



DEVELOPING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

Mike Hurst CPP, Director of HJA Consult provides some helpful advice for security professionals looking to enhance their 'Brand You'



↑ Mike Hurst CPP, Director of HJA Consult

I have always thought that Niccolò Machiavelli and his work, *The Prince*, are misunderstood. I see him very much as a pragmatist and I think we need to take a pragmatic approach to developing our careers.

What is 'Brand You'?

The phrase was first coined by Tom Peters, in 1997. "Regardless of age, regardless of position, regardless of the business we happen to be in, all of us need to understand the importance of branding." In essence, it means that we develop our business selves; image, positioning in the market, values etc. in the same way that we would a business.

Defining 'Brand You'

Some of us are more self-aware than others but it is not always possible to see ourselves as others see us. Certainly, it is worth talking to close friends and partners, but having some external, objective source of information is useful.

Jennifer Aaker devised the Brand Personality model in 1997 and whilst it is aimed at businesses/ brands, I think it also can help individuals in defining their own personal brand. It could be

adapted and different words and phrases used, but the methodology behind it is sound.

There are also personality profiles and psychometric tests that you can take and there are many of these. I find DISC analysis (the basics of which has been around for almost 100 years) and the Myers Briggs 16 Personalities test, quite useful and informative. There are many organisations offering these tests and individuals can usually find a free offering online.

When taking these tests, be honest with yourself, there are no right and wrong answers. As Oscar Wilde wrote: "Be yourself, everyone else is taken".

Position yourself as an expert

Personal branding can be enormously powerful because it sends a clear, consistent message about who you are and what you have to offer. A strong, authentic personal brand helps you become known for what you are good at, sets you apart from others and can position you as a niche expert.

Along with experience, academic qualifications, certifications

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and training can also demonstrate expertise. There is always a balance between formal education, specialist qualifications/certifications and experience. This will vary from role to role and person to person.

BRAND PERSONALITY*

5 Dimensions of Brand Personality and their facets

SINCERITY

Down to earth
Honest
Wholesome
Cheerful

EXCITEMENT

Daring
Spirited
Imaginative
Up-to-date

COMPETENCE

Reliable
Intelligent
Successful

SOPHISTICATION

Upper class
Charming

RUGGEDNESS

Outdoorsy
Tough

The raft of webinars (normally free to attend) available during lockdown may reduce, but I doubt they will stop. Take advantage of these to keep your knowledge base up to date with current trends and developments.

Post-COVID changes

In many important ways, business methods will not change fundamentally post lockdown, but I suspect strongly that there will be a more hybrid approach and a greater acceptance that a video call can replace a face-to-face meeting in many cases. However, some important things to consider are:

- Make sure you maintain access to a Zoom account or similar: a free account can often suffice.
- A good profile picture helps and maybe a good, professional background image.
- Our online presence has become more important as we are travelling and meeting people less often so make sure it is up-to-date and consistent across platforms and your CV.
- In addition to keeping your CV up-to-date, prepare some short profiles (50 words, 100 words etc.) These can be useful for

online applications, speaker profiles, etc.

- CVs are often read by computers before they are seen by a human being, so make sure you include key words relative to the role you are applying for.
- CVs can be adapted on a job-by-job basis to stress skills to a specific role - you do not need to have the same CV for every application.

Social media

LinkedIn profiles should be kept professional at all times. It is vitally important to engage with potential influencers, comment on posts as well as write and share articles of your own.

A Twitter account can really help to build 'Brand You' but again, keep it professional. If you prefer, have a second 'personal' account to follow celebrities, sportsmen, musicians etc.

In my opinion, Facebook and Instagram are largely personal, not professional, in most cases. They are particularly useful for some businesses but individuals need to carefully consider what they share. Prospective employers and business partners may still look at what you are sharing.

Promoting 'Brand You'

We are CEOs of our own companies, 'Me Inc'. To be in business today, our most important job is to be Head Marketer for the brand called You.

How do you see your network and what does it consist of? Are you a member of any professional bodies? Do you

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contribute to industry initiatives? Are you involved with charitable causes? Do you contribute articles to the media?

Ask yourself, "What have I done in the last 6-12 months?" Reviewing this can help you position yourself and plan future activities.

'Brand You' will always be a work in progress and will be evolving continually.