125 Personal Branding Tips

A Step by Step Guide to Building Your Own Brand
What is personal branding and what does it have to do with you and your job search or career development? You might think of ‘personal branding’ as marketing speak or as buzz words for the sake of buzz words, but consistently presenting yourself professionally and dynamically is becoming more important in the increasingly competitive job market and the world of work. The sooner you learn how to develop and build the right personal brand for you, the more successful you can be as you move along in your career. It is also a key component to any smooth career transition.

This eBook will walk you through:

1. Getting Started with Branding Yourself
2. Why We Need to Build a Brand
3. Being a Product
4. Getting Noticed by the Right People
5. Online Brand Building
6. Building a Brand through Blogging
7. Managing Brand Reputation
8. Avoiding Branding Hazards
9. Expanding Your Brand
Getting Started with Branding Yourself

What does it mean to ‘brand’ yourself and how do you do it? Personal branding enables you to be clear about who you are, what you stand for and where your strengths lie, and then consistently communicating this to the rest of the world. Below, we have outlined a number of pointers to get you started on the process of branding yourself:

1. Know and really understand who you are. You cannot brand yourself effectively until you know what that brand is going to be. Reflect on your experiences, preferences, qualities and values to gain clarity on what is important to you, what makes you who you are, what you are good at and what you want. Being able to identify clearly what you want is key since this will help you to establish in which direction you want your personal brand to take. The purpose of the self-branding process should be to get you to where you want to be. So the first step is to know what your destination is.

2. Choose only one destination. Do not get caught up in chasing more than one avenue. You will greatly improve your chances of getting that promotion, that job you want or shifting into a different area, if you target just one thing. The most successful brands focus on one overarching mission; where it is clear to everyone what the brand is about. There is one message only and that is what you need.

3. Do not just build your brand around what you are good at, but also around what you are passionate about. This is the only way that you will be able to build a long-lasting and authentic brand. If you are passionate about what you do, it will be
easier for you to talk about it enthusiastically and to get engrossed into that world. You will be more naturally energised and excited by what you are doing and this energy will attract and inspire others around you.

4. Be proactive and a self-starter. Do not wait for things to come to you but instead go out there and make strides towards it. You will get your results faster. Those close to you will be drawn towards your energy.

5. Be consistent. In order to build up a credible brand you need to be consistent in your messaging, in what you say you can do, are interested in and want to do and in how you present yourself to others. Consistency is also important across the different channels in which you choose to promote yourself. For example, if someone was to find out about you via LinkedIn, Twitter, your blog and your CV – what they learn about you should be the same, or similar, in order for your brand to have meaning.

6. Keep in mind that you are representing your brand at all times. Every telephone call you make, every email you send, every tweet you tweet reflects back on you. Be you and be professional in everything you do. This point is an extension to the one above in that we are highlighting how important it is to have brand consistency. Brand reputation and consistency go hand in hand as key elements to brand success.

7. Be patient. Creating a credible and lasting brand takes time. It requires commitment and dedication from you in order to make it work well. You may need to research the field, role or organisation that you wish to move into and you may need to put some time into forming strong relationships with people who can help. If you get it right, it will be worth it.

8. Believe in yourself and the brand that you have built up. If people are to have confidence in your personal brand, you must be confident in it yourself. The best way of gaining this confidence is to spend the time doing the groundwork needed to build a brand that is both genuine and credible. If you do not feel comfortable with how you have branded yourself, no one else will.
Why We Need to Build a Brand

Branding is no longer just for companies, products and services - if it ever was just for them. ‘Personal brand’ has become an increasingly common phrase and for good reason. Just as more traditional branding helps organizations to draw market awareness, public recognition and customer loyalty to them, building your own personal brand can have a comparably positive effect on employers and the labour market’s attitude to you as a professional.

It is also important to note that the best candidates in the job market are those who have taken the time to create good reputations for themselves. It’s a competitive world and if you wish to keep up and even to get ahead, you will need to put time and effort into building your brand.

Let us look at specific reasons for building your brand and some strategies for how to do so:

9. Employment is precarious. With organizations responding to ever more demanding marketplaces, no job is forever. Even with the best intentions, we have to accept that uncertainty is now the norm.

10. We all need a continuous working life. For the duration of our economic working life, which seems to get longer as every year passes, we have to do everything that we can to assure ourselves that we continue to be employed and to gain economic reward for our labour.
11. You must be prepared to move. You must be in a state of preparedness, to some degree, regarding your career and the possibility of you being let go from your current position. Not being prepared for this is foolhardy.

12. Your network should know where you are and how you are doing at all times. Nowadays, that means that you should have an accessible, up to date online profile where your contacts can check you out and see what you are up to.

13. If you are prepared to move, you must have a personal brand that is fresh and looks like you are ready. It must appeal to all employers within your target area of focus. This includes your current employer.

14. Your personal brand should show your value and how your value has been growing; based upon your experience, your skills, your learning and so on.

15. Focus on whom you want to impress. If you were looking at someone else’s brand, what would impress you?

16. Your brand should reflect the value that you have now. Focus on tomorrow. Think about things that you have seen in yourself and your brand today that you can work on tomorrow. Do not spend huge amounts of time and energy going back over the past.

17. In your personal brand, highlight what value you believe the market requires and is pertinent to you. Use your brand to demonstrate to employers what you would be adding to their organization if they choose to go with you.

18. You need to build the bridge between the last two points above. Be explicit about your understanding of the market and the need for people like you and for what it is that you can do.

19. Recognize the current prominence of the digital world. People are expecting you to perform certain professional tasks digitally, so brush up, or expand your tech skills if necessary. Find a way to use technology that is convenient and useful for you.
Be as professional as you can be behind the profiles and credentials that you choose to use in presenting your personal brand. Your brand requires you to present yourself as a professional - so act like one.

**Being a Product**

If you want to build your brand, you need to start viewing yourself as a product that you need to package up and present to the market. You and your particular set of skills are being promoted and, if you are not confident in what you have to offer, you will find it very challenging to do this effectively.

21. **Think of yourself as a product.** When you buy a product, you scrutinize its applicability to your need. You are interested in its benefits, its features and its price. Anybody looking at you goes through a similar cycle of evaluation and so keep this in mind as you build your brand.

22. **Think about brands that you believe are fantastic.** They may be so because you think them to be powerful, emotionally subtle or innovative. Learn the simple lessons from brands that you find compelling.
23. Create a personal brand statement. This can help you to define more clearly who you are and what you are about. Think about the questions:

- Who am I? What do I stand for?
- What am I good/great at? What do I really love doing?
- What is important to me?
- What do I want to be known for? What is my specialism?
- What makes me unique? (what skills / experiences)
- What sets me apart from everyone else?
- Why would someone want to talk to me? What can I offer them? What would they get?
- What do I want? Where am I trying to go?

24. Think about all the assets that you have and that you project onto your personal brand and include those in your personal statement or elevator pitch. Try to use a minimum number of words in your pitch and avoid business speak and generic and loose language. Be as specific as you can be about your strengths, about your achievements and about your ‘wow’ factor.

25. Your personal brand statement will be used to help publicise and explain your brand. It will be used in your LinkedIn profile perhaps or on your CV but think carefully before you start adding this across your different marketing channels. If you do decide to do this, then make sure that your statement is no longer than 1 or 2 sentences long, in order to keep it sharp, short, to the point and therefore, to keep your reader’s attention. Also avoid any jargon or unnecessarily long words that may alienate or confuse your audience.
26. Adapt your written statement into a shorter version for when you are in a position to influence someone in a condensed period of time. This is sometimes called an elevator pitch. Think about what others have said about you. How would your colleagues describe you? What would they say you are good at and what particular qualities might they say you possess? Think about what others may highlight about you and don’t be afraid to ask for their opinion and help.

27. Personal branding is about how you package yourself. Like any product, you have choice about the packaging you wish to use. Isn’t it fascinating how certain brands are so aligned to the presentation of the product that their packaging, from the moment you see the outside box, has you interested in what it is inside the box? Similarly, how can you think through the most effective way of self-packaging?

28. Every product creates an impression. When you are building your personal brand, test it. Test it with your market; test it with your friends and colleagues to see which structures within it create a good impression.

29. Remember your personal brand is the window of your identity. It throws light on you as a worker. Showing your identity at all times will help your personal brand to be consistent.

30. Apply subtlety to your personal branding. When people think about you, they will soon come to think, “I know more about this person than I probably realise”.

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31. Consider your reputation. Our reputation is intrinsically tied up with the lives and work of other people, both professionally and personally. Whilst we are dealing with our own personal brand, we must always remember the congruence of reputations that are involved in building our personal brand. Alignment with our existing world is important for those around us and for our own identity.

32. Get the message out. Once you have defined what you have to offer, what you are about and where you are trying to get to, start getting the word out. Identify who you want to be communicating with and create a plan to reach them. Learn more about this in the section on ‘Getting Noticed by the Right People’.
Getting Noticed By the Right People

The most successful brands are the ones that people notice, want to know more about and eventually want to be associated with. This applies to personal brands as well as business. However, there is a right way and a wrong way about being noticed. Do not attract attention for the sake of it and think about whose attention you want to be getting in order to focus your efforts. Protecting the reputation of your brand is just as important as marketing it and so here we have some tips on how to be noticed by the right people:

33. Avoid shameless self-promotion. Companies that engage with their customers and give back, instead of constantly selling to them, tend to get a warmer reception that those who only promote themselves without even trying to disguise the fact they are doing it. Similarly, colleagues, clients, employers, potential employers and recruiters will be warmer towards you if you are not constantly trying to sell yourself. Instead, engage people by showing a genuine interest in them. Ask them questions about themselves and listen hard. Find ways to help them and to be useful to them before thinking about your own agenda. Always give before seeking to get.

34. Think about how you look and what impression you want to give people when they first meet you. Your physical appearance and presentation is an important part of your overall brand and so think about what you wear and what kind of ‘image’ you want to be portraying to others. Usually being smart and professional...
looking is a good start but also make sure that you feel comfortable in what you wear so that it feels natural. Think about the types of people that you want to be associating with and what ‘style’ they may project. What style might they be seeking in you in order to feel comfortable connecting with you.

35. Make sure that you have a business card. No matter what your position is – whether you are a CEO or a student, if you want to build your personal brand and to build a network, you need business cards. Nowadays there are a number of options to explore including traditional printed cards of varying types / sizes. You can now share business cards via mobile phone using sites like mydropcard.com, rmbrme.com or businesscard2.com. Some may believe that business cards are no longer relevant. Whilst they are less used, there are going to be times when you wished you had one, so it is worth keeping them available.

36. If you reach the stage where you are showing someone your CV or sending a cover letter, be sure to make it specific to the recipient(s):

- Who will be reading your CV? What is their position/role in the organisation?
- What might they be trying to do within the organisation (their plans and ambitions)?
- Why are they hiring at all?
- What is going on in the organisation they’re in?
- What language do they tend to use?
- What are they really looking for?
- What is important to them? What do they value?
• Is your CV / cover letter tailored specifically to their needs?

37. Know who your audience is and where they are so that you can establish the best way to communicate and interact with them. Where do the people who you want the attention of go when they seek resource? What are their habits and what are they interested in? Do they:

• Attend networking events (see our 135 Networking Career Tips for more help on networking)
• Go to conferences
• Use online forums or communities
• Join professional bodies or associations
• Use LinkedIn or Twitter or Facebook
• Have specialist websites or dedicated blogs in their field?

38. Know about your industry and what is going on within it. Stay up to date with the latest news and developments in your chosen area in order to be able to have deeper and more educated conversations in the job market. Your expertise, insight, knowledge in your field will come through if you have done your research and have kept abreast of what has been going on in your arena.

39. Stand out by helping out. One of the best ways to get someone’s attention is by helping them. People tend to remember the companies that go that extra mile to make their customer experience more pleasant. In the same way, people remember those who go out of their way to be helpful. It could be to make them feel better or to help them find a solution to a particular problem. By making it your priority to find a way to be helpful, you will become much more memorable to those with whom you interact.
40. Consider speaking at an event or conference. To gain more exposure in your chosen field, you may want to explore ways to speak at a conference or seminar. This will help you to connect with more people in your particular area and will build your brand amongst your peers and other experts in your field. You can become a thought leader in your field and a ‘go-to’ person for your particular specialism.

41. If you do get the opportunity to speak at events, aim to record your presentation and speech. You can use this as promotional material later on. You can create a video, a podcast or a whitepaper perhaps to capitalise on each speaking opportunity. It may also be relevant to mention one or two of these key events in your CV or online profile, depending on your specific goals.

42. Aim to show and express gratitude. Anytime someone helps you out, lends you something or re-tweets one of your tweets on Twitter, say ‘thank you’ and think about how you could further express your gratitude by returning the favour. Take the time to show people who connect with you that you appreciate them taking the time to notice you and support what you are doing.

43. Don’t forget about your general interests. Your interests outside of work form a more holistic view of who you are and what you have to offer. You can, therefore, not only build your brand through your work and work experience, but also through your life outside of work and the skills, knowledge and expertise that you have gained in these areas too. If you have a particular hobby that could be of interest to those you meet, you may want to bring it up to help break the ice and/or to build stronger relationships.
44. Hobbies can also be relevant to specific roles and positions where the skills used can equip you better for the job you are looking to do. In this case, it may be beneficial to mention these in an interview or to include this somewhere in your online profile or CV. Think about what you have gained through the activities and interests that you have outside of work and where they fit in for you in terms of your career. They add an extra dimension to who you are and what you are interested in, so remember that they can be another important string to your bow.

45. Ask questions and be curious. Show that you are keen to learn and understand someone better by asking questions and by being interested in them. Show that you are keen to genuinely help by digging deeper and taking the time to enquire about their world.

46. If you want to be a bit different, you may want to think about some interesting answers to routine questions. In many social situations, especially when networking or at an office party, there are certain questions that you can almost guarantee you’ll be asked, such as ‘How are you?’ and ‘What do you do?’ Instead of responding generically, use this opportunity to say something interesting about yourself and to build your personal brand. Think of ways to continue the conversation and to help the person you’re talking to feel comfortable in you both getting to know each other better i.e. make them want to learn more about you and what you’re up to!

47. If you work in, or are interested in getting in to, the creative industry you may want to consider creating an online portfolio to showcase your talents and achievements. Being able to show someone visually what you are capable of can be very convincing. Check out platforms such as figdig.com or carbonmade.com, which are social networks for people wanting to show off their creative skills, for this.
48. Even if you are not in the creative arena, a portfolio of your work may still be beneficial. Collect samples of your work to put in a dedicated section of your website if you have one, or store them on a USB stick that you can then copy to CDs or DVDs to send out when the opportunity arises.
Online Brand Building

In the age of the Internet, personal branding is much more about online activity and reputation. Quality is a lot more important than quantity. If you are going to use different social media platforms to promote yourself, learn how to use them professionally and in the right way. Choose carefully which channels are right for you and be clear about what you want from each of your brand building activities. Below are some tips to help you explore this further:

49. Set up your online profiles and think carefully about the key messages that you wish to get across through them. LinkedIn is one of the most prominent business networking platforms now. Read our 125 LinkedIn Job Search Tips for more information on this.

50. Think about what mode of presentation you need. You have a choice of various platforms on which to put your brand out there. These platforms include Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest and many more. Think about what media would be helpful to lift your brand into a more exciting space and how best to reach your particular audience and peers.

51. Think about alignment. When we put our personal brand out into the market, we have choices about where we place it and how many different spaces and how many different platforms we choose. It is important that our personal brand aligns consistently and well with everything else that we are saying and doing.
52. Keep all of your online profiles up to date. To come across as a professional with a strong personal brand, it is important to keep all the information on your profiles up to date. You do not want to look sloppy and anyone reading your profile will be tuned into where your life is at right now.

53. Use keywords connected with your brand. Employers, recruiters and networkers often search social media profiles by keyword, so pepper your online pages with keywords relevant to what your personal brand is about to attract the people relevant to your brand message and mission.

54. Do not just wait for people to come to you, but go looking for people online who it will be useful for you to know. Browse Facebook pages and LinkedIn and Twitter profiles. Read and comment on other people’s blogs.

55. Be authentic. Even if people cannot see you face to face, it is usually easy to spot someone who is not being authentic and so it is best to stick to what you know and what you truly believe in. If you are not genuine in the way you communicate online, your personal brand will suffer.

56. Get connected. Gain visibility on the social networks you use by joining appropriate groups on LinkedIn, following and tweeting the relevant movers and shakers on Twitter and posting on Facebook pages related to your current or target career.

57. If there are no LinkedIn groups aligned to what your brand represents, you may want to start your own. Many companies have their own LinkedIn groups as part of their branding strategies. Use the LinkedIn group search engine to see what is out there already. There are usually several groups for different interests, industries, specialisms and locations, but if you aren’t able to find one that works well for you, think about whether you want to build one yourself and how your brand may develop as the group owner.
58. Forums are another place where you can promote your brand online. Become an active member of forums relevant to brand by taking part in discussions related to you. By adding value to these discussions, you can establish yourself to a different audience, build your brand and a following by building relationships of trust. You can get even more involved with forum life by volunteering as a moderator on your favourite forum.

59. Once you have enough online friends, fans and followers, you might want to consider setting up your own forum; where a community of your virtual associates and contacts can interact with one another, demonstrating the strength, popularity and social aspect of your brand. A precursor to buying and running your own forum might be to create your own social website using a platform such as ning.com.

60. For online profiles on Twitter, you can customise the look and feel. You can choose your own background and select one that fits in with your brand. If you are feeling creative, photobucket.com is great as a source for making collages out of existing photos and adding image effects. You may want to play around with it to create your ideal Twitter background.

61. Another resource for you to be aware of if you want to use a specific Twitter-orientated template for your Twitter background: freetwitterdesigner.com

62. An alternative to the conventional social media profile is a multimedia CV. These are becoming more popular these days and you can learn more about this and see examples here: visualcv.com, which is a free platform that allows you to create a multimedia CV—featuring charts, video, audio and more, that can be viewed online by recruiters and employers.
Building a Brand through Blogging

For some people, creating a blog can help to build your brand. It can display your expertise and knowledge and build up a following. Blogs take time to create, to develop and to maintain and so think carefully before setting one up. However, if you are a keen blogger it can be a great way to engage your audience, build up a strong reputation for yourself as an expert in your field and can be one way to help you to stand out from the crowd. If you have started a blog, the following pointers will help you:

63. Promote your content. If you have started a blog, around what you do or want to do, promote it wherever you can. You may wish to:

- Include a feed to it on your LinkedIn profile
- Include a link to it in your email signature
- Include it on your business card
- Submit it as your URL on your Twitter profile
- Create a Facebook page for it
- Mention it or link to specific blog posts in relevant LinkedIn or Facebook groups where appropriate.
64. As well displaying your expertise, blogging can also help you build your expertise. Research each topic you want to blog about thoroughly and you will be surprised by how much you learn and how fun it can be.

65. Have a plan for your blog:
   - What is the purpose of your blog?
   - What topics do you want it to cover? How does that relate to your brand?
   - How regularly do you want to be adding new content?
   - Who is it for?
   - How will they find your blog?
   - What do you want readers/followers to get from it?
   - How will your blog help to build your brand specifically?
   - What would make your blog a success? How will you measure this?

66. Once set up, add your blog to an established blog directory such as www.networkedblogs.com in order to get extra exposure and to meet fellow bloggers.

67. Pick blog topics that are not only interesting to you, but also to your readers. After all, you are blogging in order to stimulate public interest in your brand. To find out what people want to read about, use Google AdWords’ keyword tool to identify popular search terms related to your particular field.
68. Think carefully about the URL of your website and the name of your blog. If you are seeking to build a brand for yourself then you may want to use your own name as the name and URL of your blog or website.

69. To make your URL look professionally, buy your own domain instead of using a free hosting platform. You can buy cheap domains from companies such as [www.names.co.uk](http://www.names.co.uk) or [www.123-reg.co.uk](http://www.123-reg.co.uk).

70. Under the headline name of your website, include a subtitle that conveys what the blog or site is about. People will want to know what you are writing about and where your focus is as well as what your name is. Make it easy for people to grasp straight away.

71. Blog regularly in order to build up a core of regular readers. Set readers expectations and stick to a routine so that people visiting and subscribing to your blog know when to expect new content from you.

72. Encourage people to subscribe to your blog so you have a regular fan-base that will always be in touch with what you are doing and how your brand is developing. Make sure that you set up RSS feeds for people to subscribe to and include share links so that your content can be shared.

73. Consider having guest bloggers. This relieves some of the burden of having to come up with new blog topics and content all the time and gives the impression that your brand is large enough and generous enough to encompass other individuals.

74. If you are running out of things to write about you may want to explore including video content. Video can add a visual element to your blog and if done well, can add a lot of value to your site and make it more engaging for users.

75. Video blogs do not always have to be pre-recorded. Tools such as [qik.com](http://qik.com) allow you to stream live video of yourself to your audience. You could try using it to stream content from an industry event you are attending.
76. If one of your goals for your blog is to have people contacting you for your advice, expertise or something else, make sure to include your contact information on your website. Include an email address, your business telephone number, and a business address if you have one and links to your social media profiles.

77. Build interaction on your blog. One way to get people to comment on your blog is to comment on other people’s blogs. Search out blogs related to what you are about and leave meaningful, well thought-out comments. Also, ask questions in your blog posts that may help to get people thinking and that encourage responses and a discussion.

78. If you comment on someone else’s blog, do not forget to leave your name and URL, so people can click through to find out more about you and so that they can find your blog easily.

79. To become recognizable on the blogs you frequent, use a standard avatar on all of the blogs. en.gravatar.com allows you to use the same avatar across numerous blogs.

80. If you are looking for blogs to contribute to and promote your brand on, look at the blog rolls on the blogs you already know about.

81. Submit your content to online article directories as well as posting it on your own blog or website. This will help to build your exposure and credibility even further.
Managing Brand Reputation

It is one thing to create a brand and it is another to be able to manage and maintain it. Not only do you need to think about building your brand but you also need to keep your eye on it and you need to review and update it regularly. Monitor how your brand building activities are going, what impact they are having on you and your reputation and adjust your plans accordingly.

82. Monitor your reputation. Anytime a brand’s reputation has been damaged, the company will react instantly to limit the damage, if it is smart. To fight the fire, however, you must first be aware that there is a fire and so keep track of how you are coming across by using a reputation tracking tool such as socialmention.com to regularly check that all is well with your online reputation.

83. Check what people see. Google your own name and see what comes up. Are the right profiles of you appearing and are they sending out the right message? Do your profiles look professional and is there consistency across them? There are dedicated websites such as BrandYourself.com, which can help you to manage your online reputation and what people see as they search and find you online.

84. If you find that you need to repair or limit the damage to your reputation, do not panic. Confront the problem head on. Communicate openly with the person or group of people who are dissatisfied with you in order to find out what the issue is. Address the problem to the best of your ability, constantly keeping in touch and updating the relevant parties.
85. Set up a Google Alert with your name as the keyword, so that the search engine will alert you every time it finds a mention of your name—another great way of keeping tabs on what people are thinking and saying about brand.

86. You can also search for your name on Twitter to see what people are saying about you in real time. Take a look at our 125 Twitter Job Search Tips for more help with using Twitter effectively.

87. If, in the course of tracking your brand, you find that people you don’t know are talking about you, take advantage of this. This is a real opportunity for you. Go to the blog or forum where the discussion is happening and get involved. They will be pleased that you have noticed them and that you are contributing to the conversation. Brand awareness can be about what the brand knows about people that matters to them, as much as it is about people being aware of the brand.
Avoiding Branding Hazards

With personal branding, there are no hard and fast rules. However, if you want to be ahead of the competition as a professional, it would be wise of you to avoid thinking or doing any of the following things:

88. However good your brand is, do not fall into the trap of thinking that you have the market cornered. Every month, millions of CVs are sent to recruiters. Believing that you are the only brand out there can backfire and so do not get complacent - but instead keep revisiting, revamping and building your brand.

89. Do not use long CVs. Less is more:

- Show as well as tell. Clearly display your accomplishments on your CV and/or website. This demonstrates what your brand is about rather than only telling people what it is that you want to do next.

- Use action verbs in present progressive tense on your CV. For example, when describing what your duties were in your previous work position, use words such as ‘targeting’, ‘leading’, ‘selling’, ‘guiding’, ‘communicating’, ‘presenting’, ‘investigating’ and so on.

- Do not use lack of paid work experience as an excuse for having a vague CV or no CV at all. Get out there and undertake some voluntary work or an internship to flesh your CV out and learn something about yourself at the same time. Build up experience in whatever ways you can. Whether it is paid or not, it is still experience.
90. Huge egos will not get you very far. Building your personal brand is obviously about you, but the people that you are trying to impress are actually more important than you are. Remember this and always put others first; in order to build fruitful relationships and in turn, move yourself forwards more effectively.

91. Avoid getting yourself into trouble on the Internet. Anything embarrassing that you may say, type or do online may get you into trouble. Look objectively at your social media profiles and past posts and delete anything that you would not be impressed with if you were a potential employer. From now on, be mindful about everything you post. Ask yourself if what you are about to publish detracts from, contradicts or damages your brand rather than adding to it and avoid anything that will compromise the reputation that you are putting so much time into building.

92. Do not associate with bad ‘uns. If you are associated with bad people or bad organizations, then you find that your personal brand might be tarnished without you even realizing it.

93. Do not be proactive on controversial subjects. Avoid discussing them if possible. If you find yourself in a position where you really must comment on a provocative topic, it is better to speak about it rather than to write anything down. The written word can be selectively deleted, added to, misquoted and badly edited.

94. Keep your personal social media accounts separate from your professional ones. Using your personal Facebook account to promote your brand may backfire if a friend unwittingly posts something on your wall about what you did last night. Think carefully about what channels are there for your personal world and which ones are there to represent you professionally.
95. Be careful on Twitter, both in terms of what you write and what you retweet. Although retweeting something is by no means an endorsement of the original tweet, it can be misconstrued as such. If you feel the need to cover yourself just in case, include in your Twitter bio a disclaimer stating that your RTs are not necessarily endorsements.

96. Use a recognised email service provider such as Gmail. Emails sent from such accounts always look more trustworthy than ones from lesser-known providers. In addition, sticking to well-known brands will enhance your own brand. Make sure that your email address looks professional. Sticking to the format firstname.surname@emailprovider.com usually works well.

97. Do not forget to connect online with the people you already know in ‘the real world’. Import your email contacts into your social media accounts.

98. Do not criticize your boss or indeed any bosses that you have previously worked with/for. Think about how it would sound if you were a manager interviewing someone for a job and they started talking negatively about their current manager.

99. Similarly, don’t bad mouth any organization that you have previously worked for. Not only does it come across badly but you don’t want to burn bridges with any of your past employers. Even if you have had a genuinely bad employer that you never want anything else to do with, there may still be good people working within that organization that you might reconnect with later on in your working life.
Expanding Your Brand

Once you have made a start at creating a brand for yourself, you need to put time into developing it further. If you are not continuously evolving and building your brand, it can bring you to a standstill and it will go out of date very quickly. The world we are in is a fast-moving one and so it is important to seek opportunities constantly to take your brand to the next level.

100. Expand, develop and maintain your network. It is important to find a balance between staying connected and building stronger relationships with people already in your network, and building out your connections. There needs to be time dedicated to both in order to make sure that the network you have built up continues to be strong, useful and meaningful to you. You also want exposure to new opportunities, new connections and new ideas, which will continue to fuel you.

101. Build relationships with like-minded people. Companies looking to brand their brand often create strategic alliances with other organisations that can help to strengthen their brand and position. You can do the same by finding people in your field who stand for the same things as you.
102. Attending networking events and conferences can be a good way to widen your network. Familiarise yourself with the headshot photographs available through your online contacts in case you run into someone at an event. You should already know most of the people that you are connected to but if there are some who you are not close to, see if you can take your connection to the next level. If you are able to recognise them from their profile picture, you will be able to approach them and get to know them faster and they’ll also be pleased that you remember who they are.

103. Do not limit yourself to engaging with new people via networking events and formal business gatherings only. Your brand is who you are and if you have built it up well, it should feel like a natural part of you. Therefore, whether you are at a party, on a company trip or at a social event, you should be able to talk comfortably and confidently about yourself. Be open to new opportunities since you never know whom you might meet, when or where.

104. Take a limited number of business cards with you to an event, so that you do not get tempted to hand them out to just anybody. Make each one count. It is much better to connect with select number of people who will be valuable to you, than wasting time exchanging details with people who do not have any real alignment or affinity to you. If you run out of business cards and you meet someone who you genuinely think you would like to be connected to, you can store their number or email in your phone or jot down each other’s details and follow up afterwards.

105. Building new connections is not only about seeking out the people who’ll be of value to you, but also about showing them that you’ll be of value to them. Show your value by engaging a new potential contact in conversations that matter to the both of you and helping them with something connected to your interest or expertise area.
106. People will also warm to your brand if they see something of themselves in it. Relate to those around you by highlighting the traits that you have in common or by discussing similar experiences that you have had. The only way to find out what traits and experiences you share with a person is to really get to know them and so remember to ask questions, listen hard and be curious about them from the very first time that you meet.

107. Whilst emphasising commonalities can be a great way to build a connection with someone, do not lose sight of who you are and what makes your brand unique. Be genuine and do not contrive similarities between the two of you if they do not exist.

108. Increase brand visibility. Even if you are on a number of social media platforms and a member of several networking groups, do not rest on your laurels. Work at getting your brand to remain visible. Keep an eye on the latest trends and where the most brand-visible individuals pop up. Track where people are meeting up and communicating; both online and offline and make your brand presence felt there.

109. One way to reach new audiences is to record and distribute regular podcasts. This can be a great way to build up a following and to get your expertise out there.

110. Another way is to create a video presentation. This might work well embedded within your CV or distributed on YouTube. Perhaps you might want your own video channel. This is not the right avenue for everyone but, depending on what you are trying to do, it could be a good way to showcase your expertise, display examples of your work or to help people to get a better sense of who you are and thus build trust faster.
111. Leverage other people’s endorsements of you. Just as companies use customer testimonials to make their brands attractive, you should use personal endorsements from people you are connected with to spread the word about your brand and attract more ‘brand followers’. Ask for recommendations on LinkedIn or ask people you know well, what they think about you and include their responses on your website. Do not forget that you can do this in audio or video format as well as text.

112. One way to get endorsements, especially on LinkedIn, is to give out recommendations yourself. Once a contact on LinkedIn has seen you have taken the time to write about them, they may return the favour. You do not, however, want recommendations or endorsements from just anybody. Instead, think carefully about whose opinion you value and whom you wish to be associated with.

113. You may already have more endorsements and potential testimonials than you realise. If you have a blog or website and people have commented positively on your work, then these can be used as testimonials. Ask for their permission to use these and build up your portfolio of supporting documentation / endorsements.

114. One way to use these endorsements is by including it on your website in a prominent position such as on the homepage. You may want to select the strongest comments and scroll between them on your homepage so that people visiting your website can see them easily. This will help to build trust in you and in your brand.

115. Regularly review where you are with your branding. Think about:

- Where you are now vs. where you started
- Your goals and whether you’ve achieved them
- What has worked well vs. what has not been so good
• What can be improved
• The channels you’ve used to promote your brand – which ones have been effective or not
• What your brand stands for now
• Where you want to go next

By doing regular checks of where your personal brand is at, you will get clear on what you need to work on in order to keep building and expanding it.

116. Revamp and reinvigorate your brand. Your brand review should help you to shape your next steps in how to develop your brand further. Without evolving your brand, it will become stale and so it is important to keep updating all elements of your branding every so often to keep it looking and feeling fresh. This can include:

• Your online profile photo(s)
• Your personal brand statement
• Your LinkedIn Profile, Twitter profile, Facebook profile
• Your CV
• Your website and/or blog
• Your business cards and email signature
117. It is fine for your brand messaging to change and to look different to when you first started to think about it and create it. This is a natural process of evolution. The challenge is in keeping all of your profiles up to date and consistent at any one time. This includes how you verbally articulate what you stand for and what you want.

118. Take your brand to the mainstream media. If you have set up your own business or are heading up an important new project within your company, get a press release written about it and pitch it to magazines, newspapers and established blogs and other online outlets within your niche market.

119. Become known as the ‘expert’ and ‘go-to person’ in your field. Contact news desks and make them aware that you’re available for comment and quotes anytime they’re writing a piece on your area of interest. Build relationships with individual journalists and reporters. Follow them on Twitter. Email them with your latest research and findings or provide them with insight that may help them with their work.

120. If you have a real-life story about yourself which relates to you and your brand, for example a success story of how you became to be involved in your career area, how to shifted into a new career, how you set up your own business, pitch this to relevant magazines and newspapers. Success stories are very popular.

121. Instead of just attending or speaking at other people’s events, you may want to organise and run your own event.

122. To extend the idea of your brand you can explore other ways to package up what you have to offer. If you are providing a particular service this may include developing a range of products that help to enhance and extend your brand such as a CD, whitepaper,
DVD, audio podcasts, eBooks, e-Courses and books are just a few ideas to get you started.

123. You may wish to create branded stationary or other goods, alongside your products and services and as small hand-outs and takeaways when you meet people and are out networking.

124. Learn from others. In your particular field, there are likely to be other professionals who are trying to the same or a similar thing to you. Identify the key players and take a look at how they have developed their personal brands. Look at:

   • What you like about what they’ve done and what you don’t like
   • What has worked well for them and what maybe hasn’t
   • What they say about themselves in each of their profiles
   • How they describe what they want, their achievements – the language they use
   • Which social media, online and offline channels they have chosen to use
   • What groups, associations, networks they are linked to
   • Who is following or associated with them and why.

125. There is no one correct way to build out a brand. Ultimately, it is your brand and it is there to serve you. It is a part of you and it’s about you. It is crucial to remember this and to identify a way to develop your brand that feels right for your particular needs, your situation and for where you want it to take you. Your brand is with you for the duration of your working life and so protect it, nurture it and stay in control of it.
Recommended Reading

What is Personal Branding? How to Create a Memorable & Powerful Brand that Sells You – by Jim Kukral

Brand You: Turn Your Unique Talents into a Winning Formula – by John Purkiss


Me 2.0: Build a Powerful Brand to Achieve Career Success – by Dan Schawbel

Personal Impact: Make a Powerful Impression Wherever You Go – by Amanda Vickers

The Brand You 50: Reinventing Work – by Tom Peters

The Leader’s Edge: Using Personal Branding to Drive Performance and Profit – by Susan Hodgkinson

Managing Brand You: 7 Steps to Creating Your Most Successful Self – by Jerry S. Wilson

The Brand Called You: Make Your Business Stand Out in a Crowded Marketplace – by Peter Montoya
Recommended Follow Up eBooks

- 135 Networking Career Tips
- 125 LinkedIn Job Search Tips
- 125 Twitter Job Search Tips
- Sell Yourself with Confidence

More Position Ignition eBooks...

- How to Get the Job You Want
- How to Ace the Interview
- Up Your Game, Up Your Pay
- Get Paid Right, From the Start
- 100 Essential Career Change Tips
- 85 Mid-Life Career Change Tips
- Moving into Retirement in the 21st Century
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Position Ignition Ltd is one of the UK’s leading career consulting and career management companies. Founded in late 2009 by Simon North and Nisa Chitakasem, they have brought together some of the best career guides in the industry, providing much needed high quality career support and guidance to professional working men and women. Position Ignition helps working professionals to identify where they would like to go next, what roles they will find fulfilling and how to go about getting it. Their focus is on helping people to make successful career changes, establish smart job search strategies, find focus and direction in their careers and take control of their own career development.

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