

A Q&A with Denise Lee Yohn, author of “What Great Brands Do”

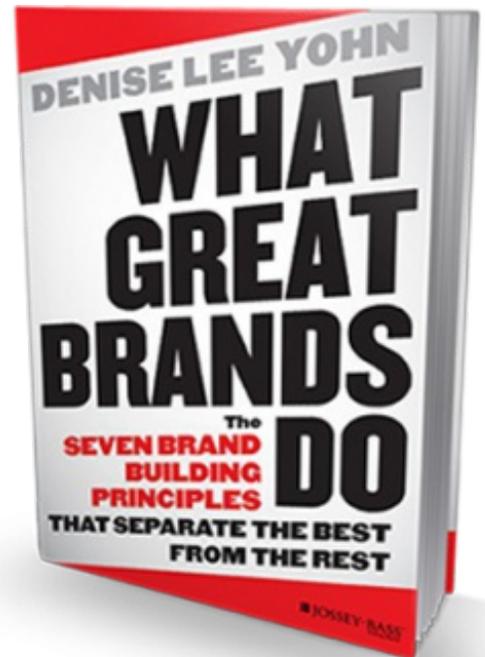
Posted March 14, 2014 by MEplusYOU Agency

Today we are fortunate to host a Q&A with [Denise Lee Yohn](#), the author of the new book *What Great Brands Do*. In her book, Ms. Yohn identifies the seven key principles behind the world’s top brands.

Curious about what it takes to become a truly great brand? Anxious to transform your brand into an industry leader? Read on for a taste, and then [get your hands on a copy](#) for seven eye-opening principles that turn typical brand-building on its head.

MEplusYOU: What inspired you to share your experiences and these seven principles with the world?

Ms. Yohn: I’ve been fascinated by brands for many years and I find it intriguing how much power they have over purchase decisions—mainly mine and the other people that I know. In trying to understand how some of the best brands achieve that kind of influence, it led me to try to understand the things that great brands have in common. What I uncovered seemed to be very different from the way that most people speak about building their brands, so I thought it would be important for me to share the perspective that I’ve gleaned from this research to demystify what great brand building looks like.



MEplusYOU: What do you feel is the key takeaway from this book?

Ms. Yohn: Great brands have elevated brand building from a niche marketing function to the core driver of their business, and that’s what has turned them into such strong brands. Instead of just using their brands as an external image, they use their brands as management tools to align and guide everything they do.

MEplusYOU: Do you feel like some of the iconic brands you mention, Zappos, Nike, etc., have reached the top? Where do they go from here?

Ms. Yohn: Nike is a good example because in some cases it’s like “how big can they get?” They’re in practically every sports category and on one hand you might think that they have peaked, but I think

they've started to think about their offerings and their products differently.

I think a good example of this is Nike Plus, their personal monitoring system. I think we'll see them figuring out how to incorporate digital technology into their products more. Things like wearable technology in the fabric they use and personal, performance enhancing gadgets out there are not what we consider their core, but they're building on the emotional foundation they've developed with customers. They've demonstrated that they're about inspiration and innovation and so it gives them permission to play in these areas. Is there a way to use digital technology in a way that has nothing to do with a shoe, but everything to do with you? I think there is room for large companies like Nike to innovate and grow if they use their brand foundation and evolve from there.

MEplusYOU: What small steps can brands take right away to begin transforming themselves into industry leaders?

***Ms. Yohn:** One thing I suggest is utilizing a tool that I introduce in my book called the Brand Touchpoint Wheel. When developing the wheel, you must identify all the different ways the outside world comes into contact with your brand. You end up with a visual perspective on the impact of your brand and you begin to realize that the things you normally think of as important brand touch points, like advertising and marketing, are really only a fraction of all the ways that people come into contact with your company. From there you can start prioritizing. This opens people's eyes to the 360 degree nature of brand building and how everyone plays a role in building a strong brand. From a cultural standpoint it helps to get everyone aligned and motivated, and from an operational standpoint, it starts highlighting what are specific areas you need to be paying attention to if you'd like to grow your brand.*

Brand Touchpoint Wheel -- Template

