

Best Personal Branding Tips

The Readers of
Small Business Trends
Offer Their Best
Personal Branding Tips

In April 2009, we polled readers of *Small Business Trends* for their tips on personal branding. The response brought such excellent tips that we decided to create this document to share them.

-- Anita Campbell, Editor in Chief

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Bill Jelen

[Mr. Excel](#), Twitter [@MrExcel](#)

“Trademark your brand. Have your face drawn by an artist in your area of expertise, such as Nitrozac and Snaggy who do techno-geek stuff.”

Brent Leary

[CRM Essentials](#), Twitter [@BrentLeary](#)

“I wanted people to think of my name when they heard the term CRM. So I named my company CRM Essentials, and my blog Brent’s CRM blog. That way “Brent Leary, CRM Essentials” is on every business card, article, blog post, webinar, interview and anything else I’m involved in.”

Loayy Ahmed

[Knight’s Capital](#), Twitter [@BusinessTherapy](#)

“A brand vision is to know where you want to be. A brand mission is to know what needs to be done to get you there.”

Brad Farris

[Anchor Advisors](#), Twitter [@blfarris](#)

“Be consistent. Use the same language, colors, themes, voice everywhere you appear; web, print, business card...”

Ivana Taylor

[DIY Marketers](#), Twitter [@DIYmarketers](#)

“Choose a favorite phrase that says what you’re all about and use it in a sentence at least 3 times a day. Mine is ‘It’s all about getting chosen’. “

Zane Safrit

[Zane Safrit](#), Twitter [@zanesafrit](#)

“Now’s the time.”

Joel Libava

[The Franchise King](#), Twitter [@franchiseking](#)

“Be yourself, and be true to your core values. Even if people disagree with you, stick with who you are. Personally, I can come across a little too aggressive for some. But my motives are good, and I am ethical. That is what is important. I am just not a good politician.”

Leslie Carruthers

[The Search Guru](#), Twitter [@thesearchguru](#)

“I’ve always had a page on our site offering myself as a speaker and contributing writer. The pages serve 2 purposes – one we actually do receive inquiries from them, and second they position me and the company as someone who is an expert and chosen by others.”

Mark

Twitter [@winningwp](#)

“I have found great success on Twitter (ie, more personal connections and conversations) by using TweetLater, which is free, to set up an automatic follow + DM (direct message) to anyone who follows me. However, the trick here is not to spam the new person with a stupid video or otherwise throwaway text/link. Instead I try to sound like myself – I say “Hi and thanks for following me. I would greatly appreciate a DM on how you found me. Happy tweeting!” I get a two-fer from this:

1. Start a conversation with someone new, and
2. Get great “how you found me” info that I can file and even trend later if needed”

Kris Bovay

[More for Small Business](#)

“For personal branding, use your name in connection with all the contacts you make. If your website is not [yourname.com](#), then make sure that you use your name throughout the site - so you can be identified. If you’re posting, or blogging, or using other social media - use your name. Connect the name with your work and your passion.”

John DiPietro

[Domesticating It](#)

“One of my new year’s resolutions was to get my online identity sorted out, which means making the most of the available tools and delivering a consistent message. After taking inventory of the various professional sites to which I belong (e.g. LinkedIn, VisualCV), I decided that I needed an aggregator to take charge and deliver my message, my way, in my style. I had registered my own name as a domain many years ago but not done anything with it, and so I decided to use WordPress to tell my professional story.

If you think about your career as a product that you’re selling, wouldn’t it make perfect sense to have a web site? Of course it does, and you want your personal brand to have the same benefits:

* More and more, clients and employers are performing online searches to learn more about the people with which they are considering to engage. Having a search engine friendly web site makes it more likely they will find you.

- * Indexing your experience through the use of keywords makes it easy for people to zero in on the skills and/or expertise in which they're interested (more about that later).
- * Multimedia capabilities (i.e. images, video, presentations, links) make it easier for you to tell your story in a vivid and interesting way.
- * You can use specialized links to direct people to specific content areas of your profile.
- * While this practice may soon be common place, for the moment at least it will help you to stand out from the crowd.

The power of this approach now takes shape as you create blog posts to describe specific projects, publications, and experiences. The key is carefully selected categories and liberal use of tags for the posts. This will allow employers and/or clients to quickly zero in on the topics in which they are interested. And since you're making it easy to find the information they're looking for, you can feel free to include lots of details, making them as interactive as possible. You'll want to include the Simple Tags tag cloud widget in the sidebar."

Martin Lindeskog
[Egoist](#)

"I say amen to Joel's statement:

"Be yourself, and be true to your core values. Even if people disagree with you, stick with who you are. Personally, I can come across a little too aggressive for some. But my motives are good, and I am ethical. That is what is important. I am just not a good politician."

My blog name is standing for a personal brand as such due to the name, EGO (I in Latin). My tip is to get a domain name with your first name, last name. (e.g. [Martin.Lindeskog.name.](#)) People have asked me about the .name several times.

Mark Thomas
[QGia Connect](#)

"Be omnipresent, be consistent. Make sure the messages you portray on Facebook are the same in spirit as those you display on MySpace. People trust consistency. Also, make sure you have a presence on all major social networks. There aren't too many to worry about, so take the extra time and effort and build your brand across all important channels and keep it consistent!"

Erin Monahan
[Union County Neighbors](#)

"Authenticity. If your customers and perspective clients can't feel that you believe in yourself and your product then all the marketing in the world won't necessarily get you anywhere. Do what you believe - and believe in what you do: That creates an underlying relationship built on trust that will net you the clients."

Bill Petro

[Bill Petro.com](http://BillPetro.com)

“Develop your 15, 30, and 90 second “personal commercial”. . 15=handshake intro, 30=elevator pitch, 90=interview “Tell me about yourself”. Ask your mentor “What’s my brand, what do people think of when they think of me?” Validate with your network: ask friends and family. Put your 15-second version on your Twitter, Facebook and MySpace profile, your 30-second version on your blog “about” section, your 90-second version on LinkedIn.”

Bruce Fenton

“My personal branding tip: “circulate value”, which could also be summed up as “pay it forward”. Too often, when people are looking to build their brand, they are wondering what’s in it for them. They go into every interaction trying to gain something for themselves. I say turn that around and always try to help others. Eventually this will reflect well on yourself. It takes time and patience, but building a brand does not happen overnight.”

Rob Ackerman

“Think of you and your image in the third person.”

Ellis

“What goes around comes around. Go out of your way to assist others, talk other people up, and do anything to help them reach their potential. People will remember you by what you do for others much more than they will remember any catchphrase or business card you give them.”

Matt Wilson

[Matt Wilson.tv](http://MattWilson.tv)

“To be remembered, be remarkable.”

Maria Pergolino

[Inbound Marketer](http://InboundMarketer)

“Treat your personal brand the way you would your corporate brand. This means promoting, tracking, analyzing, and optimizing. Record all interactions, use unique URLs to track traffic sources to your personal site(s) or blog(s), create measurable goals, analyze data, review what is working, and implement your own best practices.”

Chris Cottrell

Twitter [@chriscottrell](https://twitter.com/chriscottrell)

“Focus your skills and promote yourself as the go-to person in your field.”

Jeffrey Alexander Brathwaite

[2 The Next Level](#), Twitter [@jbrath](#)

“Start a group on [Linkedin.com](#) and name the group after your business brand like “Small Business Trends”. As the group creator you become the thought leader while being able to amass a following of professionals who are interested in the brand’s subject matter.”

Bruce Wade

[Hepincubator](#)

“Learn who you are and then be yourself all the time. This helps to be authentic and you do not have to remember who you were with, truth is easy to remember, be real all the time.

I like to introduce myself when asking questions at seminars to get a better response, so I would start “I am Bruce Wade from the Entrepreneur Incubator, where we develop and grow small businesses, I just wanted to ask...” This gives the speaker a more info to answer your specific question as well as giving everyone else in the room and 10 second marketing blurb on you and your business. Works well.”

David Marchena

Twitter [@davidmarchena](#)

“Give before receive. But be authentic in the social network, not a robot who shares links.”

Barkri

[Clink and Inc.](#)

“Recognize why you want to set up your own small business. It’s like going to the hardware store thinking that you want a drill, when in fact you actually just need a hole. What’s the difference? The difference is that having a laser-focused, crystal-clear outline of what you want at the end can massively accelerate progress towards that goal. Imagine if an overweight person went on a diet with no pound-loss goal or time frame goals e.g. “I want to lose 10 pounds in the next 30 days”. Their diet would probably not succeed.”

Karin S.

[Daily Mastery](#)

“My best branding tip: Find out what your fundamental values and mission are - mine is giving people the tools to master their daily lives so that they have the space to do anything they want to do and be - and make sure that absolutely everything people see or hear is consistent with it. People remember. . .”

John Joyce

“The first step anyone should take, whether its “Me” the professional looking for a job or “Me” the small business owner trying to attract customers, is to evaluate your current brand. Use a

site like <http://www.123people.com> or <http://www.pipl.com> to quickly understand the current state of Me 1.0 - this will help you plan and implement your Me 2.0 strategy.”

Roy G. Miller
[RGM Communications](#)

“For your personal brand, think Person, Paper and Power.

* Person: Make yourself real, genuine, reflective of your personality and style. I do that with a caricature, as part of my image. The Person also includes being who you are-being real-face to face, on phone calls and on paper.

* Paper: Online or print, make sure your brand is distinct visually and in message approach, style and tone. I like to use humor and wit to make a point. I balance that with my strong work ethic, strategic perspectives, but note that I do enjoy a good laugh. Write it. Print it. Show it.

* Power. Make your personal brand active, distinct, powerful. That means you step out of the comfort zone of your personal tastes, and Power Up your “look and feel.” Then Power-fully share your brand, not only in your marketing efforts, but your sales efforts, networking and more.”

Cecilia Edwards
[Cecilia Edwards.com](#)

“A brand is people’s expectation of their interaction with you based upon perceptions of past interactions. Therefore, I believe that a strong and valuable personal brand can be established by focusing more on solving others problems and less on promoting yourself.

While doing this, always make it easy for people to connect the help back to you (same short bio used on all your social networking sites, links back to your blog/website, etc.)

Before people read your full bio and list of accomplishments and offerings, they will have experienced your personal brand.

After that, just make sure everything you do is appropriate, consistent and professional to maintain the perceptions.”

Caren
[Digital Pink](#)

“Your personal brand is a reflection of your greatest strengths. Identify what those are, and then make that the ground you stand on.”

Robert Brady
[Righteous Marketing](#), Twitter [@robert_brady](#)

“In connection with Joel, DON’T FEAR BEING DIFFERENT or even a little quirky. Find something

positive that makes you stand out from the crowd. My personal example: Since PPC optimization seems like magic to most people, I am branding myself as a PPC Wizard. Will some people think that makes me geeky? Yes, but they'd be right, so why fight it?"

Kare Anderson
[Moving from Me to We](#)

"Make your brand a rhyming differentiating benefit - like Me2We."

David Damore
[David Damore](#)

"As best as possible, know what people are saying about you. Your brand is your reputation and your reputation is what people think and say about you. A few ideas are below.

1. Set up Google Alerts [<http://www.google.com/alerts>] for your name, brands, blogs etc.
2. Use Search Twitter [<http://search.twitter.com/>] to monitor mentions of you, your business etc. Even if you are not on Twitter, this is a good idea. Load the searches into an RSS reader.
3. Engage in conversation with people from varied backgrounds. You want to know opposing views. People with different backgrounds can provide insights on the image you are projecting."

JRM
[JRM WebSpace](#)

"Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc. . . are all great and can be considered needed in this web 2.0/social media world but, they have to be real. Far too often I see over hyped over inflated bios and experiences that do not display the true person behind the webpage. I believe that in order to increase your web brand you have to be real (sorry for the Dr. Phil reference). Also don't forget the old adage; Treat others like you want to be treated."

Ben Quinn
[Action Coach](#)

"Put forward the best UNIQUE you. Figure out the unique quality, ability or skill you have and push that to the front of your personal brand. There are so many out there being the best GENERIC you. They are pushing qualities that are average or basics within their industry. Their brand gets lost in the white noise.

Create your own purple noise and your brand will catch the ear of your perfect client!!!!"

Angi Reeves
[IOS Gallery](#)

"Branding is about recognition. Utilize every opportunity to include such things as your logo and tagline. Put them in your email signatures, your business cards, invoices, etc. It can take

an average of 7 times of hearing the same info before it is remembered, finding innovative ways to hit this is key.”

Tommie Powers

[Tommie Powers.com](http://TommiePowers.com)

“The first thing you should do is a self assessment. You need to know exactly who you are, what you stand for, etc.

Personal Branding is a long term plan, which means whatever route you choose to begin with will determine your long term branding solution.

These things stick like super-glue so you need to make sure you can live with the long term effects.

There are thousands of companies and people who got this all wrong simply because they did not assess themselves.

Don't let this be you!”

Debra Stamp

[Debra Stamp.com](http://DebraStamp.com)

“Remember that a brand is not a product. It's really a person's 'gut feeling' about a product, service or company, or in the case of a personal brand... about YOU! So, influence those individual gut feelings by communicating what makes you different from everyone else. Who are you? What do you do? Why does it matter? Now... tell everyone you meet, everywhere you go!”

Eddie Gear

Metalique

“Branding according to me to create a long lasting impressing in the publics mind.

My Tip: Create a unique style:

- 1) Writing style
- 2) Design and layout of communication
- 3) Uniqueness
- 4) Relative

To sum up, creating a brand that is RELATED to your business by keeping its design, layouts, written and oral communication unique - will help you succeed in creating a brand image.

PS: The important point is to follow them consistently.”

Bill
[Oven Claw](#)

“To get the buzz going first have a great product like the Oven Claw Pro. Word of mouth will do a little. Then get all of the press coverage possible. By press I mean every niche possible online and off. Think beyond everything you’ve been told by experts and go for it. Your brand will attract attention.”

Nick Johnson

“Objective Critical Thinking”

In an endeavor to build a deeply powerful, multi-faceted brand that individuals could identify with beyond ethnographic peer-groups (especially generational, racial, corp. status, income).

To me as a young(er) entrepreneur this is critical to establishing credibility and potential marketability for myself.

Action Steps

For me a process of finding my deepest “why’s” through introspection, immersion into the perspective of my clients, search for possible commonalities “touch-points” that could potentially drive a connection/relationship with my target (disregarding any personal limitations at this point), Paradigm shift- to understand their “potential” and their idea and depth of Value at this point-in-Time (career, lifecycle stage, disposition, etc).

Practice Makes Perfect

Over-communicated consumers demand succinct, relevant, information and they want it relative to their (object of) Value at that Time. An openness is critical to maximize opportunities to increase brand equity and a willingness to communicate the depth and breadth of your identity will be self-renewing and teach you more about yourself (and potential/ideal self) as you continue to be questioned or engaged in provocative conversation.

I think most would be delighted to see the results they find when they take the approach of systematic questioning and articulating the best-responses.

Hope this helps - I’d love to hear constructive feedback - as listening and understanding is a critical part of this strategy.”

Saurabh Hooda
[HoodaSaurabh](#)

“Be a yardstick of quality in whatever you do.”

Jeff Shuey
[Jeff Shuey](#)

“Personal Branding Tip - Do what you say you will do. Your word is your bond. People may forget how or where you said something, but they will remember what you promised /

committed to do.

Tip #2 - Under Promise and Over Deliver. This is easy to say & type - yet hard to do.”

Tim, Kilroy

[Tim Kilroy.com](http://TimKilroy.com)

“To develop a personal brand, the best course is to freely share your expertise without expectation of recompense. Contrary to popular belief, offering a cup of milk will entice people to buy the cow! Moo!”

Joe Jacobi

[Gold To Green TV](http://GoldToGreenTV.com)

“Best personal branding tip? You know that fence that separates 2 sides to just about every issue? Find YOUR 1 issue, passionately jump (far) off its fence and land firmly on your feet.”

Penny

“Live your passion.

It will come through in every aspect of your business dealings. From communications and being a recognized “expert” in your field, to customer service and being recognized for your integrity. You will build respect, respect and a loyal following, whatever your “brand.”

Ola Rynge

[The Rynge Blog](http://TheRyngeBlog.com), Twitter [@rynge](https://twitter.com/rynge)

“Building a personal brand is similar to building a house. Before starting the construction, start with a clear and detailed blueprint, get second opinions, then identify the tools to start building, and when these things are in place, the construction can begin. So in terms of personal branding:

Blueprint = Brand Identity

What are your core values, who do you really want to be. By this I do not mean that you should try to be someone else, but focus on the values and beliefs that are about who you really are. Be genuine and honest to yourself.. Let this process take time.

Second opinion = Brand Image

Ask around or let someone else ask around to see how you are perceived by your peers and identify why they perceive you in that way. How does your brand image differ from your brand identity. Don't let others define your values, but your friends and coworker might provide input that makes you change the way you look at your core values.

Tools = Communication channels

Before starting to set up your website, add profiles all over, etc. Identify the channels that you can use, and answer the question “why should I use this channel?” before starting your branding process. Maybe you shouldn’t even brand yourself online if that is not consistent with your values. Remember that relationship quality is so much more important than the quantity of relationships.

Now, when you have your Personal Brand (brand identity + brand image) and the communication tools, it is time to establish your branding strategy and go to work on communicating your brand in a consistent and trustworthy manner.

As a final tip: look at the personal branding process as a process of personal development, at least until you have defined your Personal Brand, not as marketing.”

Fbrahimi
[FB-Associés](#)

“Mon leitmotiv: “Faites de votre vie un rêve et faites de votre rêve une réalité”
- by Pierre Curie

My lietmotiv: ”Make your life a dream and make your dream a reality”
- by Pierre Curie”

Laurie Pettit Rusick
[Opt Solutions Inc.](#)

“Your name is part of your brand. Stay consistent and avoid using a nickname part of the time. I use my full name on any official correspondence, including my email signature - people don’t want to wonder whether Laura Rusick is the same person as Laura Pettit Rusick. The same is true for Joe Smith vs. Joseph Smith, etc.”

Calvin Bacon
[Alabama Business Today](#)

“Be sure to be inclusive. We take special care to market our “guests” as well as our company. This helps our guest because we give them exposure; this helps us because we have great guests and we are elevated by association. It’s using the “halo” effect to market your brand.”

Fellene Gaylord
[Sirius Media](#), Twitter [@fellene](#)

“Craft different aspects of your personal brand with each flavor of social media, then tie them all together to form the overall brand on your own website. Establish your professional CV on LinkedIn, express your personal side on Facebook (with appropriate privacy settings) and share informative discoveries and your personal timeline on Twitter.”