

# PERSONAL BRANDING – A MUST HAVE FOR FUTURE CORPORATE LEADERS

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## ABSTRACT

*Academicians talk and discuss on Personal Branding with fellow students all the time on the importance of Personal Branding. However some students are just too skeptical to agree and follow the path and used the information which has been given to them. Many students are unaware that personal branding does not happen overnight. It takes quite a while for a person to have a personal brand which would suit a person and does not look fake on him or her. This paper discusses the importance of personal branding for all future corporate leaders and how it would assist them to succeed in the working world.*

**Keywords:** Branding, Personality, working world, brand attributes

## PREAMBLE

On the night of a very important interview, you may be wondering on what attire should be worn and which handbag plus shoes will match the attire. You also may be wondering on which pair of shoes need to be chosen. You will also be practising on the best way to smile to ensure that the smile would look professional. This is done just to ensure that you would be given an opportunity to sell yourself and convince the committee that you are the most suitable candidate for the job as compared to other candidates.

For a job seeker, branding yourself is indeed the key to success. Personal branding is not new. It has always been with us. However most of us just ignore the importance due to ignorance and little knowledge on know-how.

Most of us believe that branding is only associated with products and items and therefore we tend to forget that we may be a product to an organization. We only associate brands as a corporate identity but we rarely consider ourselves a brand. Many of us are not used to this concept and we do not brand ourselves. We just live our life according to the needs and desire and allow other to make impressions and judge us as they may.

Personal branding do matters to job seekers now as it allows you to stand out and be different from the other candidates. This would allow you to be noticed among the many and be an added advantage for you to step your feet into the organization.

## WHAT IS PERSONAL BRANDING?

The term personal branding is relatively young but the concept is nothing new. Everyone has already got a brand. The brand is our reputation and identity and we, the products need to ensure that the reputation is respectable and a positive. The combination when polished and accentuated can bring tremendous results.

The term personal brand was first introduced in 1997 by management guru and author Tom Peters who wrote, "We are CEOs of our own companies: ME Inc. To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You"

Personal branding, by definition, is the process by which we market ourselves to others. It describes the process by which individuals and entrepreneurs differentiate themselves and stand out from the crowd by identifying their unique value proposition.

**Brand Personality** is also being defined as "The attribution of human personality traits (seriousness, warmth, imagination, etc.) to a brand as a way to achieve differentiation. Brand personality is usually done through long-term above-the-line advertising and appropriate packaging and graphics. These traits inform brand behaviour through both prepared communication/packaging, etc., and through the people who represent the brand - its employees. (brandchannel.com)

However with the introduction of Authentic Personal Branding by Dr Rampersad H. (2008) mentioned that personal branding is not only in selling and marketing one self. Authentic Personal Brand includes and reflects one's true character, one's value, strength, uniqueness and ingenuity. If one is branded in such a manner, one's Personal Brand would be very strong, clear, complete and valuable to others. These strong values portrayed will attract people and opportunities which are perfect fit for you.

A strong personal brand will help you succeed because it means that you are communicating the sense of purpose, vision and values that reflects and embodies you to other people (McNally, 1946).

For the purpose of understanding Brand Personality better one also needs to know what brand value is. Brand Value is the code by which the brand lives. The brand values act as a benchmark to measure behaviours and performance.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT NOW?

The original objective for branding (a burn on cattle or a mark on bricks) was to distinguish the ownership or origin of one item from other similar items; hence the traditional association of branding with differentiation. A brand name is more than just a label to differentiate ([Gardner and Levy, 1955](#)), but differentiation is still the essence of branding. ([Aaker, 2003](#)).

By understanding one's unique brand promise of value, you would begin to stand out from the other interviewees and competitors. Since you understand and appreciate what makes you different, you would definitely be aware of what you can offer to an organization. Having a strong personal brand which is clear, complete and valuable to others, you will create a career path of your own which is much more successful and fulfilling

Should you fail to portray a strong personal brand which is positive, people, interviewers and employers would have mixed images and perceptions on you.

One should take control of his/her own personal brand and the message which it delivers as it definitely affects how others perceive you (Rampersad, 2008). Images and perceptions at time kills the true reputation as perceiver or customer would only make assumption based on the interest and motive of their own (Schermorhorn, 2003). Therefore back to the question above, the answer is to get noticed by being different and outstanding from the others. The current market job search which is very competitive, having a strong personal brand will allow you to be noticed and should you fail to brand yourself, others would definitely do it.

## HOW IT HELPS ORGANIZATIONS?

Every organization has its mission and vision which have been achieved. Each and every mission is executed by the employees with the guide from the managers. Objective, mission and vision can be achieved successfully if the working atmosphere, relationship, culture, values are the same and shared by all parties involved. This can be done at the entry or selection stage.

This would be the most ideal situation where employers would try to select and fit the values or brand which the candidates have to what the organization has. Perfect match of brand between employers and employees have to be made in heaven. It has to match both parties brand as this would lead to a great working relationship. Employees who are in consensus with an organization's brand are more likely to act consistently in ways supporting how the organization hopes the external constituencies perceive it and its products/services. Research has shown that there is correlation between good working relationship to high performance and job satisfaction among employees and employer.

It was also noted that employees also would deliver the greatest value and commitment when the organization shows confidence and respect for the unique value which the employees contribute.

## HOW TO CREATE PERSONAL BRANDING?

Building personal brand is not a weekend job. It is not only about first impression and looks.

Personal branding begins with establishing a list of core competencies, expertise and all recognition received from others. It also should include your uniqueness and skills which you are proud of.

In Identifying One's Personal Brand, below would be some guidelines to help one identify it.

- 1) **Identify your unique values:** What do you stand for? What are your beliefs? Jot down several key words or phrases that best describe your unique values.
- 2) **List your key attributes:** Identify your key strengths/talents in a few key words or phrases.
- 3) **Develop your personal brand statement:** Compare your unique values and key attributes and from those key words and phrases and begin to develop your personal

brand statement in 1-2 sentences. This statement represents your personal brands unique promise of value.

- 4) **Integrate your brand statement into everything that you do:** Since your brand statement is the essence of you, incorporate it into all of your printed collateral. Make it a part of your introduction at networking and other functions. Communicate your brand statement in the way you conduct business and in your personal image.
- 5) **Watch your Appearance:** One visual image is a reflection of your personal brand statement.
- 6) **Check your Brand Behavior:** Packaging your brand includes not only your appearance but your conduct.
- 7) **Communicate your brand:** Choice of words and the way we communicate reflects the core personal brand. Your speaking style should reflect those key elements as well.
- 8) **Let your brand takes center stage:** One of the most effective ways to promote your brand is to speak in public. One needs to take this opportunity to inform others of what you have to offer. The more people you can touch with your brand, the more valuable your brand becomes.
- 9) **Evaluate your brand regularly:** Personal brand does not remain stagnant. One needs to be open to changes when the need arises due to change of career and as one matures in life.
- 10) **Stand to your brand.** Breathe it and live with it!

## CONCLUSION

Building your personal brand is too important to ignore. This personal branding process is a must-have business tool for today's professionals. Employers and companies expect it of those who are high achievers desirous of career advancement, so one needs to learn and identify one's own unique identity and controls one's own goal.

Successful people will understand and realize that personal branding is never stagnant. One has to be very open and ready for dramatic changes. Personal Brand keeps on changing with the current environment, career directions and also maturing position in an organization and situation.

One's Personal brand would attract the vibration to an environment which would best fit you. So now what you need to do is to believe, live and maintain YOUR personal brand!

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