

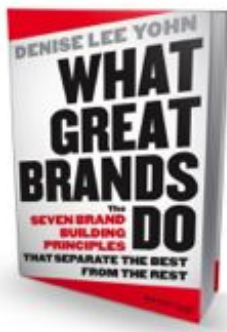
What Great Brands Do

January 30, 2014 • 1 Comment

It's not easy building a great brand. Many businesses try. Few succeed.

Denise Lee Yohn has been part of the brand-building game for the past 25 years. Her experience began first with insider positions at great brands like Sony and Jack in the Box. Second, as a consultant with Frito-Lay, New Balance, Oakley and other well-known brands. And third, as a lifelong student of the brand-building game.

She's finally written down the advice she has followed and given on how businesses can achieve rarified air in her first book, **WHAT GREAT BRANDS DO**.



“Your brand can’t just be a promise; it must be a promise delivered.”

— Denise Lee Yohn

This one line sums up Denise's smart “brand as business” advice: *“Your brand can't just be a promise; it must be a promise delivered.”*

Her book goes deeper by sharing seven principles that brands follow to become great. When businesses follow each of these principles they start to build a great brand because you cannot build a great brand before you build a great business—the process is simultaneous. It's “brand as business.”

Here's how Denise explains what “brand as business” means...

“Every great brand defines its brand as its business. It puts its brand at the core of its business and goes to great lengths to make sure there is no daylight between managing the brand and managing the business.”

In an email exchange with Denise I asked her to cite a brand that follows her “brand as business” approach. She cites Amazon.

***DENISE:** Amazon's mission is “to build a place where people can come to find and discover anything they might want to buy online” and Bezos talks about its commitment to three things: the best selection, the lowest prices, and the cheapest and most convenient delivery.*

Amazon really lives up to those ideals.

It's the first place that most people go to look for products, read reviews, and check prices. It has set the standard by which other e-tailers are judged and its footprint continues to grow. At the same time, Amazon is clear about what it offers and doesn't try to be what it's not. The shopping experience is streamlined and straightforward, not particularly stylish or fancy. As such, people who are looking for the kind of experience Amazon offers are drawn to the brand and have developed a real sense of trust in it.

One of the more provocative brand-building principles Denise shares is great brands avoid selling products. Obviously, this begs the question if great brand don't sell products, what do they sell? Denise has something to say about that...

DENISE: *Great brands offer emotional connections by meeting emotional needs or through an identity that it helps its customers experience or express. They know that a product is merely a means to an end – a way of fulfilling a desire, doing a job, fixing a problem – and customers care mostly about the end.*

Nike isn't in the business of selling shoes – although it sells plenty of them. It's in the business of inspiring and helping people feel like athletes. Its long-standing success as a business and a brand is due to the way it connects with people through aspiration and achievement.

Interested in learning more about Denise Lee Yohn's book **WHAT GREAT BRANDS DO?** Visit these blogs, they're part of the Post2Post Book Tour for Denise's book:

Monday | [Jackie Huba](#)

Tuesday | [Phil Gerbyshak](#)

Wednesday | [Paul Williams](#)

Thursday | [John Moore](#) ... (hey, that's me)

Friday | [Jay Ehret](#)