

# How Strong Is Your Personal Brand?

by

**Guest post by Denise Lee Yohn**

When you want to know how strong your personal brand is, you usually refer to your Kred or Klout score, right? Or perhaps the number of followers, friends, or connections you've attracted. Maybe you do a quick search to see how high up you and your content appears in search engines — or maybe you look at how many LinkedIn recommendations or endorsements you've gotten.

The problem with all of these measures is they really only tell you about your past and your present. They're good indicators of what you've done to date, but what about the future? There are no fast and hard metrics telling you whether or not you have a strong enough brand to propel you into new opportunities and to protect you from unknown challenges.

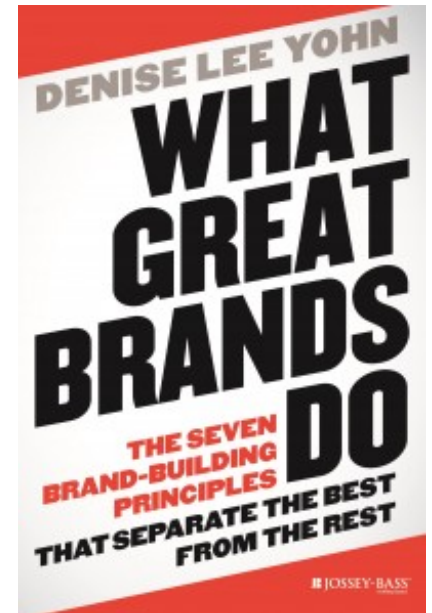
The best way to ensure your personal brand is as strong as it needs to be for what's ahead is **to employ a brand-building mindset that extends beyond typical personal branding techniques**. In the research for my new book, *What Great Brands Do: The Seven Brand-Building Principles That Separate the Best from the Rest* (Jossey-Bass), I discovered that great brands conceive of their brands as more than a name, logo, or image to promote externally. Great brands use their brands as a management tool to fuel, align, and guide everything they do.

Developing a great personal brand involves a similar approach. Instead of thinking only about how and where you appear, consider developing your brand as **a strategic platform that serves as your own personal GPS**. And seek to apply to your personal brand the brand-building principles that great brands live out.

**Great brands start inside.** The leaders of great brands start brand-building by cultivating a strong brand-led internal culture within their organizations — and they save marketing and communications for later. In the same way, define or re-define your personal brand by starting within yourself. Ensure you have a clear purpose and vision — as well as values, or guiding principles, that define how you do things. Until you're clear about what you stand for and what's important to you, how can you expect to convey that to others?

**Great brands avoid selling products.** Instead of pushing products, ingredients, and prices, great brands engage customers on an emotional level. That's because people make decisions based on how products make them feel. The same is true for how people decide whether or not they are going to hire you, follow you, read your content, etc. So instead of simply listing your skills, experience, or qualifications, link these "products" to the real value you create for people — the emotional benefit you deliver. Ask yourself, what really differentiates you from others and why does that matter? How do you want people to feel when they interact with you?

**Great brands don't chase customers.** Great brands know you don't create brand passion by appealing to everyone equally, so they don't chase every customer out there. The best brands are very clear about who they're for — and just as importantly, who they're not for. Likewise, as a personal brand, you should be clear about the kind of people and opportunities you want to attract. Figure out who is most likely to value what you uniquely offer and be laser-focused in seeking them out.



**Great brands sweat the small stuff.** Great brands design their customer experiences down to the last detail because they know that every interaction is an opportunity to enhance their brand image or to detract from it. And they consistently seek out new opportunities to express their brand in the finest details of execution. Do you do the same? Have you conducted a detailed, objective assessment of your interactions to ensure that your values and personality are conveyed in everything you do? Are you always challenging yourself to identify ways to improve what you do and how you do it?

**Great brands commit and stay committed.** Great brands are clear about their priorities and stick to them relentlessly, regardless of how attractive the alternatives might seem. You have a similar opportunity – and challenge – to stay committed to your core. When you're a new or relatively unknown brand, every avenue to build your awareness, extend your reach, or get involved seems attractive. But you must discern what opportunities are aligned with your core identity and values and be willing to say “no” to those that aren't right for you. Of course, your economic reality may require you to take a job or do a gig that meets your short term needs – but you should always keep your brand vision in mind and make decisions that move you toward that whenever possible.

To ensure a bright future, lay a strong foundation for your personal brand today. Think like great brands do. They know brand strength comes not from an image, a score, or a legion of followers. A strong brand is built by what you *do*.

## Author Bio

**Denise Lee Yohn** has been inspiring and teaching companies how to operationalize their brands to grow their businesses for 25 years. World-class brands including Sony, Frito-Lay, Burger King, and Oakley have called on Denise, a brand-building expert, speaker, and writer. She is the author of new bestselling book, [What Great Brands Do: The Seven Brand-Building Principles that Separate the Best from the Rest](#) (Jossey-Bass.) [Read more by Denise.](#)



## About [Maria Elena Duron](#)

Maria Elena Duron, Small Business Marketing Coach (a.k.a. Maria Duron), helps entrepreneurs and businesses profit personally and professionally. Specializing in creating community, connection and commerce around your brand, Maria Elena focuses on relationship marketing at it's most effective level by engaging, encouraging and empowering team members and leaders to effectively market their brand internally and externally - from buzz to bucks for profitable results. . Maria Elena Duron is creator and moderator of #brandchat recognized as a Top 12 Twitter Chat for Business. She presents seminars for Constant Contact, Brand Yourself, Appreciation at Work, Alginable, Nurph, Marketing Land at several conferences and forums. Duron founded Buzz to Bucks| Word of Mouth Firm providing marketing and appreciation marketing services, workshops and webinars. <http://buzztobucks.com>

