

# To know it is to love it

 By [Patrick Carmody](#)

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If this statement rings true after your brand name, you have a holistic approach to brand-building.

Kevin Lane Keller, the world's most widely prescribed author on branding, says that brand equity has a lot to do with our knowledge that we have accumulated over time about a given brand. Various other thinkers in the field agree with this approach. The revered Jean-Noel Kapferer defines a brand as follows:

*"The brand is a focal point for all the positive and negative impressions created by the buyer over time as she comes into contact with the brand's products, distribution channel, personnel and communication."*



## Alpha and omega

So hopefully we can agree then that knowledge, in brand building terms, is the alpha and omega. Knowledge in, brand equity out.

But, hang on a sec, knowledge delivery has done a complete flip in the last few years. Before this Web 2.0 thing, our knowledge about brands came from only a few platforms. TV ads, packaging and maybe that promoter in the store would build most of your perception around your favourite brand of cereal. But now, for a growing number of consumers, the access point to brand knowledge has become wider and, from the brand point of view, harder to control. For the big, bad brands that relied on these neatly controlled broadcast platforms, the wake-up call is at rooster-pitch.

So, if people could see further and further inside your value chain, beyond the façade of brand communication, would they love you even more?

A lot of my knowledge about say, Monsanto, is negative - from its GM policies to its approach to farmers in third world countries. The brand equity is negative. A lot of my knowledge about Google - from its company culture, to their approach to sustainability and information sharing - is positive.

This accumulated equity is not a result of conscious brand building activity but all of it has resulted in brand equity. It is about business domains that have rarely been thought of as branding centres: HR policy, procurement policy, product development, financial modeling.

## Connected world

What this means is that in a connected world, everything is brand-building. And in fact brand communication, the pillar of a brand strategy in the 20th century, plays an ever smaller role in brand-building.

Quite simply, when more people have a wider access point to your brand through the network: everything communicates... and the concept of having a marketing department becomes a very strange thing indeed.

## ABOUT PATRICK CARMODY

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