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# BRAND YOU

PERSONAL BRANDING FOR CAREER SUCCESS

**BIRKBECK  
UPSCALE**

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## 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.

**Reputation**

**Digital Footprint**

**Opinion**

**Recognition**

**Impression**

**Public Persona**

# Why is Personal Branding Important for 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 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**

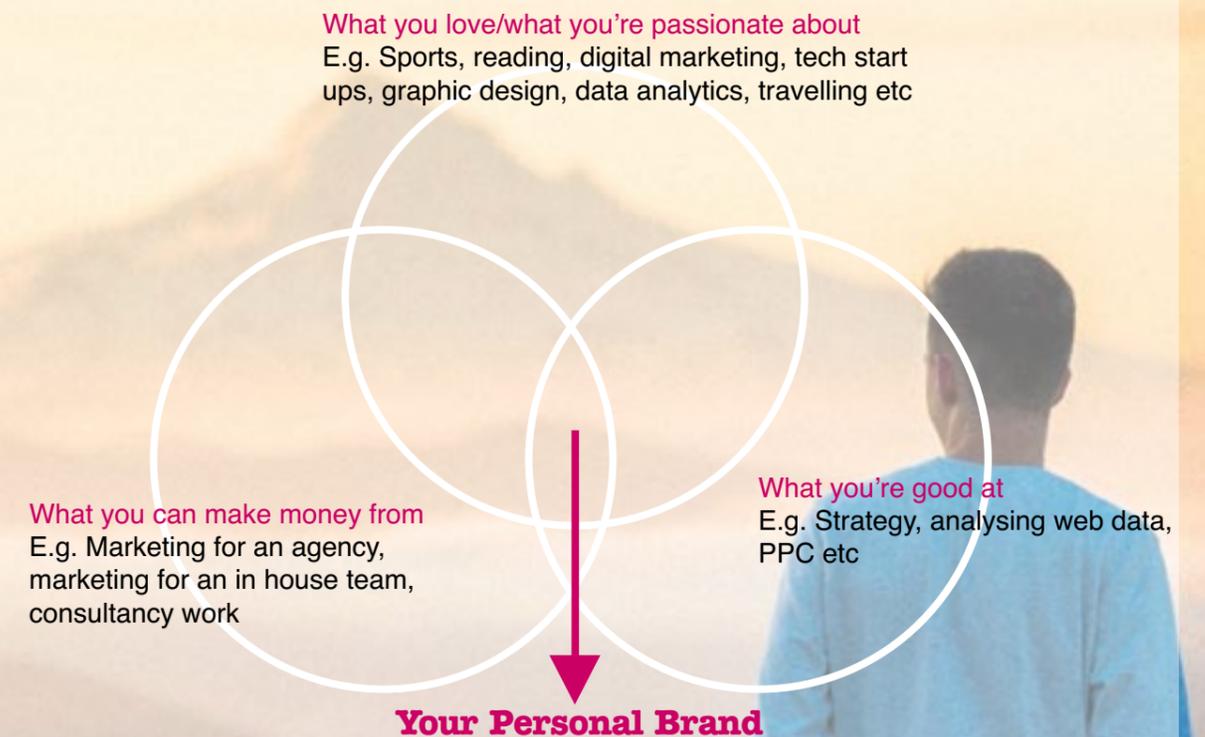
# How do you create a Personal Brand?

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. 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 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 current or past jobs and bosses and poor communication skills. However, 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 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 on 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.

# Optimising your LinkedIn Profile

LinkedIn is the most used tool for hiring managers and recruiters for finding talent so if you have a LinkedIn profile then make sure it's working hard for you. If you don't have a profile then create one, if you are not on LinkedIn you are reducing your chances of being found and hired. Follow these basic steps to improve your profile.

1. **Add a profile picture.** A professional one, not a pouty one, or one where you have a drink in your hand...LinkedIn should be treated differently to Facebook and Twitter and is a platform to market your professional profile.
2. **Complete your profile.** Complete all the prompts that LinkedIn gives you; education, current job, past job, interests etc. This is a case of putting relevant information that you've already written in a CV online for employers to view. LinkedIn will tell you what to do to make your profile complete.
3. **Personalise your LinkedIn URL** so it is easy to share. Add this link to your signature, website etc
4. **Build up your connections.** Import all your contacts and take 10 minutes here and there to connect with people that you know. The more connections you have the more you will be seen as an influencer.
5. **Use key words in your profile.** SEO (search engine optimisation) is important, if you can't be found then you can't be headhunted or contracted about opportunities. If you are a content marketing specialist, include these key words in your profile so people can find you when looking for particular skills and experience. If you say you are a sales manager then a recruiters and hiring managers will expect to see the word 'sales' or similar words scattered throughout your profile.
6. **Be useful without selling.** Share insights and information that people will find interesting and useful. If someone is asking for help and you can help them, well...help them!
7. **Write your elevator pitch.** This will take you longer than most items on the list but it's important. Your elevator pitch is what you put right at the top on your CV and should highlight all that you have achieved in your career. Be sure to include stats, targets that you've achieved and over achieved and other key information like if you manage a team etc.
8. **Be social.** Comment on posts and in groups relevant to you, ask questions and share your opinion. Remember to treat it differently to Twitter and Facebook and be sure to channel your work persona.
9. **Get recommended.** This one is particularly key for freelancers, when you have completed a job and you know they were pleased then ask them for a recommendation.

# Step two: Your CV

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

Is CV A 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?

**A**



**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 reflect you. If you work in a corporate environment make sure your CV is formatted and written in a corporate tone. If you work within a more creative industry, use your CV as an opportunity to show case your talent.
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, do not 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 will be easier for you to apply for the right jobs. Pin point the below and only apply to the 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 for. 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 choice of company 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 be invited for an 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**

First round interviews are usually about figuring out whether you will be a cultural fit. Too many people go to interviews with their 'interview face' on and hold back from showing their personality. It's better to be yourself sooner rather than later, you will spend on average 92,120 hours at work in your life so be sure to spend it being brand you!

# Final Top 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 have a view on trends or news in your industry that others would find interesting, then share it. If you are a growth hacker who knows exactly how to use google analytics to find 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 enough to be seen as an expert/influencer but not too much 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.

## **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 time and it should be a distilled version of your Personal Brand.

## **Create your own website**

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. 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.

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

**--- -- Albert Mehrabian**

# Say hello.

Reuben Sinclair's purpose is to help individuals reach their career goals by placing them in the right company for them. If you'd like advice on, please get in touch, we'd love to hear from you.

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## About the Author

Neil Grant leads the Digital Marketing Recruitment Team at Reuben Sinclair, a specialist recruitment agency based in the City of London.

Neil has led the recruitment for some of the biggest digital agencies and in house teams.

In 2016, Neil was instrumental in securing the award for 'Best Agency Side Recruitment Team' at the Marketing and Digital Recruitment Awards.

Connect with Neil Grant



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