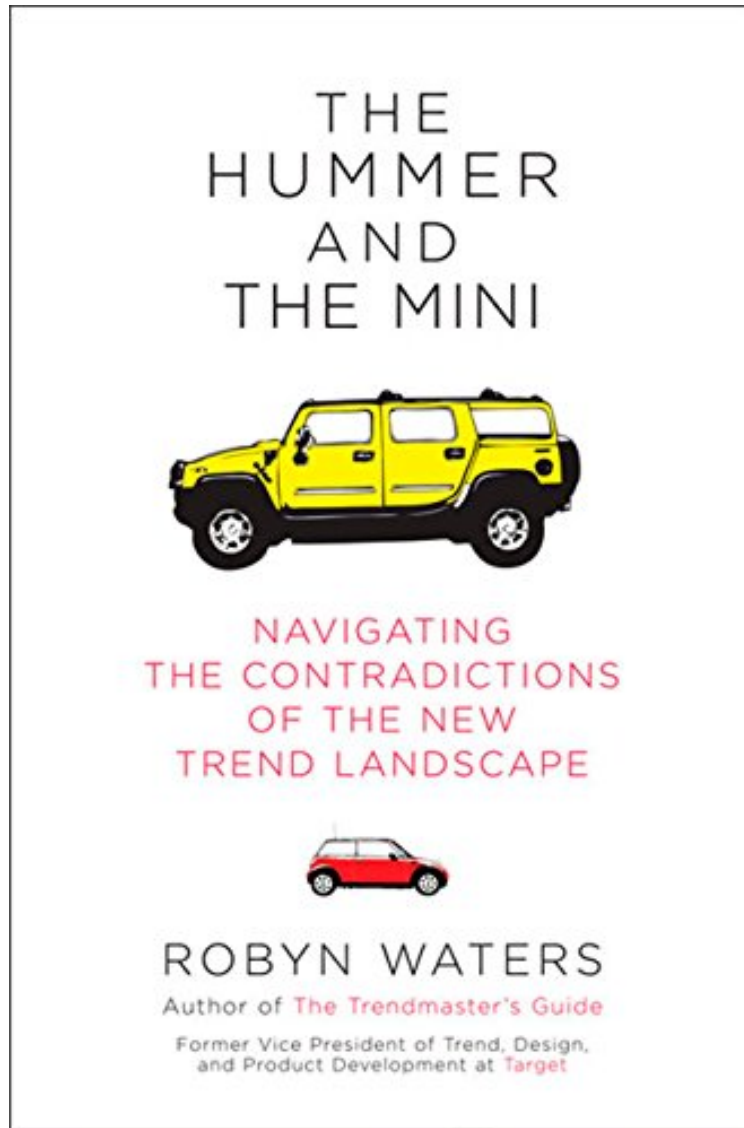


The Hummer and the Mini: Navigating the Contradictions of the New Trend Landscape

Robyn Waters

DOC | *audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF | ePub



 Download

 Read Online

#2645423 in eBooks 2006-10-05 2006-10-05 File Name: B001N89L6W | File size: 73.Mb

Robyn Waters : The Hummer and the Mini: Navigating the Contradictions of the New Trend Landscape before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Hummer and the Mini: Navigating the Contradictions of the New Trend Landscape:

1 of 4 people found the following review helpful. An Interesting Way to Identify New Insights By R. Hall Robyn Waters provides an eye-opening look at some of the biggest trends influencing consumers and businesses today. I like her concept of "trend and countertrend," which is a fresh way to glean insights for the development of new products,

services, and communications messages. There are examples from a variety of industries such as auto, health and beauty, airlines, packaged goods, home services, toys/books/entertainment, clothing, fast food, hotels, liquor, footwear, housing, retail, etc. There are also great ideas from around the world, as well as from big and small businesses in the U.S. This book will make you re-think how you go about identifying the purpose and passion for your brand, your category, and your consumer. By Robyn Hall, Director of Strategy Content, the TrendSight Group

7 of 10 people found the following review helpful. "Success belongs to those who learn to embrace complexity by reconciling the contradictions." By Robert Morris

In *The Trendmaster's Guide*, Robyn Waters offers a series of brief but stimulating discussions of 26 subjects which range from A (Antennae by which to "tune in to the little things, the trivial nuances, and the irrelevant data which everyone else misses") to Z (Zen which embraces opposites, paradoxes, contradictions, etc. while celebrating duality and embraces polarity). Waters urges her reader to learn to practice "the Zen of trend." As she carefully differentiates, a "trend tracker" is someone who is alert for indications that help his or her business to stay [begin italics] up to the minute [end italics] whereas what she calls a "Trendmaster" uses that information to determine [begin italics] where that minute is going [end italics]. Years ago when asked to explain his effectiveness as a hockey player, Wayne Gretzky replied that others know where the puck is while he knows where it is going to be. Larry Bird once said that when he played basketball, he saw plays develop as if in slow motion and he could "see" exactly what would happen next. There are countless other examples of precisely the same skills on which Waters focuses, all of which almost anyone can possess and then improve. In short, she explains the "how" of Trend

In *The Hummer and the Mini*, Waters explains the "what" of Trend. Throughout much of the book's narrative, she cites examples which illustrate how paradox "illustrates what's going on out there in the world while at the same time cautioning that things are always as they appear at first glance. When examined with an open mind, paradoxes will help you read between the lines and reframe your perspective." In this instance, I am reminded of the writings of the ancient Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, who suggests that the nature of reality is best understood as a multiple of paradoxes. For example: "Expect the unexpected or you won't find it" and "You can't step into the same river twice." This is precisely what Waters has in mind when asserting that there is no single "next best" whatever. Rather, there are many. She quotes Charles Handy: "The more turbulent the times, the more complex the world, the more paradoxes there are." Therefore, she suggests that today, "success belongs to those who learn to embrace complexity by reconciling the contradictions." In terms of providing superior service, "There are many different ways to satisfy the same customer." Waters believes (and I agree) that many of the best new ideas are really just old ideas reinterpreted, that customers will continue to demand a more personalized shopping environment and the ability to customize products to suit their individual needs, that more and more people will "trade-up" (as Michael Silverstein and Neil Fiske assert) to "luxurious commodities," that consumers will (in Leonard Koren's words) be attracted to products that "pare down to the essence" but which do not "remove the poetry," that a new nomenclature is needed to describe the newest trends (e.g. "luxurious commodities," "counterfeit authenticity," and "extreme relaxation"), and that consumer demand for goods that are ethically produced will continue to increase. Throughout her book, Waters identifies and discusses hundreds of examples of products which illustrate how various companies have not only learned to live with but have responded effectively to "the push and pull of opposites, to balance the contradictions and inconsistencies, and [embraced] the paradoxes - the trends and countertrends - that exist at a macro level in our world." These products include the Hummer and Mini Cooper, of course, but also Ralph Lauren apparel, Tupperware, the iPod, MMs, Build-A-Bear, Whirlpool Duet, In-N-Out Burgers, 3 Vodka, "Virtual Venice" and "Fiberglass France" casinos in Law Vegas, Rainforest Cafe, Dream Dinners, and Metronaps. Waters makes an important distinction between a trend guru or futurist and a Trendmaster. Her unique "trend from the inside out" perspective is this: "Trends are signposts pointing to what's going on in the hearts and minds of consumers. These days, if you want to be 'on trend,' it's more important to figure out what's important, not just what's next." Futurists look outside to the marketplace, and at statistics and numbers to suggest what's next whereas a Trendmaster looks inside the hearts and minds of the consumer, to figure out what really matters. She believes that paradox is a reliable tool to get at the "heart of things" precisely because every human being is, at heart, a paradox. We all want to belong, and we all want to be unique. As Margaret Mead observed, "We are all unique, just like everyone else."

The Hummer and the Mini will be of substantial value to marketers but I think it should also be read by all others at the senior-executive level, at least in organizations which have direct relationships with consumers. How long will the trends and countertrends which Waters identifies continue? I have no idea and perhaps neither does she. Heraclitus was right: Change is the only constant. However, although it is obviously important to recognize emerging consumer trends and then respond effectively to them, it is even more important to develop and then sustain a mindset which accommodates "the push and pull of opposites" while balancing contradictions and inconsistencies. Waters concludes with this observation: "Life may be more complicated than we'd wish, but it's also simpler than we realize. We simply need to embrace the power of paradox and put it to work for us." Those who share my high regard for this book are urged to check out Waters' *The Trendmaster's Guide* and Silverstein and Neil Fiske's *Trading Up: Why Consumers Want New Luxury Goods...And How Companies Create Them* (Revised and Updated) as well as Martha Barletta's *Marketing to Women: How to Understand, Reach, and Increase Your Share of the World's Largest Market Segment*, Gerald Zaltman's *How*

Customers Think: Essential Insights into the Mind of the Market, Pamela Danziger's Let Them Eat Cake: Marketing Luxury to the Masses - As well as the Classes, Silverstein's Treasure Hunt: Inside the Mind of the New Consumer, Paul Nunes's Mass Affluence: Seven New Rules of Marketing to Today's Consumer, and James B. Twitchell's Living It Up : America's Love Affair with Luxury.⁸ of 13 people found the following review helpful. I Drive a Mini - My Wife Drives a...By Andrew SchonbekActually it's a Land Rover. But at 5979 pounds and 14 miles per gallon (on a good day) it's almost the same deal.Living as I do in this marital paradox, I couldn't help but react when, on the first page, the author quotes ancient Chinese philosopher Lao-tzu, "When opposites supplement each other, everything is harmonious".Okay.But the wisdom doesn't stop there. We learn that Dr. Marty Grothe, author of Oxymoronica, has pointed out that "paradox is a particularly powerful device to ensnare truth because it concisely illuminates the contradictions that are at the very heart of our lives".Just as I was getting on a roll with this heavy stuff I turned the page again and stopped short as I read Waters' earnest sounding pledge, "You will find no big pronouncements here".Whoa! A bit of a roller coaster ride. Or perhaps another paradox. And then, just when I thought that things were calming down, this quote from Margaret Mead totally ambushed me, "We should remember that we are absolutely unique, just like everyone else". And Waters adds, "If you can embrace that thought, you'll have no problem embracing the paradoxes contained within".So that's what this is - a book about paradoxes.Waters' essential thesis is that in today's paradoxical world, for every trend, clever marketing mavens can uncover a perhaps counterintuitive but nearly always powerful countertrend. The companies that are good at doing this are the ones that get ahead.Beyond this, the author spins a rich series of interesting brand stories as she illustrates happening countertrend paradoxes chapter by chapter as follows:* Everything old is new again.* Mass customization.* Luxurious commodities.* Less is more.* Healthy indulgences.* Extreme relaxation.* Social capitalism.I particularly liked her description of the "Trend to Tiny" ad campaign of Schonbek Worldwide Lighting, a 137 year old manufacturer of generally gigantic and often ostentatious crystal chandeliers. As she writes, "Here I was looking at glittering monuments to wealth and power, mansions staffed by servants, decorated by some of the biggest designers names in the business, and somebody was promoting `Tiny instead of titanic. Playful rather than palatial. More darling than dazzling". She goes on to write, "By thinking big about small, Schonbek created an entirely new product category that they now own. They were smart enough to recognize a countertrend when they saw one".After a number of such anecdotes, by the end of the book, I felt that I had been on a dizzying and exhilarating odyssey.And then, a straightforward landing: "Life may be more complicated than we'd wish, but it's also simpler than we realize".Okay - so where's the keys to the Rover?

From the former trendmaster of Target;how the power of contradictory trends can help reframe your business strategy;Contradictions are everywhere! These days we wear Old Navy with new Gucci, Hanes T-shirts with Armani suits, couture Chanel with vintage denim. Suburban mansions are filled with flea market finds, and we show off our Michael Graves teakettle from Target on Viking stoves in our gourmet kitchens that might even include cabinets purchased from IKEA.When Robyn Waters began her career in the late 1970s, a trend was defined as something that everyone wanted at the same time. Fashion and business magazines proclaimed what was "in" and what was "out." Back then, it was fairly easy for companies to determine the next big trend, and ride it all the way to the bank.In today's marketplace the "next big thing" has been replaced by a thousand next big things. And in order to discover what consumers are hungry for companies need to discover what's important;to them. Today a cookie cutter approach no longer works. Waters explains that for every trend there's an equally valid countertrend.Inn;The Hummer and the Mini, Waters explores the new trend landscape and urges companies to stop looking for then;one right answer;in their industry. There are many good ways to design products, develop a line of goods, merchandise a store, or craft a marketing message. You can thrive by selling huge cars (the Hummer) or tiny ones (the Mini). You can turn something old into something new and desirable (the Vespa) or turn a commodity into a luxury (In-and-Out Burgers at the Oscars). You can even customize a product designed for the masses (personalized postage stamps) or sell less as more (Minute Clinics).Through lively tales of influential trends and countertrends,;The Hummer and the Minin;will show you how to live with the contradictions, make the most of the inconsistencies, and embrace the paradoxes of business as a source of fresh ideas.

From Publishers WeeklyIt's neither provocative nor fresh to note that some people are buying big things while others are buying small things, and that premise isn't enough to rescue this cheery but uninspired collection of musings about consumer trends. "Bottom line, it's become hip to contradict," says Waters (The Trendmaster's Guide), who sees "consumers pursu[ing] opposites simultaneously";for instance, sales of both high-tech video games and classic board games have increased. But the former Target v-p never considers that these may be different consumers. Her broad, breezy survey includes products from Vespas to Tupperware, poker to dodge ball, Whole Foods to the slow food movement, but no coherent trends emerge. Worse, the self-described "Trendmaster" offers no new interviews with experts or behind-the-scenes scuttlebutt. Rather, she gives us "secondhand learnings" drawn from "endless magazine and newspaper articles written by others." Though an agreeable guide to today's consumer landscape, she doesn't leave the reader;whether manufacturer, marketer or shopper;with enough insights to make the

journey worth it. (Oct. 5) Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From the Back Cover Praise for Robyn Waters and *The Hummer and the Mini* "This is a must read for marketers and innovators who want to find new opportunities amidst the conflicting signals of the marketplace. Anyone interested in growing their business will find this book to be a helpful guide, full of insights to think about trends in a new way." —Donna Sturgess, Vice President of Innovation, GlaxoSmithKline "Hugely entertaining and important. This book explains 21st century consumer culture in all its bewildering richness." —Roger Tredre, Editor in Chief, Worth Global Style Network Limited "Reading Robyn is like putting on glasses that let you see what was invisible." —Steve Leveen, CEO and Co-founder, Levenger "Robyn Waters presents trends in a delightfully engaging way. Unlike 'trend prophets' who spout confusing predictions, Robyn demystifies trends and makes them approachable. Robyn is a muse who inspires all of us to be open to the future by looking deeply at the present." —Bob Thacker, senior vice president of marketing and advertising, OfficeMax, Inc. "This book will change how we approach many aspects of marketing. Robyn Waters undermines the marketer's historic framing of choices as 'or' or 'and' in a world where people decide 'and' and 'but'." —Rishad Tobaccowala, Chief Executive Officer, denuo (a Publicis Groupe Company) "Robyn knows the future, she doesn't guess it. Her savvy, culture, and wisdom make her a living legend for telling us what comes next." —George Beylerian, Founder and CEO, Material ConneXion About the Author Robyn Waters is the former VP of trend, design, and product development at Target, where she worked with hot designers like Michael Graves, Philippe Starck, and Todd Oldham. She now has a consulting firm, RW Trend, that advises companies on how to track and translate trends into sales and profit, and stay ahead of the curve. The author of *The Trendmaster's Guide*, she lectures around the world and lives in Minneapolis.