

HBS Marketing Conference - Handout

Personal brands that dominate: Insights from successful executives

As hard as it is to build successful and enduring company brands, it is even harder to build your own personal brand. It is much harder to see yourself clearly, than it is to see others.

VEC has worked with many successful executives across a variety of industries, and what seems to be true for all of them is that they are acutely aware of their personal brand and how to build it.

The purpose of this handout is to give you insight into how to do this for yourself. Additionally, there are more tools available at our web-site www.vollett.com/harvard. And feel free to email questions to jim.vollett@vollett.com.

POSITIONING

Positioning of your personal brand: What is compelling, true, and distinct.

Planning your career and your life starts with positioning your own personal brand, and then continuing to update that positioning as both you and the world change. Positioning is the confluence of three things:

1. What is compelling to the senior executives that would hire you
2. What is true to you (what is your passion)
3. What is distinct from your competition (what distinct or unique value do you add)

Compelling

Senior Executives want the following things in order:

- **Followers.** People who can first fit into their culture and vision, and are able to add value. These are people who use their technical skills and training.
- **Leaders.** People, who first prove they understand the mission and the culture, then take on a big challenge by building the vision, talent and processes necessary to turn the challenge into an opportunity. They do this using a combination of their technical and people skills.
- **Innovators.** Proven leaders who create a new business opportunity and bring together the customers, product, leaders, funding and new culture to produce sustainable growth. They use their technical and people skills combined with an emotional balance that allows them to be remarkably persistent in the face of resistance.

Write out who you see is your target audience and what you see is compelling to them

True

The greatest leaders that I have worked with are always going deeper within themselves. They are always willing to risk what they have for who they can become (the more they have, the bigger the risk!). They have found that when they know what is truly important to them, and then they will take the risks, make the changes, and persist until they win.

Write out what you see is true about you.

Distinct

I am seeing a distinctive trend in the business world--*the good guys are starting to win!* These good guys are leaders who are very capable professionals but also good, mature people, who care about how they leave the world. Talent is attracted to these people and current leaders are looking for these people to be future leaders. You have to have the basic technical skills of your field, but if you can then add a solid balanced life, that proceeds step by step, you will be more and more in demand. Over and over I have seen the emotionally intelligent executive surpass the intellectually brilliant one.

Write out who your competition is, and what you see you have that is distinctive

Summarize three into one

The key now is to find that place that all of these answers come together. Start defining the underlying idea that is compelling, true and distinct. When you have answered that question, and feel it through all of yourself, then you will be ready to take action.

TAKING ACTION

Planning.

Use your marketing skills to develop a marketing plan.

Approach

What marketing materials do you need, and what channels will you use?

Budget (Time and Money)

It is so easy to get caught up on performing our work, either at school or at work, and forget that marketing ourselves is as important as developing our product.

- Have you allocated a certain amount of your monthly cash flow to market development?
- Have you allocated a certain amount of your monthly time to market development?