

# Brand building must-reads for the New Year

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Both my clients and students (MBA and EMBA Brand Management) often ask me for suggestions on the latest business and branding “must reads”. Here are four I have been recommending recently<sup>[1]</sup>:



[Creating Passion Brands: How to Build Emotional Brand Connection with Customers](#) by Helen Edwards and Derek Day

[Grow: How Ideas Power Growth and Profit at the World's Greatest Companies](#) by Jim Stengel

[What Great Brands Do: The Seven Brand-Building Principles that Separate the Best from the Rest](#) by Denise Lee Yohn

[Playing to Win: How Strategy Really Works](#) by A.G. Lafley and Roger L. Martin

The key takeaway from this reading list is that while branding is crucial in brand building, brand building is much greater than branding. That’s why astute CEOs view the brand as the business. These CEOs know that:

- The hallmark of great brands is being strong inside out
- The heart and soul of these brands is an intrinsically motivating core ideology for owners, employees and customers. It is the glue that binds these stakeholders together in remarkably loyal, long-term relationships
- An adaptive, winning, brand-as-business strategy, based on this core ideology, leads to the organizational focus and alignment that is crucial for creating and sustaining differentiating and compelling customer brand experiences over time
- Great brands must have a pioneering spirit—they must be customer oriented NOT customer led. True differentiation in the market place emanates from a relentless focus on seeking new value frontiers that will surprise and delight customers and enhance their lives in meaningful and unexpected ways

I hope that you will enjoy reading these books as much as I have.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and all of my readers for some great feedback and comments over the past year. I have learned from and enjoyed our conversations. I look forward to more engaging exchanges in 2014.

Very best wishes to you and your loved ones for a New Year filled with joy and good health.

Happy New Year!

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[\[1\]](#) Available at Amazon