

FUSION

How Integrating
Brand and Culture Powers
the World's Greatest Companies



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Denise Lee Yohn

Welcome...

...to the discussion guide for *FUSION: How Integrating Brand and Culture Powers the World's Greatest Companies*.

After releasing the discussion guide for my first book, *What Great Brands Do*, I heard from so many business leaders who used it to clarify their own thinking about brand-building and to help get their teams and organizations to adopt the brand-as-business management approach. So, I wanted to provide a similar resource for *FUSION*.

Here are some ways you might use this guide:

- Host a book club-like study in which, on a predetermined schedule, you and your colleagues read a chapter and discuss the corresponding questions. One company used its intranet site to hold a virtual discussion among groups that were spread across the world.
- Schedule a half-day or day-long session for you and your colleagues and assign the book as a pre-read. During the session, go through the entire guide, diving deeper into discussion on the points where there are questions or disagreement.
- To do this with a larger group or your entire organization, assign different chapters to different sub-groups and then have each sub-group share with everyone the highlights of their discussions.
- Go through the guide yourself and write down your answers. Consider sharing your key takeaways with a colleague and asking them to keep you accountable for taking action on them.

Whatever approach you use, this guide is intended to jump-start your journey to Brand-Culture Fusion. See if you can identify at least 3-5 specific actions that you will take as a result of going through it.

Please let me know about your experience using the guide and about the outcomes it helps you produce – you can contact me at <http://deniseleeyohn.com/contact>.

Also reach out if you'd like to learn about:

- Discounts on bulk book orders
- Special offers that combine bulk orders of signed books with printed discussion guides
- Keynote presentation or workshop on *FUSION*
- Custom group Brand-Culture Fusion Assessment reports
- ...and more!

Greatness is a choice. Choose to be great!

Denise



INTRODUCTION. Great Companies Are Powered by Brand-Culture Fusion

1. Let's start by considering your organization's internal workplace culture and its external brand identity. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means they are disconnected and unrelated and a 10 means they are tightly aligned and integrated, what rating would you give? Why?
2. Culture and culture-building is often characterized as "soft stuff." Do you agree or disagree, and why?
3. What benefits of aligning brand and integrating brand and culture seem most important to your organization? What risks of the lack of brand-culture fusion seem the greatest?
4. What organizations seem to integrate and align their culture and their brand well?
5. In general, why do you think why companies fail to build great brands and cultivate great cultures? What challenges has your organization faced in these areas?

PART 1: THE FOUNDATIONS OF BRAND-CULTURE FUSION

Chapter 1. Set Your Sole Purpose and Core Values

1. Does your organization have an overarching purpose? If so, what impact does it have on what your organization does and/or how it does it?
2. If not, how do you think you would benefit from having one?
3. What are your organization's core values? Do they differ from your brand values and attributes? Do your core values distinguish your organization from others like it?
4. In what ways do you use your core values? What is an example of how your core values have helped you make a difficult decision?
5. Does your organization have enhancing subcultures, orthogonal subcultures, or countercultures? How can you use an overarching purpose and single set of core values to unify people across subcultures?

Chapter 2. Assess Your Brand-Culture Fusion

1. Which of the nine brand types describe your brand identity today? Does that differ from your desired brand identity?
2. How well does your current culture align with the top three organizational values that correspond to your desired brand identity?
3. What do you think a culture audit of your organization would reveal about the values that influence your existing culture the most?
4. Which of the four primary areas of Brand-Culture Fusion -- purpose and values integration, employee experience–customer experience integration, Internal brand alignment, or employee brand engagement – does your organization need to focus on the most? Why?
5. In what ways are employees at your organization engaged -- or not -- with your brand?

Chapter 3. Lead the Change

1. Who is currently responsible for culture-building at your organization? Who *should* be?
2. How can you improve the consistency, simplicity, storytelling, and relevance of your internal communications about your brand and culture?
3. How well do you think your employees would say your organization's leaders role model your desired culture? What are examples they would use to explain their answer?
4. What are the roles or functions of your organization's middle managers? What difference would it make if they were engaged in cultivating Brand-Culture Fusion?
5. Does your organization use your core values in decisions about hiring, firing, and promoting people? If not, what impact do you think it would make if you did?

PART 2: FIVE STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE FUSION

Chapter 4. Organize and Operate On-Brand

1. What principles or strategies inform the current structure of your organization? Do they reflect your specific brand and culture challenges and opportunities?
2. What changes to your organizational structure, standards, and roles would help cultivate your desired culture?
3. How do your company's core business functions and day-to-day processes – such as planning, budgeting, running meetings, customer acquisition, customer service recovery, etc. -- influence its culture? How *should* they?
4. Which brand touchpoints have the most influence on your brand identity? Which groups, functions, and processes produce those touchpoints? How could they better deliver on your desired brand identity?
5. To advance your cultural priorities, how can you take advantage of the notion that “people are more likely to act their way into believing something than they are to think their way into acting?”

Chapter 5. Create Culture- Changing Employee Experiences

1. In the last 5 or so years, how have the needs for employee engagement and employee experience changed in your industry? In your organization?
2. What is the overall experience, feeling, or takeaway that you want employees to glean from all interactions and touchpoints with your organization? How well are you delivering on that today?
3. What is an approach to segmenting employees that would address the range of needs, values, and requirements within your workforce?
4. Are employees involved in the design of the employee experience at your organization? If not, how do you think the experience would improve if they were?
5. How can you integrate your employee experience and your customer experience so that employees are better educated, equipped, and empowered to deliver superior customer experiences?

Chapter 6. Sweat the Small Stuff

1. What are the most common or popular rituals at your organization? What do they suggest about your values and culture?
2. Do your rituals and artifacts differentiate your organization from others like it? How could you put more focus on the distinctiveness of your culture by changing them or replacing them with new ones?
3. What are important milestones or moments at your organization? How could a ritual or artifact help put more emphasis on them?
4. How could you use a “recipe,” a la Zingerman’s, to help guide employee behavior in a critical area of your operations?
5. How should you change your employee handbook, either in style or content, to express your organization’s unique core values, show employees how to work together to fulfill your overarching purpose, and convey your distinctive personality?

Chapter 7. Ignite Your Transformation

1. Which dimension of employee brand engagement does your organization need to improve the most: personal and emotional engagement with your brand, engagement with your brand in the day-to-day, or engagement in your brand strategy?
2. Approximately what percentage of your employees do you think understand your target customers, brand positioning, and key brand differentiators? What would be different if more employees did?
3. How could you use the “funeral and birth” brand engagement exercise to break away from the past and cultivate your desired culture?
4. Are internal communications about your brand in line with the quality standards, creativity, and tone and manner of your external communications? If not, what changes should you make?
5. What is a tool that you could develop to help employees align their attitudes and actions with your desired culture?

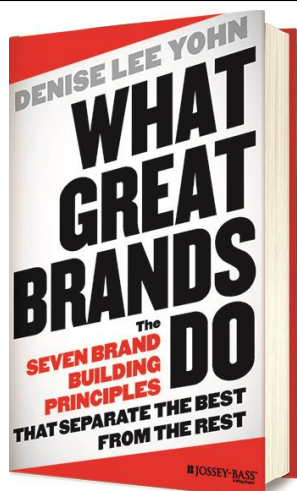
Chapter 8. Build Your Brand from the Inside Out

1. Which is more important to your organization: Aligning your culture with your desired brand identity (strategies in Chapters 4-7), or shaping your brand identity with your culture (Chapter 8), or both?
2. Do you currently express your purpose and core values to customers and other external stakeholders? If so, how? If not, why not?
3. If one (or more) of your values clearly distinguishes your organization, how might you factor that into the brand type and specific brand identity that you want to build?
4. What is a new product, service, or program that you could use to explicitly share with customers your purpose and values?
5. Is there a unique workplace practice or employee engagement approach that you could extend to customers to involve them with your organizational culture?

CONCLUSION. The Journey to Brand-Culture Fusion

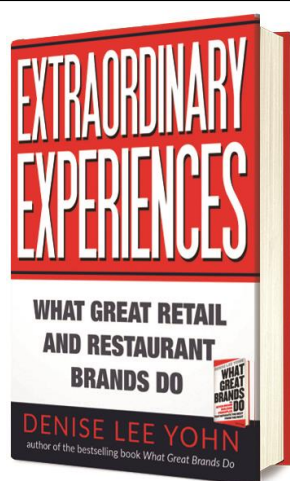
1. In what ways do you think will culture become more important to your organization in the next 5 years? In what ways do you think your brand will?
2. What excites you the most about Brand-Culture Fusion? What questions do you have about it?
3. How do you think Brand-Culture Fusion will help your organization?
4. What challenges do you expect to encounter on your Brand-Culture Fusion journey? How do you plan to overcome them?
5. What will it take to get you and your organization's leaders ready to make Brand-Culture Fusion a priority?

More Insights from Denise



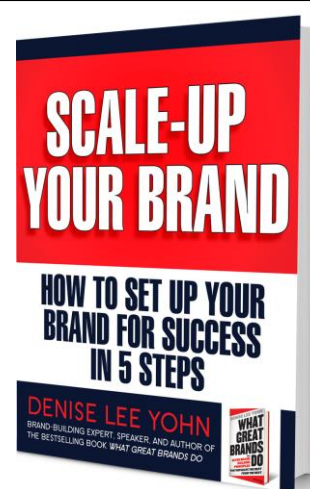
A vital resource for CEOs, entrepreneurs, and other leaders, *What Great Brands Do* explains how top companies develop standout brands that foster customer loyalty and increase profit margins. Denise shares insightful case studies, actionable guidelines, and the seven brand-building principles that separate the best from the rest.

[PURCHASE](#)



Discover how brick-and-mortar brands create extraordinary experiences that keep drawing customers into their stores. Compelling stories and practical principles make *Extraordinary Experiences: What Great Retail and Restaurant Brands Do* required reading for all business leaders who want a great brand. Available as a Kindle e-book.

[PURCHASE](#)



Scale-Up Your Brand: How To Set Up Your Brand for Success in 5 Steps is a step-by-step guide to develop a strong, valuable, sustainable brand strategy. Packed with exercises, instructions, and helpful tips, this workbook helps the leaders of new enterprises successfully make the leap from start-up to scale-up. Available as a PDF or in print.

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[ARTICLES](#)

Denise is a regular contributor to Harvard Business Review, Forbes, and other media outlets.

[BLOG](#)

One of Top 20 Marketing Blogs that Executives Actually Read

[NEWSLETTER](#)

Denise's Brand Leadership Briefs are emailed to exclusive list of CEOs, entrepreneurs, & other business leaders

[DOWNLOADS](#)

Get the tools and material referenced in *FUSION* along with additional resources



[VIDEOS](#)

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Take the Brand-Culture Fusion Assessment and get your personalized report

Book Denise to Inspire and Teach Your Group How to Achieve Fusion

Keynote Speaker Denise Lee Yohn



- Go-to expert on brand-building for CNBC, NPR, FOX Business TV & more
- Regular contributor to Harvard Business Review and Forbes
- Author of the best-selling book *What Great Brands Do* & the new book *FUSION*
- Former VP/GM Brand & Strategy at Sony
- Advisor to world-class companies including Frito-Lay and Oakley
- Leading authority on positioning exceptional brands & building great organizations

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THE FUSION FORMULA: Brand + Culture = Results

Forget everything you think you know about workplace culture! You don't need perks and parties. You need engaged employees who produce the right results and help you build a great brand.

Denise Lee Yohn shows you how to infuse your culture with your core brand values and align your people with your unique brand identity, so you produce a healthy organization and a valuable brand. Based on her new book, *FUSION: How Integrating Brand and Culture Powers the World's Greatest Companies*, Denise shares the secrets behind the world's greatest organizations and lays out the leadership playbook for achieving the brand-culture fusion you need to power your performance and future-proof your business.

IGNITE EXPERIENCE: Fuse CX and EX to Drive Your Growth

Customer experience is the new competitive battlefield where customer loyalty is won or lost. And among employees, the war for talent is intensifying. How do you win on both fronts? Denise Lee Yohn shows you how to align and integrate your employee and customer experiences—and unleash their combined power to fuel your growth.

Learn how to design and deliver employee experiences that fully engage your people and translate into customer experience excellence. Denise lays out the complete game plan you need to win the hearts and minds of customers and employees.

"A stimulating and enriching learning experience... excellent and generous interactions"

"Attendees were blown away"

"A ton of best practices that we can implement right away"

"Hands down, the best presentation in the entire conference"

"Not only inspiring but highly actionable"



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