

NANCY FREDERICKS REPORTS . . .

BRANDING YOURSELF

....

**To Raise Your Influence
and Create a Meaningful
Impact in Your Workplace**

....For Women Only



How to Raise Your Influence and Create a Meaningful Impact in Your Workplace...

Disruptive Secret: “Branding Yourself”



“In this ever-changing society, the most powerful and enduring brands are built from the heart. They are real and sustainable. Their foundations are stronger because they are built with the strength of the human spirit, not an ad campaign. The companies that are lasting are those that are authentic.”

– Howard Schultz, CEO of Starbucks

And as Nancy says: *“This is equally true for people as well.”*

Why it is so important... when done right?

In all probability, every leadership development program you’ve attended and a great number of the articles you’ve read state how impactful “Branding Yourself” is in today’s marketplace. All of those sources are accurate—branding is a significant leverage from which to launch a powerful career.

I believe business guru, Tom Peters, identified as the creator of the “Brand You” concept says it better than I ever could,

“The labor market worldwide is becoming astonishingly competitive and you can no longer expect to survive by being essentially an anonymous bureaucrat in a purchasing department or logistics department or engineering department, but you really have to stand for something.” He goes on to say, “Come hell or high water from the beginning of your career you need to think about your areas of distinction.”¹

Have you taken the time to create one for yourself? If you have already recognized the potential of branding and written one, congratulations, you’re ahead of the pack! A survey on branding reveals that less than “15 percent of people have truly defined their personal brand.”²

The pivotal question now is: How has it been working for you? Not quite as life changing as you’d hoped? Well, you are not alone “less than 5 percent are living it consistently at work—each and every day.”³ Moreover, what’s even scarier to me “is that 70 percent of professionals believe they have defined their personal brand and 50 percent believe they are living it. But when you ‘peel-back-the-onion,’ you realize that their focus was centered on self-promotion rather than a commitment to advance themselves by serving others.”⁴

I intend to offer tips that address the reasons why “Branding Yourself” may not have worked for you or your co-workers in the past and to successfully design your brand moving forward whether you’ve tried before or this is your first endeavor.

What do I mean by “Branding Yourself?”

In your career, you've demonstrated competency yet you feel as though you're slogging through wet sand all day long. No recognition has come your way. No promotion. You're still part of the large often indistinguishable, amorphous mid-level pack of producing executives. Deep in your heart-of-hearts you believe you have something to offer, and you know something has to shift. In the back of your mind, you think perhaps branding may be the answer, and you just may be right!

“Branding Yourself” isn't easy. It is not merely taking a *selfie* and then, loudly exclaiming “Ta Da!” It is a bit more complicated than that.

“Branding Yourself” is a shortcut for others to realize who you are and what you're contributing to the organization. It is impactful, brief and compelling as it represents you. The soul of who you are. And underneath the elegant brand identity design is a real effort as well as the real you.



Before ever beginning the process of “Branding Yourself,” verify that you're positioned to advance your career powerfully. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to understand that unless you build your brand on a solid foundation—one that is both in sync with your organization and authentic to who you are—you will only harm yourself long-term.

After all, what value would a brand be if your work is rife with incomplete projects, little to no critical thinking, missed deadlines and overrun with mistakes?

Well, you'd have a brand alright just not one that anyone would want their name attached to. Your brand represents the entirety of your current competencies, abilities. "Branding Yourself" also takes into account less finite measurement such as your heart's purpose, and should offer a powerful hint of all your untapped potential. It includes every single one of your winning distinctions. And *it is not* merely a replication of your job description. It is far more robust. Executive leaders in your organization have to believe you are right for not merely this job, but for future work with a larger responsibility as well.

So, ask yourself: "Am I performing my job with a 100% excellence?" If you think you are, but don't positively know the answer, ask your boss: "If I'm performing my job 100%, what would you expect from me?" After the conversation, you now know what your boss and the organization consider critical. "How do you measure up against the list?"



You are ready to move into "Branding Yourself."

The truth is a brand will enable you to distinguish yourself, but only when you create it from frankness and authenticity. "Branding Yourself" requires self-

assessment, an accurate, compelling, in-depth, exploration with no holding back. It is a careful self-analyzes at a level perhaps you've never explored.



It is next to impossible to “Brand Yourself” where the essence of you sticks in the mind of others without first identifying and acknowledging what makes you unique. Building your brand won't occur unless you are confident about who you are now, what you bring to the table, where you're going and ultimately, what you intend to accomplish in your career. Being proactive is an essential component of “Branding Yourself.” And the truth is you don't have a choice if you want to achieve an upwardly mobile career or even one of influence.

Your brand not only represents you, but it also emerges out of both your *words* and *deeds*. Think about it as an investment for the long haul in your career synonymous with your reputation, expertise, and singular qualities. It doesn't simply represent where you are in your career “Today;” it also whispers hints of your dreams for your future, and positions you for “Tomorrow.”

Why am I talking about this future concept in the same conversation as Branding? Think about it.... You aren't producing a dynamic brand for your future when you only respond to projects assigned to you. You must also own your career's forward momentum. It's you taking the reins of your career. It's you taking ownership. It's you strategically determining who you resolve to be. It's not exclusively relying on others whether boss or human resource professional.

And “Tomorrow” is a critical factor when building your brand because it is going to follow you everywhere you work, so authenticity is no small matter.



Why you would want anyone else other than you create your career destiny when:

- 69 percent of human resource experts don't believe they are developing their workforce to meet today's needs.
- Additionally, research reveals that today's workforce doesn't feel any more confident about progressing their careers.
- The majority do not feel they have the education and training to get ahead.
- 46 percent of those employed believe the same.
- Only 27 percent of those working say they are adequately prepared for the kind of job they want.



Can you see from these statistics why it is so critical that you are the one who owns your future? If you don't

do this, you haven't distanced yourself from the rest of your peers; and you'll always be a part of the nebulous mass competently stuck in mid-level, yet dreaming of so much more.

The unfortunate fact is when you don't choose your brand, it will be chosen for you often by someone who doesn't have the same skin in the game as you. Every day, as you move through your work life, you are creating your brand (which in part constitutes your reputation). The question is—does it reflect the powerful, positive side of your business persona or are you becoming better known by the unconscious insecurities you express with those around you. You see you are always generating a brand—even if it is without thinking. It just may not represent the entirety of all you stand for and all the possibilities you bring to your organization. Why create a brand if you don't intend to do it right?

How would you prefer your brand to be designed without thought or deliberately through design? Which style of “Branding Yourself” do you believe will be most impactful for your career today and into the future?

What concrete steps can I take to create my brand?

Clarity is the beginning. Your brand should highlight your strengths, unique attributes, added-value abilities.

As Gallup’s research attests: *“People who use their strengths every day are six times more likely to be engaged on the job.”*⁵ Meaning, they’re excited and energized about what they do, and look forward to coming into work every day performing at a heightened level.

I am often asked by clients, “How do I identify my strengths?” The reality is that it is far easier than you may think. Take a deep breath and access your memory banks.... Think about the last time you were working on a project where it felt as though three minutes ticked by; and yet when you glanced up, the clock revealed that hours had passed. Think about the times you were energized and work lit you up. Think about the times you were firmly in “the zone.” And then, as you come up for air, you were amazed by how much you’d accomplished. This unconscious, satisfying, mental escape from the constraints of time is you working and consciously leaning into your areas of strength.



The more you’re able to employ your natural and developed strengths that energize you throughout the day, the happier you’ll feel, the more satisfied, the more productive, and the larger impact you will have on your organization. And by the way,

it will be far easier to identify the essential elements for “Branding Yourself.” Oh, and a great bi-product of this exercise according to Gallup is that simply by learning what your strengths are you become *7.8 percent more productive*.⁶

Your strengths include your unique expertise, all the intangible qualities that make up you and all you bring to your career. These are what you build your today and tomorrow career on, and most certainly, these are the aspects that you want to include when “Branding Yourself.”



An effective brand becomes your passport into a new land. It provides an instant feedback loop to test how your message is received and if it is in alignment with how the organization perceives you. It is a visual grade card. Am I seen as someone who is contributing at a high level or do I need to re-shift a bit to add value to the organization?

When you bring more of these branding distinctions into your daily responsibilities, you will discover a whole new level of energy and satisfaction in your work—not to mention a whole new level of recognition by your organization.

So, what is it you'd like to be known for throughout the organization? Hone in on the fundamental distinctions you bring to the job. Start paying attention to the unique voice and mindset that completes the incomplete in the room, which is you.

Start the process by responding to these clarifying questions which will help you “Brand Yourself” in a way that is compelling.



Assess your career today but remember not to respond from that humble self who says *you don't do anything exceptional* rather answer from *your confident self the one who is emerging*.

- In what areas do I have something unique to say or produce?
- What do I do better than others?
- What do people recognize me for and/or praise me about at work?
- What sets me apart from my peers?
- What am I passionate about?
- What energizes me?
- What do I do differently than my counterparts?
- What aspects of my current job do I enjoy, and I am good at?
- What is special about me and how I am at work?
- What services or expertise do I offer that others do not?
- What areas of my job would I do for free—not that I’m telling anyone that!?
- What do I do that stands out from others?
- What of my accomplishments am I most proud about?
- If you asked leaders, co-workers, and friends to identify my “sweet spot,” what would they list?
- What are the significant contributions I’ve made in my organization? Or alternatively, in outside endeavors?
- What expertise and attributes do I bring to my position that adds value to my company’s bottom line?
- In what areas, am I considered the go-to person?
- What do my customers—either internally or externally—say about my efforts on their behalf?
- What do those who respect and know me well say about me?
- If I left my company today, what would my organization miss? What would be the gap I’ve left behind?
- What talents and abilities do I have that I’d like my corporation to recognize and tap into right now?

Let's look at some valuable opportunities to rebrand yourself, but only if you are willing to explore the not so terrific then transform those negative perceptions around:

- How do people perceive me? Is it good news or not so great?
- Can I be counted on to complete what I promise to do or do I consistently offer *a reason* for missing the deadline?
- In what areas have I received negative blow-back from projects or actions that I've taken?
- What areas do I feel overwhelmed working in or leading?
- Am I considered a team player or am I seen as a barrier to progress?

Don't forget to add your "You of Tomorrow" ideas:

- What do I want to do differently in my future?
- What do I want to achieve in my future?
- What do I want to be known for not solely for today, but into the future?
- What am I known for today, but don't want to bring into the future?
- What traits or attributes are "bubbling up" now that I want to expand?



Once you've answered these questions, it's time to begin crafting your brand.

Although “Branding Yourself” does boost your career, it isn’t exclusively what it is all about. As part of your brand, you will want to include a focus on issues and outcomes that have been instrumental to the greater good of your organization. It is critical to link your actions, expertise, innovating, producing to the companies bottom-line. When you align your brand with the values in your organization (or any business’s bottom-line) it magnifies the impact, you will realize. As much as we may deny it, context is commonly a determining factor to how you are received. The reality is the more closely you tie your brand to the company’s future the better you progress. This brand focus is how you become powerfully heard in the executive suite.



Exploring answers to these questions provides a lot of information to distil into a powerful “Branding Yourself” statement. Germinate on your responses. When ideas emerge—even just glimmers—it is time to begin crafting your brand so start writing down what resonates with you from this exercise. The more insights you gain, the more powerful a brand you will create for your career. Don’t expect your first effort to be your final one because it rarely is. Almost everyone finds it far harder to write about themselves than it ever is to write crucial proposals for your company. Honestly, though, it will be worth it in the end. Moreover, don’t stop until you can own everything you say in “Branding Yourself.”

Why should I spend time crafting my Brand when I'm so busy?

If you've taken the time, you have identified the space you own, what your hopes and dreams are for your future. It is you identifying where you are today and where you can make the largest impact on your company's profitability. You may even have identified areas you want to give up or transform moving forward. You've come to recognize rebranding opportunities for yourself at a far deeper level.



There is one caveat. Taking the time to “Brand Yourself” will be a wasted effort if it rests on a foundation that's not the truth or if others, perceive you are not genuine, so this must be an honest process. Why

would you want to project something that you are not or never can be? Be fearless in being yourself. If you can't own it, can you own part of it or do you need to go back to the drawing board?

As Oscar Wilde says: *“Be yourself because everyone else is already taken!”*

How do I embed my brand into my career?

Write out your brand from the questions you've explored and the insights you've gained. Tape it to your bathroom mirror and then, every morning spend five minutes reading your statement; envision yourself living it, see your brand impacting your

daily work and those around you. You get to choose. And you decide to be your brand every day as you walk in the front door of your company.

It is important to keep in mind that your brand represents your career journey past, present, and future, so it is never static. Revise it as often as new more powerful concepts are revealed to you. Expansion and growth is all about being open to learning. If a brand doesn't expand to meet the bigness of your future it isn't going to be a very comfortable fit for you.... Will it?

If you think that by determining your brand you are done with the exercise and the company will view you differently, you'd be wrong. This limited strategy is where so many executives miss out. Yes, there is an internal power in “Branding Yourself,” yet the actual power comes from how you manifest your brand day in and day out in your interactions with others.



It is time to take your brand on the road. Are you ready to walk your talk?

How can I introduce my brand?

Your next step may stretch your comfort zone a bit, but as you've dug deep, you now see yourself in a new light—a confident light! “Branding Yourself” depends on you initiating some movement toward your future. Let's review a few actions you can

take that will spread the word about who you are as well as the promise of who you can be.

1. Narrative/Story Telling:

You have rich content to start *water-dropping* your brand through narratives or storytelling. I'm particularly partial to the "water drop" concept because it permits you to reveal information without being emotionally attached to it. Envision a water faucet as one drop of water falls to the ground. The tap gives up



Control of where the drop lands the moment it releases the water. This is the technique that will be helpful in building your brand.

Water-Dropping is an effective, though gradual, method for introducing your brand to others. These idea drops are merely sprinkled naturally throughout the organization during interactions. With time, often, these *water-drop* brand ideas take root, find common ground and spring up as a fully, viable supported reputation within the organization.

It is this attitude that I'm asking you to take on as you reveal your brand. No clutched hands. No fear. Changed perception doesn't take place in one singular contact rather it has a cumulative impact so keep on telling your stories one *water-drop* after another.

Prepare several incidents that demonstrate your brand and share them when the time is suitable. Not self-aggrandizement. It is you sharing a bit about a project that you successfully worked on that made a difference to the company; or chortle over an instance when one wise word from you changed the tone in the room; or graciously compliment an employee who quickly gained expertise through your mentoring. Your narrative is centered on the organization's greater good while disclosing your brand in action.

No bragging. It doesn't work for women rather naturally conveying a story that connects with the brand you've created. Finding your *brand* voice is vital to your identity taking root throughout the organization.

If as you "water drop" your "Branding Yourself" stories the recipient looks like a deer frozen in the headlights, of necessity you will need to reassess. First, does the brand I created authentically represent you? Second, do my stories correspond to the essence of my brand?

2. Elevator Speech:

It is a very short powerful sentence or two about who you are—not simply your position in the organization. It emerges out of your branding. Your elevator speech answers the question in the minds of

the executives before they ask such as: What do you stand for? What do you want to be known for?

You reach your hand out, introduce yourself and then don't simply say your position add a bit of vibrancy you gleaned from your branding research. You may even consider adding a comment that correlates directly to the long-term strategy of the company or is particularly pertinent to the interest of the executive you are meeting. Your elevator speech introduces the value you add and separates you from the rest of the crowd in the mind of the leader.

3. Resume:

Heck, yes, it had better! You know that your resume represents you. Although this eBook doesn't intend to cover resumes, you will want to insert your brand right at the very top of your resume and sprinkle it throughout. Suddenly a bland resume comes alive with this addition of your individuality.



4. Join a Non-Profit or Industry Organization:

There is no better way to practice your brand than at a non-profit or industry organization. They are always looking for volunteers, and it

often provides an opportunity to expand into areas of interest identified in your research. In fact, it is often seen as an executive's training ground. *According to Deloitte, 91 percentage of Fortune 500 HR managers said that "volunteering knowledge and expertise to a nonprofit can be an effective way to cultivate critical business and leadership skills."*⁷ And it is a non-threatening way to rehearse "Branding Yourself" in real life circumstances.

5. Social Media Presence:

Big time if you are serious about "Branding Yourself." It is my hope that any of you, who have decided to establish a social media presence, thought about your future and "Branding Yourself" before signing up online or typing in your first word on any site.

I'm sure all of you know by now that companies in today's marketplace are not only assessing you based upon your resume, and those who are praising your expertise; they also are viewing your social media presence well before they ever meet you. You are making a positive or negative impression with your online communication whether you know it or not. Research reveals that *78 percent of professionals that search online for information about a new person in their worklife. And when they find unflattering messages about colleagues, unprofessional photos, or controversial views all contribute to a negative impression.*⁸

Kevin O'Leary of SharkTank says:



“Every time I look at hiring somebody, I go and gather their digital footprint from every source I can get. Most companies now, mine included, employ people who specialize in just watching what’s happening on all the platforms.”⁹

I bet you’ve personally heard the horror stories of some highly skilled, competent candidates who never got called in for an interview because of their *less than stellar postings*. I hope you are not one of the up-and-comers who shot themselves in the foot already.



If you still believe social media isn’t for you, I encourage you to rethink your position. We’re in a global work environment where *all CEOs of the Fortune 500 are on LinkedIn and leveraging social media for their own Executive Branding efforts.*¹⁰

Let's just look at Michael Dell, Chairman, and CEO of Dell as an example. He's...

“taken the virtue of LinkedIn and used them to propel forward. His own extensive network (around 20,000 first level connections) allows him to stay connected with partners and clients around the world. He can update them instantly and simultaneously with statuses, access crucial information at the drop of a hat, and organize meetings based on travel schedules with ease.”¹¹

I'm thinking if LinkedIn works for Michael Dell you ought to think about jumping in yourself.

Let's take a look at some research results regarding CEOs involvement in social media from Grisdale Advisors to drive home how crucial focusing on this topic is to your career:

- Reveals 66 percent use social media professionally;
- 70 percent post original content on a daily/weekly basis; and
- 40 percent plan to use social media even more in the future.

What platform are they using?

- 71 percent use Facebook;
- 70 percent use LinkedIn;
- 38 percent use Twitter;

- 30 percent use Instagram;
- 23 percent use Google+;
- 23 percent use Snapchat; and
- 14 percent use Pinterest.

Are you as active as CEOs around the country? If you're not, not social media is simply too powerful and ubiquitous to employ or play with lightly.

The upside is that social media is the perfect environment to introduce your brand. The downside is it can also be the destruction of a career.... You decide whether it reinforces or damages your career by how you choose to use it.

As you post pictures to Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+ or make comments on Twitter or any of the other mobile social media sites, think.... Does this represent my brand in the highest light? It is that important for your career.

Just think about it. Top leaders hire social media experts to post comments and manage their social media presence—not to mention their corporations. If these leaders and their companies all believe paying someone big bucks to elevate their social media is the price of doing business, it is worth your while to put some time and strategy into it as well. It is almost irresponsible not to do so!



I can't tell you the numbers of executives when laid off came to regret not consistently maintaining their LinkedIn profile as well as building their connections. Actually, a joint survey produced by Lou Adler and LinkedIn reveals: *85 percent of all jobs are filled via networking.*¹²

Companies today are using social media to identify expertise, and high potential employees in minutes. Just look at the results from a recent LinkedIn research report shows that *94 percent of recruiters use LinkedIn to vet candidates.*¹³

When it comes to social media a Hinge Research Institute study reports *96 percent of respondents say their involvement in social media for professional purposes has helped their career.* It also revealed that *76 percent of the respondents say that social media assists them to keep up with industry trends.*¹⁴

You have developed your brand. Start using it by introducing it in the social media arena by posting comments, thoughts, and content that characterize you. You will be touching far more people than you do in your face-to-face encounters, so this is no small matter.

How can I verify my branding is authentic?

Consider your brand. Is it working for you in every area of your career?

Imagine creating a “spirit level” or as carpenters more often refer to it, a “bubble level” for your brand. Carpenters, stonemasons, and surveyors use this instrument to verify the accuracy of the foundation they just created. This thought-process ensures the building will stand the test of time and not crumble because of an inaccurate underpinning.



By translating this “leveling” concept into your work day, you will forge a “brand” that stands the test of time. Ask: Where does my “brand bubble” fall on this posting and picture; or corporate project; or presentation; or customer meeting; or a conversation with my boss? Is the “brand bubble” smack dab in the middle of the two lines of awareness—*too little* and *too much*? Am I in the space I created for myself through branding? Have I tied my brand to the strategy and bottom line of the organization? Erring on the side of caution never hurts in the long run.

The only way you can get it right is by making fine-tuning adjustments to your “Branding Yourself” statement, so it fits you and your organization. None of us can travel the “hero’s path” rather a successful, long-term, dynamic career requires a collaborative endeavor to *Raise Your Influence and Become a Compelling Leader in Your Workplace*. Your brand and career prosper as others believe in you.



So, leap into your “Branding Yourself” and create the dynamic career you have always longed to generate!

As you leap into “Branding Yourself”, you will discover something magical occurring. Your career will gain momentum as your organization identifies you as a high-potential executive, you will have more information at your fingertips, you will be more sought after, and you will have more influence.... and much, much more.

Success and enjoy always,

Nancy Fredericks

P.S. If you're interested in contacting Nancy Fredericks, her telephone number is 970-384-2254 and email address is nancy@nancyfredericks.com

Who is Nancy Fredericks?

She is a preeminent **business executive strategist, author and thought leader**. Corporations like Johnson & Johnson, PepsiCo, Adobe and Transamerica have retained her to optimize individual and organizational performance through her strategic coaching, developmental programs, keynote speeches and insightful business writings.



For the last thirty plus years, she's been a gifted coach who partners with executives to produce sustainable, powerful results. Nancy's speeches and developmental programs are interactive, content rich, powerful and provocative as she draws on her extensive consulting background with Fortune 500 companies as well as years of leading developmental programs for organizations around the country. As one client said, *Nancy generates lightning throughout the room.*

¹ Tom Peters—More on Brand You—Introduction to Brand You Concept
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4G9EklwIw>

² Article: Personal Branding Is A Leadership Requirement, Not a Self-Promotion Campaign, by Glenn Liopis, Forbes, April 8, 2013, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/glennliopis/2013/04/08/personal-branding-is-a-leadership-requirement-not-a-self-promotion-campaign/>

³ Article: Personal Branding Is A Leadership Requirement, Not a Self-Promotion Campaign, by Glenn Liopis, Forbes, April 8, 2013, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/glennliopis/2013/04/08/personal-branding-is-a-leadership-requirement-not-a-self-promotion-campaign/>

⁴ Article: Personal Branding Is A Leadership Requirement, Not a Self-Promotion Campaign, by Glenn Liopis, Forbes, April 8, 2013, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/glennliopis/2013/04/08/personal-branding-is-a-leadership-requirement-not-a-self-promotion-campaign/>

⁵ Gallup, State of the American Workplace, 2013, page 46.

⁶ Gallup, State of the American Workplace, 2013, page 48.

⁷ Article: *Why Volunteering is Good for Your Business*, Michael Haberman

⁸ <http://www.talentinnovation.org/assets/ExecutivePresence-KeyFindings-CTI.pdf>

⁹ ABC's 20/20, March 27, 2015

¹⁰ Article: *What is Executive Branding*, J.T. O'Donnell

¹¹ Article: *Connect with Business Leaders: LinkedIn is the Fortune 500 Exception*, Lori Ruff

¹² <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/new-survey-reveals-85-all-jobs-filled-via-networking-lou-adler>

¹³ <http://expandedramblings.com/index.php/linkedin-job-statistics/>

¹⁴ <https://hingemarketing.com/blog/story/research-shows-firms-with-employee-advocacy-programs-grow-faster>