

# *WHAT GREAT BRANDS DO*

The Seven Brand-Building Principles That Separate the Best from the Rest



## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**

Denise Lee Yohn

Welcome to the discussion guide for *What Great Brands Do: The Seven Brand-Building Principles That Separate the Best from the Rest* (Jossey-Bass.)

I've heard from many business leaders like you who found *What Great Brands Do* to be a rich resource for your thinking and work on brand-building. You told me you've shared the book with your teams and are looking for help in getting your organizations to adopt the brand-as-business management approach.

I've written this discussion guide to stimulate conversations about the brand-building principles and actions that will move your organization forward. Whether you are the CEO of an enterprise, working on your own start-up or small business, or leading a team within an organization, these questions are intended help you process, internalize, and act on what you learn in *What Great Brands Do*. Here are some ways to use this guide:

Consider hosting a book club-like study over a series of regularly scheduled sessions in which your group reads a chapter and discusses the corresponding questions.

Carve out some time to do a deep dive and go through the entire guide in a half-day or day-long session.

With a larger group, divide participants into smaller breakouts that each discuss a chapter and then share with the entire group the highlights of their discussions.

At the very least, take yourself through these questions and write down your answers so you can incorporate them into your next planning session.

I look forward to hearing how you use this guide and about the results you experience. And please contact me at <http://deniseleeyohn.com/contact> if you'd like to learn about:

- special offers that combine bulk orders of autographed books with packets of printed discussion guides
- one-on-one consultation or webinars
- in-person facilitation of a custom discussion session or workshop
- keynote presentation on *What Great Brands Do*
- and more!

Choose to be great!

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## Introduction

1. In what ways did Kodak fail to follow through on an integral brand strategy?
2. Why do most people conceive of their brands as names, logos, taglines, or other externally-oriented messages?
3. What are examples of brands with a disconnect between their advertising and their actual offering? What are examples of brands where the two seem tightly integrated? What is the reason for the difference between the two types of brands?
4. Does your organization use your brand as its "GPS" to drive what it does and how it does it? Why or why not?
5. How does your organization view and use brand-building expenditures?

## Chapter 1: Great Brands Start Inside

1. Why did Sam Palmisano start with clarifying the IBM brand and aligning all employees with it?
2. How engaged with your brand are your employees? In which way -- head, heart, or hands-and-feet -- are they most engaged? Least?
3. How could a Brand Toolbox and Brand Engagement sessions advance brand-building at your organization?
4. How well are your internal cultural values expressed and delivered in your external customer experiences?
5. What are the benefits of starting brand-building inside and waiting to launch external communications?

## Chapter 2: Great Brands Avoid Selling Products

1. What are examples of brands that succeed by seeking intimate emotional connections with customers?
2. How do customer emotions influence their decision-making in your category?
3. What insights do you think you might uncover if you were to observe people shopping for and using your category?
4. If you were to craft a Competitive Landscape Map of your brand, what would be different options for the x and y axes?
5. What business is your organization really in?

## Chapter 3: Great Brands Ignore Trends

1. What's wrong with positioning a brand as an "-er" brand?
2. What is a prevailing trend in your category and how could you challenge it?
3. What is an emerging consumer attitude or behavior that you suspect might be relevant to your business? Why?
4. Which of the three strategies -- scanning, listening, and forecasting -- do you need to do more of or do differently?
5. What are examples of brands that have successfully advanced cultural movements and created trends that others have ended up following? How did they manage to do this?

## Chapter 4: Great Brands Don't Chase Customers

1. Why do many companies resist targeting specific customer segments and de-prioritizing others?
2. Does your organization operate more like a "lighthouse" or more with a "spotlight" approach? Why?
3. What needs-states (purchasing attitudes combined with purchase occasions) exist in your category and which ones are you best suited to meet?
4. Why is it important to carefully define your competitive frame of reference?
5. Which of the three primary ways to differentiate -- be first, own an attribute, or specialize -- would be the most powerful for your brand?

## Chapter 5: Great Brands Sweat the Small Stuff

1. What are the "moments of truth" in customers' journeys in your category? Are you paying attention to all of them?
2. What are examples of brands that have created memorable brand experiences through design?
3. Why is customer experience design a critical discipline for building a strong brand?
4. Does everyone in your organization understand their responsibility to interpret and reinforce the brand appropriately? How can you improve their understanding?
5. Is your customer experience strategy aligned with your brand strategy? If not, why not? How would it differ if it was?

## Chapter 6: Great Brands Commit and Stay Committed

1. What are the primary reasons why you are tempted to stray from the core of your brand?
2. What is your brand *made* to do? Are you still doing it?
3. How can growth put a business at risk?
4. Of the areas of focus -- technology, sales, distribution, marketing, customer, or brand -- which one(s) most closely describes your organization?
5. What is a sacred cow in your category that you might need to sacrifice in order to stay true to your brand?

## Chapter 7: Great Brands Never Have to "Give Back"

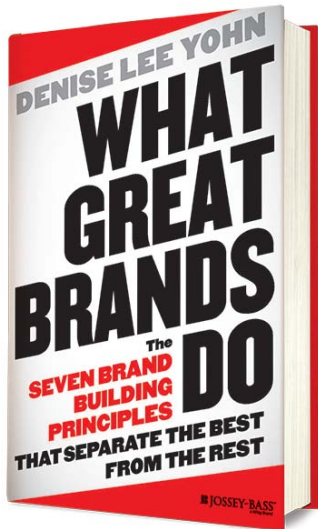
1. What are examples of companies that are merely "goodwashing?" In what ways do their efforts lack authenticity or integrity?
2. Why are consumers increasingly interested in the impact companies make on society, the environment, and our world at large?
3. How does creating shared value (CSV) differ from corporate social responsibility (CSR)?
4. On which of the five levels in the Level 5 Relevance Framework -- industry, community, target, brand positioning, and values -- are you the strongest? The weakest?
5. How does Patagonia create shared value?

## Chapter 8: The Eighth Principle: Brand As Business

1. What is the difference between branding and brand-building?
2. Does your organization practice the brand-as-business management approach? If not, what needs to change?
3. Of the prevalent business issues that are addressed by the brand-as-business approach, which ones describe your primary needs and challenges?
4. What does "your brand is a verb" mean?
5. What will you remember most about What Great Brands Do?

If you'd like more brand-building insights, please consider joining the exclusive list of business leaders who receive my brand-as-business briefs™, periodic emailed briefings . Sign-up here: <http://deniseleeyohn.com/newsletter> .

# Thanks for checking out *What Great Brands Do* !



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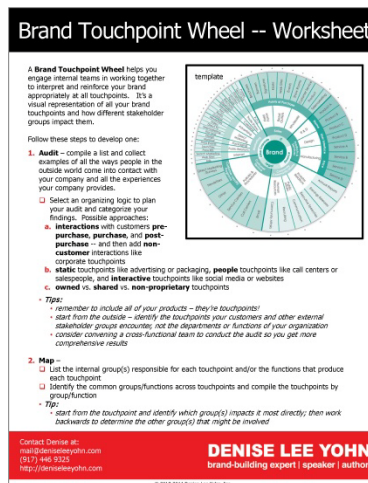
Packed with insightful case studies from companies like Starbucks, GE, and IKEA, *What Great Brands Do* explains how top companies develop standout brands that foster customer loyalty and increase profit margins. Brand-building expert Denise Lee Yohn translates these studies into actionable guidelines by sharing the seven major principles that are essential for brand excellence. Get your copy and start learning how to use your brand not just to gain a competitive edge, but to change the game completely.

Special offers on bulk purchases are available by contacting Denise: <http://deniseleeyohn.com/contact>

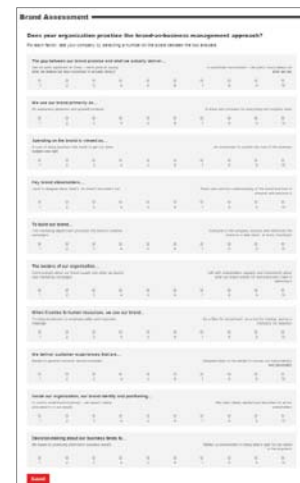
## More Resources on What Great Brands Do



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## More from Denise



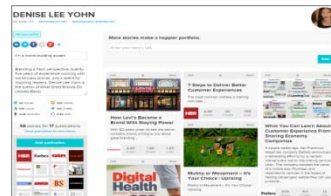
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