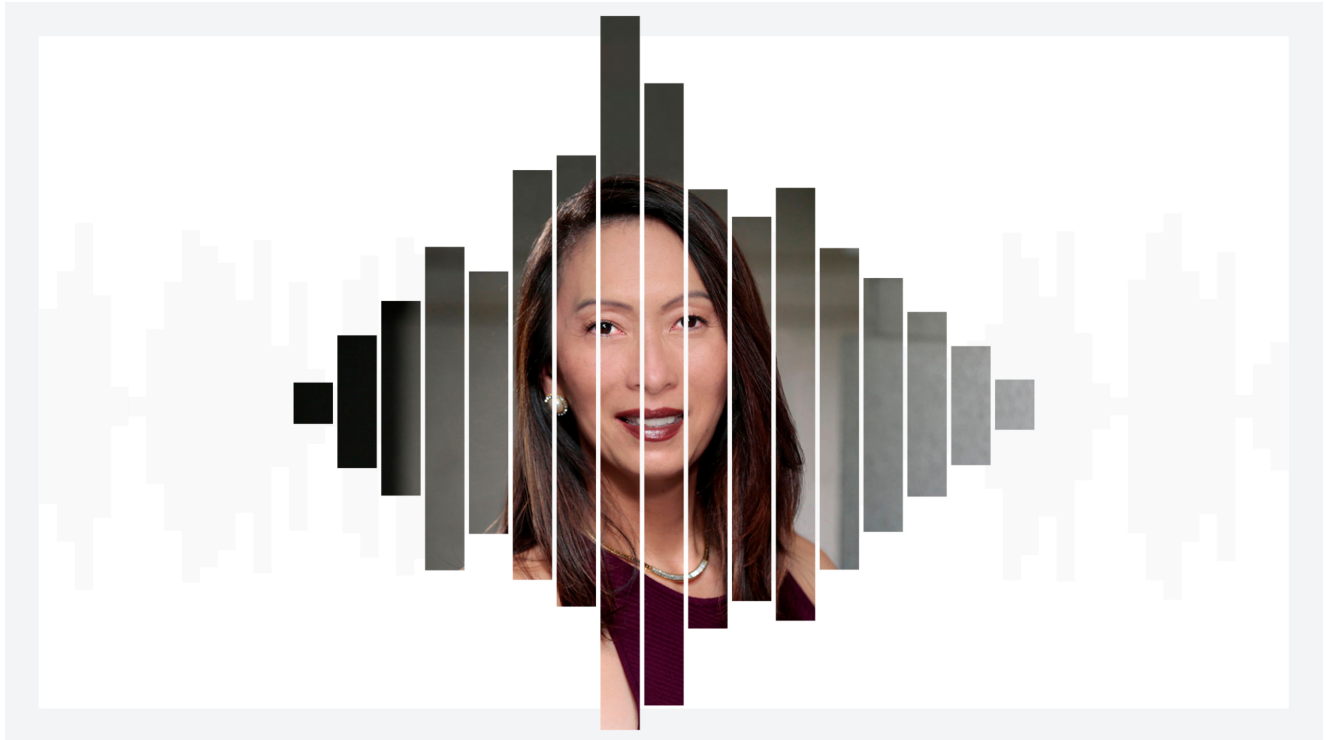


Closing the Gap Between Brand Vision and Customer Expectations with Denise Lee Yohn

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This post is a transcript from S3 E8 of the Voices of Customer Experience Podcast with Mary Drumond featuring Denise Lee Yohn.

Mary Drumond: [\(00:06\)](#)

This is Voices of Customer Experience, a podcast where we bring you the very best thought leaders and practitioners of customer experience and its overlapping verticals such as marketing analytics, behavioral economics, journey mapping, and design. Our goal is to help you be better at your job by listening to the experiences and leadership of others who like you have dedicated their careers to improving the dialogue between companies and customers. Voices of Customer Experience Podcast is brought to you by Worthix, the first and only self adaptive survey for measuring customer experience. Discover your worth at worthix.com.

MD: [\(00:44\)](#) Denise Lee Yohn is an author, a keynote speaker and a brand leadership expert. Through her expertise in personal approach, Denise has inspired business leaders around the world to build great brands and exceptional organizations. Denise has authored several books and has been a regular contributor on the Harvard Business Review and Forbes.

She's also written for Fast Company, Entrepreneur, Knowledge at Wharton and has appeared on media such as Fox Business, TV, CNBC, Wall Street Journal, and the New York Times.

MD: [\(01:19\)](#)

Welcome to one more episode of voices of customer experience. Season three. I am joined today by Denise Lee Yohn. Denise, thank you so much for coming on today.

Denise Lee Yohn: [\(01:29\)](#)

I'm so excited to be speaking with you, Mary.

MD: [\(01:31\)](#)

Awesome. So I'm a big fan of your work. I follow the publications that you write. I know you have your blog and you also contribute to Forbes and to HBR and you also authored a couple of books yourself, a four books so far.

DLY: [\(01:45\)](#)

Yes and kind of, two traditionally hard cover published books. And then I have an ebook and then a workbook, so yeah.

MD: [\(01:57\)](#)

Awesome. Well for the benefit of our listeners, those who are familiar with your work, but maybe not with your backstory and those were getting to know you now, can you talk a little bit about how you landed in this job in this profession?

DLY: [\(02:09\)](#)

Sure. So I have been an independent for about 15 years now. Independent meaning that I do three things on my own. I consult, I speak and I write. And my last corporate job before going out on my own was with Sony Electronics heading up brand and strategy and for a variety of reasons, which I can tell you over drinks sometime I decided to resign and start my posts. And for the first few years of being on my own, I was doing brand consulting and helping companies develop and position and operationalize their brands. And over time of what I had observed is that companies need to be as attuned to their internal workplace culture as they do to their external brand image and the fact that these two things need to be integrated in line. And so that's what led me to my last, my most recent book that I wrote, Fusion, how integrating brand and culture powers the world's greatest companies.

MD: [\(03:07\)](#)

Great. And is kind of what you had in mind when you initially set out, like when you started your career, did you think one day I'm going to be a consultant to keynote speaker, I'm going to teach everybody about branding and customer experience?

DLY: (03:18)

Well, I've always been passionate about brands and brand building. Even back, like as a teenager, I was just fascinated by them. But actually the job that I got at Sony was my dream job. That's what I thought I would be doing. I'd be working for a world-class brands, really helping it, developing them, leverage its brand value to create business results for the company. Yeah. And for the first few years of me being at Sony, it was awesome and it was exactly that to the later years were not as great. But I think that the more important planes are, you know, the more important inflection point in my story is that I had that job when I was 30 years old, and I woke up at that time and realize what am I going to do? I'm probably going to work for at least another 30 years if not longer and if I have my dream job now, is it all down hill from here?

DLY: (04:11)

And so, you know, as I went through a process of soul searching and really examining what is I love what I do, I'm passionate about and what I'm am I good at and, and finally what people are going to pay me to do. That's when I realized that I should go out on my own share the insights and experiences that I had had, not only building the Sony brand but then also working at agencies on previous to that. I got the chance to work on. Yeah, great brands like Land Rover and Burger King. I had worked for Jack in the Box restaurants. I had a lot of brand experience that I felt like I could share with other companies and help them create these world-class brands and so that's when I decided to go on out on my own and it turns out that this now is my dream job. I just didn't know it at the time.

MD: (04:57)

Well, in your work, you talk a lot about the gap between the brand vision and the actual experience that the customers receive on their end. What do you think is the cause of it? Because it's, it seems to be such a widespread, large scale problem.

DLY: (05:16)

I think it really is the lack of the alignment of the internal workplace culture of the organization with that external brand vision. I think that if you kind of try to back down or you know, kind of back out of it, you've got this great vision, you have a sense of what you want to stand for in the world, the kind of impact you want to have on your customers, the kind of value you want to equate for that, right? Well that requires you to offer a customer experience that is unique and is emotional and is personal and is sustainable and seamless to all your touch points. You know, all these great things about your customer experience. Well, in order to deliver that kind of customer experience, you need to have a workforce, an employee base who not only understands what you want to deliver, but is motivated and engaged and then equipped and empowered to do that. In order to have that you need to have a culture that is seamlessly woven with your brand so that there isn't this kind of gap between, okay, well this is how we do things, but then this is really what we want to be known for.

MD: (06:21)

Do you think that this gap is the main source of frustrated, not only customer experience but maybe employee experience and stakeholder experience as well?

DLY: (06:31)

Yeah, absolutely. And I think it's only getting greater. The gap is only getting greater in the sense that people's expectations have been elevated. You know, we are being trained by the best companies in the world to expect to get what we want, when we want to, how we want it, where we want it. Whether you are an employee going into the workplace or whether you're a customer doing business with a company, you expect that and when you are disappointed when a company doesn't live up to the expectation, there's just so many other options out there that you can just go and find someone else who will meet that expectation. And so, you know, I think that companies fall behind and lose a competitive advantage or lose the opportunity to create a competitive advantage when they allow this gap to exist and allow it to grow over time.

MD: (07:18)

How are you helping companies close this gap?

DLY: (07:21)

Well, a lot of what I do is share my insights, share the actions and strategies that I have found either in my own personal work or in the research I've done to help companies close the gap. And so for example, in my most recent book Fusion, what I lay out is five steps, five strategies that company leaders can take to align their company culture with their brand identity. And it's a lot of hard work and you know, the book is quite in depth and there was like, you know, definitely steps and stages and processes and methodologies that you have to go through. But it's possible because, you know, we look at it, the greatest brands in the world, you know, whether it's the brands we've always admired, like Apple and Starbucks and Nike, or whether it's kind of the new brands that are disrupting the world as we know it, like, you know, Amazon or Salesforce or AirBNB, they do this, they probably do it very intuitively and naturally and they don't call it fusion but that's what they're doing. And so it's possible. You just need to know how to do it. And so a lot of the writing, yeah, mostly the keynote engagements that I give are all in service of helping business leaders understand how to do that.

MD: (08:34)

Well, I'm going to ask you something, I kind of already know the answer, but you know, do you think it's possible to kind of learn how to become that kind of company, you know, and not being a company that's actually born customer centric or born with customer experience that their heart and soul like, like some of the ones that you mentioned. So you do believe that it's possible to become a customer centric organization?

DLY: (08:56)

Yes, yes. You know, I think it is always easier when you have, when you start up from that mentality or you have a real charismatic visionary leader who kind of leads the organization to that. I don't think it's out of reach for any company or out of reach for any business leader. You just have to do the hard work. For example, one of the companies I sometimes talk about is Cisco because compared to a lot of other technology companies out there that might not be heralded as kind of one of these most innovative, most progressive kind of companies to admire, but what John Chambers had done throughout his tenure and then what has happened, he's left. The company has really turned itself around to several times. And you know, I think that it shows that even a large organization that has multiple leaders that has significant headwinds in their industry, it can still change, can still move in the direction that it needs to. And certainly it's not completely there. But I think that it's a journey and you, oh, you always be on that journey, but I think you can embark and you can succeed on that journey.

MD: [\(10:12\)](#)

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MD: [\(10:42\)](#)

What do you think are some of the biggest challenges that you tend to see when working with the, you know, consulting with companies, especially with big brands? What are the most common problems?

DLY: [\(10:53\)](#)

Well, the first, I think we'll just kind of be this overarching problem that left thinking that not understanding that brand building starts inside. I think that most companies when they are trying to build their brands, when they're trying to reposition their brands, when they're trying to reinvigorate the brand, they will turn externally and think about, well, we need a new brand campaign. Well, we need a new logo or we need to Redo all of our marketing materials. And while those things are important than can definitely signal important service queues to signal important changes and your company, well you really need to do with start brand building inside. You really need to cultivate a brand led culture inside your organization. And that's a lot harder, you know, quite frankly it's pretty easy to change what you say about yourself. It's a lot harder to change yourself.

DLY: [\(11:42\)](#)

And so I think the first common challenges, just understanding that the work needs to be done within your organization. And let me think that you know, there are lot of misperceptions about company and you know, just out there, I think a lot of the rhetoric that's out there either says that will culture just happens and you can't really affect it. So you

might as well just kind of get used to the fact that your culture is just what it is, you know, which is totally false. You can shape and influence your culture by creating these to the environment for your desired culture to thrive. But also I think there's the misperception that there's one right kind of culture for every organization. And that is, you know, this kind of friendly, fun, nice culture where everyone feels like family and managers treat their employees benevolently and, and you know, that's just wrong.

DLY: [\(12:27\)](#)

You know, a warm, friendly culture might be appropriate for one organization but might completely backfire at another. I mean, Amazon probably is a good example of a company that has a culture that is very high performance, very demanding and very aggressive, very competitive. In fact, you know, a few years ago the New York Times wrote this whole expose about what they consider to be the poor working conditions and toxic culture of the organization. But there are certain kinds of people who thrive in that organization and that's, and the culture of Amazon is what has enabled Amazon to grow so much and has to have had so many successful innovations. And so to think that you just have to have one kind of culture is not right. You need to have a culture that sets your people up to produce a specific brand identity. And the specific results that you're looking. So that's another common challenge is just kind of getting over some of these misperceptions of culture out there.

MD: [\(13:24\)](#)

Yeah, I can tell you that there's an abundance of it for sure on the podcast when I speak to people, especially folks who are, you know, practitioners and working inside organizations that are constantly dealing with that culture clash within organizations. Now when it comes to a part of what you do, which is improving strategic decision makings within companies, I've also seen you talk a little bit about that in a way that you help companies focus their strategies towards becoming more in tune with the brand and closing that gap with the customer experience. So what are some of the ways that you do that?

DLY: [\(14:03\)](#)

One of the strategies I talk about is, you know, avoid selling your product. And I don't mean that obviously, you want sales, but the way that you create a valuable sustainable relationship with their customers is not by pushing products on them. It is by almost by like seducing them making an emotional appeal that really keys into their sense of identity, the identities they want to express to others. You know, how they want to feel when they use your product. You need to avoid selling and make an emotional connection instead. And that's often difficult when you yourself, you know, business leader, company founder or whoever, are in love with your product because you just think that is the best thing in the world. And you know, so you're tempted to I think really try to promote all the features and functions and bells and whistles. All of those things may be important, but they need to be tied to how you make people feel. Because at the end of the day, we are human beings.

That's what we respond to. But even from just a business sense, practically any company could rip off what you do, you know, in terms of creating a particular product. But very few can imitate how you make someone feel. And so that's really your competitive advantage. That's really how you create this customer bond that is unbreakable.

MD: (15:29)

I absolutely agree with you. I mean, I talked a lot about that here on this podcast and you know when I talk about it, I talked about, you know, company bias and the bias that companies bring in, not only in designing their product and creating improvements, etc. but also the way they survey their clients. So I mean, that's something that we talk about all the time, where when it comes time to listen to the feedback that your customers give you on whatever it is that you're putting out to the market, instead of just asking them what you think they want to talk about or what you think is important or what you want to find out about your brand, just listen. Sometimes just listening, you know, hey, what do you want to talk about? Hey, what do you think can improve? And having a more open ended approach to questions and the way you receive feedback, sometimes all of a sudden the data that you're collecting improves significantly because now you've given your customers the opportunity to speak instead of limiting their responses.

DLY: (16:27)

Yeah. I think that is so smart Mary. And you know, if you truly want to become customer centric, how can you do that if you're the one who's always talking? It's like you really, you need to listen and you need to dig deep and you need to be open. And to your point, what you do becomes infinitely more valuable once you understand what's important to your customers.

MD: (16:49)

Now tell me in the work that you do with companies in your consulting, do you recommend, is there a portion or moment that you have them listen to their customers and do some sort of market research or data feed back or something to help listen to the voice of customer?

DLY: (17:07)

Yes. Usually my engagement start off with an assessment and the opportunity analysis that I will do to bring in kind of a point of view on what I think their opportunities and yeah, and analyze their current situation. But as part of that process I need to listen to the customer. And so often what happens is we will either take existing research and is this seen data and analyze it together so that we might be looking at data in different ways or using the data to answer different questions and maybe what we all original research project was or we'll actually and bark on primary research to get that information and get that data. I will that right. What I find is that a lot of companies are reluctant to spend money on research even though they say they want to be customer centric and even the, they know that they need it for their brand.

DLY: (17:59)

They either think that they already know all the answers or you know, they just don't have the money or whatever. Yeah. So sometimes I will say, okay, well let's just start on this process and let's figure out how much we can do with the information we have. And it becomes pretty clear early on that they don't have all the answers and it also becomes clear the dangers of just making stuff up or making assumptions. You know, especially when you're talking about the customer experience and there are so many dynamics, so many inputs and elements that affect the customer experience that if companies really haven't dug into that in the past, there are big holes in their understanding of what customers want and need. I recently did a keynote for a bank card for all of their clients and one of their clients talked to me and said, you know, we just underwent a big voice of customer initiative and we were shocked at what we found out.

DLY: (18:58)

He said that we thought we knew what was important to customers. And so he had, we had been working really hard at those elements of the customer experience. But what we found when we did the voice of customer research is that we were working on totally the wrong thing. I think there's this statistic from Shankman that shows that 80% of business leaders think that they provide the superior customer experience, but only 8% of customers agree. And that gap of 80% to 8% doesn't exist because business leaders aren't concerned about customer experience or aren't working on customer experience. I think it's just because they're working on the wrong thing and until you really ask your customer and really do the deep digging, you won't really know what's important to them.

MD: (19:38)

Absolutely. I mean it's, it is the heart and soul. It is the starting point. If you don't know what it is that's driving your customers to make their decisions, if you don't understand the motivators behind what they're doing, then how can you possibly understand how to cater better to their needs and how can you possibly provide them with a better experience, right?

DLY: (19:57)

Absolutely. And I think that also a lot of times what you need to do, connect the dots in ways that other people haven't before. A customer might not even be able to articulate what a particular need is. But if you get into their lives and get into what they're trying to do in enough depth, you can almost get into it what do they really need? And that's when real innovation happens because people will tell you what they're trying to do or what they need and certainly you want to fulfill those expectations. But I think true innovation comes from like kind of seeing something where you're like, this is really what our customers want. They might not even know it or they might not even know that it's possible to fill that need, but here we are going to do. And then so I think that's really the key is to dig into what you're learning about customers and come up with new insights.

MD: (20:47)

That kind of goes along with that Steve Jobs quote that everybody kind of, I think in a sense kind of misuses and different opportunities where it's like the customer doesn't know, but he wants, you have to show him. I think that that is the misconception right there. It doesn't mean that you have to be death to what your customer is saying. It means that you have to understand them to a degree where you're able to predict what it is they'll need before they know it. Right?

DLY: (21:13)

Exactly. Yeah so at Sony the founder of the company, was it tremendous gentleman Akio Morita, and he was famous for having a quote, very similar to what Steve Jobs said. Just kind of like we don't ask the customers what they want, we tell them or say something like that. And so people interpret that to mean that you know, you just do what you want to do as a company. But the truth is that Mr. Morita, took a lot of time observing customers. You know, I remember reading stories about how he would like you ride the subways and Tokyo and just watch what people were doing. And from that, that's where like the Walkman was first discovered and developed as you know from him. Just kind of thinking about what do people really want. You're absolutely right. It's not about, you know, being deaf or kind of turning a blind eye, but actually looking deeper and looking more critically than other people do.

MD: (22:02)

And, and how would you suggest getting to know your customer to that degree? That's true. Customer journey mapping. What are some ways that you think companies can use internally and create processes for truly understanding their customer needs?

DLY: (22:15)

Well, in my first book, What Great Brands Do I talk about using anthropologically or anthropologically informed research methodologies, which do involve a lot more observation and a lot more research institute with a customer. There's definitely a place for, you know, the standard online survey or you know, whatever pull, you know that you might take an order to it, get a pulse of what your customers are thinking. But I think the real insights come from actually getting into their lives. And I have a colleague who is an ethnographer and yeah, he goes into people's kitchen and watches them prepare meals. He goes grocery shopping with them. He's there when the parents are packing lunches for their kid's school. And when you get into an observation mode and put yourself into your customer's shoes and into their lives, I think that's when real insight happens. And then to your point, then you start mapping out a journey of all of these critical moments that people go through. What are they trying to do? What does success look like in each one of those moments and then how do you design an experience that produces success?

MD: (23:29)

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MD: [\(23:57\)](#)

Do these steps come before developing the brand vision? Is that like a problem that sometimes happens where companies develop their vision before listening to their customer and then when it comes time to implement it, they've kind of got it backwards and then they're stuck?

DLY: [\(24:12\)](#)

This is an interesting debate or interesting area to talk about. I've always been of the belief that you need to be customer informed, but brand led, meaning that you need to be very informed by what the customer wants and needs and kind of all these insights, but then the day your brand, right? You need to lead from that place of the impact that you want to make in the world and kind of the purpose that you have behind you and the value that you're trying to create, the irreplaceable value that you're trying to create for four people. And so to me, I think you have to have that clear sense of your identity first, but then once you are informed by the customer, then you create a customer experience that brings that identity to life or delivers on that identity to that customer. This customer informed brand led approach is important because at the end of the day, if you take all your cues from your customer, if you have no sense of what you want to stand on the world and all you're doing is listening to customers and trying to figure it out from there, I think you will be very rudderless.

DLY: [\(25:19\)](#)

You will be directionless, you will not clearly stand for anything. And in this clutter competitive marketplace, you need to have that clear identity and clear essence. I think you need to start from that point. But in terms of developing the customer experience that delivers on that identity or delivers on that essence or delivers on it, that's where you need to be deeply informed by the customer. Does that make sense?

MD: [\(25:44\)](#)

Yes. And I'm actually smiling here because it actually got my mind running in a whole different direction and I love it when that happens because it means that someone has given me a new piece of information that I hadn't previously processed. And it creates a whole new train of thought where you have, what's the problem of too much listening to the customer and it's a whole new set of problems and issues and stuff where companies are so customer led to a point where they're shooting in all directions and they're not actually aiming anywhere. That's a thing.

DLY: (26:16)

That's a great way to put it, Mary. It's like, yeah, you need to be aiming for something, right? Otherwise you're gonna end up not hitting anything.

MD: (26:25)

A bit of a moment here for me because I'm adding a whole new factor into the way I think about things. So that's where it's important to know your brand as well or have a very firm positioning with the way that you present your brand to the world, to customers so that there is a certain consistency involved.

DLY: (26:47)

Yes, you have to have that point of view and then from there is where you build out.

MD: (26:53)

So when we're talking about a company like Sony, which you know you've brought up, so it's, it's a great one to mention. There has been a consistency coming from Sony and at times it was great. Other times not so great. There was a moment that Sony lost a lot of its market share, but eventually it picked back up and it has consistently been there over the years. Now is there something that you can share about the way that Sony tries to listen to their consumers and how they adopt that knowledge into the development of their products?

DLY: (27:24)

Well, it's been a while. I mean, as I said, I left the company 15 years ago, so I can't speak to what they're doing today. When I was with Sony, we did use these approaches, I introduced the anthropologically informed or anthropologically based research methodologies to the company as well as just, you know, a lot of more consumer research because I was the first ever brand officer at the company. And so prior to me joining, they did things kind of like what we were just talking about. They just kind of assumed that they knew. And for a while that work, especially when the company was smaller and more focused and when, you know, when he could come up with some great insight and his engineers could build this truth, this breakthrough product, you know, the world clamored after it and pay for a premium price for it.

DLY: (28:12)

But as competition grew and as the company grew, right, the need to be, I think more rigorous about consumer insights and more disciplined about getting consumer input that needed to happen. So I definitely was part of that process. But I will say that, you know, Sony is actually a good case study in many ways to what we're talking about. Core belief of the brand as we articulated was that Sony creates technologies that inspire people to dream and find joy. And that was this brand essence. And so for many years what that looked like was developing, using really cool devices, whether it was the Walkman or you know, then there was the really cool TVs and that was really good innovative digital cameras.

But what I think Sony failed to recognize was that as the world evolves, creating technologies and inspire people to dream and find joy meant more than just having a cool gadget or cool hardware. It meant that you needed create an entire solution for customers that involved software and content and services around that device. And because I think Sony didn't understand that or didn't get that, didn't make the shift to that quickly enough. That's when like Apple was able to just take over and dominate the marketplace and lobbies, other consumer electronic brands, roads. Well, Tony declined. Having this clear essence is important, but how you apply it. Again, these would be consumer informed and as your consumer changes you need to change how you apply that.

MD: [\(29:51\)](#)

We talk about this a lot on the blog that we write, which is a Science Behind Decisions blog about how fragile companies are nowadays and how easy it is to get caught up in yourself or caught up in your processes are in the size of your organization. And before you know it, somebody pops up out of the blue and takes over your entire market. But there are so are, you know apple has been used as like a shining beacon in the market for so long with so many best practices. But this is a very interesting moment because at this exact moment Apple's market share is actually decreasing for the first time in a while. And what we're seeing is apple kind of losing that throne that it's been on for so long, which just shows how cyclical the market is and that if you don't keep up or if somehow you misstep and it could even just be a small misstep. I think the general consensus is that right, they maybe got a little bit out of hand with their pricing. I'm not sure you can help me on that one to a point where it, it was no longer worth it for people to buy the iPhone because it's so freaking expensive at this point and it's so easy. The market is so commoditized to a point where the competition is really up there. Apple is no longer a product on its own. What's the secret here? How can you avoid this?

DLY: [\(31:10\)](#)

Well, you know, just last week I posted a video on LinkedIn where I was talking about apple and kind of related to what you were just describing and especially related to Apple's recent announcement that it was getting into services like curating content, kind of like Netflix or whatever. And I said, you know, I'm not sure if that is really coming from the core of the brand. It's certainly a way for the company to grow in a way for the company to tap into market demand for content. But is it really what Apple was made to do and what leverages the unique capabilities and unique qualities of the brand? It relates to what you're talking about because they think that, you know, apple has pivoted or has expanded into lots of different types of products and again isn't now expanding into different services. And I don't know if they're doing it the way that they should.

DLY: [\(32:09\)](#)

Certainly they're going to deliver this great experience. I mean I have every confidence that Apple will do well in whatever they do. But is it really leveraging the uniqueness of the

brand, which I kind of considered to be this like seamless intuitive user interface and this kind of philosophy of challenging the status quo or thinking different as their campaign said several years ago. And when you lose sight of that core and you start doing things just because that's where the market is taking you, I think that's when you open up your brand to all these competitive threats and when your brand begins to lose the value and maybe to your point, lose the draw for people to pay more for it because it's just not as unique. It's not as special as not as emotional as it once was.

MD: [\(32:59\)](#)

Do you think Apple is falling into the best practices trap where they're like, oh, look Amazon is successful at this Netflix, Disney, everybody's doing it. I guess I have to do it too. I mean, it seems like a kind of a rookie mistake for a company like Apple.

DLY: [\(33:16\)](#)

Believe me, I'm sure Tim Cook and the people who are leading Apple are brilliant, smarter than I could ever hope to be. You know, I, I wouldn't say that they are doing this without believing that it is strategically the right thing for the organization. And as I said, I mean it's really where the growth is coming from now. You know, we're getting to a point where smartphone penetration is, has flattened out and like you said, there's a lot more competition and so, you know, it's market share is, you know, flattening or falling. And so it's like how do you grow the company, especially when you are a huge public company, you need to continue to grow. And so, you know, this looks like the avenue for them to do it. I just didn't know whether they're doing it the way that makes it apple or whether it, it's going to be more of like a me too or a copycat or kind of always trying to keep up with everyone else as opposed to forging their own path, which is I think what Apple has done in the past.

MD: [\(34:12\)](#)

Right, like you said with their campaign, it doesn't seem like they're thinking differently this time. It seems like they're are thinking the same.

DLY: [\(34:18\)](#)

Yeah, absolutely. But you know, time will tell, we don't know. I've been surprised by apple many times, so we'll see.

MD: [\(34:27\)](#)

Well, I'm an Apple user myself, so I do hope that they stick around a lot longer. But you know, does lead me to maybe the final subject that I wanted to talk about. I read an article of yours where you're talking about Walmart and about how you don't think Walmart should just copycat Amazon. Cause if they do that it's not gonna work out. Are we once again getting into the best practices thing where people just copying the others and it proves disastrous for certain brands whereas it worked for maybe the initial one?

DLY: [\(34:55\)](#)

Yes. That article I wrote about is that, you know, Walmart has all of these great brick and mortar stores and the opportunity to interact in person with their customers as well as the use that real estate for other things besides, you know, retail. But what they seem to be doing, at least the time when I wrote the article was only emphasizing digital and only trying to kind of get to a point where they were at parody or maybe trying to one up Amazon, which everyone knows you. You can't just one up on Amazon. I'm sorry. That's not going to happen. So rather than leveraging their own strengths and saying, what are we good at? What are our capabilities and competencies? What do people love about the Walmart brand? And let's create a customer around that. I did believe that they were trying to imitate Amazon and yeah, it seems like now at Walmart is maybe realizing that they have strengths beyond what Amazon has to offer. And so I think that they are perhaps getting smarter about it, but it'll take a long time for them to catch up to the customer experience and customer centricity that everyone knows Amazon for.

MD: (36:04)

I thought their curbside pickup whole campaign and the whole idea was genius. I think that that, that is a way to appeal to the new generations that are up and coming. But I, as a millennial, old millennial, I'll be it. For me, the in store experience of Walmart is the worst that could possibly, like it doesn't get any worse, you know? So like for me it's for them to not focus on that. Like you said, you don't know your target audience, know the people that you cater to and provide them with a good experience and understand what you already have and or leverage off of what you already have. I mean for me the curbside pickup was great, but like you said, I, I do feel like they are overlooking an essential part of the core business, which is the in store experience.

DLY: (36:51)

Again, time will tell. Right.

MD: (36:54)

Absolutely. Denise, thank you so much for being on today. I really enjoyed this conversation. What are some ways that our listeners can hear from you, read your publications, and even getting in touch if they want?

DLY: (37:07)

Yeah. Well thank you Mary. I've enjoyed the conversation as well. You've actually in this prompt, some thoughts on my end also, so I think that that's the best kind of conversation. Awesome, and thank you for following up. I'm really my website, deniseleeyohn.com is really the portal to everything. Not only from there can you access my social accounts. I'm very active on LinkedIn and Twitter. My handles on both of those are Denise Leon, but you can get to them through my website, all sister, my website. You can find out more about the books that I mentioned and download free chapters from those folks as well as other free resources and other free materials, and then my website, Deniseleeyohn.com it's also where you can get access to all of the articles, blog posts, newsletters, all of the content that

I'm creating.

MD: (37:50)

That's awesome. Thank you so much. Denise is great to hear from you today. Thank you.

MD: (37:58)

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