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CONSULTING

Engage • Inspire • Empower

Path to Equity

Self-Directed Learning Guide

Module 6: Personal Brand, Identity + Voice

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Placing Personal Brand, Identity + Voice



Mastery Wheel™

Context ::

Personal Brand is an element in the *Purpose Mastery* domain, and **Identity + Voice** is an element in the *Personal Mastery* domain.



Personal Brand :: A Definition

A 'brand' is a marker, an identifier, a signature. A 'brand personality' is the way a brand speaks, behaves, 'shows up'. It's the language used to describe the brand,, the way it's visually represented.

And **Personal Brand** is no different.

Personal Brand is simply *how you are perceived, what impression people have of you based on their experience of you, including your competencies, abilities and personality.*

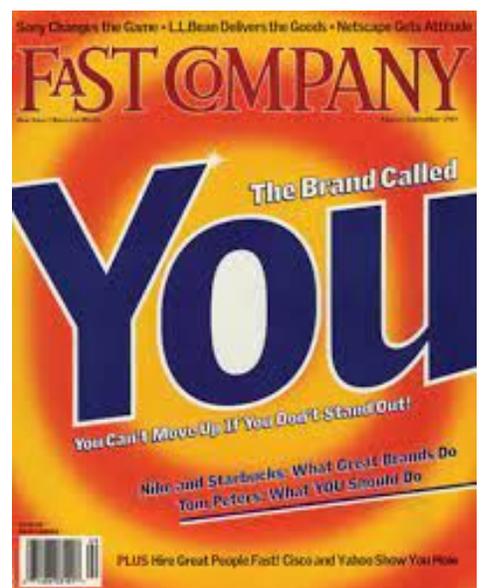
Your **Personal Brand** is experienced by everyone who engages with you - friends, family, colleagues, clients, the people you see on your morning walk, the cashier at the grocery store. It's experienced by everyone who reads what you put online, through social media channels, comments you make on others' posts, or observes the topics you engage on. Your Personal Brand includes what you do, how you do it and what you're especially good at (your Unique Value). It includes your personality traits and your presence (how you appear to the world).

And here's an important thing to remember: you already have a Personal Brand - the world experiences you just as you are. But the question is - have you created your Personal Brand yourself, and do you express it consistently, with intention, or has it been assigned to you, by default, by others' perceptions and telling of your story?

Your Personal Brand is yours, so you can refine it, hone it, create the brand you want to take out into the world, and live it consistently. But first, you have to know what it is.

Your Personal Brand is already out there - people experience it through the things you do, every day. It's up to you to understand it, refine it, and decide what it means to you, what it says about you and how you want to portray yourself to the world.

YOU are your own Brand!



Personal Brand :: Why It Matters

Creating your **Personal Brand** and expressing it consistently and with intention does several things for you. It creates:

Differentiation. Together with your Unique Value, your **Personal Brand**, is what sets you apart from others who do similar things as you. You may share core credentials and characteristics with others, but no one will do things quite the same way you do, and the experience of you will be different than the experience of someone else.

We've covered a number of related concepts between Modules 5 and 6, so here's a quick reminder of the definitions of each, and how they fit together :: **Purpose** is why you do what you do, **Unique Value** is how you do what you do that's unique to you, and **Personal Brand**, is how you express your purpose, value, strengths, and the overall experience of you to the outside world.

Memorability. Similar to *Differentiation*, your **Personal Brand** is what makes you memorable because of the unique experience of you. People encounter you and remember you for the elements of your Personal Brand that you express and that leave an impression on them.

Alignment. Having a clearly defined **Personal Brand** allows you to filter for the people and opportunities that are aligned with your unique self. It attracts those who are a 'fit' and filters out those who are not.

The number one thing you need to do to express your **Personal Brand** is to **Be Yourself**. Being authentic is key, and it begins with getting to know yourself. As you did in Module 5 where you explored your Unique Value and Purpose, get to know your Core Values, your Unique Value and your Superpower intimately, as they are the foundation building blocks of your Personal Brand. Then, layer in your strengths - in Module 5 we offered these links to select psychometric tests. If you haven't had a chance to do one or more of these yet, here are the links to our favourites again : (please note that only High5 provides a free test).

- [Fascinate](#) - how the world sees you
- [Kolbe](#) - how you work
- [Clifton StrengthsFinder](#) - what your top 5 strengths are
- [VIA Character Strengths Survey](#) - what your top strengths are
- [High5](#) - similar to StrengthsFinder but has a free version that gives the topline of your top strengths



Branding Best-Practices + Your *Personal Brand*

Brand specialists go through a series of exercises when they're developing a brand identity for any product. They look at three main elements of a product or service: Function + Performance, Value, and Brand Marker. These same elements apply to your **Personal Brand**.

Function + Performance: This refers to what a product/service actually *does* and how well it does it. In **Personal Brand** terms, this refers to what YOU do (competencies) and how well do you do it - or how we know that you do it well (credentials). ***You'll therefore want to think about what you want to be known for doing, and what supporting evidence you can offer for your qualification.***

Value: This refers to what's important about a product or service, and how having or using the product or service makes the people who use it *feel*. For your **Personal Brand**, this means what's important to you (values, commitment) and how you make the people around you feel when they engage with you (character). ***You'll want to think about what's important about you, to you, and how you want people to feel around you.***

Brand Marker/Logo: This refers to how the product or service is represented visually that's true to its overall look and feel. For your **Personal Brand**, this is how you dress, the language you use, your overall style of communication and presence. ***You'll want to think about some of the markers of the visual and experiential aspects of your brand - what people see when they encounter you.***



Identity + Voice

Identity is *who you are and who you want to be, as well as how others see you*. It is how you see yourself and it is one of the components of your **Personal Brand**. *It includes your values and unique value, your personal attributes and characteristics and your choices that express that which is inherent and important to you.*

Your **Identity** has both an inherent and an aspirational quality. Some things are fundamental to us and don't really change through our life course at their core, some things evolve and change as we evolve and change, some things feel like they "just are" and some things are more obviously by choice.

And for our purposes in this program, **Voice** is *how you express your identity, how you share yourself with the world*. It is how you communicate who you are and what's important to you (including where, when, and what you choose to share), how you use different communication tools (verbal, written, visual - or a combination such as through social media outlets), and how you consistently use your voice - across contexts and platforms.

As you may recall from our earlier module on Loyalty, trust is the foundation of the loyalty continuum, and consistency is one of the pillars of trust. So how people consistently hear your voice matters both to the **Identity** and **Personal Brand** that they experience of you, but also to whether they *trust* you.

When you are aware of who you are and who you want to be, you are able to intentionally convey yourself to others in a way that they can clearly recognize for themselves and describe to others. You *attract* the people and opportunities which are *aligned* with your values, your goals and purpose, and the unique value you bring.

Own The Mic!



Key Elements :: The ABCs of Identity + Voice

A = Authenticity is about being your true self and letting that awareness of self guide your choices, your behaviours, and the way that others experience you. It is being grounded in the values, sense of purpose, strengths, and other aspects of your **Personal Brand** that are already within you. Many of these core aspects of you are constant throughout your life, though they may manifest in different ways at different times or under different circumstances.

Authenticity requires *integrity* and *consistency* - your identity and your voice need to consistently align. This means that the experience of you should be the same regardless of where someone 'meets' you. How you express yourself on social media, in your writing, at speaking events, in person with people you are close to and those you have more casual contact with should be consistent, and in integrity with your values, purpose, and strengths. When someone has an experience with you that doesn't align with who they believe you are or have known you to be, it causes them to question your authenticity and perhaps even their relationship with you.

If you've ever had an experience where you've met someone in person after forming an opinion of them based on their public persona – their social media presence, their speaking style or content, what they've written – and you have a completely different experience of them upon meeting, you know how jarring that is and how it can destabilize your relationship to that person.

While **Authenticity** is rooted in those aspects of you that are foundational and stable, it is also *fluid*. You are always growing and changing, your mind is infinitely adaptable, and so your identity is not static. The fluidity of authenticity means that you get to decide who you want to be and authentically grow into that. This is the evolutionary and aspirational aspect of identity. If you identify a role or a characteristic you want to grow into, you may get inspiration from those you admire, or 'try on' the identities you associate with what you aspire to - eg. Who you think someone is or how you define them when they are: successful, professional, a lawyer, a partner, as examples.

To return to Authenticity while we grow, we need to blend inspiration and aspiration with our own inherent values and gifts, so that we don't merely imitate the identity of someone we admire, or try to force an identity that we think a certain title demands.



Key Elements :: The ABCs of Identity + Voice, continued

Finally, Authenticity is also *contextual*. Being responsible with your authenticity requires that you exercise boundaries and discernment so that your decisions respect the context in which you find yourself at any given moment. Your behaviours (your words, deeds, choices of how you present yourself) need to align with whatever context you're in - and having them do so does not compromise your authenticity.

For example, your authentic identity may be casual or laid back, and you may choose to express that identity through casual dress and informal communication. However, when you find yourself in a context that requires something different – such as appearing in court, or meeting a new client for the first time, or speaking at a professional event – these ways of presenting yourself would be out of context and cannot be justified or explained away with resort to a claim of being “authentic”. They are simply inappropriate.

We love [this](#) TEDTalk by Adam Grant on how Authenticity is a Double-Edged Sword - it addresses the nuances we've described between being yourself, but with some awareness of your surroundings and your audience.

B= Boundaries are the ‘bumper lanes’ of your identity, defining the parameters of what you like and value, accept or don't, stand for or against. Boundaries guide your choices around how you behave, and they set others' expectations for what you will and won't do. Your Boundaries are aligned with core aspects of your identity such as your values, your purpose and your beliefs. Boundaries also relate to the contextual aspect of authenticity, where context requires discernment in order to be appropriate.

Like Authenticity, your Boundaries need integrity and consistency to be aligned with your identity. Expressing yourself, (again, through words, deeds and the overall experience of you), within the borders of who you are and what is important to you, in every arena in which someone might meet you, (with the caveat of context of course), reinforces your identity and builds trust with others that they know who you are.

You can likely think of an example where you've been surprised at something that someone has done, or not done, what they said or when they stayed silent - because it seems out of alignment with their identity - their beliefs and values - and the boundaries that you associate with them.

Key Elements :: The ABCs of Identity + Voice, continued

C= Courage is required to create, curate, and communicate your identity. It takes **Courage** to:

- Really get to know and accept yourself;
- Grow and evolve when your identity isn't quite a right fit anymore;
- Hold to your boundaries when it's uncomfortable or unpopular or could have negative consequences;
- Use your voice to speak up and about things that matter to you, and your unique take on those issues/topics;
- Share things about yourself that let others know who you really are. An element of authenticity that we trod lightly upon in this module is "vulnerability," because it's a bit of an overused and potentially loaded term. But for our purposes in this Module, let's think about vulnerability as simply sharing our humanity - the things we're proud, scared, sad, happy about; the things and people that are important to us; the ability to admit when we've made a mistake or changed our minds, or have accomplished something we really wanted or fell short in the trying - in short, the things that make us relatable to others.

All of these things take **Courage**

COURAGE IS
BEING YOURSELF
EVERY DAY IN
A WORLD THAT
TELLS YOU TO BE
SOMEONE ELSE.

Activity :: Brand Audit - Identifying Your Personal Brand

Once you've got the foundations laid on your values, strengths, and key elements of your **Personal Brand**, discover whether the world sees you the way you see yourself - and the way you'd like to be seen!

You can do a **Personal Brand Audit** to find out how you appear to others. Here are a couple of suggestions to get you started:

- **Google yourself!** See what comes up. How do you feel about the first page of results? Are they representative of the 'you' you want the world to see?
- **Scroll through your profile, feed or grid on your social platforms.** What do they tell you about who you are, what's important to you, and what you want others to know about you?
- **Review your bio.** Whether on your firm website, or in promotional or pitch materials, do the words and images portray the brand you hope they do?
- **Ask someone.** Pick a person who knows you well and ask them to tell you what they see as your value, or your 'Superpower' specifically. What's the one thing they think of when they think about you?
- **Hold up a 'mirror.'** Ask yourself if the way you show up consistently in your life - in words, deeds, habits and style - is intentional, or by default.

Honing your Personal Brand :: Create, Refine or Evolve, Overhaul

After doing your 'audit', how would you describe your **Personal Brand**? Is it what you aspire for it to be?

If you've discovered that your Personal Brand isn't exactly what you want it to be, or that you've outgrown it, you can **refine or evolve it** (we do this over the course of our lives and careers and it's an excellent exercise to engage in). If you don't like where you are, or don't think your brand reflects you at all, you can create a new one, and engage in a **complete brand overhaul**.

What would you like to refine, evolve, or create in your **Personal Brand**?

Challenge :: Introduce Yourself With the ‘Three Hooks’!

Your **‘Voice’** is not just the way you speak - it’s all of your forms of expression of who you are, what you value, and what makes you **you**. How you write, the words you choose, the way you compose your thoughts and ideas, your character all contribute to your ‘Voice’.

One of the ways you make an impression using your Voice is how you choose to introduce yourself. We love Molly Beck’s **Three Hooks** concept for connecting with people (and Molly’s book ‘Reach Out’ is a great one for anyone developing business relationships - or just making connections!).

Three Hooks :: Introductions that Stick

Consider having a couple of cold networking introductions of yourself that follow one of the structures below:

- a. Two professional ‘hooks’ + One personal ‘hook’
- b. Two personal ‘hooks’ + One professional ‘hook’

In the space provided, start listing some of your **‘Professional’ and ‘Personal’ Hooks** to add to your introduction roster. You can mix and match these and have fun with them! You’ll definitely be memorable, and the people you’re meeting will have a sense of who you are - your **identity** and your **voice**.

What’s a ‘hook’ you ask? It’s just an interesting thing about you, that says something **real** about you - about the you that you want to present to the world (ahem...**Unique Value, Personal Brand, Identity + Voice**). ‘I am a...tennis player, wine connoisseur and regular contributor to xx blog/newsletter/podcast/journal.’

Professional Hooks	Personal Hooks

Bonus :: Practice using your ‘Three Hooks.’ The next opportunity you have to connect with new people - virtually or in person - try introducing yourself this way. **How did it go?**



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