

How to grow brands

 By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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Prof. Jenni Romaniuk, Associate Director (International) at the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute, the world's largest centre for research into marketing, will be in South Africa early next week to launch the sequel to her best-selling marketing book '*How Brands Grow*'. She will be sharing a few insights from it and will be hosted by Spark Media, to offer clients and partners 'insights that ignite'.



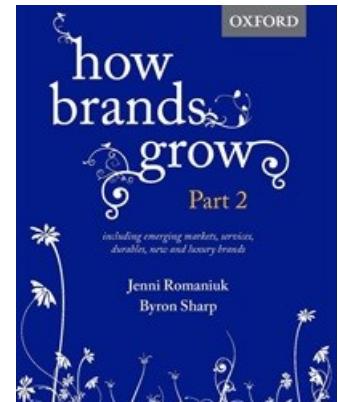
Jenni Romaniuk

Prior to her visit, Bizcommunity.com asked her about her books, brands and trends in branding. This is not her first visit to South Africa but her previous visit was too many years ago. "I am very much looking forward to returning and seeing how the dynamic, vibrant country has changed."

■ Give us a general overview on your new book, *How Brands Grow Part 2*

Romaniuk: *How Brands Grow Part 2* is the next stage of an evidence-based revolution about how to grow brands. It is about building further evidence about how brands grow, and how to turn evidence into action.

First it takes on the challenges presented by readers of *How Brands Grow* who asked us - that's fine for packaged goods brands in the developed world, but what about.... services, durables, emerging markets and the like. So we have tested the laws of brand growth in a wider range of circumstances, including emerging markets (there is quite a bit on South Africa in there), services, durables and luxury brands.



Second it lays out the road map for key areas of action based laws. So for example if you are launching a new brand, what do the laws of growth suggest as the smart way to do this. So those readers of HBG who embraced the evidence can gain more tips on what to prioritise, as well as what distractions to avoid.

■ The book is a sequel to your best-selling marketing book, *How Brands Grow*. What has changed between the publishing of the two books? Has anything significant shifted or not?

Romaniuk: The laws haven't changed, although we do talk about some new ones in Part 2, and what to do with exceptions to these laws. What has changed is the scope of our testing, and with it the depth of our knowledge. We also understand more about the implications. We are becoming smarter marketers.

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■ How has branding changed?

Romaniuk: The issue with mainstream branding ideas is they don't change, they just go round and round recycling the same old ideas with new names. Mainly because most of these ideas of brand love, personality, loyalty beyond reason, getting high engagement from buyers are developed in a vacuum that is devoid of evidence. *How Brands Grow* and *How Brands Grow Part 2* encourages marketers to get off this hamster wheel.

What are some of the trends coming through in branding?

Romaniuk: We now talk about building mental and physical availability. These are going to be the major conversations about smart branding in the future. Mental availability is about being easily thought of in buying situations. To use a sporting analogy - it is based on the idea that irrespective of how well you train (how good your brand is) you can only win a gold medal (get bought) if you qualify for the Olympics (get thought of). And the more races you qualify for, the more gold medals you will win.

To build mental availability you need to understand your buyers, and the thoughts they have that trigger them to become category buyers. These thoughts are the useful mental structures for your brand to build in advertising, and other touchpoints.

If you could only tell brands one thing, what would it be?

Romaniuk: Solve the right problem. I see marketing budgets wasted because marketers rush to judgement about the source of the problem, which leads them to implement a plan that doesn't work because it is based on a faulty premise. It's the clichéd 'drunk looking for keys under a lamppost' mentality.

I'd like marketers to understand that brand management is a system of mental and physical availability and that failure to capture sales can be due to a number of problems in that system. For example if your advertising is not working then the problem might be with your visibility on shelf. People are primed to buy, they just can't find you. Too often the temptation is to replace the ad campaign, but this might not be the smartest thing to do to get your advertising to work.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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