

Personal Branding: your key to success!



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Will you stand out?

Nowadays a lot of professionals are not getting their dream job. The labour market has changed due to the world economy, the recession and government politics. Although you are an expert, you're probably not the only one who is interested in the ultimate dream job. How would you do it? How do you make a difference as a professional starter? Focusing on Personal Branding is a smart thing to do, because an outstanding CV is not enough. It will only work if you're ready to show some personality. Otherwise you sell yourself short. Let's start today!

Personal Branding?

The first misconception about Personal Branding is, that it doesn't mean just Social Media. Google on Personal Branding and the first things that will show up are about Social Media, LinkedIn et cetera. However, Social Media is one of the many communication channels you can choose to expose your brand. To spread the word. But it is not the first step in creating a Personal Brand. The second misconception about Personal Branding is that a lot of people think it's just showing your CV and references. Unfortunately, most of them look the same. Your achievements, results and experience do matter, it's the base, but they do not make the difference.

In my opinion, you could see Personal Branding as a long term 'fingerprint' or Blueprint of you. It's about your personality, who you really are. What people say about you.... Your brand that evolves and develops in time together with you as a person. Which means standing out with your passion and drive, talent, future ambitions and qualities. Personal things make a difference and make your life richer. It means being your own authentic ambassador, which has an effect on your success at work. It might be the main reason why people feel delightful to work with you or happy to give you the interesting projects and opportunities.

As a psychologist/trainer, I start with Personal Branding on the inside. This simply means with your personality. And your appearance counts too. Whether you like it or not, we do make a first impression and radiate our brand continuously. For 90% our first impressions are based on likeability, appearance, attitude, personal space and non-verbal communication. Not on content or knowledge. So ask for a second chance if you blew your first one....!! On the next page you'll find some suggestions to start expressing your brand the way you benefit from it.

1. Knowing yourself first (mood board)!

Whether you like it or not, people are talking about you and there are things about you on the internet. So your image is already there. How often do you check what others really think of you and do you ask for feedback? Does it reflect you properly, the way you want it? What do you want to show about your Personal Brand to the world? And how much influence can you get? It's important to know yourself and your personality first to get into the drivers' seat for your Personal Brand. When you experience the fun, the positive effects and satisfaction of working on your Personal Brand, you'll see the advantage of it on the long term. As I mentioned before, it is an ongoing process.....

- Brand ME: What is my blueprint? Who am I? What are my sources of inspiration, my drives, my qualities, my core values et cetera (identity)
- Perception of YOU. Ask for feedback in your private and professional environment.
- Social Brand Screening: Google yourself frequently. What do you discover? (image)
- Mood Board: Challenge yourself and stimulate your brain. Visuals are much more powerful than words. Create a mood board of the Brand ME, based on your answers above. Use pictures, symbols, text, photos, slogans and definitely use a photo from your childhood (childhood dream).
- Present your mood board to your support group. Does it reflect you? What are the TOPs and TIPs?
- For the ones who have the guts: take a picture/PDF of this mood board and send it together with your CV/resume and your application or bring it to your job interview. Or post it on LinkedIn!



2. Finding the Perfect Match

Many products and services but also professionals and career makers are more or less the same. Together with several global labour market trends, facts & figures about reorganizations, there is a serious urgency for Personal Branding. To make a difference. For all kind of professionals and starters. Start to find the culture or organization you are attracted to.

- What kind of organization attracts you? What is the organizational culture, behaviour or atmosphere and do you fit in?
- What do you have to offer and do you inspire the specific hiring company with your Personal Brand?
- When can you be authentic? Pretending to be someone else won't last!

When you do find a match; go for it and stand out!

3. Radiate and shine! Communicating your Personal Brand

Are you ready to show your Personal Brand after the first two steps? It's important to realize that hiring companies want to know which personality you'll bring into the company. There is a lot at stake when they see you as a potential employee. So the better they know you, the real you, the better the chances for the match. They might want to know how you deal with difficult situations. Are you ready to face conflicts when necessary? How do you deal with emotions at work? Choose the communication channels that support and radiate your Personal Brand. Please consider the following when you want to stand out.

- How do you tell your personal story? How do you connect? Use your mood board if you have difficulties expressing yourself.
- Do you inspire others with your Personal Brand and how do you inspire?
- What kind of network meetings, conferences or programs do you attend? Are you involved in alumni clubs?
- What kind of Social Media do you choose to support your brand on the Internet? How much information and what kind of information do you show at LinkedIn? Do you have recommendations? What do others write about you on the Internet (likes, dislikes, blogs, Twitter)?
- Do you use a photo in Social Media? How professional is your photo? Make sure it exposes you as an expert.

There is a lot more to explore and to discover when it comes to Personal Branding. Although it is fun, it definitely needs some courage and personal reflection. As a psychologist and expert in this field, I do have a lot to offer. Feel free to contact me about my programs: *Personal Branding - Coaching (1 - 1) and group sessions, Psychology at work, Emotional Intelligence at Work, Personal Empowerment & Market Value*. You can read more on my website www.rebbels.com or follow me at Twitter @jocelynrebbens

Enjoy your Personal Branding expedition!

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