

Books that influenced me

Manfred Abraham,
managing partner,
BrandCap



From senior positions at The Partners and Wolff Olins, Manfred moved to Interbrand London as head of the consulting team and global hospitality expert, before founding BrandCap. His experience encompasses hospitality, luxury, education, retail, consumer, media, and business-to-business branding.

1 POSITIONING: THE BATTLE FOR YOUR MIND

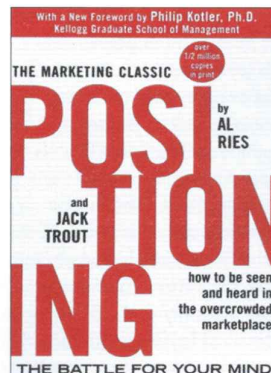
By Al Ries and Jack Trout
Published by McGraw-Hill Professional, 1981

My degree is in art history, so as a fledgling brand consultant right at the start of my career at Lambie-Nairn I felt a little disadvantaged by my lack of marketing theory. I was recommended this book and it certainly captured my mind. I loved the understanding it gave me about how branding can significantly impact a business. Even the simplest principles are still with me years later.

4 THE BIG IDEA

By Robert Jones
Published by HarperCollins Business, 2000

I read this just as I was starting at Wolff Olins. It really summed up the consultancy's ethos of strong strategic thinking with a daring future growth focus, which created fantastic brands and businesses such as Orange and First Direct that had fascinated me as a customer as much as a brand consultant.



2 THE 10-DAY MBA

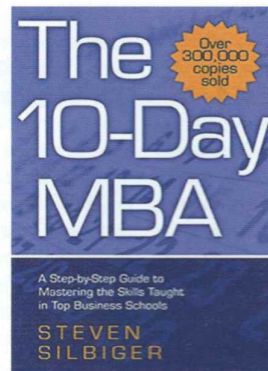
By Steven Silbiger
Published by Piatkus, 2005

This book is actually a bit of a cheat – it's more of a genre. Three years into my career, I started devouring general business books as I realised that branding and business are intrinsically linked and I, therefore, needed to understand all the stuff talked about in the boardroom – from EBITDA through to cash flow. Research shows that only 7% of marketers can put together a P&L and balance sheet correctly when given a simple business scenario. Shocking.

5 UNCOMMON PRACTICE: PEOPLE WHO DELIVER A GREAT BRAND EXPERIENCE

Edited by Andy Milligan and Shaun Smith
Published by Financial Times/Prentice Hall, 2002

Building on *The Big Idea* and my interest in these groundbreaking businesses, was this book. It cemented my belief that big ideas only work if you have buy-in from the entire organisation, as its people are the lifeblood of a brand experience.



3 OPEN MINDS: 21ST CENTURY BUSINESS LESSONS AND INNOVATIONS FROM ST. LUKE'S

By Andy Law
Published by Texere Publishing, 2001

Moulding my own management style was the next big thing on my agenda so *Open Minds* came in handy. While I read this midway through my career, I applied many of the concepts from this book when setting up BrandCap. It is one of the reasons why we have a flat hierarchy, which empowers the team.

6 INSIDE APPLE

By Adam Lashinsky
Published by Hachette Book Group USA, 2012

And, finally, I think the most important book for any brand consultant to read is this one. Apple is the most successful brand in the world and the book provides insight into the internal – and up until publication, closely guarded – processes and procedures championed by Jobs, which made the business what it is. At BrandCap we call on many of these insights to help our clients leverage brand and create the most value for their organisation.

