

# THEHOTSEAT

## ASIA'S GLOBAL IDENTITY CHALLENGE

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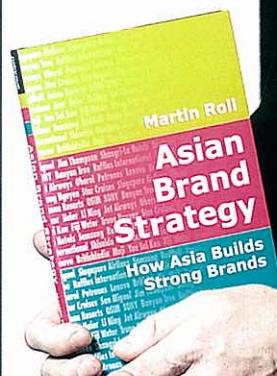
Martin Roll has delved into branding in its many forms, including celebrity branding, and its importance in creating financial value for companies. The business strategist who advises on branding, is the author of *Asian Brand Strategy*. He also lectures at the Institut Européen d'Administration des Affaires, a multi-campus international graduate business school and research institution. Last month, he spoke at a seminar by the Hong Kong and Macau Chapter of the Luxury Marketing Council. He tells *The PEAK*, that Asian companies are not giving enough importance to branding and many Asian products do not stand out globally.

"In the past, Asian companies used to be back-end workhorses, complacent about their low-cost advantages. But there'll be another country that can offer lower cost tomorrow. So I believe the time is now right, comparing to 10 years ago, for these companies to step up and capture more financial value from better price premiums and customer loyalty through branding.

"Marketing in Asian companies is still very junior, they still view branding as mere advertising or logo design. But strong brand equity is one of the main reasons why the market capitalisation of a company often exceeds its book value.

"When customers choose to buy a product, they don't only want its function, they're also looking for some kind of emotional attachment to the brand. Boasting rich cultural heritages, Asian brands have so much to offer if they craft their identity from their roots. Yet, managers need to see branding not as an appendage to the ongoing business, but rather as an infusion which seeps through the very spirit of the organisation."

His book cites case studies from Asia and has been endorsed by experienced traders and scholars, including Dominic Barton, Worldwide Managing Director of McKinsey and Company, and John Quelch, Lincoln Filene Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School. Korean, Japanese, Chinese and Vietnamese editions are available.



**WAYS TO BUILD GLOBAL ICONS**  
Martin Roll urges Asian companies to go beyond logos and slogans.