

Leadership

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Personal Branding Is A Leadership Requirement, Not a Self-Promotion Campaign



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I solve the leadership identity crisis to enable opportunities.

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Developing your personal brand is essential for the advancement of your career and development as a leader. Unfortunately, personal branding has become a “commoditized” term that has lost its intention as people have irresponsibly used social media as a platform to build their personal brand and increase their relevancy. They believe **social media can immediately increase their market value** for their personal brand rather than recognizing that the process of developing their personal brand is a much bigger responsibility; a never-ending journey that extends well beyond social media.

This is why I always advise those who want to have a social media presence to think

carefully about their intentions and objectives before opening an account. Why? Because the moment you start – you must not allow yourself to stop. Challenge yourself to think about what your intentions are and what you are capable of delivering to the communities you are serving – both in and outside of the workplace.

Personal branding, much like social media, is about making a full-time commitment to the journey of defining yourself as a leader and how this will shape the manner in which you will serve others.

Your personal brand should represent the value you are able to consistently deliver to those whom you are serving. This doesn't mean **self-promotion** – that you should be creating awareness for your brand by showcasing your achievements and success stories. **Managing** your personal brand requires you to be a great role model, mentor, and / or a voice that others can depend upon. For example, when I write a blog or an article – I am extremely mindful that my community of readers expects a specific “experience of thought” from me.

More than that, I aim to attract new readers by offering something of value that will hopefully engage them enough to continue reading my work. Sounds like a lot of pressure and a tremendous responsibility to your audience, doesn't it? Well – it is at first – but over time **the responsibility becomes a natural and instinctual part of who you are.** This is the mindset you must develop and the **level of accountability you must assume when deciding to define, live and manage**

your personal brand. Every day you know you must deliver to a standard of expectation that you have set-forth for both yourself and those whom you serve.

View your personal brand as a trademark; an asset that you must protect while continuously molding and shaping it. Your personal brand is an asset that must be managed with the intention of helping others benefit from having a relationship with you and / or by being associated with your work and the industry you serve.

Have you defined your personal brand? Are you consistently living your personal brand every day?

If you're like most, your answer to both is "no". Based on a survey conducted by my organization, less than 15% of people have truly defined their personal brand and less than 5% are living it consistently at work – each and every day. Why? It can be extremely challenging and it requires a tremendous amount of self-awareness, action and accountability.

What I didn't tell you is that 70% of professionals *believe* they have defined their

personal brand and 50% believe they are living it. But when you “peel-back-the-onion,” you realize that their focus was centered on self-promotion rather than a commitment to advance themselves by serving others.

So what is a personal brand? A personal brand is the total experience of someone having a relationship with who you are and what you represent as an individual; as a leader. Think about what that means to you. Let it simmer. Ask yourself and then ask a close friend – what is the total experience of having a relationship with you like? Write down the top 5 things you would expect others to experience and have your close friend do the same. Are the answers the same or similar in meaning? If they are, good for you! If not, you have some work to do.

Every time you are in a meeting, at a conference, [networking reception](#) or other event, you should be mindful of what others are experiencing about you and what you want others to experience about you. Each of these engagements is similar to a job interview – expect in these cases you are being evaluated by your peers. Those who know how to live and manage their personal brand will earn their respect in any situation.

At first, this is a bit of a challenge. However, when you start to see yourself living through the “***lens of a brand***,” your perspective will change and you will become more mindful about how you approach the personal brand you are trying to define and

aiming to live.

Don't confuse this with "acting a part." To the contrary, you should focus on being more of who you naturally are and want to be so that you can perform and serve at your optimal levels. Keep in mind that we have been conditioned to want to be more like others. As such, we are more likely to be accountable to others and what they want us to be rather than being true to ourselves.

If your teammates and/or colleagues don't know what your personal brand is, the fault is yours and not theirs. Having a personal brand is a leadership requirement. It enables you to be a better leader, a more authentic leader that can create greater overall impact. In fact, those who have defined and live their personal brand will more naturally [demonstrate executive presence](#) and as such may find themselves advancing more quickly at work.

Personal branding is no longer an option; it's a powerful leadership enabler.