

The #1 Secret to Building Your Perfect Personal Brand

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Some people absolutely hate the idea of personal **branding** because they think it feels fake or forced. Sure, I'd hate that too. Who wouldn't? But an effective personal **brand** should never feel forced by definition.

I'm going to let you in on an insider secret. **Brand** building is actually a misnomer. You don't sit down and decide what you want your **brand** to be. In fact, that's completely the wrong way to go about it. The secret to building the perfect personal **brand** is this. You don't actually "build" a great personal **brand**, you ["extract" it](#).

It may not be an easy or comfortable process, but figuring out what makes you "you" is a necessary first step to making your **brand** realistic and relatable.

The people who skip this step and jump immediately to packaging themselves are the ones who end up with forced **brands** that they can't relate to and ditch after a week.

It's only once you've extracted your personal **brand** that you can package it for others in a compelling, memorable, and relatable way.

Extracting your personal brand.

The first step to extracting your **brand** is being 100 percent sold on who you are and what you're looking to accomplish in the marketplace.

It's like **marketing** a company's **brand**. Would you ever sit down to market a business when you're still unsure what the product is? Of course not. A company must first determine what benefit it offers and how it's different from the competition. In other words, it has to determine its unique value proposition.

What's your unique value proposition?

Most people haven't thought about this much before. That's good news for you because you're about to put yourself 10 steps ahead of the competition.

Determining your unique value proposition.

This process is very much like defining your own personal business plan. You need to first answer three main questions:

- Who's your audience? Whose attention are you trying to get?
- What problem or challenge do you solve for them?
- How do you distinguish yourself from the competition?

Let's say you're a college graduate looking for your first full-time job in PR. Great, now it's time to dive a little deeper.

The target audience is obvious, right?

At least in the short term, you'd want to reach the hiring departments at your favorite PR firms. But it's also worth thinking about your audience in the longer term. Will you want to appeal to other PR professionals, editors at publications, or other people looking to break into PR?

Next, what problem or challenge do you solve for your audience? Well for starters, you're going to solve the HR department's challenge of finding their next awesome employee.

Taking it a step further, let's say you want to be a PR thought leader and act as a guide for others looking to break into the space. In that case, you'll want to provide them with all the information they need to break into the industry and succeed.

Lastly, what makes you unique? How do you stand out from the crowd?

Perhaps it's your incredible depth of experience despite your young age. Or maybe you have a fresh perspective thanks to your academic background in a completely different field. Perhaps you're so good at throwing parties and organizing events that PR firms can't afford to pass you up.

Packaging it all up.

Once you've answered these questions honestly, you can finally move onto packaging your personal **brand**. This is the exciting part. Your answers will help inform how you'll reach your audience, delight them, and keep them coming back for more. You will figure out what kind of personal website makes the most sense and what your call to action should be. You'll decide which **social** media profiles to use and what kind of content strategy you'll use.

These packaging decisions will definitely feel forced or fake if you've built up a **brand** without much thought or deep questioning. It's like building up a house of cards that's bound to collapse at the slightest breeze.

But an effective personal **brand** is like a tree, with strong roots and branches that extend naturally from the trunk. And like a tree, your personal **brand** will grow and evolve over time as

your goals change.

That's the beauty of extracting your personal **brand**, rather than building it. By getting to the core of your passions and your unique value proposition, you invest in a **brand** that's transparent, relatable, and sensible for the long haul. That's an investment in your future worth making.

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