



**CREATE.
LIVE.
SELL.**

**SELL
YOURSELF**

HOW TO CREATE, LIVE,
AND SELL A POWERFUL
PERSONAL BRAND

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Your post-graduation personal brand

What do people associate with you? What about you is so unmistakably “you” that everyone who knows you knows what it is?

That’s your personal brand.

Are you good with that? Or could it use some tweaking as you step into this next phase of your life?

Congratulations! You’ve graduated and are ready to join the workforce in a job that will put all that you have learned into action.

First thing first, however: Whether you plan to dip your toe into the professional world, graduate school or college, you’ll first need to create, live and sell a powerful personal brand.

You already have one? You’re a step ahead! Still, the brand that got you through high school or college is not the same one that will land you the job of your dreams or help you succeed in your new career.

You never adopted a personal brand? The best time to do that is right now.

Your personal brand is your “signature” when it comes to what you do and say. It’s what you’re known for and what people think and say about you.

Why you need a personal brand

As you look for a job, you will need to sell a lot of people on the notion that you are qualified and capable to do the work required—even though you have little to no experience. How you present yourself to the world will have a lot to do with whether those people “buy” what you are selling.

Your personal brand will become your guide to how you present yourself to the world. It also will become the tool you will use to sell yourself to:

- Those who conduct interviews with job candidates.
- Managers who can decide whether you’re a good fit for their teams.
- People who might be willing to write letters of recommendation or contact their professional network on your behalf.
- Friends, relatives or neighbors and others who work in your chosen field or might know influential people who do.

How to create a personal brand

The good news is that you already have a personal brand, even if you've never thought much about it or written one down.

How you behave, what you say and how you treat others have, in the past, have led other people to form an opinion about you. As far as they're concerned, that's your personal brand.

But you can create a better one. You can create one that will lead those same people to form the exact opinion about you that you want them to. When you create a personal brand, you don't leave your reputation to chance. You don't leave the first impression you make on others to chance.

How do you want others to brand you? That's your personal brand.

To get started creating a powerful personal brand that will help you sell yourself as exactly what you are and want to be, answer the following questions.

What kind of person is perfect for the job you want and the company where you want to work?

- How does that person present him/herself to the world?
- What kind of demeanor does that person display?
- How does that person treat others?
- How does that person conduct himself or herself during professional interactions?
- What are three adjectives that others would use to describe that person?
- How does that person dress?

What do you value the most—at your core?

- Examples are honesty, family, fairness, wealth, health, energy.
- Come up with five "value" words that describe what's important to you.

Which people—those you know and those you don't, like celebrities or historical figures—do you most admire?

- Why do you admire each one of them?
- Compare what you admire about each one to detect any common qualities that you like.
- Do you also have those qualities? Would you like to develop them?

What are some things that you do better than anyone you know?

- Those are your "superpowers."
- How can you show others your superpowers?

Create. Live. Sell.

Once you have narrowed down the qualities and values that are important to you and you have identified what is expected of people who have the kind of career you're interested in, ask yourself another question:

What can I live day in and day out?

That is an important question because deciding what your brand will be is just Step 1 of the three-pronged personal branding process: Create.

Step 2 is “Live.” That means you have to live your brand day in and day out. You have to be true to it. You have to behave and treat others in the way you have identified is most like the professional you hope to become. You have to use your personal brand as your guide to what you do and say—all the time, even if you don’t feel like it all the time.

You have to be your personal brand. So make sure your personal brand reflects not only who you hope to become but who you are at your core. Make sure your personal brand is authentically you.

If it’s not, you won’t be able to live it. And if you don’t live it, you won’t be able to sell it.

Step 3 of a powerful personal brand is “Sell.” Your personal brand will help you sell yourself to others in all kinds of situations: job interviews, first impressions and more. Sell your brand, and you will sell yourself.

Sell. Sell. Sell.

First, forget any notion you ever had that “sell” is a dirty word. Second, consider that the best way to sell yourself and your brand is to learn how to sell like a professional.

The best sales professionals rely on a process that ends with them getting exactly what they want and those who buy from them also getting exactly what they want.

You can use that process to show people who can help you get your career started that they would benefit from hiring you, working with you, recommending you or taking a chance on you. Your powerful personal brand will help you do that.

What do you have to sell?

- You can handle the job, even though you’re fresh out of school.
- You are knowledgeable about the field you’re entering.
- You learned skills in school and at part-time jobs that you can use in the career you want.
- What you lack in experience you more than make up for in energy, ideas, passion and loyalty.
- You love to learn, and you learn easily. You’re coachable and you welcome coaching.
- You’re confident but not arrogant. You know you don’t know everything.
- You work well with others who are older and more experienced than you. You’re eager to learn from them.

The 5-step sales process

As you Create. Live. Sell. your personal brand, learn from the success of the sales professional. Follow these five steps:

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

1. Plan.

Almost all success starts with a thoughtful plan. Consider: What kind of personal brand will get you closer to your professional goals now that you're ready for a career?

- What will you need to change about your behavior, demeanor, approach and presentation?
- What will you need to stop doing? What will you need to start doing?

2. Look for opportunities.

As you transition from the habits and style you got used to as a student to an awareness of how you need to look, behave and speak as a professional, you'll find that others will think about you differently.

- How can you show off your new brand to people who can help you get started in your career?
- Which people do you, your family members, former professors and even neighbors know who can help you?
- Do professionals in your chosen field belong to networking organizations that you can join so everyone can observe your new brand in action?

3. Establish trust.

Living your brand consistently is the best way to let others know they can count on you to always be the professional you want them to know you are.

You have taken the time to carefully craft a thoughtful and powerful personal brand. Before you react to situations or people, and before you make decisions, slow down and consider how to do that in a way that is consistent with your brand

4. Ask for what you want.

Part of any new graduate's brand should include "willing to ask for help." Don't assume others know what you want; ask them for it.

Ask for job recommendations, introductions to people who can help you and ideas from others in your chosen field. Most people are flattered when a promising newcomer to their field asks for advice.

5. Follow up with gratitude.

- Whenever someone helps you by giving you a job or simply offering information, be grateful.
- Send a thank-you note or email describing how the person helped you.
- Keep the person informed about the status of your job hunt.
- Make the person happy to have recommended you by living your brand, doing a good job and representing him or her well.

Sell your personal brand like a pro

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Show people who can help you get your career started that they will benefit from hiring you, working with you, recommending you or taking a chance on you.

