

Personal Branding



Introduction

"If people like you they will listen to you,

But if they trust you, they will do business with you."

- Zig Ziglar

What is Personal Branding?

Generally, most professionals think that personal branding is meant for only politicians (e.g. Narendra Modi, Barack Obama...), celebrities (e.g. Angelina Jolie, Amitabh Bachchan...) etc. But in this highly competitive world, personal branding is an indispensable tool to success irrespective of the profession.

Personal branding is defined as "a fully planned and strategic process developing action to promote your own brand.

www.theguardian.com/business/2011/mar/06/young-british-entrepreneurs

the guardian

Entrepreneurs
The Observer

Britain's new entrepreneurs: young guns go for it

Today's internet-savvy students are starting their own businesses and forging their own path in life... and here are seven prime examples

- Why a growing number of twentysomethings are doing it for themselves



Observer
Sunday 6 March 2011 00:11 GMT

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Poppy Dinsey, launched What I Wore Today (wiwt.com), a blog that does exactly what it says on the tin. Photograph: Suki Dhanda for the Observer Suki Dhanda/Observer

POPPY DINSEY, 23: Fashion blogger
It is 10am on the first day of London fashion week and Poppy Dinsey has already been photographed four times. "I think it's the coat," she says as yet another blogging fashionista takes a snap of her canary yellow Burberry mackintosh. "I am a walking highlighter, essentially."

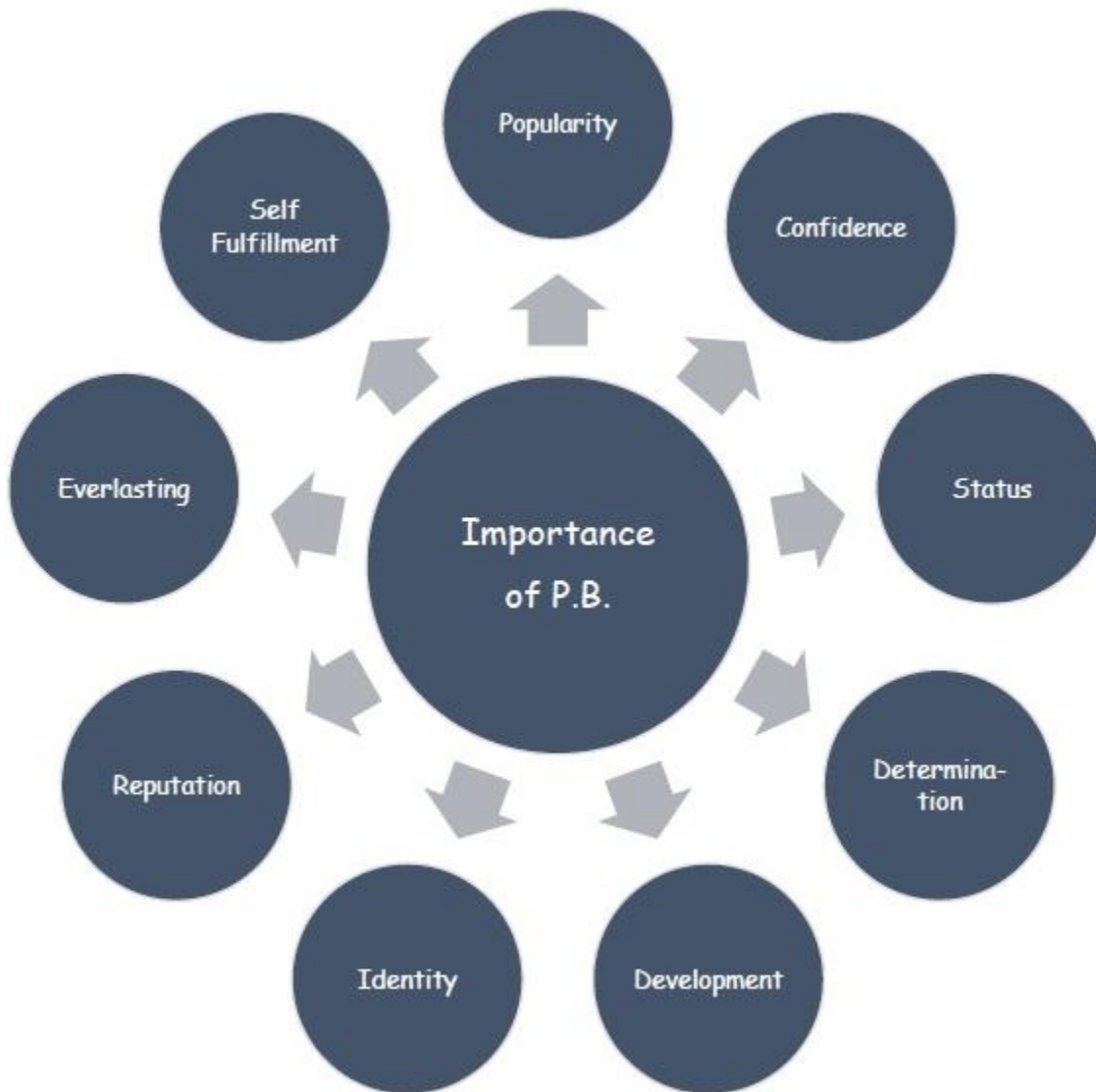
It is a creative and unique way to communicate what makes you special and distinct. It is possible only when you **understand** your creative ideas and unique attributes including your skill sets, values, strengths, and passions and use them to stand out of the crowd.

Why is Personal Branding Important?

The world is getting highly competitive. To stand out of the crowd, it is necessary to differentiate oneself so as to be unique and visible in comparison to our competitors.

Therefore, strategic personal branding helps to –

- **Popularity** – Develop your visibility and popularity.
- **Confidence** – Build your confidence.



- **Status** – Stronghold your position in the society.
- **Determination** – Enhance your focus on your business.
- **Development** – Expand your business area/s.
- **Identity** – Increase your earning and fame.
- **Reputation** – Develop your credibility and reliability in the market.
- **Everlasting** – Make your presence felt even during recession.
- **Self-fulfillment** – Attain your ultimate goal.

When you groom your profession with personal branding, it helps you build a strategy. Likewise, it adds unforgettable value to your profession.

Who is Compatible for Personal Branding?

Personal branding is for all those professionals who are determined to attain their goals with honesty. Irrespective of the profession you are into, personal branding is imperative for your success.



Personal branding is the ultimate way to success. It gives you not only a substantial source of earning but also name and recognition in the society.

Personal Branding - Identify Your Brand

"Personal Branding is all about discovering
what makes you special,
and then communicating it to the right people,
through multiple channels."

– Dan Schawbel

Identification of one's likeness, choices, and wishes is the most difficult part. Competition is so high that most of us always remain vulnerable and think – What will happen if I fail?

Such kinds of questions make us weak to identify our likeness, strong point, and passion. On the other hand, without identification of our strong point, we cannot be successful.

How to Discover your Brand?

As such there is no foolproof way to discover your brand.

However, following are some exercises, if you do them honestly, then definitely, you can discover your brand (detailed questionnaire has been given at the end of this tutorial).

Step 1

Answer the following questions –

What is your qualification?

What is your area of interest?

What do you want to achieve?

What is/are your goal/s?

What is your passion?

How are you currently perceived?

How are you perceived in your personal and professional relationships?

What is your industry/sector?

What is the market and target audience for your brand?

What is the communication style you want to project?

What is your niche?

Step 2

Do the following exercise –

Draw columns on a piece of paper (as shown below).

Things You Like Most	Things that Others Like in You	Things that need Improvement

- **First Column** – Write down five things that you like most; it could be anything of your choice including your studies, hobbies, your strongest point, etc.
- **Second Column** – Write down five points for which you are appreciated more often by the people around you. It could be anything such as your honesty, your skill sets, your punctuality, your trustworthiness, your likeness, etc.
- **Third Column** – First match column A and column B and based on that write five points that you need to improve.

Remember, while matching and comparing column A and B, you need to consider both the points i.e. your choice and people’s view. It will help you introspect and discover your brand.

Once you are done identifying your brand, now you need to –

- Set a goal.
- Note down your mission, vision, and personal brand statement.
- Build a strategy (Your strategy has to be small and in simple steps. Once you complete first only then move on to the second strategy and so on. A complicated strategy in the very first instance can discourage you, so avoid it, and choose a simple path).

Personal Branding - Create Your Brand

Your uniqueness is the key to your success.

Once, you have done the exercise asked in the previous chapter, the next question that will definitely come to your mind is –

How to Create Your Brand?

Just relax and organize your thoughts and likeness, which will help you to personalize your brand vision. With the following steps, it will be easier for you to create your brand –

Step 1

Note down your values – It could be anything that gives meaning to your life. Possibly, you are not aware of these values, but in most of your decisions, it plays a big role. For example, your value could be –

- **Relationships** (family, friends)
- **Community** (society)
- **Intelligence** (the work you can perform best)
- **Hobbies** (the work that more often you live to do)
- **Ambition/Goal** (the ultimate destination)

However, this is not the conclusive list, it is just an example. If you correctly note down your values, it will definitely help you develop a successful personal branding strategy.

Step 2

Prioritize your Values – After listing and categorizing your values, now you need to prioritize them. While prioritizing, take help of your interest, likeness, and even your passion. These will help you prioritize your values.

Step 3

Identify your Traits – Trait is the most unique feature of your personality. You might not notice, but most of your behavior is guided by your trait. Following are the five most important personality traits –

- **Conscientiousness** – It means, how careful or vigilant you are at your work.
- **Openness to experience** – It means, how open, creative, curious, liberal, aesthetic-minded you are.
- **Extraversion** – It means, you don't like loneliness rather prefer to remain around people.
- **Agreeableness** – It means, how kind, sympathetic, warm, cooperative, and considerate you are.
- **Neuroticism** – It is a tendency to be in negative emotional state. Normally, this feature is usually discouraged; so, it is good to cure/suppress this kind of trait/symptom.

Step 4

Discuss your Plan with your Parents, Friends, and Mentor – The last step is to discuss your plan and strategy with those who know and understand you very well.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT is a very effective exercise that is recommended to be done before creating your brand. It will definitely help you in revealing your real picture and accordingly you can create your brand.



Strengths – It is your internal characteristics that helps build competitive advantages. For example, good voice, eloquence, witty demeanor, etc.



Weakness – Interinspect yourself and try to find what are the weaknesses within you that might be potential hindrance in a career. For example, fear in public, not able to speak properly in front of people, etc.



Opportunities – Opportunity is an external aspect for which you have to be vigilant; if you are not able to recognize it, definitely you are going to miss on something good. For example, opportunity of a job, opportunity to deal a project, etc.



Threats – It is also an external aspect of your life. Unfortunately, you cannot control your threat, but of course, you can address and mitigate them. For example, sudden rise of your competitor, inability to attend a very crucial meeting, etc.

Some other important points that you need to consider are –

- List the people whom you admire
- Read their success stories
- Learn the lessons these people used for their success

Based on these information, you can correct/improve your strategy.

Personal Branding - Promote Your Brand

“Promote your strengths.

Remind the world why you are special and why it is special to do business with you.”

– **Mary Schnack**

How to Promote Your Brand?

Promoting your brand is another big question that you need to seriously consider.



However, in today's technological world, personal branding is not a big deal, provided you follow the following steps –

Step 1

- **Consider Yourself as a Brand** – Start considering yourself as a brand, it will give you confidence.
- **Prepare Your Toolkit** – Your profile, portfolio with pictures, messages, etc.
- **Plan Your Strategy** – Based on your toolkit, develop your strategy.

Step 2

Decide Your Medium of Promotion – This is a very important aspect that you need to consider - which mediums you want to use for your branding. For example: Self promotions, events, print media, electronic media, etc.

Make Your Online Presence – There are various social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, etc. where you can create your fascinating profile.



Develop Your Website – Having an own website with detailed portfolio is one of the best ways of personal branding. Google can easily crawl your name through your website.

Update Your Website Regularly – Updating the website is another important aspect of self-branding. Articles and blog posting is the easiest tool that has potential enough to increase traffic on your website.

Emailing – Draft a very nice, authentic, small, but clear message and email it to all those people who can be beneficial for you.

Share Your Updates – On all social media websites, share your updates including pictures, messages, tweets, and other professional updates. But before posting your updates, be careful – your messages and pictures have to be professional and of good quality.

Join Online Forum – Join an online forum, which is linked to your profession.

Acknowledge Others Comments – It will help you improve your strategy.

Step 3

Find Out Your Target Audience – Discover people interested in your profession; connect with them online, if possible offline as well.

Attend Events and Seminar – Attend all events and seminars of your interest, meet with different people, and give them your business card. It will greatly help improve your social networking.

Organize Local Events – If your position is a little strong and you can afford an event; organize it. Select a nice theme, promote your event almost a month in advance through social media website as well as print media. It is unlimited and very effective source of personal branding.

Select Your Clothing – Your personal style, sense of dressing, and body language are extremely important. Therefore, select the clothing that best represents you. Further, be courteous enough to convince others.

Personal Branding - Media Attention

“You can earn attention by creating something interesting
and valuable and then publishing it online for free.”

– **David Meerman Scott**

How to Get Free Media Attention?

Getting media's attention can make you an apparent brand in your profession. Having your name published in a national newspaper/magazine and/or being aired on TV, can make you popular instantly. Grabbing people's attention through media can definitely kick start your profession.



But how to get free media attention is a big deal. The following tips though not foolproof may help you get free media attention –

Step 1

Research Topics of Relevance – First you need to research the relevant topics (related to your profession), which is the point of attraction for the media.

Step 2

Collect the Detailed Information – Once you come to know the topic in news, collect detailed information on the same.

Step 3

Publish on Web – Write a couple of articles and blogs on the same topic giving detailed information with references. Promote your write-up through social media websites.

Step 4

Collect List of Media – Make a list of TV channels who are covering news on the same topic. Write to all of them about your views on the same topic and substantiate yourself with a few reliable links. Discuss some points, those either ignored or no one paid attention to. Possible, many of them will ignore your email. But it is also possible some of them might pay attention.

Being patient and waiting for a breakthrough is essential. Once you and your work is under the media radar, your growth will be exponential.

Personal Branding - Monitor Your Brand

"Chase your vision, not the money.

The money will end up following you."

-Tony Hsieh

I believe, through the previous chapters, you now have a basic understanding of personal branding and how it can be built. But building a personal brand is not the end of the story. If you want to sustain in the market, then you have to monitor and update, correct, and improve your personal branding regularly.

This chapter describes the importance and technique of personal brand monitoring.

How to Monitor Your Brand?

Following are the important techniques that will help you monitor your brand –

Step 1

Make Your Brand Name Distinct – Before naming your brand, you need to research thoroughly. You need to be sure that you are using a distinct name, which is not used by any other celebrity or big brand. For example, if your name is 'Amitabh' be careful, there are two big names i.e. author Amitav Ghosh and actor Amitabh Bachchan by the same name. So, you need to make your name distinct.

Step 2

Manage Your Brand on Search Engine – You need to manage i.e. how your name appears on search engines' ranking. As shown in the following image, your profile has to be visible with image and tagline. Besides Google, you also need to manage your brand on other search engines, e.g. Bing, etc.

The image shows a Google search page for 'neeta lulla'. The search results include several links to her online store, Wikipedia page, Facebook profile, and various fashion websites. A 'Shop for neeta lulla on Google' section is prominently displayed, featuring a grid of clothing items with prices and 'Exclusively' labels. Below this is a collage of images of Neeta Lulla's designs and a 'More images' link.

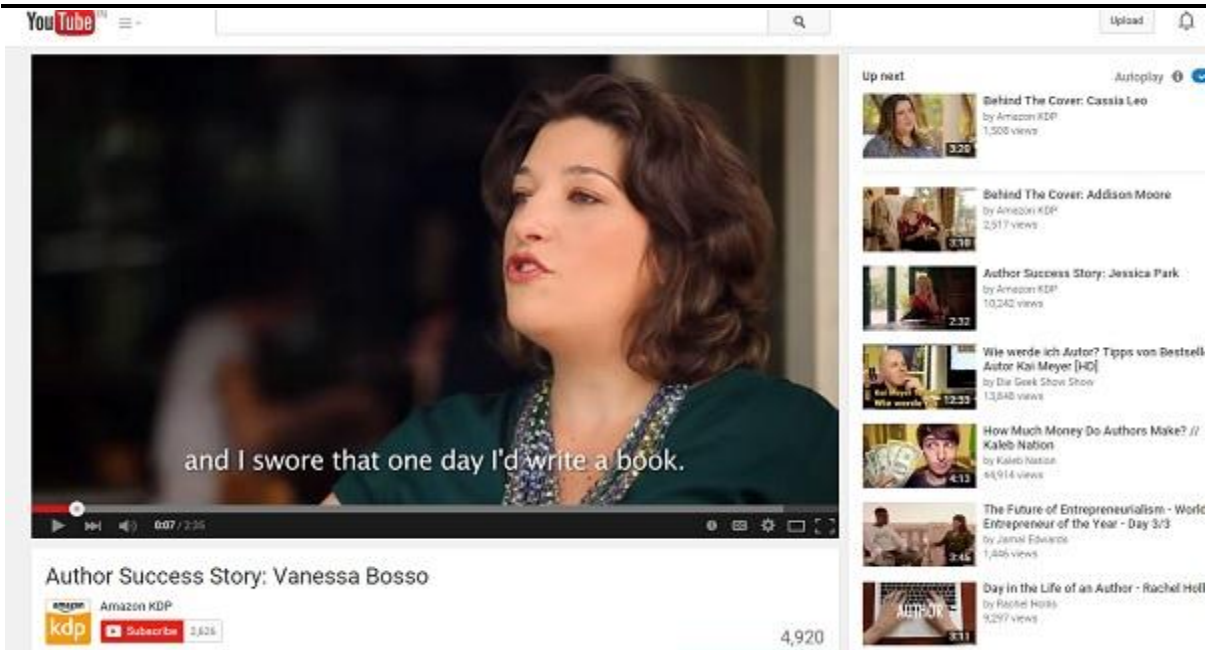
Step 3

Manage Your Brand on Social Media Websites – Keep your profile updated and compelling on Facebook, Google+, Twitter, Myspace, LinkedIn, etc.



Step 4

Upload Your Video on YouTube – Make a few short videos offering valuable information of your work if any and upload it on YouTube (as shown in the following image).



Step 5

Be vigilant – On top of this, always keep your eyes open and see what is happening around you. If something is related to your profession, acquaint yourself with it and keep updating your knowledge.

Personal Branding - Stand Alone

“Be Yourself Because Everyone Else Is Taken.”

– **Oscar Wilde**

To be distinct from the crowd, you have to be true to yourself. There are individual differences, so you are unique and you have the unique quality; all you need to do is introspect and be yourself. ‘DO NOT IMITATE ANYONE’ irrespective of his/her level of success.

So, ‘stand alone’ means making your own likeness and creativity unique rather than stealing from someone else.

Why Stand out from the Crowd?

Generally, people are attracted to creativity and uniqueness. Uniqueness can make you more appealing by making you stand out from the crowd. Distinctiveness gives an advantage over the common thing and in competition as well. For similar products, you need to grab people’s attention, but a unique product in itself is a point of attraction.

How to be Unique?

Following are the important guidelines that will help you introspect on your uniqueness –

- **List your likeness** – All of us have the unique characteristics; so, take a notebook and write down your likeness, passion, quirk, and past experience.
- **Prioritize your list** – Now, thoroughly read your list and prioritize them, which one you like most and so on.
- **Blend your uniqueness and your goal** – Based on the above exercise, blend your most unique points with your goal.

Personal Branding - Exercise

The sole purpose of this exercise is to groom your personality and help to develop your personal branding. Kindly, go through the following exercise with patience and complete it honestly.

Once you complete this exercise, you will have a clear and better picture of your career; go ahead, wish you good luck!!!

Self-Assessment

What are your strong points?

What type of work do you repeatedly want to do?

What are your weaknesses that you are aware of?

While working in a team, what role do you avoid that might be important to your career?

Whenever you face a problem, what most likely compels you to give up?

Did anyone identify your weakness that you are not aware of?

Did you ever notice that others saw strengths in you that you recognized as weaknesses for yourself?

What are the weaknesses that might hold you back from going where you want to go?

Why do you like what you like?

What is the passion behind your passionate activity?

How can your passion help you build your career and acquire the ultimate goal?

Work Experience

What was your most successful project?

What made your project successful?

What was your most important team role?

When faced with an overpowering difficulty, what have you done to overcome it?

Which are the strengths and skill sets that others acknowledge in you?

Which strengths and skills do you use again and again?

What skills have you mastered, but do not use in daily life?

Which are the skills that you enjoy using more often, regardless of the task?

Which strengths and skills are going to be most beneficial for your future career?

Which are the skills that you are missing?

What skills you don't have and you want to develop/acquire?

Past Experience

What was important to you in your past?

What energizes your passion (till now)?

What are your most important characteristics that you will never forget?

Where do you want to see yourself in next 5 years?

Did you learn something new that you could add to your values, passions, and purpose that are required to reach your ultimate goal?

Build Your Personal Branding

Which skill was missing that you'd like to build?

Which of the strengths you identified would you like to showcase?

What can motivate you towards your internal vision for the future?