

How to Brand (or Rebrand) Yourself for the Job You Want



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Are you stuck in a job which doesn't give you satisfaction? Are you looking for something new?

It's very possible.

The only thing you need to do is make recruiters and hiring managers see you as the best fit for that new job.

How do you do that?

You brand yourself accordingly. This is because your reputation matters.





Source: [Sundin](#)

If you've been out of employment for some time or are just fresh from college, this is your first branding project. If you're working but want to change jobs or careers, then you'll be re-branding yourself.

Do You Have a Personal Brand?

The mention of the word 'brand' might get you thinking about companies with big marketing budgets.

Those which have marketing specialists, carry out market research and boast great customer satisfaction.

But branding is not the preserve of companies. People also have brands. And you have one too.

Put differently, you are a brand.

Branding is really nothing but the creation of the intended perception. If you want people to view you in a particular way, then you do what will bring about that result.

Whether you know it or not, you already have a brand. The people who relate with you can say something about you.

That which they say, is what constitutes your brand.

It may be good or not-so-good. But if that's the perception they have of you, then that's who you are – according to them.



“Your brand is what other people say about you when you’re not in the room.” – Jeff Bezos

The thing is, branding is quite natural. You don’t even have to do it.

Unfortunately, if you don’t deliberately do it, someone else will. And it will be based on what they think about you. They see you act in a certain way, talk in a certain way etc and make conclusions about you.

The result may not represent you accurately.

For this reason, it’s always wise to put in the effort to [create a personal brand](#).

You’re the only one who knows how you want to be perceived. You therefore need to make the point of doing it deliberately.

ELEMENTS OF YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

Branding is a process, not a one-time event. And as a process, there are things to be considered.

As much as you’re working towards branding yourself, you will not achieve that by just communicating it.

There are elements of branding. These are the things you need to work on since they define your brand.

For a personal brand, you need to clearly define these elements and make them a part of your life. These are the things which when people look at, they will agree with what you’re saying about yourself.

In some cases, you may not even say anything about yourself. But someone looking at you will be able to see aspects of who you are.


Let’s look at five things which make up your personal brand.

Mission

Your mission is what you seek to achieve in the short-term. Your short-term may be 6 months, 3 months, weekly or even daily basis.

If you look at [companies’ mission and vision statements](#), you will see this. Some organizations have however combined these two statements into one.





This is quite understandable since the business environment changes often. As such, combining these two can provide room for flexibility.

You can do the same thing. You can have a mission that is tailored to your values and what you desire to achieve in life (vision). You can then make slight changes to this depending on the situation you're in.

Your mission is a critical part of your brand because it shows what you're aiming at. It indicates what you're doing, what you are willing to do and also what you're not willing to do.

It shows the direction your career is taking and helps people quickly decide whether you can become a suitable business partner.

Values

Your values are equally important. To a large extent, these are what truly defines who you are.

Your values give people an idea of how you conduct yourself. They help people know the kind of behavior to expect from you, especially in their absence.

Examples of values are integrity, sincerity, efficiency, friendliness etc.

Values are so important that companies take time to discover them before hiring an employee.

Aware that candidates could write anything good, they use interviews to try and get 'under the hood.' This is the reason behind some [tricky interview questions](#).

Values are connected to your mission in that you cannot take a path which is contrary to your values.

For example, if you value integrity, you can never do illegal business or get involved in such dealings. If you're friendly and kind, you will always treat others well.

How does this come up in personal branding?

Let's take a case where you're interested in a customer care job. If you've branded yourself as a go-getter and one who is driven by a strong desire to win, you may not get the job.

These are the qualities of an aggressive manager who may be out to win no matter what.

If you were to handle customers directly, especially those with complaints and questions, you might push them to see things from your perspective. Almost like forcing them to accept your solutions.

This is because you'll be seeking to win the argument. For you, it's more of a battle.

Such treatment of a customer can lead to apathy, less feedback, low sales and eventually, losses.

Personality



Your personality is another key aspect of your brand. In fact, interview questions focusing on you are often intended to [find out what your personality is](#). This helps decide on your fitness for the job.

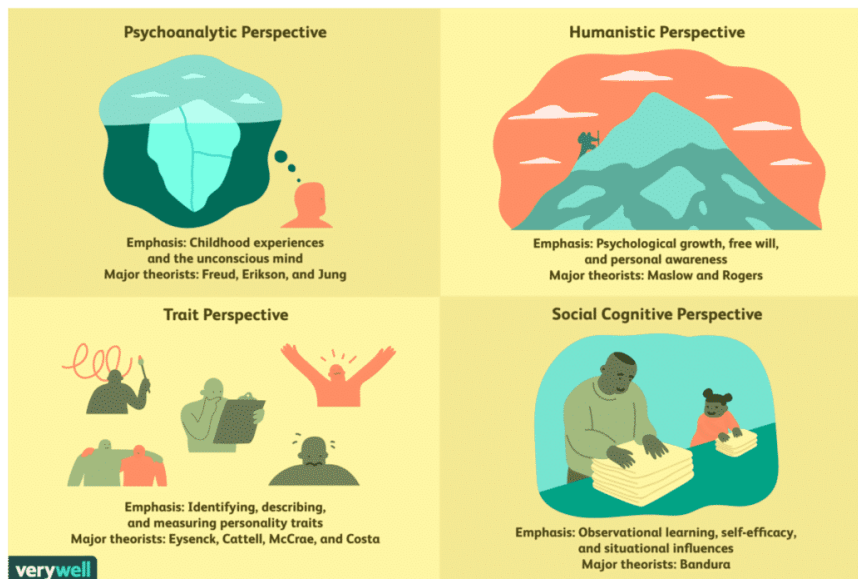
Your personality is the way you do things. It is how you respond or react to situations, how you view others and your ability to work with others.

Your personality is the result of two things: your genetics and your environment.

Some personality traits can be traced back to your parents. Others however are a result of how your environment has influenced or affected you.

These are what psychologists refer to as [nature and nurture](#), respectively.

Certain personality types are ideal for specific jobs or positions. As such, a mismatch could be bad for teamwork and customer relations.



Source: [Verywell Mind](#)

For instance, if you are the agreeable type, then you may not be best suited to take a leadership position. You may find it challenging to make difficult decisions.

Personalities have been studied for a long time. There are the [four well-known temperaments](#) used to describe personalities. These are the Sanguine,

Phlegmatic, Choleric and Melancholic.

There are also more detailed descriptions of personalities, some distinguishing up to 16 personality types.


These are actually better as they explore more facets of your nature. You can find out more using the [Carl Jung's and Isabel Briggs Myers' typological approach](#).

Strengths

It's fairly easy to understand how your strengths are a part of your brand. These are the things you do best.

All your talents and unique abilities count a lot in making you who you are. Together with your values, your strengths are important in defining you.





Whether you're branding yourself or not, knowing your strengths is important. It helps you know what you can do well and what you need help with.

You get to know what skills you need to improve on and the kind of assignments you can take up.

Strengths can be natural or cultivated through skills training. One strength which is needed in every job and in life in general, is communication.

[When you're good in communication](#), you'll have higher chances of succeeding.

This is because good communicators are loved and even envied. They are able to negotiate well and help teams work together in unity.

With your strengths clearly outlined or communicated in your brand, it becomes easy to convince someone of what you're capable of doing.

Experience

In many cases, your strengths will be evident in your experiences.

While branding yourself, you'll be talking a lot about your work experience.

If you have none, then you can talk about your experiences while volunteering in different areas.

It could be volunteer work in the community, school library, non-profit organization etc.

The key thing to be considered is how your volunteer work ties to your strengths.

Your values will also be clear as you're expected to work where you have an opportunity to utilize your strengths and express your values.

You need to keep this connection in mind lest you communicate something contrary to who you really are.

HOW TO BRAND YOURSELF

Knowing what makes up your personal brand is important since it helps you with the branding process.

The elements of a personal brand show you what to target so as to achieve your goal.

If you look at this process as a journey, then the individual things to work on are landmarks. If you haven't gotten to one and gone past it, you're probably going in the wrong direction.

Knowing what to target and consider throughout the process, let's look at how to do the actual branding.

What is Your Current Brand?



As mentioned earlier, you already have a brand. But since you now want to develop a new one, you have to start by looking at your current brand.

It's impossible to make an improvement if you don't know what you're improving.

To understand your current brand, here are some things you can do:

1. Check With Your Colleagues – if you're working, your colleagues can offer some clues. Note that they may not tell you everything. Some may only share the good as they try to avoid saying anything negative. Whereas that is not bad, you will need to also know the not-so-good.

To get this information, frame your question to show that you're looking to improve yourself. Instead of telling a colleague something like, "Tell me what pisses you off about me," try, "In what areas do you think I can improve to become more productive?"

As long as you know what you're looking for, you can derive some negatives from the answers received.

2. Check With Your Boss – the person above you could be your supervisor, manager or maybe the CEO. It all depends on your position in the company. The person to whom you report is likely better placed to tell you about your work performance. Although they too may prefer to stay on the positive side of things, you can use the above technique to get more insight from them.

The views of your current boss are very important because you'll be moving to another boss. So it's necessary to understand what makes this boss not satisfied with your work.

Remember that it's from his observations that he brands you in a certain way.

3. Check With Your Friends Outside Work – your friends who are not your colleagues are also a good source of information. The people you spend the weekend with, attend parties with, do personal projects with, have a lot to say about you.

They can tell you how easy it is to work together with you, how you response to issues and even what your communication is like.

All these will point you to what your strengths are and what you need to work on.

4. Check With Your Family – it's always said that no-one knows you better than the person who lives with you. There is a lot of truth in this statement. It's at home that you're most comfortable—at least in most cases.

In your own home, you will easily do whatever it is that makes you comfortable. If you're lazy but the need for money makes you proactive at work, your home can be a daily holiday destination.

As such, your spouse or your children might be having a different description of you than that which your colleagues have.



5. Check Your Resume – since you’re considering a new job, you cannot avoid looking at your resume. Your resume is what introduces you to both the recruiter and the hiring manager. As such, it plays a significant role. It determines whether you proceed to the interview stage or not.

For you to understand your current brand by looking at your resume, you need to take the hiring manager’s position.

Imagine that you’re the hiring manager. You work in the kind of company you want to join and there is a vacancy. Would you hire the person whose resume you’re reading?

If you don’t know what hiring managers look for, you may find this question to be difficult.

To make it easier, just ask yourself, can your resume convince a critical recruiter or hiring manager that you’re the best?

Having talked to the people around you and critically looked at your resume, note down your observations and conclusions. These will give you a clear picture of what your brand currently is.

What did your colleagues say you do best? What did they say you need to improve on? What did your spouse praise you about? What did she say you need to improve?

The above questions are intended to help you gather information. After you have the information, you then move to analyzing it.

Take some time and go through the information and look for patterns.

How many times has someone complemented you? How many times did they complain about something you did?

If there have been complaints about your conduct given certain circumstances, note them down. If someone has complained about something more than once, take note of it.

What Brand Do You Want to Create?

Now that you have your current brand, you can see what needs to be improved.

Whatever good you have gathered as part of you, keep it. The outright bad and the not-so-good need to go.

But before you embark on the elimination process, you need to have a clear picture of where you’re headed.

What’s your destination? What brand do you want to create?

You see, if you just remove the bad and improve the good, you will end up with a brand which is quite general. It will be good but not good enough to make you stand out.

What you want is a brand that speaks for itself. One that easily gets the necessary attention and approval so as to get you to that new job.



Therefore, you need to first decide what you want to make and then draft it.

Check it for any loopholes and make the necessary amendments. Once it's finalized, then build the brand using the draft as a guide or template.

To do this, first answer the question: What job do I want?

It might be a position that is in your mind but not defined by any organization.

Maybe you have a unique skill and the company you want to work in doesn't have that position.

After creating your brand, you can approach them and pitch your idea.

Maybe it's a higher position in the company you currently work in. Or a well-established position in a different company. Or maybe in a different industry.

Whichever the case, you have to define what is required and expected from the person holding the position.

Moreover, as a step further so you can stay ahead of the competition, you need to have the information which no-one else has.

Not everything is written in the job description of a job advertisement.

Some companies don't give much info to avoid higher cost associated with large-size ads. Others simply leave it to you to do your homework.

Otherwise, how will they distinguish between the proactive and the passive team member?

Research Your New Brand

Armed with the requirements and expectations of your desired job, it's time to create a brand aligned to them.

At this point, note that you're not simply looking to write the best resume or [cover letter](#).

Personal branding is more than resumes.


Therefore, know from the beginning that this is a project and not merely a task.

In this stage of research, there are two things to major on:

1. Personal Traits – these are the qualities or characteristics of the person holding the position. Whether you're seeking a promotion in the same organization or a new role in a different company, there are specific traits required for the job.

For instance, data analysts must be good with numbers, they must be logical and at times, procedural in their thinking.





This helps them recognize patterns, causes and consequences. Marketers may be more instantaneous; moving with trends before those trends make any sense.

Personalities will also come into play here. For instance, back office roles may be okay for less social people.

However, marketing, sales, customer support and other customer-facing roles are different. These require a good measure of friendliness and an upbeat personality.

2. Industry – the industry you’re in or are looking to join has its own uniqueness and challenges. If you’re staying in the same company, then you’re not changing industries. All the same, the view of the industry from that higher office is definitely different from where you currently are.

This is especially the true if you’re aiming for a management position. The kind of decisions you’ll be making are different. You will need to understand the industry in an in-depth manner.

What are your competitors doing differently? What does their PR communicate? What image are they painting of themselves? How are they interacting with suppliers? What agreements do they have which give them an advantage?

If moving to a new industry, you have more work to do.

What drives the industry? How has the industry been fairing during different economic times? How is technology used in that industry? Who are the major players? What makes the industry more profitable than others?

The more you know about your industry and desired role, the better.

You will use this information to build a solid foundation for your new brand.

It is also the most critical of all the stages. Just like laying the foundation for a skyscraper, if you do it wrong, you’ll have big problems later.

Know Your Customer

Having the knowledge and understanding of the position i.e. personal traits and industry, it’s time to get specific.

If you ask any marketer, they will tell you that you cannot market a product to everyone. You must have a target customer.

For you, you have to know the exact companies you want to apply to. Whether the big ones or the smaller ones. Maybe even startups. You have to identify them and do some research on them individually.

1. What problems are they facing? Every business is out to fix a problem. But at the same time, the businesses themselves face unique problems. These are the challenges which make it difficult to fix the problems they seek to fix.



In other cases, they might be doing it but not as well as the competition. Since they have to remain in business, there is something that needs to be done in order to remain profitable. As an outsider, can you spot the problem?

2. What are their aspirations? You can get this from their vision and mission statements. Looking at these, does their market position indicate having achieved it? On the way towards the goal? Or does the company seem to be going the opposite direction?

3. What direction do market studies suggest needs to be taken? To get market studies, you may have to find out which associations the companies in that industry belong to. Check the public events held and what the study findings suggest.

In many cases, studies come with recommendations. There will also be projections.

These will help you know where the industry, or a specific company, is headed in the future. You can then plan to be somewhere along the way, thus making yourself very relevant.

4. Do you have the skills needed? You know the problem being faced by the individual company you want to join. The question is, can you solve that problem? Do you have the skills required?

You must align yourself with the position or company which requires the skills you have. Alternatively, understand the skills needed and train to have them.

Branding Exercises

If you have decided that these are the companies you want to work for, go back to your list of strengths and values.

Which company fits perfectly with the unique person you are? If none, which one is a close fit?

Which company is your most preferred?

If you're aiming at a specific position in your company, you can put all your efforts towards branding for that. If targeting any of a number of companies, then you will have to develop a brand that is consistent though designed differently for the specific companies.

For example, you may want the position of a data analyst. According to your research, one company may need analysis in its purchasing department. Another one may need someone for the marketing department.

Although the role is the same, there might be differences. These will result from differences in company culture and the department needs.

For the marketing department, they may prefer a slightly-outgoing personality. The purchasing department may not see that as necessary. So where will it be easier for you to join and adapt quickly?

After considering your strengths, values and personality, find out the strength of your strengths.



Do you need to improve any of them? If so, [take classes](#). Check out [Alison](#), [Coursera](#) and [edX](#) for some free courses you can take at your own convenience.

Do you lack relevant experience? You can build a portfolio through volunteer work. You can also do some freelance work after your official work hours.

Ensure that whatever you figured out is necessary for the job, you have it. If you can go beyond the basic requirements, the better.

Having what is needed will be a big confidence booster. The experiences you get will come in handy as you will be quick to spot issues, suggest solutions and lead in implementing them.

Launching Your Brand

This is the most interesting and fun bit of the process

. But it still requires a plan.

You need to be very strategic since this is the communication part. You are communicating your new brand.

There are at least five things to do in this stage:

1. Update Your LinkedIn Profile – your LinkedIn profile is the first place most recruiters and hiring managers will look after receiving your resume. You don't want your resume to say that you're a data analyst while your LinkedIn profile says you are an office administrator.

All the information available about you must be consistent. If your profile is still in history, then it needs to indicate the change. You can mention it or imply it by including data analysis in your skills list. You can also include your new experiences in your profile.

2. Update Your Social Media Accounts – it's all about consistency. One of the areas companies will look as they seek to find out who you are is social media. It's in these platforms that [your true personality](#) will be discovered.

If you have some posts which may paint you in bad light, you may need to delete them. Follow professional bodies and engage with them in social media. It has to be evident that you're really up to date with what goes on in the industry.

One small but important factor to consider in your quest for a consistent image is the profile picture you use. It has to be a professional-looking photo.

It should be easy to recognize you across all your social media accounts. This helps build trust.

3. Send Emails – this is especially important if you're moving from your current employment. Let the suppliers and customers you deal with know about the change. If working in a big company with many branches, colleagues in other branches should also know about the move.



4. Call Friends – there are some friends who are too close for you to communicate with them through email. These ones must be called. Make the announcement and ensure you have some excitement in your voice.

You can also organize to meet some. Throw a party if you're able to and let it be a new beginning.

5. Network – depending on the degree of change, your networking may shift significantly. If moving to a new industry, you will have new networking events to attend. You will also have new social pages and thought leaders to follow etc.

As you seek to get close to that company you've been eyeing, your acquaintances will matter. As much as qualifications are good, nothing is as strong as the word of mouth recommendation.

CONCLUSION

Branding yourself is a fun project. You will definitely succeed in it.

Also, there is nothing as satisfying as seeing the image you worked to build pay off by landing you that dream job.

So get on your feet and put in the effort. Success is just some effort away.



Share your thoughts and experience

