

# What Great Retail and Restaurant Brands Do

Scott  
Goodson

The smart phone: The single solitary disruptive force of so many industries. Retail and restaurants have been raised and have risen in its shadow. In 2015, what seemed like a monumental shift in retail, the biggest change since man started selling things to other men in the Fertile Crescent 10,000 years ago, Amazon surpassed Walmart. 2016 is shaping up to be a year of irreversible change, numbing the mind while exciting the heart. For it is the heart that loves to shop and lust for foods.

What are the most noteworthy ideas to keep in mind as we turn towards the new year? To answer this I turned to someone with an amazing ear to the ground and eye on the big tendencies shaping brand experiences. Denise Lee Yohn has tremendous conviction and carries with this the authority of someone who led marketing with world-class brands including Sony and Frito-Lay. I know her as a leading authority on building and positioning exceptional brands. Denise is the author of the bestselling book "What Great Brands Do: The Seven Brand-Building Principles That Separate the Best from the Rest" (Jossey-Bass) and the new book "Extraordinary Experiences: What Great Retail and Restaurant Brands Do."

**Scott Goodson: Denise, so you've been busy, you have an inspiring new book out -- what is it about and why did you write it?**

Scott, the book is called "Extraordinary Experiences: What Great Retail and Restaurant Brands Do," and it profiles seven great retail and restaurant brands and how they earn customer love and loyalty by creatively designing and consistently delivering great retail customer experiences. It's a companion to my first book, "What Great Brands Do: The Seven Brand-Building Principles That Separate the Best from the Rest," in which I explained that the great brands we all admire -- from Starbucks to GE to Red Bull -- conceive of their brands differently from most. While people usually think of and use their brands merely as external names, messages, or images, companies with great brands use their brands as tools that drive, align, and guide everything they do as an organization.

Although it seems like that message has resonated with a lot of people, I wanted to make that approach to brand-building as tangible and real as possible for businesses of all sizes and types and thought the best way to do that would be to reference the experiences we encounter every day at restaurants and retail stores.

**Scott Goodson: In this day and age, people might be surprised to find that your book focuses on brick-and-mortar stores. Isn't digital the new retail frontier? Isn't traditional retail dying?**

It's true that many brick-and-mortar stores are struggling. People are shopping differently -- Amazon alone grew its revenues by 20% last year. But in-store sales still comprise 94% of total retail spending and I think it's telling that brands that were previously purely online plays like Warby Parker and Birchbox are introducing or expanding brick-and-mortar operations. There are some fundamentals of human nature that make in-person shopping evergreen -- we want to connect with other people, we want all five of our human senses to be stimulated, we want to be entertained and engaged in ways can't be accomplished digitally. So brick-and-mortar is here to stay. And the best retailers are using all the advances in technology to make their stores more compelling, differentiated, and profitable.

**Scott Goodson: You and I seem very like-minded in our approach to cultural movements, no? Building marketing strategy as a values based community-driven approach.**

Absolutely! I've definitely learned a lot from you, Scott, about how brands succeed by advancing cultural movements and I admire your ground breaking book "Uprising: How to Build a Brand and Change the World by Sparking Cultural

Movement" as well as the work you and StrawberryFrog have done for brands like Emirates Airline, Jim Beam, European Wax Center and Walmart's Sam's Club. In my research, I found that great brands look far out into the future to identify emerging consumer attitudes and behaviors -- often in categories and markets well outside their own footprint -- and figure out how to address them in ways that create cultural movements. That's actually how Starbucks got started as the "third place" for people to gather away from home and work, and more recently how the car sharing services like ZipCar and Car2Go were able to disrupt the car rental market.

In Extraordinary Experiences, I describe how the restaurant chain Buffalo Wild Wings has set its sights on creating a movement out of "the ultimate social experience for sport fans." They've created an in-restaurant experience with servers who engage with customers over sports scores and trivia games, re-designed their restaurants to feel like miniature stadiums, and invested in technology so people can compete, play, and share with others before, during, and after their visits. They've broken the casual dining restaurant mold and are creating the restaurant experience of the future.

All brands should seek out ways to advance their own cultural movement -- connect with people on a more meaningful level, enroll them based on shared values, and create news and momentum that everyone else wants to be a part of.

*Scott Goodson is the founder of StrawberryFrog, the world's first cultural movement marketing agency. He writes for Harvard Business Review, Fast Company and the Huffington Post*

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