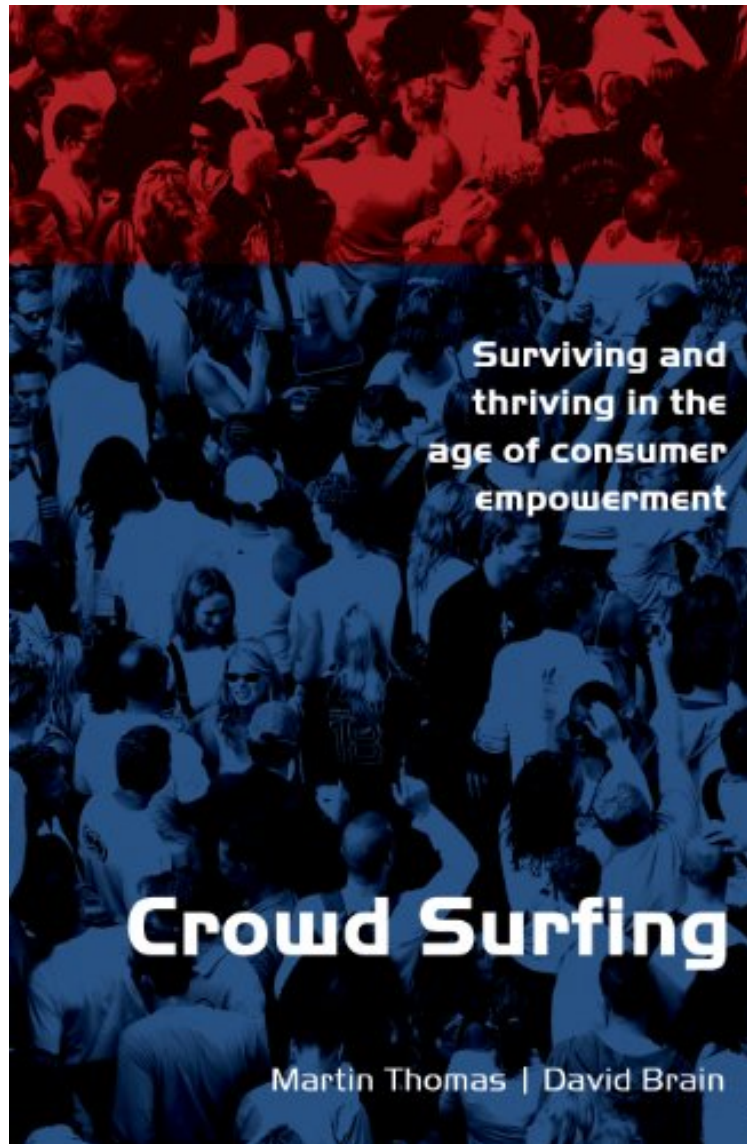


[Mobile book] Crowd Surfing: Surviving and thriving in the age of consumer empowerment

Crowd Surfing: Surviving and thriving in the age of consumer empowerment

Martin Thomas, David Brain
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Martin Thomas, David Brain : Crowd Surfing: Surviving and thriving in the age of consumer empowerment before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Crowd Surfing: Surviving and thriving in the age of consumer empowerment:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Engage the empowered consumer By Paul A. Baker A new generation of business and political leaders has learned how to harness the energy, ideas and enthusiasm of empowered consumers. These consumers are emboldened and enthused by a new spirit of enquiry and self-expression,

and powered by the Internet. 'Crowd Surfing' presents a series of case studies showing how savvy business and political leaders realize that "giving their customers, partners, voters and employees a greater say in the way that their businesses operate is, paradoxically, the most effective way to ensure a degree of control over their corporate or political destiny." "Whether buying a book, a holiday, or a new car, the opinions of our fellow consumers appear to carry as much, if not more, weight than those of the established order," they write. And this empowered crowd of consumers and Web-enabled activists can sometimes force powerful corporations to reverse unpopular policies. A fundamental principle of this book is that collaborative or participative forms of communication, which involve the crowd, are more engaging and therefore more effective. The authors emphasize that many business leaders miss out by not taking opportunities to speak directly to people interested in their businesses, and to listen to what they have to say. "If you already think that customers and stakeholders are becoming troublesome, difficult, and intrusive, then you should probably quit the corporate world now," they write, "because very few firms and organizations will be able to opt out in the future."

The way people buy has gone through a massive revolution in recent years: thanks to blogs, review sites and chat rooms, we no longer have to rely on what a company says about its products and services - we can read what our fellow consumers think about what they've bought, and make our own decisions bearing those views in mind. The result? Empowered customers who know exactly what they want and who can now explore many ways to get it. Many companies, however, just won't accept that things have changed and haven't adjusted their marketing efforts to match. In *Crowd Surfing*, David Brain and Martin Thomas explain what marketers, advertisers and brand specialists need to do to communicate with today's savvier consumers. They include case studies of successes and failures from the business world and beyond, and interview leaders such as Michael Dell and Sebastian Coe to help illustrate their points.

From Publishers Weekly Marketing consultants Thomas and Brain offer a well-meaning if woefully dated paean to the power of the consumer. In the brave new world of blogging, YouTube and Consumerist.com, business leaders must harness the energy, ideas and enthusiasm of their customers, rather than relying on the talent and budget of their marketing departments; a lesson politicians would also be well-advised to learn; the authors speak admiringly of Obama's campaign, and less so of Hillary Clinton's, which seemed tainted by the power of her political machine. They urge marketers to forgo expensive advertising campaigns and didactic attitudes in favor of giving their customers, partners and employees a greater say in business operations. Drawing on such successes as gethuman.com and Dove's Real Beauty campaign, they warn against underestimating the average Joe Blogger and praise such social corporations as Apple, which go to great lengths to meet customers and stakeholders face to face. The practical advice and enthusiasm about new media is admirable, but the information; particularly their analysis of the 2008 election; already feels stale. (Oct.) Copyright © 2008; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Free PR from Edelman, one of the world's largest PR firms Exclusive interviews with some of the world's most influential leaders Up to date take on a problem for businesses of all sizes About the Author David Brain is president and CEO of Edelman Europe, one of the world's largest PR firms. Martin Thomas runs his own marketing communications consultancy and was previously head of strategy at the Media Planning Group. He is a member of the board of Sport England.