A personal brand is engineered from the ground up. Build it on the strongest possible foundation.

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February 17, 2012
People do business with those they know, like and trust.

This statement has been a driving force of commerce for centuries but it has taken on a whole new meaning in today's digitally networked culture. Why?

Boundless advances in technology coupled with global economic distress have put job seekers and business owners alike on notice: While the playing field may still be fairly level, the competition on that field is now dense and relentless. As a result, 21st century professionals face intense pressure to be known for something ... something of value. In today's marketplace, you must be able to differentiate yourself from others. You must have a personal brand.

Because there are many approaches to building a personal brand, I decided to aggregate the research I've done over the past few years on branding into an overview-style planning guide. The intent is to provide readers with a simplified, sensible and roughly sequential process for building their own personal brands — or at the very least, getting the effort started.

This is the second in a series of publications about personal branding and the incredible power it wields in the 21st century business environment. The original publication, The Basics of Personal Branding, answered the question “What is it?” This e-book answers the question “How do I build one?”

I hope you'll find this e-book useful and informative. You can reach me with questions and comments using the contact information below (e-mail is always preferred).

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The rationale: Before building *anything*, it’s important to understand what it is, why it’s important, and the benefit it offers that justifies the expenditure of your valuable time.

A download link has been provided for your convenience below. There is no cost or obligation.

**Answers the question: "What IS personal branding?"**

**Answers the question: "How do I BUILD a personal brand?"**
LET’S UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM
EVERYONE HAS A BRAND!

**BY DESIGN**

You have built a brand from the ground up by identifying and emphasizing your most valuable and differentiating attributes. You *ARE* what *YOU SAY YOU ARE* to everyone in your network.

**BEST CASE SCENARIO**

**... OR ...**

**BY DEFAULT**

You have not taken any steps to engineer your personal brand. You are what EVERYONE ELSE says you are, not what YOU say you are. You are therefore branded “by default.”

**WORST CASE SCENARIO**
THE PLIGHT OF BEING BRANDED BY DEFAULT ...

If you have no clear, well-differentiated identity ... 

... then they have to “figure you out”!! ...

(And you may not like what they come up with!)
No offense intended, but …

... that herd of zebra at left may be a lot closer to what we look like to potential employers and clients than many of us would like to think … lots and lots of the same old stuff repeated endlessly over a landscape of numbing sameness.

And yet we know that each member of the herd does have its own unique genetic identity. So a more accurate representation of “us” might be pictured as a maze of bar codes (right). Again, the grouping looks intensely homogeneous but at least each “bar” has a unique identity.

Actually, the problem isn’t so much that we look alike or even that we may have similar qualities … it’s that many of us haven’t figured out how to distinguish ourselves in a way that makes us *singularly attractive* to those who might hire us or engage our services.

Each of us is unique … but branding is about getting *unique value* communicated to the world.

And it’s a crowded world!
Let’s imagine that the “owner” of this particular bar code decides that life in a sea of sameness is going nowhere. What should she do? She needs to take a close look at whatever attributes she has that not only uniquely identify her, but also clearly communicate value to a targeted audience within the marketplace.

Her mission is clear: She must “ratchet up” the intensity of those bars representing her strongest talents and skills (especially those that differentiate her from competitors) and establish a meaningful connection between those characteristics and customer-perceived value. She must find a way to build her attraction machine.

Ratcheting up your unique talents leads to increased value over time.
Brand-building is all about developing your strongest attributes and refining them to a point where people routinely perceive you as an authority in some special area. They see you as someone who provides relevant, credible and reliable value consistently over time. Your brand becomes what others automatically associate with you when they hear your name or see your work.

While a BIC might be an intriguing idea, it's not the end-game for building a personal brand. A brand is not something you wear around your neck for instantaneous recognition. A brand is the perception in the minds of others of your value — based on their internal criteria. That's why we all need to build brands that earn widespread respect.
You can be confident that your brand has been properly built once you have all of the components of the sweet spot identified, developed, assembled, and ready for deployment throughout your network. Although it’s difficult to hit the sweet spot with “dead on” accuracy, keeping this mental model front and center will guide your efforts to get you as close as possible. The key to successful branding: Don’t stop searching for your sweet spot.
This chart shows a generalized process to develop a personal brand. It is not intended to show all components, steps or procedures ... only the basic flow. The primary branding phases (identified below as 3A, 3B, 3C, and 3D) along with their subtending tasks are illustrative, not comprehensive. Not all tasks are sequentially identified.

**1 END STATE VISION**
BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND
(Stephen Covey, “Seven Habits of Highly Successful People”)

**2 PLANNING & ORGANIZATION**
BECOME AN EXPERT ON YOU
Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
Personality Assessments
Mission, Vision & Values
Value Proposition Statement

**3 THE BRANDING PROCESS**

**3A DISCOVERY**
Brand Audit
Client Interviews
Personal Profile
Business Profile
Brand Attribute Profile
Brand Value Statement
Keywords

**3B DEVELOPMENT**
Look & Feel
Brand Identity
Business Name
Logo, Tagline
Signature Elements
Brand Strategy

**3C DEPLOYMENT**
Web Site (Marketing)
Blog (Authority)
Linkedin Profile (Branding)
Social Media Profiles
Engage the Conversation
Press Release
Video/Audio

**3D MAINTENANCE**
Google Alerts
Reputation Management
SEO/SEM
Landing Pages
Site Statistics
Performance Standards
SM Profile Updates
Re-Assessments

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**BRANDING FROM 30,000 FEET**

**BRAND PLATFORM**
Your Digital Marketing Hub
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THE
FIRST STEPS
Section 1.1  Adopt The Proper Mindset

Think about who you are with respect to your career objectives. Are you a business owner looking for new clients? Are you looking for a new job? Or maybe even an entirely new career? *Do you have a vision for connecting whatever it is that makes you tick with the needs of the marketplace?*

Whatever your circumstances are, you will make forward progress if you can show the world who you are, what makes you different from others, and the special value people enjoy from doing business with you.

Building a personal brand requires getting inside your head at a level that many find uncomfortable. It involves tapping into that reserve of self-knowledge you tend to keep private and being completely forthcoming in your analysis of what is and isn’t there. Remember: a critical part of personal branding is that you must be *authentic!*

For some people, personal branding sounds like a worthwhile endeavor ... until they discover that it doesn’t normally produce quick financial gain. If this is you (or close to you), the branding effort will likely be unsuccessful.

If you grasp the complexity of 21st century business, you already know that a personal brand is an absolute necessity, an investment you make to stake out (or preserve) a viable place in the crowded marketplace to ensure long-term financial survival.

Personal branding is all about *YOU ... because it HAS to be.*

*Be 100% sure you understand what a personal brand is before attempting to build one for yourself. Make the time to read The Basics of Personal Branding as suggested on Page 3.*
Section 1.2 Build Your Brand on a Solid Foundation

Architectural projects begin with plans, strategies, blueprints and resources needed to lay a proper foundation for the proposed building.

And while it’s absurd to think of building a skyscraper on anything less than the strongest possible physical foundation, it’s equally absurd to think of building a brand on anything less than a rock-solid logical foundation.

For personal branding, the first steps in building this logical foundation are the creation of two key documents: 1) a Mission, Vision, & Values statement; and 2) a Value Proposition statement.

In addition to providing clarity of purpose for building a personal brand, these documents summarize your strongest attributes, provide a roadmap for aligning business goals with sales and marketing efforts, and offer a refined view of the value you offer that attracts interest (and business).

Drafting these documents is not a quick exercise. Each requires time and some deep, introspective thought. It can be tempting to sidestep this work on the belief that it may consume a disproportionately large amount of time for the benefit it yields. For those who are tempted to think this way, please consider the following:

An inability to distinguish yourself in a sea of competitors means that you remain just another zebra in the herd, just another commodity on the shelf looking uncomfortably similar to all neighboring commodities and revealing nothing of actual value to the consumer. Your features look slick, but the customer is looking for value! Understanding what really makes you “tick” as a brand — and exploiting it — is the key to rising above the level of a commodity and establishing a genuine “untouchable” niche.

Readers may wish to learn more about being an “untouchable” (i.e., someone whose talents are almost irreplaceable) by reading Thomas Friedman’s book The World is Flat (Picador / Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, © 2005).
2 DISCOVER YOUR BRAND
Section 2.1  Prepare Your Mission, Vision & Values Statement

**Mission Statement**
A mission statement is a brief description of an organization’s purpose, i.e., its reason for existence. Mission statements are written in the present tense, emphasizing what the group does (both internally and externally) to justify its niche in the marketplace. The best mission statements use highly descriptive and inspirational language to communicate core beliefs, values, primary business objectives, energy and passion of the business owner.

**Vision Statement**
A vision statement is essentially a description of how a company sees its place in the future (i.e., the roles it will serve for its customers, shareholders, employees, and owners) along with the direction the company plans to follow to reach that destination. Vision statements articulate a view of the future that serves to remind the business owner of what he or she is trying to build.

For help in crafting a vision statement, refer to the links on the next page for mission statements; most of the information (and links) for vision statements can be found on these same web pages.
Section 2.1  Prepare Your Mission, Vision & Values Statement (continued)

Values Statement
Many individuals, organizations and businesses adopt mission and vision statements and believe they have clearly articulated where they are headed and what they will do to get there.

Few individuals, organizations and businesses, however, take the time to define just how they will execute that mission and vision.

Part of being known, liked and trusted stems from the perception that you share at least some of the values with the community of people representing your customer base. While clearly not a hard and fast rule, people tend to do business with those whose values they share.

The web sites below provide good information about mission and vision statements including:

- General information about mission statements
- How to draft mission and vision statements
- Samples of mission, vision, and values statements

Helpful resources for writing mission, vision, values statements:
- http://sbinfocanada.about.com/lr/mission_statements/39328/2/
Since there is so much competition in the marketplace, you need to position yourself (or your business) in the most compelling, well-differentiated manner possible. In other words, you need to energetically attract attention while remaining relevant to your customer’s needs and retaining your credibility and authenticity.

### Overall Structure of a Value Proposition

1. **Offerings** (What is it that you offer? Is it in alignment with what your customers want to achieve — or a problem they need to solve?)

2. **Customers** (Who are your typical customers? Are you able to provide any specificity about their needs in order to identify a more precisely targeted customer base?)

3. **Compelling Reason To Act, CRTA** (What do you offer your customers that provides them with a Compelling Reason to Act?)

4. **Experience** (What kind of experience will customers have as a result of doing business with you?)

5. **Benefits** (What are the primary benefits a customer will receive as a result of doing business with you? For obvious reasons, this section of the value proposition needs to be given special attention.)
Section 2.2  Prepare Your Value Proposition  (continued)

6. Cost  (What are the costs of doing business with you in terms of money, resources, troubles, risks and possibly lost opportunities?)

7. Time  (How soon will the customer experience the benefits of having done business with you? Right away? A week? A month?)

8. Alternatives  (How would you objectively describe the alternatives your customer faces? How do you describe the competition in such a way that it reveals you as the most attractive entity with which to do business?)

9. Advantages  (What are the key differentiators you offer compared to your targeted competition? What are the things you do that provide clear benefits? What are your limitations?)

Don't be surprised if you can't come up with a complete value proposition right away … but don't give up, either.

Helpful resources for writing value propositions:

http://www.aux-training.com/ValueProposition2.htm
http://www.mindtools.com/CommSkll/ValueProposition.htm
http://www.itsma.com/training/value-props/
Your Mission, Vision and Values statements and your Value Proposition have given you the framework for discovering your most compelling brand attributes. Think of your Brand Attribute Profile as a finely-filtered collection of all of the research you’ve just performed to summarize and refine just who you are, what makes you tick, and why you add value to the business community.

It should include your best attempts to respond accurately to the following questions:

- What is your brand definition? (Go ahead … try defining your brand)
- If you believe you have a brand message, what is it? How will you communicate it to others?
- If your brand has an actual “persona,” what is it and how well does it help you to articulate your brand message?

Your Brand Attribute Profile is a distillation of your personality and business attributes. Using a simplified diagram (such as the one on the next page), distribute the phrases that best describe you from the core (highest priority descriptors) outward using the following criteria:

- Your Top 10 Personal Attributes
- Your Top 10 Business Attributes

The graphic on the next page is an illustrative model for prioritizing your attributes so that it’s easier to see which ones should be the primary drivers of your brand message.

A Brand Attribute Profile is a constantly updated visual expression of your brand qualities. Its purpose is purely organizational and never targeted for public consumption. No one sees it (and no one develops it) but you. Revisit it frequently and make adjustments as needed.
Section 2.3  Build Your Brand Attribute Profile (continued)

The Goal:

Make your *self-impression* the same as how others perceive you!
3 DEVELOP YOUR BRAND
Section 3.1  Basic Considerations

To actually develop your brand, there are several things you need to consider:

- One of the many definitions of a brand states “... a brand is your promise of value.” What is your “brand promise?” What specific value do you offer on a consistent basis that has the potential to attract the attention of people in your target market? Take another look at your Value Proposition for reminders.

- Exactly what is it that differentiates you from everyone else … especially those who have the same approximate business profile as you? If there is a service you provide, for example, what advantages do customers receive by working with you as opposed to your competitors? Say it aloud, then write it down.

- Can you think of a word or phrase with which your name can be easily associated? Is it catchy? Can you make it catchy by stretching your imagination a bit? If your customers begin to associate you with something simple but powerful and memorable, you’ve just built one of the strongest pillars of a personal brand.

- Think about your brand as something that conveys a special message … a message you want people to hear. If it helps, think about what many people call an “elevator pitch.” Keep it short, simple and pack the greatest possible punch with the fewest possible words. Taglines are extraordinarily helpful in getting people to remember a brand’s message, e.g., Avis Car Rental: “We Try Harder,” DeBeers: “A Diamond is Forever.”

- Now start thinking about the words and visuals you can use to create the symbolic representation of your brand. Start to think about ways to visually convey what makes you tick to communicate your brand effectively. Why is this so important? Because most of the power of a brand is never actually transmitted face-to-face; it’s transmitted through intelligent marketing. You need effective symbolism to represent you when you can’t be there in person – which is most of the time.
Section 3.2  Build Your Brand Strategy

A solid brand strategy successfully responds to the following questions:

- To what extent are you “out there” in the marketplace? **Visibility**
- What do you do better than anyone else? **Uniqueness**
- Do people see you as “the genuine article”? Authentic? **Credibility**
- What are the benefits of doing business with you? **Value & Relevance**
- Do people feel an emotional connection with you? **Emotional Connection**

Examples of Brand Strategies[^1]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Strategy</th>
<th>Brand Positioning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>L’OREAL: “You’re Worth It.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion</td>
<td>Maytag’s lonely repair man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habits</td>
<td>Dentyne Gum: For people who can’t brush after every meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution</td>
<td>FedEx: When it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>Ronald McDonald, Green Giant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^1]: Information obtained from *A Guide to Brand Development*, April, 2006 by Boscobel Marketing Communications.
Section 3.3  Design Your Brand Identity

Create a Brand Identity That Captures Your Unique Value: Business Name, Logo, & Tagline

To have your brand identity “stick” in the minds of your target audience, you need to incorporate the following elements:

- **Business Name, Company Name**
  (Primary considerations: a credible name, expressive, concise, makes an impression, different)

- **Logo**
  (Primary considerations: size, aspect ratio, color, typeface, design, simplicity, easy to remember)

- **Tagline**
  (Primary considerations: length, say a lot with a few words, make it memorable)

Your brand identity is what people gradually associate with the value you provide ... as long as you provide it clearly, consistently, and often enough.
Since the name of your business is what people will say and write when referring to you, it pays to put special attention into the word or words you'll use. Even if you're using your own name, it can be very helpful to tack on something which gives it a little extra meaning, e.g., "Mary Smith" might be better named "Mary Smith Watercolor Galleries," or something similar that adds specificity.

The right business name helps to “broadcast” your brand’s value.
Some well-known logos …

A logo is not a brand. A logo is the public-facing part of a business or individual that expresses the brand’s value. Logos need to be impressive, bold, visually appealing, and smart. Effective logos become instantly recognizable in the minds of clients, customers, and the public in general. Basic characteristics of an effective logo are as follows:

1. Unique
2. Strong, appealing & memorable
3. Expresses differentiation
4. Communicates
5. Adds value

Logos on this page property of:
- AT&T
- Apple
- Pepsi
- Hewlett-Packard
- American Airlines
Taglines are short, high-energy phrases intended to remind viewers what the brand or logo stands for. When they’re used (and not all brands use taglines), they need to communicate a strong message. For great information on taglines, be sure to visit "The Tagline Guru," Eric Swartz, at his web site: http://www.taglineguru.com

Because the subject of brand identity is so expansive, readers are encouraged to check information on the following web sites for more detailed information:

http://justcreativedesign.com/2010/04/06/branding-identity-logo-design-explained/
http://www.thebrandidentity.com/branding
http://www.brandidentityguru.com/

Here are some taglines that work particularly well with their respective logos. In these examples, the logo design is clean and easy to recall, but it’s the tagline that cements the brand’s message in the mind of the consumer.

Logos on this page property of:
DeBeers
BMW
AVIS
McDonalds
Papa John’s
4 DEPLOY YOUR BRAND
Section 4.1  Build a Brand Communications Platform

Now that you’ve completed the foundation-building work (mission, vision, values and value proposition) and the beginnings of a brand identity that feels comfortable enough to wear as a “second skin,” it’s time to set up a Brand Communications Platform … essentially, a launching pad on the Internet for you to introduce yourself, get people interested, and start broadcasting your value.

For most individuals who choose to build a personal brand, this platform will consist of the following:

- **Web Site**
  Your digital marketing hub; the focal point of your online brand identity. All marketing should radiate out from your web site. All social media activity should link back to your web site.

- **Blog**
  Your web site will broadcast your brand value but the focus of your blog should be on building authority. The true value of a blog lies in its ability to help you establish a dialog with the Internet community, build credibility, relevance, value … and most of all (over time) create the perception of genuine thought leadership. This is where you can establish your reputation as the “go-to guy” or “go-to gal” better than anywhere else.

- **LinkedIn Profile**
  The profile page on LinkedIn is an ideal place to express your brand, especially if you can connect it to skills, talents and experience. Many people make the mistake of using the profile page as just another place to drop their resumes. That’s a tragic miscalculation. Creative power-wording, use of pre-targeted keywords, and even some snappy visuals can do amazing things to communicate your brand to visitors.

LinkedIn, the LinkedIn logo, the IN logo and InMail are registered trademarks or trademarks of LinkedIn Corporation and its affiliates in the United States and/or other countries.
Section 4.1  Build a Brand Communications Platform (continued)

Your Brand Communications Platform should also include consistently branded profiles and active chatter on those social media web sites to which you can commit a dedicated block of time each week.

- **Social Media Sites**
  Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Google+, YouTube, Flickr, Digg, StumbleUpon, Reddit, De.licio.us, etc…

- **Portfolio**
  Not everyone has or even needs a portfolio to push their brand out into the marketplace. But if the focus of your work can be captured visually – in any way – a portfolio helps to round out the mental image people gather about you after viewing your primary assets (i.e., web site, blog, social media posts). Seeing samples of actual work output is a great way to validate your brand message … in a very compelling way!

- **Video**
  Who, me? Sure … why not? It’s a popular and truly effective way to communicate information about anything. A well-produced video actually carries more clout than the keywords you embed into a web site or blog for search engine optimization (SEO) and “getting found.” It doesn’t have to be a Hollywood masterpiece, but it should reflect careful planning and a real creative effort in order to show quality in every frame!
Section 4.2  Assemble & Distribute Your Branded Assets

Assemble Marketing Collateral
If you’ve made the effort to build a solid brand, you’ll need to develop marketing collateral to show it off and get it circulating. Consider the development of business cards, stationery, brochures, a DVD, an online resume, a gallery or portfolio, a promotional slide deck, and much, much more. Get the collateral circulating frequently and consistently. Make sure it carries your brand identity prominently and conveys your brand message accurately.

Devise a Plan (Strategy) for Brand Deployment
In 2012, it can be easy to get lost in an ocean of social media. As with so many things, careful planning generates forward progress. Devise a strategy for using LinkedIn in combination with other social media sites. Most importantly, be sure to consistently cross-link your posts or comments whenever possible to both cement the message and reinforce the brand.

Stick to the Plan
A sound marketing strategy always ensures distribution of branded assets that are clear and consistent in their message, and propagated throughout established marketing channels on a regular basis. Clarity, consistency, and frequency ensure that your brand acquires “stickiness” in the minds of your audience.
5 MAINTAIN YOUR BRAND
Section 5.1 Maintain Your Brand

For a brand to be truly successful, it needs “staying power.” It has to be strong enough to compete within its niche and resilient enough to absorb occasionally negative feedback.

If you’ve planned, developed and deployed your brand successfully, there is still one important function you need to perform to ensure the long-term viability of the brand: Maintenance.

Brand maintenance includes the following components:

- Regularly reviewing communications and branded assets to make sure they are being properly represented at every business touchpoint;

- Carefully reviewing (or analyzing) comments and feedback from a variety of sources to monitor and control the status of the brand, evaluating what elements of your brand might not be serving you well and drafting a plan for improvement;

- **Google Alerts**: Emails sent when Google locates new information (web pages, news, blog posts, etc…) that match a specified search term. Through Google Alerts, it’s easy to find out what’s being said about a company or its products and services. It’s a great way to monitor the health of your brand — and your competitors.

- Analyzing traffic on your web site, blog and social media venues to determine trends and make adjustments to your branding and marketing strategies.
BUILD YOUR BRAND

6

SPECIAL MARKETING PRINCIPLES
Section 6.1  Reach and Frequency

Reach

Reach is the number of individuals you can “touch” with your brand message through a well-planned marketing strategy using well-designed marketing assets. It’s easy to fall into the trap of focusing on the depth and diversity of established business “touchpoints” and forgetting how difficult it is to maintain contact — on a regular basis — with such an enormous population.

It’s important to have an excellent “reach” with your brand message and marketing; but effective communication demands that your message is heard regularly and never positioned as a one-shot effort.

Frequency

Frequency is how often you make contact with everyone you’ve “reached.” To understand the importance of frequency, just think about friendships you’ve acquired over your lifetime. Most friendships were not formed based on a single meeting or conversation; they were built over time through repetitive, positive interactions.

Building the “frequency component” into your marketing materials is one of the best ways to cement your brand message into the minds of would-be clients and customers.

Readers are referred to an excellent article written by Julie Chance, President of Strategies-by-Design, entitled Reach vs. Frequency, subtitled “Is it more effective to touch 100 potential customers once or 25 potential customers four times?” Find Julie’s article here.
Section 6.2  Features vs. Benefits

Features

Features are the characteristics of a product or service that define what the offering does. When marketing products and services (and getting a brand message successfully broadcast), it’s easy to become over-focused on the attributes of a product, i.e., what it “has” or “does” because – let’s face it – we’re proud of what we do, what we’ve built, designed or engineered, etc.

But from the customer’s perspective, what he or she really wants is a meaningful benefit for purchasing your particular products or services as opposed to those of your competitors (value differentiators).

The next time you purchase a new car, for example, ask yourself what’s really driving your decision to purchase: Is it the sleek and sporty lines, the super-enhanced dashboard, the hyper-halogen double-decker headlights … or the fact that the vehicle gets 78 miles per gallon?

Benefits

While features equate to characteristics, benefits equate to customer advantage or value. Benefits must be clearly articulated in your marketing materials because they provide the customer with unique differentiators distinguishing you from your competitors.

In the new car example, customers may be attracted by the automobile’s style and design (features) but tend to make the decision to purchase based on things like cost, safety, fuel efficiency, durability, maintenance, etc. (benefits).

Features are nice … features are attractive … but benefits (as perceived by the customer) outweigh almost all other considerations when it’s time to make purchasing decisions.
Outbound Marketing

Traditional marketing (i.e., the process linking branding and advertising to the public) has always relied on the principle of interruption … things like cold calls, direct mail, TV advertisements, and unsolicited faxes. Although it's probably been going on for a long time now, people today are becoming more savvy about blocking these intrusions into their day (e.g., unplugging the fax, ‘TIVO’ing their TV programs, scanning their Caller IDs, etc.).

This poses a problem for marketers who wish to sell products and services to the purchasing public. How do you reach a target audience if it keeps “tuning you out?”

To some extent, Outbound Marketing techniques are still used successfully, but they are gradually being overtaken by a much more powerful marketing model, one that almost certainly coincides with the rapid rise of social media. Read on …

Inbound Marketing

While traditional Outbound Marketing is built around interruptions and intrusions, Inbound Marketing is focused on building relationships through creative ways of attracting interest. While Outbound Marketing is based on interruption, Inbound Marketing is based on attraction and permission … i.e., the customer chooses to investigate your products and services because you have established a level of authority via freely distributed (and optionally accepted) content.

The idea is to give away something of value and, in return, generate a sufficient level of interest so that customers contact you instead of you reaching out to them.

The psychology is simple, too: If you're that confident in your product that you can give it away for a “test drive,” then it must be pretty darn good!
**Section 6.4  Branding Always Precedes Marketing**

**Brand First, Then Market**

Branding identifies what a business should say about its products and services and the benefits they provide. Identifying the "what" for a new business (or for a personal brand) can be a complicated process and is generally the result of a thorough brand audit and extensive brand positioning research.

Marketing identifies how the brand message will be delivered. But effective marketing is always the result of branding, never the cause of it. Try to imagine marketing a product or service without a full understanding of the benefit it provides and you'll quickly realize that those who "hurry to market" – without the benefit of a durable, well-conceived brand – are seldom successful.

Readers are referred to an excellent article written by Olga Slavkina, member of the LinkedIn community, entitled Branding Creates, Marketing Competes. The impetus for including this topic was generated by Olga's various discussions on LinkedIn. Article link: [http://www.schmoozyfox.com/2011/08/10/branding-versus-marketing](http://www.schmoozyfox.com/2011/08/10/branding-versus-marketing)
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TOOLS & RESOURCES
Section 7.1  Helpful Branding Tools

There are many online tools to help you build your personal brand. Some are geared for discovery, others for development, deployment and maintenance. You probably have a good idea by now which category of brand-building is the most challenging, so use it as a guide when tracking down additional branding tools and resources.

- Having your own domain name, e.g., jenniferlacrox.com or fredsmith.com. By using your name as the domain, you’re telling people that you are your brand, that you’ve staked out space on the Internet to claim that brand, and that you intend to associate your name with some particular talent or skill so well that it deserves its own web space.

- Being on LinkedIn is an essential part of 21st century networking. The profile page is particularly well-suited to expressing your personality and brand, especially the Summary and Specialties areas. Get creative! Drop in a word cloud (or “tag cloud” or “Wordle”) below your Summary via the SlideShare application. For more information on using LinkedIn for effective branding, please download my e-book, Turbocharge Your LinkedIn Profile, published in June, 2011.

- Google Alerts are email updates of the latest relevant Google results (web, news, etc.) based on your queries (excerpted from the Google Alerts web page, http://www.google.com/alerts).

- High-traffic social media sites like Twitter and Facebook serve several purposes: they can be used for research, for sharing useful information, and for all-purpose networking and connecting. If you think back to Reach and Frequency (Section 6.1), it makes sense to keep these two applications in your marketing arsenal just because of the potential reach each one has. And again, savvy brand-builders recognize the value of staying in the loop and keeping the buzz up and running as frequently as possible.
Section 7.1  Helpful Branding Tools (continued)

- Make use of Google Profiles, which gives you an opportunity to customize the way search results appear when someone searches for you. Photos, contact information, and personal or professional interests give users an instantaneous encapsulation of you in a compact, easy-to-read format.

- **Social Media Profiles:** In the world of branding, it’s imperative to be consistent in the dissemination of your brand message. Double-check all of the profiles you have on social media web sites: Are they all broadcasting the same thing? Or are there conflicts and contradictions? If so, fix them so that no one gets the opportunity to perceive you as being inconsistent in your message and identity.

- It’s easy to become overwhelmed by the responsibility for maintaining and updating all of the posts you place on social media web sites. Ping.fm is a tool that allows you to update multiple social media sites at once.

- In the “extremely helpful but very time-consuming” department, you can consider making videos featuring … you! Develop a storyline, keep it short, punchy and engaging, and be sure to bring out your best qualities without any overtones of egomania or braggadocio. Put it on YouTube, then blog about it (with a link) … videos are one of the most powerful branding tools available … they’re just difficult to produce (at least with high quality).

- Another alternative that works great with an engaging web site is embedded audio. There is a simple script available from Google that will embed an mp3 file into your web page just by dropping it into the HTML code. If video is too much, consider the audio alternative. Just put every bit of quality possible into the final product.
Section 7.1 Helpful Branding Tools (continued)

- Add applications to your LinkedIn Profile. SlideShare, Github, Huddle Workspaces, Polls, Google Presentation, Blog Link and many more are available to help you broadcast your brand.

- If you haven’t already done so, be sure to create an informative and highly personalized e-mail signature ... something you can embed at the end of every message you send. Remember that constancy (i.e., the relentless repetition of brand elements in this case) ensures that your brand stays in the forefront of the reader’s mind. Don’t send another message without a prominent e-mail signature.

- Make use of 3rd party applications that amplify the power of your front-line social media tools. Example: TweetDeck.

- In the Discovery phase of branding, well-respected diagnostic tools like the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the DiSC Assessment Profile (along with dozens of others) can provide critically important information about your personality, attitudes, and values. Google these terms for more information.

- Don’t try embedding long URLs into blog posts or LinkedIn updates. Make use of URL-shorteners such as bit.ly or tinyurl.com. Just be sure to keep track of your shortened URLs for future use.
Section 7.2  Personal Branding Resources

Slide Decks

Creating a Brand Persona
http://www.slideshare.net/perfectpixels/creating-a-brand-persona

Brand Masterclass Week One:  What is a Brand?  Definitions and taxonomies.
http://www.slideshare.net/imootee/brand-masterclass-week-one

Brand Masterclass Week Two:  How are brands built?  Managing brand meanings.
http://www.slideshare.net/imootee/brand-masterclass-week-two

Brand Masterclass Week Three:  Luxury Brand Marketing Keynote Speech (Cologne, Germany)
http://www.slideshare.net/imootee/luxury-brand-marketing-keynote-germany

Brand Masterclass Week Five:  Developing Brand Strategy (Part 1)
http://www.slideshare.net/imootee/brand-masterclass-week-five-developing-brand-strategy-1

Brand Masterclass Week Six:  Developing Brand Strategy (Part 2)
http://www.slideshare.net/imootee/brand-masterclass-week-six

Branding in a Troubled Economy
http://www.slideshare.net/guest1929d4/branding-in-a-troubled-economy-1088653

Establishing and Building a Brand in a Crowded Market
http://www.slideshare.net/Brokenbulbs/brand-first-branding-second
Section 7.2  Personal Branding Resources  (continued)

Slide Decks (continued)

Brand First, Branding Second
http://www.slideshare.net/Brokenbulbs/brand-first-branding-second

Modern Brands V1
http://www.slideshare.net/zeusjones/modern-brands-v1

Brand Strategy
http://www.slideshare.net/nusantara99/brand-strategy

Brand Management Process: Building Big Brands
http://www.slideshare.net/Sarvajeet/brand-management-process-building-big-brands-presentation

The Molecular Brand
http://www.slideshare.net/slidesbynouve/the-molecular-brand

Turbocharge Your LinkedIn Profile (Slide Deck/E-Book/Desk Reference, Chip Hartman)

The Basics of Personal Branding (Slide Deck/E-Book/Desk Reference, Chip Hartman)

An Excellent Glossary of Branding Terms
http://www.brandchannel.com/education_glossary.asp
Section 7.2  Personal Branding Resources  (continued)

Books
- *Career Distinction* (William Arruda and Kirsten Dixon)
- *Branding for Dummies* (Bill Chiarevallle and Barbara Findlay Schenck) … an unusually good resource!
- *Differentiate or Die* (Jack Trout and Steve Rivkin)
- *The New Rules of Marketing and PR* (David Meerman Scott)

Articles
- “106 Excuses That Prevent You From Ever Becoming Great” (Tommy Walker; on Chris Brogan web site)
  http://www.chrisbrogan.com/106/

- “Top Ten Personal Branding Tools”
  http://personalbranding101.com/top-ten-personal-branding-tools

- “Personal Branding for the Business Professional” (Chris Brogan) – a MUST READ !!
  http://chrisbrogan.com/img/broganbranding.pdf

- “Creating Your Personal Brand” (Jack Perry)
  http://www.myarticlearchive.com/articles/5/078.htm

- “The 10 Immutable Laws of Personal Branding” (Donald Latumahina)

- “Top Ten Free Tools for Monitoring Your Brand’s Reputation” (Mashable, by Dan Schawbel)
  http://mashable.com/2008/12/24/free-brand-monitoring-tools/
Section 7.2  Personal Branding Resources  (continued)

Videos

*Personal Branding Guru, William Arruda*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6paltEm2AF4

*Gary Vaynerchuk, Wine Library TV* (intense, strong language)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EhqZ0RU95d4

*Five Questions for your Personal Brand* (Krista Daeda)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_opMEyS30&feature=related

*Command Your Brand* (LinkedIn and Personal Branding Expert J. D. Gershbein)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6D4iqKFkn0

Notes:
There are many videos on personal branding to be found on YouTube. I chose only these four because each provides a unique approach to branding along with an effective delivery style.

*Gary Vaynerchuk* pulls no punches in his video, relying on a no-holds-barred connection with the audience to make his points. He’s unfiltered, uncensored, and occasionally unplugged in his passionate argument for branding.

Although I had not heard of *Krista Daeda* prior to seeing her video on YouTube recently, I found this particular video informative, well-organized and well-presented. What the video lacks in high-energy effects is more than offset by Krista’s mastery of the subject and ability to get the point across.

Although the focus of *J. D. Gershbein’s* video is LinkedIn, Mr. Gershbein makes an unusually eloquent case for having a strong personal brand in the early part of the 21st century.
In compiling this e-book, I found an array of principles gathered from some of the most prominent branding thought leaders on the Internet today. Although they may not factor into the branding process directly, I’ve included them here because they have interesting and relevant intersections with the phases of brand-building.

- People do business with those they know, like and trust.
- If you’re networking without conveying some aspect of your brand, you’re “networking in the dark.”
- One of the chief goals of branding is to rise above the level of commoditization and be perceived as the “no-contest, hands-down go-to guy or go-to gal for …
- Branding Precedes Marketing. Branding is the **What?** Marketing is the **How?** Branding helps you to know what to say; Marketing provides the vehicles to deliver those messages.
- Think like the publisher of great content and not the advertiser of a great product. Give people a great reason for wanting to connect with you (David Meerman Scott).
- Build authority relentlessly. That means thoughtful, provocative, and informative blog posts.
- With branding, it’s not so much **what** you do … it’s **how you do it** that matters!
- Get out of your comfort zone: It may be killing you!
Section 7.3 The Big Themes & Key Principles (continued)

Be a veritable publishing machine. Publish great stuff. Publish the kind of information that gets people energized about you and the kind of work you do. The more you’re willing to give away (at least in the beginning stages), the more deposits you make in the trust bank within the minds of every one of your readers! Be sure your brand shines through on everything you publish!

Here is just a partial list of things that you can publish … there are many more.

• Blog Posts
• Twitter (tweets), Facebook (news), LinkedIn (Q & A) to establish yourself as an approachable authority
• Videos (YouTube, create your own YouTube channel)
• Podcasts
• Slideshare slide decks
• eBooks
• White papers
• Webinars
• Presentations
• Newsletters
BUILD YOUR BRAND

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ATtribution & Acknowledgements
Section 8.1 Attribution & Acknowledgements

People and Companies: Branding Expertise

It’s safe to say that *Build Your Own Brand* would not have been compiled without the resources provided by many of today’s branding thought leaders. I am grateful for the efforts of these individuals who have generously shared their expertise either through inspiring articles, books, videos and blog posts or, in some cases, face-to-face meetings. Among them, I’d like to especially mention:

- Jason Alba (author, *I’m on LinkedIn – Now What?*, *I’m on Facebook – Now What?*; Owner, [JibberJobber.com](http://www.jibberjobber.com))
- J. D. Gershbein (videos, blog posts, articles, TV spots)
- Dan Schawbel (blog posts, articles)
- Gary Vaynerchuk (videos, blog posts, articles, presentations)
- Chris Brogan ([Personal Branding for the Business Professional](http://www.chrisbrogan.com/16043/personal-branding-business-professional.html)) – a MUST READ!!
- William Arruda (various books and videos)
- Kirsten Dixon (and William Arruda)
- Meg Giuseppi (Executive Branding and Your LinkedIn Profile)
- Eric Swartz (*The Tagline Guru*)
- Jack Trout (*Differentiate or Die*)
- David Meerman Scott (*The New Rules of Marketing & PR*)
- Julie Chance (Marketing, Branding)
- Olga Slavkina (Marketing, Branding)
- Dr. Walt Guarino ([SGW Integrated Marketing Communications](http://www.sgwin.com), Montville, NJ) – Friend and Branding Mentor
- Cone, Steve (*Powerlines: Words That Sell Brands, Grip Fans, & Sometimes Change History*) – Taglines!
- [Boscobel Marketing Communications](http://www.boscobel.com), Silver Spring, MD
- [Owlish Communications](http://www.owlishcommunications.com) ([LinkedIn; J. D. Gershbein](http://www.linkedin.com/in/jdgershbein), Vernon Hills, IL)
- [Hubspot](http://www.hubspot.com) (Cambridge, MA … When it comes to Inbound Marketing and SEO, they’re tough to beat!)
Section 8.1 Attribution & Acknowledgements (continued)

People: Planning & Editing Expertise

Special thanks to Ellen Oxild, a good friend and business partner with a gift for isolating and solving problems before they become migraines. As a talented graphic designer and fellow writer, Ellen provided a steady stream of helpful suggestions that enabled me to compress my timeline for completion of this e-book.

Please be sure to check out Ellen’s profile on LinkedIn: [LinkedIn Profile]

Images

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I would like to thank Brad Van Auken (via The Financial Brand web site) for allowing me to use the high-impact graphic on page 10 in the introductory portion of this e-book (“The Sweet Spot”).

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The Basics of Personal Branding  (PDF E-book)
Illustrative Marketing/Branding/Advertising (IMBA)  (Slide Deck)

Can we can help you with your writing, branding, marketing, and advertising needs?
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