



CRAFTING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND WORKBOOK

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DISCOVERING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

When it comes to personal branding, job seekers typically encounter two big hurdles: The first is the concept of knowing how to ‘sell yourself,’ which makes many people uncomfortable; and the second is the fear many job seekers have of defining themselves so narrowly that they exclude themselves from opportunities. While you may want to say to an employer, “Just give me a chance – I can do anything!” this is not the most convincing way to show your enthusiasm and eagerness to learn. That’s where this workbook can help.

Many employers today look to hire individuals who fit their teams in terms of knowledge, experience, skills, and personality. They know exactly what they need when reviewing candidates, so having a well-crafted and well-positioned personal brand can help you get noticed in a positive way.

A personal brand is a blend of knowing how your strengths bring value to the position and company for which you are applying, because you understand the company’s business needs and how that position solves a particular business problem.



Personal branding is how you communicate the value you bring to a job or a company, setting you apart from other job seekers.

WHY BRAND YOURSELF

Personal branding has become critical in today's job search as a way to combat an increasingly competitive labor market and navigate an overwhelming amount of technology. Branding helps you present a concise, consistent message that helps employers notice you amidst other candidates with similar skills and experience.

BENEFITS OF A PERSONAL BRAND:

- Helps you focus on the value you bring to employers and identifies the unique traits you bring to the workplace.
- Delivers an authentic message to hiring managers around your career goals and depicts who you are as a professional.
- Enables employers to see not only the skills you have but also the unique personality and character traits you have to offer.
- Helps you define how your personal vision for the future aligns with the long-term business objectives of the hiring organization, effectively elevating your status from commonplace commodity to one-of-a-kind package.

A useful methodology to apply when creating your brand is **SOAR**, which stands for **Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results**. Created by career planning experts Jacqueline M. Stavros and Gina Hinrichs, SOAR is a strategic planning framework that focuses on strengths and seeks to align values and passion with opportunities in your industry.

The nature of the **SOAR** strategic process helps you prepare your verbal, written, and visual brand as a living, evolving, energy-creating part of your job search. The methodology invites you to discuss or journal about what makes you valuable as a member of the workforce.

"The Thin Book of Soar: Building Strengths-Based Strategy" is available to purchase on www.soar-strategy.com.

WHERE AND HOW TO COMMUNICATE YOUR BRAND

Once you identify your unique value proposition, it's time to tell the world. It's important to educate the employers you want to target with your new personal brand message. Include this brand message within your cover letters, requests for informational interviews, social networking profiles, and other networking opportunities. Branding becomes an equal part of your online and offline job search efforts as you interact with people who can lead you to potential job opportunities.

Verbal and written branding will help you convey how you fit into your industry by sharing your strengths, career aspirations, and the benefits you offer. By coming up with a concise, relevant message about your key accomplishments, you're better able to shape how others perceive you as an applicant. Consistency is key in delivering your brand message.

WHERE TO TALK AND WRITE ABOUT YOUR BRAND

- Improvise verbal branding at networking events and in interviews.
- Customize written branding in resumés, cover letters, thank-you notes and follow-up letters, status updates, social media profiles, and networking outreach messages.

THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR VISUAL BRAND

Visual branding is how you are perceived. Elements of your visual brand start with actions, attitude, and wardrobe, and extend to include a consistent look and feel throughout all your job search materials, social media presence, and more.

Everything from your body language, to the color and design of your resumé, to your email signature, to your photos on your social media profiles play a role in your visual brand. If there are certain channels you wish to keep private and leave out of your job search, be sure to set your privacy settings appropriately.

TIPS FOR VISUAL BRANDING

- Choose a font, heading, formatting style, and professional voice to maintain a consistent look throughout your materials, including resumé, cover and approach letters, thank-you notes and follow-up letters, status updates, and networking outreach messages.
- Perform a Web search on yourself and do a 360-degree assessment to know how your actions, behavior, attitude, and wardrobe – both online and in person – are perceived. Hiring managers are probably doing the same; therefore, if you see things that would prevent you from hiring someone, you should hold yourself to that same standard.
- If your industry is more creative, consider creating a portfolio website, blog, or online resumé. Potential employers will expect you to show off your creative prowess.

HOW TO START BUILDING YOUR BRAND

Answering the questions below will help you create a dynamic, concise, and consistent brand message.

(The following exercise is used courtesy of “The Thin Book of SOAR: Building Strengths-Based Strategy.”)

MY STRENGTHS

If you had to define the word “strength,” you would probably say, “A strength is something I do well.” The truth is, however, that a strength is an activity that makes you feel strong. Strengths have the qualities of yearning, restoration, and presence. For this exercise, only choose to list strengths that make you feel energized and eager.

PULL OUT YOUR UNIQUE AND AUTHENTIC STRENGTHS BY PROVIDING 5 ANSWERS EACH: (Coaching tip: *Dig deep, ask: “What else?”*)

- What work duties give you energy?

- Which professional activities do you most look forward to doing?

- What are some activities you find yourself yearning to do again or learn more about once you’ve completed them?

- What makes you unique? What makes you the best at what you do?

- List 5 of your strengths and skills that get results.

- What did you accomplish in the past that you are most proud of? How does that reflect your greatest strength?

MY OPPORTUNITIES

Examining what your target industry, company, or position needs from you helps you focus on how you can bring value and benefits to your future employer.

DEFINE WHAT MAKES YOU ATTRACTIVE TO EMPLOYERS:

- What opportunities for contribution and growth do you see in your industry?

- How can you differentiate yourself within your target industry?

- What benefits do you bring to a prospective employer? (i.e. How have you made money, saved money, or saved time for your past employers?)

- Identify 3-5 needs of your industry. How can you meet those needs? What pain points do you solve?

- What challenges do you help your organization overcome?

MY ASPIRATIONS

Exploring your values and aspirations for the future can align your daily mindset, behaviors, and attitudes toward a compelling vision. Expanding your brand to include what you want to create for yourself and the community can illustrate to employers what you will bring to the organization beyond skills, knowledge, or experience.

DISCOVER WHAT ALIGNS YOU WITH INSPIRING LEADERS:

- What work would be the most compelling for you? (This would be work where you believe you could make the most difference and feel motivated daily.)

- What do you want to do? What kind of long-term difference do you want to make in your industry?

- Reflect on your strengths and opportunities, where can you make a difference in this job or industry. How can you contribute to this job or industry?

- How does this job or industry align with your values? (i.e. Who do you want to become? What do you care deeply about accomplishing or contributing?)

MY RESULTS

Giving evidence of your accomplishments is key to showing employers how you can successfully deliver results. Backing up your brand with ideas on how to generate results shows employers how you bring intelligence and value to their business.

PINPOINT HOW YOU DELIVER RESULTS:

- What are your quantifiable or measurable accomplishments? (i.e. When have you made money, saved money, contributed to the culture, improved a process, policy or system, taken on additional responsibility, increased productivity?)

- What accomplishments would potential employers be most excited to hear about?

- What makes you the best at what you do?

MY IMPACT STATEMENT

Looking back on the information you just generated, jot down what stands out to you. If your brand was a news story, **what would the headline be?**

