



# **TOMTOM: Mapping the Course from B2C to B2B**

## **Executive Summary**

*The Dutch firm TomTom – well known for its iconic portable navigation devices – now needs to reinvent itself as a navigation software provider to the automotive industry. How can TomTom compete with tech giants like Google in this fast-changing B2B market?*

This teaching case is the first multi-source case produced by the Rotterdam School of Management (RSM), Erasmus University. Developed by Professor Steven Sweldens and Professor Stefano Puntoni in collaboration with TomTom and the RSM Case Development Centre, it provides unique materials for discussing crucial issues like B2B branding, managing brands over time, Big Bang disruption, and autonomous driving.

This case is suitable for MBA, EMBA, and other Master or executive-level students of marketing, branding, and innovation. Because the case articulates a strategic vision of branding, it is also suitable for those interested in consulting and general management. After discussing the case, students should be able to:

- Acquire a deep understanding of how brands need to be managed over time;
- Understand both differences and similarities between B2B and B2C marketing;
- Understand how and under which circumstances B2C-oriented brand associations can contribute to success in B2B settings;
- Understand how to change a strongly-embedded brand identity, with both internal and external stakeholders, from the B2C to the B2B domain;
- Understand the challenges posed by 'Big Bang Disruptors', which come with shark-fin models of new product adoption;
- Weigh the strategic options available to companies competing with tech giants like Google.

### Keywords

Marketing; branding; innovation; disruption; technology; automotive; navigation; B2B; Google; self-driving cars; autonomous driving.

### Why use this case

1. Most marketing and branding cases are about selling to consumers (B2C), while the majority of economic activity lies in Business-to-Business (B2B). Because the consumer market is more tangible, relatable, and often more 'fun' to students, exciting cases on B2B marketing and branding are particularly difficult to find. This case answers that needs. Moreover, it addresses both B2C and B2B marketing issues and the challenges of moving from one to the other. Thus, students can develop a deep understanding of the differences between B2C and B2B marketing and branding as well as the power of brand identity.

2. Today, almost all technology firms – regardless of the industry they are in – face the same challenge, namely, how to compete with tech giants like Google. A traditional industry can change its nature and structure within a short period of time because of an external disrupter. What will happen to the automotive industry and to TomTom? This case lets students explore the disruption of industrial ecosystems

caused by advancements in digital technology and by the far-reaching threat posed to traditional companies by the rise of new tech giants.

3. Brands are 'symbols for sale' and this case discusses how to create, market and develop them over time. Differently from many cases that examine branding strategy at one static point in a company's development, this case follows a brand over the course of 30 years, giving students the opportunity to not just wrestle with a current branding dilemma but also to reflect on how brands can be managed over time.

4. The automotive industry, one of the most important industries by any measure, is facing a number of crucial challenges. One of the most important is the move towards autonomous driving, perhaps the most visible example of how Artificial Intelligence is likely to reshape business in the decades to come. The case affords the opportunity to discuss the future of mobility.

5. This case provides counter-intuitive takeaways and several 'Aha' moments. Based on our experience of teaching the case, by the end of the class students tend to arrive at completely different conclusions from those popular at the beginning of the discussion. The case allows for several moments of epiphany, leading to an engaging, rewarding and memorable learning experience. The rich support materials accompanying the case (PPT, video interviews with top executives, video of the brand revitalization process) add to its vividness.

6. The vast majority of existing cases feature male protagonists though the target audience in our classrooms is between 30 and 70% female. This case helps redress the balance by featuring a female protagonist. Corinne Vigreux, co-founder of TomTom and director of its consumer division since 2008, is among the most influential female leaders in the technology sector and has initiated several programmes to help other women succeed in the sector. We hope that by highlighting a female tech champion this case will contribute to correcting the gender imbalance in the technology world.

### How to use this case

This multi-source case includes the following materials:

- Introductory video;
- Executive summary;
- Teaching case (restricted access);
- Teaching note (restricted access);
- PowerPoint presentation for teachers (restricted access);
- Video supplement to the teaching note (restricted access); and
- Video interviews with TomTom senior management (restricted access).

These materials are available at [www.rsm.nl/tomtomcase](http://www.rsm.nl/tomtomcase).

To access the restricted materials, please first purchase the case and teaching note at [www.thecasecentre.org](http://www.thecasecentre.org). Access instructions are included in the teaching note.