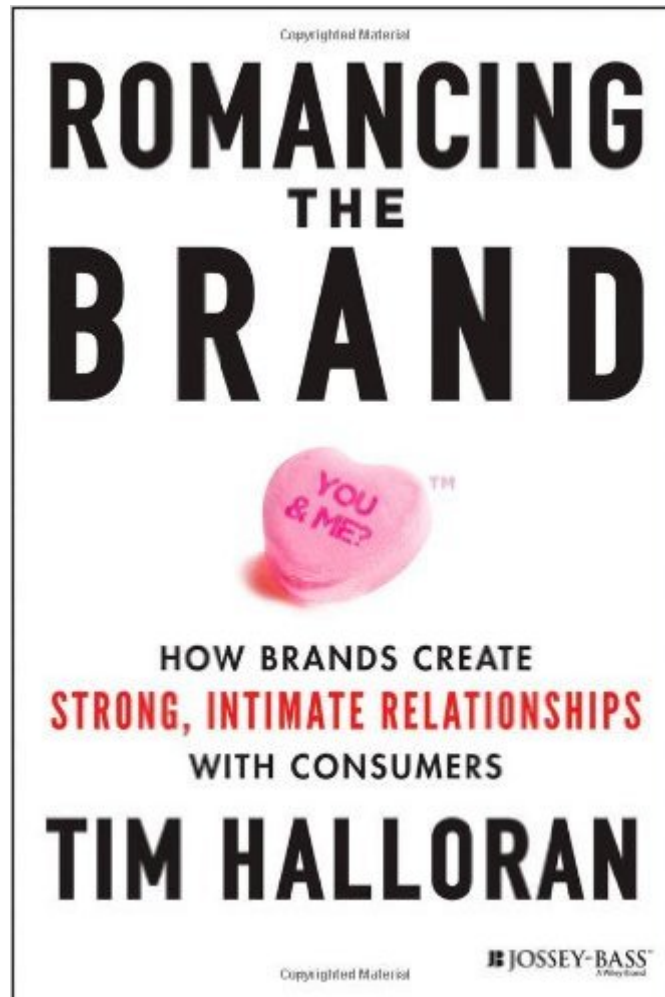


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# Romancing The Brand: How Brands Create Strong, Intimate Relationships With Consumers



## Synopsis

A young woman tells a focus group that Diet Coke is like her boyfriend. A twenty-something tattoos the logo of Turner Classic Movies onto his skin. These consumers aren't just using these brands. They are engaging in a rich, complex, ever-changing relationship, and they stay loyal, resisting marketing gimmicks from competitors and influencing others to try the brand they love. How can marketers cultivate and grow the deep relationships that earn this kind of love and drive lasting success for their brands? In *Romancing the Brand*, branding expert Tim Halloran reveals what it takes to make consumers fall in love with your brand. Step by step, he reveals how to start, grow, maintain, and troubleshoot a flourishing relationship between brand and consumer. Along the way, Halloran shares the secrets behind establishing a mutually beneficial romance. Drawing on exclusive, in-depth interviews with managers of some of the world's most iconic brands, *Romancing the Brand* arms you with an arsenal of classic and emerging marketing tools such as benefit laddering and word-of-mouth marketing that make best-in-class brands so successful. The book is filled with examples, strategies, and tools from powerful brands that consumers love, including Coke, Dos Equis, smartwater, the Atlanta Falcons, Domino's Pizza, Bounty, Turner Classic Movies, and many more. Ultimately, *Romancing the Brand* provides marketers with a set of principles for making brands strong, resilient, and beloved and the insight and confidence to use them.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In *Romancing the Brand: How Brands Create Strong, Intimate Relationships with Consumers*, marketing consultant and former Coca-Cola brand director Tim Halloran urges marketers to go deep, too, but in an appealing, old-school kind of way. By distilling marketing down to the metaphor of a romantic relationship in need of nurturing, excitement, and intimacy, Halloran doesn't have to rely on whiz-bang technological examples. Indeed, the ways in which digital technologies are transforming marketing barely make it into his book. That's one of the book's strengths. Technology has so enthralled us that it can become an end in and of itself. Certainly, we've all seen online campaigns that seem to exist solely because a marketing team has fallen prey to the belief that being seen on a hot new platform equals relevance. Instead, argues Halloran, "it is only by keeping the consumers first, by making them special, that brands live up to the definition of a relationship." He develops this premise by having each chapter mirror a stage in a romantic relationship, showing brands first how to "Know Yourself," and then progressing onward to steps such as "Meet Memorably," "Deepening the Connection," and even "Making Up," when a brand has lost its customers' trust. Halloran offers the repositioning of Powerade, a Coca-Cola brand that he worked on in the mid-1990s, as a case in point. The solution for the brand, which was running well behind the 88 percent market share of industry leader Gatorade, wasn't going to be competing head-to-head for the category's main demographic--athletic men ages 20 and older. Rather, the brand team targeted a younger demographic--athletic teenagers.

We have learned a great deal about how to establish and then sustain a relationship with another person. Its essential elements include commitment, intimacy, and dependability as well as mutual affection, respect, and trust. Tim Halloran asserts -- and I agree -- that the same elements are essential to a relationship with brands, "especially those in categories where consumer passion is particularly strong." That is why brand managers "increasingly developed and marketed key benefits that are tied into a consumer's [begin italics] emotional [end italics] state." In other words, consumers would feel so strongly about these brands "that they would insist on using them, and if they couldn't, they would feel deprived emotionally." I am reminded of several insights in Bernd Schmitt's book, *Experiential Marketing* (1999), that stress the importance of creating, if possible, an especially enjoyable multi-sensory experience associated with a brand. Uniquely positive associations can strengthen the relationship consumers have with a product and, in some instances, also with where the product can be purchased. Years ago while shopping in a mall just before Christmas, I was attracted to a Williams-Sonoma store by the aroma of fresh baked bread during a demonstration of a Breville Custom Loaf Breadmaker. Meanwhile, traditional holiday music

could be heard in the background. The decor could not be more festive. I bought one of the machines and the CD. Halloran cites two especially important marketing thinkers. Jennifer Aaker developed a theory based on research that suggests that "consumers' perceptions of brand personalities closely mirror their perception of human personalities. In other words, as consumers, we can be attracted to a brand not just by what it does for us functionally...

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