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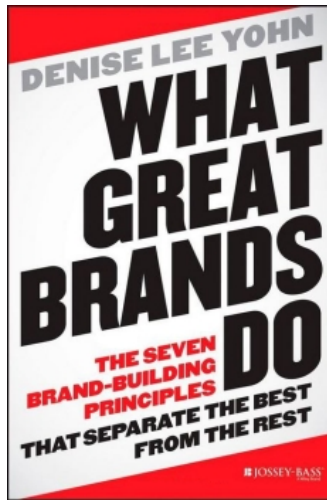
Be Great by Learning “What Great Brands Do”

Mar 30, 2014 by Patrice K Cokley In Business Books 0

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Summary

This book will show you how to follow the blueprint that other great brands have set forth.



There are many who think that if they hire a great graphic designer to create their logo and website, that they would have established a great brand; until reality sinks in.

A brand is so much more than a logo or design element that visually represents your business. A brand is your story, what you represent, and your values that spark an emotion within your customer. In order to establish not only a brand, but a GREAT brand, it is important that you learn and understand “what great brands do.”

I was extremely happy to come across this book as I am always open to exploring the wonderful world of branding and learning strategies that focuses on brand building. *What Great Brands Do: The Seven Brand-Building Principles That Separate The Best From The Rest* was written by Denise Lee Yohn, and she does a phenomenal job at identifying these principles with tons of real-life examples. Within the book, she reveals the following principles.

Great Brands Start Inside

Great brands focus on the culture of their internal environment. In order to assist customers and get their buy-in on your product or services, all employees must be on board with the company’s mission. Mrs. Yohn states:

“Great brands use culture building to *educate* - to help employees understand what a brand is and why it’s important. They use it to *define* - to explain what the brand stands for and how it is differentiating. They use it to *activate* - to help people understand their own impact on brand perceptions and therefore what is expected of them.”

Great Brands Avoid Selling Products

Instead, they sell an emotion, an experience, or a solution to a problem. But products is something a great brand does not sell. Mrs. Yohn did a great job at describing how Nike never sold not one of their products, but rather, sold an emotion that motivated their customer to “Just Do It.”

She also goes into greater detail on how marketers can learn a lot about their customer by using anthropological methods to conduct thorough research on the behavior of their target market. I found this particular section of great value because small businesses tend to focus on their own beliefs as to how their product will benefit their customer, rather than looking to the customer to provide that information for them.

Great Brands Ignore Trends

They focus on connecting with the larger culture in terms that are relevant to their brand and what it stands for. Yohn points out how following trends is extremely risky and doesn't really set you apart from your competitors. By following trends, a business is operating on someone else's timeline, and not their own.

Yohn goes on to identify strategies that a business can utilize to monitor trends, but not to follow them.

Great Brands Don't Chase Customers

They create a brand that attracts their specific market. When you think of brands such as Trader Joe's or Lululemon which she uses as an example in the book, these brands do nothing but show certainty about who they are and their customers respond naturally by patronizing their store.

That sets the expectation, and their customer follows.

Great Brands Sweat the Small Stuff

Not many businesses think to experience their brand like a customer. Yohn speaks on how great brands will sweat the small stuff such as the aroma in a coffee shop, or allowing customers to try out products in-store such as REI.

These items are small, but they have a huge effect on the customer experience that is extremely influential to their purchasing decision.

Great Brands Commit and Stay Committed

Yohn goes into great detail within this section on how to identify your core ideology and committing to never steer away from it. She states:

“If your brand defines your company, if your brand is your business, then your brand is rightly the sole focus of your organization.”

Great Brands Never Have to “Give Back”

I was eager to get to this principle to fully understand why great brands never have to give back. I agree with Yohn in that the term “giving back” suggests that you've taken something that you now have to give back in order to balance out your karma. If you're a great brand, there's no karma to even consider. Yohn then

proceeds to explain that:

“Great brands have no need to “give back” to society in the form of charitable contributions because they employ a more integrated approach, as they do in all aspects of their business. Great brands give value for themselves and others through the inner workings of their operations.”

Yohn then goes on to provide great examples of this principle by detailing how IKEA continuously improves people’s lives just by focusing on their core of design and operating with low prices. She also mentions LYFE Kitchen, a fast food change with a bold social vision of healthy food produced sustainably. Many businesses may have the urge to “give back,” but it’s important to know that great brands never give back because their core value focuses on providing value to all.

Overall, this book comes highly recommended by me as it was hard to write this review without giving away too much information. Small businesses would find great value in this book that not only comes with principles that great brands have adopted, but implementation strategies that we all could use in our own business.

Why settle on being simply a brand – when you could become a great one.

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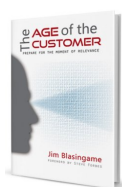


Patrice K. Cokley is a brand consultant and the Founder of The Bassline Group, a marketing consultancy and brand development firm for entertainers and creatives. A Detroit native, Patrice now resides in the suburbs of Chicago, IL and writes about branding, small business marketing, social media and entrepreneurship on her PKC Blog.

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