



The Human Brand: How We Relate to People, Products, and Companies

By Chris Malone, Susan T. Fiske

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Why we choose companies and brands in the same way that we unconsciously perceive, judge, and behave toward one another

People everywhere describe their relationships with brands in a deeply personal way—we hate our banks, love our smartphones, and think the cable company is out to get us. What's actually going on in our brains when we make these judgments? Through original research, customer loyalty expert Chris Malone and top social psychologist Susan Fiske discovered that our perceptions arise from spontaneous judgments on warmth and competence, the same two factors that also determine our impressions of people. We see companies and brands the same way we automatically perceive, judge, and behave toward one another. As a result, to achieve sustained success, companies must forge genuine relationships with customers. And as customers, we have a right to expect relational accountability from the companies and brands we support.

- Applies the social psychology concepts of "warmth" (what intentions others have toward us) and "competence" (how capable they are of carrying out those intentions) to the way we perceive and relate to companies and brands
- Features in-depth analyses of companies such as Hershey's, Domino's, Lululemon, Zappos, Amazon, Chobani, Sprint, and more
- Draws from original research, evaluating over 45 companies over the course of 10 separate studies

The Human Brand is essential reading for understanding how and why we make the choices we do, as well as what it takes for companies and brands to earn and keep our loyalty in the digital age.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Q&A with Chris Malone and Susan Fiske, authors of *The Human Brand*

When people make statements like "I hate my cable company" or "I love my smartphone," what's happening there psychologically?

As humans, we have developed a remarkable ability to draw quick conclusions about others based on surprisingly little information. We use those same powers of detection to draw conclusions about the people we buy products and services from, even if we never have direct contact with them. We infer a great deal about the intentions of our cable companies and smartphone makers from the experience we have with their products and services, as well as all the information about them we are exposed to. As a result, whether we realize it or not, we are not actually loyal to companies or brands, but rather we are loyal to what we believe we know about the people behind them.

How did you two first meet and come to work together?

I (Chris) first stumbled upon Susan's work through an article in *Harvard Business Review*, which led me to discover Susan's extensive academic research on warmth and competence. I contacted Susan with an email that started with, "I've become a fan of your work," and proposed that we test whether her human perception model was predictive of how customers relate to companies and brands. It's been a wonderful and enlightening journey together ever since.

What do you mean by warmth and competence?

Leading researchers and social psychologists have shown that we judge others almost instantly along two dimensions: What are the intentions of other people toward me? And how capable are they of carrying out those intentions? In the academic world, these two categories of social perception are known as warmth and competence, respectively, and they drive most of our emotions and behavior toward other people.

Through our research over the past three years, Susan and I have discovered that customers engage with and become loyal to companies and brands in the same way they do with other people—on the basis of their warmth and competence.

Which companies and brands did you find are successfully building lasting relationships with their customers? Which ones are failing?

There are many companies and brands, large and small, that use technology to build and maintain one-to-one relationships with customers. Some examples from our book include Zappos, Domino's, and Mercedes, as well as Dr. Kelly Faddis, Zane's Cycles, and Honest Tea. What these companies have in common is that they put the best interests of their customers ahead of their own short-term financial interests.

On the other hand, companies that focus heavily on maximizing shareholder value in the short term end up doing themselves more harm than good in the process. Despite their other successes, large companies like Toyota, Sprint, and Goldman Sachs have learned this lesson the hard way and are still recovering from their

missteps. Perhaps not surprisingly, banks, oil companies, airlines, and telecom firms dominate the list of most disliked companies. What these have in common is a reputation for profiting at their customers' expense.

Review

Winner, Business: Motivational, 2014 International Book Awards

Silver Medal Winner, Networking, 2014 Axiom Business Book Awards

“Spotlights what it takes for companies and brands to earn and keep customer loyalty in the digital age.”
—**Entrepreneur.com (selected as a “Best Business Book to Get Cozy With This Fall”)**

“This insightful book explains in simple terms why trust is at the heart of every healthy relationship—not just between people, but between companies and their customers. *The Human Brand* will cause you to completely rethink your current approach to customer relationships, and that’s a good thing.”

—**Tom Long, chief executive officer, MillerCoors**

“*The Human Brand* is a brilliant synthesis of psychological science and marketing wisdom. Engaging, insightful, and deeply original, this is an essential book for every business reader.”

—**Daniel Gilbert, author, *Stumbling on Happiness*, and Edgar Pierce Professor of Psychology, Harvard University**

“*The Human Brand* is a must-read for those who want a truly evolved understanding of how to earn loyalty and create lasting relationships with customers. It's a timely look at how modern corporations hold onto customers—and how we drive them away.”

—**Beth Comstock, chief marketing officer, General Electric**

“Chris Malone has a unique talent for uncovering customer insights that challenge conventional wisdom and uncover new growth opportunities. In *The Human Brand*, he and Susan Fiske offer a new way to understand brands, deliver more memorable customer experiences, and drive profitable growth.”

—**Ravi Saligram, president and chief executive officer, OfficeMax, Inc.**

“Susan Fiske’s renowned work on warmth and competence explains how we unconsciously judge people and companies. *The Human Brand* is a must-read for anyone with an interest in why we make the choices we do.”

—**Jennifer Aaker, coauthor, *The Dragonfly Effect*, and professor, Stanford University Graduate School of Business**

“*The Human Brand* offers truly ground-breaking insights on the psychology of customer choice and loyalty, challenging us to rethink what really matters to our customers and what it takes to build strong and authentic relationships with them.”

—**Ann Mukherjee, chief marketing officer, Frito-Lay North America**

“Today’s technology makes it appear as if marketing has become more complex. In fact, it hasn’t – especially for those brands who think and act like ‘the shop on the corner.’ People’s connection to what they buy, and who they buy it from, is what’s important. That’s been the same for generations. The challenge is in making large brands appear ‘small.’ *The Human Brand* cuts through the complexities of ‘marketing local’ in the digital age to tell the simple truth: connections are key.”

—**Patrick Doyle, president and chief executive officer, Domino’s Pizza, Inc.**

“How do we earn the lasting loyalty of others? Chris and Susan provide fundamental, yet powerful, insights into building relationships that matter. They challenge us to ‘come out from behind the curtain’ and lead with courage, conviction and heart. Never before has the humanization of brands and leadership been so vital to success.”

—**Jay Gould, president and chief executive officer, American Standard Brands**

“By re-focusing us on the primal foundations of survival, *The Human Brand* takes a major, comprehensive step towards understanding the real drivers of commercial success. If you care about what ignites, engages and sustains deep, strong relationships with your brand and company, read this book.”

—**Susan Fournier, coauthor, *Consumer-Brand Relationships*, and professor, Boston University School of Management**

“In all the noise and all the confusion, these insights on what really matters for corporations to maintain true customer loyalty make *The Human Brand* invaluable.”

—**John Williams, president and chief executive officer, Domtar Corporation**

“The insights detailed in *The Human Brand* have completely reshaped our thinking and approach to building lasting alumni relationships and financial support. Our resurgent alumni results in both areas are a testament to the timely and timeless value of warmth, competence and worthy intentions.”

—**Daniel J. Curran, president, University of Dayton**

“Malone and Fiske offer compelling new evidence on the dangers of excess focus on short-term shareholder value. Their anecdote-rich book is helpful for any business concerned with how to retain customer loyalty and trust in these complex times.”

—**Noreena Hertz, author, *The Silent Takeover* and *Eyes Wide Open*, and professor, Duisenberg School of Finance**

“The important insights in *The Human Brand* help explain why B Corporations are able to attract the best talent and the most evangelical customers, and why they deliver lasting benefits to our society and to shareholders.”

—**Jay Coen Gilbert, cofounder, B Lab**

From the Inside Flap

People everywhere describe their relationships with brands of all kinds in deeply personal ways—we hate our banks, love our smartphones, and think the cable company is out to get us. What's actually going on in our brains when we make these judgments?

Through their original research, customer loyalty expert Chris Malone and social psychologist Susan Fiske show that we relate to companies, brands, and even inanimate products in the same way that we naturally perceive, judge, and behave toward one another.

Early humans developed a kind of genius for making two specific kinds of quick judgments: What are the intentions of other people toward me? And how capable are they of carrying out those intentions? Social psychologists call these two categories of perception warmth and competence, and they drive most of our emotions and behavior toward other people—and in today's modern world, toward businesses too. As a result, we become devoted to certain companies, brands, even products, but we also have high expectations for loyalty from them in return.

Having evaluated over 45 companies across 10 separate studies, Malone and Fiske offer in-depth analyses of

companies such as Johnson & Johnson, Hershey's, Domino's, Lululemon, Zappos, Amazon, Chobani, and Sprint, showing how they manage to achieve success and sustain it—even recovering from major missteps—by forging genuine relationships with customers.

The Human Brand is essential reading for understanding how and why we make the choices we do, as well as what it takes for companies and brands to earn and keep our loyalty in the digital age.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Anthony Rodriguez:

Why don't make it to become your habit? Right now, try to prepare your time to do the important take action, like looking for your favorite e-book and reading a publication. Beside you can solve your condition; you can add your knowledge by the book entitled *The Human Brand: How We Relate to People, Products, and Companies*. Try to stumble through book *The Human Brand: How We Relate to People, Products, and Companies* as your good friend. It means that it can to get your friend when you sense alone and beside that of course make you smarter than ever before. Yeah, it is very fortunated to suit your needs. The book makes you a lot more confidence because you can know anything by the book. So , let me make new experience along with knowledge with this book.

Kim Salgado:

What do you concentrate on book? It is just for students since they are still students or the item for all people in the world, the particular best subject for that? Merely you can be answered for that question above. Every person has distinct personality and hobby for every other. Don't to be forced someone or something that they don't want do that. You must know how great and important the book *The Human Brand: How We Relate to People, Products, and Companies*. All type of book can you see on many resources. You can look for the internet solutions or other social media.

Roger Patrick:

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Randall Wilmes:

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from your book. Book is prepared or printed or created from each source this filled update of news. With this modern era like today, many ways to get information are available for you actually. From media social such as newspaper, magazines, science guide, encyclopedia, reference book, new and comic. You can add your knowledge by that book. Are you ready to spend your spare time to open your book? Or just in search of the The Human Brand: How We Relate to People, Products, and Companies when you needed it?

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