

# Personal Branding

by Joe Heller, High Performance Sales Coach

I'm here to dispel the myth about professional relationships and why the chosen few succeed and others fail. I've been studying the misunderstood relationship model in professional services for quite some time and have taken the liberty of summarizing a few of the major points in a study that redefines criteria important to sustaining and even thriving in your career during a down economy.

The number one criterion for thriving in your career is whether or not your employer TRUSTS you. The second is whether or not they RESPECT you. And in case you were wondering whether or not they LIKE you makes a difference, LIKEABILITY came in number eleven on the survey. You may at first disagree with the criteria, but I challenge you to really think about what's important to you. And I know you'll agree that the most trusted professionals always win.

So, if you are currently staking your professional career on being likable, you will manage your career all the way to the poor house. Why? As someone who travels extensively working with professionals around the country, I concur with the study that TRUST is the number one factor in career success. Trust is the foundation for creating success or when trust is broken it will act as a wedge that can rarely be completely restored.

There has been a lot of hype over the last several years on the subject of Personal Branding that Tom Peters, Management Guru, originally brought to the attention of millions. I too believe based on working with successful professionals that there is quite a bit of validity to the concept of building and extending a personal brand. I work on mine daily to strengthen my professional relationships and leverage new ones.

In the 21st Century Personal Branding is a must. Personal branding is going to be the mantra of the professional for the next 100 years as markets become increasing commoditized. As a speaker specializing in Business Development, I've given 357 talks on Personal Branding to professionals around the country, Canada, Mexico, and Asia. So now you are asking... What does Personal Branding have to do with becoming a Trusted Professional? It goes back to the number one reason people engage in a professional relationship with you -- TRUST!

A question I often I am often asked is how to communicate or package your talents and skills so that the market immediately recognizes and places a personal value on your unique talent. The answer is -- Personal Branding.

After all the most successful professionals have not only developed the skills and knowledge necessary to build trust, they also understand how to communicate their knowledge and experiences in such a way that they are recognized as the expert in a given field, they have a special quality I call "known-for-ness". They are the recognized expert. Now with this new found knowledge on Personal Branding you can too.

Trust is the forerunner to everything else in a professional's life. How does Personal Branding apply to professionals? First, let me explain what a brand is. A brand is a represented ideal that exists in the mind. A brand is a metaphor for trust and competitively distinguishes itself usually with a perceived advantage over the competition. That's right; I said a "perceived" advantage.

Let's take a brand such as Wheaties as an example. Men buy Wheaties because they believe (this is a manufactured belief) that they will run faster and jump higher all because they are eating wheat flakes out of a box with a picture of an athlete. A brand is all about managing the beliefs and selling an ideal to a segment of the population.

However, a Personal Brand is different. A brand of a product or service is manufactured for a target audience but a Personal Brand is based in the authenticity of the individual.

A Personal Brand's foundation is the unique talents, natural abilities and skills of the individual. A Personal Brand is further strengthened by the person's experience in an area of specialization extending the buzz of the individual. One of my favorite quotes by Albert Einstein is "Experience is knowledge. All the rest is information". Leveraging your experience as it relates to your natural ability (genius quality) is what successful professionals have been doing for years.

Why should you think about developing a Personal Brand? Well, believe it or not you already have/are a brand! People already "perceive" you in a certain way. They instinctively know what you are good at and what you are not so good at. So you might as well focus on optimizing your brand, building congruency with your natural talents and tie that into how the world sees you to redefine the reality you do business in. After all, your brand positions you as a known expert in your market.

Another question I am often asked is what do you mean by "optimizing" your Personal Brand? The answer is simple really. It has been psychologically proven that you can only be known as one thing in someone's mind eye. That's why people who do more than one thing wonder why they never get as many opportunities as someone who specializes. And why the person who specializes makes more money. The person who specialized has a known quantifiable value that is easily monetized into results.

If you try to be all things to all people, the people who you are marketing to will not know what to believe or what your real value is. They will be confused as to your value and will [psychologically] choose the professional who has specialized in the area that (they perceive) has the expertise they need. Because you haven't optimized your brand, the market is confused as to how to use your talents and will not see you as a solution to serve their particular need.

Remember, the professionals who are known for specializing in something are the ones that have the top of mind advantage over their competition - other professionals.

The professionals who have specialized and learned how to communicate their value have become "the choice" and not just "a choice" within their market. The unique distinction of a Personal Brand removes obstacles and clearly defines their value, especially among professionals that "look alike". Leveraging Personal Branding you can step out of the commodity mix and fast track your career to greater success. Once you do this, you will establish yourself as "the choice" within your market.

One final note; in order to become a successful in selling you must become an avid student of what works in selling. I developed the Revenue Warrior Selling System (TM) to give you a competitive advantage and succeed against your most challenging competition. You can find the Revenue Warrior Selling System (TM) on my site <http://www.JoeHeller.com>. Go there right now and click on the Revenue Warrior Selling System (TM) to learn more. It's a great resource from my personal library for yours.

Joe Heller, Sales Coach is available for - Individual Coaching, Team Coaching and Group Coaching in the United States and Worldwide.

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