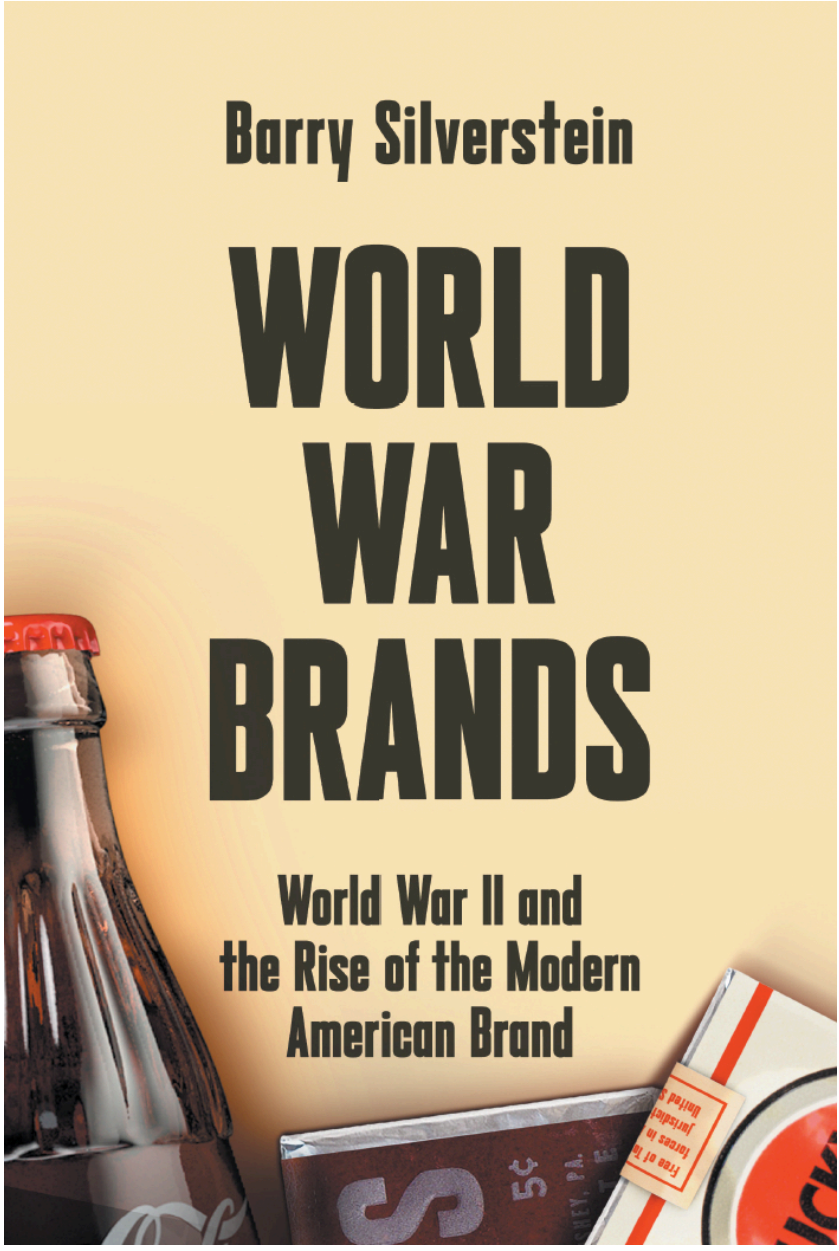

The Buzz About *WORLD WAR BRANDS*

"*WORLD WAR BRANDS* is an entertaining and enlightening story of the beginning of disciplined marketing and advertising in America. The extent of Barry Silverstein's research is incredible – he shares, displays, reports and comments on the many brands of the era. The treasure in the book is the pictorial collection of ads that were placed during the war, capturing the focus of America at that time. This book is well organized, easy to read and an informative, nostalgic journey through classic brands and World War II realities."
Peter W. Evans, Retired Advertising Agency President

"This impressively researched and fascinating book reveals how brand destinies are shaped not only by culture and technology but by global events. From Ray-Ban aviator sunglasses and Donald Duck to Cocoa Puffs and Car Culture, Barry Silverstein explains how American brands responded to World War II and – despite its human toll – went on to create a vibrant post-war consumer society and lay the foundations of modern marketing."
Barry Robertson, Partner
Boomer / neXt division of VizioNation, a generational marketing consultancy

"Anyone interested in American history and America's most successful brands will find *WORLD WAR BRANDS* an enlightening read. Barry Silverstein does a great job summarizing how America was changing from 1920 through the 1960s and how America's best-known brands evolved in response. This is a highly worthwhile read for the marketing or brand history enthusiast."
Francis J. Kelly III, President and CEO
CEOVIEW Branding LLC

"...Silverstein is keenly aware of the centrality of branding to 20th-century advertising. Three dozen print-ad reproductions complement the book's engaging writing style... Overall, it's a convincing history about the role of World War II in developing brand consciousness among consumers in the United States."
Kirkus Reviews

WORLD WAR BRANDS

World War II and the Rise of the Modern American Brand

Barry Silverstein

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Contents

• INTRODUCTION •

World War II and American Brands

I was born in 1948, a few years after the end of World War II, so I didn't experience it first-hand. Still, my father was a medical doctor in the war and he had many stories to tell. Like other boys who grew up in the Fifties, I was simultaneously fascinated and horrified by World War II. I saw the outcome from an American perspective – good decisively defeating evil.

I didn't think much about the war in adulthood. I spent my professional career doing marketing programs for brands. I've written several books about brands; in two of those books, I chronicled brands of the 1950s and 1960s that appealed to my generation – I called them "Boomer Brands." In considering how those brands originated, I began to wonder what role World War II might have played in influencing their rise.

As I researched the interrelationship of World War II and American brands, I realized that branding took on a broader meaning. World War II itself was "branded" by the American

government in association with American brand advertisers, who collectively and aggressively promoted war bonds, victory gardens and patriotism throughout the war years. In fact, there was a financial incentive offered by the U.S. government to do so. Radio, newspapers, magazines, posters and film were painstakingly coordinated in a media campaign designed to disseminate government sponsored war-related messages – in reality war propaganda – often supported by specific brands. It was quite a remarkable branding effort. It turns out that this wasn't the first time America branded a war: The American government and business had done this before, during World War I (also known as the Great War). But they perfected their partnership in World War II.

World War II had a profound impact on American brands. In addition to brands directly aligning their products with the war effort, some brands, such as Coca-Cola, used the war as a clever way to engender positive perceptions by distributing their products to American forces. Other brands actually had their roots in the war. For example, M&Ms were introduced in 1941 for soldiers; they were designed with a hard candy outer shell so the chocolate inside wouldn't melt on the battlefield. Early on, M&Ms were used exclusively by the American military before they were widely available to consumers. Jeeps became synonymous with American ground forces. The jeep was as essential a piece of military equipment as boots and weapons. "Jeep" grew directly out of its military use to become an automobile brand. Both brands, M&Ms and Jeep, remain as popular today as during the World War II era.

Just as important, the post-war economy led to the rise of the American middle class. The war fueled strong economic growth that turned the country into a major global force. Americans were thrilled to break out of wartime frugality; they enthusiastically adopted the role of materialistic consumers. They were ready, willing and able to purchase a wide range of consumer products. Manufacturers were happy to oblige; the result was that post-war America became a bubbling cauldron of scores of inventive, innovative brands. When television came along, marketing those brands rose to a whole new level.

This book is about both the branding of World War II and the impact the war had on the modern American brand. I intend for it to be informal and hopefully entertaining rather than a scholarly study. I approach the subject as a marketing professional, not a credentialed historian. Unlike other World War II books, this book doesn't focus on the reasons for war or the war itself; rather, it presents an exploration of the interplay between World War II and American brands. It examines American brands historically, from right before to right after World War II. In so doing, I hope to make a compelling case that World War II greatly contributed to the rise of the modern American brand.

How This Book is Organized

1. Part I lays the groundwork for my thesis. It is an overview of the American brand between World War I and World War II. This section is a kind of preamble that reflects on brands and their role in popular culture prior to World War II. It will be apparent that the Great War was "branded," and American brands played a role in marketing the war.

2. Part II covers the branding of World War II. I discuss the primary media and techniques that were used by the American government and American brands to support the war effort and spread propaganda about the war. The heart of the book presents how American brands marketed themselves during World War II. Here, you'll see how specific brands integrated their marketing message with the war, and how some brands used the war to increase their own product awareness and sales. I also discuss the dark side of war brands – both American and foreign brands that collaborated with the enemy. Some of the brands we know today emerged as market leaders during this time, while others have been relegated to the dustbin of history.

3. Part III addresses brands in the context of American post-war culture, moving from the war's end into the 1950s and 1960s. This part demonstrates how the consumerism of post-war America led quite directly to the birth of breakthrough brands and modern brand

marketing strategies, helped along by a major media development called television. Many brands from this time have survived and thrived into the 21st Century. If you're over sixty-five years of age, you are likely to remember a number of these brands and their catchy television jingles from your childhood. If you're younger, you will probably get a kick out of discovering how brands that continue to be vibrant today really got their start.

4. The Appendix contains numerous print ads from the World War II era. Each ad is numbered. The text will reference an ad in the Appendix by its number like this: (*Appendix, 1*).

If you want to learn more about the branding aspects of World War II or the many brands covered in this book, check out the Sources section for weblinks to additional information. Also included in that section are links to some of the original television commercials for brands referenced in the book.

I hope you enjoy this journey into an intriguing period of American history that I call "World War Brands."

• PART II •

The American Brand and World War II

• CHAPTER 5 •

At War: Advertising and the U.S. Government

Most Americans, whatever their age, have the date December 7, 1941 burned into their memories. It marks the day that Japanese forces bombed American forces in Pearl Harbor, leading the United States to enter World War II.

Right before the onset of war, American advertising was also under attack from consumer activists and federal legislators. The advertising industry was being scrutinized because it was largely unregulated; it was also associated with and sometimes blamed for unchecked material consumption which, some believed, helped fuel the Depression.

A bill commonly known as the "Tugwell bill" (after Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Rexford Tugwell) was introduced in

June 1933 to improve food labeling laws and mandatory grading of consumer goods. A provision of the bill would have enabled the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to broadly address false advertising. Members of the advertising community were concerned that such a bill would be too restrictive, so the advertising industry waged its own war against the bill, and a legislative battle ensued for five years. The industry relentlessly pressed its position in the media and made its case directly to the public, and the bill was ultimately unsuccessful. In its place, a considerably weaker "Wheeler-Lea Amendment" to the Federal Trade Commission Act was passed in 1938. It defined "false advertising" as follows:

> "An advertisement, other than labeling, which is misleading in a material respect; and in determining whether any advertisement is misleading, there shall be taken into account (among other things) not only representations made or suggested by statement, word, design, device, sound, or any combination thereof, but also the extent to which the advertisement fails to reveal facts material in the light of such representations or material with respect to consequences which may result from the use of the commodity to which the advertisement relates under the conditions prescribed in said advertisement, or under such conditions as are customary or usual."

In a 1939 paper for the legal journal, *Law and Contemporary Problems,* eminent attorney and legal scholar Milton Handler concluded:

> "While the Wheeler-Lea Act represents a sincere attempt to stem the avalanche of false and misleading advertising, it is no more than a first, and unfortunately, inadequate step in that direction. Unless buttressed by clarifying amendments broadening its prohibitions and implementing it with effective sanctions, it will not effect an abiding solution of the vexing problem of false and misleading advertising."

Handler's conclusion represented the prevailing wisdom that the advertising industry had dodged a regulatory bullet. The late 1930s therefore appeared to be a defining moment for American advertising. However, as academician Inger Stole points out in her book, *Advertising at War*, "Advertising was still a political issue at the end of the 1930s… It was the war experience, every bit as much as the legislative battles of the 1930s, that defined the role of advertising in both our postwar political economy and our cultural firmament."

In fact, advertising became a very effective weapon during World War II, setting the stage for brand marketing to thrive in subsequent decades.

Even after the Wheeler-Lea Amendment was implemented, representatives from the advertising industry and federal regulators continued their discussions about the nature of advertising's role in the American economy.

One potentially contentious battle between the two sides was the issue of taxation. As war broke out in Europe, America amped up its defense spending even though it was not officially

at war until the attack on Pearl Harbor. Congress reacted by passing a bill that taxed businesses on "excess profits" for defense but it was flawed: The bill overlooked the fact that businesses could evade the tax by simply spending more on advertising and claiming it as a business expense. An "Advertising Tax Bill" was quickly drawn up to put a stop to the practice. Once again, the advertising industry aggressively fought against the new bill and won; a subsequent bill designed to tax advertising directly also failed. As it turned out, advertising was deemed a legitimate business deduction.

Brand Advertising and the War

Despite these industry victories, the question over whether advertising was advisable at a time of conflict was not put to rest until the United States entered the war. Luckily for the advertising industry, history repeated itself – as in the Great War, the federal government again sought the assistance of advertising experts to help support the war effort.

Interestingly, it was a mere few weeks before Pearl Harbor that advertising executives met and decided to form an "Advertising Council," the purpose of which was to "bring the entire advertising industry together in service of social good," according to the website of the modern-day Ad Council, which is still in existence. But as war was declared, the concept quickly morphed into a "War Advertising Council." The timing was prophetic: The advertising industry was now able to position its own "brand" as helping in the war effort, and the federal government was only too happy to accept the industry's assistance.

The War Advertising Council (WAC) set out on a course parallel to the Committee on Public Information (CPI), the agency that was operated by the federal government during the Great War. It was similar to the CPI with one major distinction: While the CPI was formed by the Wilson Administration and reported to the president himself, the WAC was a private organization operated by the advertising industry. As such, it maintained its separation from the government and instead played a vital role in public relations, building the brand image of the advertising industry as a whole.

The WAC was not completely independent, however; it had to closely coordinate its efforts with the federal bureaucracy through such agencies as the Office of War Information, the Advertising Division of the Bureau of Campaigns and the Office of Facts and Figures. Still, the federal government not only had access to the creative and media talents of the country's leading advertising agencies, the WAC provided its services to the government at no charge – another crafty public relations move. The advertising industry could legitimately claim it was making its own considerable investment in promoting the war.

The WAC was essentially a clearinghouse for industry efforts in support of America's role in World War II, as was the CPI during the Great War. One of the Council's earliest government "clients" was none other than Henry Morgenthau Jr., the Secretary of the Treasury. Morgenthau found the WAC's assistance in promoting war bonds invaluable – so vital, in fact, that it

seemed to finally put to rest any leftover concern about advertising taxation.

Eventually, the Bureau of Campaigns and the WAC became a well-oiled team, with promotional needs from all parts of the federal government flowing through the Bureau, and the WAC developing and executing projects as required. In excess of four hundred advertising agencies volunteered their services to the WAC and advertisers paid for campaigns, which invariably promoted government programs as well as an advertiser's company or brand name.

Not unlike during the Great War, advertising on behalf of America's involvement in World War II could be viewed as both patriotic and propagandistic. However, the majority of Americans were pro-war and embraced wartime advertising messages. Government agencies, along with the WAC, used every medium available, including newspapers, magazines, radio and posters for thematic advertising, as indicated below. Comic books and cartoon animation played an important pro-war role. Hollywood studios contributed by producing thinly veiled propaganda movies that glorified America and vilified its enemies. Also on the propaganda side, millions of leaflets were produced by the government and dropped by airplanes, often behind enemy lines, in an effort to convince foreign populations and sometimes even enemy soldiers to support the Allies.

The World War II Brand

World War II itself was a "megabrand" of sorts with various essential sub-brands – major war-related subject categories that received special attention. These sub-brands included:

- **Building Morale**
  It was essential to build morale on the home front as well as on the battlefield. A common dual theme – patriotism and promise – pervaded morale-building promotions. While the American people were already largely patriotic, it never hurt to remind them of the greatness of the United States and the risk of enemy victory. Patriotism was also strongly reinforced in advertising directed at American forces to remind them what they were fighting for.

  As for "promise," the word implied victory for the Allies as well as projecting a prosperous life after winning the war. Arguably, one campaign attracted the most attention when it envisioned a "Kitchen of Tomorrow," even before the war ended.

  H. Creston Doner, an industrial designer, created a fanciful sample kitchen for the Libbey-Owens-Ford Glass Company of Toledo, Ohio, and the company built a prototype experimental kitchen from his design. It appealed to the aspirations of American women (including Doner's wife, who inspired his work), teasing them with the potential modernistic convenience that would

come after a victory in the war. Featured in the August 9, 1943 issue of *LIFE*, one of the most popular American magazines of the time, the kitchen was described this way:

> "All the equipment needed for preparing, cooking, storing food is built in, runs by electricity. The cabinets have sliding doors. Bending and stooping are reduced to a minimum because counters and utensils are at proper working level. Generous use of glass enables the housewife to see through the oven door and cook pots, into icebox and cupboards. Fronts of counters and drawers beneath working surfaces are slanted in so that housewife has knee room when she sits at her work. When work is done, the kitchen doubles as a playroom."

The Kitchen of Tomorrow was a big hit with consumers who wanted to dream of what postwar life would be like. Magazines and newspapers featured it, Paramount made a short film about it, and three models of the Kitchen of Tomorrow toured the country, attracting over 1-1/2 million visitors.

- **Conservation and Rationing**
  Conservation of vital resources and rationing of scarce materials, such as gasoline, nylon and rubber, were vital to the war effort. One of every seven war posters promoted the need for conservation. This was an area in which major manufacturers of products could boast

about their support of the war as well as encourage the American public to make necessary sacrifices.

Brands were not very subtle in promoting conservation; in fact, many of the appeals were emotional. For example, the tire manufacturer Goodyear depicted a mom whose son was killed in action while appealing to moms' duty with advertising copy that read in part: "You can only fall in line with friend and neighbor and, through scrap drives and conservation campaigns, play your part as fully as you can, as every good soldier on the home front should. You can only remember that every helpful act, no matter how small, not only hastens Victory but does its share to bring more boys back before their blue stars turn to gold." (Gold stars were indicative of soldiers killed in action.)

Other brands were more pragmatic; General Mills, for example, produced a Betty Crocker "cookbooklet" featuring wartime recipes incorporating the conservation/rationing message. In terms of brand impact, Lucky Strike may have been one of the more creative examples of conservation. The cigarette brand, whose name appeared in a bold red circle on the pack, changed the dark green background color to white; brand owner American Tobacco Company touted it with a slogan that became very familiar to radio listeners: "Lucky Strike Green has gone to war!" The company claimed the modification was made because the green color had to be used by the military for camouflage – but industry

insiders believed the change was made to liven up the look of the brand and make it more appealing to women.

- **Farms, Nutrition and "Victory Gardens"**
  America's farms needed to keep producing dairy products, meat and vegetables/fruits for both consumers and America's warriors, so maintaining farms and farm production were key messages. Related to farm maintenance, good nutrition was an important theme, along with messages promoting "Victory Gardens." These gardens became a very popular way in which consumers with a little bit of spare land could contribute to the war effort by planting vegetables.

  When it came to nutrition, food companies were uniquely positioned to promote their brands as well as good nutrition. A dairy brand, the Borden Company, enlisted its renowned cartoon character cow, Elsie, as a kind of spokesperson for the National Nutrition Program. One lengthy ad that explained the program using both copy and illustrations closed with the following statement: "Elsie says: 'We at the Borden Company are so enthusiastic about the National Nutrition Program that we're using this space to tell you about it, instead of talking about our new products.'"

  Victory Gardens, which actually started on the home front during the Great War, increased in popularity in World War II because of food rationing. Since the bulk

of processed foods were being shipped overseas to the nation's armed forces, Americans enthusiastically embraced the grow-it-yourself philosophy. The Victory Garden was as much symbolic as it was practical, and it provided an opportunity for such brands as Birds Eye and Green Giant to promote their brand names. Green Giant, for instance, offered a free booklet entitled "The Green Giant's Secrets in Growing Peas and Corn." Some companies handed out "Victory Seeds" to consumers with product purchase – but consumers weren't always aware that these same companies received government tax breaks for their war promotion.

Victory Gardens became one of the most successful war-themed campaigns, second only to war bonds. By 1943, some twenty million Victory Gardens had been cultivated, producing close to eight million tons of vegetables and accounting for over 40 percent of the country's vegetable production.

- **Protecting War Information**
  There was considerable concern about confidential information being unwittingly shared with the enemy since spies were suspected of infiltrating the United States. The War Advertising Council conceived of the legendary phrase, "Loose Lips Sink Ships," which was part of a major poster and advertising campaign.

  Again, brands found ways to incorporate the notion of protecting war information into clever promotions. In

one magazine ad, Smith Bros. Cough Drops (*Appendix, 5*) advised, "KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT! DON'T GOSSIP – it spreads rumors! DON'T COUGH – it spreads germs!" One of the best examples of this approach was advertising placed in magazines by the hatmaker, John B. Stetson Company (*Appendix, 6*). In a series of ads, the company replaced the well-worn phrase, "Keep it under your hat" with "KEEP IT UNDER YOUR STETSON." What better way to spread an important war message than in connection with a memorable and uniquely applicable promotional tagline.

- War Bonds

  War bonds garnered the most advertising support of any other sub-brand. They were considered to be a key mechanism for raising money from private citizens to help fund America's role in the war. War bonds were easy to purchase – they were sold at post offices, banks and even at retail locations. Employees of companies could elect a payroll deduction to pay for them. War bonds became even more popular because they were not just investments in the war effort, they also generated interest paid by the U.S. government after twelve months.

  Hundreds of ads encouraging consumers to buy war bonds appeared in magazines and newspapers; most of them were sponsored by advertisers who wanted to associate their brands with war bonds. War bond posters were seen everywhere and radio commercials prolifer-

ated. There was even a war bond recording made in 1942 featuring Tommy Dorsey's Orchestra and Frank Sinatra called "Dig Down Deep."

Ads ran the gamut: Some were purely informational, some played on patriotism and others tugged at the heart strings. There were so many war bond ads that the War Advertising Council had to classify them by type:

"All Out" – Ads that were 100 percent devoted to a government message with no corporate or product promotion other than the sponsoring company's name.
"Double Barreled" – Ads that emphasized a government message and also promoted a company or product separately, almost as a sidebar.
"Sneak Punch" – Ads that incorporated war themes into company or product promotions, usually in an integrated and sometimes clever way.
"Plug in a Slug" – Ads that concentrated on the company or product but added a small highlighted area to promote primarily war bonds; typically it was brief copy in a small box.
"Business as Usual" – Ads that used the war to enhance the company or product but did not make any direct appeal for war bonds or include other war themes.

Some companies went to great lengths to support the sale of war bonds. For example, the Timken Roller Bearing Company increased its corporate brand awareness

by launching a series of fourteen full color, full-page magazine ads that ran for two years. Each ad featured a large illustrated portrait of a different military leader, such as General Eisenhower and Admiral Nimitz. The theme centered around supporting the military with the purchase of war bonds and the ad copy was typically very short.

- Women at War

  With America's young men largely going off to fight in the war, women took responsibility for working in America's factories and playing a support role in the Red Cross. In addition, some women directly engaged in the war effort by joining the military: Army - WACs (Women's Army Corps), Navy - WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service), Air Force - WASPs (Women Airforce Service Pilots) , Marine Corps - Women Reservists and Coast Guard - SPARs ("Semper Paratus, Always Ready").

  Despite the essential role of women in the war, they were still viewed primarily as homemakers and subservient to men by American society in the 1940s. Much of the advertising featuring the women-at-war theme reflected this reality. For example, a full-page magazine ad run by cosmetic/perfume company Coty (*Appendix, 7*) displayed an illustration of a woman's face, beautifully made up, with a head shawl and accompanied by a gloved hand. She is peering at a man's face in shadow; he is wearing a military cap. There is nothing more in

the way of copy than this headline in script type: "His duty to serve – Hers to inspire – Coty."

Not all messages portrayed women as secondary to men, however. Certainly one of the more "riveting" images of women-at-war messaging was a campaign that became known as "Rosie the Riveter" after a song with that title was released in 1942. Rosie was a fictitious character created to promote the fact that women were needed to work in manufacturing plants during the war. Believed to be based on a real worker at a munitions factory, Rosie was depicted as a strong, confident woman wearing a red and white bandana and pulling up her sleeve to show a muscle. The poster with Rosie's image and the slogan, "We Can Do It!" was originally only displayed on factory floors. However, a multimedia campaign featuring Rosie took the nation by storm, and women joined the workforce in droves. In 1943, for example, the U.S. aircraft industry had over 300,000 women employees – 65 percent of the industry's total workforce vs. one percent before the war. Rosie was an iconic representation of an American woman helping the war effort. As such, she truly represented everything a great brand should be.

The body of work produced by the War Advertising Council in association with the federal government was nothing short of remarkable in its impact. By the end of the war, advertising had directly contributed to the American war effort in the following ways:

- Conservation: 800 million pounds of tin, 538 million pounds of waste fats and 23 million tons of paper were salvaged
- Farming and nutrition: 50 million Victory Gardens were planted
- War bonds: $800 million of war bonds were issued.

Government agencies relied heavily on the War Advertising Council to produce effective, timely work. It's estimated that the advertising industry as a whole contributed something on the order of $800 million in advertising space, time and talent before the end of the war. When key members of the federal government realized the importance of the WAC's role in promoting all aspects of America's role in the war, they came to see the advertising industry as an ally instead of an adversary.

This concludes the sample chapter. Order the complete version of WORLD WAR BRANDS in print, eBook or audiobook formats anywhere books are sold.

About the Author

Barry Silverstein is a brand historian, freelance writer and retired direct marketing/brand marketing professional. He founded and ran his own direct marketing agency for twenty years and has forty-plus years of marketing experience. He is the author of numerous non-fiction marketing/small business books and eGuides, including *BOOMER BRANDS, BOOMER BRAND WINNERS & LOSERS* and *The Breakaway Brand*.

Visit his website: https://www.barrysilverstein.com

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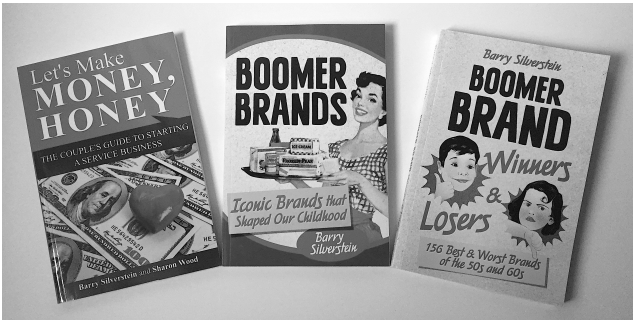


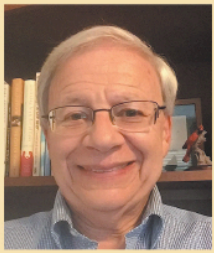
WORLD WAR BRANDS

World War II and the Rise of the Modern American Brand

How the Modern American Brand was Born

"Economic growth, product proliferation and television converged in the crucible of post-war America to create the fertile soil needed for modern brands to take root and bloom," observes Barry Silverstein in this fascinating book. Exploring the interrelationship of World War II and American brands, Silverstein shows how the war itself was "branded," how brand advertisers leveraged the war, and how the post-war economy helped birth the modern brand. Included are scores of stories about some of the best-known brands of the '40s and '50s.

History and brand buffs alike will be enthralled by WORLD WAR BRANDS!



BARRY SILVERSTEIN is a brand historian, freelance writer and retired direct marketing/brand marketing professional. He is the author of numerous non-fiction marketing and small business books, including *Boomer Brands, Boomer Brand Winners & Losers* and *The Breakaway Brand.* Visit his website:

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