Brand avoidance: The Anti-Consumption of Brands.

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Brands are espoused in both academia and practice as one of the greatest intangible assets a company is able to own. When managed properly, a brand can enhance, accelerate, and protect a company's cash flow, reduce costs and barriers, and generate additional value for both the customer and the organisation (Srivastava, Shervani, and Fahey 1998). A plethora of research has focused on the positive aspects of branding and brand equity. However, if a brand is indeed communication tool for conveying a set of values, and for differentiating and identifying the offerings of one company from another (de Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley 1998); then the question must be asked what happens when the values communicated are negative?

The research addressed in this presentation, strives to answer that very question. Avoidance consists of two concepts. The first is the notion of "keeping away, withdrawing, or refraining from something", the second is to "prevent the occurrence of something from happening" (Merriam-Webster 1998). Brand avoidance then, is the study of why consumers choose to keep away from a brand, as well as why they may be prevented from selecting a brand.

The objectives of this presentation are threefold. 1) Discuss the major themes that emerged in a current study of brand avoidance. 2) Link brand avoidance to the more general area of anti-consumption. 3) Introduce the audience, through the use of specific brand avoidance examples, to the topics covered during the remainder of the symposium.

References

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Srivastava, Rajendra K, Tassadduq A Shervani, and Liam Fahey (1998), "Market-based assets and shareholder value: A framework for analysis," *Journal of Marketing*, 62 (January), 2-18.