

Making Everything Easier!™

2nd Edition

Personal Branding

FOR
DUMMIES[®]
A Wiley Brand

Learn to:

- Distinguish yourself with an authentic personal brand
- Cultivate your on-brand career by charting a roadmap to success
- Build a strong online identity to showcase your brand
- Evaluate and evolve your personal brand over time

Susan Chritton, M.Ed, PCC

*Master Personal Brand Strategist
Executive Career Coach*





by Susan Chritton M.Ed, PCC

FOR
DUMMIES
A Wiley Brand

Personal Branding For Dummies®

Published by: **John Wiley & Sons, Inc.**, 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774, www.wiley.com

Copyright © 2014 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey

Published simultaneously in Canada

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the Publisher. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

Trademarks: Wiley, For Dummies, the Dummies Man logo, Dummies.com, Making Everything Easier, and related trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc., and may not be used without written permission. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

LIMIT OF LIABILITY/DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY:
WHILE THE PUBLISHER AND AUTHOR HAVE USED THEIR BEST EFFORTS IN PREPARING THIS BOOK, THEY MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS BOOK AND SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIM ANY IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY

OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. NO WARRANTY MAY BE CREATED OR EXTENDED BY SALES REPRESENTATIVES OR WRITTEN SALES MATERIALS. THE ADVICE AND STRATEGIES CONTAINED HEREIN MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR YOUR SITUATION. YOU SHOULD CONSULT WITH A PROFESSIONAL WHERE APPROPRIATE. NEITHER THE PUBLISHER NOR THE AUTHOR SHALL BE LIABLE FOR DAMAGES ARISING HEREFROM.

For general information on our other products and services, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002. For technical support, please visit www.wiley.com/techsupport.

Wiley publishes in a variety of print and electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some material included with standard print versions of this book may not be included in e-books or in print-on-demand. If this book refers to media such as a CD or DVD that is not included in the version you purchased, you may download this material at <http://booksupport.wiley.com>. For more information about Wiley products, visit www.wiley.com.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2014933737

ISBN 978-1-118-91555-4 (pbk); ISBN 978-1-118-91557-8 (ebk); ISBN 978-1-118-91556-1 (ebk)

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Personal Branding For Dummies

Visit

www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/personalbranding to view this book's cheat sheet.

Table of Contents

Introduction

[About This Book](#)

[Foolish Assumptions](#)

[Icons Used in This Book](#)

[Beyond the Book](#)

[Where to Go from Here](#)

Part I: Why Is Personal Branding Important?

Chapter 1: Showing the World Who You Are

[Discovering Personal Branding](#)

[Know your brand](#)

[Communicate your brand](#)

[Control your brand ecosystem](#)

[Figuring Out Who You Really Are](#)

[Shedding others' ideas and expectations](#)

[Getting to know the authentic you](#)

[Knowing what you need](#)

[Shaping your identity](#)

[Considering your life circumstances](#)

[Defining your meaning for success](#)

[Heeding your call](#)

[Owning the Business of You](#)

[Spotting your target audience](#)

[Identifying your competitors](#)

[Synthesizing what you stand for](#)

[Communicating Your Brand](#)

[Telling your story](#)

[Putting your identity in writing](#)

[Tapping into social media](#)

[Thriving in Your Brand Ecosystem](#)

[Polishing your personal image](#)

[Connecting with your network](#)

[Living your brand at work](#)

[Chapter 2: Appreciating the Power of Branding](#)

[Eyeing Corporations: Your Initiation into the Purpose of Branding](#)

[Realizing why companies invest so heavily in branding](#)

[Crafting a positive, unique brand image](#)

[Differentiating from competitors](#)

[Connecting with customers emotionally](#)

[Considering Elements of the Most Successful Corporate Brands](#)

[Visual elements: Colors, fonts, and logos](#)

[Language elements: Slogans and taglines](#)

[Auditory elements: Songs and sounds that stick in your memory](#)

[Examining How a Few Famous Brands Create Connections](#)

[Disney princesses](#)

[Apple](#)

[Trader Joe's](#)

[Starbucks](#)

[Target](#)

[Embracing the Idea of Marketing Yourself](#)

[Feeling confident that you can set yourself apart](#)

[Seeing your market potential](#)

[Investing upfront to reap benefits down the road](#)

[Chapter 3: Case Studies in Personal Branding Success](#)

[Measuring the Brands of Media and Business Moguls](#)

[Oprah Winfrey](#)

[Howard Stern](#)

[Kathy Ireland](#)

[Simon Cowell](#)

[Studying How Sports Figures Brand Themselves](#)

[Tony LaRussa](#)

[Cal Ripken Jr.](#)

[Shaquille O'Neal](#)

[Creating an Entertaining Brand](#)

[Lady Gaga](#)

[Meryl Streep](#)

[Putting Public Figures in the Spotlight](#)

[Kate Middleton: The humble princess](#)

[Jimmy Carter](#)

[Barack Obama](#)

[Brené Brown: The vulnerable brand](#)

[Big League Executives: Mirroring a Corporate Brand with a Personal Brand](#)

[Steve Jobs: "Think different"](#)

[Mark Zuckerberg](#)

[Watching Famous Personal Brands Take a Dive \(And Sometimes Rebound\)](#)

[Joe Paterno](#)

[Anthony Weiner](#)

[Magic Johnson](#)

[Martha Stewart](#)

Part II: Knowing Your Brand

Chapter 4: Defining Who You Are

[Identifying What Matters to You](#)

[Knowing your needs](#)

[Defining your values](#)

[Focusing on the things you love to do](#)

[Determining your place in the world](#)

[Outlining your vision: Taking your mission out into the world](#)

[Realizing What You're Naturally Good at: Your Strengths and Uniqueness](#)

[Studying your strengths](#)

[Remembering your weaknesses](#)

[Analyzing your strengths and weaknesses \(SWOT\)](#)

[Spotting your freak factor: What makes you unique](#)

[Figuring Out What Else You Bring to the Table](#)

[Letting your personality shine](#)

[Highlighting your educational accomplishments](#)

[Placing a value on your work experience](#)

[Realizing what makes you proud](#)

[Gaining a 360° View of Yourself](#)

[The 360Reach assessment](#)

[Conducting a self-analysis](#)

[Asking for insights from friends and family](#)

[Getting feedback on the job](#)

[Reacting when people see you differently than you see yourself](#)

[Bridging Who You Are and What You Want](#)

[Setting goals to enhance your brand](#)

[Investing in yourself](#)

Chapter 5: Spotting Your Target Audience

[Recognizing Who You're Trying to Reach](#)

[Imagining your ideal client or workplace](#)

[Focusing on potential employers](#)

[Using the ACE method](#)

[Targeting future customers](#)

[Keeping your eyes on the company you work for](#)

[Researching Your Targets](#)

[Searching for information online](#)

[Going straight to the source \(if possible\)](#)

[Attending conferences and trade shows](#)

[Aligning Yourself with Your Target Market](#)

[Catering to the psychographics and demographics of your market](#)

[Appealing both rationally and emotionally](#)

[Highlighting your benefits to your market](#)

[Creating an emotional bond: Investing in relationships](#)

[Developing a Target Market Positioning Statement](#)

Chapter 6: Knowing Your Niche — and Your Competitors

[Owning the Business — of You](#)

[Identifying the sweet spot in which you want to compete](#)

[Owning your niche](#)

[Differentiating Your Brand](#)

[Finding your potential competitors](#)

[Determining how you and your competitors differ](#)

[Understanding Contenders for Your Target Market](#)

[Comparing, not competing, for the same dollars](#)

[Overcoming your fears in the face of competition](#)

[Defending your brand](#)

[Asking for advice from colleagues](#)

Chapter 7: Crafting Your Personal Brand Profile

[Compiling Your Personal Brand Profile](#)

[Gathering your stepping stones to success](#)

[Creating a personal brand profile table](#)

[Developing Your Unique Promise of Value and Personal Brand Statement](#)

[Identifying your unique promise of value](#)

[Moving from your promise to your personal brand statement](#)

[Summing up your personal brand in a tagline](#)

[Test-driving your personal brand](#)

[Gearing Up for Your Personal Brand Strategy](#)

[Figuring out the finances to take your brand to market](#)

[Scheduling your successes](#)

Chapter 8: Writing Your Story

[Why People Like Stories](#)

[Crossing all cultures](#)

[Realizing how brains create and use stories](#)

[Using Storytelling to Illustrate Your Life](#)

[Finding the plot in your story](#)

[Creating trust through stories](#)

[Keeping gossip out of your brand](#)

[Making your story memorable](#)

[Crafting Your Personal Commercial](#)

[Avoiding common mistakes](#)

[Building your personal commercial](#)

[Aligning your message with your brand promise](#)

[Honing your personal pitch](#)

[Practicing Your Pitch](#)

Part III: Communicating Your Brand with the World

Chapter 9: Branding Your Traditional Communication Tools

Setting Yourself Up for Success: Branded Job Search Documents

[Showcasing your talents in writing](#)

[Meeting a case study: The story of Daniel Perlino, by Kelly Welch](#)

[Creating a branded resume](#)

[Penning your branded biography](#)

[Writing letters of introduction](#)

[Compiling a printed portfolio](#)

Taking Your Message Public

[Reaching a wider audience with articles](#)

[Mastering public speaking and presentations](#)

[Developing your personal brand on TV](#)

Chapter 10: Communicating Your Brand Online

Determining Your Online Message

Attracting Your Audience to a Profile Hub

Setting Up a Website

[Decisions, decisions: Create your own site or hire a pro?](#)

[When you decide to do it on your own . . .](#)

Becoming a Blogger

[Considering the merits of blogging](#)

[Creating an online ecosystem](#)

[Getting started](#)

[Sharing your wisdom](#)

[Repurposing your blog content](#)

Showcasing Your Personal Brand on LinkedIn

[Controlling first impressions](#)

[Optimizing your snapshot: Headline and photo](#)

[Crafting the summary section](#)

[Considering a case study: Daniel Perlino's LinkedIn profile](#)

[Filling in the other basic information on the profile](#)

[Links: Using custom anchor text](#)

[Gathering recommendations](#)

[Pruning your endorsements](#)

[Aligning privacy settings with your goals](#)

[Completing a LinkedIn profile worksheet](#)

Bonding with Facebook: Key Factors for Building Your Reputation

[Considering your big-picture strategy](#)

[Optimizing what everyone can see](#)

[Deciding on your privacy settings](#)

[Populating your Facebook profile](#)

[Sharing your personal brand story one post at a time](#)

Getting Connected with Google Plus

Tweeting on Twitter

[Extending your Twitter reach](#)

[Following back your followers](#)

[Creating a Twitter list](#)

[Pinning Your Brand on Pinterest](#)

[Publishing an Electronic Newsletter\(Or Not\)](#)

[Selecting a newsletter tool](#)

[Designing your newsletter's look and feel](#)

[Posting Videos](#)

[Podcasting](#)

[Measuring Your Online Reputation](#)

[Combating a Regretful Online Identity](#)

Chapter 11: Planning Your Personal Brand Communications

[Laying the Groundwork for Your Communications Strategy](#)

[Figuring out your area of expertise](#)

[Filling in your slices](#)

[Setting the Strategy](#)

[Considering a sample communications plan](#)

[Building word-of-mouth support](#)

[Achieving the Three Cs](#)

[Clarity: Crafting a clear message](#)

[Consistency: Presenting the same message every time](#)

[Constancy: Designing a plan so that people hear your message frequently](#)

[Establishing Yourself as an Expert](#)

[Using your niche to find your uniqueness](#)

[Staying authentic](#)

[Preparing a personal press release](#)

[Creating an Experience for Your Audience](#)

Part IV: Controlling Your Brand Ecosystem

Chapter 12: Fashioning Your Image to Match Your Personal Brand

[Realizing How Much Appearances Matter](#)

[Branding Your Attributes to Look Like You](#)

[Choosing clothes based on your personal brand characteristics](#)

[Aligning your style with your work goals](#)

[Have You Got the Look? Focusing on Clothes and Grooming](#)

[Career dressing for men](#)

[Career dressing for women](#)

[Styles for your body type](#)

[Grooming tips](#)

[Recognizing That You're Always on Display](#)

[Getting your body language to be on message](#)

[Voicing your brand](#)

[Having Headshots and Other Photos Taken](#)

[Developing a Professional Presence](#)

[Quiz: Your Image Is Showing](#)

[Answers](#)

[Scores](#)

Chapter 13: Your Visual Identity: Making Your Mark on Your Brand Environment

[Writing an Effective Design Brief](#)

[Leading with Your Personal Logo](#)

[Choosing Fonts for Your Personal Brand](#)

[Creating a Color Palette](#)

[Spotting color in the corporate world](#)

[Choosing colors that suit you](#)

[Considering the meanings of colors](#)

[Using your color\(s\) everywhere](#)

[Selecting Images That Tell Your Story](#)

[Building Your Brand Identity System](#)

[Creating business cards](#)

[Generating stationery](#)

[Designing brochures](#)

[Printing postcards](#)

[Preparing PowerPoint slides](#)

[Applying Your Visual Identity Online and with Media](#)

[Securing the right online addresses](#)

[Piecing together your e-mail signature](#)

[Carrying your identity into your website](#)

[Personalizing your social media sites](#)

[Building a video library](#)

[Branding Your Workspace](#)

[Aligning your office environment to fit your brand](#)

[Personalizing your workspace](#)

[Messaging your business tools](#)

Chapter 14: Focusing on Special Populations

[College Students: Getting on Brand Straight Out of the Gate](#)

[Young Professionals: Conveying Energy and Professionalism](#)

[The Middle Years: Strategizing for Success](#)

[Branding a Second Career](#)

[Executives: Presenting Confidence and Control](#)

[Service Professionals: Selling Your Personal Brand to Each Client](#)

[Entrepreneurs: Connecting Your Personal Brand with Your Business Plan](#)

[Women: Highlighting Strengths](#)

[Community Volunteers: Merging Mission and Meaning with Community](#)

[Having a Personal Brand around the World](#)

[Relocating abroad: Doing initial research](#)

[Assimilating your style across cultures](#)

[Giving the appearance of being global](#)

[Crafting your international bio](#)

Chapter 15: Building and Nurturing Your Network

Defining Your Brand Community

[Identifying who you know](#)

[Getting out of your comfort zone](#)

[Nurturing your contacts](#)

[Choosing a networking group](#)

Starting the Conversation

Hitting the Conference Circuit

[Making the most of a conference](#)

[Giving out business cards](#)

[Working your brand into the conversation](#)

Using Social Media to Build Your Network

[Minding your manners online](#)

[Establishing your professional network on LinkedIn](#)

[Supporting your efforts on Facebook](#)

[Extending your reach on Twitter](#)

[Socially connecting in the neighborhood](#)

Networking within Your Workplace

[Playing politics](#)

[Being meeting-savvy](#)

Amassing Referrals That Can Sell Your Brand

[Building your brand ambassadors](#)

[Believing in reciprocal action](#)

Expanding Your Network with a Mentor's Help

Chapter 16: Personal Branding in the Workplace

Moving toward a Personal Branding Mind-set on the Job

[Casting for the Hollywood gig model](#)

[Engaging in lifelong learning](#)

[Adjusting your loyalties](#)

[Exercising your personal brand career strategy](#)

[Identifying your boss\(es\)](#)

[Choosing your own job title](#)

[Thriving in a competency-based world](#)

Selling Your Brand to Your Internal Market: Your Boss and Coworkers

[Building credibility](#)

[Forging a strong relationship with your boss](#)

Aligning Your Brand with the Company's Brand

[Intertwining your brand with your company](#)

[Being authentic in what you do](#)

[Finding the ideal situation](#)

Standing Out in a Likeable Way

Should You Stay or Should You Go?

[Redesigning your current job](#)

[Highlighting your personal brand when negotiating](#)

Succeeding during the First 90 Days of a New Job

Part V: The Part of Tens

Chapter 17: Ten Key Benefits of Personal Branding

[Granting Permission to Be Yourself](#)

[Gaining Confidence](#)

[Building Credibility](#)

[Showcasing Your Specialty](#)

[Leaving Your Mark](#)

[Connecting You to Your Target Audience](#)

[Distinguishing Yourself from the Competition](#)

[Getting the Support You Need](#)

[Focusing Your Energy](#)

[Letting Yourself Be Lazy](#)

Chapter 18: Ten Ways You Can Sink Your Brand

[Letting It Go Stale: Taking Your Brand for Granted](#)

[Neglecting Consistency](#)

[Speaking Before You Think](#)

[Exhibiting Bad Behavior](#)

[Being Unresponsive](#)

[Ignoring the Politics](#)

[Having an Unprofessional Online Image](#)

[Not Telling the Truth](#)

[Being Inauthentic: Looking Like a Phony](#)

[Losing Focus](#)

Chapter 19: Ten Ways to Demonstrate Your Brand

[Being Authentic in All That You Do](#)

[Standing for Something](#)

[Having Consistency in Your Communications](#)

[Building Character Online: Creating a Signature Look](#)

[Leveraging LinkedIn](#)

[Going Viral on Twitter](#)

[Facebooking the Right Friends](#)

[Marketing Your Materials and Business Cards](#)

[Engaging in Community Involvement](#)

[Highlighting Your Brand Daily](#)

Chapter 20: Ten Things You Can Do to Continue to Build Your Brand

[Implementing Your Personal Brand Strategy Plan](#)

[Staying Relevant](#)

[Continuing to Evaluate the Competition](#)

[Producing Genuine Value](#)

[Working on High-Profile Projects](#)

[Setting New Goals](#)

[Aligning Your Time with Your Brand](#)

[Keeping Up with Technology](#)

[Nurturing Your Network](#)

[Being a Confidence Emitter](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Cheat Sheet](#)

[More Dummies Products](#)

Introduction

Imagine that you can step outside your body and observe yourself. Picture yourself walking into a job interview and shaking hands with people you're meeting for the first time. How do you look? Are you smiling confidently and making eye contact or are your eyes darting nervously around the room? Does your handshake seem firm or limp? Is your clothing neatly pressed and closely fitted or is it a bit rumpled and frumpy? Do you look like you're in control of the situation or do you seem overwhelmed?

Now picture yourself walking into your neighborhood grocery store. Are you dressed in a way that shows you pay attention to yourself or have you thrown on stained sweats and an oversized T-shirt? Are you interacting with the store workers or avoiding eye contact? If you run into a neighbor or coworker, do you seem excited to see this person or anxious to get away from her?

One more: Picture yourself at your computer, checking your Facebook page. A friend has sent you an off-color joke. How do you respond? Do you type a raunchy response and send it immediately with the hope of making someone laugh? Or do you opt not to respond in case someone would take offense?

Many people would say that they pull themselves together nicely for a job interview but don't pay much attention to how they look and act at the grocery store or how their social media comments come across. After all, who are you trying to impress in the produce section? And the people who interact with you on Facebook are your *friends*, right? Shouldn't they accept you for who you are — raunchy jokes and all?

But here's the rub: People who are the most successful in this world — in business and otherwise — know that impressions matter in every circumstance. They know the importance of being consistent with their actions, words, and appearances so that every person they interact with carries away a similar impression.

About This Book

This is a how-to book. It's action-oriented. I suppose you could read it without taking any of the steps I encourage, but I'm not sure doing so would prove very helpful! I hope that you interact with the information in this book by taking notes, doing the exercises, and thinking seriously about how you can benefit from each step of the personal branding process. You don't necessarily have to tackle each step in order (I've written each chapter so that it makes sense on its own), but you may find that working this program from start to finish creates the best results.

In this book, I show you how to create a consistent, targeted impression that can help you achieve your personal and professional goals. First, I help you focus on determining who you really are — what you enjoy, what you do well, and what you want from life. Then I walk you through a series of thoughtful steps you can take to bring every aspect of your world into alignment with your true self. The goal of this book is to help you break down self-imposed barriers to success and show the world your best authentic self.

The term *branding* is a marketing phrase. Corporations have been branding themselves for a long time to reach their target audiences and sell more stuff. Corporate branding efforts often involve displaying a company or product name, a tagline, specific colors, a logo, and/or

other images in every marketing tool about that company or product. Consistency is key to getting potential buyers to recognize, trust, purchase, and repurchase a product.

Does it seem crass to think in marketing terms when considering your own self and your personal goals? It shouldn't. I don't ask you to think of yourself as a product. Instead, this book is dedicated to helping you figure out who you are as a human being and what sets you apart from every other person on this planet. My hope is that, armed with the information you get in this book, you figure out how to soar in your chosen profession or whatever field of action you pursue. No matter what your goals are, making a consistent, positive impression on people will help you achieve them.

Foolish Assumptions

My biggest assumption about you is that you're going through a change in your life — or hoping to create a change — that may feel somewhat intimidating. Perhaps one of these descriptions comes close to describing your circumstance:

- ✓ You're graduating from college soon and facing the prospect of looking for work in a tight job market. You want to set yourself apart from your peers and have heard that personal branding can help you do so.
- ✓ You're a young professional in your first or second job and feel like you've got greater potential than your coworkers or managers realize. You want to figure out how to show them what you're worth.
- ✓ You're an executive facing a transition — either self-imposed or prompted by changes at your company. You know you've got what it takes to succeed, but you

want to focus your remaining work years on activities that are truly meaningful for you. You want to think outside the paycheck with your next move.

- ✓ You're an entrepreneur getting ready to embark on a new venture, and you've heard that branding is key to your success. You don't think of yourself as a corporation, so studying corporate branding techniques doesn't quite make sense. You know that your own interactions with potential customers are crucial to building your business, and you need help to make sure that those interactions generate business.
- ✓ You've been out of the workforce for a while and are uncertain how to start the process of getting back in. Maybe you've been raising children or serving in the military. Maybe you retired early and now realize that you need or want to return to work. You need to determine how to market yourself to employers.

I know I'm biased, but I believe everyone can benefit from the information in this book. Even if your aspirations don't relate to business, knowing yourself, setting goals, and taking steps to achieve them can improve your life.

Icons Used in This Book

Throughout the book, I place icons in the margins that call your attention to certain types of text. Here's what each icon means:



This icon points out stories that show you how certain branding ideas have played out for real people in the real world.



This whole book is full of action-oriented, how-to material. But this icon denotes paragraphs that contain especially useful how-to's for developing your brand.



When you see this icon, pay close attention. The point I'm making is something that's worth recalling long after you read the words.



This icon highlights potential missteps that I want to help you avoid.



Throughout this book, you'll find contributions from experts in the field of personal branding. When you see this icon, one of these experts has contributed his expertise.

Beyond the Book

In addition to the abundance of information and guidance on developing and maintaining your personal brand that I provide in this book, you also get access to even more help and information at Dummies.com. Go to www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/personalbranding for a free cheat sheet that accompanies this book.

You can also head to www.dummies.com/extras/personalbranding for some free supplemental articles that you'll find helpful as you

begin your journey discovering and perfecting your personal brand.

Where to Go from Here

I wrote this book so that each chapter makes sense no matter where you begin reading, so feel free to check out the table of contents or index and search for a subject of particular interest. For example, if you're mostly concerned about how to improve your online presence, Chapter [10](#) may be your first stop. If you've already got a job and need ideas for how to promote yourself within your existing position, Chapter [16](#) can help. If you're curious why everyone in your professional circle is talking about personal branding, start with the chapters in Part [I](#).

Note: If you're committed to developing your personal brand, I consider the chapters in Part [II](#) must-reads — especially Chapters [4](#) and [7](#). Be sure to spend time with them whenever you're ready to start the branding process in earnest.

Part I

Why Is Personal Branding Important?



Visit www.dummies.com for free content that helps you learn more and do more.

In this part ...

- ✓ Distinguish yourself by creating your personal brand and recognizing what's at stake if you don't.
- ✓ Grasp the process of building a positive set of experiences using key brand elements.
- ✓ Learn from others who have created memorable personal brands.

Chapter 1

Showing the World Who You Are

In This Chapter

- ▶ Defining the personal branding process
 - ▶ Revealing your true self and your mission
 - ▶ Considering your target market and competition
 - ▶ Sharing your brand in every form of communication
 - ▶ Ensuring that your entire environment is on brand
-

It's a new brand world. You're branded, branded, branded. We are CEOs of our own companies: Me Inc. To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called YOU.

—Tom Peters

The greatest success stories inevitably involve people who stand out from the crowd — people who may or may not have extraordinary talents but who most definitely know how to represent their capabilities in everything they do.

This chapter is your preview of how you can distinguish yourself by creating an image and reputation that set you apart, build trust among the people you want to serve, and represent the true, authentic you. This process — the process of creating your own personal brand — can serve you well whether you're searching for a first job, exploring a change in career, looking to be more viable

and successful in your current workplace, or hoping to serve your community as a volunteer or leader.

Crafting a personal brand can be exciting and a bit intimidating. To do it right, you have to spend time up front studying yourself and figuring out what really makes you tick. Only with a strong sense of yourself in mind can you undertake the steps that follow, which include identifying your target market, setting yourself apart from your competitors, communicating your brand to the people who need to know you, and aligning every visible aspect of your life with your brand. In this chapter, I outline the whole process so you know what to expect from the rest of the book. Your own success story is waiting to be written!

Discovering Personal Branding

Personal branding caught fire when *Fast Company* magazine ran a cover article called “The Brand Called You” by Tom Peters in 1997. Soon, books like Daniel H. Pink’s *Free Agent Nation* (Business Plus) and William Bridges’s *Creating You & Co.: Learn to Think Like the CEO of Your Own Career* (Da Capo Press) joined in to support the idea that you direct your own career path. Being self-reliant means that you’re responsible for the direction of your career and the impression that people have of you. The time has come to take control of your personal brand.

So what exactly is *personal branding*? Your personal brand is your reputation, which is defined by your character. Your personal brand is also your legacy; it’s the way others remember you through your actions, your expertise, and the emotional connections that you make.

Your personal brand shows your authenticity from the inside out.

You have a personal brand whether you know it or not:

- ✓ “She is so smart.”
- ✓ “He is such a slob.”
- ✓ “I can always count on him to finish what he starts.”



Personal branding is about expressing your authentic self by allowing you to be the person you're meant to be. But it isn't just some feel-good, self-help mumbo jumbo: It's a strategic process that makes you an active partner in creating the direction of your life. Through personal branding, you find out how to bring more value to your work and to the target market that you serve. You discover how to identify and communicate your unique promise of value.

Your personal brand acts as a filter that helps you make decisions that are congruent with who you are and what you stand for. It identifies what makes you unique and clearly communicates your individuality to the people who need to know about you.

Having a personal brand sounds like a great idea, but how do you get one? If you're serious about developing your personal brand, a very clear road map can get you there. This book guides you through every stop along that map. The following section, in brief, walks you through what you need to do.

Know your brand

Knowing your brand sounds easy enough, but how do you figure out what your brand is?

1. **Define who you are.**

The beginning of any branding process is being able to clearly define that brand. In personal branding, the product is you! You must take time to get to know yourself and what is important to you. That's what Chapter [4](#) is all about.

2. **Spot your target audience.**

Are you interacting with and trying to promote yourself to the right people? In Chapter [5](#), I help you determine who needs to know about your personal brand.

3. **Get to know your competitors.**

Whom are you competing with? To have a strong brand, you need to understand who your competitors are and which market niche works for you. Chapter [6](#) gives you the tools to accomplish this step.

4. **Craft a personal brand profile.**

This all-important tool, which I discuss in detail in Chapter [7](#), gathers all the data that you collect about yourself, your target audience, and your competitors into one defining document. This profile helps you pinpoint your unique promise of value and write a statement that succinctly expresses your brand.

Communicate your brand

After you get to know your brand, your next challenge is to communicate it clearly, concisely, and consistently to the people who need to know about it. Here's how:

1. **Write your story.**

Chapter [8](#) is a lesson on how to make your story appealing to others. You need to be able to tell others about yourself and to develop a personal commercial (or an *elevator pitch*).

2. **Brand your traditional communication tools.**

You want to express your personal brand in your letters, resume, professional biography, and presentations — and, if you have the opportunity, on television. Chapter [9](#) shows you how.

3. **Communicate your brand online.**

Chapter [10](#) demonstrates how to merge the world of social media with your personal brand.

4. **Create a communications plan.**

You need a communications plan so that you're sharing your brand on your own terms — not leaving anything to chance. Chapter [11](#) gives you the inside scoop on how to craft a communications plan.

Control your brand ecosystem

The phrase *brand ecosystem* may sound intimidating, but it's just shorthand for “every element of your life, from your clothes to your professional colleagues, that influences how your target audience perceives you and whether it wants to learn more about the product or service you're offering.” Phew! You can see why I opted for the shorthand. Here are some of the elements of your ecosystem that you want to control:

- ✓ **Your image:** Whether you like it or not, what you look like on the outside does matter. Fashioning your image to match your personal brand helps you communicate something authentic about yourself at first glance, and Chapter [12](#) shows you how.
- ✓ **The appearance of your branded materials:** From business cards to your website, you want to create a consistent visual image for your brand that makes the right impression on your target audience. Chapter [13](#) explains how to select images, colors, and fonts that create the visual effect you want.
- ✓ **Your unique career path:** Your target audience — and the way you interact with it — is determined by where you are in your career. In Chapter [14](#), I discuss special considerations to keep in mind if you're just out of college, if you're midstream in your career and trying to switch jobs, if you're an executive, if you're an entrepreneur, and more.
- ✓ **Your network:** The people you associate with are very important; they factor into the impression you make on your target audience, as well as your ability to make connections with future employers. Chapter [15](#) is full of tips for finding people who can support your goals and connecting with them in meaningful ways.
- ✓ **Your performance in your current workplace:** Personal branding is not just for job seekers. If you're already employed, Chapter [16](#) offers lots of ideas for developing your personal brand in the context of your current workplace.

Figuring Out Who You Really Are

Today you are You, that is truer than true. There is no one alive who is Youer than You.

—Dr. Seuss

In the previous section, I note that the first step in developing a personal brand is knowing yourself. You need to look at the expectations others have of you and how they influence how you want to be seen. In this process, you ask yourself questions to discover your authenticity and understand what you need in order to live your mission through your personal brand. Here, I help you start thinking about what that process involves.

Shedding others' ideas and expectations

Becoming an authentic human being means that you accept yourself for who you are. Everyone has different approaches to life, likes and dislikes, and skills and talents.

Most likely, when you were in junior high, standing out was deadly. At that age, nothing is more important than fitting in. But fitting in can carry you only so far. At some point, if you truly want to succeed and shine, you have to figure out how to differentiate yourself from the crowd.

I'm not saying that you need to stop caring about what other people think or to stop listening to what your loved ones think is good for you. Instead, in this book I ask you to make an honest assessment of what you want and who you are. You can't build a personal brand based on someone else's ideals. If you did, you'd be a fake.



Taking an honest assessment about who you are and what you want means looking at what you do well and owning it, as well as knowing what you don't do well and recognizing those limitations. You definitely should seek input from others during this process. However, you can't let them determine who you'll be. Personal branding is about you being you in the most authentic way.

Getting to know the authentic you

The 1960s were a time of revolution. Society began to revolt against the conformity of the 1950s. Peace, love, freedom, experimentation, and “do your own thing” became the words of a new generation. I believe the roots of personal branding were born during this time. Popular culture reflected this feeling in many ways, including a cartoon character named Tooter Turtle. Tooter was never satisfied with his life and was looking to be someone else. Each week he experimented with what it would be like to live another's life by visiting Mr. Wizard, who would cast his spell on Tooter, allowing him to explore living someone else's life.

Tooter Turtle always got himself into trouble trying to be someone he was not. Just when the mess would become too much to handle, Tooter would yell, “Help, Mr. Wizard.” Mr. Wizard would say the magic words: “Drizzle, drizzle, drizzle, drome — time for this one to come home.” Tooter came home as himself, the only self he could ever really be. Mr. Wizard would say upon Tooter's return that “he is what he is — not what he is not.”

The personal branding process helps you own who you are, quirks and all, so that you don't waste your life