

Chapter 1

Showing the World Who You Are

In This Chapter

- ▶ Defining the personal branding process
 - ▶ Revealing your true self and your mission
 - ▶ Considering your target market and competition
 - ▶ Sharing your brand in every form of communication
 - ▶ Ensuring that your entire environment is on-brand
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It's a new brand world. You're branded, branded, branded. 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.

— Tom Peters

The greatest success stories inevitably involve people who stand out from the crowd — people who may or may not have extraordinary talents but who most definitely know how to represent their capabilities in everything they do.

This chapter is your preview of how you can distinguish yourself by creating an image and reputation that set you apart; build trust among the people you want to serve; and represent the true, authentic you. This process — the process of creating your own personal brand — can serve you well whether you're searching for a first job, exploring a change in career, looking to be more viable and successful in your current workplace, or hoping to serve your community as a volunteer or leader.

Crafting a personal brand can be exciting and a bit intimidating. To do it right, you have to spend time up front studying yourself and figuring out what really makes you tick. Only with a strong sense of yourself in mind can you undertake the steps that follow, which include identifying your target market, setting yourself apart from your competitors, communicating your brand to the people who need to know you, and aligning every visible aspect of your life with your brand. In this chapter, I outline the whole process so you know what to expect from the rest of the book. Your own success story is waiting to be written!

Discovering Personal Branding

Personal branding caught fire when *Fast Company* magazine ran a cover article called “The Brand Called You” by Tom Peters in 1997. Soon, books like Daniel H. Pink’s *Free Agent Nation* (Business Plus) and William Bridges’ *Creating You & Co.: Learn To Think Like The CEO Of Your Own Career* (Da Capo Press) joined in to support the idea that you direct your own career path. Being self-reliant means that you are responsible for the direction of your career and the impression that people have of you. The time has come to take control of your personal brand.

So what exactly is *personal branding*? Your personal brand is your reputation, which is defined by your character. Your personal brand is also your legacy; it’s the way others remember you through your actions, your expertise, and the emotional connections that you make. Your personal brand shows your authenticity from the inside out.

You have a personal brand whether you know it or not:

- ✓ “She is so smart.”
- ✓ “He is such a slob.”
- ✓ “I can always count on him to finish what he starts.”



Personal branding is about expressing your authentic self by allowing you to be the person you are meant to be. But it isn’t just some feel-good, self-help mumbo jumbo: It’s a strategic process that makes you an active partner in creating the direction of your life. Through personal branding, you find out how to bring more value to your work and to the target market that you serve. You discover how to identify and communicate your unique promise of value.

Your personal brand acts as a filter that helps you make decisions that are congruent with who you are and what you stand for. It identifies what makes you unique and clearly communicates your individuality to the people who need to know about you.

Having a personal brand sounds like a great idea, but how do you get one? If you’re serious about developing your personal brand, a very clear road map can get you there. This book guides you through every stop along that map. The following section, in brief, walks you through what you need to do.

Know your brand

Knowing your brand sounds easy enough, but how do you figure out what your brand is?

1. Define who you are.

The beginning of any branding process is being able to clearly define that brand. In personal branding, the product is you! You must take time to get to know yourself and what is important to you. That's what Chapter 4 is all about.

2. Spot your target audience.

Are you interacting with and trying to promote yourself to the right people? In Chapter 5, I help you determine who needs to know about your personal brand.

3. Get to know your competitors.

Who are you competing with? In order to have a strong brand, you need to understand who your competitors are and which market niche works for you. Chapter 6 gives you the tools to accomplish this step.

4. Craft a personal brand profile.

This all-important tool, which I discuss in detail in Chapter 7, gathers all the data that you collect about yourself, your target audience, and your competitors into one defining document. This profile helps you pinpoint your unique promise of value and write a statement that succinctly expresses your brand.

Communicate your brand

After you get to know your brand, your next challenge is to communicate it clearly, concisely, and consistently to the people who need to know about it. Here's how:

1. Write your story.

Chapter 8 is a lesson on how to make your story appealing to others. You need to be able to tell others about yourself and to develop a personal commercial (or *elevator pitch*).

2. Brand your traditional communication tools.

You want to express your personal brand in your letters, resume, professional biography, and presentations — and, if you have the opportunity, on television. Chapter 9 shows you how.

3. Communicate your brand online.

Chapter 10 demonstrates how to merge the world of social media with your personal brand.

4. Create a communications plan.

You need a communications plan so that you're sharing your brand on your own terms — not leaving anything to chance. Chapter 11 gives you the inside scoop on how to craft a communications plan.

Control your brand ecosystem

The phrase *brand ecosystem* may sound intimidating, but it's just shorthand for “every element of your life, from your clothes to your professional colleagues, that influences how your target audience perceives you and whether it wants to learn more about the product or service you're offering.” Phew! You can see why I opted for the shorthand. Here are some of the elements of your ecosystem that you want to control:

- ✔ **Your image:** Whether you like it or not, what you look like on the outside does matter. Fashioning your image to match your personal brand helps you communicate something authentic about yourself at first glance, and Chapter 12 shows you how.
- ✔ **The appearance of your branded materials:** From business cards to your website, you want to create a consistent visual image for your brand that makes the right impression on your target audience. Chapter 13 explains how to select images, colors, and fonts that create the visual effect you want.
- ✔ **Your unique career path:** Your target audience — and the way you interact with it — is determined by where you are in your career. In Chapter 14, I discuss special considerations to keep in mind if you're just out of college, if you're midstream in your career and trying to switch jobs, if you're an executive, if you're an entrepreneur, and more.
- ✔ **Your network:** The people you associate with are very important; they factor into the impression you make on your target audience, as well as your ability to make connections with future employers. Chapter 15 is full of tips for finding people who can support your goals and connecting with them in meaningful ways.
- ✔ **Your performance in your current workplace:** Personal branding is not just for job seekers. If you're already employed, Chapter 16 offers lots of ideas for developing your personal brand in the context of your current workplace.

Figuring Out Who You Really Are

Today you are You, that is truer than true. There is no one alive who is Youer than You.

— Dr. Seuss

In the previous section, I note that the first step in developing a personal brand is knowing yourself. You need to look at the expectations others have of you and how they influence how you want to be seen. In this process, you

ask questions of yourself to discover your authenticity and understand what you need in order to live your mission through your personal brand. Here, I help you start thinking about what that process involves.

Shedding others' ideas and expectations

Becoming an authentic human being means that you accept yourself for who you are. Everyone has different approaches to life, likes and dislikes, and skills and talents.

Most likely, when you were in junior high, standing out was deadly. At that age, nothing is more important than fitting in. But fitting in can carry you only so far. At some point, if you truly want to succeed and shine, you have to figure out how to differentiate yourself from the crowd.

I'm not saying that you need to stop caring about what other people think or to stop listening to what your loved ones think is good for you. Instead, in this book I ask you to make an honest assessment of what you want and who you are. You can't build a personal brand based on someone else's ideals. If you did, you'd be a fake.



Taking an honest assessment about who you are and what you want means looking at what you do well and owning it, as well as knowing what you don't do well and recognizing those limitations. You definitely should seek input from others during this process. However, you can't let them determine who you will be. Personal branding is about you being you in the most authentic way.

Getting to know the authentic you

In the 1960s, a cartoon character named Tooter the Turtle was never satisfied with his life and was always looking to be someone else. He wanted to experiment with what it would be like to live another's life. He would visit Mr. Wizard, who would cast his spell on Tooter, allowing him to explore living someone else's life.

Poor Tooter the Turtle always got himself into trouble trying to be someone he was not. Just when the mess would become too much to handle, Tooter would yell, "Help, Mr. Wizard." Mr. Wizard would say the magic words, "drizzle, drazzle, druzzle, drome — time for this one to come home." Tooter came home as himself, the only self he could ever really be. Mr. Wizard would say upon Tooter's return that "he is what he is — not what he is not."

The personal branding process helps you own who you are, quirks and all, so that you don't waste your life wishing to be someone else. In this process, you need to take a realistic look at yourself to understand all the factors that

make you who you are. Getting to know yourself is truly the toughest part of crafting your personal brand. But the end goal — to live and thrive as an authentic human being — is absolutely worth the effort.

Knowing what you need

To determine what matters to you, you first need to identify what you need. A *need* is something that is necessary for you to live a healthy life. Needs can be as basic as food and shelter or as complex as contributing your talents to the world. Needs develop as you grow up and become a central part of your character. In order to brand yourself, you must know what you need.

Do you stop yourself from trying something new or taking risks for fear of putting your basic needs in jeopardy? Motivation is directly tied to needs. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which I explain in Chapter 4, states that people are motivated by their unsatisfied needs. When you have an unmet need, you are motivated to do something to change that. Needs direct your feelings and influence your values. Determining what you need will help you understand what you value and where you need to set your goals.

Shaping your identity



Branding guru Robin Fisher Roffer believes that personal branding helps you “to know who you are and be valued for it, to attract what you want, to become more attractive to others, to inspire confidence, to walk your path with integrity, and to distinguish yourself in whatever field you’ve chosen.”

Shaping your identity begins with self-awareness. When you know who you are, you can find purpose in your work. I know you must have a high IQ because you are reading this book, and I'm hoping you also have a high EQ: emotional intelligence quotient. That's because in order to make the changes necessary to reshape your identity, you must be self-reflective. Self-awareness occurs when you are able to observe yourself as others see you.



The most important ingredient as you embark on the personal branding path is self-acceptance. You need to be able to look closely at yourself, be able to listen to what others think about you, and be willing to grow and change.

Through this process, you'll discover your uniqueness and discover how to leverage it in the marketplace. As you get clarity about your vision, values, passions, purpose, and goals, you'll be able to demonstrate your authenticity knowing that you are coming from a place of strength rather than trying to practice the chameleon life. This clarity helps you live more consistently, which is vital to living a successful life.

Considering your life circumstances

Whether you're fresh out of school or a young professional or reconsidering your mid-career options or preparing for what comes after retirement, you can use your personal brand to help you enjoy each stage that you are experiencing. The beauty of a personal brand is that it is not static.

Throughout your lifetime, certain things about you (like your sense of humor or your intelligence) will be enduring. But as you gain experience and expertise, your brand will evolve to showcase these new aspects of who you are. Your personal brand grows with you.

Heeding your call

If figuring out who you really are seems a bit scary, I'd like to reassure you that it doesn't have to be difficult. You already have an inner voice that can guide you toward your true identity. It's the voice that tells you "Yes, go for it" or "Stop, this is a big mistake." I believe you know your own best answers if you pause to listen to that wise inner voice.



It is freeing to let your guard down and open up to the authentic you, the one where your true strengths, talent, and personality lie. As you work your way through the personal branding process, you want to pay extra attention to your inner voice so that you can know your calling, determine where your life's mission and your abilities intersect, and move forward in a purposeful way.



Living your "why"

Dr. Sarah David, Founder and Chief Empowerment Officer of NICE: The National Institute for Career Empowerment, offers seven strategies that she uses in her coaching programs to help others gain clarity in discovering their "why" — their purpose or mission. These steps can help you identify your strengths and translate your unique gifts into a dream career and personal brand that is fulfilling. Here are Dr. David's strategies, in her words:

- ✔ **Identify your mission in life.** Whether your mission is to start your own business, work for someone else, or volunteer for a worthy cause, the work around identification is very important to the process. Whether you have known your mission since you were a child or you are still trying to discover it, do the self-reflection needed to understand your mission in life.
- ✔ **Follow your heart.** In counseling and coaching others, I have found that many people have delayed their dreams. They put them on a shelf. They have other careers that may not be fulfilling but pursue them because they are more popular, they pay more, or someone else thinks they're

a good idea. There is nothing wrong with doing what is practical, but I have found that people always circle back around to their original dreams somewhere down the path. Find a way to incorporate what you love into your career.

- ✔ **Trust your outrageous ideas.** What makes your idea different from other ideas that are out there? One thing I have learned is that there are no new ideas. The difference between you and anyone else is how you take an idea and build on it to make it even better. You may also be thinking that your idea has already been done, so perhaps it's tired and not useful. But you can make it unique and different by bringing your special skills, talents, and personality to bear. What extra twist, service, or benefit can you add to a concept? How can you take it to a level that's truly new and different?
- ✔ **Know what you don't know and get the help with what you need to move forward.** The old saying "knowledge is power" is true, but knowing what to do with that power is key. You can't be an expert at everything, but you can ask other people for support with tasks that don't come easily to you. Do your research and know the options available when you can't tackle something alone.
- ✔ **Identify your strengths, values, passions, and goals.** Understand how these foundation steps are critical to identifying your business or career of choice. First, identify what you do well. There are several ways you can identify your calling. Some people already know what their calling is because it was a seed that was planted early in life. It may be the one thing that you knew you wanted to be or do when you grew up. For others, your calling may be something that you've been mentored to do your entire life, such as run a family business or continue with a craft.
- ✔ **Find your cheerleaders and identify your tribe.** Finding the support you need to excel will help you live your why. I highly recommend joining a support group of like-minded people. A coach can also serve as one of your biggest cheerleaders. Identify who you will follow and who you will lead.
- ✔ **Invest in yourself.** If you don't, who will? I will forever be a lifelong learner. There are many things that I am excited to continue to learn throughout my entrepreneurial career. Many years ago, I realized the importance of education. I have invested in myself both formally and informally in addition to obtaining the wise counsel of trusted business advisors, mentors, coaches, and consultants.



Taking time out to identify your "why" is a very important step in identifying your personal brand. With a firm sense of your mission in mind, you can begin to create the type of business or career that provides meaning and fulfillment in your life.

Finding your sweet spot

Your *sweet spot* is a market niche that is uniquely yours. It exists at the intersection of various pieces of your life:

- ✓ **Your “why”:** Your purpose or mission in life (see preceding section)
- ✓ **Your identity:** Your skills, talents, and personality
- ✓ **Your target market:** The people you want to work with
- ✓ **What you offer:** The ideas you have to share

Finding your sweet spot allows you to stay true to yourself, and it gives you direction to form a strategy for developing your niche. Chapter 6 offers details about how to determine your own sweet spot.



Your sweet spot applies whether you're an entrepreneur or working in a company. Your sweet spot in the workplace can be something that you are uniquely known for.

Owning the Business of You

Having a personal brand is a little like having your own business. As the owner of You & Co., you need to figure out who will benefit most from what you have to offer, as well as how you compare to people doing similar work. This part of the branding process, which I outline in Chapters 5 and 6, is essential whether you're an independent professional or employed in a workplace.

You also need to develop the personal equivalent of a business plan: your brand profile. While I offer all the details about your brand profile in Chapter 7, I help you start thinking about it here as well.

Spotting your target audience

It's not enough to just have a strong personal brand; you also need to communicate it to the right people. William Arruda of Reach Communications is a personal branding guru, and one of my favorite quotes from him is this:

“Personal branding is not about being famous; it's about being selectively famous.” In looking for your target market, you're identifying your audience: the people who will help you reach your goals.



Your target market consists of your customers, but depending on your life circumstances, your customers may or may not be people purchasing products or services from you in a retail setting. If you're an entrepreneur setting up a home computer repair service, you'll think about customers in a traditional way: They're the specific group of people you think will most likely pay for the unique services you offer. But if you're a salaried employee in a nonretail setting, your customers may be your employer, your manager, your coworkers, or your project team. If you're a community volunteer, your customers may be corporate, foundation, or individual donors who underwrite expenses for a nonprofit organization you support.

In other words, your target audience is the people who need to know about you. You want to market your personal brand to these people so that your brand has a direction.

Identifying your competitors

One of the key steps when working on your personal brand is to understand where you fit, who does the same type of work you do, and how you can better identify your uniqueness. You can only find the answers by looking at your competition.

You first want to study how your competition communicates its value to its target audience. With that information in hand, you can begin to identify what makes you different than your competition. You can find ways to articulate your brand in a way that is unique — and completely authentic.



Understanding your competition helps you live your personal brand by allowing you to find a place where what you offer stands out. Your goal is to create a less competitive space in which you can thrive. You can achieve your goal by owning your market niche — by creating a mini-kingdom where you are the king or queen. When people think of that niche, they think of you. You can minimize or eliminate the competition when you own a niche.

Synthesizing what you stand for

Your personal brand profile is where you combine what you know about yourself and what you know about your target market and competition. This document pulls together the various pieces of your personal brand puzzle, allowing you to see the whole picture of who you really are.

Working on the personal brand profile is validating, and you'll walk away having a clear sense of what motivates you and who you want to know about your brand. In doing so, you bring to light your unique promise of value, which allows you to then write a personal brand statement and develop a strategy for using your brand.



Your personal brand statement is extremely important to your branding success. Although it may be only a few words long (you want it to be concise), this statement expresses what you stand for, and it guides you in making decisions that are “on-brand” for you so that you never veer off into activities that are “off-brand.” Your brand statement keeps you energized and focused on meeting your goals. It’s the heart and soul of who you are and what motivates you.

Communicating Your Brand

When you know your personal brand, you want to communicate it in everything you do. That means not only making sure that your written communications reflect your brand, but also paying attention to your actions, your clothing, your body language . . . every facet of your communication.

When I was asked to write this book, I thought about what some of my brand characteristics were that I wanted to carry into the book. I am known for being collaborative in my work and in my community, and I thought that I would communicate that same quality in this book. You’ll notice that I include articles written by contributing authors throughout the book. These are my personal branding colleagues from both the United States and Europe. I felt it was important to show my collaborative spirit through the contributions of the authors. You benefit from their expertise and this collaboration.

Similarly, you can figure out ways to communicate your brand in everything you do. In this section, I get you started.

Telling your story

You are the author of your own life. Personal branding gives you clarity to create your story, live your story, and then tell that story to the right audience. Stories are personal, and nothing builds your brand like a good story. Stories bring out your humanness and connect you emotionally with your audience. With your story in hand, you can craft a winning biography and be prepared to offer an engaging response whenever someone says, “Tell me about yourself.”

Business leaders and politicians are often master storytellers. They’re able to connect with their audience on every level, inspiring people to follow them. A good story influences the listener to action or motivates change. Stories are told in every culture to connect people to each other and teach cultural values.

To tell a good story, you need to have a good story. Telling a story is a way to build trust, and every brand wants you to trust what it stands for. When you tell a story to your target audience — whether it be a business colleague, a

child, your partner, or a friend — you're creating a bond with that person. A story lets your listeners decide for themselves whether they'll trust you and the brand you're presenting.

The telling of a story is always personal. Whatever walk of life you come from, your stories define you. Your story becomes your personal brand, and you need to think about which stories you tell to others to illustrate who you are. Your story is an expression of your life, so put some thought into what you tell (and don't tell) others. For specific ideas about how to start the storytelling process, be sure to read Chapter 8.

Putting your identity in writing

When you're crafting a personal brand, consistency is your ally. You want every marketing item, every letter, every e-mail — every form of written communication — to highlight your brand. Your goal is to tell your brand's story with clarity so that you can engage your audience with your personality and your skills.

You want to manage your personal branding documents by following these basic principles:

- ✔ Communicate your message clearly, consistently, and constantly.
- ✔ Feature the same viewpoints, descriptors, taglines, and attributes throughout your documents.
- ✔ Use brand attributes that are visible in everything you do. All your written materials (as well as your spoken communication) should tie back to your personal brand attributes (which I discuss in Chapter 4).
- ✔ Leave off details that don't support or promote your brand.
- ✔ Practice writing and talking about your brand attributes and strengths when talking about your work or discussing a future plan.
- ✔ Look for similar words that show consistency in branding without being overly repetitive.
- ✔ Seek to understand the problems that your target market faces and offer solutions that highlight your brand.
- ✔ Identify your target audience carefully and understand what compels them (see Chapter 5). Then, reflect that information in your unique promise of value (defined in Chapter 7) that speaks to your audience with relevance.

Chapter 9 offers a quick course on how to brand your traditional communication tools: your letters, resume, bio, and cover letter.

Tapping in to social media

Google yourself for fun and see what you find. If you have a common name, you may find that so little information about you exists online that only your Facebook page shows up — on page 5 of the search results.



If you care about your personal brand, you *must* pay attention to what your online presence says about you. If you ignore your online presence or if you assume that you don't even have one, you run the risk of letting other people create your image for you. Get proactive about how you present yourself online.

Your message online needs to be based on what you have learned about yourself while putting together your personal brand. As with all written communications, your online message should highlight your unique promise of value: the promise that you make to your target market that your brand will fulfill.

Your online message should also describe your essential professional qualities. You want to show your knowledge and expertise and let your personality show through. Your message should exhibit your personal qualities, your professional characteristics, and your style in how you apply those qualities to your work life.

Social media is incredibly popular in part because your impressions can be even more personal than your written communication tools. That's because your online presence usually includes visual elements, including pictures and/or video of you. Keep in mind that your visual message needs to align with what you write or say. (The most winning words about your professional aplomb will be worthless if your picture screams "party girl!")

A *profile hub* is a central source online — such as a website, blog site, or personal web page — that guides people who are interested in your services to the multiple paths in which you communicate. Using a profile hub allows you to influence the impression that people have about you when they search for your name. You can set the look and feel of your brand, and the hub acts as a portal for the information seeker to find out about you. Here are some of the best-known examples:

- ✓ **LinkedIn:** If you're just beginning to think about using online tools to showcase your personal brand, begin with LinkedIn. LinkedIn has earned the respect of the business community and has become the number one tool to find a business colleague. Success with business networking comes at the intersection of sharing the right information to the right people at the right time and on the right social media platform.

- ✔ **Facebook:** Facebook is designed to share words, photos, video, website links, and more to help tell your story in ways that inform and entertain. Facebook allows you to navigate the balance of being social while also sharing enough of your personal brand to offer a taste of what others experience when they meet you in person. Be careful, though: Sharing the wrong information to the wrong people in the wrong way can impact how people feel about your personal brand.
- ✔ **Twitter:** Twitter is a social networking and micro-blogging online service that allows its users to send and read text-based messages of up to 140 characters, known as *tweets*. Twitter allows you to become a content expert without years of schooling and a prestigious job title. If you're consistent and build followers who are interested in what you have to say, you can rise to the status of content expert quickly.
- ✔ **Video:** Video is the next best communication tool to communicating in person. Video bios are a great tool for telling your story in a very personal way, as well as for introducing the viewer to your business. A well-done video bio lets you connect with your audience, establish trust and a connection, and build your credibility and expertise in your particular subject matter. Your personal brand and persona simply cannot be expressed only in the written word.

Thriving in Your Brand Ecosystem

Your brand ecosystem is everything that surrounds you, and your challenge is to make sure that it's "on brand." In other words, you want your clothing, your professional network, your behavior in the workplace, and every other visible aspect of your life to represent who you really are and what you're capable of doing. That way, your target audience is crystal clear about what you represent and what you can accomplish for them.

Polishing your personal image

Your personal image is the totality of what you say, how you say it, and how you appear while you're saying it. It's all the ways in which you present yourself. Chapter 12 is your primer on polishing your personal image.

Successful people recognize that all aspects of their appearance — their clothing, grooming, and body language — are nonverbal tools they can control to help them achieve their goals. Your outer appearance can create the message that you want to send, which allows your target market to feel trust in you at first sight.

A key goal — and challenge — is to dress in order to make an on-brand impression. To be clear, that won't necessarily mean wearing a suit every day. If you run a surf shop in Virginia Beach, your target audience doesn't want to see you in a suit — it'll make them scratch their heads and wonder what, exactly, your brand represents. But if you're aiming for corporate success, in Chapter 12 I offer a full rundown of the details you need to consider every time you get dressed.



Having a personal brand means that you know who you are and what you stand for. As I say throughout this book, your brand must be authentic because pretending to be someone else can be painful and exhausting. When it comes to creating a style that boosts your personal brand image, your goal is to wear clothes that you feel good in and that help you visually express the real you. When your style matches your brand, your best self can shine through.

Like the clothes you wear, your grooming is a complex form of visual, nonverbal communication. Grooming includes keeping your body clean, as well as maintaining your teeth, breath, hair, hands, and nails.

The impression that you make extends to other aspects of your life as well. Having good phone manners, for example, can boost your personal brand score. Let your natural enthusiasm come through in your phone voice and try not to sound flat and monotone. If you're nervous before you make a call, practice what you are going to say. Be confident and practice good pitch, pace, enunciation, and volume to let your brand ring through.

Connecting with your network

Having a strong personal brand demands being connected to a network of resources for mutual development and growth. Your target audience pays close attention to your business partners and other alliances because the people you associate with say a lot about who you are. But how do you develop a network that's on-brand?

Give more than you get!

This is the golden rule in networking. A confident networker knows that to build his network and create a web of relationships, he must genuinely enjoy learning about the people he interacts with. You can confidently build a network that strengthens your personal brand by encouraging two-way relationships with people whom you want to be part of your circle. Grow your contacts by sharing information and introducing people to each other.

Growing a strong network is smart brand management. Your network is a powerful extension of your brand; it communicates volumes to your target audience about who values you and your business. See Chapter 15 for lots more tips on how to become a successful networker.

Living your brand at work

In the book, *The Coming Jobs War* by Jim Clifton (Gallup Press), the Gallup organization conducted a survey questioning the level of engagement in the workplace. The survey found that 28 percent of Americans are “engaged,” 53 percent are “not engaged,” and 19 percent are “actively disengaged.” The 53 percent of not engaged workers are not hostile or disruptive but are just killing time and collecting a paycheck. The 19 percent of actively disengaged people are there to stir up trouble and destroy their workplaces.

Only the 28 percent of engaged employees are trying to do their best work and build their careers while serving the organizations that they work for. I may assume that you belong in the 28 percent because you’re reading this book to further your own professional development. If you aren’t part of that 28 percent, I can at least assume that you want to be.

Striving for a vocation

When you embark on creating a personal brand, you develop a different awareness about your relationship to your work. Sometimes you may do work just for the money, and that’s fine if you know why you’re doing what you’re doing. But ultimately, moving into your authentic self and using all of who you are takes you past the point of working only for a paycheck.

Following is a list of the four types of relationships that people have to their work:

- ✔ **Job:** This word indicates the place where you work and the task you’re doing; it’s work based on material rewards (a paycheck).
- ✔ **Career:** This is the sequence of occupations in which you engage, which includes school, your work life, and retirement. Career work requires personal initiative but needs collective approval.
- ✔ **Occupation:** Work involving greater meaning, but dominated by outer activity, in an occupation. This is a definable work activity that occurs in many different settings.
- ✔ **Vocation:** From the Latin *vocare* (which means “call”), this word implies practicing the work that best fulfills your dreams and utilizes your unique talents. An intrinsic calling, vocation work is directed in service of a greater good and is said to be connected to the soul.



Your goal with personal branding is to achieve a *vocation*, which is tied to a mission — not just a job title.

Adopting the personal branding mindset in the workplace

As I explain in Chapter 16, the personal branding mindset is about standing out from the crowd and closely resembles how an entrepreneur looks at his work. To be successful in the quickly changing business world means that you must move toward this mindset. By being proactive in the self-management of your career, you can charge forward with opportunity. You need to

- ✓ Have a distinct personal identity
- ✓ Seek employability security (the ability to find work)
- ✓ Look for the next career opportunity and be open to alternate paths
- ✓ Focus on loyalty to a project, to your profession, to your coworkers, and to yourself
- ✓ Aim for work/life balance (holistic life success)
- ✓ Understand how you and your personal brand fit with your company's work culture
- ✓ Practice lifelong learning
- ✓ Showcase your competencies
- ✓ Embrace fluid, gig (project-based) employment
- ✓ Know you'll have multiple positions in your work life
- ✓ Gauge success based on your own personal career strategy
- ✓ Build relationships on trust and authenticity
- ✓ Label yourself with an ever-evolving personal brand
- ✓ Understand the complex web of ever-changing reporting relationships
- ✓ Take personal ownership of everything you do

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