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# Creating Value: The Theory and Practice of Marketing Semiotics Research

By Laura R. Oswald



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## Creating Value: The Theory and Practice of Marketing Semiotics Research

By Laura R. Oswald

In global consumer culture, brands structure an economy of symbolic exchange that gives value to the meanings consumers attach to the brand name, logo, and product category. Brand meaning is not just a value added to the financial value of goods, but has material impact on financial markets themselves. Strong brands leverage consumer investments in the cultural myths, social networks, and ineffable experiences they associate with marketing signs and rituals. *Creating Value: The Theory and Practice of Marketing Semiotic Research* is a guide to managing these investments by managing the cultural codes that define value in a market or consumer segment.

The book extends the discussion beyond the basics of semiotics to post-structural debates related to ethnographic performance, multicultural consumer identity, the digitalized consumer, and heterotopic experiences of consumer space. The book invites readers to challenge the current thinking on topics ranging from cultural branding and brand rhetoric to digital media management and service site design. It also emphasizes the role of product category codes and cultural trends in the production of perceived value.

*Creating Value* explains theory in language that is accessible to academics and students, as well as research practitioners and marketers. By applying semiotics to the everyday world of the marketplace, the book makes sense of the semiotics discipline, which is often mystified by technical jargon and hair-splitting debate in the academic literature. The book also provides practitioners and professors with a practical guide to the methods used in semiotic research across the marketing mix.



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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

Laura Oswald's truly original interdisciplinary Marketing Semiotics and its compendium Creating Value are groundbreaking, foundational works that incorporate a wide range of modern and postmodern semiotic, economic and deconstruction theories, seminal for understanding the foundations of marketing semiotics. Creating value, an intellectual tour de force is a seminal work for all those interested in semiotic theory, and marketing in particular, contributing to the establishment of the dynamic field as an exciting innovative academic discipline that furthers our comprehension of social behaviour in general. Paul Perron, Professor Emeritus, The University of Toronto Building on real-life case studies, Laura Oswald offers a broad-ranging and stimulating framework for understanding how semiotics (broadly defined) can be applied to address a large variety of marketplace problems. Christian Pinson, Emeritus Professor of Marketing, INSEAD Fontaine Bleau Today marketing managers look for customer insights directly, by getting out and talking to people where they shop and consume. The more they do so, the more they realize that interpretive and ethnographic skills are not innate; they need to be learned. Books like this one, unpacking the science and art of semiotics, are essential reading for managers responsible for insights research. Professor John A. Deighton, Harold M. Brierly Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School Creating Value is a remarkable book, not only written skillfully but with a rare mix of cutting-edge theory and practice on the market-based making of meanings. Market creators, brand managers, and customer experience designers alike will find it to be an eloquent and effective guide to leveraging the power of semiotics. Markus Giesler, Professor of Marketing, The Schulich School of Business, York University, Toronto In this book, Laura Oswald brings semiotic theory and marketing practice together through an engaging and illuminating series of case studies...Her analyses astutely pin point the limitations of more conventional approaches and show the clear strategic advantages offered by a semiotically informed, cultural perspective. This book should have a strong appeal for marketing academics and practitioners alike. Craig Thompson, Churchill Professor of Marketing, University of Wisconsin-Madison

### **About the Author**

Laura R. Oswald, *Director, Marketing Semiotics Inc.*

Laura Oswald is an academic as well as founder and director of Marketing Semiotics Inc., a brand strategy research and consulting firm serving Fortune 500 clients in North America, Europe, and Asia. Oswald is an expert in semiotics - a social science discipline that leverages consumers' investments in the cultural myths, social networks, and ineffable experiences they associate with marketing signs and rituals. Oswald has held academic positions at Northwestern University, ESSEC Business School, and the University of Illinois, Urbana. She writes and speaks on current issues in advertising, consumer research, design, and strategy at meetings of the Association for Consumer Research, the American Marketing Association, the Qualitative Research Consultants Association, and the American Sociological Association.

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