

How to develop yourself as a brand



ABSTRACT:

Today's competitive society has made it very difficult to distinguish between ourselves and others. Nowadays Branding has reached a new level and it is not just companies who apply in order to make their brands but something an individual should do for them to develop yourself as a brand. Marking your identity as different from others is thus gaining importance. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to provide a better understanding of how individuals can develop as their own personal brand. This paper suggests the benefits by developing themselves as their personal brand and also suggests the possible strategies for it and will also enable them to understand the possible way it can be done by choosing either a single strategy or a combination of them.

Keywords: Benefits, Personal Branding, Strategy

INTRODUCTION:

Personal branding is the process whereby people and their careers are marked as brands ([7] Lair et. al. 2005). The image of your brand is a perception held in someone else's mind. The term "personal brand" is believed to have first appeared in the August 1997 issue of FAST COMPANY MAGAZINE in an article by management guru and author [21] Tom Peters. Peters wrote, "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." [3, 4] Dan Schwabel, one of the experts on personal branding, describes it as "the process by which individuals and entrepreneurs differentiate themselves and stand out from a crowd by identifying and

articulating their unique value proposition, whether professional or personal, and then leveraging it across platforms with a consistent message and image to achieve a specific goal.”

Personal branding entails managing this perception effectively and influencing how others perceive you and what they think of you. Building an authentic personal brand is an evolutionary and organic process that should emerge from your search for your identity and meaning in life. It is about getting clear on what you want, giving it all your positive energy, doing what you love, and improving yourself continuously ([16] Goldsmith, 2009).

To become a successful personal brander, it is required that a person should take time to define, communicate and protect his brand. By creating a personal brand a person can easily stand out in the crowd in this fast paced business development world. Branding yourself both as an expert and as an interesting individual. Why interesting? Because it’s not good enough simply to be considered good at what you do; you also need to be memorable.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The objective of this study is to provide a better understanding on how individuals can develop their own personal brands. With this idea in mind we establish two research objectives:

1. to understand the benefits of developing a personal brand
2. to understand that how can a strategy be adopted for developing personal brand

SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

The scope and significance of this study lies in the significance that developing yourself as your own brand will help you to distinguish yourself among the similar crowd. Furthermore, this paper will help us to understand the objectives of establishing yourself as a brand by highlighting the benefits from it. This paper will also try to suggest the best possible strategy to develop personal brand via different methods.

METHODOLOGY:

To understand the objectives of this study, the data collection is done on the basis of secondary data available from Journals, Articles, Newspapers, Books, and other material available with the related topic. Since, not many researches have been done on this topic. So, with the help of secondary data available through various sources, objectives and benefits of developing a strong brand along with the strategy to be used for framing a personal brand will be highlighted.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

To further classify the meaning of personal branding, [20] Brown (2010) has established how to distinguish terms such as reputation, personal brand and characters as these often are confused as being synonymous. However, all these factors are of great importance while creating your personal brand; at the same time you should be able to separate them. If you design your personal brand with the right message you can to some extent control what people think and talk about you behind your back. The relationship between these three factors, character, personal brand and reputation is illustrated in following figure ([20] Brown, 2010):

<https://assignbuster.com/how-to-develop-yourself-as-a-brand/>

The later section of this literature review will look at relevant theories to support our two research objectives.

OBJECTIVES OF PERSONAL BRANDING

Many authors have discussed the fact that we need to differentiate ourselves in today's competitive work environment. [8] McCorkle et al. (2003), highlighted the objectives of self marketing, in which special emphasis was given to developing job search skills in order to reach your professional goal. A skill can be defined as “ an underlying ability that can be refined through practice, such as communication, analysis, creativity, intuition, leadership, decision making and planning” [5] Waller and Hingorani (2006, p. 2). [8] McCorkle et al. (2003) divided skills into two categories: discipline related and support skills. Discipline related skills can be described as the knowledge achieved. Such skills are developed through class projects, part-time jobs or volunteer works. Supporting skills are general such as interpersonal, communication, creativity and decision making. These skills can also be achieved via the same methods.

Again, there has been a great discussion of which skills are most important to have regardless of business you are in. One study indicated the below rank as being the most beneficial for marketers:

1. Communication
2. Sales
3. Analytic/Statistical
4. Leader/ manger/ self-starter

5. Direct marketing

6. New product introduction

By using skills alike mentioned above and combining these with your strengths, values and passions you will be able to differentiate yourself and allowed to guide your career decisions. A personal brand will distinguish you from your colleagues and competitors in the same manner as corporate business does ([22] Arruda, 2003).

BENEFITS OF PERSONAL BRANDING:

[9] McNally and Speaks (2012) consider the primary benefits the fact that you get to be more of who you are and what you are, not less. By developing your personal brand, you get to live your values, be acknowledged and receive credit not only for what you do but also for what you believe.

Building and nurturing a winning brand will benefit you in many ways as it will allow you to:

Understand yourself better

Raise your confidence

Increase your visibility and your compensation

Thrive during economic downturns

Expand into new business areas

Attain more interesting jobs and assignments ([22] Arruda, 2002)

[2] Clare (2002) also adds a couple of benefits to the list if you will manage your personal brand effectively he means that you will beside the above mentioned, differentiate yourself from your peers and achieve your own personal and professional goals. According to [17] Montoya & Vandehey (2002), influence is really what personal branding is all about. He has also created a list of what is considered to be the most beneficial effects of having a great personal brand:

Confers “ top of mind” status

Increases the authority and credence of decisions

Place you in a leadership role

Enhances prestige

Source of Attraction

Adds perceived value to what you are selling

Earns recognition

Association with a trend

Increases earning potential

Thus, if you are able to incorporate some of the above benefits or even all, having a personal brand can push for promotions, boost sales or increase the perception of your expertise which results into greater compensation, prestige, source of attraction and many more. So we can say that a personal

branding will furnish you with power to influence people's decisions, purchases or even attitudes.

STRATEGY:

Majority of researches agree that the personal branding process is same as the product or corporate process ([13] Shepherd, 2005). In today's society it is even encouraged to consider yourself as a product and actually discover and develop your unique qualities as a product and use those qualities as nn points ([7] Lair et al., 2005). Even though a personal brand needs to be strong and believable, the most important is to begin with a solid foundation in order to keep it persisting. According to [17] Montoya & Vandehey (2002), these three essential elements are:

1. Emotional Impact: a great personal brand generates a positive and strong response in people in areas like confidence, admiration, trust and fondness.
2. Repetition: the main goal of personal brand is to develop its meaning and characteristics in the minds of people. It is therefore important to make sure that people perceive your brand as reliable; to make sure that it remains effective.
3. Time: Aiming for a long term exposure for that reason a long term solution for creating a strong and stable perception.

Developing your brand is not enough, what required is to differentiate yourself from others. Here, strategy plays a role. [16] Goldsmith (2009) describes four phases which an individual needs to go through when building a strong, yet more believable brand.

Phase 1: Creating and defining your personal ambition. The first phase means assessing your personal vision and mission and expressing them and making them visible for others.

Phase 2: Define and formulate. Based on all your ambitions, brand objectives, domain and special attributes, formulate your personal statement. The basic idea of this formulation is that it will help give a clear view of yourself and your personality.

Phase 3: Developing a well-balanced action plan. At this stage, taking personal ambition into consideration, an integrated and well balanced action plan should be prepared. It is about translating your personal ambition and brand into manageable and measurable personal objectives, milestones, and improvement actions in a holistic and balanced way.

Phase 4: Implement and Cultivate your brand. Personal brand has no value unless you make it a reality. So, maintain and create your brand effectively.

[17] Montoya & Vandehey (2002) has also defined a successful way in building you brand, under the label, ' The Eight Unbreakable Laws of Personal Branding'. He has summarised those laws as follows:

The law of Specialization

The law of Leadership

The law of Personality

The law of Distinctiveness

The law of Visibility

The law of Unity

The law of persistence

The law of Goodwill

Communication Tools:

The main objective of developing your personal brand is to create 'top of the mind' place in your audience. Thus, to achieve this objective there should be some strategy behind to guide you in which direction to go. Here, communication tools play a very crucial role. Choosing the right tool is therefore very important. If you have a large desire for developing a strong personal brand, you need to have a more developed strategy than those people who do not have the same intention ([12] Werner-Runebjork, 2004). There are quite different tools to approach when implementing your personal brand. These are as follows:

Word-Of-Mouth marketing: this tool is very powerful for promoting your brand. [21] Peters (1997) has stated its importance. [3, 4] Schawbel (2009) strongly support this as he argues that this is the most significant part in the process of getting your brand out as it contains what your most important contacts such as friends, family, business partners and acquaintances are hearing of you. Nowadays, usually businesses tend to succeed or fail based on referrals. Furthermore when world is connected today, it also determines if people become famous or infamous ([3, 4] Schawbel, 2009).

Networking: Nowadays, people are becoming technology savvy. Usage of facebook, twitter, blogs, social networking has increased to significant numbers. Another way of differentiating yourself as a brand and making it more noticeable is by using different social networks and blogs by using internet ([14] Elmore, 2010). [3, 4] Schawbel (2009) has described networking like an occurrence, where we come across with friends, family and colleagues in our everyday life.

Virtual Resume: It is equally important to regularly update your resume and make it easy to find, by combining it with other social networks like LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. In this way, people will be able to follow you up. Through virtual resumes, you also add videos or even diplomas, which will allow people to get a real feeling of who you are ([14] Elmore, 2010).

Personal Branding can be done by choosing any one from the two tactics, i. e., Analog personal branding or Digital Personal branding tactics; or may be a combination of both. What matters is the type of audience you want to have dialogue with. Digital personal branding is taking shape through older e-marketing tools like Web sites and e-mail, and newer platforms like LinkedIn, Plaxo, Twitter and Facebook ([1] Vitberg, 2009).

The table below will show how the different tactics that can be adopted while developing your personal brand.

SOURCE: ADAPTED FROM VITBERG (2009), ANALOG VS. DIGITAL PERSONAL BRANDING-A NEW TWIST ON PERSONAL MARKETING PLANS

Making a good impression is very necessary on any occasion. When you meet someone for the first time that person will form an instant impression of you ([24] Arruda & Dixson, 2007). Facial expressions, your tone, dress, smile, body postures, the way you use your hands and eyes, everything matters as they all form a part of your communication and contributes to your brand identity ([15] Wee & Brooks, 2010).

CONCLUSION AND INTERPRETATION:

Nowadays, when competition is cut-throat there is an utmost need for separating yourself from the similar people. Thus, the requirement of developing yourself as your personal brand is important. After studying and understanding the theories developed by previous researchers, now we will try to provide a better understanding on how individuals can develop as their own personal brand.

Objectives/Benefits of developing a personal brand

The study has indicated that there are several significant objectives/benefits of developing a personal brand. The main purpose is to differentiate you from others. Another objective for developing your personal brand is that it will definitely increase your authority and credence if you are able to work and portray your brand right.

We have also understood that professional dressing will generate a serious appearance for your personal brand. It also helps in increasing your confidence or self-esteem. In conclusion, we can say that the below mentioned points are the most important issues regarding the objectives/benefits of developing a strong personal brand:

Better communication skills will enhance your chances to get a leading position

Increases your reputation among your audience

Creativity will enable you to stand out among your competitors

Strategy to develop a Personal Brand

The most significant finding was that the strategy used when developing a personal brand does not follow any specific order and the process is over an indefinite period of time. Every study has indicated that first step you should take is defining and identifying your core competence/ unique property which makes you different from others. While associating yourself to your competence, it is important to remember to your domain that you are capable of more and not bound to your core competence.

There are different routes available from which you can reach to your audience by implementing your brand and make it come alive. Oral communication is also necessary when it comes to develop your personal brand. Depending on your personality, you will be able to tell the world 'this is me'. However, it also required to interact with people in order to maintain a good reputation.

It has also come to notice that usage of internet to create personal brand is also increasing. Your social networks and people you hang out with will enable you to get your personal brand visible. Also, the way you dress will make a mark among the people about your seriousness and commitment

towards work. You should remember that whatever you say can affect your brand, both in a positive and negative way.

Social network online is also good way to get in touch with new people which may turn out to be your clientele. The world has become digitized and using digital media is can be very fruitful to you. A single blog, twitter, or Facebook page is available for millions of readers at a time. How you present yourself and your thoughts is important.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS:

In today's current scenario, very few people are actually aware of and spend their time on developing their personal brand. Because of the strong competition, people try to distinguish themselves from others. Creating a strong brand therefore, is very importance; and in near future it will be highly required.

Developing a personal brand is neither too hard nor very time consuming. The main requirement is that you should be aware of the unique domain of yours. Other than this, you should be able to find a right communication tool to enable you to stand out.

This study has identified that with great communication tool you will be able to increase your network and brand visibility. Socializing and meeting as many people as you can will also contribute to increase your audience. Always try to make a good and positive impression as this is what you leave after meeting the people.

Social network online are also a good way to get in touch with people. You need to be conscious while updating your status or resume online. If you approach yourself as a brand and practice all the different skills, your personal brand will become stronger and you will maintain the standard of your brand.