



Why Create a Personal Social Brand?

Juliet said, “I want to be remembered and distinguished from the crowd.” A strong personal brand is a mix of exposure, reputation, trust, execution, and distribution. You need to decide what is your goal and the impression you want to leave—being generous (Paul Newman); financial wizard (Warren Buffet); humanitarian (Albert Schweitzer); ecology visionary (Al Gore).

Who is Juliet? Her Reflections On and Offline

Your personal social brand is a reflection of what you have done in life and what you want to be recognized for. This includes your values, formal and informal education, job experiences, personal networks, and your conversations with your social networks. You are the qualities or characteristics that distinguish you from your colleagues. With the growth of social media, your life is now an open book. Your personal brand is now strengthened or weakened by your online persona – your members on LinkedIn; photos on Facebook; comments on your wall; your purchases; and groups you frequent. It is much more than a resume; it is your living and constantly evolving [digital footprint](#).

The Critical Decision

Your initial decision is to develop your personal brand. It takes commitment, discipline and putting aside your “ego.” You must be honest with yourself and reflect on how you want to portray yourself to the world -- your colleagues, future employer, business partner and networked contact. Often you need to work with a friend or coach to gain the detachment and clarity needed.

Communicator Geoff Livingston blogged [we should not confuse brand and reputation](#). “Social media experts with huge personal brands and followers number in the tens of thousands may be well recognized, but don’t often have the reputation to match.” He went on to say that grounding personal brand on continuing results may be the key. So what are some other steps can you take to cross the chasm from brand to reputation?

Building Your Personal Brand Strategy... 25 Steps

Outline your Strategy

- 1. Set your goals** - What do you want to accomplish with your personal brand? Get a job, build your business, gain exposure, or become a thought leader.
- 2. Develop a step-by-step plan** - Take the time to do this planning. It is critical and often neglected or procrastinated. Include specific objectives, communication tactics, and a timetable. Review your progress quarterly.

- 3. Gain Competitive Advantage** - Everyone has a resume; few have developed a personal brand, publishing venue, and online destination. Pew Research says in their 2007 [Digital Footprint](#) study, “18% of working college graduates report that their employer expects some form of **self-marketing online** as part of their job.”

Define U

- 4. Clarify your identity** - What makes you different? What do you want to be known for? Ask yourself, “What I do that adds remarkable, measurable, distinctive value?”
- 5. Reveal your real power** - Everyone has a source of “power.” You need to come to terms with this power with humility. For some, it’s their physical attractiveness, others their accomplishments, others their sincerity and patience; and others their network. It’s being known for making the most significant contribution in your particular area. Your power is in your reputation. Be aware of it and use it discriminately.
- 6. Define your “global calling card”** - This is how others will connect with you. Sum up yourself in one phrase or word. Choose four keywords or phrases that best describe your areas of expertise, interest and future endeavors. These terms are how you identify yourself; how others locate you though the maze of social networks, and how they find you though the search engines.
- 7. Scope out your path** - It’s a maze. Display a diverse portfolio of experiences that develop new capabilities, gain you new expertise, grow relationships and networks, and constantly reinvent you.
- 8. Share your values; vision** - Powerful people have strong values and a clear vision. They inspire others with their courage, generosity, humility, and anticipation of the future.
- 9. Express your loyalty** - Loyalty distinguishes you from the masses. It’s loyalty to your vision, loyalty to your team, loyalty to your project, loyalty to your customers, and loyalty to yourself.

Express U

- 10. Develop your style** - Consistently show who you are and what you stand for in a style that defines you. This includes your look, colors, texture, and “logo.”
- 11. Demonstrate your work** - You are the projects you create, manage and deliver measurable results. Share them; they define you.
- 12. Share your passion** - Your passion adds zest and power to U. It energizes your personal brand and distinguishes U from the crowd.
- 13. Develop an elevator speech** - Who is Juliet? Within the time that it takes an elevator to travel four floors – about 30 seconds – practice delivering an engaging impression of yourself: what you do, how you do it differently, and the benefit you provide to others.

Develop U

- 14. Refine your communications skills** - Communication skills are a great asset and need to be developed and refined. An inspired speaker and cogent writer will help build your brand and increase your upward mobility.
- 15. Define U with dress, etiquette, and tradition** - Learn good business and social etiquette. Balance your culture, tradition and individual style; your outer impression greatly affects your brand. This point has changed in significance with rise of the youth and multicultural nature of our society.
- 16. Select social relationships carefully** - Select “significant” others and relationships carefully. Your relationships affect your brand. Business etiquette is changing. Some suggest that single people not take their dates to company events. If they do, they will be judged by their partner. Others are more open.
- 17. Give something back ... time, talent, money** - Find a cause you are passionate about. Share your resources, expertise and network to charitable causes. It expands your network and builds your brand. Chose your volunteer efforts to harmonize with your personal brand strategy.
- 18. Strive to become a Thought Leader** - Become a recognized authority, well connected resource for your specific “keywords.” This requires offering regular and engaging content — webinars, blog posts, comments on other blogs, white papers, and participation on online groups.

Publish U

- 19. Create a consistent digital profile** - With the growth of social media applications, it is important to develop your profile, keep it updated and refined. Develop on digital profile and through a social aggregator like www.friendfeed.com, distribute your profile and conversations to your network of applications.
- 20. Define your online persona** - This a summation of your online conversations and status updates. Your conversations are your personal brand and define you! Be careful of what you post online; be conscious and selective. For example: 77% of recruiters report using search engines to find background data on candidates. Of that number, 35% eliminated a candidate because of what they found online, data from [Star Tribune](#).
- 21. Create your online destination** - This is your formal personal online publishing venue (e.g., blog, website) that can serve three purposes. It is your online location that people and search engines can find you. It can be your interactive resume including your articles, personal expressions, accomplishments. Or it can be a format to share your professional opinions and research. This further defines your personal brand and serves to distribute your content.

Distribute U

- 22. Listen, Participate, Comment** - Be active, participate regularly in your networks. Sometimes that is listening and strategizing a response, other times it's commenting. Well-thought-out responses encourage people to connect with you and include you in their personal network.
- 23. Build your network** - Networks in this generation have expanded globally. Building your Rolodex, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter friends is a daily activity. Make new business/social contacts and stay connected. Most people with powerful brands have powerful friends and contacts. This is the way you distribute your content.
- 24. Monitor your online reputation** - Be aware of what is affecting your personal brand. Do regular Google Searches on your name and monitor links on the results. Use URL shortening services like [Bud Url](#) [Bit.ly](#) and [Tiny URL](#) to track your online exposure - this is your [digital footprint](#).
- 25. Access great resources** - There are extensive resources on the technical ways to build your online brand. They are being updated often. Refer to these excellent resources:

Chris Brogan on Personal Branding:

<http://www.chrisbrogan.com/img/broganbranding.pdf>

Dan Schawbel on Personal Branding:

<http://personalbrandingblog.com/>

Randy Siegel on [Ten Tips to Build Your Personal Brand](#)

Your personal brand is one of your greatest assets. Refine and project your brand; it will position you for new opportunities. Your personal brand strategy clarifies your direction and allows you to integrate your values and passions in your activities. It gives you freedom and the power to achieve your goals.



Contact:

Ira Kaufman

ira@optimizedstrategies.com

540-563-2249 (office)

540-875-8510 (cell)

Connect with me:

LinkedIn <http://www.linkedin.com/in/optimizedstrategies>

Twitter <http://twitter.com/ira9201>

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/ira.kaufman>