

Book review



Peter Simpson, chairman of agency Data Lateral and former commercial director of First Direct and head of marketing for parent bank HSBC finds Stefan Engeseth's *ONE: A consumer revolution for business* contains inspiration and few holes

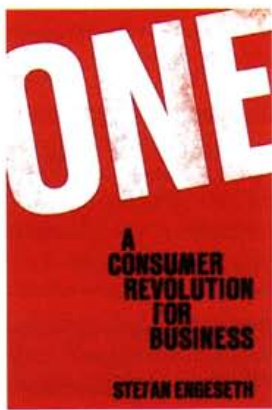
Stephen Engeseth asks readers to write their own foreword to his book *ONE – a consumer revolution for business*. He isn't just being lazy, nor is he avoiding writing the all-important 'executive summary' to a wordy business case. After all, he has already given us a preface on his previous two pages. He's giving readers room to analyse the theory for themselves.

So what should a reader expect from *ONE*? Firstly, a good read. I've never heard Engeseth speak, but he clearly has one of those minds which can engage many ideas at the same time and those concepts are themselves a little quirky or a bit leftfield. This type of thinking creates a book which, while lacking some structure, makes up for it in provocation. Like fellow thinker Edward de Bono, Engeseth likes to provoke and generate a reaction.

So what reaction is he looking for? In short, it's one where the reader feels able to take a leap of faith into a brave new world. And in this world, the company and consumer are 'one'.

My experience is that many compa-

Inclusive branding



***ONE – A consumer revolution for business*
by Stefan Engeseth**

**Published by Cyan Books,
priced £12.99**

nies say that they are customer-focused but few truly are. At my previous employer, First Direct, we had the idea that the bank should be designed by its customers, not the company itself. As Engeseth says, this means that customers become your brand advocates and your marketing department, because they are in control and define the organisation. They are part of the media mix.

It's time to consign old ideas to the dustbin of outdated business thinking – such as the concept that internal and external people live by different values. I rather like the idea of not reaching people, but reaching 'into people'.

The core notion here is that people love people and it's entirely right: they do. The internet means we love each other more, not less. We all become cus-

Three from me

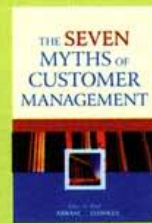
Peter Simpson also recommends...



***Life's a Game so Fix the Odds*
By Philip Hesketh**

Capstone Publishing (2005), £12.99

This book comes from another brilliant public speaker, focusing on the psychology of marketing. It helps us understand ourselves and our persuasive capability. It is inspiring reading for anyone setting up a sales organisation, because Hesketh starts with understanding the buyer's thinking.



***The Seven Myths of Customer Management*
By John Abram and Paul Hawkes**

John Wiley (2003) £24.95

Published in 2003, Abram and Hawkes were one of the first teams to challenge the excesses of customer relationship management. The myths put CRM into perspective, explaining what to use and what to discard. This is a treatise on reality, and the first hint of a post-CRM world.

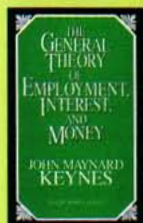
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tomers with the same reality of the brand experience.

You will love this book as well. But only if you are prepared to open your mind, and take on the wealth of ideas. Your mind will need to work a bit, translating those ideas into actions relevant to your customers and your company.

ONE is not your usual business volume. I often think – and I wonder if you agree – that so many business treatises are as dry as the beer tent at Headingley after England have won a cricket test on a baking hot day. Unforgivable. *ONE*'s construct is designed to capture the imagination rather than set out a series of sequential arguments. It is not chapter but verse.

This does not mean that the book's overall hypothesis is not well presented or that Engeseth's arguments are illogical. It does mean that you are drawn in abruptly with an Edward de Bono-style provocation to create a reaction. The points are enlivened with vivid examples. It is more of an interaction with a presenter than a one-way street. One can imagine that Engeseth's live shows allow absolutely no nodding off at the back.



The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money
By John Maynard Keynes

Palgrave MacMillan (2006 ed.) £18.99

Keynesian Economics informed my learning at Cambridge in the 1960s. What I liked about Keynes then and now is his clarity of thought about abstract concepts. As a theoretical base for understanding supply and demand, the *General Theory* has a place in history.

There is, of course, nothing at all wrong with being entertained in business. We do take ourselves so very seriously. At lunch recently, I asked: "what is success?" My companion answered satirically: "dying in credit". She has a point – life is for living and exiting our mortal coil in debt seems to be a good way to indicate that you have lived well.

I think that this is why I am so sympathetic with the author's exaltations about bringing everything together. There are clearly artificial barriers between work and home – what is the point of the work/home balance debate if you enjoy both?

Organisations, Engeseth is saying by extension, are best if they create living and breathing environments for their stakeholders to interact with and in. The nature of that interaction will be different for everyone: the astute manager will recognise this and work with it rather than against it.

In case anyone thinks I am an apologist for laissez faire management, I'm far from it. But it is possible to create processes which provide customers with high-class experiences. At the same time, your people get high-quality interactions with other folks, efficiently and effectively, without constraining them as individuals. A structured approach enables more personality and individuality – oneness – not less.

But I am not suggesting that *ONE* is without flaws. The unconstrained writing style can become irksome in large doses. Even those with the most right-brained attitudes will be searching for some structure in the end. A stream of consciousness is all right if you are willing to take the trouble to sort the wheat from the chaff.

Specifically, I felt that part three of the volume on Corporate DNA might have been condensed without loss of meaning or power. It feels a little bit like track eight on a CD, something of a filler. But I think Engeseth probably knows that. Also, where he talks about values in the context of *ONE*, further consideration would not be lost.

After that, I should think that I am not now absolute favourite to write the forward, but you have a go. *ONE* is worth a try.

From the bookshelf of...

Sarah Mason,
marketing, Club Med

The baffled parent's guide to sibling rivalry
By Marian Edelman Borden



Marian Borden's book attempts to arm parents with a 'how to' manual and afford them a fighting chance at navigating

sibling relationships. Her writing style is warmly sardonic which prevents it from seeming patronising. What I found utterly befuddling, after the arrival of my third child, was that I managed to navigate the people politics in business. But managing the competitive battleground of my house was another matter.

The book's main focus is to help parents understand what causes sibling rivalry by observing their own behaviour first. There is an element of psychology involved and Borden shows parents how to engage children on their level by illustrating the difference between what you say and what your child hears. It is divided into logical sections for quick referral.

They say the longest relationships we have are those we share with our siblings. Yet the people we apparently spend the most time with in our lives are our work colleagues. The advice and techniques to manage children in this book are just as applicable to managing colleagues. Sibling rivalry is a potent force in the family and colleague rivalry can also be a minefield. This provides tips that translate for both groups.