



# What is a Personal Brand and Why Do You Need One?

*By Sean Harry*

Many of the posts on my website focus on developing your own personal brand. They address questions such as:

- What is a personal brand?
- Why do I need to develop my personal brand?
- How do I create a personal brand?

Of course, you don't really "create" a personal brand. You already have one.

Don't believe me? Google your name followed by your home town. If you have a Facebook page or LinkedIn profile your name probably comes up on the first page. Perhaps you are listed in the phone book. Maybe you have recently been mentioned in a local news article. All of these things are part of your personal brand.

Scary? Get over it. It's already out there and you can't do anything about it. What you CAN do is manage your personal brand so what people see about you is what you WANT them to see.

Personal branding was popularized by an article by Tom Peters first published in Fast Company Magazine ("A Brand Called You") over 10 years ago. He starts out the article by writing, "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. 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."

When I read that 10 years ago I implicitly KNEW he was right but I didn't understand HOW a person could go about creating their own personal brand. The only brands I knew of were huge corporations with hefty advertising and marketing budgets. What could a lone individual do to create their own personal brand?

Then along came the Internet, and social networking, and web 2.0, and Google, and...





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Blogs, Myspace, Facebook, LinkedIn and many other applications entered the scene and made it virtually impossible for anyone to keep from creating a personal brand, whether they wanted to or not.

Here are a few things you can do to manage your personal brand:

1. Be **clear about the image** you intend to project. If you have more than one message you run the risk of confusing people about what you are all about.
2. Make certain your brand message is **consistent** across all platforms. For instance, your resume and LinkedIn profile must be in sync.
3. Back up any broad statements with **objective proof**. Show numbers, dates, etc. of what you have done the backs up your claim.
4. Keep it **brief**. Can you state your value proposition in 10 words or less? If not, you run the risk of being forgettable — the death nelly of any brand.

*Sean Harry has been successful for over 20 years at helping train and motivate people to find what's important in life and develop a strategy to achieve it.*

