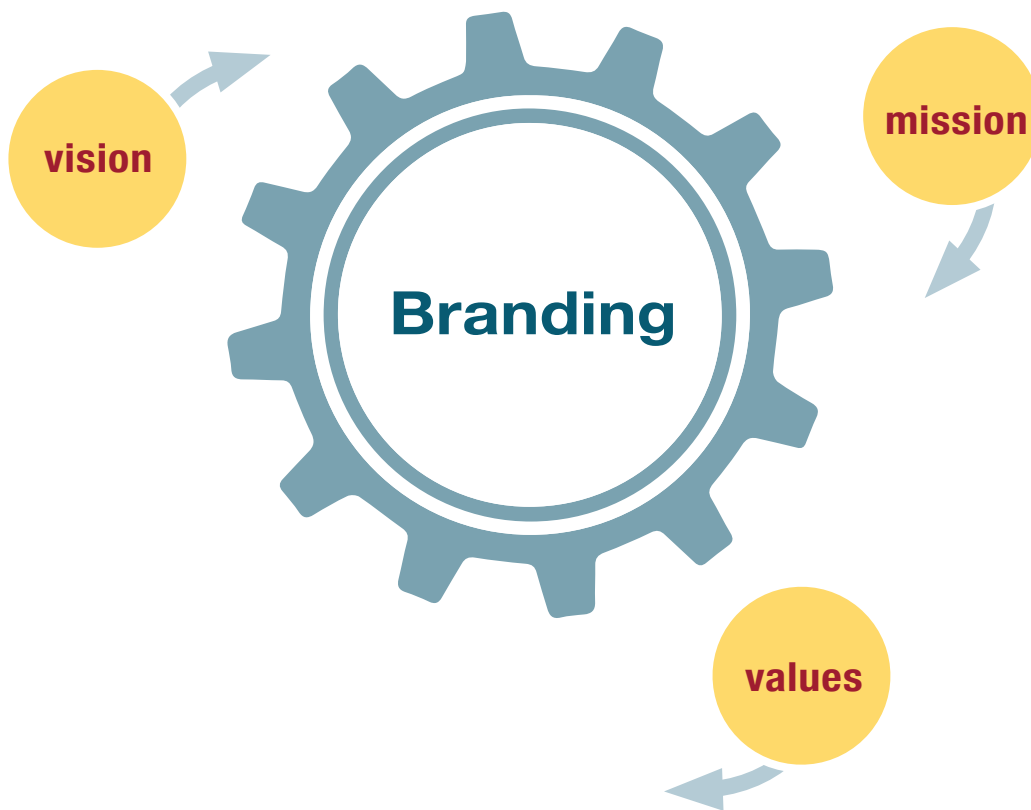


# 6 Steps to Creating a Personal Brand



By Susan Peppercorn

## What is a Personal Brand?

In the words of branding guru, William Arruda, “Personal branding is not about you. It’s about putting your stamp on the value you deliver to others.” Personal branding done well is not self-promoting or self-aggrandizing. Your personal brand is about communicating the promise of value that you can deliver to someone else.

Your personal brand the unique combination of skills, experience, and personality that you want the world to see you. You use your personal branding to differentiate yourself from other people. Professionally, your personal brand is the image that people see of you. It can be a combination of how they see you in real life, how the media portrays you, and the impression people gain from the information about you online.

Your personal brand is vital to you professionally. It is how you present yourself to potential clients and employers. It allows you the opportunity to ensure that people see you in the way you want them to, instead of in some arbitrary, possibly detrimental way. It also gives you the ability to highlight your strengths and passions and help people believe they know you better. People have much higher trust in those they feel they know.

You need to create a strong personal brand if you want to be considered credible. Your personal brand helps you stand out from everybody else. You can use your brand to demonstrate your knowledge and skills about your areas of expertise. It is your personal brand that helps you stand out from the thousands of other people like you.



# 1. Know Your Audience

To have a brand that will attract interest, you must know who your target audience is and what problems you can solve for them. Here are some questions to help you identify your target audience.

- What problem do I solve?

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- Who needs my product or service the most?

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- Why do they need it?

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- How would I describe my ideal client?

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## 2. Clarify Your Values

Values are the foundation of who you are. They are the standards by which you measure yourself and others and the bedrock on which your enthusiasm for the work you do is built.

Make a list of the values that are most important in the work that you do. After you've written the list once, revise it making sure the order mirrors your priorities. It's important to remind yourself why you do what you do, especially when distractions can quickly take you off course.

<b>Initial list</b>		<b>Revised priority order</b>
Enjoyment	4	1 Integrity
Learning	8	2 Making a difference
Security	5	3 Money
People	6	4 Enjoyment
Recognition	7	5 Security
Money	3	6 People
Respect	8	7 Recognition/Respect
Making a difference	2	8 Learning
Integrity	1	

### 3. Seek Feedback

You may think you know yourself, but others may see you differently. Colleagues, managers, and even family members have seen you in action and can help you reflect on your capabilities. A more accurate measure of your value is the perception held by others.

Ask trusted members of your network for an example of when they've seen you at your best and the strengths they noticed you using. To your surprise, you may find that you overlooked a quality that someone else recognized.

What three adjectives did others use most often to describe you?  
Write them here:

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**Achiever** **Ambitious** **Brilliant**  
**Calm** **Cheerful** **Compassionate**  
**Courageous** **Creative**  
**Determined** **Trustworthy**  
**Unique** **Vibrant** **Wonderful**

## 4. What Are You Good At?

Frame your skills in a way that is meaningful to an employer or prospective client.

### Examples:

- *“My strengths lie not only in my financial management skills, but my ability to quickly assess needs, streamline processes and implement with speed and accuracy.”*
- *“I help organizations calm the chaos by utilizing my project management skills to get all stakeholders on the same page through clear and effective cross-functional communications.”*
- *“I excel at driving revenue through product and channel innovation in B2B and B2C environments.”*
- *“I’m great with people. As a volunteer for the Red Cross I was praised for my ability to put first-time blood donors at ease.”*

**Now it’s your turn. What are you uniquely skilled and passionate about? Capture it in a sentence or two below.**

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## 5. Offer Proof

A sure way to come across as adept in your field is to offer proof by giving examples of problems you've solved for an employer or a client.

### Examples:

- *“Managed Agile software team in planning, prioritizing and implementation of a Learning Management System (LMS) for 1,900 students, and 220 faculty, on time and within budget.”*
- *“Working with cross-functional stakeholders, I developed systems and processes to improve planning, coordination and visibility for key regulatory submissions and lifecycle management for a biotech company.”*
- *“My success is rooted in creating and leveraging teams of internal and external experts and empowering them to find the right approach for each challenge, while not setting limits as to how and where to find the answers.”*
- *“I’ve worked with organizations big and small, from Bank of America to Pfizer to the Make a Wish Foundation. I begin every conversation with a question to get to know the client and the problems they are facing.”*

**What are your proof points? Write them here:**

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## 6. Create Content

One of the best ways to establish your brand is to write or speak about what you know. With content creation tools such as LinkedIn's publishing platform or YouTube so readily available, there are many ways in which you can share your passion and knowledge with your audience. *"Even if you don't have 10,000 readers, it's an invaluable form of credibility when a potential client mentions a problem they're having, and you can tell her, "I just wrote a piece about that – let me send it to you,"* says writer and speaker, **Dorie Clark**.

Personal branding is not about bragging or being self-absorbed. It means being introspective so you can become clear about what makes you relevant and compelling to people who are making decisions about you.

