



The Leader's Guide To A Powerful Personal Brand

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It's understood that brands create value, loyalty, and profound emotional experiences for customers. What is less understood is that successful brand building is no longer just about the company's brand.

It's about your personal brand and how you use your own distinction to deliver the brand promise of your organization as well as become seen as the go-to-expert in your field.

Make no mistake about it. If your work lacks enthusiasm, distinctiveness and a clear customer advantage, no matter how hard you work you won't be viewed as a strategic advantage to your customer and your performance will suffer.

So, developing your individual brand is an essential strategy for leaders, independent contributors, sales-professionals, managers, board members, and anyone who aspires to have their ideas not only heard, but acted on.

In this short branding guide, my hope is that you will authentically explore that which you care about most and become a catalyst for inspired performance for you and others.

Hugh Blane



DEFAULT BRAND: SELF

The starting point for building your leadership brand involves you writing four words or phrases that you believe best describe your leadership. Individual words can include words such as “inspiring” and phrases may be similar to “can do attitude”. Don’t overthink these words; simply capture what you see is the essence of your leadership.

1	2
3	4

Your four words reflect how you see yourself and how you present yourself to colleagues and customers. This is your *Default Brand* from your perspective.

DEFAULT BRAND: OTHERS

The overarching objective of this step is to clarify your leadership brand from your key stakeholders perspective. To do so you will create a list of eight to ten people you trust and respect. They can be colleagues, managers, coworkers, direct reports, former employees, and or friends. Your list should be a list of people whose opinion you value.

Call and or email each person on your list. Inform them that you are involved in a leadership activity that requires candid feedback. As someone you respect, his or her assistance in seeing your leadership from an outsider’s perspective is essential.

Specifically, ask them to provide you with four words or phrases they believe best describe your leadership. It can be a one-word or phrase descriptor similar to the one you used to describe yourself.

Review the words you receive and compile a list of themes or patterns. Similar words or synonyms should be distilled into a one-word descriptor that best represents what you believe is the tone and or feel of the words provided. Whittle your list down to a list of four or five words that best represent your current leadership. This is your *Default Brand* from others perspective.

Name	Descriptors
1.
2.

Name

Descriptors

3.

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DEFAULT BRAND SUMMARY

This page will help you determine if a gap exists between the descriptors you generated for yourself and the list generated by others. The top four or five words used to describe me are:

1	2
3	4

Now ask yourself the following questions:

- 1. Am I being seen in ways consistent with my goals and aspirations?
.....
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- 2. Is my list of descriptors (both my own and from my observers) distinctive or simply the price of entry for being in my role?
.....
.....
- 3. What is the upside and downside to my leadership brand / reputation?
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.....
- 4. Am I excited about the words used to describe me, or am I neutral?
.....
.....

DESIRED BRAND

This next section will help you define in clear and compelling terms your *Desired Brand*. Specifically, you will answer the following questions:

- 1. What is it that I want to be known for?
- 2. What traits, characteristics and or values are essential and or non-negotiable to me?
- 3. What must I be known for in order to provide a competitive advantage to my ideal customer or key stakeholder?

This step is less about logic and what's probable; it is rooted in articulating your highest hopes and aspirations for you and your leadership.

What four words or phrases do you want to be known for:

1	2
3	4

DESIGNED BRAND

After determining your *Desired Brand*, your next step is to convert the aspirational aspects of your brand into behaviorally explicit actions that bring your Desired Brand to life. Behaviors such as focusing on the future rather than the past, using uplifting and positive language, using “want to” versus “have to” are examples of being seen as inspiring.

What behaviors will you exhibit in order to be seen as your *Desired Brand*?

I will:

1.
.....

2.
.....

3.
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4.
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Hugh Blane doesn't claim to know everything about your business. He does claim however to know more than anyone about converting human potential into accelerated business results—that's why his clients call him the Talent Alchemist.

His consulting firm, Claris Consulting, is retained by clients such as Sony Pictures, Microsoft, Pepperdine University, Swedish Medical Centers, Aramark, Spacelabs Medical, Sodexo, and the University of Texas at Qatar, to challenge assumptions, jettison complacency and catapult growth.

Hugh's specialty is working with high potential employees. He was selected as the exclusive coach for the prestigious Helen M. Young Fellowship at Pepperdine University, and is an adjunct faculty member at its School of Law and Entrepreneurship. Hugh has taught business literacy courses to homeless men and women through the Union Rescue Mission in Los Angeles. He has also served on the Strategic Planning Committee of the Boys and Girls Club of King County.

Hugh and his family emigrated from Scotland to Canada, and then to Birmingham, Alabama in 1969 to escape financial hardship and begin their lives anew. The culture shock he experienced upon his arrival in Birmingham six years after Bull Connor ordered the use of fire hoses and attack dogs, along with the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church, was profound. His commitment to organizational transformation came as a direct result of being witness to a chaotic time that changed the course of race relations in the United States.

Hugh is a serial entrepreneur and doesn't shy away from reinventing himself. After 11 years as the CEO of his own financial consulting firm, Hugh reinvented himself when he was recruited to join renowned business author Tom Peters as a senior level consultant with The Tom Peters Company. After traveling to three continents, working in seven countries and 43 states, Hugh left to become the youngest partner and consultant in the venerable consulting firm, the Effectiveness Institute. After seven years, Hugh recognized that it was time to reinvent himself again and started Claris Consulting.

Hugh once ran with the bulls in Pamplona and learned how not to get gored. He is happily married to Alyson and they love traveling, wine, and good food. They reside in the small beach community of Normandy Park, Washington with a black Giant Schnauzer they rescued named Brooks. They're still debating whether they rescued Brooks or if Brooks rescued them.

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