

BUILDING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

GENERAL TIPS ON BUILDING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

- Know yourself, assess your abilities through testing, and perform your own appraisal of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
- Brainstorm things you are good at, identify your passion, and determine the advantages of your passion & best attributes.
- List your contributions and accomplishments and assess your reputation quotient. In other words, what are other people saying about you?
- Become self-observant and reflect on how people respond to your presence. Do they listen, or can they not wait until you stop talking?
- Look for the right people to know about your brand – create awareness, and check employment opportunities for your emerging brand.
- Consider creating a portfolio of your best work. Include samples of your work, theses, presentations, published articles, prepared question, references, personal and career assessments, team meeting reports, copies of diplomas, etc.
- Perform verbal and visual branding by preparing brief brand statements.
- Enlist brand champions who will periodically evaluate your brand to ensure its relevance and significance.
- Maintain your brand and evolve your brand.

Controversial Advice from David D'Allesandro, C.E.O. at "John Hancock." Some of the tips spark some interesting conversations.

"CAREER WARFARE : 10 RULES FOR BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL PERSONAL BRAND AND FIGHTING TO KEEP IT"

BY DAVID D'ALLESANDRO, CEO OF JOHN HANCOCK

"Hard work and accomplishments are necessary, but they will probably not set you apart. Most organizations are vertical villages. What really counts is the name you make for yourself on Main Street.

More than anything, your personal brand will determine whether you conquer the vertical village or are defeated by it. Promotions are usually doled out in the most casual way, based on someone's instant assessment of you. It's the character you have demonstrated that will decide whether you get the promotions you want - or not.

Smart organizations go out of their way to look for employees who will enhance, not compromise, the company's reputation. The single most important thing you can do for your career is to lay the groundwork for an attractive personal reputation.

To do that, you have to look at your own actions in the same way that the people judging you will view them. Everyone has a natural tendency to make excuses for their behavior. Don't make excuses for yours. People will decide who you are on the basis of the things you do. Don't flatter yourself, though. You can't build a good personal brand if you can't see yourself as others see you.

The best way to establish a brand when you are new to an organization is by offering something that the organization is missing. To get noticed, turn whatever particular qualities you offer into something that is of value to the higher-ups. There are probably plenty of volunteers for every high-profile task, so

sometimes the best way to be noticed by those in power is to do something humble but essential. Associate your brand with something glamorous and valuable and you will become valuable, too.

When you are young, getting access to powerful people is the name of the game. To be considered for the upper ranks, get into a position where you are making money for your organization.

A reputation for dishonesty is a career-ender. Indiscretions can cost an organization a great deal, so become known for your excellent judgment about when to speak and when to keep quiet. To quickly elevate your personal brand, make bold promises and deliver them on time. You have to develop a reputation for leadership, because at some point your ability to do things yourself becomes meaningless. What counts is whether you can get other people to do them.

Here are a few ideas for adding leadership to your brand:

It's about the people, not the theory. Know what you don't know. A reputation for fairness is everything. Accept the fact that you have to pay your dues. Early in your career, you will be making the most of the money for the organization and expending most of the sweat, while the senior people reap most of the rewards.

Your boss decides how your accomplishments will be viewed by higher-ups. Their power is real, so handle him or her carefully. Bosses want three things: loyalty, good advice, and to have their personal brands polished. Hell hath no fury like a boss scorned. Do not talk negatively about your boss to co-workers. Beware of complaining about your boss to her boss. You will develop a reputation for disloyalty that senior execs will hold against you.

There are three types of corporate personalities: sycophants, contrarians, and balanced players. Don't be a suck-up. Smart bosses know that sycophants are dangerous because they overreact to anything the boss says. Avoid the contrarian trap. Don't assume that your tremendous intellect alone is enough to propel you to the top. It isn't. You'll need the right kind of character, in addition to brains. Develop a reputation as a balanced player who is able to give advice that is worth trusting. Learn the art of giving advice. Do it before the decision is made, not after, when you will appear to be challenging the boss's authority.

Don't be afraid to stand out from the crowd. It will help build your brand as a balanced player. But pick your moments carefully. It's your job to polish the boss's reputation. Don't make yourself look good at his expense. Compensate for your boss's weaknesses, to win his or her respect and gratitude. All bosses will use you. The question is whether you are smart enough to use them to build a great reputation.

There are two things that you want from a boss: trust, and a fair exchange. A boss who trusts you will give you opportunities that will allow you to be considered executive material. Early in your career, experience is more valuable than money. Parents are self-sacrificing. Bosses are not. Understand that almost every nice thing your boss does for you is done not out of love, but to further his or her own brand.

Ideally, your boss is like a great platoon leader. You both gain strength by watching each other's back. A true mentor will make sure that your reputation rises in tandem with his. A mentor understands that your brand has to change as you gain experience. Be tolerant of your boss's weaknesses, if those weaknesses yield opportunities for you to build your brand.

Try to form alliances outside your boss's circle in order to develop a reputation as someone who is loyal to the organization. Try to be seen as corporate-minded player not boss's lackey. Try to be a conduit between your boss and the rest of the organization.

Recognize the kind of boss who is a one-way user and who will do nothing to help you build your brand. Then, find a way to move on. Wimp bosses do not allow you to build your brand because they don't allow you to do anything. Because the know-it-all boss doesn't allow you to think for yourself, he or she has nothing to teach you. Inquire about a boss's reputation before you take a job!

Do your best to shine during crisis. Good manners are essential. Show you belong among senior executives, and demonstrate your compassion and respect for people around you. Sometimes a single embarrassment is enough to alter people's opinion of you forever.

Dress professionally if you want to be taken seriously. However, don't use that against people. Don't judge people based on their appearance, don't be a snob, and don't be a bigot.

Beware of company events that are supposed to be fun. You are still being judged. Don't drink at office parties. And try to avoid your boss. Try to avoid off-site meetings, because they are snake pits for reputations.

Manners are about compassion, knowledge, patience, respect. At a family run business, your last name is always deficient if you are not in the family. If you marry into it, don't even think about getting divorced. Do not waste years in a place where your brand can never succeed. Don't get obsessed about being partner - don't let it cloud your judgment. You must be a hunter to make partner. If you are passed up twice, leave.

Entrepreneur run companies are dangerous for anyone looking to build a brand. Everything is personal, they are controlling, they don't like to share, and they like to play toy soldiers with employees.

Your reputation is built brick by brick every day. You are always on display. As you rise, little things matter more. Meetings are the stage on which you build your brand.

There are three basic meetings you need to understand:

The staff meeting, the get-something-done meeting, and the combat meeting (that involves money and approval). Do not use a staff meeting to argue for yourself or a project, do not attack peers, and don't complain about your job to colleagues.

No one is perfect, but you can establish good patterns. If you make your boss's life better, your detractors usually won't matter.

Keep in mind that your enemies will not confront you directly and they will try to not leave fingerprints. They will try to destroy you with gossip if they can't on your merits. Fight back when you recognize gossip campaigns. Then, fire traitors as an example to everyone else. Don't be afraid to take on someone powerful - self-respect is a good part of every brand.

Becoming an executive is like being royalty. Be skeptical of your own genius, though, and keep the friends who remind you you're human. Develop interests other than golf. More importantly, remember who feeds your family (customers and shareholders). Surround yourself with equally skeptical people.

Build something people can respect and they will make allowances for your shortcomings. The more important you think you are, the more important it is for you to give of your time, money, and influence. Give because it's the right thing to do, give where you can make a difference, give locally, and give personally.

Build goodwill in good times because you will need it in bad times. The higher you fly, the more you will be shot at- bad press comes with the territory. Don't forget to explain things before they become problems. Always behave in a forthright manner. Don't conceal information just to protect your brand or you will be finished! Do not lie, especially under scrutiny.

Finally, surround yourself with a trusted team of advisors.