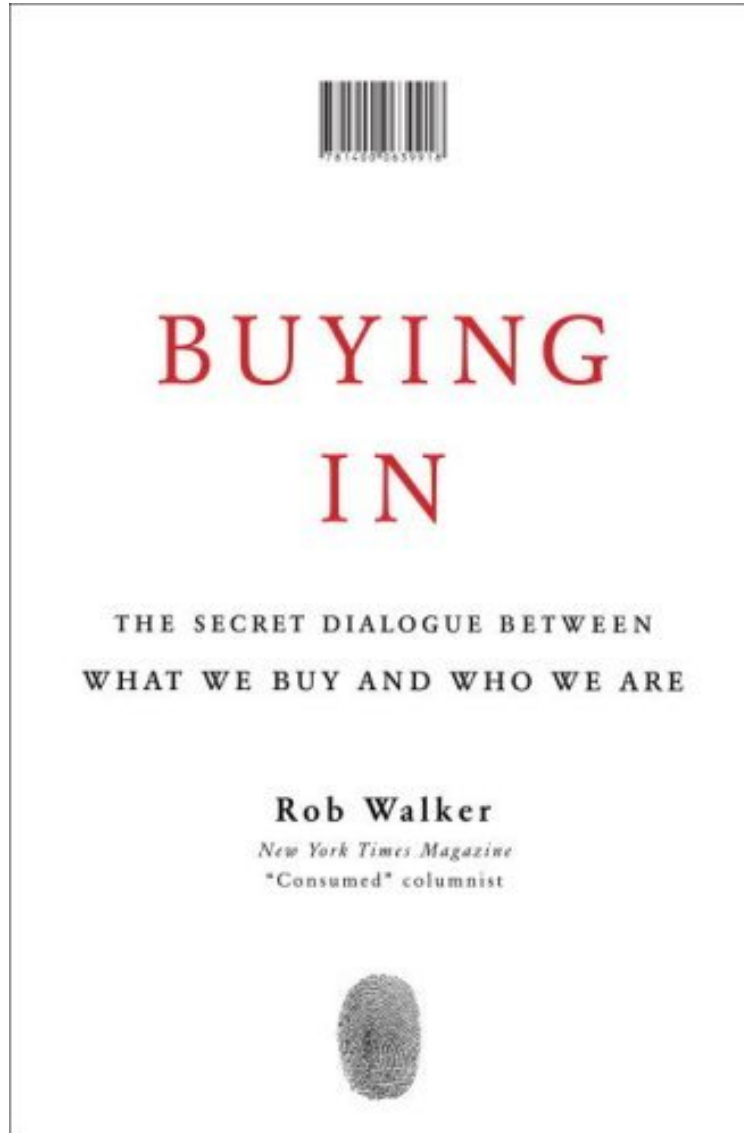


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Buying In: The Secret Dialogue Between What We Buy and Who We Are

Rob Walker

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0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Buying In: the Secret Dialogue Between What We Buy and Who We AreBy Kim Burdick."Buying In" is a thought-provoking look at America's consumer culture.Rob Walker tells us

there is a strong disconnect between theories about contemporary immunity to advertising and the consumer culture he has actually observed. His conclusion is that in a world of many "pretty good choices," modern Americans and others do not buy things based on price and quality issues as much as they buy into ideas about the products, the manufacturers, and themselves. Psychologists recognize that familiarity with a brand helps people make sense of the world; that people will instinctively buy more expensive goods if they are first asked to contribute to a good cause, that many are willing to help market new products and create a buzz about things they like (—hmmm—doesn't mention that is exactly what reviewers do on), and that dopamine, a chemical in the brain associated with pleasure, is released when we buy something. Walker believes that the interconnection between any product and the consumer is more subtle than simply figuring out a need and filling that need. Brands and logos and products of all kinds are symbolic tools used in telling personal stories. Walker's final chapter focuses on purchases as visible statement to ourselves and others about who we are. Problems arise, he says, "when people use material goods and experiences not to reflect who they are but to construct who they are." "Buying In" is a fascinating look at consumer culture. Kim Burdick Stanton, Delaware 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By A. Gobeaga Good information 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. a must read to understand the tweaking of our attention ... By Ross Jones a must read to understand the tweaking of our attention via the tweaking of our curiosity.....led down the garden path....to the brand new shoes!!

Brands are dead. Advertising no longer works. Consumers are in control. Or so we're told. In *Buying In*, Rob Walker argues that this accepted wisdom misses a much more important cultural shift, including a practice he calls *murketing*, in which people create brands of their own and participate, in unprecedented ways, in marketing campaigns for their favorites. Yes, rather than becoming immune to them, we are rapidly embracing brands. Profiling Timberland, American Apparel, Pabst Blue Ribbon, Red Bull, iPod, and Livestrong, among others, Walker demonstrates the ways in which buyers adopt products not just as consumer choices but as conscious expressions of their identities. Part marketing primer, part work of cultural anthropology, *Buying In* reveals why now, more than ever, we are what we buy—and vice versa.

From School Library Journal Adult/High School—Walker takes a close look at past and present consumerism in the United States, positing that older forms of advertising are no longer successful. In their place, the trend has shifted to what the author calls "murketing," a mix of "murky" and "marketing." He argues that instead of being manipulated by marketing, consumers are using it to their advantage; and instead of being shaped by products, consumers are using them to express individual identity and social outlook. Told from the perspectives of both consumers and marketers, the book entwines historical fact, commentary from experts in the field, and pop-culture examples drawn from brand names such as Timberland, Sanrio, Apple, and Nike. It also incorporates conversations with CEOs of companies like American Apparel as well as start-up projects from the skateboarding and music industries. Walker examines all aspects of "murketing," including ethics, emerging technology, and commercialization versus underground movements. This book is both accessible and relevant to teens, with many of the examples being pulled from Generations Y and Z. It will be useful to those interested in business, advertising, or social trends.—Kelliann Bogan, Colby-Sawyer College, New London, NH Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist New York Times columnist and author (Letters from New Orleans, 2005) Walker makes no pretense at being a master of modern marketing. But he does, through intuitive, savvy observations of human and corporate behaviors, solidify his argument on what brands mean in today's society. His claim that brands such as Hello Kitty and the iPod, among others, balance our need for both belonging and individuality is not revolutionary. So what's new here? That Walker is one of the prime analysts dedicated to probing our minds, our behavior, and, specifically, our buying patterns. He addresses the demand for authenticity and the nearly accidental formation of consumer communities, almost in spite of commercial persuasion campaigns, creating a real connection that many Americans are seeking. And thanks to his scrutiny of today's global companies, his examples, from Toyota's Scion to the Austin Craft Mafia, prove his point: "You surround yourself only with who you are." "and who you want to be." Easy, colloquial, and passion-driven prose will help this tome reach the top of business booksellers' lists. —Barbara Jacobs "A fresh and fascinating exploration of the places where material culture and identity intersect." —Michael Pollan, author of *In Defense of Food* "A compelling blend of cultural anthropology and business journalism." —Time "Few observers have plumbed the subterranean poetry of marketing as thoroughly as Walker." —New York Times Book "Superbly readable . . . a thoughtful and unhurried investigation into consumerism . . . marked by meticulous research and careful conclusions." —Publishers Weekly, starred review "Witty . . . Walker unravels what he calls the Desire Code, that tension between wanting to fit in and wanting to stand out, wanting to be unique and yet somehow attached to something greater than ourselves." —Times-Picayune "Provocative . . . richly reported." —USA

Todaynbsp;"Fascinating."mdash;Newsweeknbsp;"Terrific."mdash;Miami HeraldFrom the Trade Paperback edition.