

brand as business™ brief

brand as business briefs are periodic emailed briefings about how companies can operationalize their brands

from denise lee yohn
08.03.10 vol 027

site

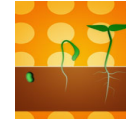
blog

archive

about

in this brief:

- 1 brand-building culture
- 2 the brands at comic-con
- 3 what is denise doing?
- 4 service spotlight: brand platform



Hello friends and colleagues!

This brief is about culture. By "culture," I mean the **behaviors and beliefs characteristic of a particular group**.

For brand builders, there are two aspects of culture we need to think about:

- **organizational culture** -- The culture within your company can fuel the power of your brand or it can block you from realizing its full potential. Last month's Harvard Business Review was chock-full of insights about brand building organizational cultures including "**You have to have a 100% belief in your core reason for being,**" a quote from Starbucks' Howard Schultz. See below for key excerpts from Schultz, Tony Hsieh, and others.
- **consumers' cultures** -- To truly understand consumers and effectively influence their thoughts and behaviors, we need to understand their cultural influences -- what are they seeing, hearing, experiencing? **Comic-Con** embodies the culture of a growing number of people -- not just geeks and freaks (although the show does attract its fair share of those!) Here's my [recap](#) of this seminal event.

I love hearing from you so please keep those [comments](#) coming -- and for more brand as business insights, try signing up for the [RSS](#) of my blogposts.

Denise

Organizational Culture



Your company culture can make or break your brand. An inspired, focused, and customer-informed organization generates powerful insights about brand opportunities, makes planning decisions aligned with its brand, and delivers its brand with operational excellence. But, don't take my word for it.

Last month's [Harvard Business Review](#) featured a wealth of insights about how companies foster brand-building cultures. Here are some of the best bits:

Tony Hsieh, the CEO of Zappos and the author of the recently released book, *Delivering Happiness: A Path to Profits, Passion, and Purpose*, has built a billion-dollar business in less than 10 years. He explains **the difference a focus on the Zappos brand in his**

company's culture makes:

Looking at every one of our interactions through a branding lens instead of an expense-minimizing lens means that we run our call center very differently from others... We don't have scripts, because we want our reps to... develop a personal emotional connection with each customer... Usually when marketing departments do their ROI calculations, they assume that the lifetime value of a customer is fixed. We view it as something that can grow if we create positive emotional associations with our brand.

Creating a culture is a critical managerial skill, says **Clay Christensen** the tech guru and Harvard Business School prof. In the following point, he talks about **how culture can empower employees** to make decisions that nurture and protect the brand:

If employees' ways of working together to address those tasks succeed over and over, consensus begins to form... Ultimately, people don't even think about whether their way of doing things yields success. They embrace priorities and follow procedures by instinct and assumption rather than by explicit decision -- which means that they've created a culture. [Culture] can be a powerful management tool.

what is denise doing?

- prepping for upcoming speaking engagements including presenting **Align and Integrate Your Customer Experiences to Build Your Brand** at the **Retailing Summit** hosted by Texas A&M University, and moderating a panel about pricing strategies at **Dine America**, the invitation-only conference for senior foodservice executives. [Contact me](#) to book me to lead a provocative, engaging session at your event.
- **interviewing business leaders who are breaking new ground**, such as **Omar Green**, Director of Strategic Mobile Initiatives at Intuit, and **thought leaders who are challenging conventional thinking**, including **Les McKeown**, author of *Predictable Success*.
- continuing my **monthly column** with **QSR Magazine** -- my latest piece, **Bigger Isn't Always Better**, offers some cautionary notes for any business which aspires to grow.

Since **Howard Schultz** resumed the reins of Starbucks 2 years ago, he's taken the venerable company from a 50% decline in operating income and share price to delivering its best financial results in company history. The successful turnaround can be attributed to the **unique tie between culture and brand**, Schultz explains:

The equity of the brand is defined by the quality of the coffee but also, most importantly, by the relationship that the barista has with the customer and whether or not the customer feels valued, appreciated, and respected...There is a sensibility of the brand. Our role as leaders is to celebrate the human connection that we have been able to create as a company, and to make sure people realize the deep level of respect we have for the work they do and how they act.

He also comments on how **culture fuels Starbucks' differentiation**:

Whether you are a high-tech company or a coffee company, your responsibility has to be to constantly create the kind of excitement that provides differentiation and separation in the marketplace. Not innovation for innovation's sake but innovation that is relevant, usable, and, in our case, core to the culture.

And, finally from an article about how **Singapore Airlines** has earned a stellar reputation in the fiercely competitive commercial airline business by offer world-class service while being a cost leader:

Your rivals can't easily copy your people and organizational culture, and those are the linchpins of getting a dual strategy right.

The Brands at Comic-Con

Around 140,000 people of all shapes, sizes, colors, ages, and persuasions flocked to **Comic-Con 2010** last week. Did you miss what is arguably the biggest entertainment event of the year? If so, you may have missed out on an excellent opportunity to immerse yourself in the cultural influences of many of your customers.

But no need to worry -- here's a brief **video recap** of my experience.



grow.

service spotlight

This brief's featured service is:

Brand Platform

- o Does your team "**reinvent the wheel**" every time new materials are created?
- o Do you **ass-u-me** everyone in your organization knows what your brand stands for?
- o Do people **struggle to clearly articulate** your brand's competitive position?

Everyone who works on your brand should share **one clear, consistent, common understanding of what your brand stands for and how it competes**. I help companies develop **brand platforms** to facilitate organizational alignment and focus.

Download an overview of this service offering and **contact me** to learn the results a **Brand Platform** can deliver for your organization.

Check out other ways I help companies achieve their brand and business objectives.

send to a friend



Got a **friend or colleague** who could use briefings about how companies can operationalize their brands?

Forward this email on and share the insights.

If you received this email from someone, subscribe to **brand as business briefs™ here**



denise lee yohn has been inspiring and teaching companies how to operationalize their brands to grow their businesses for over 20 years. World-class brands including Sony, Frito-Lay, Burger King, and Nautica have called on Denise, an established speaker, author, and consulting partner.

for more information, visit www.deniseleeyohn.com



denise lee yohn, inc
3770 herbert street
san diego, ca 92103
917-446-9325

mail@deniseleeyohn.com
www.deniseleeyohn.com



[previous briefs](#) | [view online](#) | [forward](#) | [subscribe](#) | [unsubscribe](#)

-- You are subscribed as [EMAIL] If you do not want to receive any more newsletters, please click [UNSUBSCRIBE] [USERTRACK] To update your preferences and/or to unsubscribe visit [PREFERENCES] Forward a Message to Someone using [FORWARD]

I respect your privacy and will not share your contact information with others.

© 2008 denise lee yohn, inc.