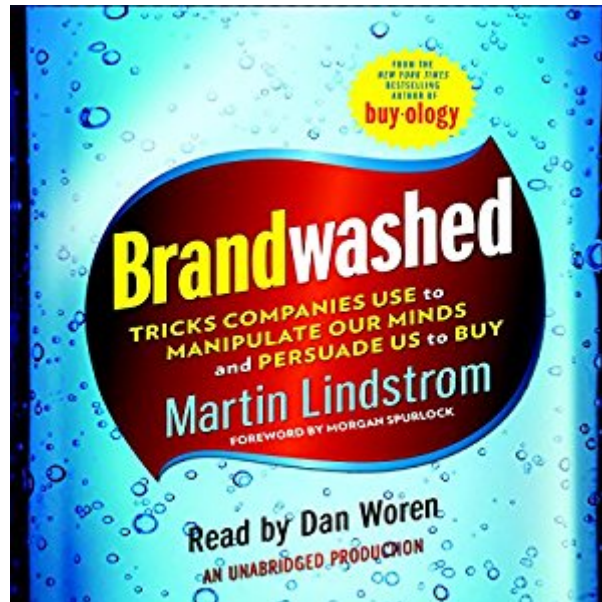


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# Brandwashed: Tricks Companies Use To Manipulate Our Minds And Persuade Us To Buy



## Synopsis

Foreword by Morgan Spurlock From the best-selling author of Buyology comes a shocking insider's look at how today's global giants conspire to obscure the truth and manipulate our minds, all in service of persuading us to buy. Marketing visionary Martin Lindstrom has been on the front lines of the branding wars for over twenty years. Here, he turns the spotlight on his own industry, drawing on all he has witnessed behind closed doors, exposing for the first time the full extent of the psychological tricks and traps that companies devise to win our hard-earned dollars. Picking up from where Vance Packard's best-selling classic, *The Hidden Persuaders*, left off more than half-a-century ago, Lindstrom reveals: New findings that reveal how advertisers and marketers intentionally target children at an alarmingly young age - starting when they are still in the womb! Shocking results of an fMRI study which uncovered what heterosexual men really think about when they see sexually provocative advertising (hint: it isn't their girlfriends). How marketers and retailers stoke the flames of public panic and capitalize on paranoia over global contagions, extreme weather events, and food contamination scares. The first ever neuroscientific evidence proving how addicted we all are to our iPhones and our Blackberry's (and the shocking reality of cell phone addiction - it can be harder to shake than addictions to drugs and alcohol). How companies of all stripes are secretly mining our digital footprints to uncover some of the most intimate details of our private lives, then using that information to target us with ads and offers "perfectly tailored" to our psychological profiles. How certain companies, like the maker of one popular lip balm, purposely adjust their formulas in order to make their products chemically addictive. What a 3-month long guerilla marketing experiment, conducted specifically for this book, tells us about the most powerful hidden persuader of them all. And much more! From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As with many other reviewers, I was alerted to this book after hearing an NPR interview with the author and found his message well worth following up. After reading *Brandwashed*, however, it seems that Martin Lindstrom is a persuasive speaker but his focus is totally on marketing--himself and his books. Instead of recognizing that marketing is a legitimate part of business, Lindstrom too often goes for sensational, breathless prose--ending up sounding like a *National Enquirer* headline writer instead of someone conveying really new and important information. Our culture *is* too often driven by excessive consumerism, but he sometimes seems to want to "pick on" specific brands he doesn't like rather than sort out acceptable advertising from tricks and gimmicks. The book reads too often like a marketing piece. Too often he says we'll learn "later" about some great secret he has for us, but this just sounds like one of those junk mail packages selling a book that has all the secrets to health if we just send in 29.95 plus shipping and handling. Then there was his self-promotion, cloaking in the way that he seemed to be the only one to see the simple solutions that would save their products. Did you know that it was Lindstrom who, all by himself, helped a soft drink company find exactly the right *a\*snap\** for the sound of opening a soft drink can so that "to this day whenever the sound is played at sponsored events, the manufacturer witnesses an instantaneous uptick in sales." Really? Really? Can we see some clear and verified data? And speaking of data: the notes section was another disappointment--sources were internet addresses for magazine and newspaper articles, not scientific journals.

First, I'm very interested in marketing and have long been conscious of the manipulative tricks played by advertisers in their efforts to take our money. I'm no specialist by any means, but this isn't my first book about the phenomenon. I came to it expecting perhaps one or two revelations (and I did get that), but primarily interested in how this particular marketer was going to approach the question. While I think he came at it honestly, there were times that I found the information he presented dubious in conclusion, perhaps at times because he didn't question the sources himself. I see that an earlier reviewer (C. MacPhail) has already made reference to this and has a few examples with which I agree. There were several others that struck me as I was reading, but none more starkly than in Chapter 5 (p. 122 of the advance version I have) where he discusses a study in

which women were given what looked to be designer sunglasses and asked to take a math test, self-graded on the honor system, in which they received cash awards. The women who were told that the designer sunglasses were fake were more likely to cheat on grading their tests and take more money. The author of the study he reports on concluded from this that "wearing counterfeit glasses...undermines our internal sense of authenticity. 'Faking it' makes us feel like phonies and cheaters on the inside." Or, perhaps, people who think they have been given something truly valuable feel an obligation to the giver that makes it more difficult to cheat them out of money. Or maybe their internal "greed" quotient is satisfied and they don't need cash on top of swag.

I like to think I'm not easily influenced by marketing. I shop used a lot, I don't have a lot of brand loyalty---like many people, I like to think I'd see through brand marketing and corporate tricks. But this book showed me I certainly don't always do so. I love Whole Foods, but after this read, I'm not going to look at them in quite the same way! I found out how they use little tricks like putting veggies in rustic looking boxes to seem as if they are straight from the farm, putting prices on "chalkboards" which actually are preprinted, putting food on ice when it doesn't need to be, to make it look more appealing----even little things like putting their main door to the right, because people that walk counterclockwise through a store spend more---weird! Even the fact that I always like the music they have playing is a result of marketing---they know what their customers like, and play that. The extent to which we have no privacy on the internet was brought alive to me by this book also. It explained something weird that happened to me just this week. My brother-in-law, who lives upstairs from me, got a catalog in the mail from a handbag company. He wouldn't know a handbag if it hit him in the face, but the particular brand was one I like, although can't afford. I have, however, browsed their web site and bought some used bags on ebay. Now that I know that such internet activity can be tracked by I.P. address, it all made sense---our internet for the house is in his name, and they decided he'd be a prime buyer. Wow. Scary. The author has worked with many companies to hook in buyers. I'm not quite sure why he is giving away their secrets now, but I like it that is he! Take the time to also read the acknowledgments at the end of this book.

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