong understanding that brands must take cultural differences into account to effectively gain market share and experience success.

The Global Brand goes on to evaluate both the strengths and weaknesses global brands face. In Chapter 7, Hollis explains the advantages local brands have over global brands and the key attributes global brands must possess to realize success in a local market. In Chapter 9, he investigates the advantages multinationals possess over local companies. Chapter 10 follows on this analysis. Here, Hollis discusses the two main challenges facing anyone wanting to make a brand global: (i) "balancing investment in the brand against short-term cost savings; and (ii) "balancing effective local marketing with economies of scale" (pg. 141). Hollis explains these challenges in detail and also includes a discussion of challenges with global brands themselves as have been identified by industry experts. The entire approach taken by Hollis results in a clear, logical picture of what international companies need to do to succeed locally. Such analysis shows the strengths of local and global brands in the market, keys to fully proving the thesis *The Global Brand* is based upon: "without a

good understanding of people's needs, wants and desires at a local level, marketers of global brands stand little chance of success" (pg. 5).

The Global Brand concludes by looking at implementation — specifically, how companies should make their brand global and what needs to be considered in doing so; how to develop and communicate an effective brand promise; the role research should play in a company's approach brand strategy; and the way to align an organization to achieve global brand success. To begin this section, Hollis discusses the products themselves and considers how environmental factors in different geographic locations will have different effects on the product a company is offering. From there, Hollis discusses common elements and messaging a brand should have across different regions. While discussing implementation Hollis deftly ties the critical role research plays in brand success and identifies biases and complications that marketers must be aware of when applying and gathering research to make informed decisions.

The importance of an "aligned organization" is also introduced at the end of *The Global Brand.* This section compiles examples of companies and feedback from industry professionals on why this alignment is essential, and although this point is critical to the success of a global brand it is conveyed as more of a step-by-step guide and lacks the insight that is prevalent in earlier chapters. *Part Three: Practices that Help Build Successful Global Brands* is successful in tying together the concepts and practices introduced throughout the book and clearly defines what it takes to make a brand successful on the global scale.

A well written, easy read, *The Global Brand* acts as a great resource to help gain a general understanding of global brands, increase knowledge of brand success and gain a better understanding of the steps a company needs to take to develop a successful global brand. By providing concepts and perspectives that are strongly supported by research, personal experience, and industry examples, *The Global Brand* is able to appeal to a wide range of individuals.

References

Hollis, Nigel. (2008). *The Global Brand.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.