

Why the Relationship Between Culture and Brand is so Important – Interview with Branding Expert Denise Lee Yohn

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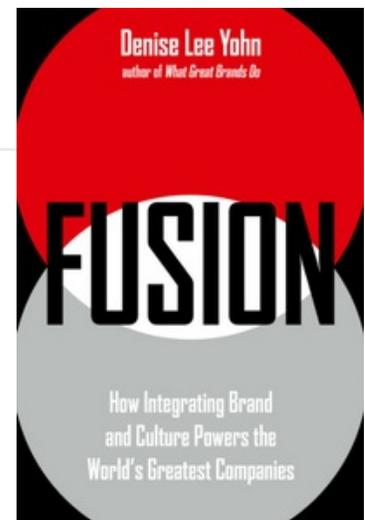


As always, here at Digital Diary we search for the latest sources of information regarding business transformation, and how companies can power their growth in 2018 and beyond.

Millennium Alliance Advisory Board member Denise Lee Yohn is helping us do just that by giving us a sneak peek into her new book in this exclusive interview!

Denise, it's great to hear you have another book coming out this year! Can you tell us a little about "***FUSION: How Integrating Brand and Culture Powers the World's Greatest Companies***" and where we can get our copy?

FUSION: How Integrating Brand and Culture Powers the World's Greatest Companies cracks the code on culture-building the way my first book, *What Great Brands Do*, explained how to build a valuable, sustainable brand. It shows leaders how to build a great business by aligning their external brand identity and internal corporate culture. *FUSION* becomes available on March 13, 2018, and you can pre-order it now on [Amazon](#) and other online booksellers. It is currently available in hardcover and e-book and an audiobook version is coming soon.



Nearly 70% of American workers are not engaged at work. This is threatening to lead to a culture crisis in Corporate America. How can businesses prepare for this?

I talk to business leaders around the world and most don't know how to cultivate a healthy, valuable, sustainable culture. For example, many leaders think that there is one "right" kind of culture—a kind of warm and fuzzy one—that works in all companies. But since every organization is different, every culture should be too.

So your culture and brand should be tightly aligned and integrated. Make sure your brand and culture are guided by an overarching purpose and a single set of core values that apply to your external identity and internal organization. And ensure what you stand for on the outside is operationalized in the way you run your business on the inside.

Whose responsibility is the corporate culture within the business structure?

It starts at the top. The top leaders of an organization must assume responsibility for culture-building. Although they may delegate aspects of implementation to functional groups such as Marketing or Human Resources, the leaders of those groups will tell you that unless the highest levels of leadership champion the culture, their efforts won't achieve the traction they need to make a sustained change.

Why is the relationship between culture and brand so important?

When your corporate culture is channeled toward, aligned with, and integrated with your brand identity, you realize several important benefits:

- Increased efficiency of your workforce and quality of its outcomes. When everyone in your organization is working toward a clear, single goal and using a common set of values, they're less likely to use conflicting standards and work at cross-purposes.
- Improved competitive advantage because you operate in a way that's difficult to copy. Competitors may be able to reproduce what you offer to customers and employees, but your culture and brand create a unique how that's much harder for competitors to match.
- Brand authenticity because aligning internal culture and external brand means you operate the same way on the inside and out. People seek out authentic brands and can easily judge whether or not you do what you say and say what you do.
- Mobilization toward your vision. You attract and retain people who are motivated by your overarching purpose. Everyone who works in your organization is committed to the contribution you want to make to the world.

On the flip side, if your culture and brand are out of sync, you produce all sorts of damaging disconnects. Just look at what's happened at Wells Fargo and Volkswagen. The public was able to learn the truth about those organizations and how different they were from the brand images the companies had been projecting.

We were thrilled to welcome you to our Advisory Board this year. What excites you the most about working with us?

You have assembled a community of smart and successful players who operate at the leading edge of business today. I love how participants get to engage with each other on substantive issues and learn from experts on how to get ahead.

What is your top tip for business leaders in 2018?

Create a mutually-reinforcing, interdependent relationship between them to increase your competitiveness, create measurable value for customers and employees, and future-proof your business.

Thanks Denise for sitting down with us! Don't forget to check out her new book *FUSION: How Integrating Brand and Culture Powers the World's Greatest Companies*.

ABOUT DENISE LEE YOHN

Denise Lee Yohn is the go-to expert on brand-building for national media outlets, an in-demand speaker and consultant, and an influential writer. 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 e-book *Extraordinary Experiences: What Great Retail and Restaurant Brands Do*. News media including FOX Business TV, CNBC, The Wall Street Journal, and The New York Times call on Denise when they want an expert point-of-view on hot business issues.

The Marketing Executives Networking Group (MENG) named her blog as one of the & Top 20 Marketing Blogs that Executives Actually Read. Denise enjoys challenging readers to think differently about brand-building in her regular contributions to Harvard Business Review and Forbes, and has been a sought-after writer for publications including Fast Company, Entrepreneur, Knowledge@Wharton, ChangeThis, Seeking Alpha, QSR Magazine, among others.

With her expertise and personal approach, Denise has become an in-demand keynote speaker and has addressed thousands of business leaders around the world. Denise initially cultivated her brand-building approaches through several high-level positions in advertising and client-side marketing. She served as the lead strategist at advertising agencies for Burger King and Land Rover and as the marketing leader and analyst for Jack in the Box restaurants and Spiegel catalogs. Denise went on to head Sony Electronic Inc.'s first ever brand office, where she was the vice president/general manager of brand and strategy and garnered major corporate awards. Consulting clients have included Target, Oakley, Dunkin & Donuts, and other leading companies.

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