Hope Jensen Schau, Albert M. Muñiz Jr., & Eric J. Arnould

How Brand Community Practices Create Value

Using social practice theory, this article reveals the process of collective value creation within brand communities. Moving beyond a single case study, the authors examine previously published research in conjunction with data collected in nine brand communities comprising a variety of product categories, and they identify a common set of value-creating practices. Practices have an "anatomy" consisting of (1) general procedural understandings and rules (explicit, discursive knowledge); (2) skills, abilities, and culturally appropriate consumption projects (tacit, embedded knowledge or how-to); and (3) emotional commitments expressed through actions and representations. The authors find that there are 12 common practices across brand communities, organized by four thematic aggregates, through which consumers realize value beyond that which the firm creates or anticipates. They also find that practices have a physiology, interact with one another, function like apprenticeships, endow participants with cultural capital, produce a repertoire for insider sharing, generate consumption opportunities, evince brand community vitality, and create value. Theoretical and managerial implications are offered with specific suggestions for building and nurturing brand community and enhancing collaborative value creation between and among consumers and firms.

Keywords: brand community, branding, collective consumption, engagement strategies, marketing strategy, practice theory

Modern marketing logic, as derived from economics, advanced a view of the firm and the customer as separate and discrete; the customer is exogenous to the firm and is the passive recipient of the firm's active value creation efforts, and value is created in the factory (Deshpandé 1983). However, a different perspective is emerging. Research across disparate streams of management literature—from new product development, to services-dominant logic, to consumer culture theory—leads to the view that customers can cocreate value, cocreate competitive strategy, collaborate in the firm's innovation process (Etgar 2008; Franke and Piller 2004; Prügl and Schreier 2006; Von Hippel 2005), and even become endogenous to the firm (Jaworski and Kohli 2006; Kalaignanam and Varadarajan 2006; Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004; Vargo and Lusch 2004). Despite the proliferation of such work, a consumer-centric delineation of the mechanism in which value is collectively created has not been identified, nor has a clear typology of cocreated value been developed. This article aims to address these issues.

Consumer culture theory researchers have investigated a host of coproductive activities in consumer collectives organized around market-mediated cultural products (Muñiz and Schau 2007) that elude many aspects of marketers' immediate control and make no direct contribution to marketing efficiency or effectiveness as conventionally defined (Kalaignanam and Varadarajan 2006). These collectives include those that are (1) primarily experience based, as in brandfests, raves, or Linux "installfests" (Bagozzi and Dholakia 2006; Cova and Cova 2002; McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig 2002); (2) lifestyle based (Goulding and Saren 2009); (3) opposition ideology based (Thompson, Rindfleisch, and Arsel 2006); (4) brand based (Martin, Schouten, and McAlexander 2006; Muñiz and O'Guinn 2001; Muñiz and Schau 2005); or (5) Web community based (Szmigin and Reppel 2004). This work demonstrates that all such collectives exhibit community-like qualities, as understood in sociology, and address identity-, meaning-, and status-related concerns for participants. Moreover, this work suggests that such collectives provide value to their members through emergent participatory actions of multiple kinds and that consumer collectives are the site of much value creation.

A revolution in both marketing thought and practice is at hand. Recognizing the implications of the aforementioned developments, Lusch and Vargo (2006) argue that cocreation will ultimately induce firms to collaborate with customers to cocreate the entire marketing program. This is consistent with reasoning regarding open-source innovation (Etgar 2008; Von Hippel 2005) and with emerging corporate practices that tap into brand communities, such as LEGO, which explicitly sought and harnessed consumer innovation to refine the successful LEGO robotic kit Mindstorms (Koerner 2006), and skinnyCorp's Threadless, which manufacturers consumer-designed and critiqued

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T-shirts, famously claiming that "the customer is the company" (Chafkin 2008). However, cocreative actions have not been clearly identified and categorized in a uniform or generalizable way, nor has the nature of their value creation been revealed. In essence, we know that value is cocreated, but we do not know how, which makes replicating successful cocreation strategies within a product category and even within the firm difficult and transferring successful practices from one product domain to another nearly impossible.

Using a meta-analytic approach, we aim to systematically categorize value creation practices within brand communities, identify the role of each type of practice in the value creation process, and suggest templates for bundling practices to enhance collaborative value creation. We demonstrate the following: (1) Companies should foster a broad array of practices, moving beyond mere customization; (2) managers can encourage a broad array of practices through seeding; (3) a focus on practices provides guidance for new product development by facilitating the identification of high-fidelity, as well as low-fidelity, needs (Von Hippel 2005); and (4) companies can encourage the interaction of practices to foster greater customer engagement with the brand.

Background and Purpose

Our research purpose is to reveal common processes of value creation among networked firm-facing actors in brand-centered communities, a meaningful and manageable subset of all commercially mediated collectives. We then situate these processes in the extant research. Case studies show that firm-facing actors can create value in use. However, the field has yet to systematize the knowledge of these value-creating activities. To be sure, progress has been made toward accounting for value creation. Holt (1995) illustrates the ways individual consumers derive subjective value through patterned interaction with a sporting event. Although this research is useful, Holt limits himself to discussions of individual value-creating activities, primarily through production of individual distinction in cultural capital endowments (Bourdieu 1984). Outside of providing the context for this behavior, the collective is understudied. Similar observations can be made about Belk's (1995) analysis of collectors.

Others have begun to rectify such shortcomings. McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig (2002) show that participation in brandfests led to significant increases in feelings of integration into the Jeep brand community and positive feelings about the brand and product category. These findings were robust across nonowners and newcomers as well as owners. Thus, we may infer that in addition to firm benefits, participants derive social and hedonic value from the experience. Franke and Piller (2004) show that participation in online product design leads to increases in willingness to pay and willingness to pay more (an indirect indicator of brand equity). Thus, we may infer that participants derive some sort of value in use from participation.

Although such studies represent important advances, they have their limitations. In neither of these studies (i.e.,

Franke and Piller 2004; McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig 2002) are the activities by which consumers create value dissected, dimensionalized, or generalized. Although such activities are evident, they are treated idiosyncratically. No attempt has been made to link the value-creating activities with the activities in other brand community studies. This is a problem with the larger literature on brand consuming collectives, which has focused on the idiosyncratic and oversold novelty at the expense of uniformity, generalizability, and connections to prior work. Indeed, not only have no meaningful connections been developed, but there has also been no attempt to develop the common nomenclature for recurring activities and processes that we offer herein.

Other authors have invited research centered on the value-creating activities of market-facing collectives, recognizing the need for consistent nomenclature. Woodruff and Flint (2006, p. 194) call for "much greater focus on experiential customer value phenomena" to resolve the differences in typologies of value in use. Similarly, O'Hern and Rindfleisch (2007, p. 37) argue that "the role of brand communities as a catalyst for co-creation is an intriguing topic for future research." Clearly, our endeavor has a mandate. Following Vargo and Lusch (2004), we argue that value resides in the actions, interactions, and projects that acquired resources make possible or support. Taking inspiration from Holt's (1995) initial foray in applying a sociological theory of practice to individual consumer behaviors, we argue for an explicit methodological application of practice theory (Duguid 2005; Lave and Wenger 1991; Reckwitz 2002; Schatzki 1996; Warde 2005) to disentangle the forms of collective value creation in brand communities.

Practices are linked and implicit ways of understanding, saying, and doing things. They comprise a temporally unfolding and spatially dispersed nexus of behaviors that include practical activities, performances, and representations or talk. Practices link behaviors, performances, and representations through (1) procedures—explicit rules, principles, precepts, and instructions, called "discursive knowledge"; (2) understandings—knowledge of what to say and do, skills and projects, or know-how (i.e., tacit cultural templates for understanding and action); and (3) engagements—ends and purposes that are emotionally charged insofar as people are committed to them (Duguid 2005; Warde 2005). Schatzki (1996) underscores how practices create and perpetuate both collective identity and individuality. To engage in practices, people must develop shared understandings and demonstrate competencies that reinforce social order while allowing them to distinguish themselves through adroit performances.

Following Schatzki (1996), Warde (2005, p. 137) asserts that consuming is "a moment in almost every practice." Thus, consumption follows from practices, rather than vice versa, because practices dictate what is essential for the competent and meaningful engagement of social actors in a particular consumption setting (Schatzki 1996). A focus on practices emphasizes the routine, collective, and conventional nature of consumption while accommodating the internally differentiated (across participants and groups; see our subsequent discussion of staking) and dynamic nature

of consumption (see Cheng et al. 2007). As Warde further observes (p. 145), "practices are the principle steering device of consumption because they are the primary source of desire, knowledge and judgment;… recruitment to a practice becomes a principal explanatory issue." Thus, a practice focus dovetails with the gap identified in previous research on value creation in brand communities.

To identify and categorize cocreative practices from a consumer-centric perspective and in a generalizable way, we draw on a corpus of data across nine brand communities. We access participants in brand communities in collaborative cocreation activities specifically, as well as their emic notions of value related to branded offerings and communal activities. Using a meta-analytic review, we situate these practices in the extant literature, connecting the practices we revealed with those previously, if only implicitly, encountered in prior research. We then demonstrate how these practices interact, or are bundled, to create value. This enables us to develop new theory in the domain of consumption practice. From a managerial perspective, our findings illuminate opportunities to grow, not simply exploit, "customer competence" (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2000). In short, our findings reveal how to build better brand partners.

Method

To address the research issues identified, we examine consumer cocreation in an empirical context. Our sampling frame consists of an array of nine brand communities across traditional product category classifications: 3Com Audrey (Internet device), Apple Newton (personal digital assistant), BMW Mini (car), Garmin (global positioning system [GPS] device), Jones Soda (carbonated beverage), Lomo and Holga (cameras), Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers (hereinafter, TPATH) (musical group), StriVectin (cosmeceutical), and *Xena: Warrior Princess* (episodic action television program). Collectively, these data sites represent a broad spectrum of marketplace offerings. Packaged goods, electronics (including cutting-edge and well-established technology), and entertainment are represented. The data also represent greater gender diversity than is found in most prior work on brand communities. The Audrey and Newton communities are primarily male; Garmin, Jones, TPATH, Lomo/Holga, and Mini are fairly balanced; and Xena and StriVectin are primarily female. Table 1 describes each brand community and the nature of research engagement with each. It was our hope that this diverse collection of communities would increase the chances of our data resonating with that presented in the extant research, thus facilitating the identification of common elements.

Our data include in-depth interviews with community members, participant and naturalistic observation of community activities, and netnographic research within forums centered on brands. We observed forums for all the brands included and downloaded thousands of messages posted by brand users. Our analytic approach combines the strengths of primary data collection with those of meta-analysis and overcomes the weakness of individual case study approaches to brand collectives. In many cases, we assessed the full breadth of community activities both online and in the corporeal world. In some cases, specifically with StriVectin and Xena, we pursued the community across forums when several sites were implicated in community activities. Finally, our approach is appropriate because we endeavored to move the unit of analysis away from the individual consumer and individual brand community to the practices common across individuals and communities. Our analysis also benefits from the insights of a multidisciplinary (anthropology, social psychology, sociology, and marketing) and bigendered team. These differences allow triangulation across researchers in terms of convergence and divergence in interpretation following guidance in previous research.

In addition, we performed a meta-analytic review. We identified 52 articles published in *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, *Consumption, Markets and Culture*, and *Advances in Consumer Research* that explicitly claim to examine collective consumer behavior and/or "practices." None of these studies expressly examined collective value creation, and none used the construct of collaborative behavior uniformly or systematically. Nonetheless, using four coders to achieve intercoder agreement on interpretation, we identified 37 articles (71%) that contained sufficient material to code collective practices. In 13 (35%) of these articles, we found some evidence of practices consistent with our current data set. Thus, this analysis of published research demonstrates that the 12 practices we identify here are robust (Farley, Lehmann, and Sawyer 1995) because we found traces of them within data analyzed for diverse theoretical purposes.

Findings

Our first goal was to compile an exhaustive list of practices common to the brand communities studied and to situate those practices in the context of prior research. Our intent in this endeavor was multifaceted. First, we wanted to synthesize and extend prior accounts of brand community. Second, we wanted to reconcile common practices that have appeared under disparate titles. Third, we wanted to dissect and dimensionalize these practices. Fourth, we wanted to systematically document how a constellation of practices coalesce to create value-added brand community experiences. Doing these things would enable us to place brand communities in both new theoretical and managerial lights.

We induced 12 value-creating practices across the nine brand communities we studied. We assert that these common practices represent value-creating dynamics present in most, if not all, brand communities. To support this assertion, as mentioned previously, we analyzed the extant literature on collective consumer behavior to find instances of behavior that correspond to these 12 practices. Appendix A details the practices common in the brand communities we studied, as well as those abstracted from prior research. It lists the name of the practice, the definition, a list of the prior research in which each practice was evident, and examples of the practice in our data. We further organize these practices into four thematic categories: (1) social net-

TABLE 1
Research Engagement

Brand Community	Research Engagement	Description
3Com Audrey	20 months of naturalistic observation 8 in-depth interviews with key members	3Com is an Internet-only device released in October 2000, based on the Palm operating system. It is designed to be a simple and elegant way to access the Internet, check e-mail and sync with Palm personal digital assistants (PDAs). The Audrey had a rushed release, tried to carve out a new product category, and failed to connect with consumers. After a little more than seven months on the market, 3Com discontinued the Audrey in June of 2001 and offered full rebates to purchasers. 3Com no longer provides any support for the Audrey. Numerous sites sell new and hacked Audreys, and there are several user forums in which users can find assistance in repairing and extending the functionality of their Audreys.
Apple Newton	7 years of naturalistic observation 2.5 years of participant observation 82 in-depth member interviews	The Apple Newton (PDA) was introduced in 1993. The Newton had a rushed release, tried to carve out a new product category, and failed to connect with consumers. Newton was far from bug free. Widely reported problems, coupled with a high price, discouraged most potential adopters. Despite these barriers, a strong and fiercely loyal brand community formed around the Newton (Muñiz and Schau 2005; Wagner 1998). The Newton lost its lead in the emerging PDA category to the Palm Pilot in 1996 and was officially discontinued by Apple in February of 1998. Because it was discontinued, users have come to rely on themselves, as well as the larger community, to keep their Newtons operating. Numerous Web sites sell new and hacked Newtons, and there are several forums in which users can find assistance in repairing and extending Newton functionality.
Garmin	4 years of naturalistic observation 1 year of participant observation 4 in-depth member interviews	Garmin produces a variety of GPS devices, including the Nuvi, Quest, and Streetpilot lines. These devices enable users to pinpoint their exact location in real time and plot directions to any geographic destination. They have a worldwide community consisting of users and company employees. The community manifests online and offline. The community is truly global in nature with multiple languages used on the message boards. The offline community is more travel based, insofar as people interested in certain destinations or dwelling in certain destinations meet to exchange use experiences and travel experiences.
Jones Soda	4.5 years of naturalistic observation 8 in-depth member interviews	Jones Soda is a carbonated beverage firm that solicits customer cocreation from a community of devoted fans. The firm gives its 12- to 24-year-old target consumers input into product innovations (flavors), packaging (labels, cap quotes), promotions (stickers, Web content, price points), and advertising. Through the Jones Soda Web site, consumers are asked to rate suggested new flavors and are invited to submit photos and copy that would fit in advertisements and on the packaging. A mobile Jones promotional vehicle arrives at events such as the X Games, malls, and school campuses to give away promotional material and have consumers try and rate Jones soda products. The promotional vehicle stocks flavors of interest (new and experimental) and actively solicits consumer feedback. As of 2005, Jones Soda used nearly 4400 consumer-generated photos in its marketing (*BusinessWeek* 2005).
Lomo and Holga	5 years of naturalistic observation	Lomo and Holga are cheaply made Russian and Chinese cameras, respectively, with inexpensive lenses and few adjustable options. Users simply point and shoot. The international origins, inexpensiveness, and simplicity of these cameras have made both cameras the subject of active community followings, mostly centered on one joint community (www.lomography.com). Lomography has come to stand for a lo-fi, no-rules, and no-pretense school of photography that stresses creativity and spontaneity. Members create modifications and additions for the cameras, enabling them to do things the manufacturer never intended. Over time, the Lomo and Holga brand communities have merged to create one dual-brand community based around these toy cameras.
Mini Cooper	2 years of naturalistic observation	The BMW Mini was introduced in North America in 2002. It is a retro brand that is distinguishable from nostalgic brands (Morris Mini) by the element of technological updating (BMW). It is "a brand new, old-fashioned offering" (Brown, Kozinets, and Sherry 2003, p. 20). The brand was introduced and sustained with a marketing communications campaign that created an iconoclastic, high-style, high-cultural-capital image for the brand that builds off the retro, populist narrative associated with the old British Morris Mini. Through numerous local chapters and its elaborate Web site, the North American community promotes chat, discussion of all aspects of the various Mini models, frequent group road trips and rallies, customization of interiors and exteriors, and racing, and it facilitates both lateral recycling of parts and supplies and limited aftermarket sales by qualified vendors.
TPATH	23 years of naturalistic observation 12 years of participant observation 67 in-depth interviews	TPATH is a Grammy Award winning rock act with a career spanning more than three decades. The group successfully leveraged the music video art form, earning an MTV Music Video Award and a place on various compilations of the most influential music videos. Their Greatest Hits album was certified 10x platinum in 2003, and their debut release continues to sell globally; new fans emerge across generations and around the world. In 2006, ABC contracted with TPATH to use their song "Runnin' Down a Dream" to promote the NBA Finals (www.ESPN.com). As indication of their enduring popularity, TPATH performed at the Super Bowl XLII halftime show. The group's fans are active in attending concerts, hosting tailgates and concert parties, tuning into the radio show, posting on the online forums, and participating in fan chats.

TABLE 1
Continued

StriVectin	3 years of naturalistic observation 6 in-depth member interviews	StriVectin is a "cosmeceutical" (a high-end cosmetic with pharmaceutical properties) that treats skin imperfections (stretch marks, wrinkles, and scars). The tagline for StriVectin's advertising campaign for the last three years is "Better than Botox," focusing on its age-defying results. The ad text claims that StriVectin has clinically proven attributes that effectively repair skin and vastly improve skin's appearance. There is a lively community centered on StriVectin, composed mostly, but not exclusively, of women. The members meet online on message boards sponsored by the producer, as well as on online forums dedicated to beauty and "youth endurance" or sites devoted to waging war against the signs of aging. The members are evangelical in their support of the product and tout the effectiveness of the product through the telling of highly personal testimonials.
Xena: Warrior Princess	12 years of naturalistic observation 2.5 years of participant observation 28 in-depth interviews	The Xena character began as a guest role on the *Hercules* television program in 1995. *Xena: Warrior Princess* became a successful spin-off melodrama that ceased production June 2001. It is now in syndication on various networks. The show has lucrative syndication agreements; has on- and offline cottage industries revolving around the fan culture of costuming, fan fiction, and conventioneering; fits squarely within existing organizations (Society for Creative Anachronism) devoted to medieval reenactments and fairs; and in many respects appeals to other fantasy fan communities, such as those revolving around *Star Trek* (Jenkins 1992), *Star Wars* (Brown, Kozinets, and Sherry 2003), and *X-Files* (Kozinets 1997).

working, (2) impression management, (3) community engagement, and (4) brand use. Next, we describe these categories and the practices housed within each.

First, social networking practices are those that focus on creating, enhancing, and sustaining ties among brand community members. These include (1) welcoming, (2) empathizing, and (3) governing. This trio of practices highlights the homogeneity of the brand community, or the similarities across brand community members and their normative behavioral expectations of themselves and one another. These practices operate primarily in the intangible domain of the emotions and reinforce the social or moral bonds within the community. Examples of social networking practices can be gleaned from prior research. Muñiz and O'Guinn (2001, p. 419) describe behaviors consistent with empathizing in the following excerpt from their field notes:

> The club president proudly shows a letter he received from a sixteen-year-old Italian boy who is a big fan of Saab, despite the fact that he doesn't drive yet. He got the club's address from their web page. The letter says that he is a fan of pre-changed 900, especially liking the '83 and '84 3-door models. He is seeking pictures of these cars that the club members might own. This letter is big news at the meeting and is shown to everyone over the course of the evening.

The variety and scope of social networking practices that we witness across our nine communities challenge Muñiz and O'Guinn's (2001) assertion that brand communities are communities of limited liability. What we observe suggests that social networking practices evolve and move past brand boundaries. Examples include TPATH fans posting open invitations to community members to life-cycle celebrations, Garmin users relating road challenges and solutions to other members, StriVectin users complaining and sympathizing about aging, Lomo and Holga users encouraging one another to continue their effects trials, and Jones Soda users supporting one another in their pursuit of independent music. We assert that this metamorphosis beyond limited liability is a function of the amount of time members can spend with one another in enduring brand communities. Daily or multiweekly contact, sustained over several years, enables these friendships to expand beyond

brand boundaries. Indeed, there is evidence of longtime community members remaining in the community after dispossessing themselves of the focal brand (e.g., when a life-stage responsibility requires a Mini driver to sell the Mini and purchase a more family-friendly vehicle).

Second, impression management practices are those that have an external, outward focus on creating favorable impressions of the brand, brand enthusiasts, and brand community in the social universe beyond the brand community. These include (1) evangelizing and (2) justifying. In evangelizing, members act as altruistic emissaries and ambassadors of good will. Various impression management practices are evident in the extant brand community literature. Kozinets's (2001) study of the Star Trek community and Muñiz and Schau's (2005) study of the Apple Newton brand community provide relevant and closely related examples. Members of both brand communities engaged in impression management practices, evangelizing and justifying their devotion to manage stigmas associated with overt sci-fi fandom and reliance on an obsolete and abandoned technology, respectively.

Third, community engagement practices are those that reinforce members' escalating engagement with the brand community. These include (1) staking, (2) milestoning, (3) badging, and (4) documenting. This set of practices emphasizes and safeguards brand community heterogeneity, or the distinctions among brand community members and subsets of members. These practices are competitive and provide members with social capital. Here, brand use is secondary to communal engagement. For example, in staking, community members delineate their specific domain of participation: "The Lomo community is vast, but I operate mostly within the groups interested in architectural lomography and within that group I spend most time with the Scandinavian group and some time with the German lomographers" (Hans interview, 11/18/08). Hans carefully stakes his domain of engagement. This echoes Martin, Schouten, and McAlexander's (2006) study, in which female Harley community members distinguished the contours of their engagement from that of the male community members. Milestones are standout brand experiences, such as the first

TPATH concert, the first Garmin caching find, or a posted Lomograph. Badging occurs when a semiotic signifier of a milestone is created—for example, when a fan buys a concert T-shirt or when a Mini owner makes a designated "run" and adds a circular image commemorating that to his or her signature file. Documenting occurs when brand community members construct a narrative of their brand experience, staking their social space, participating in milestones, badging the milestones for posterity, and finally evolving a cohesive personal brand narrative (see Appendix A).

Fourth, brand use practices are specifically related to improved or enhanced use of the focal brand. These include (1) grooming, (2) customizing, and (3) commoditizing. Examples of grooming include Mini consumers who share homemade tools and advice (Q-Tips in air vents) to better clean their cars and demonstrate their collective pride, StriVectin users who encourage wiping the tip of the tube with a clean tissue and storing it in the refrigerator, procedures for handling and storing original TPATH record albums, care and maintenance of Xena costumes, and home-crafted "snugglies" (soft cases) for the Garmin, Lomos, and Holgas. Examples of customizing include when a TPATH fan creates a custom tour poster from his or her first concert, when a StriVectin user carefully mixes StriVectin with foundation makeup, when a Newton user modifies a Newton so that it can perform functions other than those anticipated by the manufacturer, and when a Lomo fan customizes a camera lens to achieve more artful distortion. Examples of commoditizing are when Newton, Xena, and TPATH communities monitor and restrict the price of community-created resources to encourage diffusion of technologies and items deemed to be community building; when Jones Soda drinkers rant about corporate distribution or Pepsi and Coke products but advocate offering Jones in Target, Walgreens, and Starbucks; when Garmin users stretch the useful life of firm-offered maps with local patches given as freeware but anxiously anticipate firm-updated map packages; and when Lomo and Holga users chastise digital camera offerings as pricey but encourage the resale of these "toy" cameras on eBay for upward of $100.

The Operation of Practices

Each practice exhibits a common anatomy, which can be described as (1) understandings (knowledge and tacit cultural templates), (2) procedures (explicit performance rules), and (3) engagements (emotional projects and purposes). Each practice similarly demonstrates a physiology in which these anatomical parts function together. Practices vary in their anatomy, but in their physiology, they vary across communities. We identified the anatomy of practices previously. In what follows, we detail the physiology of practices, or the way the three anatomical components of the practices—procedures, understandings, and emotional engagements—cohesively function. We employ the physiology metaphor to emphasize the dynamism, internal diversity, and interaction between practices.

Bagozzi and Dholakia (2002, p. 4) propose that "a person achieves a social identity [in a community] through self awareness of one's membership in a group and the emo-

tional and evaluative significance of this membership." The approach to brand community membership that we develop here is different. We assert that an emergent sense of membership and identity arises from the trajectory, or the development of practices that foster the exchange of collectively defined and valorized resources. This is consistent with prior work on communities of practice (Wenger 1987). Resources may compose cognitive elements of practices (e.g., knowledge of procedures and rules), status elements (e.g., self-esteem), and emotional elements of practices (e.g., commitment, pride), but they may also include elements such as services, money, and accessory goods.

Physiology of practices. Practices work together and drive one another, as Figure 1 suggests. Empirically, the thematic categories we revealed (i.e., social networking, impression management, community engagement, and brand use) work closely together as a process of collective value creation, analogous to gears working together. For example, the impression management practice of evangelizing may yield to the social networking practice of welcoming as new members join the fold. The social networking practice of governing provides explicit directions for the community engagement practice of staking as status differences among members are marked, and the social networking practice of milestoning may inspire the brand use practice of commoditizing as members create badges (social networking) for members' achievements.

Appendix B provides details of the physiology of practices from several of our commercial collectivities. Practices work together both to enhance the value people realize when engaged in brand communities and to promote the collective health and welfare of the social bodies centered on brands. Practices can be combined in complex ways. The effects of interaction are at minimum additive and potentially exponential. Interactions can be either intrathematic (practices acting together within a functional theme) or interthematic (practices working together across functional themes). In what follows, we provide one example of a practice physiology. Milestoning is the recounting of salient episodes in brand and community relationships. A vivid example comes from the Mini "birthing" stories that are organized by participants in "production week."

> Good job Birdman! I'm like you. I watched cameras, checked tracking…. You'll treasure having these for your "scrap book" or should I say Minibird's "baby book"? Jake [the car] was not on a WW ship so there were a lot less options for catching glimpses of the journey. This doesn't apply to east coast folks, but the cameras at the Panama Canal are amazing. Was able to see the *Auto Banner* cross with my Mini. Hang in there. Minibird is almost home! (5th Gear, Phoenix, Ariz.)

In this conversation, the experienced poster (5th Gear) empathizes, encouraging his fellow enthusiast to keep track of GPS tracking information and port camera feeds and comments positively about the Panama Canal camera feeds that West Coast enthusiasts employ to track cargo ships, such as the Auto Banner mentioned in the post. Tellingly, the poster encourages Birdman to produce a customized "baby book" for the car, which will help Birdman milestone his brand relationship and promote the social practice of

FIGURE 1
The Process of Collective Value Creation in Brand Communities
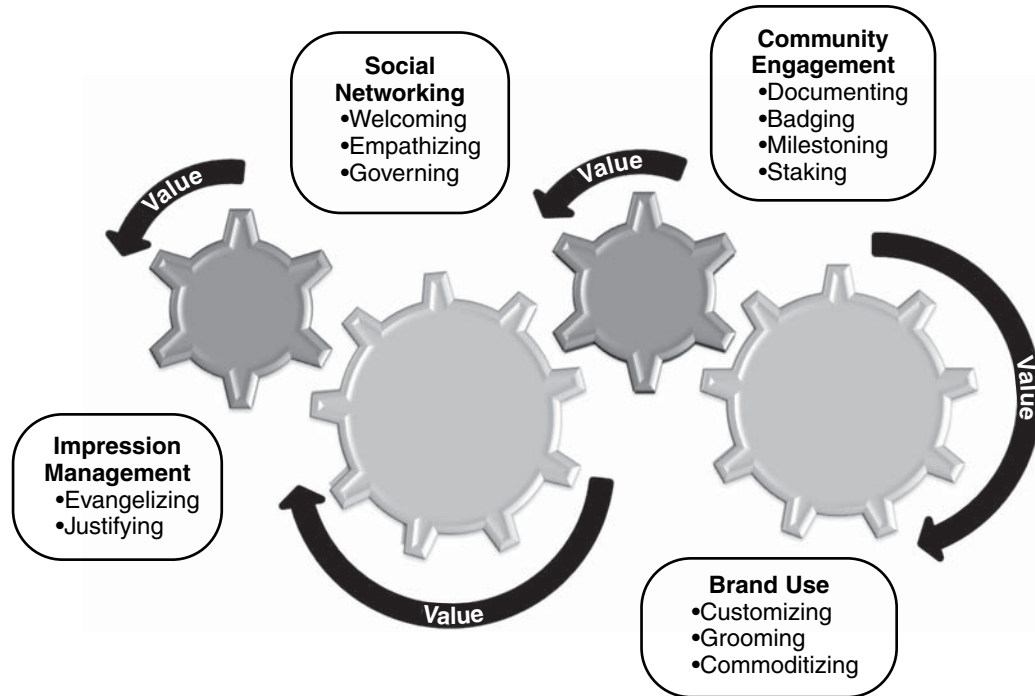
following the Mini through production and delivery. Scores of these "production week" chats unfold in a similar way over the time between ordering of a custom Mini and its delivery to the owner. By stringing together a host of unrelated Web functionalities (customizing) and through e-mail and telephone exchanges with BMW marketing staff, participants can track the physical movement of the vehicle. In this way, not only is how-to, discursive knowledge shared among community members, but it is made normatively expected as well. It becomes something individual members do, value, and expect, and it ultimately becomes a collective good that strengthens the brand community.

Here, tacit know-how is being identified. Participants exchange rumors (e.g., when the ship will leave port), information (e.g., confirmation that a production number has been assigned and that a vehicle has left the factory), and empathic communications about the wait (e.g., socially constructed as an anxious time) for a first viewing and driving of the new arrival. Naming and other anthropomorphizing (customization) performances are encouraged during this time. Finally, owners engage an additional possession ritual: final predelivery customizing at the Mini dealer. When following these threads over the weeks from order to delivery, it is easy to track the evolving emotional engagement as participants develop a special dialect to speak about the impending arrival and encourage one another to create commemorative "baby books" to document the new arrival. This illustrates the explicit procedures, tacit know-how, representational gestures, and tailoring to circumstances that together constitute a practice

physiology. We find analogous examples of tacit knowledge being used across the other eight brand communities: TPATH gestures associated with song lyrics, geocaching hints shared among Garmin users through patterned utterances (rhymes), StriVectin community members' use of fingertip patting in applications, Jones Soda campaign protocols associated with voting, Lomographers developing online posting styles, and so on.

Intrathematic interactions are the most common when the practices within a set focused on a thematic function work together toward their thematic goal (e.g., social networking, brand use). For example, community engagement is fostered when milestoning (seminal brand events) is combined with badging (symbolic representation of the milestone) and is part of the overall documenting of the use journey. Our data reveal that in the case of a brand enthusiast's first TPATH concert, a milestone is created (first concert). That milestone is celebrated, and a badge is created or purchased (tour T-shirt). The accumulation of experiential milestones and their related badges helps the brand user document his or her use journey in a narrative format. Each badged milestone becomes a chapter in the story. Similarly, brand use is magnified when a user grooms the brand, customizes the brand to his or her unique needs, and commoditizes the grooming or customization technique for collective use. Garmin users have grooming practices to keep the device's face clean and safe (ranging from carefully prescribed cleaning regimes to the creation of fabric "snugglies"). When the grooming routine and customization are commoditized, brand use can be enhanced within the entire

collective. Because the practices are normatively expected, users feel compelled to adopt them. Commoditization makes doing so easier.

Interthematic interactions, or practices that work together across themes, abound. Interthematic interactions are evidenced when evangelizing (impression management practice) yields to welcoming (social networking practice) or when positive word of mouth inspires outsiders to join the brand community. Another example is when badging behavior inspires the creation of a brand community badge that can be commoditized, or sold to members and non-members alike, as in the purchasing of Jones Soda bottles with customized labels. Here, the badge is commoditized and inspires more brand community engagement or brand use, thus creating more value.

Practices operate like apprenticeships. Practices can be viewed as apprenticeships (Lave and Wenger 1991); their effects evolve over time as consumer engagement deepens and practices are integrated. Recall the milestoning practices surrounding Mini birthing stories discussed previously. Members learned when a vehicle left the factory and when an auto-carrying ship left port. They learned how to use the resources available to track the car's progress from factory to delivery. Finally, they learned what activities they were expected to engage in during this time and how they were supposed to feel. As Østerlund and Carlile (2005, p. 97) aptly note, members "do not merely learn about practices, they become practitioners."

Welcoming is the first practice to which members are exposed. Consequently, it is easily adopted, and recent members can enact this practice with newer members. With the addition of more and increasingly complex practices, members' standing and legitimacy increase. New members may adopt the practice of milestoning to demonstrate membership in the brand community and participation in specific rites of passage. In this way, members are recruited to new practices (Warde 2005). Additional practices are acquired as members determine the fit between their skills and the community's repertoire of practices. In this way, members transition from apprentices to journeymen.

The first step in an apprenticeship within the TPATH community often involves the first recording a fan buys and the first concert the fan attends. Threads on the TPATH forums are dedicated to the first song that made a person a fan, the first album the person bought, the first concert the person attended, and the first time the person realized he or she was a fan. These seminal experiences are evidenced in threads dedicated to TPATH experience firsts, and the discourse surrounding these milestones inspires greater engagement; tales of concert attendance begets more concert attendance and subsequent storytelling.

In the Xena community, fans note their first participation in a Xena event—for example, the first time they bought Xena gear (e.g., costumes, props, paraphernalia) or the first time they created and shared Xena-inspired art. As Zoey reveals,

> The first time I went to the Xena section of the SCA [Society for Creative Anachronism] festival was phenomenal. I had cobbled together a costume that I was initially

quite proud of, but then I saw what the others had:… authentic medieval gear including weapons and outfits that looked like they came right off the set. I had to have that too to belong…. Beautiful, strong women in Xena clothes. It's addictive. (interview, 07/05/99)

Here, Zoey describes her awe at the first Xena event she attended and her desire to purchase more authentic Xena wear and attend more events. Similarly, Mandy describes how her Xena engagement escalated in tandem with others who started at the conventions when she did:

> The first convention I went to was a fan-run subtext-oriented but main-friendly [run by fans who support the lesbian reading of the show but welcome those who adhere to an action-adventure reading]. I actually went with a boyfriend. We wore clothes we had in our closet:… a mishmash of western leather clothes made to look medieval. Don't ask me how. But the thing is, most other people were dressed like that … [with] stuff they had already. Not vintage or even authentic replicas…. The elaborate costumes came over time. One person ups the bar and we all really dig it and compliment them, and then we all start upping the ante…. Now, you can't really show up in something you just had in your closet. No one would take you seriously. (interview, 02/10/2001)

Mandy describes how this practice began as a casual nod to medieval attire and became a quest for authenticity and even vintage costumes through competitive, escalating engagement in brand practices. She shows that practices develop; hedonic engagement evolves and deepens over time, and value expands. Mandy's description of the evolution of the practice echoes Warde's (2005, p. 139) assertion that "[p]ractices have a trajectory or path of development, a history."

Similarly, badging offers a vivid illustration of the emergent sense of membership and identity that arises from practices. Contrasted with Bagozzi and Dholakia's (2006) perspective on identification with brand communities (in which identification is conceptualized as an antecedent individual difference variable), badging is clearly an emergent property of membership. The greater the length of membership and level of engagement, the more detailed and intricate the efforts at badging became. For example, in the Mini community, the number and complexity of badges are related to the length or intensity of affiliation and the extent of value experienced. Of particular note is that badging behaviors codify the expression of brand identity, suggesting the proper behaviors to be a true member (see also Muñiz and O'Guinn [2001] on legitimacy) and the proper idiom for expressing that membership.

The aforementioned tendencies illuminate the factors influencing the customer's willingness to engage in creating value for the brand and firm (Kalaignanam and Varadarajan (2006). Consumers become habituated to learning more from the community while mastering an increasingly complicated set of skills. This has important implications for the development of customer competence (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2000) because it demonstrates that customer competencies are not static. Through apprenticeship, they evolve and expand. In addition, observing members documenting a customization or cleaning/grooming practice

demonstrates that this evolution is organic and endemic to the community with a distinct trajectory. This is not to say that the marketer cannot affect the development of practices. Rather, it illustrates that when left to their own devices, communities will foster and develop skills of potential value to the marketer. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2000) suggest that one of the challenges to co-opting customer competence stems from the diversity of customers' sophistication and knowledge. The apprenticeship aspect of practices suggests that vibrant communities can be relied on to mitigate this problematic diversity.

The Effects of Practices

Practices endow participants with cultural capital. A competitive spirit underlies much brand community behavior (Muñiz and O'Guinn 2001). Practices, especially community engagement practices, present opportunities for individual differentiation through adroit performance (Bourdieu 1984; Holt 1995). Members compete on brand devotion, knowledge, and history to display their various competencies. Mini drivers compete for the best racing times, narrowest gap between custom tires and wheel well, or shiniest finish.

> I'd like to thank K*, and M*, and R*, and C*, and C*, and H* for teaching me so much in the last 18 months.... Thanks to your help (and a bit of work and many $$$ spent by me), I won Best Foreign Car today in Blimey's first car show!!! I'll post pics and a writeup later on my blog, but couldn't wait to share the news and THANK YOU folks for helping make it happen. I got lots of kudos from other car owners on detailing, paint polish, style, theme, etc, and I didn't know squat about any of that until I started hanging out with you folks. (V-P Tarheels Mini)

Similarly, TPATH fans compete on the basis of knowledge and number of concerts attended, Audrey and Newton users compete to demonstrate novel and wide-ranging use of the device, and Xena fan-fiction authors compete for awards on the Athenaeum Web site and strive to have the most intricate and accurate costumes. Competition enables members to distinguish themselves from one another and to create a social hierarchy that members reference strategically. Consider this posting from the Lomo community: "Lomo wizard! You're good man, but check mine and Avery's out!! We got some sweet effects in the urban set we did. Surely, you'll admit we're in the game!!!!" Photography becomes a competitive, noncontact sport.

It is through practices that brand fans become brand devotees. In addition to developing explicit and tacit performative skills, they also develop local cultural capital resources that differentiate them in terms of status within the community (Holt 1995). Consumers who achieve status within the brand community are reluctant to give it up.

> I'm into the whole scene, but the truth is I stay in the scene because I'm really known for my authentic costumes and my swordsmanship. I mean people know me because of it and they seek me out to see what I've made lately or what moves I developed.... It's theatrical and I guess I have "fans." … Sure I sell some of what I make but it doesn't really make money or cover costs. I have a very expensive Xena habit and what I make on the cos-

tumes doesn't scratch the surface. (Sondra interview, 07/18/02)

Sondra's status within the Xena community is a source of pride; she stays engaged because she garners the admiration of others in the brand community, and this increases the value she experiences from the brand.

These tendencies reveal the "micropolitics of consumption" (Holt 1998, p. 22), or the ways cultural capital pursuits are enacted in everyday brand community life. Members of brand communities accrue cultural capital through the accumulation of an increasingly diverse set of increasingly intricate practices. They work to maintain it. These tendencies also suggest an overall positive trajectory of cultural capital (Holt 1995) in brand communities, with members valuing and safeguarding what they have accumulated.

Practices produce a repertoire for insider sharing. Practices provide participants with an almost inexhaustible source of shared insider jargon and modes of representation, which enhance consumers' brand experience. Consider possibilities arising from the practice of customizing. The following post responds to a request for information about uneven ride in a "lowered" Mini:

> [P]rogressive rate springs are more sensitive to load than linear rate springs—load being your weight. Also, never use the fenders as a measuring benchmark; front fenders are used to "take up" build tolerances. The rear fenders are typically much more accurate as these are part of the uni-body…. In the rear, measure from any of the three bolts that are used to adjust toe on the rear trailing arm. Up front, use the inner ball joint—front part of the control arm. And, while measuring, you can use the outer ball joint up front and the lower rear damper bolt to measure across the car—an X pattern—to determine squareness. (6th Gear, No ID)

The practical activity of measuring and adjusting springs is embedded within a complex set of customizing practices designed to augment the car's coolness factor by decreasing the distance between the tires and the wheel well, thereby accenting the wheels. Other related threads are devoted to discussions and pictures of this distance and of wheel/tire sizes and configurations. The "show me your wheels" thread contains more than 4500 posts of photos of wheels. One post in this thread brags "Almost No Clearance" in the caption to one photo, evoking admiration from multiple posters (e.g., "msfit … that is just ridiculously hot! now i really want the kdw2's" [2nd Gear, Queens, NY]; "yea, drop it to 40's and never 'rub' again; PM SENT!!" [6th Gear; EastSide]). Often, this linguistic play takes the form of exchanges of photos accompanied by short lists of product attributes (e.g., "Gram Light 57S 17x7.5 with Dunlop SP Sport Maxx 215/45... 40 mm offset, rubs with M7 springs" [4th Gear, same as yesterday]).

In the StriVectin community, insider information trading often involves combining StriVectin with other products.

> People are impatient for results. They don't realize that StriVectin isn't that effective as a standalone application. I need to tell them all the time, "You need to reinforce its effects by using skin-friendly products in general. It's not a miracle." You need a whole routine that supports it.… StriVectin only works if you modify your whole beauty

regime. I'm constantly reminding people in the forums, especially those who claim it isn't working. (Clara interview, 06/21/2006)

Clara admits that whatever results she identifies are from an entire consumption set, not just one product. She says that she shares the most effective uses of StriVectin with other community members and recommends complementary purchases that will enhance consumers' realized value. As these examples illustrate, jargon does the boundary work typical of dialects and provides a creative repertoire for insider sharing. This linguistic repertoire of representational forms and the trading it facilitates foster, recreate, and strengthen the community. They also create consumption opportunities.

Practices generate consumption opportunities. Through practices, members generate, reify, and perpetuate consumption behaviors and patterns. Consider the practice of documenting. Documenting captures and formalizes a consumption practice. However, in doing so, it provides a template on which other members can build. One person performing (and documenting) a modification invites others to perform the same and other modifications. In this way, documenting serves a constructive community function by establishing scaffolding on which others can build and develop further practices. Similarly, engagement in the milestones, memories of milestones, and the retelling of milestone memories inspires more consumption. Within the TPATH community, it is a common practice to commemorate first concerts with anniversary concerts, as when fans who first saw TPATH in 1985 make a point of attending TPATH concert dates in 2005 to mark the 20th anniversary of their first TPATH concert. Notably, these anniversaries are consumption anniversaries, not significant band dates or dates that even have other social importance to the fan. Likewise, in the Jones Soda community, consumers discuss their experiences with the Jones promotional vehicle and their decision to follow it to another location. These kinds of conversations perpetuate and extend consumption behaviors.

Grooming practices lead to new consumption, dictating what is appropriate in caring for the brand. Additional (and community-sanctioned) supplies must be purchased and used in the approved manner. In the TPATH community, TPATH image- and logo-adorned clothes are valued, and the community discusses care and laundering of these items to extend the clothes' life while retaining the precious meanings associated with tours:

> It's a tricky thing;… you want to wear the T-shirts [with band images and tour info] because you were there. You sort of relive it or at least vividly recall the concert when you pull the shirt out of your closet, but you know that every wear brings the shirt one more step closer to destruction…. I wash mine in Woolite. It drives my wife crazy. If she doesn't pull it aside and put it in the gentle cycle, I get pretty pissed off…. We have a system now; we wash them [concert T-shirts] with her lace delicates, but not with any hooks and clasps—we can't risk holes! (Kyle interview, 05/18/2000)

Kyle's determination to wear his memorabilia means that he must be careful when wearing and washing the garments because both contribute to their destruction. His devotion brings about consumption of a specialty detergent, Woolite, and he risks domestic conflict in insisting that his wife employ special washing procedures. Documenting often functions as a manual of discursive how-to-consume information. This becomes important to community reproduction when the behavior is complex. By simplifying or encouraging complex behavior and actions, practices allow members to become more deeply engaged with the brand and community and, thus, to institutionalize consumption behaviors. Here, Warde's (2005) assertion regarding the primacy of practices is most evident. Indeed, consumption follows from practices rather than vice versa. Practices continually create and perpetuate new opportunities for consumption.

Practices evince brand community vitality. It has long been understood that numbers of posts, replies, and hits provide evidence of participant interest in online sites. Our analysis would also suggest that the existence, number, and diversity of practices that can be assessed on brand-related Web sites offer additional methods for assessing brand community vitality. For example, North American Motoring, Newton, and the Shipper Seasons Xena Web sites evince full-fledged practices in terms of the tripartite definition we outlined at the outset of the article. Procedures, understandings, and hedonic engagement, not to mention specialized vocabularies, are all evident. In contrast, at the various Jones Soda sites, there is considerable evangelizing on the guestbook and badging and customizing through the creation of personalized labels, cap, and banner quotes. However, little evidence of the development of special symbols or language, or of performances specific to the Jones community, can be found. Instead, such elements are borrowed from broader subcultures and various musical genres. Furthermore, in contrast to the hundreds of threads consisting of scores of posts and responses on the Mini, Newton, and Xena sites, at Jones Soda sites, there are few threads (see Appendix B). Posts and replies across the various forums rarely exceed a handful, nor do site moderators actively intervene, a source of some frustration among posters. Thus, the music forum is marred by the presence of apparently unpoliced spam, and there is little evidence of emergent community leaders at the Jones sites, in contrast to North American Motoring (e.g., do-it-yourself mechanics) or Xena (e.g., prominent fan-fiction authors).

On the basis of these observations, we assert that more practices evince brand community vitality. We postulate that stronger brand communities present a more diverse constellation of practices than weaker brand communities. Furthermore, the practices of stronger brand communities are more complex and require more insider knowledge than the practices of weaker, less cohesive brand communities. Finally, hosting of online and real-world interaction spaces seems to be an antecedent to vitality. These assertions await testing in further research.

Practices create value. By now it should be clear that consumers create value through their participation in brand

communities and, specifically, in the enactment of practices. Through 12 practices, consumers affect the entire marketing mix. Each practice serves to enable brand use and encourage deeper community engagement. Practices must be known to be repeated and must be repeated to become part of the value creation repertoire. By providing opportunities to demonstrate competencies, practices allow members to accrue cultural capital through adroit performance, which creates value for the consumer. Specifically, evangelizing creates value by enlarging the brand community and its human resource base while enhancing the brand perception outside the brand community. Empathizing creates value by providing affective resources within a sympathetic social network. This support system acts as a significant switching cost for consumers who come to depend on it. Grooming creates value by preserving the brand's performance and appearance. Customizing creates value by offering unique but reproducible solutions to user challenges. Milestoning and badging create value by providing a motif with which to build brand meanings associated with the use journey.

Practices structurally add value by making actions reproducible and repeatable, thus allowing more consumers to derive greater value from the brand. Consider an example from the Audrey brand community. Because the brand is no longer supported by the marketer, the repeatability of actions takes on an added urgency. Members must provide sufficient detail:

> This page explains how I got a Korn shell running on my Audrey. It was a pain in the neck, but now the work is done and it ought to be easier from this point on. This is an overview of what I did: 1. Get an Audrey flash ROM image on disk from someone who knew someone who apparently serviced Audreys, and had a Compact Flash card that was used to restore Audreys to their original state. Without this image, I would have probably gotten nowhere. 2. Using the QNX RTP, dump the contents of the Audrey file system to disk. 3. Add pterm, ftp, and a clever web page to my local copy of the Audrey file collection. 4. Regenerate the embedded file system. 5. Put the file system back on the Audrey image, and flash it back to the Audrey. 6. Let the Audrey auto-update itself back to the 1.02.08.01 final version. 7. Run the shell and explore!

This description presumes considerable how-to, know-how, and literacy, but it is also a detailed accounting that others should be able to replicate. Without such description, few (if any) consumers would be able to realize any value from the Audrey brand.

We argue that value underlies all practices and that engagement in practices is an act of value creation. This insight is intrinsic to explanations of value in traditional society (Mauss [1925] 1990). Simmel ([1907] 1990) suggested (echoed in Miller 1987, 2005) that it is exchange or interactivity, which is at the origin of both rarity and utility on which modern economic value rests (Ramirez 1999, p. 51). In other words, "the actual values which firms endeavor to manage are thus neither purely subjective … nor objective,… be they exchange or utility values. They are interactively established" (Dean, Ottensmeyer, and Ramirez 1997, p. 431). We also argue that the consumer who engages in practices is both an operant and an operand resource (Vargo and Lusch 2004). On the basis of the fundamental insight that services are the coproduction of value through situationally contingent actions between customer and supplier, we argue that it is of greater value to focus on the array and density of common activities that are productive of value.

Discussion

Using extended ethnographic methods, we unearth 12 practices common to an array of brand communities, thus providing a catalog that generalizes beyond particular activities documented in case-based studies. We then situate these practices in the extant brand community literature and deconstruct them to better reveal their mechanics. Practices have a common "anatomy" and varied "physiology" evincing discursive knowledge, or explicit procedures for doing; know-how and tacit elements, or taken-for-granted knowledge of worthy projects; and affective commitments to brand-centered practices, as well as intra- and interthematic linkages. We find that practices evidence remarkable consistency in a range of product category classifications. Practices foster consumption opportunities and create value for both consumers and marketers. Our study offers insights into collaborative consumption and value creation in brand communities, organizes the current knowledge of collective brand-based actions, and suggests what is needed to support collaboration.

Theoretical Contributions

Prior literature has not systematically analyzed collective value creation or used consistent terminology ("practices" and "collective action") or methods for uncovering insights (e.g., prolonged research engagement, participant observation, netnography, interviews). Still, across disparate and noncomparable studies, we find considerable evidence that the practices we catalog here occur in the data sets of other published articles in marketing and consumer research. Likewise, previous studies on the production of value in brand communities have tended to focus on the idiosyncrasies of individual communities (Kozinets 2001; Leigh, Peters, and Shelton 2006; Schouten and McAlexander 1995). Our examination of collective value creation in brand communities is distinguished from the current accumulated knowledge of brand-based collectives in three important ways: (1) We move beyond the prior literature's examination of a brand community single case study or even comparative brand community studies to achieve a taxonomy of common collective actions that are present across communities centered on a wide range of products and services; (2) using practice theory, we catalog the collective actions in our data and prior published studies, which have three integrative anatomical parts (understandings, procedures, and engagements); and (3) we offer ways collaborative value creation can be fostered and nurtured in the marketplace through practices in brand communities. Our research suggests aspects of practice that each research

stream has ignored but might fruitfully incorporate in the future.

Our study resolves some limitations in prior research. For example, Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006) find that only a tiny fraction of the variance in brand identification is accounted for by social identity value. We suggest that this is because social identity value is only a fraction of the values realized in brand communities. Similarly, Algesheimer, Dholakia, and Herrmann (2005) show that consumers' relationship with the brand is often a function of a host of individualistic factors. The practice perspective in our work indicates that such uninspiring findings may derive from a focus on individual differences and subjective utilities. In contrast, our findings show how knowledge is transferred from insiders to initiates—that is, how "people come to an understanding of what is required by the practice and their role within it" (Warde 2005, p. 148). Our research suggests that through apprenticeship in specific practices and learning of intra- and interthematic relationships, newcomers are created as members through their progressive appropriation of practices (Duguid 2005; Reckwitz 2002). More specifically, our research goes beyond the study of knowledge exchange (Anand, Gardner, and Morris 2007; Østerlund and Carlile 2005) to the creation of value through customer engagement. This is an aspect not explored in the extant literature on practices and is only hinted at in user innovation research (Franke and Piller 2004). Thus, our research provides a significant and beneficial contribution from both a managerial and an academic perspective.

Our research supports three emerging perspectives in marketing: (1) Value is manifest in the collective enactment of practices, which favor investments in networks rather than firm–consumer dyads; (2) ceding control to customers enhances consumer engagement and builds brand equity (Cova, Pace, and Park 2007); and (3) firms derive added brand value by creatively using willing customer (operant) resources (Vargo and Lusch 2004). Our research shows that healthy brand communities have a presence in all practice areas shown in Figure 1 and a depth within practices that fosters prolonged engagement. The most successful brand communities continuously evolve and encourage collaborative brand engagement, and practices that stagnate are modified or replaced by those that are vibrant and dynamic.

Managerial Implications

Our research demonstrates that if firms give consumers the opportunity to construct brand communities and the freedom to modify their products, they will. Therefore, we argue that companies should provide customers with the opportunities and materials with which to welcome, badge, document, milestone, evangelize, and so forth. We argue that if more practices lead to a stronger brand community, marketers should strive to encourage greater diversity in practices because these multiple opportunities serve to cultivate these markets. Our findings illuminate opportunities to grow, not simply exploit, "customer competence" (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2000) and, thereby, to build more cocreative (Vargo and Lusch 2005) brand partners. This research reaffirms the importance of encouraging practices

among brand communities. More significantly, it suggests how. Companies that want to encourage cocreation should foster a broad array of practices, not merely customization, as is the current focus (Etgar 2008; Franke and Piller 2004; Prügl and Schreier 2006; Von Hipple 2005). The *Twilight Saga*, a set of books by Stephenie Meyer, illustrates the art of collaborative value creation by inspiring the development of collective practices. Unlike the *Harry Potter* series, which also strongly resonates with young adults, Meyer and her publisher have at every stage of their promotional campaign encouraged collaborative product use. Though perhaps unaware of the full potential we find in our study, they encourage the practices we have identified. An official Web site equipped with forums invites welcoming, evangelizing, and justifying among readers. By setting up subcommunities such as Twilight Mothers, the brand encourages staking and social differentiation among the fan base. Through threads in which fans are asked to share a broad range of thoughts on politics, spirituality, and philosophy, the official Web site encourages empathizing. Through creation of a set of escalating patterns of engagement in the brand and the site, the corporate host creates and inspires milestoning, badging, and documenting. Through fan-fiction contests, the brand supports customizing. Through tips on how to store signed or first-run copies, the publisher inspires grooming. The only practice the *Twilight* brand does not openly advocate is commoditizing. The brand community has gone off-site to pursue commoditizing, with *Twilight*-inspired jewelry and artifacts for sale on eBay and paid distribution of Twilight newsletters that promote fan-run events that often charge a fee.

Our findings suggest that there are specific recipes for managers to follow to foster brand community. One simple managerial tactic is seeding practices. For example, a firm might find that it has a brand-centered community that has evolved brand use practices but few, if any, social networking practices. To ensure the health of the brand community, our research suggests that the firm should foster or sponsor social networking practices to build and sustain the community and to inspire further cocreation. Given that practices are emergent and become self-perpetuating in organic brand communities, such as Newton, Xena, and others, marketers should be able to encourage their development. Agents of the marketer could initiate basic practices in a brand-centered forum, documenting any modifications they make, or as in the Mini community, aftermarket providers could be encouraged to offer up various brand-centered customizing (racing modifications), grooming (detailing techniques), and documenting practices (e.g., transportation tracking utilities). Such approaches should be predicated on conditions of transparency rather than furtive lurking and "astroturf" creation. In other words, the marketer's agents need to disclose their affiliation to reduce the likelihood that consumer market distancing/commoditizing practices would exclude the marketer or keep the marketer at arm's length.

In a more complex move, marketers could foster community engagement by encouraging the interacting practices to promote engagement. We demonstrate that when combined with badging as part of documenting brand use, milestoning leads to increased community engagement.

Marketers could encourage this tripartite constellation of practices by giving away branded journals in which consumers can record their experience. To facilitate brand use practices such as customizing, firms could create a Web site that allows consumers to tweak the brand logos to suit their own color schemes or to include owner name or initials, perhaps going so far as to sell customized brand logos and automobile hood badges.

This research provides guidance for new product development. New product development requires two types of information: information on customer desires and information on how to best satisfy them (Thomke and Von Hippel 2002; Von Hippel 2005). A focus on practices reveals both. The development of a practice frequently follows the identification of a thwarted desire or high-fidelity need (Von Hippel 2005): a way to combine StriVectin with makeup, a way to identify all Starbucks stores in an area (Garmin), a channel to express one's independent musical vision (Jones Independent Music), or a way to give the Mini the showroom shine off-the-shelf options do not provide. The emergence of the practice reveals the desire. The evolution of the practice reveals information on how to satisfy that need. Firms might wisely condone the most successful consumer-created aftermarket practices, perhaps going so far as to release official branded versions of the formulas devised through community beta testing. Firms might also want to cobrand with the community in these efforts.

A focus on practices, particularly with a long-term orientation, provides marketers with a better vantage on high-fidelity needs than the typical focus on low-fidelity needs (O'Hern and Rindfleisch 2007). Community participants' needs develop from the relatively low-fidelity needs of the newbie to the high-fidelity needs evident among "6th Gear" Mini members, experienced Xena content creators, or Audrey, Newton, and Garmin software developers. Companies such as Harley-Davidson that have experienced some stagnation in brand value might use such insights to identify unexploited high-fidelity needs to build out underserved markets (see, e.g., Martin, Schouten, and McAlexander 2006). Finally, companies such as L'Oreal that have developed a conversational model of relating to customers segmented on their degree of creative involvement could structure and develop high-fidelity "content" for these conversations through the practices framework (Dias 2008).

Further Research

Although we identified 12 practices common to nine brand communities and found evidence of these practices lurking in prior literature, we hope to inspire researchers to return to the data sets we assessed or collect new data to unpack the operation of a broader set of practices as they appear in a wider array of brand communities. Such research might lead to a greater understanding of the necessary and sufficient conditions for brand community vitality and deepen the theoretical understanding of how value is created. When can firms successfully encourage value-creating practices to achieve strategic goals? Which practices or constellations of practices are most likely to yield significant value and under what conditions? Why do some vital communities successfully emphasize social networking and community engagement (Moisio and Beruchashvili, in press), and others brand use (Mathwick, Wiertz, and De Ruyter 2008)? How do some communities successfully attract and engage participants, while others do not? Refining understandings of value-creating practices in existing brand communities should prove useful in creating novel strategies that further leverage the collaborative tendencies of marketplace actors.

Category	Practice	Description	Instances in Prior Research	Data Example
Social networking	Welcoming	Greeting new members, beckoning them into the fold, and assisting in their brand learning and community socialization. Welcoming occurs generally into the brand community and locally as members welcome one another to each practice. Welcoming can also be negatively valenced, as in discouraging participation in the brand community and/or a specific practice.	•Muñiz and Schau (2005): Newton users welcoming new users to the fold and pointing them to important community resources. •McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig (2002): Jeep-owning parents introducing their sons as the "next generation of Wrangler owner." •Schouten and McAlexander (1995): Discouraging potential Harley drivers who present community members do not feel are consistent with the brand image, or "prospect status."	•StriVectin: "The forum is very inviting. When I posted a novice question, I had about separate answers and welcoming messages all verifying the StriVectin is safe and that it works. They all said to treat skin early is a way to win the battle [of aging]. I felt better immediately to see others reaching out." (Tracey, 10/19/06) •Garmin: "Hello Newbie Jake! So glad you chose a Garmin!" (sakiking, 03/17/06) •Lomo: "Welcome Fran! Meet me in chat and I'll give you a guided tour of the site." (imprezme, 01/29/05)
Social networking	Empathizing	Lending emotional and/or physical support to other members, including support for brand-related trials (e.g., product failure, customizing) and/or for non-brand-related life issues (e.g., illness, death, job). Empathizing can be divisive if the emotional support is in regard to intragroup conflict.	•Muñiz and O'Guinn (2001): Saab drivers helping stranded Saabs through moral responsibility. •McAlexander, Schouten, and Koening (2002): Long-time Jeep drivers helping neophytes make a difficult stream crossing. •Leigh, Peters, and Shelton (2006): MG "gurus" act as mentors to newer owners. •Mathwick, Wiertz, and De Ruyter (2008): Experienced users mentor novices.	•StriVectin: "Aww Taylor, don't fret. Aging is natural, but StriVectin makes the lines go away leaving only the wisdom." (tanwnee, 8/16/2006) •Garmin: "I often tell users 'The Garmin is a great product, but it takes time to really use it well—to tap into the inherent logic of it. Stick to it. The more you use it, the better it works for you.'" (Tim interview, 10/13/06) •Jones: "People get nostalgic for the old days when Jones was 'our little secret.' I remind them that Jones hasn't sold out, just more people 'get it' now. It's hard to lose the secret to let go of the club." (Mel, 09/21/06)
Social networking	Governing	Articulating the behavioral expectations within the brand community.	•Mathwick, Wiertz, and De Ruyter (2008): Asserting the norms of volunteerism, reciprocity, and social trust in the P3 community. •Schau and Muñiz (2007): TPATH fans insist on group norms related to drug references and claiming intimate contact with the band. •Schouten and McAlexander (1995): Articulating the "principle of brotherhood."	•Jones: "We don't condone flaming. Keep the criticisms constructive and try to add in positive comments where you can." (sassymay, 08/22/08) •StriVectin: "The community is fueled on support and creating a positive environment. People come here because they need that. It's up to everyone to maintain the goal." (Whitney, 06/18/07) •Xena: "We have our disagreements … for sure,… but we keep our dirty laundry inside and wash it gently." (Karina, 11/08/06)
Impression management	Evangelizing	Sharing the brand "good news," inspiring others to use, and preaching from the mountain top. It may involve negative comparisons with other competing brands. Evangelizing can be negative (annoying, off-putting) if extreme.	•Muñiz and O'Guinn (2001): Saab and Mac enthusiasts telling others of the virtues of the brand. •Muñiz and Schau (2005): Newton users preaching the gospel of Newton to the uninitiated. •Muñiz and Schau (2007): Newton users creating advertisements to attract new users. •McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig (2002): Jeep owners enthusiastically talking about the "love" for their vehicles with "missionary zeal."	•Mini: "In another MINI forum that I used to visit a lot, there were a few people who had had major accidents in their MINIs and I was shocked at just how tough and safe these little cars are. A lot of people see how small it is and think 'death trap' but they weigh more than most small cars and are amazingly rigid and protective from what I've seen—thankfully not first hand." (1st Gear, TX) •Garmin: "If you're thinking about a plug and play GPS, the Garmin has the most intuitive interface, the most map updates available—both factory upgrade and user patch—and the very best voice options. Here on the boards we have some of sweetest user patches." (05/21/05) •TPATH: "When I find someone unfamiliar with their work, I usually burn them my personal greatest hits compilation. Like a primer of essential TPATH songs. It works. I convert them to fans by exposure." (Lana, 08/05/02)

APPENDIX A
Continued

Category	Practice	Description	Instances in Prior Research	Data Example
Impression management	Justifying	Deploying rationales generally for devoting time and effort to the brand and collectively to outsiders and marginal members in the boundary. May include debate and jokes about obsessive-compulsive brand-directed behavior.	•Kozinets (2001): *Star Trek* fans rationalize their devotion and attire based on having fun, supporting social mission of the series or value of collecting. •Giesler and Pohlmann (2003): Justifying file sharing in Napster because boycotting the music business is what "any real music fan" would do. •Muñiz and Schau (2005): Newton users tout the advantages of the Newton over all other personal digital assistants (i.e., handwriting recognition) as a reason to continue their use of the Newtons even after abandonment.	•Garmin: "OK $800 and all that time and people say 'why?' and I say I save time being on time, not stressing, finding everything I want. I'm far more efficient." (Mackie, 11/19/2006) •Lomo: "Well there are those who insist I'm not a photographer or even an artist. They see toy cameras as inconsequential, I guess. I tell them that it is art. Maybe its not for everyone, but its my art eye on the world." (nusant, 06/21/05) •TPATH: "I travel to see Tom. He doesn't tour that often and I don't want to miss it. It's pretty pricey if I end up flying and grabbing a hotel, but what if I didn't go and he never played another date! (Rita, 07/28/02)
Community engagement	Staking	Recognizing variance within the brand community membership. Marking intragroup distinction and similarity.	•Schouten and McAlexander (1995): Outlaw sensibilities and the upscale bikers are at odds within the Harley community. •Martin, Schouten, and McAlexander (2006): Claiming distinct and multiple femininities within the Harley "hypermasculine" community. •Sherry et al. (2001): Cheerleader versus football fan spectator roles. •Peters (2004): Winnebago enthusiasts create vocabularies to distinguish themselves and their participation in the community.	•Garmin: "Whether you're a runner, a trekker, a geocacher, a builder, or just an everyday driver, Garmin is there to support you. Generally the runners and trekkers use Garmins in similar ways: protective handhelds or wrist mounts, surface maps, timing and distance monitors. Drivers look for specific addresses, driving directions and need auto mounts. Geocachers use handhelds to hunt down coordinates and look for caches. Builders link up to other software to design home elevation plans and map the infrastructure distances." (Guy, 03/17/07) •Xena: "Once you're into the Xena-verse you can identify with the mainstream or the subtext. Mainstream reads an action adventure narrative. The subtext reads a lesbian love story." (Pauline, 05/29/04)
Community engagement	Milestoning	Milestoning refers to the practice of noting seminal events in brand ownership and consumption.	•Muñiz and O'Guinn (2001): Saab drivers relaying tales of their cars' odometers hitting 100,000 miles. •Leigh, Peters, and Shelton (2006): MG owner telling story about purchasing first MG following a midlife crisis and depression. •Arnould and Price (1993): River rafters on the Yampa River touch "kissing rock" to ensure safe passage over the dangerous rapids.	•TPATH: Threads on the TPATH forums are dedicated to the first song that made you a fan, the fist album you bought, the first concert you attended, and the first time you realized you were a fan. Doug details his concert milestone: "I first caught TPATH at the Forum in LA in 1985. It's a huge venue and the parking lot scene was wild. People had the tailgate parties before and after the concert. The security didn't even try to sho us out. I added my story to the thread and some people responded that they were there too." (Doug, 06/18/02) •Garmin: "I got my Garmy for Christmas 2005. I thought it was cool, but until I took my first real road trip, it was basically a confirmation of my positioning. After the road trip it was my partner in navigation." (Nick, 12/05/06) •Mini: "The odometer hit 100k miles and I loved my Mini more than ever!" (Scoopmama, 4th gear, 08/15/07)

Category	Practice	Description	Instances in Prior Research	Data Example
Community engagement	Badging	Badging is the practice of translating milestones into symbols.	•Leigh, Peters, and Shelton (2006): MG owners displaying photos of trips to national events and other driving related activities. •Kozinets (2001): *Star Trek* fan recounting the first time she donned "Bajoran earrings" and did not care about looks from others. •Schouten and McAlexander (1995): Body modifications that commemorate brand use and brand milestones.	•Xena: "You're a real Xenite after you go to your first convention or post your first fan art." (FriedaBeMe, 01/18/06) •Mini: •Jones:
Community engagement	Documenting	Detailing the brand relationship journey in a narrative way. The narrative is often anchored by and peppered with milestones. Documenting includes the Mini birth stories of the car assembly and distribution, customization efforts, grooming practices, and so forth.	•Muñiz and Schau (2005): Newton users sharing tales and tricks of battery rejuvenation. •Leigh, Peters, and Shelton (2006): Recounting stories about the level of one's own effort to put into restoration of their MG.	•Mini: "This is how to install the front control arm (wishbone) bushings without dropping the subframe. I used powerflex bushings Tools; Jack and stands, edium pry bar (about 18 inches long), 10mm socket, 13mm socket, 13mm ratcheting wrench, 16mm ratcheting wrench, BMW tool 31 5 150 (and 27mm socket or wrench), Support the front as high as possible on stands and remove the wheels. Remove the two bolts that hold the outer ball joint to the hub with the 13mm socket…." (5th Gear, No ID)
Brand use	Grooming	Caring for the brand (washing your Mini) or systematizing optimal use patterns (clean skin before applying StriVectin).	•Leigh, Peters, and Shelton (2006): MG owners trying to restore cars to original authentic, "showroom quality." •Schouten and McAlexander (1995): The elaborate rituals revolving around cleaning the Harley bikes. •Muñiz and Schau (2005): Community members discuss the manner in which the Newtons' batteries should be handled.	•Garmin: You have to keep the smudges off. Use a dry cloth. Never use water. Keeping Garmy clean is priority one." (jimbean, 09/18/2007) •Newton: "I have heard some people using contact cleaner spray, and after taking apart the Newton spraying it so that it gets in the switch…. I can't say how long this will work and if it will react with the plastics or not (given time). But I know that some people were successful with it. Personally I would try disassembling the switch and try cleaning the contacts." (Dan interview) •Mini: "I try to wash at least once a week with a quick detail spray during the middle of the week to keep my Zaino shining. I'm looking to add Hydro into the mix starting with my next wash. Newt, [thread initiator] prepare yourself for an onslaught of posts suggesting that you should keep your car away from those car washes." (posting)
Brand use	Customizing	Modifying the brand to suit group-level or individual needs. This includes all efforts to change the factory specs of the product to enhance performance. Includes fan fiction/fan art in the case of intangible products.	•Kozinets (2001): *Star Trek* fan editing and contributing to fan magazine. •McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig (2002): Taking doors off of Jeep Wrangler for an open-air feeling.	•Newton: "My thinking is this: a simple modification to the application 'Calls' should allow the 'Newton' to dial a number (Under "Place Call: Using"—current choices are Modem, Speaker, and Telephone) and then keep the line open (like when sending a fax) until the user hits the 'Hang Up' button on the bottom of the screen. Once the line is open, the only hard part should be sending live audio. I mean how hard is that? We can hear live audio from the receiving end of the call when faxing." (posting) •StriVectin: "I mix it into my foundation and then it stays on my skin all day nourishing. I can feel it tightening." (dawnecko, 2/10/2007)

APPENDIX A
Continued

Category	Practice	Description	Instances in Prior Research	Data Example
Brand use and incisive (moving from the outside, through the boundary to the core)	Commoditizing	Distancing/approaching the marketplace. A valenced behavior regarding marketplace. May be directed at other members (e.g., you should sell/should not sell that). May be directed at the firm through explicit link or through presumed monitoring of the site (e.g., you should fix this/do this/change this).	•Kozinets (2001): Criticisms of *Star Trek* merchandizing and commercialization. •McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig (2002): Camp Jeep participants impressed at company's respectfulness, not giving hard or soft sell.	•Newton: "It looks like Phil is going for the die-hard pay-any-price type, instead of really contributing to the Newton community. I'm sorry, but $50 for a product that'll only be truly useful to a small fraction of a percentage of the Newton community is price gouging, particularly when it could be a lot more useful to a lot more people, simply by lowering the price significantly. At $10 like Louis' wireless driver, the ATA driver could become ubiquitous. A real contribution to the community." •Xena: "There are those of us who simply cannot let go of our favorite show. Luckily for us, some very enterprising folks took the story and ran with it. Now, we have several more seasons to enjoy with much more satisfying endings. My favorite virtual season is the Subtext Virtual Season. These episodes pick up a few months after FIN and leave no doubt about the relationship between Xena and Gabrielle. (http://www.xenacast.com/xc/virtualseasons.htm/)

APPENDIX B
Physiology of Practices

Practice	Procedures	Understandings	Emotional Engagements
Definition	*Explicit rules, principles, precepts, and instructions, what is sometimes called discursive "know-that" knowledge.*	*Knowledge of what to say and do; skills and projects, sometimes called "know-how" (i.e., tacit cultural templates for understanding and action).*	*Ends and purposes, which are emotionally charged, in the sense that people are attached or committed to them.*
Welcoming: 3Com Audrey	The community must actively recruit and retain users because 3Com has abandoned Audrey. Welcoming potential and new users to the fold is an important practice. The procedures for welcoming are laid out in the Audrey community: lead the newbies to the FAQs (frequently asked questions). This is where a newbie "ought to start."	Audrey users understand that to inspire continued user developments, the community must attract new users. Converting the newbies to committed use involves welcoming them and making them feel that they are valued in the community.	Engagement in welcoming practices is a community building exercise, correlated to product development as a larger user mass excites innovation. Welcoming is a positively valenced emotional engagement.
Empathizing: Newton	The Apple Newton is a product in a state of marketplace abandonment for nine years, and it is in real danger of attrition or of parts breaking and the whole not working. It is facing extinction. This threat inspires empathizing practices. For users, stories of battery miracles are empathizing practices because they mitigate the threat of extinction. Users recite the rites to be used when the battery has "died," providing solutions and emotional support for those who experience battery failure.	The understanding is that there is some intervention that cannot be fully explained. There is a spirituality embedded in the technology, such that if the correct rites are performed the battery may indeed come back to life. It is understood that the procedures are not fail-safe or that the user must supply efficacy or faith for a successful outcome to be achieved. It is also understood that this can only be accessed by fellow users' support; battery miracles depend on the collective to support one another in performing the rites.	The engagement rests on the need for the battery as an underlying necessity for product use: "No juice, no use." It also depends on the ability of users to support one another in the rite and the mustering of faith or efficacy. Newton users believe they own and use the best technology available and that it takes a village to keep the Newtons operating.
Evangelizing: Xena	Spreading the word takes the form of consumer-generated content. Procedures include development of tertiary texts (Fiske 1987)—stories that fill in narrative gaps. For example, 48 episodes of "shipper seasons" deal with the Xena–Ares relationship, 36 episodes of "xwm" seasons fill out the lesbian subtext; fiction "challenges" invite writers to imagine alternative endings or points of view; genres such as "uber" take essential character elements and transplant them to other times and places. Postshow "seasons" production details are explained online. Feedback is solicited. Consistency with show plotlines and relational entanglements tend to be worked out on chat page discussions of favorite episodes and assessments of the true meaning of events and relationships.	Fan-authored "episodes" and other tales must be open-ended and, in general, employ soap opera conventions—for example, hooks and bubble episodes (anachronous and asynchronous tales; dream sequences); feminized narrative forms are emphasized; realism is stressed in the relationships, not in the where or when of events (thus, Hercules, Jesus, and Romans coexist). Understandings include consistency with show plotlines and relational entanglements. Characters conform to Jungian principles. For example, Xena/Ares = anima/animus or union of duality; bad Xena/good Xena and Livia/Eve = shadow/self-duality.	Engagement includes authoring stories that enact value commitments and personalities of the key figures— a proactive version of the passive identity work identified in research on soap operas (Van Evra 1990). Commitments to costuming, conventions, and celebrating the post-Xena careers of key stars are also part of the Xenaverse.
Justifying: Lomo and Holga	Procedures include proving the ability to perform in more mainstream, photographic genres. Users of Lomo and Holga justify their devotion to the toy camera by demonstrating that they can/do use more technologically sophisticated cameras but find merit in the quirkiness of the Lomo and Holga effects. Lomo and Holga users often post galleries of their lomography and their more traditionally oriented photography interlinked.	Understandings include the presentation of traditional skills to justify the use of their time and effort on a toy camera that was originally intended for novices to capture images. The idiosyncratic image effects are deemed to be more artistic and credible and time and effort outlays more justifiable because the photographer is trained and competent in the traditional methods.	The emotional engagement rests on the freedom to abandon objective realism. The ability of the photographer to seek the surreal imagery and the fantastical elements of the images. It is spiritual in nature because the effect is idiosyncratic and unpredictable and the outcome is otherworldly.

Practice	Procedures	Understandings	Emotional Engagements
Milestoning: TPATH	Fans of TPATH are encouraged to explicitly mark their concert events anniversaries, and there is a protocol for concert storytelling. The concert stories are real-life events, and the concert must be explicitly interwoven into the fan's larger-life narrative. Unlike documenting, which focuses on the use journey, milestoning focuses on an episode of use and how it is situated into the consumer's life.	The understanding here is that TPATH is not just a band with catchy music but a band that provides the soundtrack of fans' lives. Various TPATH events anchor the life narratives of fans, and fans who engage in this milestoning practice have an understanding of how to convey their concert stories. They have a jargon, a phrasing, and a manner of interweaving lyrics into life events.	The emotional engagement involves bringing TPATH into the fan's life in an intimate and compelling way. The music is clearly distinguished from background music as a central component in the life stories of fans.
Badging: Mini	Badges provide symbols of experiences associated with the brand or the collectivity. North American Motoring community badges (illustrated in Appendix A) are consistent in shape and style. Knowledge of how to make them is shared online. Badges refer to car colors, to model, to geographic club, or to real-world performances, such as driving a particular rally route in the Rocky Mountains or South Carolina.	Badges are displayed horizontally. Group badges are supplemented by personal emblems. These typically include a humorous or ironic cartoon of car and owner's handle. Northamericanmotoring.com also generates individual badges that vary from "neutral" to "sixth gear" and are understood to represent depth of engagement with the community.	Rally badges reflect achievements. "Justacooper" badges reflect a "little engine that could" ethos. Regional club badges speak to more general consciousness of kind and moral commitment.
Documenting: Xena	Documenting shares the individual story of the journey of brand collectivity engagement. Documenting focuses on the trajectory of the brand experience and brand relationship. Procedures include recounting a confessional tale about engagement. Family ties play a role in socializing participants in their initial viewing: mom and daughter, older sister and younger sister, perhaps a romantic partner.	Tacit elements pertain to the content of the confessional tales: tales of rejection of Xena and eventual acceptance and tales of errancy and return to Xena. Engagement with Xena is associated with maturity. Engagement also entails appreciation of the complexity of the Xena character and of Xena and Gabrielle's multilayered relationship or Xena and Ares profoundly ambivalent relationship. The emotional ambiguity of the story is not appealing to all.	For women, Xena is often named as a role model. For men and women alike, the notion of falling in love with a beautiful "kick-butt" woman provides a platform for emotional engagement.
Grooming: StriVectin	Discourse surrounds how to care for the product itself while it is in the consumer's care. These are not mandated or suggested by the manufacturer. For example, consumers are advised to extract the cream from the tube with a clean implement other than a finger tip, most often suggested as a makeup sponge. After the bottle is opened, consumers advise one another to be sure to clean the tube tip before recapping to avoid cream debris/residue on the tube. Consumers even suggest the tool to be a Q-Tip straight from the box to avoid germs.	The knowledge the consumers share pertains to the affect of dirt (Mary Douglas's notion of "matter out of place") and germs on the active ingredient in the cream. It situates the product into the cleansing and skin-care category (highlighting medicinal and curative associations) rather than to a beauty cream. The skin surface should be clean and dry before application, and the product itself should be extracted by clean, some even suggest sterile, implements.	The procedures and understandings position the use of the product into a scientific understanding and perhaps enhance the consumer's perception of effectiveness. The emotional engagement rests in the consumer's faith in science as a solution, in which a restorative cream "fountain of youth" is scientifically going to improve the skin's appearance (Tissiers-Desbords and Arnould 2005).
Commoditizing: Garmin	Detailed instructions are posted on the importance of protecting the Garmin in transit or between uses. Toward that end, there is a practice of consumer-produced "snugglies," or protective pouches/sheaths, for the Garmin. The snugglies should be made of soft, smooth material that cannot scratch the Garmin's display face. Microfiber fabrics, such as those made to clean eye glasses, are most preferred. Instructions for how to sew these fabrics are explicitly laid out. These snugglies are deemed by the community to be far superior to any Garmin accessories on the market.	The understanding here is that the Garmin's face is anthropomorphized and described within the community as fragile. This is not a manufacturer assertion. Unlike eye glasses, which consumers liken the Garmin display to be, the Garmin's screen is touch-driven, or made for tactile manipulation. As such, it is not objectively fragile or easily scratched. Within the community, Garmin's screen is vulnerable and must be protected with aftermarket, user-generated snugglies.	The emotional engagement stems from the sense that Garmin assists the users in locating themselves and their destinations and protecting them from becoming lost and from danger and embarrassment, and in turn the users protect the screen when it is not in use or is in transit. The emotional relationship is made reciprocal through the anthropomorphism and creation of gentle protective sheaths.

Practice	Procedures	Understandings	Emotional Engagements
	Consumers who successfully produce snugglies are encouraged to sell these online within the community. Notably, these user-created sheaths are even suggested for use with the Garmin accessory units or carrying cases.		
Customizing: Jones Soda	There are explicit rules for entering the label contest, including instructions for what images are acceptable (e.g., no pornography or other illegal behavior depicted, size and resolution parameters). All photograph submissions must include a model release and a photographer release to be entered in the contest. Each submission has a six-month active voting period before it is archived. Images may be reposted. Votes are tallied and adjusted for computer and IP address, meaning that people cannot vote multiple times for a submission. In contrast, photographs for customized labels do not require the legal releases but must conform to the size and resolution parameters.	The contest participants understand that they publicly post their submission on the official Jones Soda site and must garner the support of the community to win placement on a Jones Soda label. They campaign for their images on the site through agreed-on cultural templates (e.g., inserting a Vote Jones button that directs voters to a submission in an e-mail distributed to friends; posting a message on the Jones forums, including the Vote Jones button; setting up a personal Web site/blog that contains the Vote Jones button). Though not formally stated, the Vote Jones button is tacitly understood to accompany all vote solicitations. This button indicates the official status of the label submission and ensures proper content for potential viewers (e.g., no pornography). There is no mechanism in place to prohibit promoting your submission without the Vote Jones button. In contrast, the customizable label submissions do not get vetted through a community vote, nor must they be posted in any publicly accessible domain.	Contest participants vie for a community distinction of having a "label run," in which their label is featured on a publicly distributed Jones Soda bottle for a specified duration. This "prize," though it contains no cash award or even a product, is a highly desired community distinction. Those with labels chosen for public distribution become part of the coveted "rare Jones Soda bottles" that consumers find off the street, collect, and trade. Emotional engagement is palpable in the contest and on the forums in which consumers query others as to whether their label has been spotted, discuss label winners, and trade spotted bottles. In contrast, the customizable labels are charged with a different emotional engagement, in which consumers create the labels, knowing that they will have 12 bottles with their labels. They anxiously await delivery and plan the gifting/use of their bottles. Some purchase runs for special occasions, adding the personalized labels to weddings, graduations, birthdays, and so forth.

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