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The State of Brand-Culture Fusion

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The current state of brand-culture fusion in business today is quite weak. The workplace culture at many organizations isn't aligned with their desired brand identities and employees aren't engaged with their organization's brand. In other words, many companies aspire to be perceived a certain way, but they're not operating in a way that supports that aspiration.

These findings come from the results of the Brand-Culture Fusion Assessment that I introduced in my new book *FUSION: How Integrating Brand and Culture Powers the World's Greatest Companies*. It's a free online tool designed to help a business leader understand the cultural values they need to cultivate inside their workplace to impact external perceptions of their brand identity -- and to assess how well-fused are their brand and culture today and what are specific areas for improvement.

(To get the background on Brand-Culture Fusion – the integration and alignment of how an organization is perceived and experienced on the outside and how it operates on the inside – check out the 1st and 2nd posts in this Brand+Culture Series.)

So far, hundreds of business leaders have taken the assessment and their inputs indicate huge gaps between their current and desired brand identities:

- For example, there is a 32 percentage point difference between those who say they want their company to be one that "introduces new concepts that substantively change the

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consistently creates something that's new and improved" (61%) and u...
companies are known for doing so today (33%) is almost as large.

- And, for the most highly desired brand attribute, "is highly dependable...
between the desired and existing states at their companies is also signif...
71%.)

While there's nothing wrong with desiring big changes and having bold br...
business leaders must understand what's holding them back from achieving...
brand identity and take responsibility for removing those barriers.

Other results from the assessment reveal two main reasons why these gaps...
and desired brand identity exist – and how those gaps might be closed:

#1 Reason for the Big Gap Between Existing and Desired Brand Identi...
organizational values that support the most desired brand identities are am...
people rated their existing organizations on the lowest. That is, the culture...
organizations doesn't fit with their brand aspirations.

For example, one of the most highly desired brand identities, an Innovative brand (a brand
that "introduces breakthrough products and technologies," "consistently creates something
that's new and improved," and "uses advanced materials, technologies, and systems") must
be supported by an organizational culture that values inventiveness, experimentation, and
continuous improvement. But inventiveness and experimentation are some of the lowest
values on which leaders rated their organizations.

Therefore, if business leaders want to develop an Innovative brand identity, they must
deliberately develop a culture around inventiveness, experimentation, and continuous
improvement. They must cultivate a mindset and promote attitudes and behaviors that
support innovation. To set the conditions for their desired culture to grow and thrive, they
might need to develop formal innovation programs such as an innovation lab or establish a
new innovation department or function. They should also look into ways to weave the
inventiveness, experimentation, and continuous improvement organizational values into the
employee experience (that is, all the interactions, steps, touchpoints in employees'
experiences with the company).

Action to Close the Gap: Deliberately cultivate a different culture -- one that aligns with
and advances your desired brand identity. _FUSION_ explains strategies for nurturing your
desired culture, and my latest blog post connects different brand identities to the
organizational values necessary to support them.

#2 Reason for the Big Gap Between Existing and Desired Brand Identities: Most
organizations do not practice robust employee brand engagement.
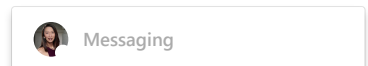
their company's brand. More robust than general engagement, employee br seeks to engage your employees with your brand so they think and act in th that produce the specific brand identity you desire. Currently employee bra isn't a priority for most organizations.

For example, only 54% of the business leaders who took the assessment ag company leaders expect everyone, not just the marketing department, to do build our brand." Only 38% agree, "Most employees have the skills and res to ensure they deliver on the brand promise," and only 35% agree, "Most e understand what makes our brand different and special from a customer pe

All employees need to be motivated and equipped with the knowledge, skil to build the brand, so that everything everyone does in the organization int reinforces it appropriately.

Action to Close the Gap: Actively and deeply engage every employee wit through employee brand engagement experiences and tools and internal bra communications campaigns. Chapter 7 of *FUSION* provides more instructi actions and relays case studies from MGM Resorts, Mitchell International, others that have successfully used employee brand engagement to support their desired brand identities and meet their business goals.

The current state of brand-culture fusion might be lacking, but business leaders who are committed to diagnosing the disconnect and making the changes to align brand and culture are able to do so.

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In the coming weeks, I'll continue to provide insights about the fusion of brand and culture, or the lack thereof, including more results from the Brand-Culture Fusion Assessment that dig into differences between B2B vs. B2C companies, large vs. small, etc. Subscribe to the Brand+Culture Series so you don't miss out on future posts.

For now, I'd like to invite Series subscribers to contribute to an upcoming post on the barriers to integrating and aligning brand and culture. Please share: **Why don't more business leaders and their organizations fuse brand and culture?** Please either respond in the comments or email me directly (if you don't know my email address, use this contact page: http://deniseleeyohn.com/contact). Please share your insights in 150 words or less. I'll synthesize your inputs and include them in a future post. Looking forward to tapping your wisdom and experience!

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