



Blueprint for creating your personal brand

THE BRAND CALLED YOU

Create a strong personal brand that sets you apart. Build your reputation, influence, and craft your authentic message for success.

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Introduction

Personal branding has never been more important than it is today. With the advent and increasing popularization of social digital media, there are, to put it mildly, so many brands out there. It has never been easier to create a platform and gain a successful following, but there has never been more competition. As a result of all this, branding has never been more essential.

The world is constantly evolving and keeping up with the trends is the only way to stay relevant; and having a quality personal brand is the best way to add value to a business.

Personal branding is for everyone, regardless of the business type or industry. When you think about some of the biggest and most successful brands today, you also think about the people behind them. And, naturally, the feelings and impressions that you obtain about those entrepreneurs influences your perception of their work. No one is immune or exempt from the effects of branding, which is why you need to be ahead of the game, in control of your branding and how the world perceives it.

There has never been a bigger amount of clutter for brands and businesses to be lost in.

No longer are we anonymous. We are all online. Having a personal brand is a way of controlling the narrative about who you are and what you stand for. It is a way of removing the barrier that exists between you, as a content creator, and your audience. It is the way you present yourself to your audience and how they will interact with you.

In marketing, they always talk about the “noise.” Having a clear, concise brand in the best way to cut through all that noise and be heard.

This eBook is dedicated to walking you through all the necessary steps to consider either before you begin to define your brand, or to help you refine it to make it work better for you. This eBook will be split into several sections. The first section clearly defines what personal branding is and provides the key information that is needed to begin a personal brand. The second section builds upon the concept of the brand that you have created and discusses appropriate media and content types and highlights unique ways you can add authority and credibility to your brand.

This book begins by outlining exactly what personal branding is and why it is so essential. It then goes on to provide a step-by-step of the most essential elements to constructing the foundation of your branding. Once the foundation has been laid, we will discuss the three keys to success: audience, authenticity, and credibility.

Following that, this eBook will describe some of the most popular media types for growing audiences and how you can harness them effectively. It will also summarize some of the best methods for content creation and growing your audience effectively. The next chapter will discuss the importance of analytics, which, may not sound particularly interesting(!), but is quintessential to monitoring your outreach and engagement so that you can ensure the continued success of your content.

While, of course, most of the world is “online” now, it is also important for your personal branding to extend into the rest of your life, so we will discuss some tactics for incorporating your brand into your everyday life.

This eBook will conclude by drawing on examples of successful brands and the associations that people have with them. By analyzing prominent brands in your industry, you can emulate successful elements and improve upon their weaknesses when creating your own personal brand.

This eBook will give you all the tools you need to create a personal branding strategy that is effective, credible, and successful. By implementing the information that you will find in the following pages you are giving your personal brand the best start possible.

A holistic approach to personal branding is described here. There is no one-size-fits-all method, there are only keys to success. You should adapt and alter these methods in order to make it appropriate for you and your goals. If you believe and trust the process, eBook will give you the strongest possible foundation for your personal branding and future success.

The “what and why” of personal branding

To firstly put it very, very simply, in essence, personal branding is the combination of who you are, what you are doing and how you are doing it. It is your purpose and your character; and how your audience perceives you.

But what does that mean?

The personalization of business is a key characteristic of how industries have changed in the last decade. Brands and marketing have become so incorporated and entangled within our daily lives that we are exposed to so many messages all day, often without noticing. Whereas in the past, the idea of a “brand” was exclusive to the business world. This is now an outdated concept.

These days, we are all brands, in effect. Even our personal social media account shares our brand with our friends and families—even if we do not always realize so. Our accounts are full of the things we care about, our interests, and the experiences we have. There are, often, a “highlight reel” of our lives and they are all the things we want people to see us as. Hence, personal branding.

Your personal brand is, in part, the relationship that your audience will have with you and your endeavor. It is what you want to be known for and how people will recognize you.

See the similarities? You likely already have a personal brand, of sorts. But, since that you are probably already online you may be wondering why you need to curate such a defined brand, too.

There are an abundance of reasons why having a strong personal brand is a requirement of business.

Good personal branding helps attract more clients—it encourages engagement and feeds credibility. Rather than just being a mystery behind a screen, it shows that you are a real person, and therefore you have a higher level of influence over your audience.

In terms of a social media presence, people are often more inclined to want to follow another person, then they are a random, faceless business account. Thus, good personal branding can encourage people to follow you, as a person (a brand) and you will then introduce them to your business endeavors. This does not mean you have to have two accounts; you can be your business; it just means that your personality must shine through.

In addition, quality personal branding permits premium pricing.

Consumers pay more for a product that is backed by a quality and reputable brand. Just think about smartphones—despite numerous, cheaper options being readily available on the market, people tend to gravitate towards the same, more expensive brands. Without branding, you are just a product that is subject to intense competition; branding is what sets you, and your price range, apart.

Consumers do not want to engage in business with a brand, instead they would much rather to interact with a person and know that, by proxy, they are helping another person live their dreams. Therefore, good personal branding builds relationships with your audience—your interactions can be more authentic and personal, while your audience is more loyal, more engaged, and less likely to switch to a competitor's product.

It is how you differentiate yourself from everyone else; how you show that you are better, more qualified, and more credible than the rest. It increases your influence and persuasive power over your audience and is a fantastic way to add value to your endeavors.

If you do not put in the time to develop your personal branding at the beginning of your venture, you will likely spend significantly more time later on undoing the damage of uncontrolled or chaotic branding. It is far better for you, professionally, to develop a personal branding strategy, implement it and then adjust and monitor as your brand develops. This helps you remain up to date and, over time, will change organically.

It is far better to have a cultivated personal branding strategy from the outset, than have to do damage control and completely reinvent your online presence.

Additionally, personal branding can be pre-emptive form of marketing—it means you already have a good reputation in the eyes of your audience. In the unfortunate circumstances that a bitter and disgruntled customer, or unprofessional competitor tries to discredit you or spread negative misinformation, you will already have a robust platform. Already having a strong positive brand association makes your personal branding more stable and able to withstand shocks and will also provide less of a need for crisis management.

A strong personal brand creates a bond with your customers before you attempt to market your products or services to them. It means they are already on your team and want you to succeed.

Now that the idea of personal branding has been well-established in your mind, it is time to begin, or revamp, your own.

When reading the following chapters, you may find it helpful to stop, and write down any thoughts you have, or any answers to the questions posed. Being able to understand what, and why, and how things apply to your personal circumstances is essential in succeeding to create a valuable and credible personal branding strategy.

The first steps to creating your personal branding strategy

In order to create a personal branding strategy that will be successful and add value to your venture, you first need to begin with a solid foundation. Much like with a house, if there are cracks in the foundation it will not be long before the whole thing crumbles.

While setting out and clearly defining your personal brand may feel like it takes a lot of time to do—it is an upfront time investment. Once everything is visibly developed and strategized it will make the remainder of the business planning a breeze.

It is also important to note, however, that you should also be monitoring your branding strategy as your business unfolds. Monitoring should be a part of your admin—over time, it will become second nature. There will be more on this later, but first let us utilize three questions to determine the baseline for your brand.

As we go on, it is essential to remember that everything needs to be very clearly defined—if you are confused about your branding, your audience will be, too.

What is your purpose?

This is a very abstract and confronting question. It is prudent to note that this phase of developing your personal branding strategy will require some deep reflection and introspective thinking. While it is intense, you will know yourself, and what you want your dream life to look like, better by the end. You need to be able to understand yourself, including your motivations and personality in order to harness the best elements of it to shine in your personal branding.

There are multiple things that need to be considered, and different people value them in different ways. You need to decide which are the most important, and most relevant attributes to be manipulated into your personal branding. It can be helpful to make a list of the following.

What are your:

- Past successes?
- Strengths?
- Goals?
- Experiences?
- Passions?
- Personality traits?
- Values?
- Beliefs?
- Interests?

What are the words that you want to be used in and associated with your brand? Write down as many things as you can think of for each of the aforementioned categories.

Then go through and highlight the ones that stand out to you. They should be most important, and most usable ones that have the ability to inspire your branding.

Do not be afraid to use your life! Your experiences, strengths and ambitions are what make you, you. They are what will make your audience connect with you.

Who is your audience?

Now that you have figured out a little more about who you are, you need to select your target audience. Defining your target audience means that you can tailor your content and marketing specifically and efficiently towards them.

To do this, it can be helpful to come up with a very specific image of a consumer. First, what is the main demographic of your target audience? This includes things like...

- Age
- Location
- Gender
- Lifestyle
- Education
- Financial situation
- Technological use
- Family/living situation

Then, you need to think about them in a more psychological way.

- What do they want?
- What do they need?
- What challenges do they face?
- What do they believe in?
- What are their attitudes and behaviors?

Defining your target audience as specifically as possible is a great way to make sure that your branding can be optimized to your potential future customers. You need to make sure that the words you have chosen for your branding will also resonate and reflect well on your audience—otherwise it leads to mixed signals and suboptimal performance.

What do you have to offer?

Based on your purpose and your audience; what can you do for them? Why is it better than everything else on the market?

Are you:

- Making their life easier?
- Solving a problem that they have?
- Solving a problem that they do not know that they have?
- Making their life more interesting or entertaining?
- Helping them?
- Teaching them something?

Your purpose, your audience and your offer combined together make up your personal branding. The way that you present and market yourself needs to reflect all three of these elements in order to make a positive impression on your consumers.

Once you have clearly defined all three of these; it is worth writing it all down somewhere. These make up the vision for your brand. You should check back in with these mission statements as your branding strategies progress to ensure that you are on the correct track.

You should be able to break them down to a few sentences and it is recommended that you put them somewhere so you can refer back to it and be inspired by your personal branding—just as your future audience will be!

The three keys to the success of a credible personal brand: audience, authenticity, and consistency

In order to be successful, you need to be credible. While there are a few ways to approach achieving credibility the simplest ones are often the most effective. In this case, it is your audience, your authenticity and realizing a level of consistency. Without these, you will not maximize the potential gains of your personal branding. Your audience needs to trust you and, if your personal branding shows that you are authentic and consistent, they will.

Even though your audience will likely have never met you, effective personal branding makes it seem like they already know you—even though all that is really happening is that they are absorbing the content that you are creating. Personal branding means that your audience will feel a bond with you, they will trust, respect, admire and be happy to do business with you.

Audience

The importance of appealing to your clearly defined audience cannot be overstated. The message of your brand is not going to appeal to everyone. You need to let go of the idea that you must be liked by everyone in order to be successful. If you do not commit to a specific demographic of people, any message you create will not be as powerful. If you do not risk alienating people who are not part of your target audience, you risk not reaching those you want to. Your personal branding needs to be attractive to your target audience. You could have the best branding, but if it does not attract your goal audience, it will be ineffective. Your brand values need to align with your audiences and the lifestyle you are trying to portray should share similar dreams with theirs.

This will be discussed in later chapters, but you need to put your brand where you audience will see it. You need to consider where they are, what they are looking for and develop a content strategy that aligns with it.

Authenticity

Your personal branding needs to come across as authentic. With the rise of photoshop and influencer culture, consumers are able to tell when someone is showing a fake life—and they will tune out. A “brand” does not mean a “persona.” Rather, branding is a strategic showing of who you are.

Given how invasive and intertwined social media is with our lives, and how easy it is to create a false impression, audiences want to follow someone who is real and true to who they are.

To achieve this, you should share parts of your story and be real with your audience. Sharing past experiences and future goals is a method that can be used to connect with your future consumer base—it should be done with caution, there is such a thing as oversharing!

Audiences do not naturally believe what they see or what is presented to them. They read reviews, they look for multiple sources and they usually do not take things at face value. Having a strong personal brand is key in narrowing this divide. If people trust you, if you seem authentic, passionate, and natural they will engage with your content. In this day and age, authenticity is currency; spend it wisely.

Consistency

We can discuss consistency in two ways. There is the more media-oriented level of professional consistency and then the engagement consistency. The first of these is something that can very easily be achieved. It is so simple that if it is missing from your personal branding it instantly stands out and makes you seem unprofessional.

It is pivotal that, aesthetically, your content is consistent. This means making sure you have good quality photos, a recognizable logo and unique design that makes you stand out. You should consistently use the same colors and fonts.

Again, this is something that can take time to set up in the beginning but will have invaluable long-term results.

While we will discuss engagement more broadly later on, it is highly advised that you have a consistent content strategy. Creating quality content takes time. You do not have to rush out as much content as possible as quickly as possible. It is better to have fewer posts of a higher caliber, then many posts that are low quality and put your audience off. Having a consistent posting schedule of high-quality relevant content will retain your audience and inspire them to engage with your posts.

Having strong personal branding requires accountability. You need to ensure that you are accountable, not only to your audience, but also to yourself. Do not sabotage your brand by neglecting to maintain and monitor your strategies. Put simply, the way to be seen as credible, is to be credible.

Which social media will best benefit your personal branding?

There are so many different social media platforms in existence at the moment. It can be tempting to just join and post constantly on everything in order to try and reach the most amount of people. However, it is better to target your main social media to your audience and build up from there.

Start smaller—claim domains, but creating content can be expensive and time consuming, meaning you are better off investing in fewer mediums originally, and then growing as your audience does.

Before getting too carried away, you should do research into your industry and trends. Look at the popular accounts and posts; take note of what is similar and what is successful. Determine what the main characteristics are and figure out how to build on it differently. Researching your competition is essential in finding your content niche.

The most important thing to remember is to be consistent throughout your media; make sure it all uses the same branding, design, names and all the information is up to date.

This section will provide a brief run down on some of the most popular social media sites. Different sites work in different manners, but, most of all, remember to keep up with the trends.

A website

A website is an essential part of any personal brand. While it may be tempting to skip this platform in favor of social media which tend to have higher user rates, a website is not an outdated concept! It is the perfect center of information for your personal branding.

You can use other platforms to share some of that information, but it is essential to have one, easy to navigate place that consumers can access. It should, of course, have links to all your other social media profiles and contact information.

Facebook

Facebook is one of the biggest social media platforms in the world. Everyone is on it, which means you need to be careful how you use it. Use a business page and attach it to a business profile account that aligns with your personal branding. Be active and share content from other platforms.

Being active on Facebook is key—make sure that your page has a high response time and you post on a regular basis. Joining Facebook groups, “liking” and interacting with similar profiles are a great way to build up your audience.

Twitter

Twitter is a good way to connect with similar people, so make sure you follow all the relevant influencers and brands in your industry. Interaction is very important on Twitter, the best way to build up a following is to interact with other people’s tweets, as well as posting your own.

Weigh-in on discussions that are relevant and use hashtags to reach a wider audience. Twitter threads are a great way to share some of your content and do not forget to reply and interact with people who Tweet at you!

Instagram

One of the most popular photo sharing websites is Instagram. Instagram is also a good example of ensuring that you follow the trends. What once was a site where you could post random, over-edited pictures of your friends, has turned to a platform for people to carefully curate the best image of themselves possible—showing them being successful and having fun, effortlessly.

More recently, however, Instagram has seen a recent uptake in “carousels.” These tend to be aesthetically laid out collections of information, written clearly in simple terms that get shared around. Before the middle of 2020, these were not really used. Instagram stories were not the place for the average people to share knowledge or quotes—for the most part. Now, however, the ways people use Instagram are changing; make sure you are aware of this!

Pinterest

Pinterest can be seen as more of a niche social media site. People turn to Pinterest for inspiration, ideas, and step-by-step guides to achieving things. When uploading content to Pinterest, it should be artistic and visual, descriptions should be detailed, and any boards named specifically, too.

Having a consistent and clear design on Pinterest is pivotal—else your content will get lost in the clutter.

WordPress or other blogging platform

Starting a blog is a good way to begin to create content for your audience. It is an easy method for you to begin to share your personal branding. Using quality keywords, hashtags and SEO is essential to getting discovered. Blogging about other people, tools or events within your industry is a great way to get your content out there so others have more of an inclination to share it. Your posts should also be shared to other sites to increase traffic.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the social networking site for professionals. Having a detailed profile outlining your goals, business and past experience is a fantastic way to add professionalism to your personal branding.

It is a platform full of likeminded people looking to make connections, grow their own businesses and further their own careers. It is a great place to post your own content.

YouTube

The biggest video sharing platform is YouTube, and many people use it to look for information. Videos are a great way to share your expertise; some audiences would rather watch, then read.

However, it is important to remember that recording and editing high quality videos can be time consuming.

Podcasts

Podcasts are a newly popular medium. It is a very personal media type, and listeners often feel a real connection with the speakers. Audiences feel like they know and trust the hosts, even though they have never met. For this reason, podcasts are a great way to build an intimate connection with your audiences. This was not an exhaustive list of all the social media platforms, just the major ones. There are many other sites out there, some with very niche user-bases that could be perfect for your target audiences.

It is, of course, worth noting that different sites have different sharing abilities and having a following on Instagram, and then starting a podcast and using Instagram to promote, for example. The key to social media is simply to stand out and putting your high-quality content on the right platforms is the easiest way to grow your following.

Irrespective of which platform you choose, your audience will only grow if you provide them with quality content.

Strategies to grow your personal brand and authority

Once you have decided on your medium; there are a few different methods that you can use to grow your brand and authority.

Having strong personal branding immediately positions yourself as an authority and your content will reflect this, too.

Creating content

The best way to grow your personal branding is to create content. Creating your own, quality content is the best method to show that you are an expert, that you are trustworthy and that you deserve your audience's time.

It works best if you curate content specifically for the medium you are primarily posting on. However, posts can also be shared to other platforms for increased visibility.

Getting involved in Facebook groups is a great way to interact with your audience in a more casual way. Direct, personal interaction will make them trust and respect you. Once you have enough of an audience, you could also start your own Facebook group for your content.

Instagram posts, blog posts, and videos are all fantastic ways to grow your branding. But, of course, quality is better than quantity. Post as much valuable content as possible and try to include a call to action for your audience.

Your content does, of course, need to be unique. It should reflect your personal branding; your values and your goals; and speak to your target audience in such a way that they feel compelled to act.

Mailing list

Email marketing is a super effective method of connecting with your audience. Create links and leads in your other content and make it easy to subscribe so any future content gets sent straight to their inbox.

A weekly newsletter can be a super effective way to connect with your audience. You can include personal on-brand anecdotes and link back to posts you have made over the week to remind your audience to engage with your posts.

Offering an incentive to subscribe to your mailing list, such as discounts on your paid content, sneak previews on future content or exclusive new content will help your audience feel included in your personal branding and encourage engagement.

Free content

Offering free content and resources allows your audience to see that your content will be of a high caliber. It builds trust and ensure that the audience is aware that the paid content will be of a premium quality.

Audiences are usually more likely to pay for full access to a product or service if that have had a positive experience with a free preview.

Smaller professional details are key

Small details are key in proving that your personal branding makes you a credible and reputable voice in your industry. This includes elements like professional headshots (that are consistent across platforms), good language and proofreading, design, and aesthetic consistency, and even an email signature. These are such small elements that immediately make you an authoritative source of knowledge.

Creating proper connections within your industry

A great way to bring exposure to your personal branding is to reach out to other people in your industry or similar key players. Being featured on a popular and well-respected platform in your industry will elevate your credibility and authority.

It can be worth reaching out to other brands and seeing if they need features, or guest blogs—this syndicates your brand's credibility as it shows that your work is valued by other trustworthy and prominent sources.

While it can seem tempting to try and build your personal branding alone, such connections and collaborations are an invaluable way to reach different aspects of your audiences.

The importance of analytics

Now that you have decided on your target audience, the platforms you will be using to share it and the content type, it is essential to track its progress. Analytics can be confusing to understand initially, but, once you are familiar with them and how they benefit you, they will allow you to fine-tune your content and posting and maximize the returns of your personal branding.

In short, analytics can help you track how well your posts are doing. You can use them to check various details to verify that your content is reaching your target audience and meeting your branding goals.

Checking your analytics regularly allows you to monitor, reflect and recreate the success of your personal branding—and may help you catch any shortcomings early on.

Intense growth does not always happen overnight, and it can be unrealistic to go viral immediately. But, by tracking your progress you can capitalize on the successes of your personal branding as they happen.

Engagement

Engagement is a two-way street. The first form of engagement is audience engagement. Engagement occurs not when your audience is viewing your post, but when they are liking it, commenting on it, sharing it and taking action from it. Most platforms have built in insights and engagement checking functionality.

You can see the demographic breakdown of your followers (to make sure you are reaching your target audience), as well as the number of likes. One of the most important forms of engagement is the number of people who have seen the most versus the number of people who have taken action from it (including likes, shares and comments). If you have a high number of viewers, but low actions taken this could mean that your content is not resonating with your audience.

Alternatively, if your posts are not being seen, consider changing your content schedule. Make sure you are posting at times when your audience is active and include a call to action in your content.

The other form of important engagement is your own. Are you regularly checking your accounts, responding to comments, replying to questions, or just otherwise interacting with your audience?

This makes your branding accessible, credible, and authentic. You want your audience to feel like they can trust you, and if you are online, you are available.

Keyword planning and Search Engine Optimization

Search engine optimization and keyword planning, in essence, just make you more easily found when audiences search for relevant things to your brand. Planning out keywords is a good step to take when trying to reach your audience. Use words that are relevant to your personal branding and industry, making sure you check for popular words and phrases.

The popular and common searches do change over time, so ensure that you are keeping up with the trends. Audiences also change their word searches depending on the satisfaction with the results—so try and keep synonyms in mind.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO), while similar to keyword planning, prioritizes better quality content. Search engines rank search results, and the higher up in the results you are, the more credible and more trustworthy you will seem. How many times, really, do you go to the second page of results?

Tailoring your personal branding to be optimized for search engines is a perfect way to show your audience that you are credible. Search engine optimization is an organic way of gaining traffic to your profiles and naturally growing an audience.

Public Image

When you search for yourself online, what comes up? Do you have a common name and get lost in a crowd of other people? Do old posts you made come up? Do you even come up at all?

You should take the time to search for yourself and be thorough! Check your names, and add extra words; including schools, locations, associates, family members and workplaces. You need to know exactly what is out there. Clear your browsing data, use incognito mode, and even get other people to search for you too.

If a drunken picture of you posted on Facebook show up before a professional headshot when you image search, you may have a problem! Remove any controversial posts that you are tagged in or weird, party pictures you uploaded as a teen.

If a potential customer searches for you and see things that do not align with the personal branding you have created, they may take their business elsewhere.

Some other tips for improving search results include

As you know, when you search for something, multiple results show up. Try and improve and optimize your SEO so that you rank highly and take up more of the popular results.

When creating profiles, make sure you use the same name on all of them. Try to get the same username if possible. Make sure to include your location and fill out all the relevant information.

If you want to have personal accounts for your friends and family only, separate to your business accounts, consider using a different name and put the privacy settings on high. If personal accounts are discovered to not align with your personal branding it will make you seem inauthentic and discourage audiences.

Ways to live your personal branding and increase visibility

Now that the digital footprint element of personal branding creation has been summarized; we will now take our journey off-screen.

It is not enough to just have a good media strategy that portrays your brand in one way, and then act differently in your everyday life. Of course, you can do this, however, should you audience come into contract with this alter-ego it can be confusing and makes your personal branding weaker and less trustworthy.

Your personal branding is the combination of who you are, what you do and what you want to do. Everything you do is associated with your brand, and this includes your everyday life.

Build a network

One of your aims should be to build a network of connections with other key players in your industry. Being friends with successful people makes you appear like one of them.

If you know people, and come up in suggested searches or tagged posts, not only is it easier for your audience to find you, but it is likely that other industry players will find you, too. Having a network makes it easier for other media types who are looking for some to feature to connect with you and will share your brand with their audience.

Often, people with brands similar to yours will look for experts to share insights with their audience, so by having such connections you can harness these opportunities.

Collaborations are often mutually beneficial; so, you should be on the look out for interviews or guest blogging positions to help you reach more consumers in your audience.

Being seen with reputable and credible brands make you appear so, too.

Aside from networking platforms such as LinkedIn (as well, of course, as other digital media locations), you can increase the size of your network by attending conferences and industry events.

Remember, it does not matter what you know, the important part is who you know. And you never know who might hold the next big opportunity for you.

Build an accessible community

As well as having a good network of industry connections, it is also important to have an accessible community for your audience. In order for your personal branding to be successful, you need your audience to trust and respect you; they will do this if they feel like you are a real person, not just a businessperson! Your audience will want to connect with you as a person, not a nameless, faceless avatar.

There are a few ways to build up a “community” around your personal branding. This can include holding in-person events to meet up with your audience, or, at the very least live sessions.

Starting a Facebook group (and being active in it) is a great way to get a discussion going and for you to impart your wisdom on a personal level. Even just responding to comments on your content posts is a great way to be seen as reachable and available.

You should also make sure you have contact options for your audience; this includes emails and messages. You should monitor your comment section so that you are up to date with how your audience is responding to your content. Remember that many social media platforms show when you were last active, or they show how responsive you are to messages; make sure that you are keeping response times down in order to show that you care and are available.

At the end of the day, people connect with people; the value of genuine human connection cannot be overstated.

Business cards

So maybe business cards seem like an outdated concept, but they can be useful to invest in. You can hand them out to new business associates, or simply pass them on to people when you meet them—but in a professional manner, of course.

Some of the benefits of business cards include the fact that they are an easy way to give someone all your details in one convenient place. If you include all your social media handles, as well as other ways to contact you; your audience will be able to reach you in their preferred manner.

Business cards are a fantastic physical reminder of your personal branding— it is harder to lose a piece of paper than it is to forget details.

The design and branding on your business card should be consistent with your digital footprint—this means matching fonts, logos, and other aesthetic staples of your brand.

Dressing well

Your personal appearance should match the brand that you have created. You are the physical embodiment of your branding, so you need to have a look that matches the brand. Dressing well is the best way to achieve this— it makes you look trustworthy and professional. You do not need to be in a three-piece suit constantly, but taking pride in your appearance shows that you take pride in your brand.

Share your story

Your audience wants to do business with a person. Sharing your story brings down the walls between businessperson and human.

You should share the story behind your brand with your audience. Show them why you are passionate, how you are qualified, and what you want to achieve. You could incorporate this into your content strategy, or even just include an “about” page on your website.

Humanizing yourself and sharing your life story, including hardships you overcame and what inspired you to become the person that you are will build a strong connection with your audience. It adds a level of authenticity and will make your audience believe in you and your personal branding.

If it would suit your branding strategy or content schedule, you should share elements of your day with your audience. This is not essential, but it is a way of building a connection with your audience. Including insights of your day, even something as simple as getting a morning coffee, resonates with people and shows that you are serious about your personal branding.

Of course, there is such a thing as oversharing. You need to seem open and upfront, yet still maintain a degree of separation. Decide on what the appropriate level of sharing is that will foster a true connection with your audience. Once they are engaged and feel a part of your life, they will be more likely to participate with your branding in the future.

In essence, you need to ensure that your actions and lifestyle align with the image you want to convey with your branding. Carrying aspects of your branding with your everyday life will create authority in your work. It shows that you are serious and credible—that your vision for yourself is a reality, and not a scheme to make money. Your audience wants to know that you care; both about them, and about your branding. Living your brand is the best way to accomplish this.

Successful branding examples and how you can harness them

As we have seen throughout this book, there are many different ways that personal branding can be achieved. Yet they all start with the same foundation. Some brands are more successful than others.

Strong personal brands can be advantageous increasing exposure for any companies or ventures an individual decides to undertake. It is a great foundation for any future products or services.

Think about how many people with strong personal brands have written self help books with their top tips for being successful—with their audiences fawning over the content and swearing by the tips to try and change their lives.

Emulating the success of others can be a great way to bolster your personal branding; just make sure you are not copying it exactly.

Think about your favorite people and the personal branding they have curated. What associations do you have with them? Chances are there are a few key words that spring to mind when you think of them. Now think about why those brand have those associations and what words you want people to think of when they think of you; because, with an effective branding strategy, they will think of you—just safeguard that it is in the way that you want.

These key traits are the cornerstone. Some of the most successful brands are also controversial. They are not afraid to alienate a huge portion of the population in order to reach their desired audience. This has been essential to their relevance and achievements. While, at times, these examples are controversial and do not appeal to everyone, by seeing the success of others it can be easy to recognize areas of your own.

Steve Jobs

Even before he was the face of Apple, he had a strong brand that he brought to the company. His personal branding was unique and strong—he understood completely what he wanted to convey, and his actions furthered this. There was complete synergy between his purpose, his message, and his audience, which made him seem trustworthy and authentic.

Steve Jobs personified the ideas of innovation and creating the next best thing—which he went on to do numerous times through the products he helped create. The purpose of his personal branding was clear, and he was able to effectively communicate the messages he wanted to portray.

Steve Jobs created one of the most credible and recognizable brands; so much so that his legacy lives on and his branding messages and tips still remain relevant.

The Kardashian Family

The Kardashian Family is one of the best examples of successful branding. They were able to build an entire media empire and were able to use their show to help control the narrative surrounding them. Even when faced with harsh scandals in the media, the Kardashians would share the raw and real insights into their personal lives, making their fans feel empathetic towards the sisters. Their personal branding makes you feel like you know them; given how much of their lives they exploit on their show and on their personal social media accounts. Between them they have released numerous products—from perfume to skincare to clothing lines. But the question is, would any of those products have been anywhere near as successful as they were if the Kardashian named had not been attached?

The Kardashians, love them or hate them, have turned their name into such a successful brand that they could probably sell anything.

Hugh Hefner

A controversial figure, for sure, but can you seriously picture a silk robe without thinking about him?

While contentious, Hefner's personal branding and his company matched the lifestyle that he lived. This is a key aspect of his success. Had he headed up a conservative company, it would be confusing to reconcile that with his lifestyle choice.

Hugh Hefner is an excellent example of entwining your personal branding with your business and having a wider level of success.

Now, think about your favorite brands...

What is it about them that enchants you? How have they captured your attention? What springs to mind when you think about them? How do they use content? What makes them successful? What could they improve on?

Analyzing other brands, particularly ones in the same industry as you will help you better define your personal branding strategy. You can exploit their missed opportunities, capitalize on their mistakes, and try to emulate their successes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, personal branding is essential to the success of any venture in the twenty-first century. While defining and outlining your personal branding can seem like a huge task in the outset, the rewards will be unparalleled. Doing so at the beginning of your entrepreneurial journey will give you a head start on your competition.

Having a personal branding strategy will get you noticed, it will add authority to your content, and it will encourage your audience to engage with you.

This eBook has given you the strongest possible foundation to begin planning your personal branding strategy or updating and rejuvenating your current brand. While it can seem overwhelming, working through it methodically and ensuring you outline each section precisely, before moving onto the next will guarantee that you create the best brand possible. Defining your audience, purpose and message is pivotal branding strategy.

Building a strong foundation for the concept of your brand will allow you to create meaningful content that will impact your audience. Your specific target audience will come to you once your content is out there waiting for them. Monitoring your analytics, and consequently, your influence, is the best way to make sure that your branding is on track.

There is nothing wrong with trying something new, it is a fantastic opportunity to stand out. Make sure that you are keeping up with trends. This is both industry but also medium specific. Staying up to date with the kinds of content that your audience wants to consume will make sure that your engagement stays high. Staying alert means that you can adapt and improve, as necessary. Do not let the fear of trying something new or different stop you from trying to stand out. Businesses fail, but good brands last forever.

True personal branding power is being able to influence the trends, not just keeping up with them.

Personal branding is the make or break of the business world; good branding means that you will have strong connection with your audience—without that, you will not be successful.

Do not be afraid to shake things up! Your personal branding is what will allow you to fully live out your dreams. No one has ever made a difference in the world by following the rules.