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Brands are now a dominant feature of contemporary living. Drawing on rich empirical material, this book builds up a critical theory, arguing that brands have become an important tool for transforming everyday life into economic value.

Corporate logos are inscribed in our everyday life as companies try to brand a particular lifestyle or value complex onto their products, working on the assumption that consumers desire products for their ability to give meaning to their lives. However, brands also have a key function within managerial strategy. Examining the history of audience and market research, marketing thought and advertising strategy, Arvidsson traces the historical development of branding. Through his evaluation of new media, contemporary management and overall media economics, he presents a systematic and comprehensive theory of brands.

Brands uses illustrative case studies throughout from market research, advertising, shop displays, mobile phones, the internet and virtual companies. This book will be essential reading for students and researchers in sociology of media, cultural studies, advertising and consumer studies, and marketing.