

A Comprehensive Guide to Personal Branding

Brand You



Unleash the power of our
Personal Brand to get ahead in
your career

a **reuben sinclair** career guide

What is **Personal Branding**?

Personal Branding is defined as ‘the process of people marketing themselves and their careers as brands’. Essentially, Personal Branding is the same as any type of branding for a product or service, it’s just for yourself. Over the course of this white paper we will be guiding you through how to apply it to ‘Brand You’ and specifically how to use it to accelerate your career.

Below is an array of different aspects that make up a personal brand, represented by Personal Branding trailblazers.



Why is **Personal Branding** important to your career?

Personal branding yourself is a powerful tactic that will enable you to develop a career in whatever area you are passionate about. It's a big subject, but can be broken down into the below categories.

Identity

An effective, well thought through personal brand will get you recognised in the right tribes and communities and make sure you are noticed for the things you want to be known for.

Competition

The job market is competitive, it's harder than ever to stand out from the crowd. It is likely that there are a lot of people with similar profiles/years experience to you in the world. What are you going to do differently to get noticed?

Credibility

An effective Personal Brand can establish you as a thought leader and make you a figure that people go to for advice and insights. A strong personal brand in the work place is also likely to lead to more leadership opportunities.

Influence

Individuals with influence carry more weight than others and are more likely to be listened to. If a figure like Richard Branson speaks about building a business, you're likely to listen to his advice as he's been there and done it.

Like minded people

Others will want to connect in with you in regards to your views, expertise and insights. In return you will get access to the same from those you are connected with.

Being found

If you don't have a personal brand or online presence, how do you expect others to find you? Ensure that you are top of mind (and search engines) in your areas of expertise.

“Personal branding is about managing your name - even if you don't own a business - in a world of misinformation, disinformation, and semi-permanent Google records. Going on a date? Chances are that your 'blind' date has googled your name. Going to a job interview? Ditto.”

- - - Tim Ferris

So...where do you start?

The process of crafting your Personal Brand can feel like you have a mountain to climb.

The best place to start when developing your Personal Brand is right at the end...you must first figure out **what you want to be known for**.

Set aside some time to list all the options for the below to explore all the potential avenues you could go down.

Exercise



After this exercise you should have wittled down the options of what you want to do and what you want to be known for. So for example, the person above could have resulted in many different options:

"I'm a freelance digital strategist for sports brands and sports marketing agencies."

"I'm an award winning freelance growth hacker focused on digital data with a particular expertise in sports marketing"

You may have a fair few variations here so the key is to pick the sentence that you are most inspired to achieve and focus on that. **Choose the combination that excites you the most.**

Step one: Your online presence

Did you know that a whopping 60% of employers check candidates' online presence before offering an interview and job? In this digital age, it's often the first point of call for people wanting to know who you are and what you're about.

So before we go into the details of why this is important, take 30 seconds to google yourself...make sure you do this in an [incognito screen](#) so that your regular searches aren't included.

What did you find? Would you be happy for future employers and colleagues to see all the results that appear?

Social media and your job search

Social media can be your worst enemy or your best friend. Employers are put off by inappropriate photographs, bad mouthing their job and poor communication skills. The good news is that 32% of employers actually found things online that triggered them to hire candidates. So get your online presence right and you can massively enhance your chances of getting hired.

Here are our top tips for optimising your Personal Brand online:

1. Get rid of digital dirt

You'll be able to pick it up any digital dirt on you through an incognito search. Make sure you remove anything that may give a negative impression of you from the source.

2. Be consistent

If there are discrepancies on what you have said in your CV and what is on your LinkedIn profile, recruiters and employers will find them and ask why they are different. (The next page gives an extensive overview of how to optimise your LinkedIn profile to be searchable.)

3. Contribute to your communities

The web is an amazing place to align yourself with the communities that you want to be in/associated with. So spend time joining and contributing to the tribes that specialise in your area/s of expertise.

Online presence part two: LinkedIn

LinkedIn is an extremely powerful tool in your Personal Brand tool kit, over the past few years it has completely revolutionised how employers and recruiters find candidates. It's also the ideal platform to use for professional networking and finding clients. Here are our top tips for getting it right.

1



Your title shouldn't just be 'your title'. It should be an accumulation of all things you want to be found for. LinkedIn works the same as Google, those with relevant keywords in the title will show up in the top searches

If you write blogs or produce content, LinkedIn is a fantastic place to post them. Subjects could include anything from opinion pieces, to how to guides, to research findings. But remember - keep it professional.



2

3

Your summary should provide an overview of you; your career, your skills and your passions. Include the keywords that you would like to be found for e.g. 'digital marketing'. Write this in your own style, whether that's fun and friendly, or business and corporate - keep it true to you.



4

Your role should be exactly that, the roles and responsibilities that makes up your day to day job.



5

Honors and awards are the best place to shout about your achievements. These don't have to be individual, they can also be for campaigns you worked on.



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Recommendations are very important - they reinforce everything you have said. Ask for recommendations from colleagues, employers, clients and partners. Make sure you only ask people that are genuinely able to give you a professional reference.

Step two: Your CV

Look at the two CVs below - which one them stands out to you and what are your immediate impressions of them?

Is CV A or more senior or junior than CV B? What industry do you think they work in? If you had to choose one over the other to interview without even reading the content - which one would you choose?

CV A



CV B



The point is, your CV will make an impression and it's well worth taking the time to make it a true reflection of you. Here are the top aspects you should consider when creating your CV.

1. From the format, font, colours and general feel - **make it you**
2. **Be consistent.** If you've said you do something on LinkedIn that isn't on your CV - the hiring manager will pick up on it. If you've said you are passionate about blogging and there are no blogs to be found, or poorly written blogs found by you online then that isn't going to get you very far.
3. As with all leading brands, they seem to have a great way of giving you enough so that you're satisfied at the same time as wanting to know what's next. Apply this same strategy to your CV. Too much information can ruin your chances; keep it concise, to the point and **leave people wanting to know more.** The best brands do this well - the question is...can you?



Step three: Job applications

Be selective

Whatever you do, don't apply for everything and anything. This will result in serious damage to your Personal Brand. A recent report powered by a survey to 1500 recruiters and hiring managers in the UK found that irrelevant applications was the biggest turn off for 30% of them. Of that group, 43% of them said they would 'blacklist' those candidates from any other job opportunities.

If you know what your personal brand is, it should be easier for you to apply for the right jobs. Pin point the below and only apply to those jobs that tick at least three of the below criterion.

- > Industry
- > Sector
- > Specialism
- > Location (in general we advise that you cap your commute time to one hour)
- > Salary band

Make it personal

Another recent study revealed that only 15% of job hunters seek out the hiring managers of the companies that they want to work out. Surprisingly, just 38% of this small percentage actively try to interact with them. What does this tell us? That there is a very small number of job seekers who are adopting a proactive and personal approach to their job search. It is also a massive opportunity for you to stand out from the crowd.

Find out who the hiring managers are and get your Personal Brand in front of them. When talking to them about opportunities, ensure that you make them feel special by stating exactly why they are in your top choices of companies to work for.



Step four: Interviews

After you've sorted out your online presence, CV and applied for only the most relevant job roles, specific to your personal brand...you'll hopefully now be invited to interview.

We recommend paying attention to the below in order to project your personal brand at interview stage.

Dress code

One of the top questions we get asked by candidates is 'what do I wear to the interview'. Our best advice is to be true to brand you but also air on the side of caution. The best indication you will get is by going on the company's website/LinkedIn profile. Look for images of the staff at work to give you an idea of the smart/casual dress code so you are able to dress accordingly.

Handshake

For many bosses, this will be make or break. A firm handshake evokes trust and confidence.

Eye contact

Much like the above, maintaining eye contact will show that you are engaged. There is nothing more distracting than having a conversation with someone who is struggling to

Smile

This one may sound obvious but did you know that the first round interview is usually more about figuring out whether you will be a cultural fit for the organisation. Too many people go to interviews with their 'interview face' on and holds back from showing your personality. In our experience, it's better to be yourself sooner rather than later, you will spend on average X hours of work in your life so be sure to spend it being brand you!



“When meeting someone face to face, body language and tone of voice make up for 93% of the overall message.”

-- -- -- Albert Mehrabian

Our final top **Personal Branding** tips

Publish your own content

Have an opinion, show off your talent, be useful. There is an unrestricted variation of the type of content you are now able to produce by yourself. If you are a marketer with a view on the trends in your industry that others would find interesting, then share it with the world in a blog. If you are a growth hacker that knows exactly how to use google analytics and other platforms to find the gold dust insights, share some (not all) of how you go about doing this in a blog, YouTube video, podcast or other medium. Remember, much like your CV you want to give away just enough to be seen as an expert/ influencer but not enough so you give away all of your insights and knowledge for free!

Attend networking events

There is no better place to meet like minded people, we recommend attending at least one networking event a quarter. For marketers, below are just a few (free) suggestions of where you might go to find like minded individuals.

> General Assembly

> Eventbrite

> Hubspot (mostly American based events but there are UK based events too if you keep scrolling)

Know your elevator pitch

You're in the lift for 30 seconds with someone you want to impress and influence, they ask 'what do you do for a living?'. How do you answer this question? Your answer needs to be both concise and compelling (and short because you've only got 15 seconds max to deliver it). Getting this right will take some time and it should be a distilled version of your Personal Brand.

Create your own website

Only do this if you're going to regularly update it with great content but a website is a great place to collate and show case all your work and social channels. Cost effective options for non web developers are Wix, Square Space and Wordpress.

Follow the people who have already achieved your goals

Link in with those people who are in the position that you aspire to be one day. By following them on twitter, LinkedIn etc you will get an insight into industry news, trends and will put yourself in the same mindset as them.

about the authors



Rohan Shah is a Co-Founder and MD of Reuben Sinclair, a leading Recruitment Consultancy specialising in sales, marketing, PR and digital.

Rohan has helped some of world's largest & smallest companies attract exceptional talent as well as working with select clients on improving and adopting exceptional recruitment strategy and processes.

Rohan is also Co-Chair of the Marketing and Creative Sector Group M Squared for the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APS-Co) helping Corporates and Recruitment Companies within the space grow, develop and share best practice.

 **Connect with Rohan on LinkedIn**



Alexandra Lewington is the Client Services Manager at Reuben Sinclair. Alexandra has four years experience managing the recruitment process for some of the UK's biggest brands and agencies.

Alexandra's specialism lies in recruitment with PR, marketing and digital and in 2016 won the prestigious award of 'Best Permanent Recruitment Consultant' at the Global Recruiter Awards.

Alexandra is also Reuben Sinclair's public speaker and can be found at events across London advising clients and candidates on subject such as personal brand, career paths and recruitment for retaining the best talent.

 **Connect with Alexandra on LinkedIn**