



*Dr. Cindy's*

# Grad Pack

The Graduates' Guide to Selling  
Themselves in an Unexpected World



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# INTRODUCTION

In these unconventional times, it's comforting to know we can rely on conventional wisdom. One of the wisest truisms is that when we can't control what's going on all around us, we should concentrate on the one thing we can control: our reaction to it all.

It's good advice for times like these, when most of us are stuck in our homes most of the time and when we can't socialize or go to a job unless it's considered "essential." Even as the strict rules for staying home gradually ease up, we'll still be social distancing and finding fewer places to go.

And, no doubt, fewer businesses will be open, and the ones that are won't be operating at full capacity. That means there will be fewer jobs in the marketplace, and the positions that do open up are likely to go to the employees who were furloughed because of the pandemic.

So if you're graduating this spring and hoping to start your career or at least pick up some spending money by working a summer job, things are tough to say the least.

That's a fact. You can't change that. What you *can* change is what you do next.

You can work around it. You can make a new plan. You can make the most of a difficult situation.

What can *you* do instead of what you had hoped to do?

There's a big difference between what you can do and what you can't. There's an equally great difference between what you are willing to do and what you are not.

You can't change the fact that the company where you have been planning to work since you were a freshman is closed for business and won't be hiring any new employees for at least a year. You can't go to a department store right now to buy a killer new outfit. You can't schedule an in-person job interview that would give you a chance to show that outfit off.

You can't land your dream job at a national park right now, or go to a casting call, or give your valedictorian speech at graduation or open the start-up that you've been planning for a year, at least not if it requires customers to physically walk through your doors.

That is so disappointing. Take some comfort in knowing that everyone is in the same boat.

But not everyone will take this next important step: Figure out what you *can* change. Figure out what you *can* do. Figure out how to get a job, even if it's virtual and not in an office or a studio. Figure out how to showcase your talent, even if it's on YouTube and not on a stage. Figure out how to start your post-academic life, in spite of the coronavirus. Take the next step, even though you don't know what that is yet. Figure out a safe and healthy way to do *something*, even if it wasn't what you expected or planned to do.

### How to create a back-up plan

Plan A isn't possible right now. That's no reason to hide under the covers all day. Instead, make a Plan B.

Plan B is what you will do right now instead of what you had thought, hoped, dreamed or expected you would do. Plan B is what you will do right now instead of sleeping until noon, playing Animal Crossing for eight hours a day or bingeing on those "Parks and Recreation" reruns you've already watched 20 times. Plan B is what you will do when you realize that the impact of the pandemic is going to last for years, not weeks or months, and you can't just wait around for things to get back to normal.

Things may never get back to normal, or at least to the "normal" that you envisioned when you were making your

### Seize the Day!

Sometimes conventional wisdom is most true during unconventional times. Make these your favorite clichés:

- ❖ When life hands you lemons, make lemonade!
- ❖ Today is the first day of the rest of your life!
- ❖ Necessity is the mother of invention!
- ❖ Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass. It's about learning to dance in the rain!
- ❖ You have to look through the rain to see the rainbow!
- ❖ If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail!

post-graduation plans pre-graduation. Everything is different right now. And while everything won't be different forever, some things *will* be different forever. We don't know which things will be different, but some things will be, for sure.

You can sit around and wait to find out. Or you can get moving on Plan B. The better choice: Make a Plan B for your immediate future and then put that plan into action.

That is what **Grad Pack** is about: Getting started, even while it seems the world has stopped. It hasn't.

The world has slowed down. It has paused. And yes, it has changed. Accept it.

Get smart and *change what you can*.

### What you can change

*Your attitude.  
Your mindset.  
Your decisions.  
Your behavior.  
Your plans. Make a Plan B*

	No Plan	Plan B
Attitude	This isn't fair.	We're all in this together.
Mindset	This is a good excuse to put things off.	I can make the best of this.
Decisions	I'm going to watch Netflix all day.	I'll use my time productively.
Behavior	Who cares if I act lazy and irritable?	We should be kinder to each other.
Plans	I'll put everything on hold.	I'll apply for an essential job.

What you *can* do right now is embrace the unexpected and the precious gift of time that the pandemic has given you. What you can do right now is:

- 🌱 Embrace this opportunity to rethink your post-graduation plans.
- 🌱 Create a new plan that's realistic for the near future.
- 🌱 Make a strategy for eventually transitioning from your short-term solution to a permanent or longer-term situation.
- 🌱 Learn and practice new skills that will make you more employable (more fun, a better friend, more well-rounded, smarter, more amazing).
- 🌱 Spend time thinking about what you really want, for now and forever.

-  Craft a personal brand for yourself that will help you get what you really want.
-  Figure out what's important to you—not just for your career, but for your family, friendships and mental health.
-  Reach out to those who have helped you, mentored you, taught you and befriended you, and say “thank you.”
-  Outline the steps you will take, post-pandemic, to make a real contribution to the world we live in, whatever that may look like once the crisis passes.



# 5 Steps to Success

Throughout this **Grad Pack** and in the accompanying book, *Every Job Is A Sales Job: How to Use the Art of Selling to Win at Work*, you will learn about a five-step process that will pave your road to success: right now, in the short term and for your future. The five steps are part of a process used by successful salespeople. Before you say, "Ick, sales," consider this: It turns out that borrowing the skills of the sales professional can help us get what we want and need from life, from our careers and from the generous people who might be willing to help us along the way.

These five steps are:

- 1. PLAN.** By the time you finish reading the **Grad Pack**, you will embrace the value of having a plan. What you plan for is what you will do. What you plan for is what you will spend your time on. What you plan for is what you will achieve. Making a plan for how you reach any goal will put that goal within reach.
- 2. LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES.** Once you know what you want and you have a plan for getting it, look for opportunities to make it happen. Opportunities are all around us, and often take the form of kind people who are willing to help us or openings for jobs that we never thought we would be interested in—but it turns out we are. Sometimes opportunities are invitations to do cool new things. Sometimes, they are chance meetings with influential people.
- 3. LISTEN & ESTABLISH TRUST.** If you have ever asked for a favor, your request might have been met with: "What's in it for me?" Don't sit back and wait for the other person to ask that. Figure it out yourself by making it your business to get to know the other person; to listen to what he or she is telling you; and to hear what the other person needs. What better deal is there than one that lets you give something valuable back to someone who is giving something valuable to you?
- 4. ASK FOR WHAT YOU WANT.** If you don't ask, you won't get. If you do ask, you are so much more likely to get what you want than if you don't. Don't be afraid to ask for what you want. Give yourself permission to ask for what you want. After all, don't you deserve to have it?
- 5. FOLLOW UP WITH GRATITUDE.** Make gratitude your greatest strength. Grateful people not only say "thank you" to those who offer jobs, help, favors, gifts,

friendship, introductions and praise, but they keep in touch with them; return the favors; honor their commitments to them; and always listen to learn what else they can do in return.



### Get ready to go

Prepare yourself for the time when you can get out of the house and start your search for your dream job, your new company, your campaign or whatever your next thing is.

# PART I

## IT'S A VIRTUAL WORLD

Daniel has a degree in film and a talent for video, storytelling, writing, singing and composing. His favorite part of filmmaking is the interaction with his subjects: people, animals, the environment. He's hands-on—literally; he likes to place people where he wants them to be and straighten up any imperfections on his subjects' clothing and hair.

He isn't interested in being a filmmaker in the virtual world that this pandemic has created. So he has decided to stop filming until social distancing rules relax and he can closely interact with lots of people again.

Sammie doesn't love virtual filmmaking, either, but she's too excited about her projects to wait out the crisis. Instead, she has been working with her former video professor on an idea for a multimedia content startup that she can get off the ground with very little money—and that she can do 100% online, without waiting for customers to return in droves to physical locations.

Virtual storytelling, online graduate school classes, mobile banking, video business meetings and virtual happy hours may be around for a while. And it's a good bet that after everyone is safe from the coronavirus, those

### Double take

- ❁ People who are older than you assume that you are a whiz at social media and all things internet. They assume you are a digital native, even though you probably got most of your education the traditional way—in a classroom where your presence was required and your phone had to be muted.
- ❁ Not every member of Generation Z—which includes the bulk of 2020 graduates—is social media savvy. Some choose not to engage in social media at all. And among those who do, many use platforms like Instagram and Twitter exclusively to swap photos, chat with friends and follow celebrities. How many graduates today understand how to leverage that skill for use in a corporate public relations department or as a sales tool? Do you?

virtual substitutes for in-person interactions will be more popular than they ever were before the pandemic.

In fact, it's pretty likely that businesses will continue to meet virtually with clients more often to save on travel and commuting times. Online training, which was already pushing face-to-face training aside, will become more popular for the same reasons. Now that they have had a taste of telework, employees and their supervisors might decide to keep doing it.

Working parents might start looking for jobs that allow them to work from home so they can be there when their kids get home from school. Corporations large and small are seeing that they can save a fortune through telework options for their teams.

For so many reasons, at least some of the virtual accommodations that the world has made in its effort to keep people safe are bound to stick.

It was already a virtual world before the pandemic. Afterward, that world will be bigger.

Be ready. And don't assume that you already are.

### How to fill gaps in your skills

Here are skills to learn, practice or perfect while you wait for the economy to right itself and your dream job to materialize.

1. **Communication.** You might be surprised to learn that some of the most in-demand skills for social media and digital specialists are the ones you thought weren't necessary for people who work in cyberspace. At the top of the list: good writing.

No matter how adept you are at sprinkling your texts with just the right emojis or how often you're the first one in your friend group to use the freshest slang on Instagram, those casual methods of expression won't do you any good in the professional world.

You did plenty of writing in school, of course, and learned the rules a long time ago. But because we communicate so often on social media—where those rules don't matter so much—it's a good idea to brush up on formal grammar and style as you head into the workplace.

You might want to brush up on formal writing style if you:

- 🍂 Never capitalize names and other proper nouns in emails or texts because it's not necessary in friend-to-friend communications.
- 🍂 If you run sentences together without punctuation because you always forget to tell Siri where to put the periods when you dictate your texts.

Once you get to work, your boss, business clients and more-experienced colleagues will be less than impressed with you if your emails contain spelling, capitalization, grammatical and punctuation errors. They will be put off if you can't make your points clearly and easy to read; and if you don't fact-check the details before you hit "send."

In business, you're expected to behave and to express yourself professionally. A resume with a misspelled name on it might stand out—for the wrong reason—among the 250 others that the manager at your dream company got the same day. A website that you designed or coded will make the company look careless if it's full of misused or misspelled words. An otherwise-perfect video that you create to introduce yourself to potential employers will make a bad first impression if you don't capitalize the name of the college where you graduated in a caption.

If writing isn't your strength, work on that while you have some free time.

What you can do:

-  Find online grammar tutorials to tool around in during slow stretches at home. Some of them feature fun games and Gen Z examples.
-  Enroll in an online grammar class at your local community college. Take it pass/fail or for no credit so it won't mess with your GPA if you don't do well.
-  Buy an actual grammar book, like the classic "The Elements of Style" by William Strunk, and page through it a section at a time until you feel "brushed up." Remember books?

**2. Public speaking.** Starting with your job interview, your professional life will be full of both virtual and in-person meetings and presentations. Make time now to develop your online speaking style.

If you're already a good public speaker, you probably draw some of your energy from your audience. A room full of people who can't wait to hear from you or who agree with everything you say serves to pump up a speaker and make the presentation even better. A sleepy or low-energy audience, on the other hand, can be a challenge for the speaker.

Zoom could be your new room. You'll see faces and you'll hear voices. But you're unlikely to feel any energy from the audience. You'll have to bring your own.

In a small video meeting, there's no back row where you can sit so you won't be noticed. So even if you are not the host or the presenter, you'll have to be prepared to participate even more in a live, virtual meeting than in a face-to-face gathering.

Video meetings aren't the only virtual platform that will require you to have professional-quality public speaking chops, however. If you are called on to create videos, slide shows or other materials for your business to post online, you may need to narrate them. If teaching is in your future, you will have to create appealing lectures for delivery online. Doctors and psychologists are even diagnosing and counseling patients via telemedicine. Most professions have some sort of digital component that requires speaking skills.

If you're not used to participating or presenting on video or on a videoconference, spend some time now creating your style and practicing your pitch.

What you can do:

-  Buy an inexpensive mini-tripod for your smartphone or prop your phone up against a sturdy object so you can record yourself hands-free as you practice public speaking or a presentation.
-  Think of a topic that you might be asked to say something about during a meeting. For example, what is a question that an interviewer might ask you during a virtual job interview? What is the pitch you would make to a venture capitalist who was considering investing in your startup? Jot down some notes to organize your thoughts. Then use them to practice speaking to a camera.
-  Play your video selfies back so you can spot your weaknesses. Do you play with your hair as you talk? Do you look like you're reading your notes instead of looking at the viewers? Do you nervously rock back and forth? Do you rush through it? Do you say "um?" Do you mumble? Do better next time.
-  Schedule a video meeting with some friends. Record it so you can watch it later. Do it twice: Once to chat without any agenda or notes, and a second time to make a presentation to a friendly audience. Ask them for feedback.
-  Do this a lot so when you're invited to a "real" videoconference, you will know what to expect, how to interact, how to prepare and how you will bring your confidence.

**3. Interviewing.** Your job interview might be your first brush in a professional setting with someone you meet only virtually. Get ready to nail it.

Excellent public speaking skills will take you far when it comes to making a good first impression on a potential boss. But there's more to a job interview than how well you speak.

The best candidate is one who is qualified and confident and is comfortable during the interview, offers intelligent answers to all of the questions, appears



professional, can carry on a conversation without awkward gaps, and seems interested in the company and the work.

Job interviews bring out the nerves. A virtual job interview brings out nerves you didn't know you had.

What you can do:

-  Learn as much as you can about the company and the job you are applying for. Impress your interviewer by asking questions that show off that knowledge. Ask about the goals of the company. Ask how your role fits into achieving those goals. Ask how the company stands out from the competition.
-  Get yourself physically ready for the interview in the same way you would for an in-person interview. Wash and style your hair. Shave. Put on makeup. Wear a suit jacket and tie or a dress with a blazer or sweater. It may seem silly, but wear a skirt or slacks that match your shirt and blazer, even though it's unlikely your camera will show that part of you. You just never know. One ABC News reporter working from home recently appeared on "Good Morning America" in a suit, tie and gym shorts, believing the camera wouldn't show his bare thighs. It did.
-  Come up with questions the interviewer might ask, and practice answering them in front of your own camera.
-  Choose a background that isn't too personal. For example, don't conduct the interview in your bedroom or closet. Sit in front of a bookcase or a bland wall in your home. And unless you have a conservative professional Zoom background, don't use one. They're busy and distracting. You want to be the star of this show. Don't let your background show you up.
-  Smile. Look the interviewer in the eye, which means looking into the camera when you talk and at your screen when the other person is speaking. Nod. Don't interrupt. Keep your hands away from your face and hair. Non verbal communication rules the day in a virtual workspace.
-  Close the door to the room you will use to keep out pets, children and roommates. Just because you're doing this at home and the interviewer is probably at home doesn't mean you should treat it any more casually than if you were meeting in an office.
-  Expect the interview to be recorded and shared with other decision-makers at the company.
-  Be the first one to arrive. There's no way to sneak into a virtual meeting without being noticed. Show up at least 10 minutes early.

4. **Tech.** Your experience looking up answers on Google for term papers and expanding your social circle on Instagram won't do you any good in the professional world unless you can translate that expertise into something to benefit the business that eventually hires you.

Sales, marketing, public relations, data collection, research and other departments rely on experts who can determine if buying a magazine ad resulted in brand awareness or a marketing campaign for a new lipstick boosted sales of the product.

Analyzing the relationship between what goes online and what goes into the company's cash register is among the most-important digital-related jobs a business hires for. In addition, businesses need web designers and coders.

And every company needs people who are not only familiar with doing online research, but who are very good at it.

Even if you don't plan to work in a research or marketing field, most businesses use the internet to collect data and communicate their messages. Plus, young applicants who bring coding and research skills to the table are in demand, even in a down economy.

If these are not skills you possess, use this time in limbo to fill the gaps in your education and experience.

What you can do:

-  Enroll in a certificate program that will teach you how to design web sites from scratch and from templates; create a good online user experience; and collect and analyze data from users of a company website. Community colleges often have certificate programs designed for part-time students. At this time, most of those programs are online.
-  Use what you learn to create an online resume or another piece for a job interview that will set you apart from the other applicants.
-  Study the digital footprint of the companies you hope to work for. Explore their websites. Follow them on social media. Read articles about their sales and marketing efforts.
-  Check position descriptions for the jobs you intend to apply for. If a company is looking for candidates with technical skills that you do not have, don't expect it to train you on the job. It will hire someone who has those skills already.



- 5. Sales.** Buy into the notion that every job is a sales job, and it quickly becomes clear that all job candidates and all employees need the skills to sell themselves and their companies' products and services—in person, on the phone and online.

A job interview is a sales job; you're trying to sell a hiring manager on offering you a job.

You will likely to be doing at least some of your job interviews on a phone call or a videoconference. Once you land a job, you will almost certainly be communicating the same way with clients, vendors, teammates and supervisors.

Even if the words "sales" or "selling" do not appear in your job description, you will use those meetings to sell any client on coming back for more business or on referring your company to friends and colleagues. The sale will happen if you present yourself professionally, come to the virtual meeting prepared and treat others on the call with courtesy, respect and kindness.

When you meet virtually with a supervisor, the sale occurs when you ask for a deadline extension, pitch a new project, propose yourself as team leader or ask for a raise.

Every work-related interaction is an opportunity to make a good impression about your company, which can lead to its good reputation and to repeat business.

If you don't consider yourself a salesperson or if you would rather be unemployed than try to sell anything, consider that you've been selling all along. Every time you convinced a teacher to let you turn in an assignment late, you made a sale. Every time your boss said "yes" when you asked for an unscheduled day off, you made a sale.

As long as you are selling—at least unofficially and even if you don't think of it as selling—why not become even better at it? Any manager would be impressed by a non-sales employee who can bring business into the company.

What you can do:

-  Follow the proven, five-step process for making a sale as outlined in the Wall Street Journal business best-seller, *Every Job Is a Sales Job: How to Use the Art of Selling to Win at Work*. The steps are: plan, look for opportunities, listen and establish trust, ask for what you want, and follow up with gratitude. (See box.)
-  Change your mindset. To people who have not chosen sales as a profession, selling can sometimes seem manipulative or pushy. Adopt a different definition of sales: It is helping someone get what he or she



wants, while you get something, too. It can be a service if you only try to sell what you know the other person needs or wants.



## How to Sell a Company on Hiring You

A job interview is one long sales pitch. Mimic the process used by the most-successful sales professionals to ace your virtual interview.

**Plan.** Don't sit in front of your camera for the interview until you know exactly what you will say once you turn it on. Know whom you will be speaking with. Know as much as possible about the company. Know why you're the best person on earth to fill the job. Know how to describe your strengths in the context of the job. Know how to answer the question: "What are your weaknesses?" When you prepare ahead of time, it lets your interviewer know that you are aware of them and working on them. Be prepared.

**Look for opportunities.** Use the interview as an opportunity to sell yourself. Look and listen for openings where you can highlight your unique skills, awards, accomplishments, successes and resourcefulness.

**Listen & Establish trust.** A good sale is a win for you and a win for the company you want to work for. Don't fall into the bad-interview trap of talking only about why you want the job. Explain how the company will benefit if you get the job. Bring this up even if nobody asks you.

**Ask for what you want.** Don't be shy about expressing how much you want the job. And at the end of the interview, ask for the job. Once the subject of salary comes up, don't be shy about asking for a little bit more. Don't demand; ask.

**Follow up with gratitude.** The minute the interview is over, hand-write a thank-you note to the interviewer and drop it in the mail. You can also send a quick email to thank her for her time. But nothing says "goes the extra mile" like a thoughtful, physical note. If your interview was for a high-tech job, a thank-you video might seal the deal.



## PART 2

# EVERY JOB IS A DREAM JOB

Your dream job might not be your first job out of college.

It wasn't for Tracey, who has always wanted to be a lawyer, but her family couldn't afford to send her to law school. So she majored in communications in college and accepted a first job as an editorial assistant for a trade association with a glossy national magazine.

She applied for the job because the association dealt with environmental issues, which is one of her passions. She wished she could work in the Legal and Regulatory Department, where lawyers write proposals for state and federal environmental safeguards and lobby members of Congress to endorse those proposals.

But she had a good attitude about her editorial assistant job, which involved transcribing interviews, proofreading magazine pages, archiving back issues of various publications and helping out with whatever the editors and writers needed.

She was a good writer, so she even offered to write some stories for the association's newsletter. But she was just as friendly and happy about typing up transcripts.

The association had a program that would pay for tuition for any employee working toward a degree that she could use in her current job or in a job at the association that she could reasonably expect to be promoted into.

Tracey made a plan. She had to convince her superiors that she could reasonably expect to be promoted into the Legal and Regulatory Department as a lawyer if the company would pay for her to get her law degree.

She had to sell them.

Tracey decided that she would make herself invaluable. She would work as hard as she could in her current role. She would educate herself about legal and regulatory issues and suggest article ideas to the magazine editor. She would do unofficial interviews with the lawyers so she would know about their work and so they would know her. She would impress managers at both the magazine and in Legal and Regulatory so they would believe she could be a good lawyer for the association.

Then, she looked for opportunities to execute her plan. She volunteered to cover congressional hearings for the newsletter, and sat with the association's lawyers who attended. She suggested ways for the lawyers to drum up support for their proposals by having articles published in the newsletter and magazine. She stood in for lobbyists at political receptions when they were too busy or too burned out to attend. She made herself an unofficial member of Legal and Regulatory in this way.

Next, she listened for what her managers needed and then identified and offered ways she could help fill those needs. She was the best editorial assistant the magazine had ever had. She was cheerful and friendly. She acted like the editorial assistant role was her dream job.

But it wasn't. She wanted to become a lawyer. So after solidifying her reputation as a smart, environmentally aware, hardworking, friendly employee, she asked the Legal manager if he would hire her if she got her law degree. He said "yes." Then she asked him if his department would help her pay for it. Again he said "yes." Next, she asked her magazine editor if his department would split her tuition with Legal. And he said "yes."

Five years later, Tracey was a lawyer with the Legal and Regulatory Department and still is. She loves her job. She is good friends with the magazine's editor, who appreciated her hard work and was sorry to see her go to Legal. But he wished her well.

And she is grateful for that. She also is thankful to have her true dream job. And every day she thanks both of those managers by doing her absolute best at work.

Abraham Lincoln famously said: "Whatever you are, be a good one."

### How to sell your best self

The fact is that the best way to sell yourself is to be your best self, even if you're not exactly in your dream job. Tracey sold those managers on helping her get to her dream job by treating her editorial assistant job as if it were her dream job.

You can do that, too.

### Sell yourself in 5 steps

1. Plan
2. Look for opportunities
3. Listen & establish trust
4. Ask for what you want
5. Follow up with gratitude

It is difficult to find a job right now. Unemployment is at its highest level since the Great Depression. Furloughed employees are eager to get back to work. Many businesses are temporarily closed and a lot of the ones that are open can't afford to hire anyone.

It's OK if your first job isn't your dream job. Sell yourself on giving your all to whichever job you manage to land, whether it's a store cashier, a bartender, a warehouse packer, a delivery driver or a maid. Treat any job as if it's your dream job.

It could lead to your dream job.

Do you know what your dream job is? Use your down time to figure that out.

The fact is that you are more likely to do what you plan to do than if you just figure you'll get around to it someday. But you can't plan to do anything if you don't know exactly what you want.

Tracey wanted to be a lawyer, so she created a plan for selling her bosses on paying her law school tuition. Plus, she created some built-in job security.

What kind of help do you need to get where you want to go?

First, figure out where you want to go. Then make a plan to get there. And don't sweat it if your dream job isn't your first job after graduation. Don't beat yourself up if you can't land your dream job during an unemployment crisis.

Do what you can, and plan for your future. Be ready when the future arrives.

Part of that plan should be to be your best self, no matter where you land along the path to your dream job. Sell yourself by convincing others that you are a hard worker, a cheerful colleague and a good candidate for the promotion you really want.

This is a surefire way to be taken seriously at work, even though you might be younger than most of your colleagues. If you take your work as a bartender seriously, treat it as important and do your best possible work, others will believe that you will take a job as the bar manager or the bar owner or the distribution coordinator seriously and that you will work hard at that, too. No matter what you do, own your work and be proud of it.

Everything you do will sell someone on something. You are either selling them on helping you get your dream job or you are selling them on believing you don't deserve to have it.

### **How to find a job that's available**

You might not have a huge choice when it comes to where you will work right now. But you can at least try to land something that will showcase your strengths and talents. Some examples:



-  If you majored in business or marketing, or if you have a friendly, outgoing personality, consider a job in sales. Some stores are still open and hiring part-time salespeople. Some work-from-home jobs involving sales are available to those who might be good at identifying and calling potential customers for products like insurance and financial planning.
-  If you majored in communications, creative writing, journalism or visual arts, try setting up shop at home. Publications that are losing advertisers during the health crisis are laying off their experienced, full-time writers, editors, photographers and videographers. They may be offering freelance work to creative new graduates who are comfortable putting their pieces together without violating social-distancing guidelines.
-  If you majored in a health-related field, you might find work in a doctor's office or hospital. You might not get the same job or as high a salary as you would have if the circumstances were different, but you can contribute greatly to helping those in need.

### What to do right now:

-  Spend some time revising your resume and making it look perfect and professional. Create several versions: one for each of the kinds of jobs you would like to apply for.
-  Sign up for LinkedIn and post all of your experience there—even if you have a stop-gap job as a delivery driver. Employers might be impressed that you're spending your time productively—and safely—rather than standing still. Send a LinkedIn invitation to anybody who interviews you.
-  Contact professors, internship supervisors, managers at past part-time jobs, and friends of your parents who have jobs you admire and whom like you. Ask them to write you letters of recommendation so you'll have them when employers ask for them.
-  Write an essay about how you can translate your college lessons and experiences into a benefit for the company you want to work for. You can use part of that in a cover letter to send along with your resume when you apply for jobs.





## Get ready

**Plan** to send resumes to the companies you want to work for as soon as hiring begins again. Spend this time improving your resume, finding people to recommend you and writing cover letters.

**Look for opportunities** to work now, even if it's not in your chosen field. Treat any temporary job like you're lucky to have it. Managers will remember that when you ask them to recommend you to your dream company later.

**Listen & establish trust** when managers talk about what they need. If you learned something in college that you could put to work for the benefit of your employer, offer it up. If you help someone out today, that person might help you out tomorrow.

**Ask for what you want.** If you find yourself working for minimum wage in a store while you wait for your dream job to open up, ask your supervisors if they have any work that requires the skill you learned in college. You might not get promoted, but you could wind up with interesting assignments.

**Follow up with gratitude.** Be grateful for whatever job you have, and show your gratitude by giving it your all. You may be there temporarily, but do your best every day.



## PART 3

# YOU DESERVE IT!

In his 2013 book, *Where Winners Live: Sell More, Earn More, Achieve More Through Personal Accountability*, multimillionaire Dave Porter tells a story about wanting to be a White House intern so badly when he was in college that he drove from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C., and camped out at the subway station where he knew he would run into the internship coordinator on her way to work.

She thought that was creepy, of course, and told him to get lost.

But he didn't give up. A couple of weeks later, he did it again, and he made his pitch, as fast as he could, promising to work from dawn to dusk and harder than any other intern ever had.

This time, she listened. She accepted his resume. And eventually, she hired him.

Dave didn't go to a prestigious college or come from a political family. He just knew what he wanted and decided to pull out all the stops to get it.

Most important, Dave believed he deserved it. He hadn't ever bought into the notion that you have to be well-connected or rich or a straight-A student or a Harvard graduate to get the best possible jobs. He knew that he was smart, resourceful, scrappy, fun and hard-working.

Today, he owns one of the largest financial planning/insurance firms on the East Coast—and he knows he has earned and deserves his wealth, position and success.

Dave gets what he wants more often that he doesn't. Dave's secret: He asks for it and he believes he deserves it.

You can get what you want, too—if you ask for it.

You've read about the five steps to sales success—plan, look for opportunities, listen and establish trust, ask for what you want, follow up with gratitude—a few times already on these pages. All are important, but “ask” is perhaps the most crucial when it comes to getting what you want.

After all, if you don't ask for something, you're very unlikely to get it. Those who are in a position to say “yes” might not even know you want it, so they won't offer to help you get it.

If you ask, there's no guarantee you'll get it, of course. But if you don't ask, you're pretty close to guaranteed that it's not going to happen for you.

So ask.

If you're offered a salary that you believe is lower than your worth, ask for more.

If you want a job, but 100 other people have applied for it, too, ask for the job.

Same goes for a raise, a promotion, more vacation time, a bigger cubicle, a plum assignment, a meeting with the CEO.

Same goes for a favor, a second helping of ice cream, a discount on a pair of shoes, an extension on a deadline.

If you ask, the answer might be yes and it might be no. If you don't ask, the answer is always "no."

So ask.

Before you ask, though, consider this: What do you want? If you don't truly know what you want, how will you know what to ask for?

So the first step toward getting what you want is to figure out exactly what that is.

Here's how: Make a plan. Everything in life goes smoother when you have a plan. Write your plan down. Make it real. And as you write that plan, think about what you really want.

For some, it's easier to decide what you don't want than what you do want. Either way, making a plan forces you into spending time weighing the pros and cons of your many options, and deciding what's important to you in the short run and the long run.

## Ask for Help!

- Right now, you might need help getting motivated to do anything because you're stuck at home. Ask for help from your parents, your roommates, your siblings, your professors.
- You might need help finding a job in this very challenging job market. Post requests for recommendations, introductions and ideas on LinkedIn. Circulate your requests among your personal, professional and college networks.
- You might need help with interviewing skills after you're turned down for a couple of jobs you know you're qualified for. Ask the person who interviewed you for constructive feedback.
- You might need help finding a way to earn money while you wait for the economy to recover. Ask your friends to put in a good word for you wherever they work. Ask your parents' friends if their businesses are hiring.

Some people make a plan for life: college, grad school, career, married by 30, CEO by 40, retired by 60. Then, they figure out what they have to do to make each part of that plan a reality.

Others make a plan every year. Successful salespeople, for example, calculate how much money they will need to earn in a year to hit their annual goals and support the lifestyle they want to live. They add up their expenses, how much they need to save and what they want to buy. Then, they know exactly how much they need to sell and in what timeframe.

Their plans include strategies for how to earn that money: How to find new clients; when to contact them; which products would be best for them; how much they can afford to buy, and so on.

Many people make a plan for each big project: a wedding, a 25th birthday party, a trip to Italy, the purchase of a first home.

They calculate their costs, how much they will have to save, what they can afford to put away each paycheck and all the details of the event or trip.

It's smart to make a plan for difficult conversations, like if you are breaking up with a partner, or important conversations, like a job interview or a marriage proposal.

By making a plan, you can focus on what you want to say and prepare yourself to respond in the best way to any possible reaction.

All of these plans help you understand what you have to do to get what you want. They help you determine whose help you need as you do those things. They clarify what you should ask, when and how.

And they put a fine point on the obvious: You have to ask for help.

Nobody does this life alone. At every stop on your journey, you will need help from others. People who believe they don't need any help have bought into a myth. We're all in the same boat, and we all need each other to keep us afloat.

So ask for help. Asking is not a weakness.

If you're reluctant to ask for help, consider four important truths:

1. First, embrace the notion that you need help and the simple fact that everyone does.
2. Second, know that most people want to and are happy to help others.
3. And third, be helpful in return. Especially during a crisis, we all need to give back.



4. A fourth truth is often overlooked, especially by people who are afraid to bother others by asking for help or are chronically fearful that the answer to "Will you help me?" will be "no."

That fourth truth is that you deserve to have what you want and need. You deserve to have a good life, a good job, good pay, good friends, nice things or whatever it is you want.

Many people simply can't bring themselves to ask for what they want because deep down, perhaps, they don't believe they deserve to have it.

Who told you that?

Find a different voice to listen to.

## Give yourself permission to:

- Have what you want.
- Ask for anything at all.
- Say "no" when you are offered less than you are worth.
- Expect to be treated the way you would like to be treated.
- Have your needs and expectations fulfilled.
- Accept more than you thought you would ever have.

## HOW TO NEGOTIATE FOR MORE MONEY

Whether you're offered less than you hoped for during a job interview or you haven't had a pay raise in two years, the only way to make it right is to ask for what you want and deserve.

**Plan.** Nobody is going to give you a pay raise just because you ask, but if you ask the right way, you stand a far better chance of collecting the coinage.

As you plan, do some research so you will know.

- 🌱 How much the job pays at other firms.
- 🌱 What the average pay raise at your business is this year.
- 🌱 The reasons why you deserve the raise and how your employer will benefit from giving you that raise.

**Look for opportunities.** Find opportunities to prove your value. Don't assume the boss will give you a raise simply because you're the best at what you do. Make a point of taking on tough assignments, pitching in on your manager's pet projects and otherwise making yourself irreplaceable.

**Listen and establish trust.** Choose just the right time to make your request. Observe if the boss is in a good mood. Listen to learn whether the company is in financial trouble. Asking at the wrong time could get you the wrong answer.

**Ask for what you want.** Bring a number. Explain why you chose it. Be willing to negotiate. Know how low you will go—and don't go any lower. Worst case: Find another employer who will pay you what you're worth.

**Follow up with gratitude.** If you get the raise, uphold your end of the bargain. Do everything you said you would. Continue to be excellent. Show your gratitude by making the boss proud she said "yes."

## PART 4

# FIRST IMPRESSIONS MATTER

Maddy was ready for the job interview of her life at the company she had dreamed of working for ever since she aced Intro to Business sophomore year. She had bought a new business suit—conservative but stylish—and had pulled her hair back into a neat bun. Her resume and a pre-interview video session had gotten her this far: waiting in the reception area of the Human Resources Department of what she hoped would be her first employer.

She was a few minutes early—a good practice for any interview, so she pulled out her phone and sent a couple of excited texts to her boyfriend and her mom, telling them she could barely believe where she was. Her boyfriend texted back a longish message about how proud he was of her.

She heard someone say her name. The Human Resources director had come out to get her for her interview. Maddy looked up and smiled, and said, “Just a sec,” as she quickly sent a heart emoji response to her supportive boyfriend.

The interview went great. Maddy knew she was a shoo-in for the job. She was well qualified. She answered all of the director’s questions in a professional, confident manner. She asked questions that revealed her knowledge of the company. She got along well with the director. She sent a hand-written thank-you note the same day. She was sure she got the job and couldn’t wait for her first day of work.

She found out the next day that she did not get the job.

Disappointed, she called the director to politely ask her why. She figured the feedback might help her do better with her next interview.

The director gave it to her straight: “You lost the job the minute you asked me to wait for you to finish your text while you were sitting in the waiting room,” she said. “I did the interview as a courtesy. I never even passed your name along to the department with the vacancy.”

Ouch.

Maddy is a courteous, polite, respectful young woman with a brand-new business degree from a prestigious university. But her behavior was unprofessional.

She didn't realize it at the time.

She asked the director for a second chance. The director said more than 100 well-qualified graduates had applied for the job. She would choose someone who would pay undivided attention to work and clients, someone who would not prioritize a personal text over an in-person interaction.

Maddy learned that day just how true it is that you only get one chance to make a first impression.

Whether it's a job interview, your first day at a new job, an introduction to a client or even a phone call with a potential employer or customer, the first few seconds of your interaction will forever be who you are to that person.

If you want someone to think of you as the perfect candidate, be the perfect candidate. If you want people to refer to you as a superstar, perform like a superstar.

But know this: The message you hope to send to others is not necessarily the message you meant to send or the one they received. Your behavior, habits, style, comments and even your social media posts determine what people think of you.

What do those things say about you?

### **How to create a personal brand**

Maddy's personal brand is professional, on time, smart, educated, poised and polite. Or so she thought. The Human Resources director would agree with all but the final item. She found it rude of Maddy to expect her to wait even a minute for her to finish a text before starting the most-important job interview of her life. She doesn't want to hire someone who will be rude to the company's clients or executives.

No matter how hard you work on planning how you will appear to people, you can blow it in an instant by not thinking about what you are doing and how that might look to someone else.

Your personal brand is how people see you. It's how you are known. It's the impression you give others—first impressions and lasting impressions.



Everyone has a brand, whether it's planned or not. If you are always nicely dressed with styled hair and a clean-shaven face, that is your brand only as long as you are nicely dressed with styled hair and a clean-shaven face. The minute you join a Zoom meeting wearing your pajamas and yesterday's stubble, you have a new brand.

It's important to live your brand. But first, you need to build your brand. If you don't, others will assign one to you. It's better to craft and control it yourself.

### How to sell yourself on paper

Before you have an interview to go to, you need to convince a bunch of people that you're a likely candidate to fill the job.

Most often, that means you need to sell yourself on paper—with a tight resume and an engaging cover letter.

Here's how to write a resume that will stand out among hundreds:

- 🌿 A resume should include your name, contact number, education, experience and awards. For someone who is applying for a first job out of college, it should be a single page.
- 🌿 Some companies ask for references; if so, include them on the resume. Get permission from the people whose names you offer, and ask them if they will give you a positive recommendation. Don't assume professors and former bosses like you as much as you like them!
- 🌿 Customize your resume for every job you are applying for. Include a line at the top that says: "Position desired," and type in the name of the position for that interview.
- 🌿 Include any skills you learned in college or during internships that might be relevant to the job you want. For example, if you learned how to use Photoshop and InDesign when you worked on your college newspaper, and now you're applying for a job in corporate communications, highlight that expertise.

## How to choose your brand

Choose a brand that:

- 🌿 Is authentic to your personality.
- 🌿 Portrays you as successful, even if you're still working your way up.
- 🌿 Helps you sell yourself.
- 🌿 Shows your helpful side.
- 🌿 You can stick with for the long haul.

Include a cover letter. Some online applications do not allow a cover letter and some job postings specifically forbid it. But for those that accept cover letters, even if it's optional, write one. Studies show that around 50 percent of recruiters expect to see a cover letter along with the resume, and a quarter of them admit that a good cover letter can tip the decision in your favor.

Proofread your resume and cover letter, and have others proofread them, too. You don't want to lose your shot at a job because you spelled a company's name wrong on your resume—but you could.

Print a copy of your resume on high-quality paper that's a little bit thicker than copier paper, and bring it with you to your interview. Hand it, along with a portfolio of your work if one is required, to the interviewer. Expect the interviewer to hold onto the resume and portfolio, so make copies to keep.

## Dress for success

As you prepare for a job interview, find out what the people who already work there wear to work. Plan to dress a step above that so you will make a professional first impression.

## The cover letter

- Is three or four paragraphs only.
- Indicates your interest in a specific position.
- Is addressed to a specific person.
- Tells how you will add value to the company.
- Includes your contact information.
- Mentions the person who told you about the job if she works at the same company.

## How to ace an interview

As Maddy learned the hard way, the job interview starts the minute you walk into the building (or enter a Zoom room).

Whether your interview is on video or in person, here are six non-negotiables:

*Dress conservatively.*

Women: Even if the nicest outfit in your closet is a sequined little black dress, do not wear anything glittery to a job interview. If your fanciest skirt falls more than two inches above your knee, do not wear that mini-skirt to a job interview. Do not wear a top that shows cleavage, your midriff or your bra

straps. Do not wear jeans, leggings or flip-flops to a job interview.

Men: Opt for a suit or dress slacks with a crisp—not wrinkled—collared shirt. Wear a tie if the men who already work there wear ties. Wear socks—dark-colored ones—that match. Wear closed-toe shoes—and not sneakers.

It's better to overdress for a job interview than to go too casual. But be aware that "dressed up" in the business world does not mean the same thing as "dressed up" for a party. Professional clothes are toned down, more conservative and cover you up.

*Turn your phone off.*

Your interview will probably last for less than an hour. You do not need to check your phone under any circumstances during a job interview.

Don't silence it or set it to vibrate. *Turn it off.*

Even if the interviewer leaves the room for a moment, do not pull out your phone. Spend the time observing what is in the office. You might find something you have in common with the interviewer and that could be a topic for small talk.

*Watch your language.*

No matter how laid back the interviewer seems, he will not hire you if you drop an F-bomb during the interview. Even if the interviewer swears during the interview, don't swear.

Some business environments are casual and tolerate swearing. Even if you're applying to work in a casual workplace, behave formally during the interview.

Likewise, do not fall into the trap of talking trash with an interviewer who is being very casual during the interview. Don't make jokes or snarky comments. Don't gossip.

In addition, avoid these three topics in every business conversation: sex, religion, politics. You just never know when something you think is harmless will offend the values of the person who is in a position to offer you a job.

*Talk and listen.*

An interview is a two-way conversation. The company's representative wants to learn about you, so she will ask you a lot of questions. She also wants to know if you are interested enough in the company to be curious about it, so ask her some questions, too.

Both of you need to gather information during the interview to determine if the job is a good fit for you.



And don't be surprised if some of the interviewer's questions are personal. More and more, interviewers want to know how you have handled situations in the past so they can predict your future reactions. This is called "behavioral interviewing." Look online for typical behavioral interviewing questions that you might have to answer.

*Arrive early.*

Whether your interview is virtual or in person, show up at least 10 minutes early. Give yourself enough time to get to where you have to go, catch your breath, calm your nerves and put on your game face. Just as Maddy blew her chance at a job by texting while her interviewer was waiting for the meeting to start, you'll lose your shot if you're even a minute late for the interview. If you're not early, you're late.

*Follow up*

Sending a thank-you note after an interview is not just polite anymore; it's expected. If you're the one who did not thank the interviewer for her time, that's what she might notice most about you.

An email is a nice way to follow up with the interviewer, but a hand-written note sent through the mail is nicer. Choose a plain notecard and write a very brief note saying "thank you" and recalling something from the interview that you believe shows you are a great fit for the team. Say you are looking forward to joining the team.

A thank-you by text is not OK in this situation. The interviewer is looking for a candidate who will go the extra mile, not take the easiest route.



## PART 5

# YOU CATCH MORE FLIES WITH HONEY

Eli had an emotional senior year. His parents got divorced; he had to move into a cramped apartment with his mom and two brothers; and he had to quit his part-time job at a local diner because it was too far away from his new home.

He was in a bad mood all the time. Already an introvert who sat in the back row of every class, Eli stopped participating in discussions altogether and spent most of his class sessions daydreaming instead of paying attention.

When a professor got on Eli's last nerve one day by asking him to speak a little louder as he gave a required small-group presentation, the student snapped back, "Get off of my back!" He crumpled up his notes, threw them in the trash and stomped out of the room.

When he returned to class the next week, he never apologized or acknowledged his outburst. He never explained that he was struggling at home. Yet a few weeks before graduation, he sent his professor an email telling her, "I need you to write me a recommendation for a job application."

The professor politely suggested that Eli find someone else to write the recommendation.

Along the way, somebody's grandma probably told you this: "You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar."

She was right.

Getting someone to recommend you for a job or for grad school, acing an interview, working with the team once you're on board, and negotiating raises and promotions with your boss boils down to one skill: your ability to sell yourself.

The key to landing any sale is making it a win-win for you and for the person who will make the decision to "buy" what you're selling.



What are you selling?

If you need favors from people who can help you get started in your career, you're selling yourself and your personal brand. And the "win" for those people is the pleasure of helping you succeed and of seeing someone they're proud of get something she wants.

What was the "win" for Eli's professor? Absolutely nothing. And her answer was "no."



## How to ask for a recommendation

**Plan.** Find out who knows people at the company you hope to work for. Find out whose recommendation might have influence. Then, outline what you will say when you ask. If you don't know anyone at the company, pick out a few traits from the job description that you have, and ask someone to point those out in a recommendation letter.

**Look for opportunities.** If you want to ask in person, make an appointment rather than catching someone who is rushing to a meeting. If you want to ask via email, send your request early in the morning when people are most likely to check. Look for your opportunity to ask, and choose the right time and place.

**Listen & establish trust.** Figure out what the professor or former boss will get in return from helping you. Will the professor feel happy and proud to help a former student? Will the recommendation give the writer bragging rights for endorsing you once you become the best employee at the company?

**Ask for what you want.** Don't demand. Don't act like someone owes this to you. A favor is a gift. Request it in the most polite, most professional way.

**Follow up with gratitude.** Say "thank you" whether the answer is "yes" or "no." Then, keep in touch to let your professor know if you got the job and how you like working there.



## How to create a win-win

That grandma who talked about catching flies probably also had this to say: "You have two ears and one mouth for a reason."

That's so you can listen twice as much as you talk.

If you want to create a win-win situation so someone who helps you will also get something out of the deal, listen carefully.

Listen before you speak.

Say you want a friend of your parents' to introduce you to her boss, who is the vice president of finance for the brokerage firm you're hoping to work for. You've met the friend, but you haven't seen her for a while.

You could shoot her an email and ask her to make the introduction. Maybe she'll do it as a favor to your parents.

Or you could try to create your own relationship with the friend. You could shoot her an email and ask if you could visit her at her office, or meet her for lunch or set up a video chat with her.

Then, your request for an introduction comes as part of a conversation. You could learn about the friend, her job and her family, and you could tell her about your college experience and what you hope for your future. If you listen closely, you might hear her say that she enjoys mentoring young professionals. Or that she would be happy to be able to do this as a favor to your parents. Or that she can see you have a promising future and it would be her pleasure to help you along the way.

No matter why she decides to make the introduction, you will part on much better terms than if you simply asked her to introduce you for no other reason than that she knows your parents. You will leave her having made a new contact for the future. You will leave her having made a good impression.

You will have created a win-win. And you will be able to call on her again in the future if you think she can help you with something else.

*The rules for listening:*

-  Don't rush to the "ask." Allow yourself to get to know the people who might be able to help you. You might find out that they can help in ways you never imagined.
-  Take an interest. Don't fake interest; genuinely engage with the person. Ask questions. Enjoy the conversation.
-  Start with small talk. Everybody has something to say about the world health crisis, or the weather or the movies. Find common ground, and you might just make a new friend.



- 🌿 Don't make it all about you. A one-sided conversation is not satisfying for anyone. Don't answer the other person's questions about how you are and what you're doing without also asking her how she is and what she's doing.
- 🌿 Listen with your ears and your eyes. Observe the other person's body language and facial expressions. They can reveal a lot about how someone is reacting to you. And be aware that the other person is noticing your body language and facial expressions, too.

### How to work a room

One of the best ways to find people to help you get started or get ahead in your career is to network.

"Networking" is a term that means finding ways to meet with people who are in the field you want to work in or the company you work for or want to work for. Networking also can be among people with interests like yours—professional or personal.

For example, if you like to attend superhero conventions or hackathons, your social time with others at the conference is a form of networking.

Professional networking via social media can be effective, too. For example, following the CEO or marketing director of the company you want to work for on Twitter will help you keep up with the business and give you something to talk about if you happen to meet one of them in person.

LinkedIn is a great way to expand your network—by linking with colleagues and people you meet at in-person networking functions. LinkedIn lets you see the contacts of the people you have connected with, so you can ask your contacts for introductions to their contacts.



## TIPS

**Accept** invitations to receptions that are hosted by your college alumni association, your company or your clients. Sometimes these are after-work functions with drinks and appetizers; sometimes they're after-dinner get-togethers for convention-goers.

**Prepare** a few non-controversial topics to talk about with the strangers you meet. Small talk is hard for a lot of people, but talking about a speech you attended or a research paper you read that's relevant to your industry could be interesting to those you meet at a professional networking event.

**Limit** your socializing (and your drinks). Your goal should be to make contacts who might be able to help you find jobs and move your career upward, not to make friends. Adult beverages often are free-flowing at networking events. If your first impression on a potential future boss happens when you're tipsy, that won't be good for you.

**Follow up** with the people you meet. Exchange business cards or contact info with everyone you engage with at a networking event. Then, shoot them an email or a handwritten note saying how much you enjoyed meeting them. Contact them in the future if you have something to offer them or would like to ask them for help.

## PART 6

# GRATITUDE = SUCCESS

For a class project in senior year, Mari, a broadcast journalism major, arranged for her classmates to take a tour of a large radio station. One of the professionals who spoke to the group was a young man who had wanted to be a radio newscaster all his life but had had trouble finding a job because he didn't have any experience.

He told his story: He decided to start a podcast, air it every week for six months, and then send the recordings to every radio news program in the country.

Even then, he heard "no" after "no" after "no"—until he heard a "yes" from the largest all-news radio station in the country. The program director liked his sound and loved his enterprising spirit.

Mari thanked the speaker afterward by sending a hand-written note that was very specific. "Thank you for telling your story," she said. "I was just about ready to give up on my dream of becoming a broadcaster because I haven't been able to find a job. Instead, I'm starting a podcast and am going to send it to every radio station I can find."

The speaker emailed her the next day to say, "That makes me feel so good, Mari. Your note really touched me."

Fast forward six months, and Mari sent her podcast to the same radio station where the tour had taken place. She gave the speaker a heads-up that it was coming, and he got it into the right hands.

She got the job and today the two of them work together on projects.

The power of sincere gratitude is limitless. An authentic expression of thanks goes a long way when it comes to:

- 🍂 Making someone who helped happy that he did.
- 🍂 Starting a professional—or personal—relationship that can endure forever.
- 🍂 Laying the foundation for additional help in the future—on both ends.
- 🍂 Giving someone a good impression of you.
- 🍂 Solidifying "thankful" as part of your brand.

## When to say 'thank you'

First, consider when to say "thank you," which is all the time. A thank-you note is appropriate and sometimes even expected after someone:

- 🍁 Gives you a gift. If you have stopped thanking your aunts and uncles for the \$5 they send you on your birthday every year, start it up again.
- 🍁 Agrees to do a favor. If you have "sold" someone on helping you, it's important to help that person in return. Sometimes all she needs or wants is for her kind act to be acknowledged.
- 🍁 Interviews you. Thanking someone who has interviewed you for a potential job is a must. The lack of a speedy thank-you could signal to the interviewer that you're not grateful for the chance to work with him.
- 🍁 Recommends you. A professor, an old boss or a friend of your parents' who endorses you for a job, for grad school or for any opportunity is sticking his or her neck out for you. People who write recommendations are putting their own reputations on the line. Show your gratitude by sending a simple thank-you note.
- 🍁 Invites you. A thank-you note after you attend a dinner—with a colleague or a friend—or a meeting you wanted, for example, is a nice touch. So few people send notes after those sorts of events that yours will stand out and enhance your brand as "thoughtful."

The absence of a sincere "thank you" can have some unintended consequences, including:

- 🍁 The person who helped you or gave you a gift might feel used or unappreciated. Plenty of unthanked aunts and uncles—who are thoughtful enough to remember your birthday every year even if their gift is small—are wondering whether you appreciate them or if they should continue sending their \$5 every year. In fact, you probably love this tradition and figure that they know that, but they don't know it. Send the thank-you every single time.
- 🍁 An interviewer might take your lack of communication as a lack of interest.

### Don't assume

Don't assume the person on the giving end doesn't expect or wouldn't appreciate receiving a thank-you note. Make it a win-win. However delighted you are with the favor, gift or opportunity that someone presents you is how delighted that person will be when he reads the kind thoughts you write in return.

- Someone who did you a favor without any acknowledgment from you might decide not to do another one next time you ask.
- People who expect thank-you notes probably send notes themselves and very likely believe you are rude if you ignore their kindnesses. Is “rude” part of your brand?

When in doubt, send the note. Often, a decision not to send a thank-you note stems from a feeling that it is not necessary. You might figure that your great-aunt gets pleasure from sending that \$5 every year—and she does. And you probably never considered that she feels hurt that you don't acknowledge it, even if she continues to send the gift every year.

### How to say ‘thank you’

Almost as hurtful as the lack of a thank-you note is one that is written without much thought.

“Dear Aunt Sally: Thank you for the \$5. Love, Jemma” isn't enough.

What did you buy with the \$5? Do you appreciate Aunt Sally for always remembering your birthday? Do you consider it a birthday tradition, so your birthday just wouldn't be complete without her thoughtful card?

Say so.

When you write a thank-you note:

- Come right out and say “thank you” or “I appreciate you.”
- Explain why you are grateful. In what way did the gift, favor or opportunity benefit you?
- Express your feelings about the person you are thanking: “thoughtful,” “kind,” “special.”
- Refer to future communication: “I'm looking forward to seeing you this summer”; “I'm excited about the possibility of joining your team”; “Feel free to call me if I can do anything for you. Here is my contact info.”
- Consider a hand-written note that you send through the mail. It's more personal and imparts a greater meaning than an emailed thank-you. That you took the trouble find note paper, look up the address, spend a stamp and walk to the mailbox says something about you that a quick email doesn't.
- Write legibly. Don't rush. As we type messages on the keyboard and on our phones so often, our handwriting—universally—is suffering. Make sure what you write is clear and readable.

- 🍂 Send it right away. Don't wait more than a day or two to express your thanks.

A note isn't the only way to say "thank you":

- 🍂 If Aunt Sally remembers your birthday every year, how about remembering hers? Send her a beautiful card in the mail.
- 🍂 Thank colleagues, friends and family just for being there for you in general. If you're sheltering in place, spend your free time jotting notes to them saying, "I appreciate you." You will make their day! (A note: The pandemic has resulted in a resurgence of mailed letters.)
- 🍂 Send an inexpensive gift to someone who has gone out of her way for you: a Starbucks card good for one drink; a gift card that will pay to have lunch delivered; flowers; a bakery item. Gifts can be small tokens of appreciation. The monetary value isn't important. When it comes to showing gratitude, it truly is the thought that counts.
- 🍂 Return the favor. When someone who has done you a solid asks you for help in the future, say "yes."
- 🍂 Follow up. If you get the job that your professor recommended you for, let her know. If it results in a full-time job six months later, let her know.
- 🍂 Check in with people who have said "yes" on a regular basis. Even an annual email or a holiday card lets them know that you were not just using them to get something, and that you really appreciate them and you want to keep in touch.

### How to follow up

When you keep in touch with the people who have been kind to you along the way, you will gradually build a network of friends, colleagues, professors, bosses, classmates and acquaintances who have already shown you that they will be there for you when you need them.

Add to that network every time someone does something for you—something as small as copying you on an email about a job opening; sending you a research report on a topic that interests you or tags you in a social media post that benefits you in some way.

In sales, this is called creating "customers for life." You are, of course, selling yourself, all the time. Create "customers for life" for your unique product—you—by carefully tending to your network, one person at a time, on a regular basis.



## THANK YOU!

Dear Graduate:

Congratulations on your accomplishment! Although your plans for your immediate future might have to change because of the world health crisis, the situation in no way diminishes your awesome achievement or the value of your hard-earned degree.

I know you will use the same drive, creativity and resourcefulness that got you through four years of college to get you through this setback, too. I want to say I wish you well and will be rooting for you as you create your Plan B and execute it like a pro!

I also want to say "thank you" for reading the **Grad Pack**. I wrote it for grads like you: the ones who aren't afraid of hard work, embrace change as an opportunity and believe the future is what you make it. I hope you have learned a few useful tips and tricks from the **Grad Pack**. Mostly, however, I hope it has inspired you to be your best self, no matter what life throws at you, and to understand that you deserve the best life has to offer.

Best wishes for a bright future!

*Dr. Cindy*

If you enjoyed reading Grad Pack, you'll love Every Job Is a Sales Job: How to Use the Art of Selling to Win at Work. Every Job Is a Sales Job goes in depth to teach you how to:

- 🌿 Sell yourself to potential employers and during job interviews.
- 🌿 Sell your ideas and proposals to your new bosses once you start your career.
- 🌿 Negotiate promotions, your starting salary and pay raises.
- 🌿 Convince friends, managers, colleagues or anyone to help you when you ask for help.
- 🌿 Create "customers for life" out of people who help you so you can help each other for many years to come.

Every Job Is a Sales Job: How to Use the Art of Selling to Win at Work is a Wall Street Journal business bestseller. It's a must-read for anyone just starting out in the workforce and for seasoned employees who want to do better, earn more and go farther. Get your copy at [www.drcindy.com](http://www.drcindy.com).



From the author of  
"Every Job Is a Sales Job"

EVERY JOB  
IS A  
SALES JOB

HOW TO USE THE ART  
OF SELLING TO  
WIN AT WORK

Dr. Cindy McGovern



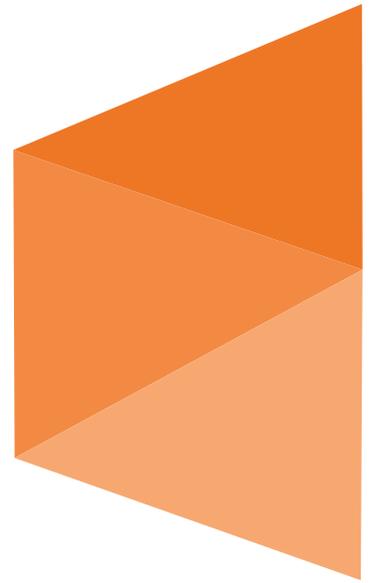
# Selling you



**Dr. Cindy's 5 Steps**  
for Building Your Personal Brand



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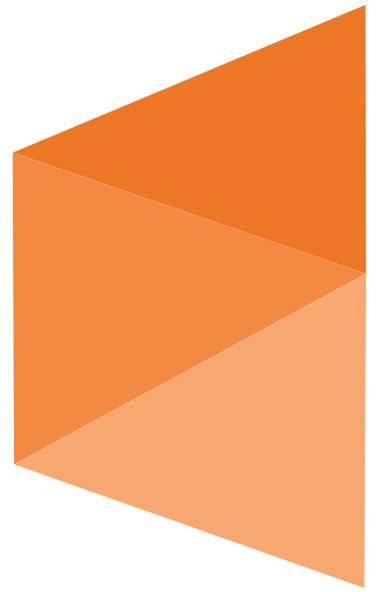


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# The most important thing you will ever sell is **yourself.**



*You are selling yourself 24/7.* You sell you by the way you carry yourself, the way you dress, the way you speak to others, the things you say to them and the way you react to them.

*What are you selling? Is it the best “you” that you can be?*

One way to make sure you're selling the right thing—your best self—is to create a personal brand.

Your personal brand is the person you show to the public—at work, socially and on social media. You may let your hair down with family and your closest friends, but most of the time, you can serve yourself well by carefully curating your image. Here are my five steps to creating a personal brand that reflects what you want others to see in you.



## Step 1: Plan

Every successful sale begins with a good plan. So creating your personal brand starts with a good plan.

Your personal brand is how people see you. It's what you're known as. It's the impression you give others—first impressions and lasting impressions. It's what you're selling to others.

Why leave your brand to chance? The fact is that you have a brand whether you know it or not—whether you have consciously curated one or not.

So it is important to think through what your brand will be. It's important to make serious decisions about the impression you want others to have about you, and spend some time figuring out how to cultivate that image and how to stick to it so your behavior, style, social media posts and reputation are consistent.

Inconsistency is probably not the brand you're trying to create for yourself.

Create a plan around how you want others to view you. If you were to overhear colleagues, clients or new acquaintances talking about you, what would you like them to say? Figure that out, and the best brand for you will become obvious.

Here are five suggestions for creating your brand:

1. ***Create a brand that's authentic.*** If you would like to present yourself as a dynamo but you're excessively introverted, you won't be able to pull that off. It will be too hard for you to consistently behave in a way that doesn't come naturally to you, if at all.

A big part of my own personal brand is kindness. I want to be known as a kind person; a person who treats others with compassion, empathy and respect. So I can't snap at people or make snarky remarks; I can't roll my eyes at others whose views differ from mine. Instead, I have to be a good listener; think before I react; and simply be nice to other people.

This isn't a stretch for me. I grew up in the South, where I was raised to be nice. My whole life, I've tried to be nice to everyone—even to those with whom I disagree or don't care for. I like it when others are nice to me. My philosophy is that nice begets nice; that is, the nicer I am to someone, the nicer he or she will be to me.

This brand works for me because it comes fairly naturally. It's already part of my personality. I'm not saying I don't have moments when I'd rather bite someone's head off than smile, but I try to smile anyway. It's my default. It's how I'm used to acting and reacting. And it's what I have to do to protect my brand. It's what I want for myself.

In short, it's really me. My brand reflects my authentic self.



- 2. Create a brand that says, "I'm successful."** Maybe you're not at the top of your field yet. Maybe you don't even have a job yet in that field. Your brand should say you're already there.

You might be young and new to the workplace, and you might like to dress in comfortable t-shirts, jeans and sneakers for work. That might even be perfectly acceptable where you work. But is that how people dress for the next job you hope to land?

Look at the managers, the president of the company and the members of the board of directors. Do they wear cool kicks to work? Or do they wear a jacket and dress shirt every day, and walk around in polished, leather shoes?

You can't establish a brand as a successful businessperson if you don't dress like a successful businessperson.

It's true that some very successful entrepreneurs, like Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg, whose daily uniform is a heather-gray t-shirt and nice jeans, have become gazillionaires despite their fondness for casual attire. But when Zuckerberg wanted to be taken seriously during his testimony about Facebook's data privacy and security policies in a congressional hearing, he dressed himself in a suit and tie. That was a strategic move. It was a part of his plan.

For us mere mortals, we need to be diligent about looking like what we want to be. When I was a college professor at the beginning of my career, I had a semi-casual wardrobe of comfortable dress slacks and twinsets or pullover sweaters, for example.

But when I accepted my first job as a sales consultant and knew I would be meeting with high-level corporate clients, I went shopping for dresses, pantsuits and nice pumps.

I planned to present myself in an entirely different light to my new colleagues, clients and supervisors. I made a plan for what I would wear to work.

It's why we dress up for job interviews: We want to look the part. If your goal is to advance to a higher position at work than the one you have now, make dressing for success part of your brand. Dress like the boss you want to be. Look like the boss you want to be.

- 3. Create a brand that will sell the message you want others to receive from you.** I work in the sales field, so believe me when I say that your personal brand is the thing that will sell you to others: to potential employers; to bosses and teammates at work; and to clients, teachers and acquaintances who are in a position to write letters of recommendation for you or refer you and your company to their colleagues.

My brand, in part, is compassion. I know that compassion sells. I hope that clients want to work with me because they like me. They know I'll treat them with courtesy and respect. They know from my behavior and actions that I care about them. It is genuine.

So when they have to choose a consultant to work with, they take my compassion—my brand—into consideration. Same goes when they have to choose a company to hire or refer a colleague to a consultant.

Pin down what you want, and then create a brand that will help you to get what you want. Make a plan that will serve as a road map for getting what you want. Make a plan that will help you sell yourself.

Do you want to be "discovered" so you can have a career in music or acting? Build your brand around that. Plan to be the musician with a catalog of YouTube videos showcasing your talent. Plan to contact every talent agent who represents newcomers and send them links to your YouTube performances. Plan to create a social media presence that shows your knowledge, experience and talent.



I recently published my first book, *Every Job Is a Sales Job*. Part of my brand now is “author.” So I wrote a plan to get my name and my book’s name out there.

An aside: I want you to know how much I appreciate you for buying my book. It means more than you know.

Other parts of my brand are “speaker” and “consultant.” So I created a new website, [www.DrCindy.com](http://www.DrCindy.com), so people will know I’m an expert with a Ph.D. who can help them grow their companies. I sent out emails and wrote articles about the topics my book covers for business magazines to further establish the Dr. Cindy brand.

All of this is part of my Dr. Cindy brand: Ph.D., consultant, author, coach, speaker.

Don’t simply hope to be discovered. Instead, be proactive. Create a brand that gets you discovered. Create a brand that sells you to those who might discover you.

- 4. *Create a brand that will position you to help others.*** Branding is all about selling yourself, so figure out how to use your brand as a personal sales tool. One thing I know for sure is that people are most likely to buy what you’re selling if there’s something in it for them.

My “nice” brand is an example of this. People buy what I’m selling because they know I’ll treat them right.

Selling yourself is no different from selling products or services. You can spend all day talking about how great your product is, but you’re never going to sell it if the buyer doesn’t see the value in it. What value do people see in you? Your brand should make that obvious.

Do you present yourself as someone who can help others solve their problems? Advance in their careers? Dress nicer? Save money? Be more popular?

Your brand might seem like it’s all about you. But a successful brand shows others that you’re a person who can do something for them.

- 5. *Create a brand that you believe you will stick with.*** It’s not unheard of for a politician to switch to the other party or to flip-flop on an issue. It’s not impossible for a stockbroker to become a cooking and decorating maven (Martha Stewart) or for a figure skater to switch to fashion design (Vera Wang) or for a college professor to move to a career in sales and consulting (me).

But making a total 180 degree pivot means, for most of us, pretty much starting over with our branding. And that might mean undoing the brand you already have and creating a new one to match the new you.

So as you choose your brand now, carefully consider if this is what you want for the long haul. In today’s media age, branding will involve a significant investment of time—and perhaps even money—in creating and curating a social media presence, developing a style or a look for yourself and your media, and steeping yourself in the language, trends, history and background of the world you’re building your brand around.



6. **Hold off on introducing your newly branded self until you have a plan in place.** In other words, be prepared for your unveiling.

When you're attempting to brand yourself, you don't want to "throw spaghetti at the wall" and see what sticks. Instead, you need to do research, acquire any props that you'll need to present yourself in this new, branded light—like the right wardrobe, new web pages and YouTube videos. Instead of just guessing about what will work best for you as you create your personal brand, make a solid plan for what you know is going to work—before you introduce your brand.

For example, I went shopping for a corporate wardrobe before my first day at my first non-academic job, not after I'd been there for a few months. I wanted my brand to be evident from day one. I wanted my first impression to be the one that I wanted to make. I had a plan and started my new job prepared and branded.

That's not to say you can't or shouldn't make small changes to move in the direction of your new brand before your grand unveiling. If your aim is to become a YouTube influencer who does clothing overhauls and dishes out advice about fashion and beauty, for example, it's a good idea to make it a habit to apply your makeup and press your clothes before you leave the house—even if you're just making a grocery run. Country music legend Dolly Parton says she doesn't even go to sleep without fresh makeup on her face because she doesn't want to be caught clean-faced in case an overnight earthquake forces her to flee her house. Part of the Dolly Parton brand, of course, is the perfect hair and makeup.

Likewise, if your brand will be that of a successful entrepreneur, go ahead and start talking about your businesses now so people will believe you know your stuff when you launch your website and seek out speaking engagements. Your brand reveal shouldn't really come as a surprise to anyone. It should not be a total 180 from what the people you work with and socialize with already expect from you. But it should coincide with a persona that is more focused, more consistent and more public than before.

7. **Write down your plan.** If you're new to branding, you might be surprised that the people with the strongest brands have choreographed everything about their public selves—from the way they walk to the clothes they wear to the catchphrases they speak. Celebrities plan which restaurants they will be seen in, which people they will be seen with and which comments they will make in case a fan or media reporter approaches them.

Most of us don't have to be that precise, of course. But I can tell you that I plan my outfits for days when I will meet clients, potential clients, the public or my own employees. I plan how much sleep I need to get so I'll look fresh and be on my game when I travel. I plan how I will introduce myself; how much of my personal story I will reveal to strangers; and how much time I will devote to fixing my hair and applying my makeup. I don't want to be stranded—and by that I mean unprepared—because I haven't planned for the things that are important to uphold my brand.

This paid off big time when I wound up sitting on an airplane right across from the CEO of a company I had hoped would hire me. Thank goodness I wasn't in my yoga pants—because I would never dress that way for a business trip. The CEO and I wound up sharing a cab after the flight, and sure enough, he became my client.

I can't remember everything I need to do without writing it down. Neither can you. Write your plan down.

Someone who wants to brand himself as a thought leader, for example, could make a list of the philosophies he wants to push. He could write down the causes he wants to publicly embrace. That will help him get used to steering conversations in the direction of the topics he wants to associate himself with.

Likewise, if you want to brand yourself as a fashionista, go through your closet and mix and match your tops and bottoms to put together as many killer outfits as you can. Then write down which pieces go together, including shoes and accessories, and create a calendar to schedule when you will wear each ensemble. That will save you from repeating an outfit that you already wore to an event where the same people might spot you wearing the same old thing.



8. **Rehearse.** How you look, what you say and how much confidence you project will determine whether your brand is believable and consistent. So practice all of those things before you present yourself in public.

Taking your branded self out for a spin is a little bit like giving a speech. You never go on stage unprepared.

When you create a personal brand, the world is your stage. A fitness coach will kill his brand if he sits at his desk at the gym eating french fries. A young executive will quickly burn his wunder-kind reputation if he hangs out until the wee hours drinking with the employees he supervises and starts showing up late to work in the morning.

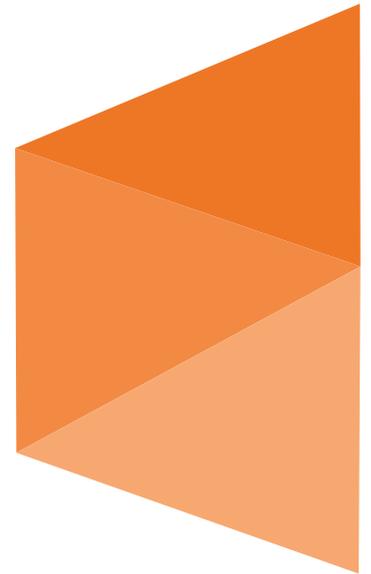
Plan for all of that. Know that you're on stage—and quite literally could show up on somebody's Instagram feed—any time you leave your house. Plan to dress the part. Plan to act the part. Plan how you will say “yes” and how you will say “no” to invitations and opportunities that could help or hurt your brand.

The more you plan, the less likely you are to forget who you have decided to be and how you have decided to present yourself. The less likely you will be to slip, and the more consistent your brand will be.



## Step 2:

# Look for Opportunities



Your personal brand doesn't exist only in your head. In order to become known for something, you need to show it to others. You need to live your brand.

Here are 5 ways to get your brand off the ground:

1. **Live your brand.** Conducting yourself according to your brand some of the time rather than all of the time will not solidify your brand. In fact, it will create a new one for you: as someone who is faking it.

You very well may be faking it—at least in the beginning. But nobody should know that except for you.

If you want your brand to “stick,” your behavior must jibe with it. Look no further than former Saturday Night Live funnyman Al Franken, who became an influential U.S. senator and an advocate of women's rights in the workplace. He was forced to resign after a journalist alleged he sexually harassed her. A viral photo of Franken posing for the camera in an inappropriate pose that was meant to be a joke was all it took for the public to take her side and not his.

Franken's brand, in part, was “women's advocate.” His behavior—even if it was a joke, as he has said—unraveled that reputation in an instant.

Your behavior determines your true brand. Match your behavior to your brand. Live your brand every moment of every day.

2. **Put yourself out there.** If you have a personal brand, let people know. Look for opportunities to showcase your newly branded self.

*For example:*

- If you want to be a social media star, then be present on social media. Tweet, post photos, offer advice and comment on news relevant to your field—or whatever your brand is related to. Post videos of yourself making speeches, being interviewed or offering your perspective on relevant topics. Accountants, lawyers, handymen and people in all sorts of professions are going online to promote themselves as influencers in their fields.
- If your brand has more to do with shining in the office than starring online, behave as you would if you already had the job you aspire to. Some opportunities to grab when you spot them might include speaking engagements and article writing. If you have the opportunity to share your expertise by giving a speech, sitting on a panel, conducting a workshop or training the newest member of your team, say “yes.” Write articles for business journals. Agree to be interviewed by trade journalists. Branding is an endeavor best carried out in public. The more you can showcase your knowledge and confidence, the more people will seek you out as an expert in your field.



- Share your brand plan with people who already know, like and respect you. They can become your first—and most loyal—followers or advocates. If you're a mom with a child-rearing blog or household hints show on YouTube, for example, brand yourself as an expert by introducing your advice to the moms in your neighborhood. Not only will they spread the news about your new brand/blog/videos to their friends and family, they can offer you valuable feedback on your initial pieces and shows that might help you make them even more useful. If you're a mid-level manager with the hope of a promotion, brand yourself as a rising star with your co-workers by taking a leadership role on team projects and being a resource for colleagues with questions.
- Identify the “big mouths” in your company or field. If you have the eyes and ears of these formal and informal leaders in your workplace, they can help you promote and solidify your brand. If they become your advocates, they will spread the word about you. Network with them. Find a way to work with them. Impress them. And stay on their good side. The “big mouths” can ruin your brand as easily as they can help you build it.

3. **Find a mentor.** Attaching yourself to a more experienced, branded colleague will help you accomplish two things: First, you will learn a lot about how to succeed from a willing mentor/coach/advocate. Second, you will attach your reputation to your mentor's, which could give you more credibility.

Nobody does this life alone, and that includes branding. Hitch your wagon to a more experienced star in your universe and follow the lead of someone who has “made it” the way you want to.

4. **Change your business card or personal stationary.** You might temporarily be a business assistant, a college student or an office manager, but that's not your brand. Your business card, along with your social media and any publicity you might get, should identify you as the person you want others to see.

An accountant who has a huge social media following because of his tax advice video might title himself “accountant and social media influencer” or even “celebrity accountant.” An accountant with no social media aspirations might identify himself as a “financial expert” or an “accounting adviser.”

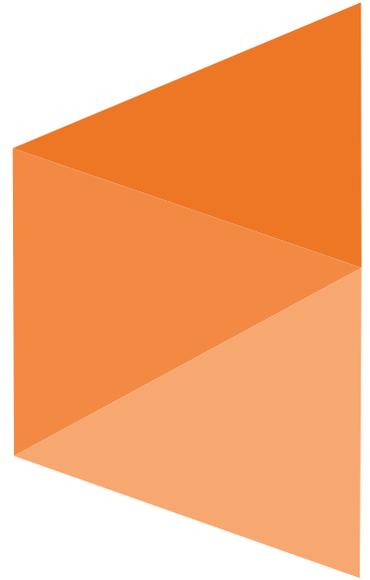
5. **Defend your brand.** Just as you'll want to jump on every opportunity to let people—those in your circle and in the public—know you are an expert/influencer/advocate or whatever your brand is, grab every chance to defend your brand when someone questions it.

Once you reveal your brand, things could start changing in your world—for the better. That could make others jealous or competitive, especially if they have been working on their brand longer. When someone lies about you, disrespects you or calls your qualifications into question, respond with logic. An even temper and facts about your own value are much more effective than a defensive reaction. Never argue or go on the attack; that would go against your brand. Instead, stick to the facts; be nice; and assure everyone that you have what it takes.



## Step 3:

# Establish Trust



No matter how well you brand yourself, you will only be as influential and credible as the level of trust you inspire for yourself in other people. So make trust an integral part of your brand.

Nothing solidifies you as a trustworthy influencer, speaker, thought leader, rising professional or adviser quicker or more solidly than a good reputation. And nothing can break your brand faster than a bad one.

Here are 10 important ways to protect your reputation, which, in turn, will protect your brand:

1. **Control the narrative.** Keep control of your own story. Don't put anything into the public domain that you are embarrassed about, ashamed of, not sure of or isn't well thought-out. Tell only what you want to be retold, tweeted, posted or reminded of far into the future.
2. **Guard your private life.** I post very little personal information about myself on my websites or social media. In fact, I rarely tell my personal business, even to employees, clients, colleagues or vendors. They know I'm married and that I have a dog. But I don't talk about my husband, any problems or feelings that I share only with friends. Part of my brand is "professional and businesslike." It's not businesslike to talk about my marriage, my finances, my family or my social life. My private life stays private.
3. **Keep your social media clear of political, racist, sexist or phobic comments, photos and the like.** Something your immediate circle of close friends finds funny could be offensive to a more general audience. Even if you have privacy settings on your non-public accounts, there's no guarantee that someone won't share the post. Just look at Comedian Kevin Hart, who lost his chance to host the 2019 Academy Awards ceremony after a journalist pointed out some homophobic tweets he had posted eight to ten years ago, even though he said he feels differently now.
4. **Don't "use" people.** When co-workers agree to cover shifts for you, do you return the favor when they ask you to do the same for them? If a colleague agrees to talk you up to the boss when you're hoping for a prime assignment, do you also put in a good word for him when he's in line for something special? Building a brand as a team player, a good friend and someone who's willing to speak up for what's right can go a long way toward moving you to the next level in your career. I say it all the time: Nobody does this alone. Do for others if you would like them to do for you.
5. **Be authentic.** It's perfectly clear to everyone when you are networking just to network. If you're not genuine about getting to know people and about using your brand to help others and not just yourself, your brand could backfire. And avoid aligning yourself with users. People like that won't be loyal followers, or recommend others to your social media sites, or be your true supporters. And your advice won't feel credible or trustworthy to followers who do treasure relationships.

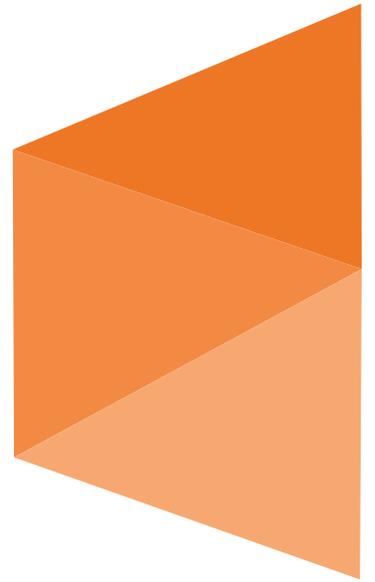


6. **Show, don't tell.** You can tell people all day long that what you have to offer is valuable, or that you are trustworthy or that you deserve their loyalty. That won't convince them, though. You have to show them. You can do that by consistently taking the needs of others into consideration; by using your brand and your influence to help others; by doing what you say you will do; and by keeping your promises. Someone who tells others, "You can count on me" will build a brand of "reliable" only if he comes through every time.
7. **Be transparent and honest.** Some influencers attract social media sponsors, who pay them to mention their products or send them free clothes or recipe ingredients to talk about on their shows. The best of these influencers reveal to their viewers when they are about to gush over—or criticize—a product they have received for free. The ones who are not transparent about that risk their reputations if viewers or competitors find out and assume that they are promoting things just because they got them for free. Their brand: sell out.
8. **Keep polite company.** Your choice of friends can say a lot about you, especially at work. If your brand is "mature, responsible and ready for promotion," but you hang out with a group of co-workers who don't seem to take their jobs seriously, do the bare minimum required, show up for work hung over and spend too much time socializing or texting during work hours, the bosses will think you're that way, too. It's OK to be friends with colleagues, but don't let work become all about your friends. Instead, reserve your chats, parties and inside jokes for after hours. Likewise, avoid associating with co-workers who seem to dislike their jobs or the company you both work for. Someone with a reputation for complaining and badmouthing the work or the organization won't be good for your own rep. They poison the well for you. If your brand is "future leader," you won't get far if you're hanging out with someone whose brand is "loser."
9. **Don't gossip.** Whatever you do, don't let someone else brand you as a gossip. It's way too easy to get sucked into gossiping about co-workers, but avoid it at all costs. Say what you have to say right to the person you have a problem with. Say what you have to say out in the open at meetings instead of whispering about the people and agenda items in the hallway after the meeting ends. Gossips cannot be trusted to be managers, so they often are passed over for promotions. Gossips cannot be trusted to keep confidences, so they are left out of the critical conversations among higher-ups who tap the employees they can trust for the primo assignments. Gossips cannot be trusted as friends, so they tend to align themselves only with other gossips. Their brand: not going anywhere.
10. **Be accountable.** When you mess up, own it. Don't blame others for your mistakes, even if others contributed to a misunderstanding or a missed commitment. Admit your failures, your shortcomings and your missteps, learn from them and do better next time. Every time. Nobody respects someone who blames others for her own shortcomings. But owning your shortcomings is only half of accountability. The other half is reliability. Nobody wants to work with—or promote or give a raise to—someone who is unreliable. One of the nicest compliments you can overhear bosses or co-workers giving you is: "She does what she says she will do." Make "reliable" a big part of your brand.



## Step 4:

# Ask for What You Want



The hardest question to ask is the one that is the most likely to get you what you want. Most of us fear rejection. We're afraid that a "no" means something more sinister, like a demotion or worse.

The fact is that a "no" almost always just means "no for now." It means the company doesn't have the money to give you a raise, or there really isn't an opening to promote you into, or the boss truly believes someone else is a better fit to lead the new team.

It's not the end of you.

I work with a lot of sales professionals, and even they have a hard time asking for what they want. They're afraid to ask for the sale because that potential "no" will upset or embarrass them.

The thing about asking is this: It's the only way you'll even have a shot at getting what you want, need or deserve. It's the only way you can get what you need to establish your brand.

Too many of us assume that our work speaks for itself. If we brand ourselves as reliable, hard-working and deserving of the next great thing, it will land in our laps. In reality, that rarely happens without a little prompting from us. That prompting takes the form of asking for what we want.

Here are five tips to help you ask for what you want, need and deserve:

1. **Know your worth.** You wouldn't be creating a personal brand if you didn't believe you have something special to offer to others. You obviously believe you have the reputation, drive, talent, charisma, smarts or potential to take your life, your career and your success to the next level.

To me, that means you believe you deserve to get to that next level.

If you believe you deserve what's next, include that in the plan you create for solidifying your brand. Include a plan for how you will get to that next level. Include a list of people who can help you. Identify what each of those people can do to help you. Figure out how they might benefit from helping you.

Then, ask for help.

Sure, the answer might be "no," at least for now. But most people will respect you for having the confidence in yourself that it takes to ask for what you deserve.

If, on the other hand, you believe you do not deserve what you're asking for, you might want to re-evaluate your plan to brand yourself this way. If you lack confidence in yourself, you are unlikely to successfully brand yourself as an expert, an influencer or an up-and-comer.



- 2. Take the initiative.** You can ask for help or you can ask others if they can use your help. Asking to take on that extra project, or lead the team or fill in for a vacationing manager can plant the idea with the boss that you're someone who is willing to pitch in, to stretch yourself and to take on more responsibility. Those are qualities that managers look for when they are promoting from within. Offering to help—asking for the chance to do something extra—will flag you as a candidate with potential, drive and team spirit.
- 3. Invite others to follow you.** During every single episode of Vincenzo's Plate, a fun Italian cooking show on YouTube, the host, Vincenzo, asks viewers to subscribe to his cooking channel. The more subscribers he has, of course, the more likely he is to attract sponsors.

If you want people to follow you on social media, attend your presentations, consider you a candidate for a promotion or otherwise help you cement your brand, ask them to. They won't if they don't want to. But many of them will be happy to.

Even before my new book, *Every Job Is a Sales Job*, hit the bookstore shelves, I asked just about everyone I knew to pre-order a copy. I sent them emails. I reached out on social media. I told them about my new website, [DrCindy.com](http://DrCindy.com). I offered them incentives (like this mini book). I explained how the book could help them. I asked for what I wanted. I asked for endorsements from other experts and authors.

My brand: confident and excited about my new book. My success will depend on people who buy my book. So I asked them to buy my book.

- 4. Raise your hand.** Part of branding yourself is becoming an expert about something. If you want to become the youngest partner in your law firm's history, become an expert at the kind of law you want to practice. If you want to be a social media phenom, educate yourself so well that the advice you offer online is considered unique, trustworthy and absolutely accurate.

When someone asks, "Does anybody know how?" Raise your hand. Speak up. Embrace the opportunity to be heard. Let everyone know: I'm new to this role but I'm qualified to do this job.

Ask for the chance to show off what you know.

- 5. Ask for referrals.** One of the most important questions you can ask anyone is, "Will you recommend me to someone else?"

As you build your brand, your friends, family, neighbors and colleagues will be your earliest supporters. Let them know, through your consistent behavior, what your brand is. Make sure what they say about you will be positive and will reflect your brand. Sure, you can simply tell them what to say. But their praise will be more genuine if they know all the right things to say because they see the best of you every day.

Your next most-likely supporters are the clients who are satisfied with your work. Ask them to follow and recommend you as well.

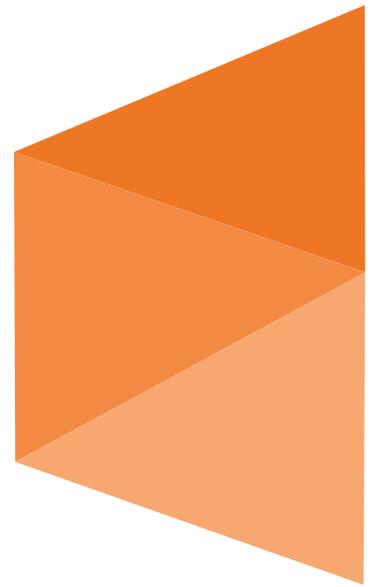
Most people—even the ones who love you—won't do that on their own. You have to ask. And then they'll post glowing reviews for you, or subscribe to your YouTube channel, or otherwise support you, just because you asked.

Displaying your brand to everyone—the people closest to you; the customers you serve; and the strangers you encounter during your day—will make it more likely that someone will put in a good word for you with the boss; pay you a compliment within earshot of your manager; post a positive Yelp review about your company that mentions your top-level service; or write you a glowing letter of recommendation when you're ready to change jobs.



## Step 5:

# Follow up



Once you settle on a brand, act the part, no matter what, at least around colleagues and strangers. Remember: Consistency solidifies your brand. And nothing causes Instagram Stories to go viral quicker than someone who gets caught stepping outside of their self-proclaimed brand.

It's not always easy to stick to your brand, especially when you're tired, super busy, around colleagues or clients you've gotten to know pretty well, or when you're traveling or celebrating. Sometimes, you just want to do what you want to do. To hell with your brand. Here's a cautionary tale.

The 28-year-old social media influencer Yovana Mendoza Ayres built a personal brand—and earned herself 1.3 million YouTube followers—as Rawvana, a vegan. She shared recipes for raw, vegan breakfast drinks and meals, and once even went on a 25-day water fast. She bragged about how good she felt and showed off her trim, fit body as she filmed her segments wearing short-shorts and midriff-baring tank tops. She preached the importance of “reveal[ing] your authentic self” and urged followers to eat only fruits and vegetables.

That was before another vlogger who ran into her at a restaurant shot and posted a video of the social media star noshing on a plate of fish. The backlash began immediately: One-time devotees shifted into full-on hate mode, calling her a “liar” and a “fake.” They called her “Fishvana” and worse.

She explained her fish feast away as the remedy to a health problem she was having. But the damage was done: Her brand was tarnished beyond recovery. She shut down her social media sites and disappeared from the public eye for four months before starting a new site—Yovana—to promote a healthy lifestyle, but not veganism.

The good news for her is that two months in, her new brand had attracted nearly half a million YouTube subscribers, although a fair number continued to post critical remarks.

You may not aspire to be a social media influencer, but your brand is still important for your company and your own reputation. It would definitely suffer if you were ever photographed or videotaped losing control in public.

Your brand should include a commitment to be in control of yourself. That might mean that you're thoughtful about what you say; you think before you speak. It also might mean that you don't drink alcohol with clients or colleagues. Alcohol dulls our inhibitions and gives us “loose lips”; that is, it paves the way to talking behind others' backs; sharing secrets that we ordinarily would keep private; and behaving in a way that some might see as too casual for business acquaintances to be with each other.

Damaging your brand damages your reputation. Bad reputations lead to missed opportunities, lost jobs, angry co-workers, hurt feelings and shame.

Commit to your personal brand. Sustain your brand. If you can't, then you may have chosen the wrong way to brand yourself.



Here are five ways to practice sticking to your brand:

1. **Don't go off script.** During your planning phase—before you ever reveal your new brand—make a list of potential behaviors that could derail your image, reputation and brand. Resolve to think about your brand before you act.

An example: Beauty influencer James Charles, a 19-year-old multimillionaire and his mentor, 37-year-old influencer Tati Westbrook, were friends until Charles started promoting a beauty product that was a direct competitor to Westbrook's own signature brand. The pair duked it out by posting inflammatory videos about each other. Westbrook accused Charles, a Covergirl spokesmodel, of sexually harassing several men, and the teen star wound up losing millions of YouTube subscribers practically overnight.

Make a plan for responding to any accusations that might tarnish your brand. For example, you could plan to deal with negativity in private, not on social media. A public scandal is bad publicity that isn't good for anybody's brand.

2. **Don't take your brand for granted.** People who get too comfortable with their situations tend to lose sight of the fact that it can all go away in an instant in a time when anything can wind up on social media. This makes the need for brand-consistent behavior, conversations and posts critical.

It's fine to decompress with trusted friends and family members who would never think of publicizing your off-hand remarks or jokes. But don't let your guard down with customers, fans or colleagues who might betray you in order to gain something—like that job you have your eye on—for themselves.

Earn your brand and your reputation every day. Behave consistently as if one misstep could unravel all of your considerable efforts to build to your brand.

3. **Don't get too big for your britches.** If your brand makes you more successful, more popular or wealthier than you ever expected, that doesn't protect you from backlash if you go off-brand.

These are extreme examples, but look at comedian Bill Cosby, for one, and family advocate Josh Duggar.

At age 82, Cosby is in prison after being convicted of sex offenses in 2018. Reality TV star Duggar, the oldest of 19 children of Jim Bob and Michelle Duggar and the former head of a family values-oriented religious group, was exposed as a client of Ashley Madison, a dating site for married people seeking affairs.

Their brands—wholesome TV dad and family-first crusader—were irreparably destroyed.

4. **Revisit your brand plan often.** As our jobs change; as we get older; as our tastes mature; and as we achieve our goals, we can outgrow one brand and start building another.

Don't resist it. Instead, plan for it.

Every six months or so, evaluate your progress. Determine whether you need to update your plan. Examine whether your brand needs expanding or tweaking.

5. **Be grateful.** Your success at branding won't be possible without the support of both friends and strangers. Once you're living the life you dreamed of, remember who encouraged, supported, subscribed, praised and recommended you. Say "thank you" often, and mean it. Make "gratitude" part of your brand, no matter what else it includes.

