

## Research on National Brand & Private Label Marketing – International Conference (5<sup>th</sup> edition)

**CONFERENCE DATES AND VENUE:** JULY 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018, BARCELONA, SPAIN

**DEADLINE FOR PAPER SUBMISSION:** January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018

**CONFERENCE CHAIRS:** *Francisco J. Martínez-López* (University of Granada, Spain; Open University of Catalonia, Barcelona, Spain), *Juan Carlos Gázquez-Abad* (University of Almería, Spain) and *Alexander Chernev* (Northwestern University, IL, USA)

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**CONFERENCE SPONSORS:** So far, this conference is sponsored by several institutions: *Open University of Catalonia*; *IRI Spain*; the *Spanish Association of Commercial Codification (AECOC)*, and *EAE Business School*.

**CONFERENCE PUBLICATION:** Conference papers will be published as a conference proceedings book entitled “Advances in National Brand and Private Label Marketing. Fifth International Conference, 2018” by the prestigious publisher Springer. Conference papers will also be accessible online through Springer’s online platform, for quick and effective dissemination of the conference participant’s research work.

## Call for Papers:

The concrete theme for this fifth edition is on a passionate and timely research theme  
***“Building Strong Brands in the Digital Age”***

The internet has dramatically changed the ways in which consumers engage with brands, the role brands play in people’s lives, and the value brands can create for companies and their customers. As an increasing number of consumers are virtually always online with their smart phones, tablets, and computers, companies are presented with unique opportunities to gain a better understanding of how these customers think and design more effective and cost-efficient strategies to build and manage strong brands. To stay relevant, companies must evolve with times and ensure that their brands are in tune with the digital lifestyle of their customers.

Along with brand building opportunities come challenges. The availability of product-related information is eroding the role of brands as a signal of product quality. Rather than relying on the brand image to infer product performance, consumers can easily gain the relevant information from blog posts, customer reviews, and online ratings. Product performance, rather than the company’s advertising, is becoming the key factor in defining brand image. The increased importance of product performance not only de-emphasizes the impact of the company’s brands and decreases customers’ willingness to pay a premium for branded products, but it also levels the playfield between national brands and established mega-brands on the one hand and private labels and newly launched niche brands on the other. In addition to the threat of becoming less relevant, traditional brands are also facing the challenge stemming from the exponential growth of the social media that has dramatically reduced the company’s ability to control the image of its brands. Today’s customers effectively co-own the company’s brands by creating unique brand content, developing brand narratives, and shaping brand meaning.

Another profound change in the ways companies position their brands involves a shift from focusing on functional benefits of the company’s offerings to emphasizing the role of brands as a means of self-expression. Lifestyle branding has become an increasingly common approach among managers, especially in categories in which functional differences are hard to discern. A growing number of companies—from consumer packaged goods companies, to car manufacturers, and technology companies—are adopting lifestyle positioning as a way to break free of the cutthroat competition within a category by connecting with consumers on a more personal level. This trend toward lifestyle branding is facilitated by Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and other social media platforms that help companies identify the touch points where brands engage and influence their target customers. At the same time, social media platforms provide unprecedented opportunities for consumers to assert their individuality by interacting with one another without relying on lifestyle brands. The ubiquity of such nonbrand means of self-expression raises the hurdle that lifestyle brands must overcome to stay relevant to their customers.

Despite the changes, one aspect of building brands in the digital age has remained constant: consumers want offerings with a clear and relevant brand promise. The key function of brands as a means of creating customer value above and beyond the value delivered by the company’s products and services has not changed. What has changed is the context in which brands create customer value, the means by which they create value, and the specific tools that companies can use to design and manage their brands. Understanding the impact of the digital transformation is essential to the company’s ability to build strong brands that create market value.

In keeping with its established objectives, the conference welcomes papers on topics related to any retailing, private label and/or national brand issues, though this year we encourage submissions related to the topic introduced above.

In order to submit a paper to the NB-PL 2018 conference you must register as an author at the conference management system at Easychair; click [here](#)

All papers must be formatted according to the conference’s format guidelines and submitted through the conference management system.

**Important Dates:**

- Conference Paper Submission date: **January 20<sup>th</sup> 2018**
- Authors Notification date: **February 15<sup>th</sup> 2018**
- Accepted Papers camera-ready: **March 20<sup>th</sup> 2018**
- Conference Dates: **July 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

For further information and updates, please check the conference's website: <http://www.nb-plmarketing.org>

We really look forward to meeting you in Barcelona and having a great time, sharing ideas and experiences in an amiable gathering.

**The Organizing Committee**