



# FINDING YOUR REBEL VOICE™

## **7 Key Strategies to Connecting With Who You Are**

An individual's guide and workbook to identifying with  
your personal brand and authentically standing out

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The purpose of this book is to educate and simplify an often complex or little understood subject. The author and the publisher shall have neither liability nor responsibility to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damage caused, directly or indirectly by information covered in this book.

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## How to use this workbook

You may have come across the term personal branding, but there are many interpretations as to what personal branding is and the length and depth that brand strategists and others work with clients varies considerably.

My intention with this workbook is to explain the importance of following a logical series of steps in building a personal brand. All too often I am working with clients who have been 'branded' only to find that they have no true connection or relation between who they really are and the brand that has been created for them.

The two are intertwined and are inseparable, you cannot develop and refine a strong personal brand without spending time defining who you are, what you stand for and what drives you – that foundation becomes the cornerstone of your brand.

Take time to read through the workbook, it is predominantly aimed in text at the professional or executive who is looking to make a career move – which might be internally where they currently work or taking themselves externally in to the job market. Take time to complete the exercises for greater learning.

The tips and insights are equally applicable to people at all levels and stages of their careers from school leavers to the semi retired and from junior workers to C-level.

Also the personal branding approach and outcomes can be adapted and work very successfully with the self employed and small business owner. After all they do not have the budgets of large corporations and have to be creative in the tactics they use to get their message out there. As well many times the brand of the company is stamped with the personality of the owner – the personal brand is the company brand.

I trust that you find the information useful to you, your career or business and in discussions with others. It is not intended as a replacement to working with a professional brand strategist who can tailor the work they do to your specific situation, but more as a starting point to what I hope will be a journey of discovery for you that results in your achieving all that you want to.



## Introduction

The world of work has changed, self-employment, freelancing and contracting are considered normal and traditional career management and job search approaches are broken. After all, **who solely relies today on a document that was first used over 500 years ago**, to represent themselves in an age where someone can find you and most of your experience with a click? But that is what the vast majority of executives, service professionals and even the self-employed are doing by offering a resume or online chronological profile as their lead career marketing piece, a piece first used by Da Vinci in 1482!

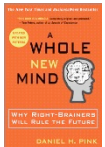
## Change is Constant

30 years ago you were told that your career would be spent with one company from leaving school to retirement.....now your career is spent with numerous companies, more than likely in more than one industry or is not with an employer at all.

20 years ago you were told that the biggest challenge in the 21st century would be what to do with your leisure time....now your challenge is maintaining a successful business or career and a work life balance.

10 years ago you were told that we were entering a long period of prosperity and unlimited opportunity.....now our economies are just recovering, employee engagement is at all-time lows and people are seeking alternatives.

5 years ago you were told due to the retiring boomer generation the shortage for talent would be so great that you could name your price and work conditions.....now offshoring is common and imported talent is the norm. Long term unemployment, reduced benefits and slowed career progression, especially for the younger generation is a stark reality, as is delayed retirement for many.



*"If your job can be done faster by a machine or software or cheaper somewhere else in the world then you need to differentiate or that job will not exist" – Dan Pink, A Whole New Mind*

Students in the first year of a science or technology program in most Universities will find that by the time they graduate 25% of what they learnt in year 1 is already obsolete or revised.

The elementary or pre-schoolers of today will have careers that will span four different functions and industries, an average of 19 employers and 70% of the jobs they will end up doing are yet to be developed.

Several surveys have found that the average executive can now expect to be looking for a new opportunity every 3-5 years and be made redundant **at least** 2 or 3 times in the career. At certain times the average tenure of a Chief

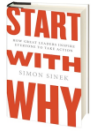
Marketing Officer in a Fortune 500 company in the United States has been as little as 23 months, an average of 48 – that's often not even time to see the results of your 3 year plan!

Global costs and technological advancements have completely changed the landscape of work and business as we know it - forever. Everything is geared toward cheaper, faster, simpler.

**Individuals are craving recognition and have a stronger desire to know what they are doing is making a difference.**

*"Unless you give motivated people something to believe in, something bigger than their job to work toward, they will motivate themselves to find a new job and you'll be stuck with whoever's left."*

**Simon Sinek, Start With Why**



There is one thing that we can all be certain of over the next 5, 10, 20 and 30 years - the world and how our careers are defined will be in constant change. You cannot necessarily predict where the world will be or where, but you can **take greater control of your position in it and define your success.**

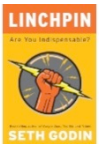
BUT you will not find that control and success from repeating what has been done in the past, the track record of career predictions sucks, you know it – look where you are right now.

**Not advancing as far, or as fast in your career or business as you expected?**

- Need to update how you go about promoting yourself for your next great project or client?
- Do you feel that when you do get in to management there seems to be only one club and you are not a member?
- Or something has stopped you from advancing any further?

**Wouldn't be great to have a plan and action steps that get you there?**

To know when an opportunity is right for you and equally important identify when it's a wrong move. To have reference points that keep you focused in the right direction. To be able to tell others about your skills and strengths in a way that feels natural to you and doesn't come across as pushy or bragging and develop equally compelling career or business marketing documents rather than rely on the boring old resume or tri-fold brochure?



*"If you need to conceal your true nature to get in the door, understand that you'll probably have to conceal your true nature to keep that job."* **Seth Godin, Linchpin**

## **You are certainly not alone.**

This feeling is not unusual, in fact many successful professionals have been able to advance on the fast track because of their technical skills. But now this rapid rise is slowing or they realise it's not what they want in the future. This is happening for a number of reasons, not just the economy and uncertainty but also because the people they have to influence fall outside of their immediate network, area of expertise and comfort areas.

Suddenly it's not so easy to be recognized by those who are making the decisions and reaching out to them and getting noticed requires a whole new understanding and set of skills.

**Master a unique process that sets a path to your ultimate goal.** In our research in working with top performers we have identified **four key** actions that you must take;

- **Align your strengths and skills with your aspirations.**
- **Connect with decision makers in ways your competitors or peers cannot.**
- **Communicate your unique personal brand and leadership value.**
- **Leverage technology and social media to get you noticed.**

What we have also found is that those who are willing to reveal more of what we call their Rebel Voice™ are more likely to achieve the goals and results they seek and do it faster.

**They are what we call Rebellious Professionals.**

**We help you master a unique process that sets a path to your ultimate goal.**

## **The World of Work Has Changed – Forever – how personal branding is shaping the future for both corporations and individuals.**

***"That cross-trainer you're wearing -- one look at the distinctive swoosh on the side tells everyone who's got you branded. That coffee travel mug you're carrying -- ah, you're a Starbucks woman! Your T-shirt with the distinctive Champion "C" on the sleeve, the blue jeans with the prominent Levi's rivets, the watch with the hey-this-certifies-I-made-it icon on the face, your fountain pen with the maker's symbol crafted into the end ...***

***You're branded, branded, branded, branded.***

***It's time for me -- and you -- to take a lesson from the big brands, a lesson that's true for anyone who's interested in what it takes to stand out and prosper in the new world of work.***

***Regardless of age, regardless of position, regardless of the business we happen to be in, all of us need to understand the importance of branding. 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."*** – Tom Peters, Fast Company – 1997

When Tom Peters wrote this in Fast Company, I am not sure if he expected it to take as long for the noise of Brand You to be finally heard in the mainstream of people's careers – but it has finally arrived and is only going to get louder.

But why is personal branding starting to be recognized as a very legitimate way for people to be identified and to manage their careers now?

Well the world of work has certainly changed and continues to do so. My father spent 43 years working – 2 years with his first company and 41 with the next – loyalty, security and the belief that a job was for life drove his generation forward in their careers.

If you know anyone in elementary school now, 70% of the jobs they will end up doing on leaving school have yet to be developed. First year science or technology graduates will find 25% of what they learn this year will be obsolete or revised by the time they graduate.

By the time my son graduates (hopefully!) in around 2022 his career going forward will span 4 completely different functions and probably industries, with an average of 19 employers.



Global costs and technology are completely changing the landscape of work as we knew it and we can only guess how we will be job searching in 5 or 10 years time.

One thing, to be sure, will be that we will be presenting ourselves completely differently – the percentage of people misrepresenting themselves on their resume is now fast approaching a third – making that document one that cannot be relied on.

Already as many as 77% of executives are using the internet to research who they are meeting prior to that first face to face – your on line identity will be as critical as your references and experience. If you do not do so already go out and buy your own domain now – before you end up with [www.JohnBloggs15874358.com](http://www.JohnBloggs15874358.com) !!

The rise of product branding, employment branding and even celebrity branding has raised our awareness of the influence of branding, it is becoming a commonly used phrase in conversations.

To understand where personal branding is coming from we should quickly take a look at some of the falsehoods that surround branding.

- Branding is not about spin or creating something that is not
- Branding was not invented by Nike or Coke
- Branding is not just for products and companies
- Branding is not just for the BIG guys

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is witnessing the collision of two societal trends that are creating the demand and opportunity for personal branding. That first trend is the new world of work we have already spoken about, companies are being forced to react so much more quickly and to be innovative – our uniqueness provides that supply of creativity. And tied to that is the second trend of Egonomics – a term coined by Faith Popcorn – that identifies our need to be recognized as unique individuals who crave non-conformity at work.

It's at the intersection of these two trends that personal branding is evolving – where companies demand unique contributions and we crave that recognition of our unique value.

So personal branding is no more than the opportunity for all of us to be ourselves. It is an opportunity to be what Marty Neumeir calls a "Charismatic Brand" – a brand for which people feel there is no substitute.

Being able to clearly identify and communicate those differences and using those qualities to guide your career and using your strengths, skills, passions and values to separate yourself from your competitors are the benefits of personal branding.

And personal branding is not just for the self employed or small business owner but also for job seekers at the professional level, career changers and even students.

A fast growing area is also with in corporations as organizations realize that the success of their own brands will be determined by the feeling of ownership and belief from their employees. They are realizing that the best way to keep employees engaged is to allow them to develop and recognize their own brands and then 'present' the company in their own unique style. We just have to look at the huge success of Four Seasons, Southwest Airlines and Starbucks as examples of this employee power driving the success of brands.

Personal branding is the way to expand success and still be in touch and focused on who you are, so jump on the 'brand wagon' now.

## **The 7 Strategies of Personal Branding**

***".....or consider the notion, made popular in this magazine, of the Brand Called You. This signature story in 1997 argued that we should imagine ourselves as brands and manage our professional lives accordingly.***

***Often discredited, if not ridiculed, as unemployment climbed higher, that idea turns out to be every bit as relevant now as it was then. The difference, as author Tom Peters points out, is that in good times, the Brand Called You was a luxury.***

***Now as companies continue to discard employees like used Kleenex, you have no choice but to actively market your personal brand. No one else will do it for you."***

John A Byrne – Editor – Fast Company, March 2004

### **The World of Careers & Job Searching**

Less than 30 years ago we were told that our career would be spent with one company from leaving school to retirement.....now our career is spent with numerous companies in more than one industry.

Less than 20 years ago we were told that the biggest challenge in the 21st century would be what to do with our leisure time....now our challenge is maintaining a successful career and a work life balance.

Less than 10 years ago we were told that we were entering a long period of prosperity and unlimited opportunity.....now our economies are recovering, but people have not made the career moves that they have wanted to.

Less than 5 years ago we were told due to the retiring boomer generation the shortage for talent would be so great that we could name our price.....now the big job news is offshoring and delayed retirement for many.

There is one thing that we can all be certain of over the next 5, 10, 20 and 30 years - the job market and how our careers are defined will be in constant change.

We cannot necessarily predict where the world will be, but we can take greater control of our careers and position our success through personal branding.

## **Branding**

We are exposed more and more to the power of branding, it is estimated that the average North American is bombarded with as many as 3,000 different advertising messages everyday! Companies spend millions on that very advertising because in the past it has been proven to;

- Support premium pricing
- Extend product lines
- Increase company valuations
- Enable survival in downturns better
- Even attract better talent to organisations

Celebrities are now also heavily involved in the branding process through the products they endorse and their own 'persona's' that are presented to us as brands - you just need to look at Martha Stewart, Jack Welch or Tiger Woods to see the power of celebrity branding.

## **So Why Not Personally Brand?**

It helps you to clarify and communicate differences and specialties and use those qualities to guide your career. Also in understanding your strengths, skills, passions and values and using to separate yourself from your competitors.

## **What to Consider- The 7 P's of Personal Branding**

### 1. Personal

Your values and passions, what values impact you and what drives you?

### 2. Perception

What are your attributes? Develop a focus group, ask for input, collate response and consolidate.

### 3. Potential

What else can you uncover? What other hidden talents do you possess?

### 4. Positioning

Who are your target audience? What segments? Who are your competitors in the job market?

### 5. Performance

Can you and have you delivered? Develop a Personal Brand Statement

### 6. Packaging

How does your resume look? cover letter? portfolio? How do you present yourself? How are you priced?

### 7. Planning

Plan your professional path. Promote you and rebrand where necessary.

## **What Can You Do Right Now in Your Career?**

One of the strongest and most effective personal brand tools is your portfolio – which of course has to be online. If you do not have one you are missing a fantastic opportunity in every meeting and interview to showcase your brand.

Start to put one together including all relevant documentation that are good examples of your brand. Invest in a presentation folder that keeps all the documents together in either chronological or project order.

Include examples that will highlight:

Your unique skills – what have people said about you in reviews or letters/e-mails of praise. Or alternatively look to use specific tools to gather external feedback on your attributes and strengths, such as the 360 personal branding tool.

Your achievements – certificates, letters of praise and thanks, actual sales figures or other specifics make for great show and tell in an interview.

Your involvement in influential projects - show examples of where you have been utilised in or led a project or job and made a difference. If you have specifics through measurable results - \$ or %'s include these as they are really golden.

Bottom line is that as the quote says **“..... you have no choice but to actively market your personal brand. No one else will do it for you.”** you cannot afford to rely on others to control or direct your career anymore, and you have to look at developing and nurturing your brand for career and business success.

## **Making Your Most Important Hiring Decision**

Strategy 1 – Personal - appointing the VP's of your life

It is critical to approach the personal branding process with the mind to start with a strong foundation, this is an area that you should not cover lightly or try to miss out all together. It is also usually the most difficult part of the process because it requires an amount of introspection that many people feel uncomfortable with.

As an executive you understand the importance of having a vision and mission for the company and it is certainly no different in approaching your own career – its just a lot harder when the focus has to be you. But as Yogi Berra has said “If you don't know where you are going, you will end up someplace else” – so setting some direction for your career is a fundamental step.

Your first step is to appoint the first VP and decide both what you would like to see for the world (your vision) and then also your personal role in that world (purpose – or mission).

Your vision can be a big picture – the 50,000 foot view – something that you alone cannot achieve. Bill Gates, while the richest man in the world and probably the top influencer in terms of computers, still has a vision that is bigger than him – ‘to see a computer in the hands of every human’ – much of what he does personally both in business and philanthropically move him toward that vision – for example he is one of the major backers who have realized the development of a laptop for under \$100 – making it affordable to a much wider market than ever before.

Your purpose needs to be something much more tangible that is a realistic but stretching expectation of yourself – what can you do to effect that vision? What would you like people to say about you? How would you like to be remembered?

Once you have clarity on your vision and purpose you can put yourself through a goals exercise that looks at where you want to be over the next 10 years. How many times have you asked or been asked in interviews – “Where do you want to be in 5 years time?” – many interviewees struggle with this and it is sometimes thought to be a question that should be dropped from the process.

But think about it for a moment, it is a key question to ask someone in light of today's work environment. The average tenure in one position is now 4 years and with one employer only a year more – so starting in your new position you should already be planning what your next move is in terms of functionality and company – and that should be just the start of the goal making process.

With some goals you will have a clearer picture of where you want to be, by when. But distractions will arise that will cause you to stop and question your direction or make you reconsider a decision. That is why the second VP – Values & Passions - are an equally important appointment that you make early in the personal branding process.

Your Values and Passions are your guiding lights that ensure you keep on track for the long term but more importantly become the beacons that you will not compromise. These are your true underlying motivators that get you fired up when it's all heading in the right direction and upset or angry when you have to compromise them or they are challenged.

If I was landing on earth for the first time this is what the ideal world would look like

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My role in this world is going to be

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## The EvalYOUation®

Very often in the personal branding work clients reflect back on this exercise as one of the most important that they do. It results in major shifts of perspective or confirms for them why they are doing what they do.

Your values are the operating principles that form the base of your belief system. You take your values with you wherever you go.

Knowing your values is crucial for making decisions in career, business and life, because it helps you recognize whether you and a particular organization, client or project are a good match.

To better understand your values, take note when something occurs that bothers you and ask yourself why it makes you upset. Or look when time flies by and something feels so natural and easy. Either way chances are one or more of your values are the root of either the dissatisfaction or the excitement.

### **EvalYOUation® - Step One: Identify your Values**

Review the attached list of values and complete the following exercise:

- 1: As you read through the list do the following:
  - Circle the words that you feel really "*fit*" you
  - Draw a line through words that really *don't* fit you
  - Feel free to add values that you don't see on the list
  
- 2: Take a few moments to look at the words you circled as a "fit" for you, and put an asterisk or star by the 10-15 that you feel most closely fit your values.

## Identifying your Values

Accessibility	Efficiency	Optimism
Accomplishment	Elegance	Originality
Accountability	Empathy	Passion
Accuracy	Endurance	Peace
Adaptability	Enthusiasm	Perfection
Adventure	Excellence	Perseverance
Affection	Experience	Persuasiveness
Affluence	Expertise	Power
Altruism	Fairness	Precision
Ambition	Faith	Professionalism
Assertiveness	Fame	Prosperity
Balance	Family	Punctuality
Belonging	Fidelity	Realism
Bravery	Fitness	Recognition
Calmness	Flexibility	Relaxation
Celebrity	Frugality	Reliability
Challenge	Fun	Resourcefulness
Charity	Generosity	Respect
Clarity	Grace	Security
Cleverness	Gratitude	Self-control
Comfort	Growth	Sensitivity
Commitment	Harmony	Significance
Compassion	Health	Sincerity
Completion	Honesty	Speed
Conformity	Honor	Spirituality
Contentment	Humor	Spontaneity
Control	Imagination	Stability
Conviction	Impact	Strength
Cooperation	Independence	Structure
Courage	Integrity	Success
Creativity	Intelligence	Support
Curiosity	Justice	Sympathy
Dependability	Kindness	Teamwork
Determination	Knowledge	Understanding
Devotion	Leadership	Virtue
Dignity	Learning	Vision
Directness	Love	Wealth
Discipline	Loyalty	Winning
Diversity	Mindfulness	Wisdom

Education

Modesty

Zeal

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Now is the time to get extra focused on your core values. These will be the ones that truly drive many of your decisions.

**EvalYOUation® - Step 2: Focus on your core Values**

Review the list of 10-15 values that you identified in Step 1 of the EvalYOUation®:

- 1: From your list of 10-15 words, select the top 5 words that you feel most closely articulate your values.
- 2: Record these top 5 values in order of priority with "1" being your most important on the next sheet.
- 3: Now really think about these values and what they mean to you. Capture that in the form of a sentence.

**In the space below, write your 5 top values – *in order of priority with "1" being your most important value:***

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Reflect on your personal definition of what each of these values means to you.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **EvalYOUation® – Step 3 - Aligning and Living Your Values**

Now you have been able to really focus down to your core 5 values, how are they showing up for you right now?

Are you living them all to the fullest extent you can or are there some gaps?

It's okay, chances are for most of us we are having to compromise our values in some way. Being aware of that is the first step. Then if we are able to make some small changes and commit to those we can start to live to our values a little more closely. That is good for us, others and our personal brands.

- 1: On the next sheet you will see instructions to align your top values.
- 2: On that sheet you will also see instructions on making a commitment to “realign” one of your top values.

## EvalYOUation®- Value Alignment

In the space below, write your 5 top values from Step 2. Now consider how much your life is *currently* aligned with each value. In the column next to each value – circle the corresponding number which best describes how aligned that value is with your current life choices. “1” would indicate a low alignment and a “10” would indicate very high alignment.

*For example if one of your values is “teamwork” and you consistently collaborate and work in teams you might give yourself a “9”. If one of your values is “teamwork” and you rarely communicate with others you might give yourself a “2”*

Top 5 Values	Current life alignment with Value									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

## Value Realignment

Choose one of the values above (perhaps that with the lowest score) and make a commitment to yourself on how you can bring that value back into alignment as a priority in your life in the next 30 days. It can be one major thing or perhaps 2 or 3 smaller steps. Try to make it part of your daily routine.

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## Do You Really Know Who You Are – Or What Others Think of You?

Strategy 2 – Perceptions – What are your perceptions?

As an experienced executive who has either conducted many interviews or been on the receiving end of a few tough interview questions, you should be well prepared for the somewhat over used interview question – “If I were to ask your best friend/closest work colleague to describe you, what would they say?”

But if you were able to take the interviewer through a detailed analysis of others perceptions of you in a positive and informative manner do you think that the impression you leave will be much stronger?

All good marketers at some point in a brands development look for feedback, usually in the form of a focus group – and it should be no different for you in your own career. It is critical to know how others perceive you for a number of reasons:

1. Are your beliefs in how you are perceived consistent with what people actually think about you?
2. Is there consistency amongst different groups who you interact with? Do your friends and relatives see a different you to the one that peers and colleagues see for example?
3. If your next employer is going to go to some of these people for references (either officially or unofficially) it's important that you are at least armed with some information to counter any potential negative feedback on your leadership style.
4. If there are some glaring shortfalls at least being aware of them can help you understand how you impact others, even if you decide not to do anything about it.

Start by getting a mix of friends, colleagues, managers and ask them for objective but honest feedback on what they think of you. You can ask them to;

1. List the top 6 attributes that best describe me \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 
2. What is my greatest strength \_\_\_\_\_
  3. What is my greatest weakness \_\_\_\_\_

To get some worthwhile data you want to be choosing at least 3 or 4 people from each group, ideally more. When you have the information collate by grouping and see if there are patterns to what is being said by the members of that group.

Then look to see if there is consistency between groups – if there is that is an indication of a strong brand, if not there might be some work needed on your brand.

One of the major disadvantages with this approach is that you are 'openly' asking for feedback, which some people might be reluctant to give and they may not be as honest as they might be if the questions were anonymous.

One such tool that allows you to ask for and receive anonymous feedback all via e-mail is a personal brand assessment tool that also has additional questions related to peoples perceptions of you as various brands – cars, cereals etc.

This can provide very rich data beyond the more clear feedback in the types of questions above, because people will explain their choices. So for example one person may choose Oatmeal to describe you because it is healthy and good for you, on the other hand someone may have chosen it because it's bland and stodgy!

Much more can be done with the feedback, even to the point of lifting comments to use as mini-testimonials or quotes in other job marketing tools you are using.



## Understanding More About Yourself

Strategy 3 – Potential – uncovering other hidden talents

How often do you take time to reflect on your strengths?

Many executives are very poor at spending enough time on their own personal development from a regular review of their skills and abilities, in fact it might only be in their annual reviews that they do this, and those experiences are not always very positive ones.

If you have ever had to endure a performance appraisal the typical catalogue of events can run like this:

1. Fill in very lengthy self analysis form looking at all areas of your performance over the last year
2. Seek the input of peers, colleagues and managers
3. Sit down with supervisor for an hour to review all of the above
4. Spend the first 5 minutes reflecting on your strengths
5. Spend the remaining 55 minutes identifying, dissecting, analyzing and navel gazing your weaknesses
6. Create an action plan around how you are going to bring your weaknesses up to an, at best, average level of performance.
7. Feel like you are treading water and not progressing as fast as you would like.
8. Repeat annually to the point of absolute frustration.

Some may view this as either a little simplistic or harsh, but the truth is that only 42% of Americans believe that working mostly on their strengths will mean they are more successful and that drops to an alarming 24% of Japanese and Chinese.

“Now Discover Your Strengths” by Marcus Buckingham and Donald Clifton is a highly recommended read for anyone interested in building their personal brand and tackles this subject head on.

Very often it is difficult for you to articulate your top strengths and how they might be reflected in your career to date. With the ‘Strengths’ book there is an opportunity to take the “Strengths Finder” assessment online and have your top 5 strengths identified with explanations.

My top 5 StrengthsFinder Strengths are \_\_\_\_\_

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You can then take this information and create your examples, or stories, around how you have used that strength in a work situation. So in interviews you are not only just listing what you consider your strengths to be but also giving reference and context with a concrete example – very powerful and memorable when the interviewer is doing a review at the end of the day.

There are many other assessments and tests that can be taken to understand more about yourself, but it is probably best to find one or two that resonate and make sense to you and work with those than take a battery of tests that are more likely to confuse than confirm.

Another good marketing exercise to conduct is a SWOT analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats. In each area ask your self these questions:

Strengths – what are my strengths, what do I have that is positive, that can help me achieve my goals?

Weaknesses – what are my weaknesses, where am I challenged the most?

Opportunities – if I was able to overcome those weaknesses and utilise my strengths what will result for me? What is the upside?

Threats – what is the down side if I do not address those challenges?

It's not just enough to be aware of your strengths, take the time to discover if you have other hidden talents either through your own analysis or from the feedback of others – ideally both. The foundation of strong brands are built in part on maximising strengths.

## Who, What, Where?

Strategy 4 – Positioning – identifying your target industry, audience & competitors

There is absolutely no benefit if you have spent all that effort defining and developing your personal brand if you spend most of your time communicating it to the wrong audience.

Having a clear understanding of your target audience is critical to being noticed by the right people, so you should be able to clearly and in quite some detail be able to describe them.

You might know who that target audience is already and if you have been in that business for a while might even know them by name. If not then you need to take some time to think about who might be attracted with the skills and strengths you have identified, or perhaps who you most would like to be working alongside perhaps based on some of your passions. Your needs might be a bit more immediate than that, in which case who has the greatest need for your skills and talents right now?

Another factor to consider is not necessarily to put you with in an industry silo but to look at it differently in terms of the target's influence – such as the disabled or literacy – see if there can be a stronger link to your vision and/or purpose.

Once you have decided on that industry or segment you need to take it down to the next level as to which people in that arena are the ones that you need to influence and who need to be exposed to your brand and your message.

Approach this from both the demographics – such as age, gender, location etc and then take it deeper to the psychographics – what do they do in their spare time, what they like to read, what professional or community activities might they be involved in – this can be invaluable for you to 'meet' these targets in situations where perhaps your competition will never be.

My target audience is\_\_\_\_\_

Looking at your competition you must be fully aware of the potential barriers for you and these can be outside of the box in terms of threat. Coca Cola for example considers one of its major competitor's cell phones because their target market – youth- may choose to spend a dollar on text messaging or phone calls versus buying a can of Coke.

Conduct a similar exercise to that of target industry and target audience – again experience might already tell you who they are. What is the same- what do you have in common with these competitors? Now more importantly what makes you different?

For that thinking outside of the box who else might be competing for your target audience's time and resources? What advantage do you have over that competition, why should your target market listen to your message?

Some of the earlier work in the personal branding process is that of identifying your strengths and brand attributes. Some of those you would expect you and all people like you to have – i.e. your competitors are likely to have these attributes – for example a Chief financial Officer would be expected to have Honesty as an attribute for the role they perform. This then would be considered a rational attribute. But a CFO might not need to be Witty, which then would be considered more of an emotional attribute.

It is the emotional attributes that can be the differentiators, the reason people want to work with you and for you and – if you have that attribute and none of your competitors do you can really start to use that positive attribute to stand out to your target audience.

## **Say It Like It Is – But Back It Up**

### Strategy 5 - Performance

Once you are clear about who you are, who your target audience is and why you are different from your competitors you are in a position to put that all together in a one sentence summary – your personal brand statement.

“I use my (differentiating attributes) to (purpose) for (target audience)” – this is your personal brand statement.

For example, an environmentally aware accountant might say:

“I use my caring and collaborative approach to develop self sustaining community supported projects for corporations that have their eye on the bottom line and the environment”

Even clients who have done all the necessary work up to this point still find it hard to distill down to a few words what it is they do, for whom and why they should be considered different. Sometimes using another longer form of ‘elevator speech’ or other such tool can be useful in getting clarity, enough that it can then be culled to just a dozen words or so.

Whilst this approach can appear alien to many of you, the statement needs to sound as natural as possible, its no good throwing in a bunch of words that sound great but have no substance or base of authenticity – its just spin if you are not connected or believe in what you are saying.

But the personal brand statement is just a start. Yes, its intention is to clearly define who you are to others, but what happens after that? The personal brand statement can be at best a conversation starter or a positioning statement, but its not going to seal the deal.

People are not rushing to you to offer you new jobs or opportunities based on this statement alone, you have to back up what you are saying with a lot more.

The key to a strong brand is following the 3 C’s rule – Clarity, Consistency and Constancy. What I call the Donald rule!

Love him or hate him, Donald Trump is a good example of a strong personal brand who follows the 3 C’s. He is clear with his message – if it’s a deal that involves real estate and it’s big and can have his name on the top – that’s on

brand for The Donald. He's very Consistent with that message, you do not see him wavering if there is an opportunity to be in a deal that is in an area he does not know, or with a product or service that does not have a direct link back to his core brand.

Even when you think about his spin off ventures Donald Trump is remaining consistent - from suits (his appearance and love of fine things) to The Apprentice (come and work for the biggest) to even his University (come and learn from the best).

And finally he uses all means possible to be Constantly in your face with his message – even his spat with Rosie O'Donnell was timed to coincide with the launch of his latest round of The Apprentice which was slipping in the ratings, so he picked on somebody who would bite back and who was on a high profile TV show thereby gaining more exposure.

I am not suggesting you need to have a public disagreement with a TV celebrity – but in all that you do to broadcast your message you need to remain clear, consistent and constant – only that way will people start to hear your message above all the others they are bombarded with each day and start to recognize you as an expert or someone to go to for your specific skills.

And also ensure that throughout the job search and selection process you follow this rule, because hiring companies are using more points of reference than just relying on HR or the hiring manager to say yes. They will involve others in and even outside the organization and with the rise in the use of the internet as a talent tracker what you say on line has to carry that same 3 C's content.

## **Think of the Other P's of Marketing**

### Strategy 6 – Packaging

It's no longer the case that a well crafted resume and targeted cover letter is going to land you the job. In fact it is much more likely that first contact for a new opportunity is not going to come from what have been the traditional avenues of job seeking. Namely the job advertising and application process. Third-party recruiters are only filling at best 20% of all positions, probably not even that high.

Even the most conservative of estimates place 50% of the job market being satisfied and sourced from networking and/or employee referral, some sources say as high as 85%. A generic resume is not necessarily going to get someone excited, especially if they do not have an immediate opening for those skills outlined in the document. You become relegated to the file for later pile, which nearly always is never looked at again.

So what can you do to get noticed? Some of the more traditional P's of marketing are a good place to start.

### **Packaging**

The resume needs to be a document that is flexible to various situations. Most people with at least 10 years of experience can write a resume that is more than the two page standard. So what gets cut? Better to have a document that is tailored to specific positions and highlights the more relevant skills and experience.

Use other career marketing documents to stand out, get noticed and stimulate interest. Even the best direct mail campaigns return less than 2%, so resume blasting and other such methods are not going to generate big returns and might even turn off a potential hiring manager or company.

## **Presentation**

Do you look the part? Are you dressing in what you feel comfortable and more importantly what you feel good in – and is it relevant to your target audience? What other aspects of your make up are a true reflection of your brand? If you are in technology do you use a pen and paper or a PDA, do you have a web site or blog that reflects your technical expertise or are you still submitting paper resumes, is your email address [joesmith@gmail.com](mailto:joesmith@gmail.com) or [grubbychops@hotmail.com](mailto:grubbychops@hotmail.com) ? Think what is in your brand environment now that is on and off brand and look to make some changes.

## **Promotion**

Besides the resume how else are you presenting yourself or raising your visibility? Pick three different mediums that you are comfortable with, for example networking, speaking and writing and then consider all the ways that you can make people aware of you through these. Perhaps it is writing for an association newsletter, or being on a panel of experts at a conference or thinking outside the box and attending a non-industry or vocation networking meeting.

## **Price**

Do you know your price? This might sound like a crazy question, but it's amazing how many candidates will waffle when someone asks the direct question how much do you want to earn to do this job? You need to know your absolute minimum, a hiring company knows their minimum and maximum – so should you.

## **Positioning**

This is one area that, if you have done the personal branding work, you should be very clear on. This can save a huge amount of time and effort in that you should only be going after relevant and on target opportunities and leads. If you start to waver from this you get distracted, dilute your effectiveness and potentially damage your brand.

The temptation with any 'campaign' is to fix it before you get a chance to see if it is working. Building a brand is not an overnight thing – even the most successful brands have taken a lot of time and effort building their following, it is going to be the same for you.



## **This is Not the End – it's Just the Beginning**

### Strategy 7 - Planning

Think of the brands that you like and use every day. Chances are that outside of the technology sector these brands were built over years and through many hours of effort, trial, errors and re-branding. Even the highly successful Google or Blackberry, whilst an apparent overnight success are still built on strong foundations and with a focus on what they are good at and known for, companies that have a vision.

Strong brands also are fanatical measurers of their brands success, and very aware and quick to act if their brands fall short of internal and more importantly external expectations and perceptions.

You should be doing the same for your brand. Put in place some measurements – even if it's as simple as putting a line in the sand now as to where your brand sits and then re-visiting that in 6 or 12 months time to see if perceptions have changed. If you are looking to build your on line brand note your Google score and then see how many more entries appear in 6 months time.

But just measuring your brand is not enough; you need to do something about raising the visibility and credibility. That can only happen consistently with a brand action plan.

Identify what aspects of your brand you want to highlight and raise and then identify what actions you need to take to achieve that. Then just like the plate spinner at the circus, do a little bit of everything every week to ensure that all the plates keep spinning. The danger is if you do not do that you become known in one area or only appear on one group's radar and get forgotten by others who are equally important parts of your target audience.

The personal branding process is quite a linear one as you go through the various aspects, but the great thing is that if you do it well the first time you then have a blueprint or a template to look at your brand going forward for the rest of your career.

That means you can re-visit the process on many occasions to review and refine your brand. The average employee in today's job market can expect to be changing jobs and/or employer every 4 to 5 years and potentially changing vocation 2 to 4 times in their career life.

Both of these statistics should be reason enough to have a brand plan, action steps and a regular review process. But many other aspects of our lives can come to play in the defining of our brands – our family, our location, our interests and passions and the branding process enables us to look at those aspects too and make adjustments as needed so that we remain in control and more engaged and motivated – doing something we are good at and we love.

Personal branding is one of the new millennium's hottest career strategy topics and an essential tool for thriving in today's work environment. It is ideal for professionals who want to use who they are to help them increase their success and the value they provide to their employers.

Personal branding is not about creating a false image for the outside world; it's about unearthing and maximizing your true strengths and using them to stand out and achieve your goals. Branding enables you to increase your confidence, self-motivation and visibility so that you can build strong and enduring relationships inside and outside an organization.

It gives you a much better idea of who you are, enhances your credibility and helps you differentiate yourself so that you can get involved in new and exciting projects and opportunities.

You can no longer rely on HR or even your boss to come to you with the next career move, its up to you to take control so that you achieve what you want to and give yourself the stimulation you crave.

This is certainly not the end, just a beginning – a new way of managing your career and life that connects to the real you.

## **In Summary - 20 Things You Should Understand About Personal Branding**

1. Know where you are going in both life and career, work on your Vision and Goals that will set you a clear path and focus
2. Identify and understand your strengths and how these can be used to your benefit in differentiating yourself in the job market and in your career.
3. Seek the feedback and input of others, how is your brand perceived by others, is there consistency across all groups and where do you need to do more to raise your brand profile.
4. Know your target audience from an industry standpoint but also from an individual – who do you need to talk to and influence and where are those people likely to gather.
5. Understand who else and what else might be competing for the same job or promotion. Know what is similar about them and also identify why you are different, how you can positively stand out.
6. Ensure that your resume includes a value statement and that in reading it becomes obvious what you are worth to an employer
7. Develop a longer personal brand statement that can be used in various situations and opportunities – one for 15 seconds, one for 45 seconds and one that can be used in written communications and on profiles.
8. Have a brand identity – project the right, consistent image both physically but also in terms of font, colour, business cards, thank you notes, voicemail messages etc.
9. Understand how you can best communicate your message, what is relevant for your target audience but also how and what do you feel comfortable in delivering.
10. Decide on the key content themes for all communication exercises; provide a strong and consistent message in a few avenues versus the scatter gun approach.
11. Be clear about who you are, what you offer and why you are different – know what is on brand and off brand for you and concentrate on the on brand actions.

12. Don't get involved in actions that can dilute your brand, be consistent with your approach and message.
13. Be sure to be in front of your audience constantly, it takes 7 touches or exposures to catch someone's attention, be sure that continue to be front of mind for your target audience.
14. Never miss an opportunity to connect your brand to the last experience. After a meeting send a thank you that is on brand, meet people in places that are on brand for you.
15. Identify all of the possible things to include in your brand environment and make a plan to get them all on brand. Aligning your environment with your brand will make you more confident and more memorable.
16. Continually nurture and develop your network, your professional contacts are an extension of your brand and may well be your greatest brand ambassadors – treat them that way.
17. Your brand is never stagnant it is always evolving, be on top of its development and refinement – never miss an opportunity to be more on brand.
18. Build your on line brand with passion. Look to place intelligent and valuable comments in on line forums, on blogs, at book reviews – each one becomes a new page on the web and raises your on line profile.
19. Understand that building a brand is not just for now, its something that can be continuous for the rest of your life – it needs to be part of your daily routine, a little brand building every day will ensure a healthy brand.
20. Review and measure your brand strength annually – conduct a brand audit and compare the state of your brand now to where it was 12 months ago.

## And Remember.....

Strong personal brands follow the 5 R's rule

### Is your brand answering the 5 R's?

- Relevance – is it right for your industry and vocation?  
*Satisfy the 'must haves', develop the differences.*
- Resonance – does your target audience see why you make sense?  
*Become the person they want to be associated with.*
- Relation – is there a connection for everyone?  
*Help everyone's brand benefit from your interactions.*
- Remarkability – does it stand out, will it be noticed?  
*Be remembered for the right reasons, in the right way.*
- Real – is it a true reflection of who you are?  
*Feel comfortable, be inspired, have fun.*

### WEB LINKS

Personal Brand Slide Presentation <http://www.slideshare.net/paulcopcutt/stand-up-stand-out-get-ahead-personal-branding-for-career-success>

Online ID Calculator <http://www.onlineidcalculator.com/index.php>

Mashable Social Media Guide - <http://mashable.com/>

[www.zoominfo.com](http://www.zoominfo.com) - search for past colleagues and company contacts

[www.hover.com](http://www.hover.com) - register your own domain and brand your e-mail

[www.alexa.com](http://www.alexa.com) - toolbar that gives web site rankings

[www.authentic happiness.org](http://www.authentic happiness.org) - online FREE quiz version of Strengths Finder

<http://personas.media.mit.edu/personasWeb.html> how your persona looks online

## Blogs

[www.feedly.com](http://www.feedly.com) – subscribe to all your favourite blogs in one place and see when new postings go up

[www.blogsearch.google.com](http://www.blogsearch.google.com) - find a blog on any subject by keyword

## On-line Networks

[www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) - online professional social capital network

<http://blog.linkedin.com/> - LinkedIn's own blog tips on how to use it

[www.thevirtualhandshake.com](http://www.thevirtualhandshake.com) - great summary site for maximising business on line relationships

## **FURTHER READING**

**Now Discover Your Strengths** – Buckingham & Clifton or **StrengthsFinder 2.0** – Tom Rath

**Never Eat Alone** – Keith Ferrazzi

**A Whole New Mind , Drive** and **To Sell Is Human** – Dan Pink

**All Marketers Are Liars** - Seth Godin

**The Brand You 50 : Or : Fifty Ways to Transform Yourself from an 'Employee' into a Brand That Shouts Distinction, Commitment, and Passion!** - and **Re-Imagine** – Tom Peters

**Brain Tattoos – Creating unique brands that stick in your customers minds** – Karen Post

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**Brag- The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn** – Peggy Klaus

**[Make a Name for Yourself: Eight Steps Every Woman Needs to Create a Personal Brand Strategy for Success](#)** - Robin Fisher

**[Career Warfare: 10 Rules for Building a Successful Personal Brand on the Business Battlefield](#)**

David F. D'Alessandro,

**The Brand Called You: The Ultimate Brand-Building and Business Development Handbook to Transform Anyone Into an Indispensable Personal Brand** - Peter Montoya, Tim Vandehey

**Six Pixels of Separation** – Mitch Joel

**Trust Agents** – Chris Brogan and Julien Smith

**Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook** – Gary Vaynerchuk

**The New Rules of Marketing & PR** – David Meerman Scott

**Now I'm on LinkedIn – So What?** – Jason Alba

## Thank You for Reading



I appreciate your taking the time to get all the way to this page and trust that the information has been useful in your starting to define what your personal brand might be – I would love to hear what you thought – e-mail me [paulcopcutt.com](mailto:paulcopcutt.com) and let me know.

If you have suggestions regarding future updates to this e-book or suggestions for articles for my e-zine or my blog please also drop me a note.

Thanks, take care and make every day brandtastic!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul".

Paul Copcutt  
Personal Brand Architect  
Paul Copcutt Unlimited

w: [www.paulcopcutt.com](http://www.paulcopcutt.com)

Connect on LinkedIn: <http://ca.linkedin.com/in/paulcopcutt>

Like on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/careerhacking>

Follow on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/paulcopcutt>



# Paul Copcutt – your rebel guide



*"Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you will help them become what they are capable of becoming" – Johann Goethe*

Described by Forbes magazine as a leading personal brand expert globally, Paul Copcutt has exceptional skills in quickly distilling what he sees and hears in to custom solutions that are effective such as the Fun Accountant who holds Pinata Bar-B-Q's or the Senior VP of IT who hosts Ice Cream Socials.

He helps people uncover their uniqueness and communicate it in an authentic way that appeals to those they are trying to influence and gets them noticed and remembered, for the right reasons.

He is passionate about this work because he knows the only barriers to doing what you love are those you put in place yourself. After two attempts to pass his basic Math qualification and his biology teacher labelling him an idiot, it was ironic that these subjects were the basis of a successful corporate career that started in banking and ended in biotech.

After reading Tom Peters 'Brand You 50" in the late 90's and realising that he had taken many of the actions and suggestions that Peters wrote about, he knew he had to help others have the opportunity to do the same. This would later form the basis of his 'Rebel Voice™' approach, easy to implement actions in an acclaimed, tried and tested process.

He regularly speaks to professional audiences across North America with latest information, personal examples and practical actions as well as being one of the first certified personal brand strategists globally. Over the years his expertise has been honoured with remarkable and notable accolades, inspiring Fortune 500 executives and employees to proactively manage their careers.

A regular media resource, Paul Copcutt's perspectives and client actions have been featured in Elle, Money, Reuters, The Wall Street Journal and the Globe & Mail as well as online including as guest writer on CareerAttraction.com, CareerHub.com and as resident personal brand expert for HigherBracket.ca and BlueSteps.com both resources for the \$100k plus executive and for over 3 years he was top contributor to the Career/Training section of MarketingProfs.

Paul's personal brand expertise has also been cited in several career books including best sellers *Career Distinction*, *The Female Brand* and *The Twitter Job Search Guide*.

A born again runner and committed and passionate about the future of his adopted country and the youth that will be taking that responsibility forward he is a specialist with the not-for-profit Youth in Motion and their annual Top 20 Under 20 awards program. He is on the committee for the annual Climb for Cancer and also active in his local neighbourhood association and in seeing the development of future business owners in his city through a local not for profit community centre .

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