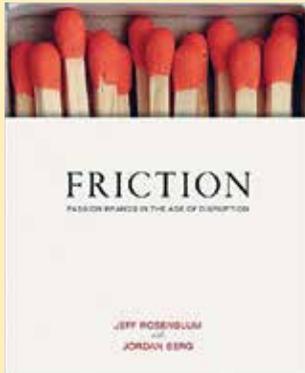


Holistic Approach Counts



Title: Friction: Passion Brands in the Age of Disruption

Authors: Jeff Rosenblum and Jordan Berg

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Baby boomers will remember the 1960s and 1970s, when there might have been only four or five channels, and everyone watched the same shows. They'll also remember how their favourite shows would be interrupted by commercials.

Well, some things never change. While our television, and more broadly and accurately, our entertainment habits have been revolutionised in the age of the Internet and the smartphone, advertisers continue to be driven by the old-fashioned interruption model of advertising.

In his gorgeously produced book on the future of advertising and branding, *Friction: Passion Brands in the Age of Disruption*, advertising executive Jeff Rosenblum offers a succinct explanation of why the interruption model is still so prevalent: "institutionalised muscle memory." It doesn't matter that, according to Rosenblum, 89 per cent of advertisements are not viewed. The industry still clings to a 60-year-old advertising invention.

Instead of interruption, Rosenblum

argues the industry should be focusing on doing the one fundamental thing that ensures goodwill and sustainable loyalty from customers: reducing friction. That's what Uber did. As Rosenblum explains, with Uber, you don't have to worry about having the right amount of cash or calculating the tip – Uber took cash out of the equation. And "it only requires one click to provide your home address or share your music playlist with the driver," he writes.

Friction comes in two sizes, Rosenblum says: micro, which is the brand- or company-level friction, and macro, which is category- or industry-level friction. Uber tackled both. At the macro level, Uber responded to a need for people to have an efficient and safe way to travel. "They elevated an entire category," Rosenblum writes. But it's at the micro level, with its revolutionary technology-driven process, that Uber really shines.

In short, brands remove friction at the macro level by adding value and at the micro level by making the product easier to buy and to use.

While removing macro and micro friction might sound theoretically sound, does it truly work? In other words, what about the bottom line?

Instead of interruption, Rosenblum argues the industry should be focusing on doing the one fundamental thing that ensures goodwill and sustainable loyalty from customers: reducing friction.



In 2013, Rosenblum made a documentary called "The Naked Brand" about companies that were, he writes, "embracing transparency and building brands through holistic behaviour, not messaging." Only when people started asking questions did Rosenblum realise he had never really looked at the bottom-line impact of the companies' battle against friction. So, he crunched the numbers, and they proved what his instincts had already told him: fighting micro and macro friction leads to better results.

After laying out the bottom-line benefits of his anti-friction marketing mindset, Rosenblum explains some of the reasons it works, including the innate human desire for reciprocity (if someone does something good for you, you want to reciprocate) and our subconscious reading of signals (the green or red flags that makes us support or walk away from a brand).

In later chapters, Rosenblum focuses specifically on helping marketers become more creative or tell better stories so that they can compellingly convey how their brands are removing friction.

Rosenblum uses superb graphics to drive home his message. Each of the last two pages of his chapters, for example, have only one sentence on them, in gigantic fonts – but those two sentences summarise with laser-focused succinctness the core lesson of the chapter.

In effect, the creative design of the book shows Rosenblum practicing what he preaches, helping the time-pressed, right-brained marketers who will read his book learn its important lessons with the least friction possible. Honest, grounded (for instance, he refuses to talk about "the death of advertising," whose "false eulogy has been written before") and practical, *Friction* earns its place on the bookshelves of every marketing department. ■