

The 5-Minute Guide To Personal Branding

- SPECIAL REPORT -

In today's society, one that is run by social and digital media, personal branding has become everything. We all spend hours a day on our phones, often scrolling through seemingly endless newsfeeds that are full of promotions, advertisements, as well as subtle, and not-so-subtle, marketing tactics.

We all have a personal brand; we just do not always realize it. The content that you post, from the pictures of your friends and family, to the sunsets, and the meals you that enjoy, all make up your personal brand. Your personal social media accounts are full of the things that you want to share with the world. It is likely mostly full of the high points, celebrating your successes and the lovely things that you have done—holidays, parties, and cute animals. Social media is often described as a “highlight reel.” In effect, even our personal social media accounts have created a perception of ourselves to the world. Often unintentional, we are still only showing people the things that we want them to see, and that means that our followers get a filtered version of our life.

Your personal brand can be harnessed for success. No more is social media just a casual thing we share pictures with our family on. Social media is one of the most powerful tools for business in the twenty-first century. It allows you to build an audience, share your content, and, if used effectively, create meaningful engagement that can translate into sales.

But before all this you need a solid personal brand

When making a personal brand you need to consider the message that you are portraying. Look at your current personal social media accounts and think about how an outsider would view your content; do the same thing some of your friends, families and even celebrities. Understanding other people's brands and the ways that they use them can be a great foundation for thinking about your personal brand. Think about the content that they are sharing the message that it sends and how their followers react and interact with them.

You need to work out exactly what you want your personal brand to convey. You need to know exactly who you are, what do you want and how you are going to do it: your personal brand should reflect your dream life. It is the perception that you want your audience to have of you, it will be what makes them intrigued, engaged and, importantly, what will make them trust you.

Your audience is essential to success of your brand; without them, unfortunately, you are nothing. Building up a legion of loyal followers is the only way for your content to succeed in a meaningful way. In order to have the desired relationship with your audience, you firstly need to understand them. You need to understand who they are superficially and demographically; and then you need to understand them on a deeper psychological level. You should be devoting a significant portion of time to fully recognising who your audience, what they want and what you can do for them. By understanding you audiences' beliefs, values, wants, and needs you can ensure that they will connect with your branding.

Once you have determined who you are, what you will be doing and who your audience is, you need to do research in your industry. You need to understand how the industry works, what is already there, what is successful and what is not. You need to discover what is missing from your industry and exploit it in your personal branding.

Competition is everywhere. There is a huge rivalry between influencers and brands within the same industry. You need to monitor them. Take note of what they are doing and how they are doing it. You can find ways to emulate their success and build on their shortcomings. If they have been in the industry longer than you and are considered a reputable influence, they have likely taken the time you re-evaluate and improve their branding and related content—the power you have is the ability to see it from another perspective and harness the knowledge to benefit your own brand.

Building a strong personal branding strategy is the only way to gain loyal consumers. You need to offer them something that other brands do not, and build a connection, and a community with your target audience. When someone thinks of your industry and what you are trying to accomplish; you want them to think about you. Personal branding is the way to accomplish this.

Once you have developed your brand; you need to build a platform. This means creating accounts on different media platforms. The accounts should be uniform; with the same branding staples across them all. This is because your brand needs to be recognizable.

Your branding is, in essence, your reputation; so, it needs to be a good one. When your audience comes across your platforms and profiles, they will instantly get an impression of who you are; so, it needs to be a good one. Having a “good one” looks different to different brands based on their goals and audiences. Your personal brand needs to be good for you. What works for one brand will not necessarily work for another. There is strength in uniqueness and success in standing out; you just must find it.

Creating content is essential to having achieving success as a brand. Your content needs to be reflective of what you are trying to achieve. It should be appropriate for the platform and of a high quality. Posting less, but higher quality content is more important than just posing for the sake of it. Your content will be the starting point of any conversation your audience will have; it should be clear, concise, and clever. It should be relevant to your brand and to your audience. It should encourage them to act and engage with your branding.

There are many strategies that you can implement to build your personal brand. You need to find the ones that are most appropriate for what you want to achieve. It may not traditionally be the most successful strategy; you just need to find one that works for your brand. It should encompass the message and personality of your brand, while taking into account your audience and preferred platforms. Strategies work in different ways; some cater towards growth and others engagement. Different strategies will be appropriate at different times of your branding journey—discovering which is necessary at which point will help you to capitalize on your successes.

But once you have created a brand and have started to post content, how will you know that it is working? The answer is simple, but can take time to understand completely, and that is analytics.

If your content is not being seen by your audience; that is the first problem that needs to be fixed. If your audience cannot see it; how can they turn your brand into a success? But, if they can see your content, but they are not interacting with it, this could mean that it does not resonate with them. This means you will need to revisit your content strategy, to ensure that it is appropriate, accurately targeted towards your audience and on a platform that they will see it.

This leads us on to engagement. The number of engaged followers you have is more important than the number of total followers you have. You are aiming for high engagement, not high followers. Engagement turns into sales. In order to foster engagement, you need to create a relationship with your audience. Building a relationship with your audience is a way to add credibility, authority, and relatability to your brand; that often is not too hard to accomplish.

As much as making sure your followers are engaged; you need to be, too. You should cater your brand towards your audience, interacting with them in such a way that they feel included and special. You should be active on your platforms, responding to comments and shares and starting a conversation around your brand. Cross-promotional strategies are excellent ways to showcase your work across different platforms. Sharing your content across platforms is a good way to ensure that it is seen by your audience and expose it to new ones.

Remember, within a personal brand, consistency is key. Your brand needs to be well-developed and cohesive. If you are confused about what precisely your brand is, your audience will be too. For that reason, it is essential that your brand is consistent. Consistency is important in terms of the personality that you are presenting—it needs to be uniform, strong, and trustworthy.

Your branding needs to be consistent from a design perspective. This means using the same visual elements in your content, and, additionally, your content needs to be consistent too. Developing a posting schedule is the best method for ensuring that you remain on track to meet your goals and keep your audience entertained.

Consistency and professionalism go hand in hand; being consistent is the easiest way to gain credibility.

At the end of the day, you need to be open-minded towards your personal branding. Sometimes, you need to accept that there are elements of your brand that are not successful or are hindering your ability to reach your next goals. This is okay and completely normal. By monitoring your progress, you are keeping all these things in mind.

Being able to adapt is pivotal in the business world and will allow you to stay ahead of trends. You do not want to get left behind, so adapting to changes in content, monitoring your engagement and updating your personal branding strategy will increase the longevity of your brand. You need to stay on top of your industry research. By monitoring what your competition is doing, and how their brands are evolving, you can make sure that you are not being left behind. By constantly devoting time to research the trends and keep an eye on your industry as a whole you are allowing your brand to grow constantly. This is in contrast to if you neglect to keep up with trends and end up having to completely revitalize your brand. Staying relevant is the best way to stay successful.

In conclusion, your personal branding is what will guarantee you success in your business endeavor or be the cause of your failure. You could be delivering the best product or service in the world, but if you are not reaching your audience; in terms of content or engagement, your brand will not succeed.

You need to completely understand your brand, your industry and your audience. You need to choose appropriate platforms for your content and create quality content to attract your target audience. You need to inspire and foster a real connection with your audience to build your brand reputation and credibility. You should stay available and consistent so that your audience knows that you are trustworthy and dedicated. You need to stay up to date with the industry and your competition. Build connections within it to build up your network and audience.

Mostly importantly you need to keep on top of things.

Update your branding strategy and content if you find that it is not achieving the results you would like. Being flexible and being able to update your strategies in order to better fit the whims and desires of your target audience is one of the pillars of a good brand. Continuing to do the same ineffective things over again, yet expecting different results is doing a disservice to your brand.

Personal branding is the best foundation for success; build it up well and the results will grow exponentially.