

# PERSONAL BRANDING TOOLKIT

How to cultivate a personal brand online.



Everyone has a personal brand. Whether public or not, your personal brand is an aggregation of others' perceptions of you. If you want to use social media to harness your personal brand, ask yourself whether you'd like to showcase the entire brand or a specific slice of that brand (i.e. your humor).

## Before You Begin...

Do you *really* want to do this? Once you start, you will be in the spotlight. The spotlight may someday be a news station that highlights a controversial quote or may be the glitz and glamour of Hollywood cameras; it will *always* be your friends, family, co-workers, or even enemies. Do you feel comfortable subjecting yourself and your thoughts to such scrutiny? Remember that social media is a two-way road. People will let you know how they feel about you, not just the material you publish.



If your answer is a passionate YES!, keep reading...

## Prepare...

What is your goal? Every brand needs a goal. The goal can be specific (i.e. write comedic post-game commentary about your favorite baseball team) or the goal can be open-ended (i.e. make videos based on your fans' input and votes). Whatever you choose, you need a goal to stay on track and be consistent so your followers can understand what your brand stands for.



What do you want a share of? Chris Flink did not say this during our first class because it sounded cool. It's actually important! Do you want a share of your followers' minds (i.e. through comments and voting), do you want a share of their eyes (i.e. "just pay attention to me and I'll be happy!"), do you want a share of their mouths (i.e. food blog), or do you want something else entirely?

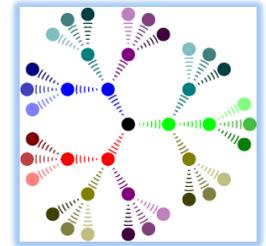


Why will someone follow you? Seriously. With so many media outlets vying for someone's attention, establishing a loyal follower base is not as easy as getting Bay Area venture capital funding with just a castle in the sky. Inorganic growth (i.e. making your family and friends subscribe) will only get you so far. Why will a perfect stranger want to follow you? Chances are that someone will not *need* to follow you. You have to make that person *want* to follow you. Remember what Oren Jacobs (Pixar) said: "virality is a consequence, not a strategy." A strong personal brand is not dependent on how *long* you've been building it, but with how *well* you've been doing it.

## Launch...

Which channels will you use to distribute your brand? Here are a few thoughts to keep in mind:

- ✓ Home base: most brands have a central node. The central node can be WordPress, Blogger, Facebook, or anything else. A central node keeps track of all information related to your brand, including an “About” section that, at a minimum, tells potential followers who you are. All information posted on non-central sites feeds back to the home base. For example, you create an online personality on YouTube and post those videos on Facebook. YouTube is your home base, and, ideally, you embed YouTube links to your Facebook feed. All views on Facebook are relayed back to YouTube so you can track total views from one location.



- ✓ Where should you launch? Below is a list of potential outlets. Choose the ones that appeal to you, your goal, and, importantly, your followers.

- Blogger
- Facebook
- Podcast
- Twitter
- WordPress
- YouTube



- Email – Send a regular email to subscribers. Chances are that you subscribe to at least one email distribution right now. What do you like about it? What don't you like about it? Benefit: you have more control over your brand. There is no reply-all or commenting section for subscribers to share their thoughts with everyone. Subscribers only share their thoughts with you. Drawback: subscriber growth may be more difficult over email.
- FigDig – Free online portfolios for those with some artistic flare.
- Carbonmade – Free online portfolios for those with some artistic flare.

Remember, that your audience may not prefer one form of communication or may not even be registered on websites such as Facebook. If you like to write creative nonfiction pieces for people who are 65+ years old or anything for children under 13 years old, email or blogs may be a better option than Facebook. (Note: Facebook users must be at least 13 years old to register.)



Look at your competition. Is there someone with a similar brand already? The brand can be similar in terms of content or another metric. What is that person doing? Are there any best practices that you can adopt?

## Content...

Remember what the zany guy at OraBrush said? What are the “4 C’s”? Here is our take on his 4 C’s.

### *Content*

Balance substance with style. Remember the engagement arc.

Tell a story. Remember what Oren Jacobs (Pixar) said. People remember stories, not a list of facts. Something becomes a story when there is a struggle, a decision, and a subsequent action that advances the plot. You cannot go back after the action.



Create two-way communication. Content does not end with your last sentence. It is continuous and includes communication from your followers.

Running out of ideas for content? Ask your followers what they’d like to see or hear. People love sharing their opinions and will feel more attached to your brand, even if you don’t go with someone’s specific suggestion. Or have a guest post an article, video, etc.

Have an easy-to-find “About” section on your site to help potential followers understand who you are and why you’re brand exists. Include a mini-bio at the end of each post if your brand will appear on other sites.

### *Call to Action*

Be specific. Tell people what you’d like them to do. Don’t leave them guessing. Remember OraBrush? Every video told viewers to “leave a comment below” and “subscribe by clicking the button above.”



### *Collaboration*

Engage your users. Easy and effective tactic: thank people – subscribers, people who comment, guests, etc. You want people to feel like they are a part of your brand. Respond to followers’ comments and communications. You will gain their trust and learn a lot about them and how your brand is perceived. Remember, people connect with people, not websites, blogs, or videos.



### *Consistency*

Your brand should have a consistent theme. This theme will resonate with your followers and keep them coming back even when there are no incentives. However, you will not earn repeat business by simply meeting expectations. Every post needs to innovate around your theme and go beyond expectations.

## Analyze...

A critical component to building your online personal brand is collecting data and understanding that data. Unlike traditional media, information and flow of information can be measured and understood without much effort or cost. Here are some ways to measure and understand your personal brand:

- ✓ Survey followers to find out more about them. You will learn who they are and why they are following you. Something as simple as “vote if you like cake” tells you more about your users.
- ✓ Facebook Page: Facebook offers free tools to monitor weekly traffic to and from a Facebook page that you create.
- ✓ Google Analytics: Feature rich tools that help you understand your personal brand.
- ✓ Klout: Measures the online influence of your Facebook or Twitter profile.
- ✓ Alexa.com/siteinfo: Ranks websites and tells you information about site visitors (location, search engine queries, etc). Note: this will only work if you have a registered domain (i.e. [www.jenniferspersonalbrand.com](http://www.jenniferspersonalbrand.com)). It will not work if you have a sub-domain (i.e. [www.facebook.com/jenniferspersonalbrand](http://www.facebook.com/jenniferspersonalbrand)).
- ✓ Compete.com: Measures daily uniques to your site and gives information about your visitors (age, location, etc). Note: this will only work if you have a registered domain (i.e. [www.jenniferspersonalbrand.com](http://www.jenniferspersonalbrand.com)). It will not work if you have a sub-domain (i.e. [www.facebook.com/jenniferspersonalbrand](http://www.facebook.com/jenniferspersonalbrand)).
- ✓ Google Adwords Keyword Tool: Tells you how many times people search for a keyword every month. This can be useful if you’d like to drive organic growth through search engines. (<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal> or Google “adwords targeting keyword ideas”)



Need more? There are several additional services out there that can help you understand your personal brand and its effectiveness. Try a quick Google search to find additional services.

## Grow...

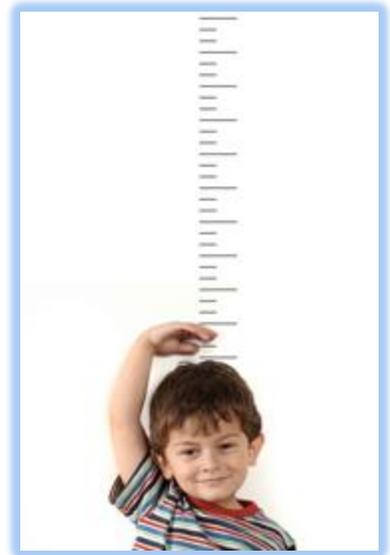
Your most powerful marketing tool is your current followers. Encourage your followers to tell their friends about your brand if they like what you're doing.

Make it very easy to comment or subscribe. People do not want to search for subscription button. If you use Blogger or Wordpress, you can add an opt-in button to your Facebook page. Also, create specific links to understand how users are getting to you. Are they coming from Facebook or are they coming from another blogger?

Get someone's contact info and add them to your blog, email chain, Facebook Page, etc. Many people forget to follow up and subscribe after an initial conversation. Help them by taking care of the final step.

Experiment with how to grow subscriber base and target strategies that work. Examples include:

- ✓ Contests
- ✓ Giveaways
- ✓ Comments
- ✓ Likes (a favorite of Avinash Kaushik)
- ✓ Swap PR with other bloggers or sites
- ✓ Write-ups in magazines
- ✓ Celebrity/node endorsements
- ✓ Advertise



## Turn This Into A Business...



Do you want to earn income from your personal brand? Similar to "Before You Begin..." ask yourself "is it worth it?" Will you lose the trust of your followers? Will you have to change your brand?

Advertisements. A common form of earning income from your personal brand is hosting advertisements. A typical business earns \$0.20-\$0.40 per follower per month for advertisements. Again, ask yourself if advertising will not create conflicts with your personal brand.