

# **Multiple Meanings? A Mutual Knowledge Perspective on Brand Co-creation<sup>1</sup>**

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## **Abstract**

Drawing on Clark and Marshall's (1981) theory of mutual knowledge, this article presents a framework for understanding and managing brand meaning. Whilst traditional brand management theory has focused primarily on brand-related marketing communications, the role that the knowledge base of the recipient plays in interpreting these communications has generally been overlooked. This may explain the multiple and sometimes dissonant brand meanings that arise despite consistent, simple and memorable brand communications. The theory of mutual knowledge stresses that assonance of meaning will only arise between the sender and recipient of a set of communications when both parties share a mutual knowledge base. Thus, to co-create brand meaning, organizations have to understand the knowledge base of different stakeholder groups. Effective brand co-creation should combine the management of both communications and stakeholders' mutual knowledge.

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