Brands help to build sustained relationships with the consumers. Strong brands lend endurance and permanence to an organization and protect it from the market turbulence and uncertainties. Given its strategic role, the selected chapters examine and develop a critical understanding of the processes involved in building and managing brands for gaining long-term sustainable competitive advantage. The book provides an insight into the world of sustainable and competitive branding through thirteen chapters divided into four sections.

In section one, “Branding and Sustainable Competitive Advantage,” the first chapter discusses whether being perceived as sustainable is a means to achieve a differential advantage. Whereas, the second chapter on “Are Strong Brands a Source of Competitive Advantage in the Virtual World?” highlights the importance of customer education and employee training to prevent the erosion of brand image and loyalty on one hand, and improve perceived service quality and customer satisfaction on the other, for companies using offshore outsourcing of customer services.

Finally, the third chapter, “Taking Public Health Learning Global through Branding and Identity Management,” explores potential methods for online branding and identity management. This chapter addresses an environmental scan of the global public health environment and work implications of the global branding, along with the engagement and the maintenance of the brand over time.

In section two “Strategic Branding Decisions,” the first chapter, “Exploring key issues in Destination Marketing,” discusses and presents an analytical framework to effectively communicate the competitive advantage of destinations and market them as brands. The second chapter, “Branding Strategies for digital TV Channels,” analyses the impact of digitalization on TV marketing strategies focusing on the role of brand as a loyalty-based resource, available to digital television networks to create a sustainable competitive advantage. The third chapter, entitled “Between Physical and Virtual reality: the case of Benetton Brand,” identifies the organizational dynamics of the Benetton Company and presents a perspective theory that seeks to analyze the connections between social representations and corporate communication.

Further, the fourth chapter, “Branding & Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Indian Politics: Brand Rahul Gandhi,” discusses and analyses Rahul Gandhi as a brand to find a match between brand identity, brand personality, and consumer perception in terms of benefits sought and influence of activities undertaken by him. The chapter concludes that there should be a sustainable synergy between the leader and the party to avoid brand equity dilution.

In section three, “Consumers and Brands,” the first chapter, “Brand Engagement and Brand Loyalty,” states brand engagement from theoretical, managerial, and methodological perspectives. The theoretical component describes types and levels of engagement and emphasizes their antecedents and consequences.
The managerial component briefly describes management interests in branding and brand loyalty and the relation of brand engagement to loyalty. Finally, the methodological component briefly describes how to operationalize the engagement concepts. Similarly, the second chapter, “The Brand Stakeholder Approach: Broad and Narrow-based views to managing consumer-centric brands,” presents a dynamic collaborative process of creation of brands seeking to engage consumers in new and innovative ways in order to gain authenticity.

Finally, the third chapter, “Brand Obsessed Society: Branding Yoga Guru Baba Ramdev in India,” explores the value propositions, and the sustainable key differentiators to analyze the brand status and brand strategy of spiritual beacon Baba Ram Dev. The chapter concludes that, a strong synergy between image and identity of Brand Baba Ramdev results in strong personality that offers him a competitive advantage to get across to the consumers.

In section Four, “Digital And Virtual World,” the first chapter, “GeoFree BrandComms: Building and Sustaining Virtual Brand Communities,” presents the use of Weblogs (Blogs) and related technologies as strategic tools in building GeoFree BrandComms and posits the applications of GeoFree BrandComms in Web-based marketing strategies that find their basis in strong brands and loyal customers.

Further, the second chapter, “Enhanced Social Presence Through eBranding the Consumer in Virtual Communities,” discusses that brands have become an important mode of consumer communication, identifying and distinguishing consumers as social objects within consumer market culture. In addition, eBranding affords consumers the necessary tools to represent themselves by communicating their roles and relationships in virtual consumer culture environments for transfer to actual consumer culture environments.

Finally, the third chapter, “E branding and Institutional Websites: the Visiting Cards of the Municipalities of Rome and Paris,” presents the analysis of the municipal web sites of two historical capitals, Rome and Paris, considered as the Visiting Cards these two cities offer citizens and tourists. In sum, the chapter offers guidelines for web professionals and institutional communication managers.

Avinash Kapoor  
Management Development Institute, India

Chinmaya Kulshrestha  
Management Development Institute, India