

30x30x30 Blogathon

A Personal Branding Tour





30x30x30 Blogathon

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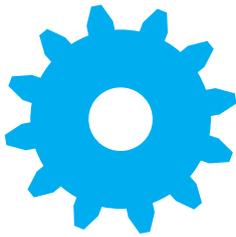
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30x30x30 blogathon: Foreword by Paolo Feroletto

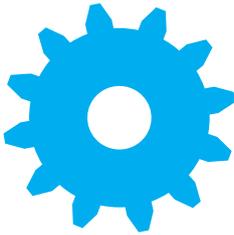
What started as a quick ‘Tweet’ in reply to a request for blog contributors has led me to become involved in a special project within a group of inspirational thought leaders. The Blogathon is a wonderful example of how Social Media can bring people together to collaborate and share their knowledge, delivering informative content around the subject of Personal Branding.

The variation of content is exceptional, offering many angles on the subject with each contributor delivering through their own definitive personality and voice. Personal Branding is an emotive subject with differing opinions on its use and viability, yet I believe it’s an important part of our lives. This eBook strengthens that belief, and I have re-read many of the articles knowing they will enhance my own Personal Brand in the future.

The life experience of each contributor is evident, offering value to the reader: those looking for an introduction to the subject or to further develop their own Personal Brand. The benefits of exploring the eBook are clearly laid out with concise information that encourages immediate action, each with their own positive spin on the subject. I would encourage every reader to take time to read each contribution and discover how Personal Branding can impact on their daily lives.

On a personal level, I am grateful to have been involved and have begun many interesting and positive relationships through this project. I look forward to future collaborations. Enjoy the eBook!





30x30x30 blogathon: Introduction by Peter Sterlacci

Someone in my brand community who knows I am a cycling fanatic mentioned to me that this 30x30x30 blogathon was much more than a “Sunday ride” but rather a cycling tour like the “Tour de France”. While I never really thought about it that way, it certainly makes a lot of sense.

A Sunday ride is a simply a single day. While I love spending a day on the bike by myself, the experience is always better when accompanied by my cadre of cycling companions. We challenge each other, help each other with riding technique, and support each other to finish the ride. The conversation over coffee afterwards is filled with laughter and we literally glow from the feeling of accomplishing yet another glorious Sunday ride. Our community stays strong, we stay connected by a common bond, and we meet again a week later.

A cycling tour consists of consecutive days of riding with a goal to complete ‘x’ number of miles per day within a designated time limit. Each day of a tour is of course a single ride, but the the goal is to complete every day. In professional racing the grand “Tours” such as the Tour de France are an intense challenge of fitness, endurance, willpower, and teamwork to ideally get all team members across the finish line on the final day. It is rare for every team member to complete the entire tour, but when they do the feeling is certainly glorious!

Well, the 30x30x30 Personal Branding Blogathon was certainly my 30-day “tour”. I recruited a cadre of 30 “riders” to join me on this journey and each day we supported each other by sharing our experience and lessons from our rides. Of course, as the ride captain I faced some challenges with detours and late finishes. But in the end we all crossed the 30-day finish line together. We are now a connected by a common bond! We are finishers of the 30x30x30 Personal Branding Tour!

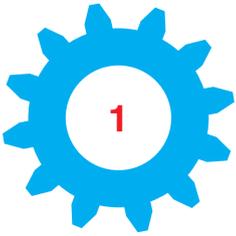
This Blogathon eBook is meant to be a guide to help you on your personal branding journey by giving you 30 days of amazing thought leadership. Feel free to approach it from the viewpoint of 30 individual “Sunday rides” each with its own special route. Enjoy a ride and come back another day to ride a different route with a new lesson to learn from a new ride leader. Or, saddle up, grab your water bottles and start the grand Tour by cycling through all 30 amazing days. My only request is to share your riding experience with others and build your cadre of cycling companions to enjoy the blogathon ride with you. Share this eBook by tweeting:

***“I am cycling through the 30x30x30 Personal Branding Blogathon eBook.
Join the **FREE** ride here!”***



On a final note, I want to thank “The Thirty” who made this tour possible. I look forward to embarking on another grand tour in the future. ***Ride on!***





Screw ‘Dents’... I want to make an ‘Immense Gaping Hole...’

Todd Nielsen
www.asliceofleadership.com



I have many regrets about the life I’ve lived—coupled with equal failures to accompany those regrets. But the biggest failure —and the regret that leads them all—was the failure to grasp my full potential earlier in life. I’ve always worked hard, but I haven’t always worked smart. I’ve sought success, but I didn’t always plan for that success. Since I failed to grasp all that I could become; I never defined what success looked like, nor focused my actions toward it.

A handful of years ago I experienced a “renewal.” After selling a company I had founded, I began to realize that I needed something more. I desired more: wisdom, success, and meaning—in every area of my life. I consumed knowledge, and I worked even harder. I wrote my first book, started a very successful leadership blog, and extended myself into every opportunity that interested me.

Success came slowly, but it wasn’t enough. Soon, I realized I needed to focus my energy. I could not find any guidance to help me do this in a way that was right for me, so I created The Ultimate Personal Success Plan. For two years, I have used that, updated it, and tweaked it to fit my aspirations.

What Kind of Dent am I Making?

Then recently, I saw the title of an article that had something to do with making a dent in the world. I didn’t read the article, or see who the author was. But the concept stayed with me; the thought kept piercing my mind: “What kind of dent am I making?” I was struggling with the way my life was going. The success I was having was good, but it wasn’t enough—or maybe it just wasn’t ...meaningful.

As I pondered this one night, thinking about how a dent is the result of an impact (a hammer striking a wall, a heavy object dropping to the ground), and how the size of the impact determines the dimension and depth of the dent, the thought struck me:

What’s the gaping hole that I want to create in the world? I am still working on that, but I want to make a difference in people’s lives, do something useful, create something meaningful ...be somebody who makes other people’s lives better, and of course improve the quality of my life and that of my family. So I find myself again redefining my Ultimate Personal Success Plan, almost halfway through the year. In doing this, I recognized that my aspirations needed greater impact.

I couldn’t settle for slow, small impacts. I realized that if I wrote the most meaningful article of all time, or was the most eloquent speaker, or had the most brilliant idea... it would lose impact, if no one knew who I was. I needed a multiplier, something to expand my impact, like higher octane fuel in a car. I needed something that would shape me, Todd Nielsen, focus me, Todd Nielsen, position me, Todd Nielsen and extend my platform, sooner, rather than waiting for critical-mass.



I didn’t accept it at first, but it turns out what I needed ...was personal branding

Personal branding—first introduced in *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill, encompasses aspects of presence, both online and offline. It unites one’s purpose (Mission), long-term focus (Vision), and the standards (Values) that guide behaviors in order to create a package that exemplifies, you. It incorporates position consistency, to ensure your actions have greater impact—to advance one’s career, and one’s goals.

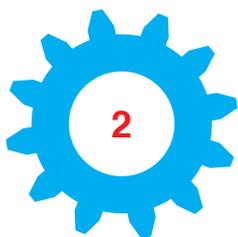
I’m now working to focus not only on what I’m good at, but also on *linking my personal brand to what I’m good at*. I’m working with coaches who help keep me focused on my success.

In this world of brilliant people, those who do not embrace personal branding will find themselves falling behind those that might be less brilliant, yet better positioned through branding. It is not something to take lightly.

Simply making “a dent,” ...just isn’t adequate

This Personal Branding Blogathon is not just another excuse for content. Personal branding is real, and it is powerful. By focusing our talents, understanding our potential, and multiplying it all through personal branding, we can have the tools to make a difference, to position ourselves for greater success and meaning. Now is the time to start ripping open a cavernous, gaping hole! **Because simply making “a dent,” ...just isn’t adequate.**





Buy Curious? How to Make Your Personal Brand a Conversation Starter

Tea Silvestre
www.thewordchef.com



We've all been there. You take a deep breath. Button up your jacket. And walk into a room filled with strangers. Maybe you're hopeful. Maybe you're nervous. Either way, when that first person stretches out their hand and asks, "So...what do YOU do?" Is your go-to response something fascinating?

Be honest.

Do you skip over the opportunity to pique someone's curiosity and just go with, "I'm a [fill in the blank]." (e.g. "I'm a bookkeeper, life coach, etc.")? Hey, I've had to corral my share of butterflies. I know it's not as easy as it sounds.

Yes, walking into a room full of strangers with the goal of making a lasting impression on even just one person can feel terribly daunting. But your opening line doesn't need to hit people over the head in order to be effective. After all, the first step to gaining a new customer is turning someone into a prospect. And in order for that to happen, they've got to know, like and trust you.

Let's start that ball rolling, shall we?

Prepare a Teaser Opening

One of the things we know to be true about humans: we're a curious bunch. And nothing gets our curiosity bone tickled more than something strange, weird or off-the-wall.

So here's what I want you to do:

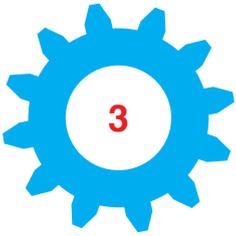
1. Find an active verb that speaks to the benefit you provide your customers. Here are some choice examples to get you started: help * encourage * stimulate * nourish * pamper * create * explore * serve * push * pull * save * find * instigate
2. Find a word or very short phrase to describe your ideal customers. See if any of these fit: Moms * Writers * Baby-boomers * Nerds * Crafty-folks * Foodies * Tweens * Tech-Geeks * Solopreneurs
3. Find a word or two to describe the result your ideal customers are looking for. Note: Do NOT be specific here. Choose something a little bit vague and mysterious. So for example, Feel 20 years younger is better than just Lose weight; or Attract the right attention vs. find a husband.
4. Now string them all together and see how they work. Here's an example for someone who might call themselves a book agent: I help new authors navigate treacherous waters. Me? My response is I help small biz owners find and share their Secret Sauce with the world.

Sounds a tad more interesting than a pat answer like, "I'm a marketing consultant," right?

You know what happens when I use this kind of opening? The person I'm talking with usually responds with some form of "Really?! And how do you do that?" They actually ask me to share myself (my personal brand and what that means) with them in a way that I would otherwise not have the opportunity to do.

I have a perfect opening to take the conversation deeper and find out more about the prospect (don't forget: the conversation really needs to be about her). **Which is the whole point.**





A Career vs. A Calling

Srinivas Rao

www.theskooloflife.com



When You Can't Imagine Doing Anything Else

A few days ago my sister graduated from medical school. When you consider the decade of schooling that goes into it, our family is obviously very proud of what she's accomplished. During happy hour after her graduation, I asked her "when did you know that this was what you wanted to do?" Although she had the desire to become a doctor since junior high school, she said there came a point in college when she realized she couldn't imagine herself doing anything else. Her desire to become a doctor went from being a career choice to a calling.

So many of us ignore our calling, neglecting the most important factor in finding work we love. We confuse survival with success and get caught up in the ego driven pursuit of a life that looks good on paper. Fear, self doubt, risk aversion and the hidden dangers of other people's expectations keep us from taking a leap of faith.

The Difference Between What's Good for You and What's Best for You

What's good for you is safety, security, and comfort. Play it safe, drive through life with the emergency break on, and don't get too close to the edge. This is how many people approach life. When we operate from this place, we become the victim of self imposed limitations. Doing what's best for you is hard. You'll be judged, criticized, and questioned for your choices. The parental sign off or seal of approval is something that we all strive for. There will even be moments when it feels like you're not doing what's best for you. But if you don't trust your gut instead of popular opinion, it always comes back to bite you in the ass.

You must resist the temptation to quit. When you get to the point of no return it's inevitable that you'll exceed your own expectations.

Dreams and Ambitions Come in Different Shapes, Colors and Sizes

Some of us are lucky enough to have our calling and our careers blend, while others have to embrace the sex and cash theory. And there's nothing wrong with that. But many people paint their masterpiece in black and white. They become victims of social programming and see the world through lenses that they didn't even choose.

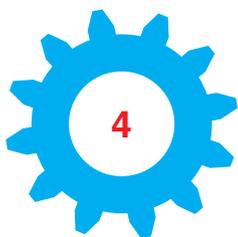
If you want to visit every country in the world, become fluent in 3 months, or ride 60 foot waves then by all means pursue that goal. Tribes of people doing supposedly impossible things are emerging every single day.

What Do You Want to be When You Grow Up?

It's a question we're asked over and over as children? Even though there are no wrong answers to this question, we act as though there are and dreams deflate because of it. "Not everybody can be... you can't, it's not possible"...fill in the blank and "you should, it's best if" and the cycle of of self doubt begins.

There are probably waves I'll never surf. But a few days ago, I was toying around with another mission, surf every coastline in in the world where there are waves before I turn 40. Why? **Because, to live any other way would be completely insane.**





Finding the Inspiration for a Brand You Love

Kimberly Bordonaro
www.kimberlybordonaro.com



Have you ever wondered why some people are able easily find something they love to do, make a living doing it, and even inspire others along the way?

Maybe you feel your heart isn't in your work.

Maybe you believe your work can't involve your passions.

Maybe, like Jack Johnson sings, you're drawing too many lines in the sand.

Jack Johnson: You And Your Heart: View Video Here: <http://youtu.be/BWVnZAJaq4Q>

“You and Your Heart Shouldn't Be So Far Apart”

I'll admit it. I was that person who thought that business and passions had nothing to do with each other – even though I secretly wished for years that I could incorporate the two.

It started when I was in the mortgage industry. I was a horrible loan officer. I hated selling loans. It wasn't “my thing” but it was my job. I knew I didn't want to spend my life that way. Have you ever felt that way about a job? I was doing the daily motions of work that didn't reflect anything about me or what I wanted to do with my life. And my production reflected my inner-turmoil.

Instinctually, I kept going back to my public relations and marketing background. I felt most alive when I was helping people market themselves and I looked for ways to include this into my life as a mortgage consultant. I created mastermind groups for loan officers and taught them how to brand and market themselves. Soon, mortgage companies sought after me to train their loan officers.

One day, I had a light bulb go off in my head one day and recognized that branding was my thing. I also realized that when I focused on incorporating what inspired me into my everyday life – including my business – my opportunities increased and my reputation grew.

People Are Not One Dimensional and Neither is Your Personal Brand

I'm passionate about branding and I've made a career based on that; however, what inspires me does not end there. There is another place where you will find my heart – in music.

From as early as I can remember (and this dates back to a five-year-old Kimberly belting out the Eurhythmics every day on a school bus to a less than thrilled audience of elementary school kids), I have been fascinated with lyrics.

I have a special talent for illuminating lines in songs and applying them to situations in way that helps people relate and understand. When I started my company, I knew that I wanted to take this talent and combine it with branding, which has become the signature mark of my personal brand.

Find Your Brand Passion in 7 Questions or Less

Some people instantly know their passions. Others need a nudge or two to discover them. If you're like me and need a nudge, here's a list of questions to guide you:

If you were to open a bookstore (solely based on the books, magazines, and informational products you already have in your home library), how would you breakdown the category sections of your store?

If you were to ask your friends what “your thing” is (talent, skill, expertise), what would they respond?

When you were a kid, what did you enjoy doing the most?

What are you willing to wake up at 4:00 am to eagerly do?

Is there an injustice in this world that really angers you or fires you up?

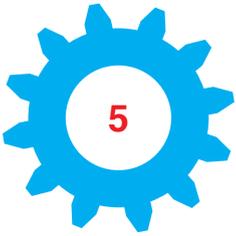
Which causes do you volunteer or donate to and why?

If money, failure, and/or other people's judgments were not factors, what would you spend your days doing?

Discovering what drives you is just half the journey. You must find a way infuse your passions into your personal brand.

Use examples from famous people to inspire creative opportunities to incorporate your passions into your brand and everyday life.





Spirituality, Social Media and Personal Branding

Dr. Amit Nagpal
www.dramitnagpal.co.in



Becoming Spiritual is the First Step to Becoming a Great Personal Brand

“Spirituality and personal branding-what the hell are you talking, you have gone bonkers”, you must be thinking this. Before you curse me further, let me explain this.

When I told this title to my mother (who gets the credit for inspiring me to take the inner journey), she got zapped and told me, “Amit, I think you have meditated a bit too much and you are seeing relationships and connections, where none exist. Are you not getting a bit hyper-creative and mixing oil and water? Personal Branding is about external presentation and spirituality is about inner transformation.”

This time I decided not to take my mother for granted and decided to give her a well-thought, professional reply. I said, “Firstly, image management is about external presentation and personal branding is about personal growth besides communicating the values you stand for.” I continued, “Secondly, yes I am mixing oil and water but spirituality and personal branding are like a couple who have a bitter fight during the honeymoon and later emerge as the most compatible couple. Thirdly, if you are not convinced with the relationship after reading my article, I will not send it to Peter, who suggested writing a full article on this theme after our discussion on the social media and future of society.”

And I began taking notes on my mobile right during the commuting to office today. Something beautiful was coming up. I must thank Supreme Consciousness (or God, if you like it that way) for the inspirations and Peter for the gentle suggestion.

So what exactly do I mean?

To me spirituality is primarily about two activities viz. inner journey/transformation (I change, Everything changes) and mastering the wild horse called mind.

Social Media and Personal Branding

Social Media success is dependent upon primarily three factors viz. content, engagement and collaboration. To differentiate between success and mega success on social media, I have created two equations which are given below:-

Social Media Success (SMS) = Good Content(C) + Engagement (E) + Collaboration (CO)

Social Media Mega Success (SMMS) = Mindful content (MC) + Passionate Engagement (PE) + Heartfelt Collaboration (HC)

Hence SMS = C + E + CO

& SMMS = MC + PE + HC



Spirituality and Personal Branding

Here are the 7 connections I found between spirituality and personal branding. Let me explain in a format of how spirituality can help you build a great Personal Brand.

Connection 1: Becoming Spiritual helps you in discovering your deepest passion

Silence is the best way to connect with our inner selves. It may take time and effort but it is worth it because we come to know our deepest desires, our life purpose and what do we truly want out of life. A cluttered mind or a pressured mind just running the rat race will never even find out what her true desires were.

Connection 2: Becoming Spiritual makes you more creative

A direct connection has been found between meditation and creativity. The same has been discussed by Indian spiritual guru Osho and personal branding expert Dr Hubert Rampersad (in his book on authentic personal branding). Personally I wrote a blog long back on how I regained my lost creativity through meditation. Scientific research also talks of theta brain waves being released during meditation which improves creativity (or gives us inspiration).

Connection 3: Becoming spiritual makes you see the goodness in others, making you a better collaborator

Social media is not a platform where you can use a dictatorial style of leadership and expect your friends/connections/followers to follow your commands. Either your content has to be excellent and people feel like sharing it with their network, or they have a certain soft corner for you because of your courteous behavior. A true personal brand does not talk about himself/herself but is talked about by other people. Other people make you a personal brand. So let us get out of the 'I' mode and get into the 'You' mode. Moving from an 'I' to 'You' mode is not easy because we are inherently selfish. Trusting others and becoming less selfish requires either high level of maturity or a spiritual inclination. Henry Miller says "Develop an interest in life as you see it. The people, things, literature, music-the world is so rich, simply throbbing with rich treasures, beautiful souls and interesting people. Forget yourself."

Connection 4: Becoming spiritual means you will inspire trust

A genuinely spiritual person with a higher level of consciousness is more likely to inspire trust in others. When you inspire trust, you will find it easy to spend the time in engaging and conversing with your social media network resulting in passionate engagement and a loyal following. Only if you truly love humanity, will it work. I remember reading in Readers Digest that one percent of people are psychopaths. Forgive the negative people for your own peace as they tend to have a chemical imbalance. Also remember, a drama of being spiritual will not last long and your posts and comments will reveal your true nature and immaturity.

Connection 5: Becoming spiritual makes you aspire for personal growth

Once your consciousness level goes up you have more inclination for personal growth. You will start looking within for things gone wrong. You will realize that the locus of control is inside you and not outside you. Spirituality says we write our own destinies with our thoughts and actions. Once you start believing this, you will make an attempt to control negative thoughts and avoid negative actions. Since the blame game is over, you will start a new game, where you are the captain, the skipper, the woman in charge. Most of us live with the blame game psyche and we find fault everywhere except with us. Since spirituality makes you go within, you develop an attitude of reflecting and introspection. And you are ready to take charge of your life and your brand.

Connection 6: Becoming spiritual means you develop the enthusiasm required for a journey of passion

Spirituality will connect you with beautiful people from across the world, who will give you positive energy with their positive (online or offline) company. Spirituality will make you more sensitive to vibrations and energy in your environment and help you block negative energy. Thus you will get all the energy to continue with your passionate journey. Someone has rightly said, "Passion and persistence do not make dreams easy, they only make them possible." Keep the negative people away from your environment as far as possible and bring a circle of people around you who uplift you even if it means more online company than offline company. Spirituality will help you take that leap of faith required for a journey of passion, whether as an entrepreneur or intrapreneur.

Connection 7: Becoming Spiritual means developing a truly Global Mindset

Spirituality says humanity is interconnected and we all are the leaves of the tree called humanity. Of course we have closer relationships with our social networks (they belong to the same twig) and the people of our country or state belong to the same branch. Although we share a closer and special relationship with our family/social networks, we need to respect people who do not belong to our networks. After all they belong to the same tree too.

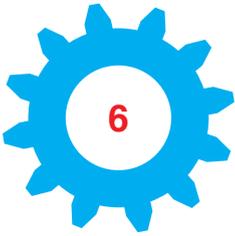
If you post racist content (reflecting your racist beliefs), you are likely to raise an uproar and find it difficult to connect with people of that community. For example, there is a proverb in the west, "There are too many chiefs and not enough Indians." If you have global ambitions such updates and beliefs can put you in trouble. Rather develop respect for all ethnic groups, religions, cultures and races, in your own interest. In fact, as your consciousness level goes up, it will happen automatically.

A Journey Worth the Effort

Remember there are no short cuts in this journey. It is going to take time and effort but the result will be that you will emerge as a Great and Global Personal Brand and not a "Me too". Meditation results will take time, attitudinal change will take time and becoming truly spiritual also means you will face many obstacles from the mind and society. Keep reminding yourself great ideas are initially ridiculed, slowly accepted and finally accepted (as obvious) and appreciated. My best wishes for the journey!

Teilhard De Chardin has rightly said, "We are not human beings having a spiritual experience, but we are spiritual beings having a human experience." So my dear readers does it not make sense to become Spiritual and begin the inner journey. And oh yes I forgot to tell you, my mother agreed that I was not being hyper-creative and there was a **relationship between spirituality and personal branding**.





How Does Your Personal Brand Translate Online?

Steve Wainwright
www.profiled.com



Your Google CV

If you don't know why your online presence is important in communicating your personal brand, ask yourself this question: "If you're looking to place a piece of business or you've been booked to go to a business meeting with someone you don't know – what's the first thing you do?". More than likely – you'll Google them.

In fact, most people use the internet to validate the people they're looking to do business with, so making sure your 'Google CV' accurately reflects your personal brand is hugely important when establishing your reputation and credibility with a new contact.

Taking up the first page of Google with links to your LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook accounts is great – however this can cause your internet identity to become fractured and it can prove difficult for potential contacts to piece together a true reflection of who you are and what you do. Google will always be the first port of call for new contacts researching you and, since 'people buy from people', you need to make sure that the first impression they get is a positive one.

The following personal branding steps provide a great framework to kick-start your personal brand online and will have potential contacts eating out of the palm of your hand in no time:

Step 1: Tell your story

That Google search may be the only time you get to tell your story and communicate what you're all about to your potential new contact. Don't be shy – make sure you have a professional profile which tells your story for you and is 'on brand'. By the time your contact has finished reading they've either been convinced to deal with you (great!) or they've had enough information to know that you're not the right fit for the job (again – great, it's saved you both time and effort!). Either way, the internet has worked for you.



Step 2: Monitor your Google CV

Ensure that you know what people are posting about you, it's an essential part of your business armoury. You may be surprised where and in what context things from the past crop up again. Given that we're all busy people and can't spend every day Googling ourselves, simply automate the monitoring of what people post about you so you have it delivered to you. It's vital that you know and can react to what your contacts can find with as little effort as possible. There are two great tools you can use to do this:

Step 3: Influence the first page of Google

Ensuring you manage the top 10 results about you is a case of ensuring that those results are the most relevant to you. Creating content which is relevant to you and shows off your expertise will ride high in Google and you will start to dominate your Google CV. Your professional profile, your blog, interviews and guest blogs, LinkedIn and Twitter pages all rank highly so make sure you're generating appropriate content.

Step 4: It doesn't have to be all business

Allow your personality to shine through when you're creating your profile, blogs and social media presence as this allows people to connect and relate to you. If your contacts share your values and they like and trust you then they will be more inclined to do business with you rather than your competitors. One of the most popular features on Profiled.com is the 60 second interview feature. The way people answer the interview questions speaks volumes about their values and outlook which is vital when communicating your personal brand online.

Step 5: Position yourself as an expert

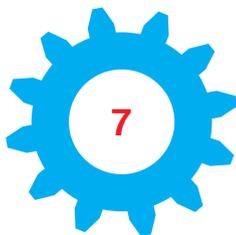
Blogs are a great way to position yourself as an expert in your field and they're hugely influential with Google when new contacts are searching for you. Stick to your core topic and make sure that the content is interesting and relevant to your readers. So if you've got plenty of useful and relevant things to say then writing a blog will be hugely beneficial.

Summary

When communicating online present yourself fairly, honestly and in line with your personal brand values. Your contacts will instantly recognise people that they can do business with and will connect with you without even having met you if you have interesting content and provide a 3D view of yourself online.

The people who have recognised that the online world is now almost exclusively informing the offline world have recognised that a **strong personal brand online is now an essential business tool and is key to business success.**





Bootstrapping Social Media Tools

Saul Fleischman
www.osakabentures.com



Bootstrapping Social Media Tools

Increasingly, those who read my blog are dipping at least a toe or two into the waters of collaboration, and so I thought to tell people, old friends and new ones, what I have been doing most recently.

Being Useful

I want cooperation from people with abilities I don't have and so I help worthwhile people with what they need, drawing on my strengths. Okay, truth be told, I actually enjoy helping people, whether it be with SEO basics, WordPress issues, or what I am mostly doing: lean startup team-building and social media tool creation, and just plain getting things made.

I have to get tools made and live, whether they are instantly profitable or not. I have come to understand that what people know me for is know-how that they don't want to pay for, and any way you slice it, is not going to produce a level of revenue that will allow me the freedom to continue

Taking my own ideas and those of collaborators, refining them together, and then bootstrapping their creation and launch.

Blogging, the ins and outs of crowdsourcing, proprietary technology securing for light startups, CMS, syndication, curation, aggregation, aggravation, blogger character assassination: we've talked on this, whether you consider "talking" the ideas going around on my blog and comments or in a G+ Hangout or my favorite communication channel (figure this one out, why don't you?), the discussions are plentiful. Seven days/week for me, in fact, I'm talking with people in Japan and worldwide, trouble-shooting each others' plans and crowdfunded launches, and so on.

What really floats my boat, however, is the $1+1+1=5,000$ math of starting up and creating new things, drawing on the varied abilities of tiny creative teams: ultralight startup initiation. I am now mainly working on a few projects (I am not at liberty to provide specifics) which at least aim to be fun and useful, innovative social media tools. We are taking each others' hair-brain "got part of it/stuck on the..."-type ideas, refining them together, creating visualizations to facilitate our understanding of what we are refining our projects into, and then

Bootstrapping Web Apps

Specifically, the projects range from...

- Ronald de Block's Facebook Fanpage ebook's introduction, re-branding and marketing
- IdeasWatch.com user experience and community building
- The creation of a content sharing site tag optimization tool
- and even a darkly comedic site that will showcase and celebrate a growing, vibrant, ever-changing and community-nominated selection of only the most mind-bogglingly imbecilic bloggers ever to pollute the blogosphere (what, you thought I was "nice?" Wrong guy, wrong blog.) Our scope is wide; we may not need to look beyond Triberr, however.
- and a couple other Facebook games and mobile apps that are so, so hot, I won't even hint at what our mad scientists aim to release into the atmosphere...



These projects are fun, working on them is a joy (even when headaches and hiccups arise) and they all aim to bring people together, and do something fairly good. We don't get involved in projects we can't feel good about bringing into existence. What's more, I find that I am usually the loud-mouth who insists that we at least offer to showcase the talents of every single person who contributed substantially to the realization of what we create.

And Credit Their Asses Publicly!

This is something I see scant little of, and something I believe to be important. We know that we will not make money with everything we build and launch. We don't accept your work, however, without finding a way that we all feel good about – to CREDIT YOU properly for your contributions, whether they be short or long-term involvements.

If we're talking regularly, you know it is you who I am thrilled to be working with. I am sleeping less and less – yet more and more energetic and creative, and it do think you are the cause of this trend. You are more visual than I am, and so I just flip when I see the logos and wireframes you come up with. My temperature rises when php, .net and JAVA backend people read a specs document and show us other things that they could also do that would enhance the features we will provide to our site users. I appreciate the chance to work with people whose brains are wired much differently than my own – **and**

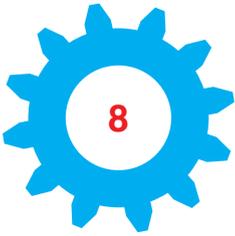
We stumble, we redefine the scope and aims of projects sometimes (ouch!), and we learn from the little perks as well as the little pains.

Albert Einstein said that that's okay: "a person who never made a mistake never tried anything new."

I wonder what Einstein would have thought of FAQs? I love working with a web director and user experience colleague who remarked, on my addition of an FAQ link on the top page of one of our sites being developed, "no instructional videos, no FAQs. These are evidence of design ineptitude." Albert probably would have sided with Michal; we know him also for "intellectuals solve problems; geniuses prevent them."

Do you have half a cockamamie idea for a social media tool, a Facebook learning game, cloud-based education or translation system, but perhaps not all the skills to do it all yourself? **If you actually care more about getting it made soon, and done very professionally, then get talking with us, and let's see where our synergies are strongest.**





Be Brandtastic! 5 Golden Rules for an ICONIC Personal Brand Experience

Tanvi Bhatt

personalbrandingindia.wordpress.com



Icons are loved; Icons are revered; Icons are Fantastic!

What if I tell you it doesn't take much to be an Icon-The Apple of your Industry's Eye! (Pun, intended) All you need is what Steve Jobs had when he brought Apple back (thanks to the brilliance of Ken Segall) from the brink of bankruptcy – Passion & Vision.

If Life is a Canvas, Passion adds color to it! Every Individual's life is a unique portrait of passions that add vitality & vigor to an otherwise monochromatic existence. Passion when channeled with a Vision empowers an Individual to build a legacy, larger than life, that inspires the world to come! If every Individual decides to follow his Passion, and transform his Vision into a reality; we would have a league of truly ICONIC Individuals like Jobs who can create History!

Create a 'Brandtastic' Experience

There are Icons & there are ICONS; Legendary ICONS leverage on the power of Personal Branding to create Fantastic Experiences for their audience that touch hearts & inspire lives. To catapult Your Brand into the league of such ICONIC Individuals, I present you with the concept of **Brandtastic™** Fantastic Brand Experiences: Building an ICONIC Personal Brand that manifests the power of Fantastic Experiences for the Community, time after time.

Rule 1: Pour Your Brand's SOUL

The SOUL of Your Brand is the essence of Your Brand that distinguishes you from the herd. For Apple, it's Innovation; For Volvo it's Safety; For Richard Branson it's Adventure; For Oprah it's Compassion. Once you've discovered it, religiously incorporate it into every aspect of your Personal Brand and bring your Brand to Life.

Rule 2: Brand your VOICE

Building a Brand, in reality is building a Reputation. Your Brand has a VOICE (the art of communicating & expressing your Brand) of its own, which is responsible for building the desired Brand Reputation: both, online & offline. Adopt a uniform Brand Content theme across the following vehicles, infused with the SOUL of your brand.

Your Brand Bio: Your first snapshot of Personal Brand

Your Gravatar: Your Global window of Brand Expression

Your Professional Photo: Your Professional Brand snapshot on LinkedIn

Your Virtual Real Estate: Your Website, Blog and Social Media alter egos

Your Brand Tangibles: Your Business Cards & other paraphernalia

A consistent Brand Communication & Expression builds an alluring Brand Voice and a steadfast Brand Reputation.

Rule 3: Brand your Experience

Excite them online & Enchant them offline, is my motto! You are your Brand in Action- Conceive a Signature Look and Feel that is pulsating with the SOUL of Your Brand. A Personal Tip: Have a Signature Greeting & Sign off when on Podium; introduce them to an ICONIC Brand & Sign out with an Inspiring Brand Experience.

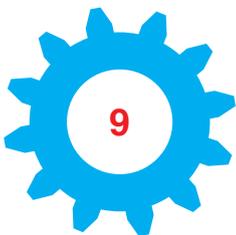
Rule 4: Brand Your Value Proposition:

Make people WANT to work with you, and only YOU. Offer them an indispensable rational value proposition and garnish it with an irresistible emotional value proposition-in terms of what ONLY you can do for them.

Rule 5: Be Yourself; Be Awesome; Be Brandtastic!

Personal Branding can indeed be a daunting task if you keep working on creating a decorated image of yourself; hence prima facie, Personal Branding is often viewed with unwarranted skepticism. The beauty of Life lies in its Simplicity; and the beauty of Personal Branding lies in the Simplicity of Being Yourself, all along.





Redefining Brand You in a New Language and Culture

Gabby Wallace
www.gonaturalenglish.com



One of the most enjoyable parts of learning a new language is that it gives us the opportunity to redefine ourselves. First we discover the difficulty of directly translating some phrases and cultural norms from our first language. Then we learn new phrases and the new culture that goes with them. Then, we must choose how to express ourselves so that our personal brands make sense in our new sociolinguistic environment.

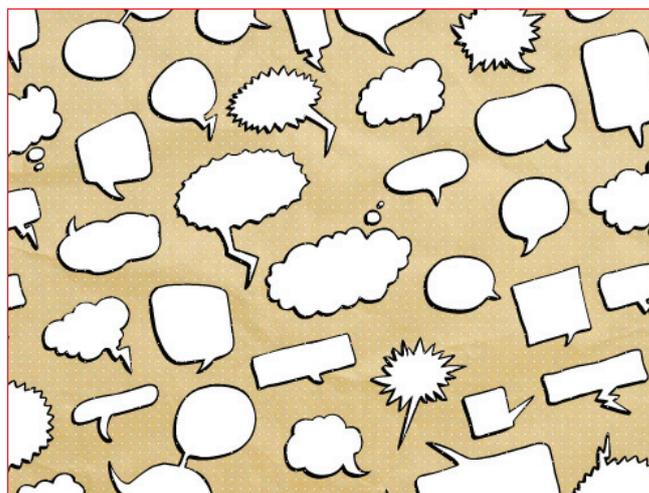
Simple Words & Phrases Define Your Brand in Another Language

When I lived in Japan, I became aware of different verb choices for expressing respect, formality, or friendship and informality. Although the levels of formality contained in verb conjugations are specific to Japanese, every language has a way of expressing different levels of respect and formality. For an example, let's look at greetings in English. Many English learners prefer to stick with the tried-and-true "How are you? I am fine, thank you and you." This is textbook language, and appears too stiff and boring for all but the most formal situations. It is more common to say, "How's it going? (It's going) good, you?"

And if you are in an inner-city area like Harlem, New York City, you might find it comfortable to say, "What's up? Not much." But you probably wouldn't say that in Texas, where you might be more likely to hear, "Howdy, folks." These are contextual and regional differences. Finding the right fit may feel like the traditional story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Observe and then try out some different phrases for yourself.

Additionally, I learned that only men should say "boku" in Japanese to refer to themselves, whereas women can say, "watashi." Although in English we have the gender-equal "I" to refer to oneself, we can choose vocabulary, grammar and non-verbal communication to express gender.

English is so gender-equal that "guys" can always include women. An example of a typical masculine word is "dude," which is typically used by men and directed toward another man. On the other hand, feminine speech is peppered with more questions (Don't you think so?), an upward intonation at the end of sentences that are not questions, and adjectives like "cute!" Also, in the US, it is more feminine to use non-verbal communication such as eye-contact and, in informal situations, a brief touch on the arm. These are ways of expressing interest in having a conversation with a person, but not necessarily a romantic interest.



How Your Brand Translates Across Cultures

Maybe the most interesting part of learning a new language is figuring out how your personal brand best translates in a new culture. For example, the word "assertive" may not be part of your personal brand. Given that being assertive relates to taking action as an individual (not necessarily as a team), individualistic Americans may perceive this attribute as positive.

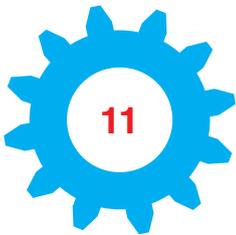
On the other hand, typically group-oriented Japanese may perceive this attribute as negative. From my experience working both in companies in Japan and with Asian professionals in the US, I would advise that a group-oriented person could start to show assertiveness in a way that Americans would perceive as positive by actively starting conversations with colleagues and with supervisors. First, ask for others' help and opinions. Then, try introducing your own unique skills and opinions.

Learning a New Language Multiplies Our Potential

As you discover a new language and culture, you will have a wonderful opportunity to express your personal brand in a new way.

At first it might be disappointing that we can't simply input a first language and culture into a translation machine, click "go" and get something that makes any sense at all in a second language and culture. This point could be a whole new blog post. But trust me: As much as we might like, online translators can not account for the differences between formal and informal, masculine and feminine, and social or regional contexts. That is the beauty of expressing oneself using more than one language: your choice can not be directly exchanged one phrase for another. Instead, we are left with many new options that multiply our potential to express and market our personal brands.





Content is King But Originality Trumps Everything!

Catharine Fennell
www.videobio.com



It's All About The Content!

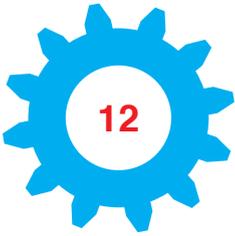
Catharine Fennell is Founder and CEO of videoBIO which is redefining video creation with a flexible, multi-service platform to build your brand. They also offer a cool 'do it yourself' platform, videoBIO D-I-Y, where you can create and share your own videos in less than 3 minutes! Video has become one of the most critical ways to expand your personal brand's visibility and Catharine is leading the way with the best platform available by far. So of course, Catharine's post for the Blogathon is in video!

This video blog comes to you recorded in field via the videoBIO DIY publishing suite online. Create and share great video from anywhere! Learn more about the D-I-Y tool here. This was recorded while watching my kids at their swimming lesson on Sunday—excuse the background noise! As a busy tech entrepreneur you have to squeeze everything in, wherever you are. Remember, when video blogging, you don't have to be perfect because it's all about the content!!

View Catharine's Blogathon contribution here: <http://petersterlacci.com/2012/06/11/content-king-originality-trumps/#more-3914>

VideoBio Options





Personal Branding Requires Authenticity

Lida Citroën
www.lida360.com



Personal Branding Requires Authenticity

From the time we are young, we are encouraged to get along and fit in with others. Even my parents, European immigrants, were told to assimilate as quickly as possible into American culture to be accepted. Being cooperative, assimilating and blending appears to be the goal. However, in our effort to connect with others, we can lose our sense of self. We see this with teenage girls trying to conform to be popular, young adults trying to dress like their magazine idols, spouses wanting to be what the other desires in order to be happy, and employees trying to fit in with a corporate culture that goes against their values.

In a society that seems to reward sameness, we often lose the most valuable part of our personal brand: **our authenticity**.

As a personal branding specialist, author and speaker, my job is to help my clients and audiences create effective positioning in a target market based on their authentic value. I have never been good at “spin” or making someone into something they’re not. Instead, I help my clients uncover their core beliefs, passions, values and build a marketing and communications strategy to build brand awareness, manage their reputation and create desired positioning based on what makes them unique, not what makes them look, sound and appear to be like everyone else.

Authenticity Explained

I define authenticity as “living the core goals, beliefs and values that guide your emotional, spiritual and intellectual self and that present through behavior.” In other words, when you are your most genuine self, you are being authentic. When we encounter you, are you being authentic?

Being authentic means that across situations, I will experience you – and your commitment to your values – consistently. Since a brand is a promise of an experience, an authentic brand is one that has a consistent, dependable experience attached. Each time I experience you, I know I can expect you to be yourself (i.e. qualities such as friendly, honest, collaborative, inquisitive, etc.). I don’t have to worry that you will try to be someone you’re not just to impress me.

A Real Example

Last year I worked with a talented chief executive who had just facilitated the largest acquisition in telecommunications history. She had been instrumental in designing, negotiating and directing the transaction, and was lauded for her skills of financial design, operational innovation, teamwork, shareholder management and media relations.

When I worked with Susan (not her real name), she was beautifully scripted. She had her key messages ingrained and even knew which was her better side for media photographs. Her presentation skills had been honed and crafted over many years of high-pressure public exposure.

With the acquisition, Susan was leaving her post. This presented a unique time in her life: No longer would her scripts be prepared for her, wardrobe carefully selected according to the audience, and schedule designed by an expert public relations team. She was on her own now.

Susan embraced this opportunity to examine and design her personal brand once and for all. In working together, Susan and I uncovered what really motivated her, what made her heart sing, and where her genuine self shined the brightest.

Our work together revealed many “ah ha’s” as well as confirmed some beliefs:

- Susan was great at building teams.
- She loved to mentor young women coming up the corporate ladder.
- She empathized with cross-functional teams struggling to build unity.
- She believed passionately in transparency and honesty.
- She loved her community!

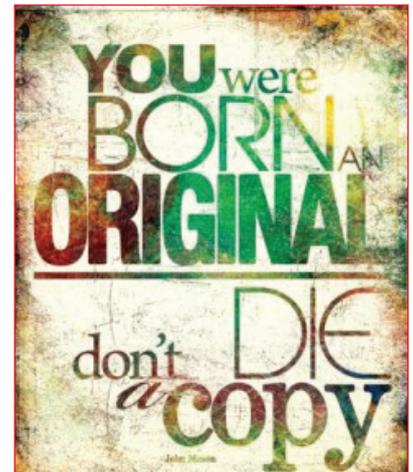
All of these authentic passions, character traits and beliefs gave Susan and I a platform from which to design her personal brand strategy and create the next chapter in her personal and professional life. We designed a personal brand strategy and tactical plan that Susan found easier than expected to implement because it was based on authenticity. For once, Susan could be herself, and that was exciting to her!

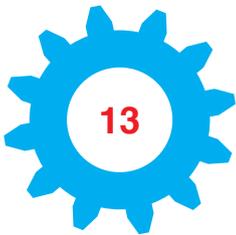
Start Your Authenticity Today

Authenticity requires great introspection and humility. No one is perfect – we are all flawed. We also cannot turn the clock back and un-do mistakes (or inauthentic behaviors) from the past.

We can, however, move forward and make changes RIGHT NOW to live more authentically. Focus on being genuine.

Stop listening to the scripts of what you should do/believe/want/love/think, and listen to that quiet voice in your heart that knows what is right for you, above all.





4 Steps to Create Your Personal Mantra

Gini Dietrich
www.spinsucks.com



4 Steps to Create Your Personal Mantra

So you want to build your personal brand. Let me ask you a question: Why? Is it to grow a business? Get a book deal? Get paid to speak? Get noticed for that big job you want? Get your first job out of school? Whatever it is (and it works for all of these things), know what you're setting out to do before you start.

A Quick Story

A couple of years after I started my business, Chicago-based integrated marketing communication firm Arment Dietrich, I hired my first second in command. She came from the corporate side, had a few more years experience than me, and knew how to manage people (I'm a great leader, but a terrible manager). She also is extremely intelligent. I'll never forget, after she'd been there for a few months, she said, "Why aren't we branding this firm?"

My response, at the time, was, "Clients want us to do good work for them. I can't imagine they'd appreciate our working on building a huge image for us instead of them." She just shook her head and said, "Clients pay attention to these things. They want to work with the firms that get a lot of attention."

It took me a long time (two years, in fact) to understand what she was saying and to take her counsel to heart. It also took a terrible economy and some time on my hands to implement her advice. What I discovered along the way is she was right.

Your Personal Mantra

Just like we do when we're researching a company, product, or service, people will Google you before they meet you in person. In fact, they'll look at how you interact online and off before you're invited in for a job interview or a new business pitch.

Why leave that reputation to chance? The very first thing you want to do is create your personal mantra. This will be used in your Twitter profile, your blog bio, your Pinterest description, your LinkedIn bio, your Google+ description... it'll be used everywhere you need a two or three sentence bio.



In order to figure out your personal mantra, you want to follow these 4 steps:

Step 1: Determine your emotional appeal

Do you want to build a reputation for being funny and quirky like Erika Napoletano? Do you want to be known for your solid, metrics-driven insight like Jay Baer? Or perhaps you want to provide insights into real-time technology changes, Big Data, and advertising and marketing advances like Mitch Joel. Whatever it is, know why people like you in order to determine your emotional appeal

Step 2: Create your description

Think about the industry you're in or what tangible skills you have in order to create your description. Ask yourself:
What field or industry am I in (or want to be in)?
What are the words I use to talk about my work (one word descriptive adjectives)?
Who is my target audience?
Answers to these will help you figure out your description.

Step 3: Think about your function

Write down exactly what you do (or want to do). It might be something directly related to your career at this very second (graphics, writer, sales, financial planning, culinary arts) or it could be something more broad (creator, organizer, connector). Whatever it is, the following questions will help you determine your function:

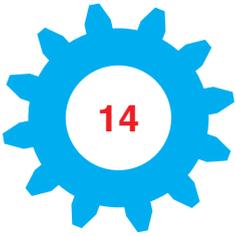
What service do I have to offer people?
What do I do that is different from anyone else?
What do I do that makes me stand out from the crowd?

Step 4: Put it all together

Now comes the hard part. How can you combine what you've written into two or three sentences? Once you're able to do that, you have your personal mantra. In some cases it will be phrases like Geoff Livingston's Twitter bio as an example. In others, it will be three complete sentences like Danny Brown's bio as an example.

No matter how you write it, your personal mantra will be used consistently across the web as you begin to build your brand. **This is how people will begin to perceive you so take control and make it happen!**





Personal Branding For Young Professionals

Samantha Zinth
www.samzinth.com



Personal Branding for Young Professionals

I don't know about you, but I had no clue what I wanted to do with my life when I was 22. I'm now pushing 30, and quite honestly, I'm still figuring it out. This lack of direction as a young professional paralyzed me. How was I supposed to be a success when I couldn't even define what long-term success looked like? Here I was, a recent college graduate with a job and a car payment and an apartment—a full-fledged adult by virtually anyone's definition—and I had no idea what I wanted to be when I grew up.

Gulp!

So I did what many meandering, misdirected young professionals do: I accepted positions aimlessly, with no regard to fit or function. I job jumped, hoping that the next position would be better than the last. After holding three dead-end jobs in two years it hit me: this isn't getting me anywhere. Instead of blazing ahead, I had to step back and think—really think—about who I was and what I wanted professionally. I had to define not only my career goals, but also myself.

Enter: Personal Branding

Your Personal Brand is Not a Gimmick

Although I was seeking direction and definition as a young professional, I didn't realize at the time that what I was doing was really personal branding. I was just trying to formulate a plan for my future. Figure out who I was, and what I was about. Personal branding has become a bit of a buzzword in the last decade. But your personal brand is not a gimmick or a sales pitch. Your personal brand is you. It's natural, it's authentic, and it's never forced. *It's who you are—and what you offer.*

Effective marketers know that branding is about consistency. Every personal and professional interaction you have—either in person or online—is an opportunity to shape and manage how people perceive you. It is everything from your bio on Twitter to your presentation to senior management. Everything you write, speak or do is a reflection of you and your brand. For others to internalize, trust and believe in your brand, it's imperative that you reinforce your message over and over again.

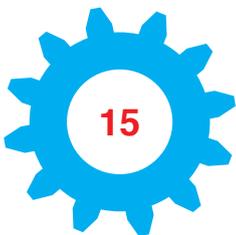
4 Tips for a Personal Branding 'Newbie'

So as a young professional, how do you begin to articulate your personal brand? When you have 20 years of career experience under your belt, hopefully your brand will practically smack you in the face. But when you're just getting started and you don't have decades of work experience behind you, try the following:



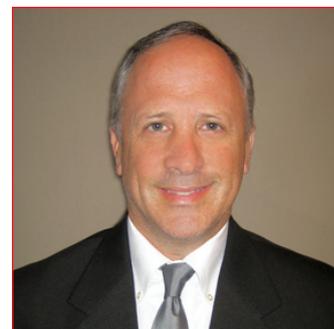
1. **Ask around.** Whether you know it or not, you already have a personal brand. Ask your friends and colleagues to describe you in five words. You may be surprised by how people see you. Look for themes that were repeated over and over again and integrate these ideas into your personal brand.
2. **Define your passions.** There's nothing more authentic than pure passion. Let the things you're naturally enthusiastic about shape your brand. Even if you haven't found your dream job yet, stay active and current in your ideal field. Volunteer, freelance, find a mentor, etc. Let your enthusiasm shine.
3. **Leverage the power of social media.** Social media allows virtually anyone to be a content expert. Be strategic about your online presence and become a thought leader in your field. Share resources and connect with others around common interests. Remember, to be important, you first have to be interesting.
4. **Promote yourself.** Once you've defined your brand, share it with others! Use your brand to build connections and differentiate yourself. Your brand is about you, but its power is in the value it provides to others. Let people know what you have to offer. Strive to be genuine and helpful. Your brand is all about perception; above all else, you need consistency and strong relationships to succeed.





Write a Book to Give Your Brand a Platform to Stand On!

Mitchell Levy
www.happyabout.com



Why Write a Book?

Books deliver instant credibility both to the author and to their message. Having an MBA or PhD is great; however, putting the word “author” in front of your name is similar to using the letters PhD. You are no longer Jay Conrad Levinson, you are “Author Jay Conrad Levinson.” Print on-demand (POD) book publishing can quickly and easily help companies drive sales through thought leadership. Books can share both your vision and how your products and services help customers reach that vision. Your book will open doors to speaking events as well as generate new leads. Every person who buys or receives your book is a potential customer.

Many companies have had significant success with books. Folks from IBM, BEA, Dell, and Salesforce, to name a few, will tell you that books were an efficient and powerful tool they used to open doors and establish thought leadership. Mark Bauhaus, X-SVP SOA Software from Sun Microsystems has the following thoughts from a book his team put together:

“In the heat of the dot-com boom, my Sun Consulting Team wrote a book describing our collected methodology & experience in ‘dot-comming’ companys’ IT infrastructure. The book was before its time in laying out how to bullet-proof XSP and ECommerce infrastructure for super-scale, strong security, and new world agility. ‘Dot-Com and Beyond’ was distributed worldwide and became required reading for many IT Architects and CIO’s.

Having the book in hand accelerated our sales cycle by weeks & provided instant credibility when we competed against less experienced consulting firms. Most of all, we had a kind of textbook to use during engagements to train our clients on best practices. I estimate that using the book for education and sales doubled our prospect stream & resulted in tens of millions of dollars in incremental business. A well-crafted book of expertise dramatically enhances credibility!”

Books lead directly to increased revenue:

A typical consultant will make 3x in indirect revenue for every dollar they make on book sales

With the 200+ authors we have at Happy About, 95% can show a significant positive impact on their businesses from writing a book.

Books are better than business cards. They are:

- More powerful than white papers
- The best tschocke you can give at a conference
- An item that makes it to the book shelf vs. the circular file - When was the last time you dumped a new book in the trash can?”

“It’s a gift. It’s a guide. It’s a chance to tell the whole story in a way that white papers only hope to achieve. It can take the time to tell the story instead of the bullet points and it’s a tchotchke that people will not throw out — a book has intrinsic value.” says Jim Sterne, President, Web Analytics Association

It is the best marketing tool you can add to your marketing mix! Imagine having a trusted third-party (e.g. Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Apple and other physical/online bookstores) supply a powerful marketing message that will get your prospects to think or to act. Books are the tool that delivers that message and the infrastructure is already setup for the trusted third-party to deliver it.

Top 10 Reasons to Write a Book

Instant Credibility: You are not just “Jay Conrad Levinson”, but “Author Jay Conrad Levinson.”

Opens Most Doors: Whether it’s during the writing process (many folks want to be included in a book) or afterwards, the name “Author” carries weight.

The Media Wants to Hear From an Expert: Easy to put your evangelist in front of the press.

Leads Come to You: If you write a good book, it will be passed around and leads will seek you out.

Asked to Speak at Conferences: The author is the one that is asked to speak at conferences and events.

Prospects Ask for Your Brochure and Actively Share it With Others: When else would you hear someone say, can I please have your brochure, I’ll even pay you for it.

Major Retailers Advertise Your Products and Services: Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and other major retailers give you 3rd party credibility.

It’s Not About How Many Sell: Who cares how many copies sell if you can place your book in the hands of your prospects and they buy your products and services?

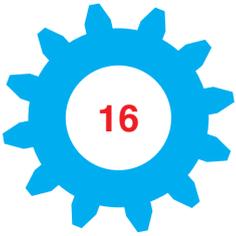
Great Gift: What a great way to meet people, place a gift in conference gift bags, send as a present to both your existing customers and new prospects.

Ghost/Collaboratively Written: You can have someone else write it for you or you can ask a bunch of experts to share their stories (e.g. “42 Rules for Driving Success with Books”) which adds credibility while building key relationships.

Why Wait?

As a blogger, you can finish a book quickly by using the format of the **42 Rules™** series where books are comprised of 42 500-word articles (<http://42rules.com>). Most likely, your books is mostly written. Even quicker to market is the **THiNKaha®** series where books are comprised of 140 twitter-sized quotes (<http://thinkaha.com>).





Authenticity is at the Heart of Every Brand

Sharon Gilmour-Glover
www.clarityfortheboss.com



Authenticity is at the Heart of Every Brand

So you know how when a really great opportunity comes along, and you say, “Yes, I’d love to. Thanks so much for the invitation.” Then, all of a sudden you realise you have no idea how to deliver on this great opportunity?

That was me in relation to writing this post. I was honoured to be invited but I’m not a personal brand expert. When I told Peter I didn’t know what I could contribute he said, “Write about what you specialise in. Be yourself. You don’t have to be what you aren’t”. **In short, be authentic.**

The Power of Authenticity

Authenticity is at the heart of every successful brand, whether personal or corporate. Being authentic, living from the core of who we really are, helps us to hang in when the going gets tough. It connects us to our passion, reveals our strengths and is that drive inside of us that doesn’t let us let go of what we really believe in.

It sounds so easy, just be who you are, but it can be incredibly difficult. And very, very scary. Authenticity can cost us a lot. From the moment we are born the people around us and the communities in which we live, start to teach us what is right and wrong and how to live “successful” lives.

For the most part, it’s a good thing but an unintended side effect is that sometimes, we get the message that there is really only 1 right way to be and live. If who we really are, if what we really believe, differs significantly from what the majority of our community believes is the right way, our life is going to be very challenging.

Authenticity demands vulnerability. That’s why it can be so difficult and lots of people and many of companies don’t live and make decisions from their base of core values and deeply held beliefs. What if what we believe in goes against common practice? What if everyone finds out what I really believe and think I’m stupid? Or worse yet, **“What if I live authentically, put myself right out there and I am just not good enough?”** Then what?



Be Authentic and Change the World!

Steve Jobs got fired from Apple. Dr. Brené Brown spoke from a place of authenticity and had a break down as a result. But both of these people have changed the lives of millions of people because they had the courage and tenacity to be who they were in the world, even though it wasn’t always easy.

I’ll bet if you stop and think about the people you admire, the businesses you are loyal too, the art, music, books and food that draw you, what they all have in common is that in their own way, they are expressing something real, consistent and authentic. And that is the true secret of sustained success whether we are talking about personal or business branding.

That takes me right back to the beginning of this post and Peter’s excellent advice; **write about what you know. Be yourself. Those are words we can all live by.**





Why Twitter is the Perfect Personal Branding Tool

Jorgen Sundberg
www.linkhumans.com



Why Twitter is the Perfect Personal Branding Tool

There are lots of definitions of your personal brand, sometimes I think there are as many as there are personal branding coaches. The definition I like to use is that your personal brand is who you are and what you do. Keeping it simple in other words.

I also think that your personal brand (your true brand), is who you are and what you do at work, on the weekends, at the team building off-site day, with your stamp collecting club and with your kids. Basically, you only have one brand and this is a combination of your professional and personal lives.

When I give talks on social media to different audiences, most people will agree that Facebook is where you hang out with friends and family, you share photos, videos and socialize. So this isn't really the place for your full personal brand as it doesn't include your professional self.

LinkedIn is considered the virtual trade show of social networks, a place for professionals to meet and do business. Does this mean your personal brand will be fully represented on LinkedIn? Not really, most users fail to project any sort of personality on LinkedIn and see it more as a place to keep a professional identity.

Enter Twitter – this is where I think your real personal brand shines through. Everything you do on Twitter is out in the open (unless you have specifically locked down your account). Twitter's transparency lets people sum up your personal brand perfectly.

Let me explain.

1. Your bio

This is really the brand that you want to project. It has to be succinct and explain what you do in a couple of lines. Most people will include both job titles as well as what team they support or how proud they are to be a father of two. Then there's the photo of course, on Twitter you want something that represents your whole brand if that makes sense.

2. The people you follow / that follow you

This demonstrates who you have connected with and whom you get inspiration from. This will typically be a combination of friends, industry leaders, celebrities, news sources and others. Looking at this I'd be able to get a snapshot of your brand, as defined by the people around you.

3. Your content

When I was a child, I wanted to read minds. Now when I have a Twitter account, I can. The fact is that most people love to put content out on Twitter for several reasons, it could be to promote your blog, to show that you read the Harvard Business Review, to just tell people what you had for breakfast. You will be judged by your content on Twitter, ideally you want to put out useful information sprinkled with a smaller dose of personal PR.

4. How you interact

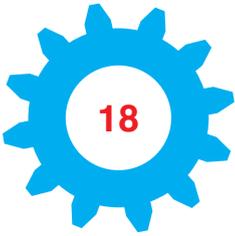
How you interact with other users will say loads about your brand. For instance, do you say 'thank you' when you get a blog post retweeted? Do you reciprocate a #followfriday recommendation? Do you answer questions from users with 3 followers? You can learn a lot about someone by looking at how they treat others.

5. How much time you spend on there

If you are in a full-time job, let's say you are an accountant, you probably don't want to be tweeting every 5 minutes. If you're a social media [insert title here], you can get away with it. As Twitter is wide open, a potential client or employer can have a quick look at your feed and they might just think you're wasting precious time tweeting.

This is why I believe Twitter is the perfect personal branding tool; it is where your social and professional worlds meet. You could argue that Google Plus is another place for this, just not as prolific yet.





Is Fear Killing Your Brand?

Heather Poduska
www.clearvoicebranding.com



Is Fear Killing Your Brand?

If I could wave a magic wand and get rid of one thing that plagues most human beings, it would be worry. I hate worry, HATE IT! It is an evil that must be challenged at every turn. Worry stops dreams before they start. Worry poisons passion. And worry is one of the leading causes of a malady that strikes down many otherwise healthy business owners. It's called weakbranditis.

Do You Have 'Weakbranditis'?

Weakbranditis is a condition that occurs when people worry too much about what other people think. They worry whether or not people will like them. They worry they will come across too strongly, too girly, too anything and everything. In an effort to avoid the discomfort of possible rejection, they pull back, tone down or dilute the very things that would make their brands special and memorable.

In some ways great branding is a paradox.

You are trying to create a strong brand other people will like and to which they will respond. You are trying to build a loyal audience of pleased fans. So you are thinking about your audience a lot. What do they want and need? How can I better connect and engage with my target market? These are all good questions to ask.

However, if you WORRY about what your audience will think, if you put their desires and preferences before your own, you will never, ever have a strong brand. You will be perceived as weak and you will feel weak. That is how worry erodes the strength of your brand. Those are the symptoms of weakbranditis.

You have to remember that people are RESPONDING to you. There has to be a YOU to which they can respond, good bad or otherwise. Otherwise, you end up in a position much worse than being disliked, you are ignored.

If you have no definitive point of view, your brand message is nebulous. No one will hear you.

In singing, in order to have a clear tone, your soft palette must be high and taut so the sound can bounce off and project out. If the soft palette is low and mushy, the sound gets absorbed and the tone is muddled and uninteresting. Furthermore, it does not carry. There is no ping.

A brand without a point is like a tone without ping, boring.

Turn Your "What If's" into "So What's"!

Worry is a phantom. It lives and breathes on "what if." We say to ourselves,

"What if I create a workshop and no one comes?" or "What if I give a speech and people think I'm boring?"

The first thing you have to remember about "what if" is that it is always looking into the future. It takes you out of the present moment which is your place of power. It is in the here and now where you initiate creativity. You cannot predict the future, but you can take actions now that will insure your future. When you take action not only do you insure your future, you also cease to worry because you are focused on the task at hand.

The other kind of "what if" has to do with whether or not you think people will like you or like what you do.

"What if I talk about my love of surfing and people think I'm unprofessional?"

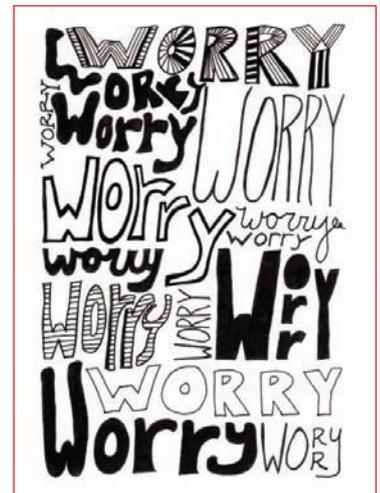
"What if I put hot pink on my website and no one likes it?"

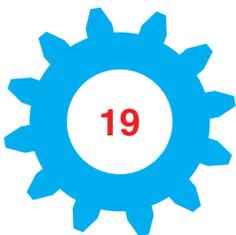
I want you to stop right now and turn your "what if's" into "so what's." So what if some people think hot pink is ugly or inappropriate? Ask Dunkin Donuts or Barbie how hot pink has worked for their brands. As a brand you are not trying to appeal to all the people all of the time. You are trying to strongly effect and engage the group of people with whom you most resonate and with whom most strongly resonate with your authentic brand message.

Ironically, in my experience it is in those moments when you stop worrying about how you are going to be perceived that you get the most positive response. It is electrifying and refreshing when someone is completely authentic in the way they present themselves and their work to the world even if we don't always agree with their choices.

An End to 'Weakbranditis'

At the end of the day, we all want to be loved and respected, but the person whose approval you should most desire is you. When you have full-throttle, total commitment to your personal brand, there is no room for worry. There is only room for growth and expansion. You will inoculate yourself from weakbranditis and the result will be a strong, healthy business.





5 Ways Your Brand Gains from Other's Experiences

Maria Elena Duron
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5 Ways Your Brand Gains from Other's Experiences

You've heard the saying – “there's nothing new under the sun”. Many things are very much a re-hash of something that has already been done. The method of presentation may be different, or the process by which it is to be done is perhaps not quite the same, yet the essence of what came before still exists.

For your own personal brand, you would do well in following successful people's experiences, after all, they have already done the work, and if applied correctly, their methods can work for you too. It's also valuable to learn from other people's experience in general. You'll gain insight on what not to do, how people think and even different perspectives. Even what I'm writing is “nothing new”. I'm sure someone's imparted advice like this to you before. What I'm challenging you to do is to kick it up a notch and be very deliberate in “creating a curriculum for yourself” to learn from other people's experience.

1. Learn from their Mistakes

They already paid the cost of time, treasure and set back – why not learn from them instead of having to sacrifice your time and treasure? Being able to correctly identify where they went wrong can save you a great deal of time, heartache and money.

Identifying mistakes is a great skill. Learning from them is an even better skill. The question to ask is: If you knew then what you know now, what would you do differently?

2. Create your own Personal Board of Advisors

One of my favorite Oprah sayings is “do what you do best; write checks for the rest.” I wholeheartedly believe that you need to focus on what you do so well, what is so uniquely you and what you are most interested in. That's why creating your own personal board of advisors can help you by providing the expertise and experience of others who are better in areas that you are not.

Asking people to serve on my personal board of advisors was, to me, the hardest “ask” I ever made. I was amazed when they were more than willing to give of their experience and time when I kept asking myself “why would someone want to serve on my personal board of advisors?” It turned out to be a networking and mastermind group that served the needs of each of us at the table – not just me.

Who should be on your Personal Board of Advisors? For me, it was:

1. An association administrator – to give better perspective on what organizations were looking for in presenters and speakers.
2. A bank president – to give better perspective on what successful business owners do that sustains their business and where businesses often fail.
3. My insurance agent – she provided client perspective (as we were each others' client), is a woman small business owner herself and is great at assessing risk
4. The partner in an accounting firm – to give better perspective on what where the real numbers that are key to measure.
5. A friend – who owned a business herself and could give tell me when I didn't see something or missed something.

The question to ask is: Will you help me? (the key is to ask).

3. Be Teachable

This is harder than you think. You must be well grounded in your personal brand and know your strengths and your unique promise of value so that you can be fully open to “hear” the valuable lessons and advice that your advisors/mentors are sharing with you. **The question to ask is:** What can I learn from this experience?

4. Be Grounded

Part of making the most of other people's experience is for you to be firmly grounded in your beliefs. **A good question to ask is:** What are my non-negotiables? The things that I value that I will not compromise on. Knowing the answer to this, will help you learn from other people's experience and then assimilate it to match who you are and what you value.

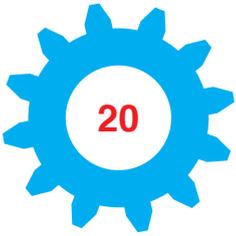
5. Read every single day

You don't have to read a book. Read just 10 pages every single day and you will be exposed to new situations, perspectives, feedback and solutions. Education and reading doesn't just happen in a lecture hall or a book – you can read websites, blogs, reports and magazines or e-zines. Successful people always seem to be on the ball with everything. They know their market well, and continue to strive in it. This is because they continually study and apply their knowledge. Imagine how much you could learn by reading biographies of successful people. For one year, I read from biographies like Theodore Roosevelt and Winston Churchill. Imagine what you could learn by reading Steve Jobs' biography for example. **A good question to ask:** What one step can I take now?

Take that First Step

I challenge you to step out of your comfort zone (where learning happens) and to ask someone to be on your personal board of advisors. Or perhaps the first step is to be grounded in your personal brand so you may need to identify what you uniquely enjoy. Or, it could be you need to solidly identify what your non-negotiables are. Identifying my non-negotiables alone took me three years to discover. **The key is to start. Take one step forward and upward.**





A Minimalist Approach to Personal Branding

Richard Knobbs
www.k-creative-japan.com



A Minimalist Approach to Personal Branding

I've always been a fan of minimalism, whether it's design, architecture, art or lifestyle, and I'm certainly not alone. The simplicity and multi-functionality, embodied by the maxim 'less is more', has meant that it's remained popular while many other styles have fallen by the wayside.

But can minimalism be successfully applied to personal branding? I think it can, but as with all of its other applications, it should be done mindfully and for the right reasons. I do a variation of the following exercise in the Personality Profile section of my Creative Edge online course. Take your time on these steps. There is no need to rush. If you think you can get it done in one hour or one day, then fine, but for many people it can take days or weeks.

1) Write down ten words to describe yourself and what you do

This is for your eyes only, so be completely honest. Try to avoid resume-type clichés: Don't write 'perfectionist' if you really think you're borderline obsessive compulsive! Also, don't worry if it feels uncomfortable or difficult. In fact, be happy if it does, as it shows you're getting somewhere.

2) Reduce the list to five words

These five words should reflect your core skills, beliefs and values. In the spirit of minimalism, use one word to cover several similar skills or values.

3) Reduce the list to one word

This is the final step, and the word that remains should form the foundation of your Personality Profile.

What ONE word epitomizes who you are and how you want to be perceived?

A few of the words people have shared with me include active, thoughtful, liberal, and respectful. These words may not be as attention-grabbing as dynamic, gallant, avant-garde, or gracious, but that's not the point. All that can come later.

Some people have expressed dismay that, when they were brutally honest, they ended up with words like temperamental or obsessive, but that's also fine. This is an excellent first step in branding yourself as it can help define who you are and, consequently, not only the type of work you'd enjoy, but also the type of work you would excel at, and the working environment you would excel in.

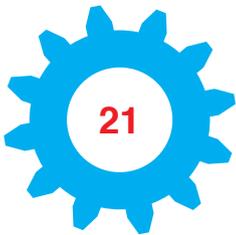
What's in a word?

So you've gone through all the agony and self-doubt to define yourself in one word. Now what? Well, in my opinion, this is where the fun stuff starts. This is when you can really start exploring the avenues, adventures and opportunities that await you.

The process is not just about defining yourself in one word, it's about being honest with yourself and seeking opportunities and environments that stimulate you, satisfy you, and allow you to utilise your skills. It can also help you define the kind of people you work best with, or whether you may prefer to work alone.

If you've completed the process honestly and thoroughly, your personal branding should seem nowhere near as daunting as it once did. I'm not saying it's all plain sailing from here, but at least you have a solid foundation.





Oh the Places Your Personal Brand Will Go

Paul Copcutt
www.paulcopcutt.com



Oh the Places Your Personal Brand Will Go

Almost 15 years on and I unfortunately find that most college and certainly high school graduates still have very little concept or exposure to the notion of managing proactively their personal brands.

It frustrates me no end. I know that many great personal branding experts are making every effort to get that message out there to schools, college and universities. I look forward to the day it is mandatory on the career curriculum and every career counsellor covers it. In the meantime a very popular graduation gift at this time of year is the Dr. Seuss book "Oh the places you'll go" – so with some apologies to Theodore Geisel please send this is to every graduate (new and old) – congratulations and may your brand go with you.

Congratulations!
Today is your day.
30x30x30 blogathon reader
It's your brand YOU day!

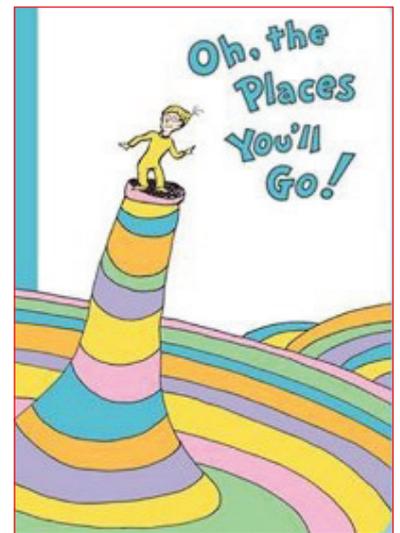
You have attributes that stand out.
Skills that show you've paid your dues.
You can steer yourself
Any direction you choose.
You're on your own. And you know what you know.
And YOU is your brand, you can decide where to go.

You won't fall behind, you'll find those with a need.
You'll pass by the others, because you're so branded to lead.
Wherever you work, you'll be the best of the best.
Wherever you go, you will top all the rest.

Oh the places you'll go. Following your passions is fun.
Being true to yourself, means we all feel that we've won.
And with values aligned and purpose all set.
Achieving your goals is one sure-fire bet.
Fame! You'll be famous as famous can be.
But it's all been authentic, because you said "It's all me!"

And will you succeed?
Yes! You will indeed!
(98 and three-quarter percent guaranteed)
KID YOU'LL MOVE MOUNTAINS

So....
Buy your web site domain
Before someone else takes it away
Because owning your name
Certainly matters today.
But the critical part is developing your brand foundation.
Owning the definition of YOU makes you live with elation.
You're off to great places!
Today is your day!
Your life is waiting. Don't stay on the shelf
Your personal brand is all about being yourself!





You've Got 60 Seconds... Tell Me Who You Are!

Runa Magnúsdóttir
www.runamagnus.com



You've Got 60 Seconds...Tell Me Who You Are!

I'm Talking About Your Uniqueness.

Yes, your uniqueness... you are unique, what makes you different from all the others? We all have strong-suits... abilities... strengths...qualities... knowledge, how do you deliver yours?

People connect with other people! People do business with other people they know, like and trust. They come to YOU because they know, like and trust YOU, so being clear on YOUR uniqueness will give you a head-start in a very competitive world.

My experience, as a personal branding coach and facilitator working internationally helping women entrepreneurs in particular to find their uniqueness, is that most of us find it really hard and challenging to talk about our personal qualities...in other words to sell ourselves.

Most of us simply find it much easier to talk proactively about other people's brands than expressing our own brand. It's really a question of daring to give ourselves the time to investigate who we really are. The minute you take that step, you are giving yourself the head-start, moving you ahead of your competitors. Not to mention the boost it gives our self-confidence by being able to communicate our strengths with ease, and we are confident about the value and ROI you give, and the best part is, people are much more likely to buy your products or services.



6 Tips to communicate your uniqueness!

1. When looking at your uniqueness and your strengths, think about the things you often hear people say about you... often things you don't find a BIG DEAL at all, because they are simply so natural to you! Write them down.
2. Ask 3-5 people who know you well what THEY think is your 3 strong suits. Write them all down, look out for the consistency, what do they all say?
3. Write one sentence explaining who you are, start the sentence with: "People who know me best say...."
4. Write one sentence explaining who you are, start the sentence with: "My passion is..."
5. People don't care what you do – people care who you are.
6. Use this phrase to grab attention immediately: "I can accumulate who I am in three words."
7. Use video to communicate your Personal Brand Statement. Video is 6 times more likely to give you results.

According to marketing research, people are 80% more likely to watch a video which is 60 seconds or less than to read a text. Video's that combine audio & text is more likely to stick in people's mind than text alone.

Check out these five **BRANDit.is** examples of Personal Brand Statements in 60 seconds. When you watch each video ask yourself:

What sticks with me? What will I remember from each video, what will I not remember?

Keep those points at hand when you create your very own Personal Brand Video Trailer!

Karen Maples - President MyUtiq, USA

Stephanie Camilliri - Project Manager, Malta

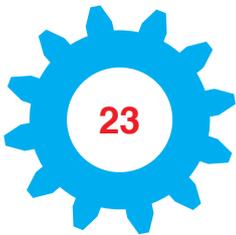
Thora & Gudrun - founders of Puzzled by Iceland

Theresa Delia - CEO Business Meetings, Malta

Michelle Gialanze - CEO IVC, Malta

Remember! You are the best brand, make it outstanding!





Top 10 Social Media Facts

Adam Acar

www.emergingmedialab.wordpress.com



Top 10 Social Media Facts

When I started researching about Facebook, it was 2005 and back then no one knew about social networks and social media.

Social media is all over and not 'trendy' any more.

However, I can't say that for Japan as seemingly there are only a handful of scholars studying how Japanese individuals and brands use social media. To close this gap, my students and I have been conducting more than 15 different social media related studies at the moment such as Japanese consumer behavior on twitter, cross-cultural analysis of brands' social media use, and comparison of the social media use of Japanese and American celebrities, just to name a few.

I really wanted to write about one of those topics but the fact is academic studies are not necessarily the posts you'd want to read while drinking your morning coffee.

So I just put together 10 social media facts recently covered in the mass media that you might find interesting. Enjoy and click on the links for more details on these interesting facts:

1. Analysis of 15,938 Facebook fans pages showed that car fans (any car) had 3 times more friends (433) than those who don't follow any car brand
2. A survey of 689 regular bakery customers who were contacted 1 month after becoming a Facebook fan of a store in Houston showed that the customers significantly increased their store visit. (Dholakia & Durham, 2010)
3. A Bit.ly study showed that links/messages that are posted at/around Wednesday 3pm has the highest chance of being clicked on
4. An eye-tracking study found that consumers mostly look at the timeline right in the middle of the wall on Facebook (not too much on profile photos or brand's likes, etc.)
5. A study by Constant Contact and CMB showed that the top 3 reasons people follow a brand on twitter are 1- Already a customer 2- Want to be the first to know about information about the brand 3- To get discounts
6. The Constant Contact and CBM study also found that half of the twitter users claimed that they were more likely to buy from a brand after following it on Twitter. 60% of the respondents in the same study agreed with the statement "I am more likely to recommend a brand"
7. In 2009 Facebook officially suspended a burger King Campaign which gave away a free Whopper to every user who befriended 10 network members. (Wilson, Gosling & Graham, 2012)
8. Top 3 reasons to follow a brand in social media are 1- To receive discounts and promotions 2- Social endorsement (showing one's support for a company to others) 3- Get a freebie
9. Dan Zarella's study showed that messages posted on Saturday and around 6~8Pm are more likely to be liked and shared (In the US)
10. According to an infographic put together by problogger these are the top 10 reasons why American users share stuff in social media (it is) 1- hilarious 2- Incredible or unbelievable 3- Deeply emotional 4- Agrees with our worldview 5- Makes us stop and think 6- Not covered by mainstream media 7- Will make someone smile 8- Dramatic 9- Embarrassing (?) 10- Provocative





Your LinkedIn Brand = Your Online Persona

Neal Schaffer
www.windmillnetworking.com



Your LinkedIn Brand = Your Online Persona

No matter how you plan to use social media to brand yourself for career and/or life success, you will be interacting with, and be seen by others, without having a chance to personally meet them. While corporate websites give us complete control over how we depict our corporate brands, social media sites like LinkedIn level the playing field for our personal brands by stripping away the design elements and simply presenting every user in basically the same way. Let me take this one step further and tell you that others may make decisions on whether or not they want to contact you for professional reasons based on how you've utilized your LinkedIn profile.

My 'Japanese' Approach to Personal Branding

An analogy that helps explain this has to do with business interactions I've had in Japan. I lived in Japan for 15 years, often representing foreign companies with little or no brand recognition in the market. When I went on a customer visit, therefore, everything I did represented not only my personal brand but also the brand aligned with my company.

Did I take a meishi (business card) with two hands or one?

At what angle did I bow when I was introduced?

What was my body language when I presented to them?

How quickly did I respond to their emails, and did I strive to use Japanese or fall back on my native English?

All of these little activities added up to create a larger picture of who I was and how I did business, which then shaped how they viewed me as a person and eventually how they saw the company I represented.

This is exactly why social media, including LinkedIn, requires a strategic approach for your personal brand. Regardless of how much "branding" you try to include on your professional profile, keep this in mind:

Your actions and words online speak much louder about your brand than anything else.

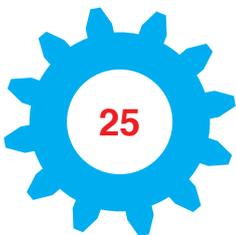
Don't Clutter Your Brand Message

In addition to your actions and words affecting your brand, you really become what you tweet. If you are trying to showcase your experience and expertise in front of other professionals, you need to stick to discussing appropriate topics that help portray your personal brand in a positive light. There may be a time and place to talk about sports or family when you meet people in person, but on LinkedIn, these types of conversations are out-of-place and awkward. A professional's goal when using any form of social media should be to share content that his target audience find useful, allowing him to become the expert "channel" for that type of information. If you post useful and engaging comments that are aligned with your career objectives, people will perceive you as being appropriately skilled and experienced. However, if you clutter your message with off-topic comments, you run the risk of losing your credibility.

This concept holds true for status updates (or tweets, for those of you who have integrated them into your LinkedIn profile), discussions in LinkedIn Groups, and all other public avenues for communication that exist on LinkedIn. For instance, it might be tempting to chime in on a controversial subject that has been brought up in a LinkedIn Group or a disputed question on LinkedIn Answers, but due to the fact that anyone on LinkedIn—and, for answers and open groups, anyone on the Internet—can view your responses, you need to remember to communicate "on brand."

Treat LinkedIn with the same amount of respect you would treat a professional association meeting or industry convention and you will be on your way to building and enhancing your personal brand on LinkedIn, which will be optimized for your career success.





Your Brand is Based on a True Story

Walter Akana

www.threshold-consulting.com



Based On A True Story

Stories are powerful. On some level, I think virtually everyone believes this. And yet, if I were to say, “Your story is powerful,” you, like most people, might become a bit self-conscious and tend to downplay the power of your story.

Yet, any time we relate a personal experience, we are telling a part of our story. And even if not crafted with the skill of an expert storyteller, our story gives the listener a window into our life and a glimpse of who we are. And when those views reveal common experiences, they foster a bond or emotional connection.

For most of us, this process is so natural as to be nearly imperceptible. We experience the benefits of stories without a whole lot of thought about the nature of story, and why stories are so deeply woven into our every day experience. Interestingly, the science of storytelling tells us that we are “hard-wired” for stories. So much so that they have emotional and cognitive effects that shape our beliefs and our choices.

Stories shape our lives – especially the ones we tell ourselves.

In a compelling blog post, Seth Godin discusses the power of narrative to keep our lives consistent and predictable. He points out that making a life change that could lead to more effectiveness and success is often so risky that most people will choose to double down on the story. In his words:

“If you went to bed as a loyal company man or an impatient entrepreneur or as the put-upon retiree or the lady who lunches, chances are you wake up that way as well. Which is certainly safe and easy and consistent and non-confusing. But is it helping?”

He goes on to say:

“The truth though, is that doing what you’ve been doing is going to get you what you’ve been getting. If the narrative is getting in the way, if the archetypes you’ve been modeling and the worldview you’ve been nursing no longer match the culture, the economy or your goals, something’s got to give.”

So, if you still don't believe your story has power, think again!!



Controlling the Narrative

While Seth’s intent is to challenge you to change for the better, his view may seem pessimistic. Yet, as the craft of screenwriting suggests, a narrative – any narrative – is driven by selecting, interpreting, and arranging events to lead to a specific conclusion. Of course, not all narratives drive frustration. The stories that successful people tell themselves drive behaviors that make them successful. Although this doesn’t mean they are in control of the narrative – even though they are living it. Yet, increasingly, navigating on autopilot is a choice we can ill afford.

Today, in our social media driven conversational age, people seek to connect, partner, and do business with people who “get it” and therefore “get them.” And the way they determine this is via the story we convey! So, controlling our narrative has become critical, and to be able to do so requires self-knowledge. As creative writing instructor Robert McKee points out, “Self Knowledge is key – life plus deep reflection on our reactions to life.

Applied to personal branding, this suggests we need to go deeper than a conveying a one-sentence personal brand statement arrived at from the examination of the 360 feedback and introspective exercises. While these are certainly important, it is critical to examine the life events that support our brand. And in doing this, to look not only at accomplishments but also failures and key life turning points that shape the vision, purpose, values, passions, beliefs, and skill sets that we bring to creating value. An outstanding example of just such a reflection is Steve Jobs’ Stanford Commencement Speech.

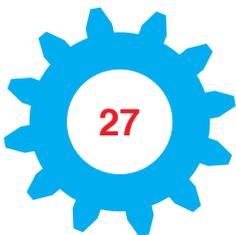
For most of us, sharing anything other than our biggest strengths and most significant accomplishments is counterintuitive. It seems to fly in the face of everything we’ve been taught about selling ourselves. Yet, in his recent book, *The Rare Find: Spotting Exceptional Talent Before Everyone Else*, George Anders points out that it’s a mistake to hide our stumbles since they very often reveal our resilience or ability to overcome setbacks.

Your Story is Your Brand

Taken as a whole, our failures as well as our achievements make up our brand DNA. That is, they form the code that makes us who we authentically are. Of course we need to convey our story in a way that makes clear our strengths and our value. And yet, we become who we are not by success alone, but also through our mistakes, our misgivings, our struggles, and our comebacks. Providing a glimpse of these humanizes us and gives a more complete picture of who we are.

Business storyteller, and founder of Get Storied, Michael Margolis, has said that your story is your brand. It’s true. Essentially, if personal brand is about being unique, there is nothing more unique than your story. Yet, more than that, your story – including your significant “ups” and “downs” – gives you a kind of credibility that not only rings true for your audience but makes them want to connect with you. **Because, after all, your brand is based on a true story!!**





The Power of Civility to Supercharge Your Personal Brand

Yasmin Anderson-Smith
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The Power of Civility to Supercharge Your Personal Brand

In a recent interview on MSNBC television show, Your Business, marketing guru, Seth Godin shared insights on what marketers need to do today to be more successful.

Seth offered that marketers should be less self-absorbed and have more clarity, generosity and humility. He also commented that “no one owes you their attention” and that marketers need to tell stories (not pitch slogans) that resonate with their audiences. I immediately began thinking how Seth’s comments interrelated with my own views on the power of civility and image to supercharge our image and personal brands.

While there’s universal agreement that clarity is one of the three hallmarks of great personal brands (along with consistency and authenticity), humility and generosity are not widely touted as attributes needed for success in today’s global business environment. How inspiring and refreshing to hear this from Seth Godin, and how potentially amazing is the connection between personal branding and civility which embraces humility, generosity and selflessness.

The Human Side of Personal Branding

Civility is a way of life. It is about a mindset, having conscious intent, being non-judgmental and consistently demonstrating respectful, considerate, kind, responsible, assertive, ethical, generous and humble conduct in our interpersonal relationships.

Civility augments the human side of personal branding.

It builds trust and fosters happy, smooth and harmonious relationships that are so critical to building successful personal brands.

Dr. P.M. Forni, author of *Choosing Civility, The Twenty-Five Rules of Considerate Conduct*, St. Martin’s Griffin, New York, 2002, defines civility simply as “gracious goodness.” A longer definition of civility in this book states,

“Civility means a great deal more than just being nice to one another. It is complex and encompasses learning how to connect successfully and live well with others, developing thoughtfulness and fostering effective self-expression and communication. Civility includes courtesy, politeness, mutual respect, fairness, good manners, as well as a matter of good health...”

Research by Christine Pearson and Christine Porath and the writings of civility expert, Lew Bayer report on the huge costs to businesses associated with incivility in the workplace due to tarnished reputations, lower productivity, weakened performance and diminished commitment among employees.

Let’s consider these questions:

What does being selfless, humble and generous have to do with building a successful personal brand?

How can we show more generosity, humility and be less self-absorbed in our fast-paced, overwhelmed everyday lives?

Are you known as a giver or having a commitment to building community?

Does growing your personal brand mean always boasting about your talents and achievements while overlooking the contributions of your colleagues or employees?

I purport that the answer lies in the meaning and practice of civility and how it can supercharge our personal brands, elevate our image and strengthen our commitment to community. It’s about making time to do even small acts of kindness and consideration like publicly acknowledging a colleague, offering a sincere apology, volunteering or sending a written thank you note. These low or no-cost steps are self-defining and empowering, both individually and collectively. In today’s highly competitive global marketplace, it is these quality, not-about-me actions and human connections that help forge meaningful, distinctive and lasting relationships.

It’s All About Relationships

In the book *The Power of Civility*, Thrive Publishing, 2011, I make the point that being successful in business is all about our relationships. Happy relationships are at the nexus of civility and a positive image and therefore both are intimately connected with managing our personal brand for success. Our image and brand continually create impressions on others based on how we treat them, our communication, attire, and behavior. In business and social settings. It is our manners, ethics, use of protocol, commitment to service and giving back to community that determine the quality of our relationships and our personal brands.





How to Brand Your Radio Show

Tara Kachaturoff

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How to Brand Your Radio Show

If you're thinking of producing a radio show – just for fun or for business purposes – you'll want to make sure it's branded in a way that aligns with your vision, values, passion and purpose! While the area of branding is both vast and deep, here are three simple ways to brand your own radio show:

Show title - Music - Intro and outro

1. Show title

Your show title is of critical importance as this is the best way to attract your target listeners. Use keywords that relate to your topic and which would be compelling to the audience you want to reach. Make sure your title is obvious – not cute. If it's too esoteric, people will miss the point and move on to something else that relates exactly to what they're looking for.

The more memorable your title, the easier it will be for others to spread the word – both online and offline. Shorter is better and you can always include a tagline that explains the purpose in more detail. That being said, the title needs to stand strongly on its own. Avoid making up words or using strange spellings as these make it frustrating or impossible for interested others to find you online.

For example, my weekly television talk show is titled Michigan Entrepreneur. It communicates a great deal in just two words. It focuses on Michigan and entrepreneurs –that's it! It's short, it's obvious and it utilizes keywords that convey a great deal both quickly and clearly. I also use the tagline, "Featuring businesses from startup to stellar" since that is exactly what I do.

Similarly, my radio show is branded as Teach Me Law. This title construction was more challenging since I wanted it to be short and obvious and not more than three words in length. And, it wasn't going to be any old type of law program. Specifically, the focus is on guests teaching me about specific things related to law. Note: I actually started this show to supplement and speed up my learning process while studying law! I combined my love of producing a radio show with learning law from experts – a perfect combination!

2. Music

A second way to brand your radio show is through the selection of music used for your intro, station breaks and outro. Music is a powerful sensory experience that communicates great amounts of information to the listener. If you don't realize just how influential it is to your brand, listen to a radio broadcast without music – if you can find one. Music energizes and moves things along. It keeps listeners engaged. The music you select is highly dependent on the topic of your show. The theme, tempo, tone and other musical qualities will play an important part in supporting and sustaining your show's brand. And, by sheer repetition, it will embed itself in the minds of your listeners and will be virtually indistinguishable from the show itself. Notice how many brands you can distinguish by hearing only a few notes of music – without seeing the product, show or person! The music becomes integrated with the brand and ultimately represents the brand.

3. Show intro and outro

Your show intro and outro represent important opportunities for including your distinct branding. While the intro music is trailing off, you'll be speaking your first words of introduction as you welcome listeners. It's critical that you continually remind them of two things throughout the broadcast – who you are and the name of your program.

Keep in mind that listeners are depending solely on their auditory sense and you never know at which point in the broadcast they tuned in. When you listen to professional broadcasts, notice how often they brand themselves.

Make sure your intro and outro include your personal touch. The show name, your name and other identifying information are crucial as are any legally mandated show or station identifiers. Beyond that, it's your time to be creative.

I have specifically branded intros and outros for my radio and TV shows. I say the same thing every single time. For example, for the introduction of my radio show Teach Me Law, directly after the intro music, I include a short welcome, my name, the name of my show and a legal disclaimer about the content as notice to listeners to seek their own legal counsel for their specific legal issues.

Throughout the show I continue to identify myself, my guest, the topic and the show name. Again, you never know who is tuning in and when. You don't want to leave listeners wondering about what's going on. If they're confused, they'll tune to another program. Consistent branding not only makes it easier for you to design and deliver the program, it delivers out a strong and on-brand message to your audience.

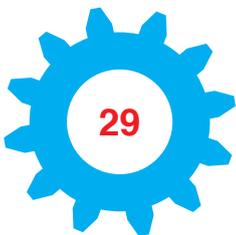
Next Steps

Creating, producing and hosting your own program take a lot of focus, determination and resources.

A program with "on brand" elements will attract great guests and listeners.

Start with the easiest elements which include your show title, music selection and your intro and outro. By ensuring everything you do is aligned with your overall vision, you'll be well on your way to sharing your message with the world in a fun, exciting and engaging way. **To your success!**





Nurture Your Personal Brand's Narrative

Jeff Rock

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Nurture Your Narrative

One of the most important steps in personal branding is taking accountability for the life of your narrative. I view personal branding as being the thoughts, emotions, experiences, expectations and beliefs about you. All of these are highly subjective.

As anyone who has run a political campaign will tell you, narratives, whether they are about people or issues, tend to be accepted as truth. Controlling your narrative, managing the message in your communities, is critical to effectively communicating your personal brand.

In nature, different species of birds have evolved different strategies for survival. At the time of their hatching, birds are either precocial, relatively mature and mobile from birth, or altricial, requiring extensive care and nurturing. Precocial birds emerge ready to deal with threats to their existence. Altricial birds do not and are utterly defenseless early on.

Your narrative is altricial. It needs to be developed, nurtured, and protected until such time as it can survive on its own. Sometimes we treat our narrative as if it were precocial. We put it out there and let it fend for itself. It takes on a life of its own or just perishes. We discount its importance and believe our work will speak for itself.

It doesn't. It won't.

If you do not choose to manage the narrative about who you are, your value proposition, accomplishments, and what is important to you, someone else may fill the void. You are neglecting a powerful tool for placing yourself in the context of other people's lives.

Narrative Gives Your Personal Brand Context

When I am speaking to a group and want them to fully appreciate the importance of setting context, I use an example from Robert Ornstein's book, *The Right Mind – Making Sense of the Hemispheres*. I read a paragraph out loud containing ambiguous language that describes a journey, and then ask the audience what they remember.

They remember very little and are visibly annoyed.

Then I give them the title, *Columbus's Voyage to America*, and read it again in the same tone, tempo and pitch. I have been practicing this.

The look of annoyance falls away and is replaced by understanding. They consistently report that after the second reading, they remember almost everything, they heard me more clearly, and the images in their head were in full, vibrant color. They are sure that during the first reading, I was mumbling and speaking softly. Context provides clarity and, evidently, improves your hearing.

Our brains don't do well with remembering or understanding a lot of disconnected pieces of information. We want to know where things fit and crave a taxonomy. We naturally seek an order and context. Your narrative can provide both of these and become a powerful tool to strengthen your brand in your communities.

Those who speak for you will have something of substance that they can relate to others. One of the key roles of a personal brand is to establish and maintain a connection with those in your brand community. Strong brands build trust that leads to loyalty.

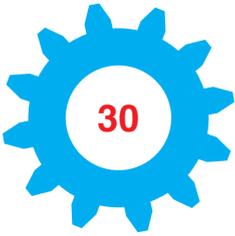
Your brand becomes more potent as your narrative proliferates.

But it has to be right.

We live in a time of opportunity and turmoil as the work place transforms from conformity to diversity at the level of the individual. The strongest brands with clearly articulated narratives will thrive. Your narrative becomes the driver of who you are and who you will become.

Your narrative may be the most durable aspect of your personal brand. It persists long after your accomplishments are forgotten. Take accountability for it. **Nurture it and protect it until it's ready to fly on its own.**





Your Branded Bio: The First Sentence

Kirsten Dixon
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Your Branded Bio: The First Sentence

I was recently looking at a cookbook that had the bios of its three authors at the beginning.

Two of the three authors began their bios with where they had lived. For example, Jane Smith grew up in San Diego. If you begin your bio with where you're from, it has to be relevant to what you do. And, in this case, they did make the connection later in the bio (specialization in California cuisine or how living in international cities has influenced the recipes). However, even if you were the mayor of San Diego, I would argue that starting the first sentence of your bio with where you grew up is not the best approach.

How many people grew up in San Diego? How many people have lived in multiple international cities? Millions! So, those statements are not differentiating enough to be in the first sentence. Something like this would have been better for Jane:

Jane Smith is a light recipe developer known for cuisine influenced by the beaches of California.

With this version, I immediately know Jane is a developer of light recipes related to California cuisine. That piques my interest so much more than knowing she grew up in San Diego, and I'm more likely to keep reading her bio.

The third author of this cookbook began her bio with the fact that she has a passion for food. Really? I wouldn't have guessed. So, what differentiates her from every other person who has ever written a cookbook—or even a diet cookbook for that matter?

You may be thinking, "But I'm not a cookbook author, I'm an MBA student or a CxO or a PMP or a V.P. of Marketing, so what would I write in the first sentence of my branded bio? Let's break it down.

Your first sentence can include some combination of the following elements:

The overall role you'd want to be known for going forward (more on this below)

- Specialization
- Target audience and how you benefit them
- Competitive positioning (Are you the first, leading, top, pioneering?)
- Differentiating strengths and attributes

Similar to an elevator pitch, you want to state what you can do for your target audience. In a professional context, when someone asks you, "Tell me about yourself?" or "What do you do?" you wouldn't start off with, "I grew up in San Diego ..."

These are some first sentences of bios I've written (names changed):

- Adrian Gupta is an international development executive with a record of expedient problem solving and opportunity capitalization.
- Daniel Viser is an HR Expert who helps large, creative global companies make giant leaps in performance by maximizing their people assets.
- Lori West is a change agent for smart planning, simple, eco-friendly living and sustainable decision-making.

There's evidence of their brand in this first sentence. If you only read this one sentence, and not the rest of their bio, it would stand alone. You could simply take this sentence and use it for the 160-character Twitter bio.

For contrast, here are the opening sentences of three random bios:

- Sarah Jeffrey began her performing arts career at a young age with dance and magic shows.
- I am an artist, young entrepreneur, Christian, cancer survivor, crazy, creative, kind kinda guy.
- My ideas and strategies speed a company's selling process, catapulting their brand, while preempting their competition.

Where's the branding? In these three opening sentences, do you know exactly what these people do today, or how they want to be positioned going forward? Is Sarah now a dancer, magician, or in another type of performing art? Is she still in performing arts at all, or is this something she just did as a child? Is #2 making his living as an entrepreneur? If so, what kind of entrepreneur? Is he selling his art, or is that a sideline? There are too many unanswered questions. This is all good information, just not opening material.

(continued on the next page...)



The third example really just needs the addition of a name, role, and company focus. Such as, Mandy Burton is a Customer Engagement Strategist who specializes in helping dental practices win new clients, catapult their brands, and preempt their competition. With this sentence, I'd know exactly the type of business to refer to Mandy. Whereas, before, I had no idea what type of companies she worked with or in what capacity she helped them speed their sales process.

Notice I wrote "role" and not necessarily a job title. **In branding, you are not your job title.**

If you write that you are a V.P. of Marketing, it doesn't give you room to grow and change within marketing. So, maybe you are a marketing maven, marketing executive, or a marketing leader. These examples are specific, but there is flexibility going forward. If you can include a title that will be lasting for you, then great! For example, I'm comfortable with "Brand Strategist" in my own opening sentence because anything I do going forward will be related to that.

How will I know when I have a solid first sentence?

- It can stand alone, and people will understand what you do
- You've expressed some differentiators
- It's as specific/niched as possible
- You've used the strongest, descriptive, most accurate language possible, and each word is thoughtfully chosen

What about the rest of my bio?

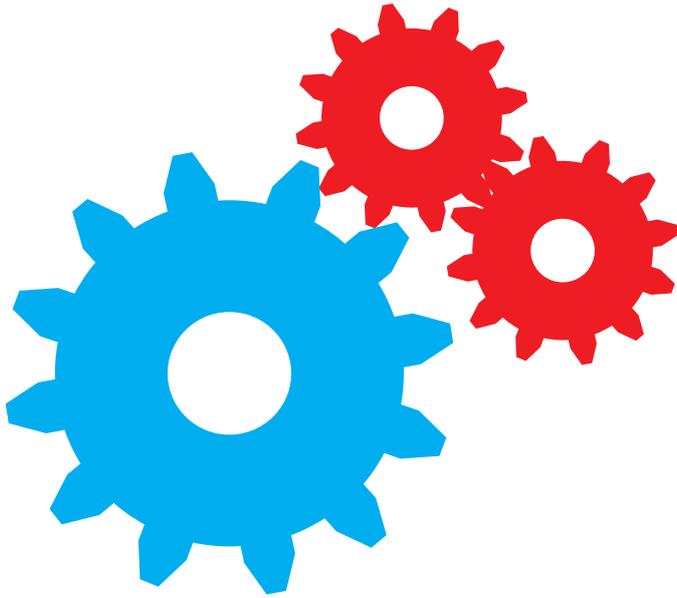
The rest of your bio would then be written to support whatever you're claiming in the first sentence. Your bio should be projective - positioning you for how you want to be known, while making the connection to your past. You'd include:

- Your story of why this is your specialty or why you chose to serve this target audience
- What qualifies you to do this work (credibly)
- The value you consistently provide to others—what's the experience like of working with you?
- A few interests / passions that add a little more color and make you more, well, interesting and relatable

The next time you are reading someone's bio or online profile, notice whether the first sentence brands them. Can you ascertain what they do uniquely in a way that would help you to connect them to relevant opportunities?

I think you'll find that most people don't put enough thought into this all-important leading sentence, and there is huge opportunity for you when you nail it.





Be³YB

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