

Building Your Personal Brand



We all know that brands are important for companies, but they're also important for people. Personal Branding has powerful outcomes, providing a way to promote yourself and make a lasting impression in the minds of others. It's what people say about you when you leave the room. The result is a signature image, a unique voice, as well as standards and expectations that others can grow to recognize.

Three main action steps can help you create your brand: Reflect, Create, and Grow.

1 | Reflect on Your Competitive Edge

Recognizing your talents and promoting them doesn't always come easily. The first step in building your brand is defining what makes your services appealing and distinguishes you from others. This includes identifying your strengths, areas of improvement, motivations, and values. Assessing them will lay the foundation for establishing your brand and marketing yourself.

Strengths

Oftentimes we take our unique combination of skills for granted, but these are the things that give you a competitive edge. On the next page, you'll begin to list the strengths you possess in both your personal and professional life. Don't overthink it!

1 | Reflect on Your Competitive Edge *(continued)*

Finish these statements:

I am (ex.: a good communicator, analytical, certified in "x," etc.).

I am...

I am...

I am...

Ask 3-5 people to give you a list of five of your skills. How would others describe you? Ask in person or by phone.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

How do these characteristics help you in your position as an advisor?

How can they help you accomplish your career goals and objectives?

Areas of Improvement—These aren't reasons to feel defeated; they're opportunities to improve on something, ask for support, or even delegate to someone better-suited. Don't feel obligated to master everything. For example, organization, meeting deadlines, and technology know-how.

Motivations—What inspires you? These could be things such as achievement, a flexible schedule, financial independence, and the ability to provide for family.

Values—What are the behaviors and attitudes that drive your success? Examples are fairness, innovation, or integrity.

2 | Create Your Perfect Pitch

The answers to the questions in the first section will help you form your Perfect Pitch. You established your competitive edge in the first step. Now you need a pitch to communicate it in the best way possible. When you articulate how and why you're different, you leave an impression, making your Perfect Pitch a very powerful tool.

Structure:

1. **Who You Are:** First and Last name
2. **What You Do:** Title, name of business; "I'm a [x] at [x]."
3. **How You Do It:** Why you're interesting; explain it in simple terms so that it will be easier for others to remember you.
4. **Why You Love It.** Convey your passion—it impacts how people perceive you.

Example: *Hi, my name is Deb Kennedy. I'm a financial advisor. I help my clients by designing investment plans that help them achieve their financial goals. I love seeing my clients benefit from good financial advice, and I know I'm helping them realize their goals for themselves and their families.*

Write your Perfect Pitch:

Practice

Practice your Perfect Pitch on coworkers, mentors, family, and friends three to five times a day until you become extremely comfortable. Practice it out loud and consider recording it. Use the right volume and inflection for the situation. Make sure you're stating your pitch with confidence—not "questioning" it. Your Perfect Pitch should flow naturally; not sound rehearsed. Practice until you can do it without thinking, but with feeling. Be prepared to provide additional detail when you're asked.



3 | Grow Your Network

Your network is similar to a personal sales team. If done correctly, networking can greatly enhance your personal brand. This is an opportunity to use your Perfect Pitch.

List organizations in your area that you're currently involved in—personal and professional:

Are these groups meeting your needs? Assess whether they can help you accomplish your goals by asking:

- Does this organization allow you enough time to interact? Exchange information? Give your perfect pitch?
- Do members have beneficial and relevant connections?
- Are, or will they, they refer you to others? (You need to provide them with the right information to do this.)
- Are they striving to achieve the same level of goals that you are? Interested in personal development?
- Do they have similar motivations and values?
- Is the support you offer fellow members reciprocated?

If your answer to many of these questions is no, it may be time to explore other groups.

How to ask for the business: *I'm looking to grow my business. If you know of anyone who can benefit from the services I provide, please let me know.*

Remember, be intentional when networking:

- Is there someone you want to meet?
- Is there a product, service, or project to discuss?
- Are you seeking help or information?
- Are you asking for a referral?
- Other

Strategize ways to get better results from existing groups. If you're challenged with finding an effective network, consider creating your own networking group. There are others just like you who want to focus on growing their business.

We tend to rise to the level of those around us. Remember to surround yourself with like-minded people. It makes all the difference.

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