

Creating a Personal Brand Statement

Approximate time to complete: 40-50 minutes of class time and 45 minutes of time prior to class.

Adapted from Quintessential Careers and Jorgen Sundberg of Link Humans

“Simply put, your career brand is your image, your reputation. Your career brand is your promise of excellence, your distinctive characteristics that set you apart from other workers and job-seekers. Your career brand is the essence of who you are, what you can do for an employer, and your potential for the future.”

- Quintessential Careers (*quintcareers.com*)

Provide an overview of what brand statements are- their purpose, and what they can convey to a potential employer or client. Share examples with the students of brand statements from professionals in your discipline area. I use both those of individuals and of products to get across the idea that with a personal brand statement, ***you are the product***. This also helps students to understand that similar to slogans and brands for products, personal brands need to be short, easy to understand (jargon-free), catchy, true, unique and memorable.

Three guidelines for creating a brand positioning statement:

- Needs to be truthful and accurate - with no exaggerations
- Should focus on critical benefit to employer (or client) - a void you can fill
- Should be unique and compelling feature that only you can deliver

-Michael Goodman, *The Potato Chip Difference*

Personal Brand Statement Exercise

Have the students answer the following questions; parts one, two and three. In order to allow time to reflect on these questions and their answers, I generally make this a homework assignment to bring completed to our next class:

Part One:

What are you good at?

What are you passionate about?

What does this have to do with the work you want to do in (insert field or discipline here)?

Part Two:

How are you distinctive in what you have to offer?

In what ways are you relevant? (Consider your qualifications, character traits, insights, and how and why you can successfully add value or fulfill a need.)

In what ways do you demonstrate consistency, dependability and trustworthiness?

Part Three:

Form a personal brand statement from your answers to the questions above in parts one and two

(▪ what value you provide ▪ how you do it uniquely ▪ whom you do it for (your target audience):

In class have the students share their brand statements with one another with the goal of helping each other hone them into clear, catchy, memorable and unique statements. This can be difficult for some students, as it can seem a bit “cheesy” or self-promoting, and thus uncomfortable. I usually emphasize that they are here with peers that are attaining similar degrees, yet each of them will do so as unique individuals and they are the best person to describe what they have to offer. I encourage them to utilize the support of their peers, with the mutual goal for them all to be successful in their various careers endeavors.

Following the final draft of their branding statement, as a class brainstorm ways that they can promote their personal brand. These include the following, as well as many others generated by the students:

- Communicate it to people in your network and your references
- Incorporate it into your letterhead design (résumé and cover letters)
- Include it in your professional email signature
- Put it on your professional social media pages such as LinkedIn, Google+, Facebook Business Pages, your About.me page, etc.
- Place it on products you produce
- Add it to your personal website or blog
- Make it part of your “Elevator Speech”