

## 053 — Fusing Brand and Culture

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 [actionablebooks.com/en-ca/podcast/053-fusing-brand-and-culture](https://actionablebooks.com/en-ca/podcast/053-fusing-brand-and-culture)

“If you try to keep brand and culture separate, there’s a big gulf that emerges, and that gulf can be problematic.”

For many years, we have discussed brand and culture as two separate things. Brand represents the reputation and perception of an organization, while culture refers to the way that people experience working at an organization. However, in our increasingly digital, and therefore transparent world, the alignment between brand and culture is becoming a competitive advantage. We were delighted to host Denise Lee Yohn, author of *Fusion: How Integrating Brand and Culture Powers the World’s Greatest Companies*, for a discussion about this alignment between brand and culture. Denise layers her 25 years of brand and marketing experience with an interest in the power of culture together to create some of the most successful companies in the world.

In this conversation, we discussed:

- Why a mismatch in an organizational brand and culture is bound to erode customer trust, and to create a gulf that at best confuses employees, and at worst, leads to public missteps (we’re looking at you, Wells Fargo).
- In our digital age, consumers don’t want brands that are *perceived* as authentic, they want brands that *are* authentic—and alignment between brand and culture is an indicator of authenticity.
- The 9 types of brands, and the individual identity of organizations within those types—understanding what is unique about your brand can help you inform what your culture should be.
- Why we should focus on healthy cultures—sustainable, productive, life giving—not “good” or “great” cultures. Each organization creates a unique culture, which won’t be great for everyone, but allows the company to thrive.
- Chicken or egg: brand first, or culture first? Brand can be easier to quantify, but organizations that presume a healthy culture will develop organically do so at their peril.
- The ROI of working on culture isn’t as clear as other initiatives, so leaders typically shy away from doing the work. However, a focus on creating a healthy culture can make so many aspects of the business easier.
- Practical steps for leaders to take to improve the alignment between brand and culture: articulate your purpose (or why), and your values (your how). And don’t assume that everyone in your organization knows those things intuitively.

**Actionable Quote:** “Ensure that you have an overarching purpose, and a single set of core values to guide your organization and your brand. You need a foundation for your culture and your brand, and it really should be one foundation.”

Links:

[DeniseLeeYohn.com](http://DeniseLeeYohn.com)

Buy *Fusion*

Buy *What Great Brands Do*

Read our Summary of *What Great Brands Do*