

# Introducing How B2B Brands Grow

## The B2B Institute Team

Afiya Addison, Jann Schwarz, Jennifer Shaw-Sweet, Jon Lombardo, Peter Weinberg, Rachel Abbe and Ty Heath

In the decade since Professor Byron Sharp published *“How Brands Grow”* in 2010, very few marketers who read the book have been left unfazed by its groundbreaking new way of thinking about marketing. The provocative ideas laid out in *“How Brands Grow”*, and in subsequent research from the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute, have overturned decades of received marketing wisdom.

In the Ehrenberg-Bass marketing universe, there is no room for brand love, loyalty campaigns, differentiation or hyper-targeting. There is only “Mental Availability” and “Physical Availability,” a simple but profound mental model, which states that buyers choose brands that are “easy to mind” and “easy to find.” According to the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute, brands grow by acquiring new customers, not by increasing customer loyalty. Brands compete through “meaningless distinctiveness” – logos, characters, colors – not through meaningful differentiation. Advertising works by building and refreshing memory structures in the minds of buyers who may not purchase for several years. These “small nudges” add up to big sales effects when done at scale through “sophisticated mass marketing” that reaches every category buyer.

As we have said in the past, the most valuable ideas are “contrarian and right.” And by that standard, the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute is a veritable goldmine. For marketers who obsesses over their brand image, churn rates, and targeting inefficiencies, these ideas are about as contrarian as it gets. But the 60+ marketing scientists at the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute do not set out to be contrarian – their goal is to be “right.” They hold their work to the highest empirical standards, relying on single source

data and constant replication to identify the generalizable “laws” that govern marketing effectiveness.

An increasingly important life skill is the ability to change one’s mind when faced with new facts, something that humans find very hard to do. Physics Nobel Laureate Max Planck put it more bluntly:

*A new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it.*

This grim assessment doesn’t have to be true. We founded The B2B Institute because waiting out the status quo is no fun – we prefer to skip ahead and live in the future. Because the future is already here, if you look hard enough for all the good ideas that are still misunderstood.

We are thrilled and honored to partner so closely with our friends at the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute to bring their ideas and scientifically proven insights to the B2B marketing world in a comprehensive way, with specific B2B data, for the first time.

We are hugely grateful to Professors Byron Sharp, Jenni Romaniuk and John Dawes, and all their amazing colleagues at Ehrenberg-Bass who have taught us so much and patiently answered so many of our questions. Thank you.

We encourage you to become Ehrenberg-Bass supporters as well, and we are excited to share the gift of this knowledge with you.

**The B2B Institute Team.**

