

Build your personal brand for business success

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With more and more jobs being outsourced offshore (or to a computer!) and a whole lot of competition in the market place, it may be the most valuable thing you have to sell is the very thing that makes you unique – your ‘personal brand’.

Growing trend

Whether it's a higher salary, a better job or more influence in your industry that you're after, your personal brand – how colleagues, headhunters and managers perceive you – could be your most vital tool. In a growing trend, more and more people are getting help in this area from people like Emily Kucukalic, Managing Director of Brand New You, a personal branding consultancy.

Image is everything

While the idea of having a personal brand is not new, it was first spoken about in 1997, the idea has reached its time. Business is booming for Emily, who says the company has grown by 200% every year in the four years it has been operating. What is perhaps surprising however, is that more men than women have taken up their services, with a roughly 70%-30% ratio.

“Men actually love the program,” she laughs. “Because most men don't want to think or worry about this stuff.”

And Emily points to examples of clients who have received major promotions and pay hikes after presenting themselves differently in the work space. The message; improving your personal brand might significantly transform, or fast-track your career.

Self promotion

Here, we outline five simple ways in which you can build and promote your personal brand, in order to achieve your business and career goals.

1. Know your strengths

Emily says it's all about finding the one thing that makes you different, and learning how to embrace and enhance it. “The fundamental idea behind what we do at Brand New You, is to get an understanding of who our clients are, work out the best parts of them, and then enable them to demonstrate in two seconds, to anyone they meet, just what they've got to give,” she says. Unearthing those characteristics that make you such a great asset, then knowing how to promote them, is key.

2. Conduct a social media audit on yourself

Brad Schepp, co-author of, *How to Find a Job on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and Google+*, says it's not just about making sure those drunken party snaps are safely hidden from your public profile, but making sure the information that is available publicly paints you in the right light. “Build compelling, professional profiles for yourself that include your job history, going back no more than 15 to 20 years,” he advises. “LinkedIn is an obvious place for such a profile, but Facebook, Twitter, and Google+, among

others, are also sites where you can include this kind of information. These profiles should demonstrate not only what you've accomplished, but where your strengths are and what you can offer future employers."

3. Position yourself as an expert

In today's economy, it's more important than ever to differentiate yourself as someone an employer can't afford NOT to hire. "People are looking for specialists, not generalists when recruiting and promoting now," says Dan Schawbel, author of the upcoming, *Promote Yourself: The New Rules for Career Success*. "If you can become the best at what you do you will become sought-after". It seems like obvious advice, but honing your skills in an area that differentiates you as a leader is a great way to fast-track your career goals.

4. Publish and Curate

You don't have to be an author to publish great content these days - in fact, anyone with a Facebook profile or Instagram account is already an experienced publisher. Think about the information you're putting out there. Can you contribute to a project, or write a guest-blog post about your field of expertise? Can you share fantastic and relevant articles with your professional networks to prove you have your finger on the pulse? The best way to become known in your field is to engage with ideas and concepts that are relevant to your work. If you can establish yourself a thought-leader, then most of the work is already done.

5. Educate people as to why they need your services

Part of developing a personal brand is identifying the reasons an employer or business partner couldn't do without your skills. Once you've got that figured out, it's time to let them in on the secret, and make them see why you're such a valuable asset. "You have to learn how to listen and pull out of people the things that they want or do research to find out what companies want, then tie what you do well to what they want, so that you can directly link successes you've had in the past to a goal they are trying to achieve," says Pamela Rucker, Chairwoman of the CIO's Executive Council's Executive Women in IT.

Why mentoring matters

Article from insights.bt.com.au

Finding a person or organisation to help you navigate the world of business can be incredibly beneficial for your long term success – which is why more and more business mentoring programs are springing up. And it's not just small business owners who benefit, it's also the mentors.

Mentoring – how it impacts small business

According to the Federation of Small Businesses, research shows 70% of small businesses receiving mentoring services survive for five years or more – this is double the rate of non-mentored entrepreneurs.

It also found 20% of mentored businesses are likely to experience growth in that time.

With the head start that having a business mentor provides, it's no surprise that it is a vital pillar of the School of Social Entrepreneurs (SSE), with whom BT has partnered to develop the [*SSE & BT Social Entrepreneur Incubator*](#), helping students develop their social business ideas.

Win/win for all

"All students on SSE programs are matched with mentors with strong business or entrepreneurial experience to help them to develop their business plans and strategic thinking as they establish and grow their enterprises," says Sally McGeoch, SSE Partner Programs Manager.

"It is a win/win experience for both the mentors and mentees. Mentees have a personal coach and trusted adviser to help them navigate the challenges of developing a new enterprise and in return the mentors are stretched personally and professionally as they work side-by-side with social entrepreneurs who are passionate, committed and trailblazing innovative solutions to social and environmental challenges in their communities."

It's this focus on real-world skills and connections that has contributed to the success of so many SSE fellows.

"Without the support of the high profile people I have met through my journey at SSE I think don't think I would have made a dint in the market place." says Jamie Green, SSE Fellow and Founder of [*One Night Stand*](#), a social enterprise sleepwear brand that invests its profits in homelessness initiatives.

And it's not just the students that benefit from the networking arrangement. Not only can mentoring a new entrepreneur help more established business people identify areas of growth for themselves, it's an excellent way to give something back to the community in your area of expertise.

"Some of the things I learnt when mentoring was about the pure spirit of being an entrepreneur. For me, mentoring with the School for Social Entrepreneurs was about giving back, and actually helping someone else out with my personal knowledge and connections. If people are thinking about having a go at being a mentor, I think absolutely do it!" Barry Thatcher, Westpac mentor.

Find out more about the [*SSE & BT Social Entrepreneur Incubator*](#) - applications are now open for students and mentors <http://insights.bt.com.au/bt-and-sse-launch-the-social-entrepreneur-incubator/>

How to green your business (and why it makes financial sense)

Article from insights.bt.com.au

On a planet with finite and rapidly declining resources, talking the talk isn't enough when it comes to sustainability. Businesses need to walk the walk, and create environmentally friendly offerings that positively impact the planet, and not just because it's the right thing to do – but because in the current economic climate, it is the only thing that makes long-term business sense.

Going Green: The best business decision you can make

According to a recent [study](#) by Havas Media Group, the majority of people wouldn't care if 73% of brands ceased to exist – so what does it take to be part of the 17% of brands they do care about? In a nutshell, businesses need to be meaningful in order to have the kind of connection required to succeed in a crowded financial marketplace. They need to resonate with consumers not only for their product, but for the message and meaning they represent.

Consumers put their money where their heart is

Global consumers are more likely than ever to vote with their dollar, spending more with socially and environmentally responsible businesses, according to a recent [Nielsen study](#). Moreover, the region most likely to choose businesses with a sustainable message is the Asia-Pacific region, with a whopping 64% of consumers reporting a propensity to choose a product or service based on the environmental or social impacts of the business that provides it.

Sustainable steps to take

So, you've decided to make your business more environmentally responsible – now what? Depending on the current situation and how eco-friendly your business currently is, there are a range of steps you can take. Internally, you can:

- Ensure there are adequate recycling bins and a firm recycling policy in place, as well as employee education as to why this is important.
- Make office buildings and vehicles as energy-efficient as possible by creating energy-use policies, switching to solar power, fitting energy-saving light bulbs and offering carpool/public transport subsidies to employees.
- Conduct a green audit in order to discover the ways in which your business can run more efficiently, with the minimal impact. The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection can assist you in assessing your waste, water and energy inefficiencies with its free [ecoBIZ](#) program.

When it comes to the products and services your business offers, there are also many ways to become more sustainable. These include:

- Ensuring suppliers at all levels are both ethical and environmentally sound, and publicising this fact
- Maintaining transparency at all stages of production and distribution so it is easier for socially and environmentally-conscious buyers to ensure their choices are based in fact
- Offsetting your carbon footprint
- Supporting other local sustainable businesses

Like any solid investment, investing in the green future of your business is going to involve work – but it will yield invaluable long term returns, not only in brand loyalty from consumers and a more efficient business, but financially too.

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