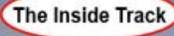


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Building your personal brand in nine easy steps



People

WRITTEN BY JAYNIE ELLISON

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Is building your personal brand important? You bet it is. The way you dress, the car you buy and way you speak are either improving or weakening your personal brand. Sound shallow? Not at all. You are your own marketing department. If you don't build your personal brand, who will? Check out the nine suggestions below for building a stronger personal brand.

One: Be the go-to guy or gal. Establish yourself as a knowledgeable source in your industry. Present at industry events, write an article or blog. Make sure you have a current photo, bio and resume. Keep your LinkedIn profile fresh, including a current picture, job experience is a must and always make sure your contact info is up to date. Attention to detail speaks volumes when it comes to your personal brand.

Two: Communication is key. Be a great communicator. Many opportunities have been born out of good conversation. In fact, research shows skilled communication is the top determinant for upward social and professional mobility, so make sure your written and verbal skills are at their best.

Three: Create a marketing plan for yourself every year, and review it quarterly. Include specific goals, strategies, steps and a timetable. Hold yourself accountable for reaching the goals you set, but be flexible enough to roll with the punches. Easier said than done, but it is well worth the ROI.

Four: Be able to describe what you do, and do it well. Branding is all about confidence, your conviction and the trust others have in it. Develop an "elevator speech." Within about a minute, be able to deliver a succinct description of what you do, how you do it differently and the benefit it provides.

Five: Build your Rolodex and network. Make new business contacts, and stay in touch with them. Attend networking events and join industry associations. Most people with powerful brands have powerful friends. Who you know can be integral in reaching your career goals.

Six: In building your brand, you need alliances. Recognize that your boss can be your most powerful partner or foe in building your brand. Be loyal. Never speak ill of your superiors to anyone. Make your bosses look good, and help them build their own brands.

Seven: Dress for success. It's cliché but true. Dress for the job you want, not the job you have. Balance your individual style with clothing that will appeal to those you are trying to impress.

Eight: Become a class act. Learn good business and social etiquette. Always remember your online manners too. Buy elegant personal stationery and send hand-written notes. Know how to order a good bottle of wine in a fine restaurant and drink it sparingly during dinner. Remember, alcohol and branding seldom mix.

Nine: Give back. Make a difference and do it because you owe the world a debt. Celebrate your success through philanthropy. Generosity is a brand-builder but never feign sincerity. Giving your time, talent and money to charitable causes complements your brand strategy. Be passionate about the causes you support. The enjoyment you get from your participation will shine through and reinforce your personal brand. Altruism builds goodwill both personally and professionally.

Your personal brand is one of your greatest business assets. Build a brand that assures others they can entrust you with new opportunities. Nurture your brand, and you will nurture your career.

Jaynie Ellison is the Director of Recruitment Services at ExhibitRecruiter Inc. Established in 1998, ExhibitRecruiter has been the premier recruitment agency specializing in the exhibit and event industry for over a decade. ExhibitRecruiter has partnered with companies design and production of all sizes throughout the United States and Canada that specialize in trade show exhibits, museums, branded environments and event marketing. ExhibitRecruiter focuses exclusively in the experiential marketing sector. Her complete bio is on

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