

Great Brands Start Inside – Denise Lee Yohn (Atlanta Growth Summit)

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Posted by [Douglas Wick](#) on Mon, Jun 6, 2016

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It's often the place I find new customers resist reviewing and working on.

It's the **PEOPLE** part of the business. And specifically it's the subjective portion: [Core Values and Purpose](#).

The result of getting people right in a Gazelles/Rockefeller Habits' Principled business is a harmonious culture of accountability.

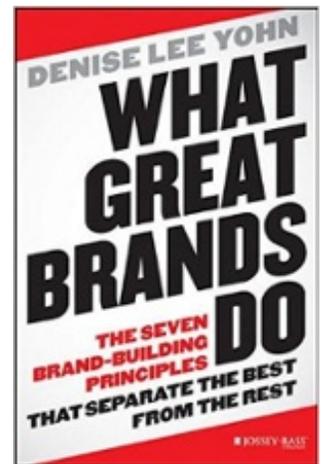
Denise Lee Yohn, author of [offered seven steps to building greatness](#).

She emphasized the first step is unconventional when most business look at building their brand. It is not something that is expensive to achieve, it is it innovative, and ultimately it serves your customers. Great Brands simply think differently. It is challenging. Most company's start outside because it's easier to change what you say about yourself then it is to change your culture.

Until the people inside your business live and harmoniously work together to be accountable to your promise, your Core Purpose and Values they will never deliver the promise you expect. That's why Great Brands start inside.

The Seven Brand-Building Principles that Separate the Best from the Rest:

- 1. Great Brands Start Inside** Great brands start brand-building by cultivating a strong brand-led culture inside their organizations.
 - Clearly articulate your purpose and defining values, and use them to inspire and engage employees and customers.
- 2. Great Brands Avoid Selling Products** Great brands seek to develop emotional connections with customers instead of pushing products, making claims, or promoting features.
 - Identify the emotional appeal of your brand and tie your products/services to it.
- 3. Great Brands Ignore Trends** Great brands challenge the status quo and advance their own movements instead of following what everyone else is doing.
 - Identify a popular trend or prevailing wisdom in your industry and launch a challenge to it
 - Monitor emerging attitudes and behaviors in areas outside your category and ask yourself how they will/can/should impact your business.



4. **Great Brands Don't Chase Customers** Great brands project their brand identities like lighthouses and attract like-minded customers. (*Denise offered the greatest indicator of the strength of your brand is: Profitability*)
 - Specify who is not your target and deliberately exclude them from your customer acquisition efforts
5. **Great Brands Sweat the Small Stuff** Great brands seek out opportunities their brands in the finest details of execution.
 - Identify underleveraged or overlooked brand touchpoints and infuse them with your key brand attributes and personality.
 - Determine which of your touchpoints are not on brand – fix them. (*Denise offered a tool called the touchpoint wheel to help the audience determine how to appeal to all 5 senses of your customers. It's why Chick Fil A bathroom's toilet tissue is shaped in a triangle; Why Virgin Airlines makes their boarding passes fit in their customer's pocket.*)
6. **Great Brands Never Have to "Give Back"** Great brands make a positive social impact in the core of their operations and create value that all their stakeholders share.

Discontinue programs or activities that make a positive social impact but are disconnected from your brand purpose and values.

7. **Great Brands Commit and Stay Committed** Great brands have the commitment and the discipline to reject anything that causes them to lose focus on their brand core.

Make two lists:

1. What you as a brand are able to do.
2. What you were made to do – stay committed to the second list!

Identify at least one thing you need to say “no” to in order to stay focused on the core of your brand.

Denise provided a number of additional great ideas and resources which I hope to return to in a future blog. She offered this definition for Brand: **A Brand is What you do and How you do it.**

Finally she offered an additional Principle to follow:

1. **Great Brands Do "Brand as Business"** Put your brand at the center of your organization and use it to drive, align, and guide everything you do.



It's about action – Delivering Your Promise.

What I'd like to offer further from my experience with my Gazelles customers: Every one of my [Strategic Discipline](#) customers believes in this idea of their Brand as Business and started from the inside.

I have a customer who just started that is really struggling with their marketing. Yet what they've done is built and continue to work on is the People Result, "a harmonious culture of accountability!" Their recent employee engagement survey suggests their people are authentically aligned, agree and practice the company's Core Values and Promise.

Denise Lee Yohn's presentation provides affirmation they are focused correctly on the most important principle of

building a Great Brand.

How is that working for you?

What's the culture like in your business?

Big companies are vulnerable to the agility that new startups can cause to the dynamics of their business and the entire industry. You only need to see the impact startups like Uber and Airbnb have done to their industries.

If you're a company with a lot of money tied up in infrastructure and inventory, your attack is coming. Are you prepared? David Butler is the VP of Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Coca Cola, the greatest Brand on the planet.

If Coca Cola is working on being agile with their dominance it makes sense you should be too. David Butlers insights on what Coca Cola is doing next blog.

Topics: [Core Values](#), [People](#), [Core Purpose](#), [Growth Summit](#), [Harmonious Culture of Accountability](#), [Great Brands](#)