

# How to build your personal brand and accelerate your career progression

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Boss's Day, observed on 17 October this year, aims to improve relations between bosses and employees. This is also a good time to reflect on your own personal brand if you are looking to grow in your career and possibly even aspiring to become "the boss" or a senior leader at your company one day.

If you're looking for your next "big break", it's important to bear in mind that personal branding is a crucial aspect of successfully landing a new role. It can have far-reaching effects on both your career progression and your earning potential. To build your own personal brand, you need to first understand what that brand is in terms of the unique value that you can bring to your current or future employer. Then you need to consider how to package it so that you can stand out from the crowd in an increasingly competitive job market.



## What is a personal brand?

A personal brand is a widely known perception or impression of an individual based on their experience, expertise, competencies, actions and/or achievements within a community, industry, or the marketplace at large. Some examples of famous personal brands are Nelson Mandela, Oprah Winfrey and Richard Branson.

Within the context of employment, personal branding is about how you market yourself, your talents, and your career history. It is also about what your colleagues think of you (and how you make them feel), professionally and personally. Essentially personal branding is an ongoing process that enables you to leave an impression on others about who you are, what you can do, and why they should want to work with you.

## Understanding your current personal brand

Before you can build your brand, you need to understand it. Start by spending some time reflecting on the value that you bring to others. What are you best known for and what do you think your best attributes are? If you need help getting started, take this quick [Personal Branding Quiz](#) to discover your unique personal branding archetype. You can also [explore](#) how your personal brand aligns with your character and career goals.

## **Get feedback from others**

Once you've gained insight into your brand attributes through self-reflection, ask those closest to you how they perceive your brand. The people in your life who know you best can shed light on your brand based on first-hand experience and can help you market it for your career growth. You may be surprised at what your network has to say about your brand and discover positive brand attributes that you didn't even know you had! You will also learn what does not resonate with those around you, so you can make suitable adjustments to your own personal branding.

## **Consider what makes you tick**

Take some time to sit down and think about what motivates you to do what you do. Most people know *what* they do, but many don't take the time to interrogate why they do it. List a few things that make you excited about your work – that give you a sense of purpose and meaning. Doing this will help you to define your personal brand and develop a plan for where you want your career to go.

Understanding this is particularly important when you're applying for a new role. CareerJunction's checklist can help:

*The job application checklist:*

1. Be clear on what you want.
2. Let technology do the heavy lifting – register your profile on a specialist recruitment platform like CareerJunction.
3. Look for the story in the opportunities you're considering:
  - Are you applying for the job that is right for you?
  - Does it resonate with your aspirations?
  - Do you get the sense that the culture is aligned to your values?
  - Will you be proud to work there?
4. What can you see online about how the company celebrates individual success?
5. Have you researched what other people say about the company?
6. What has your experience as an applicant been like?

## **Be consistent in everything you say**

Whether you're creating an online profile to be found by recruiters, applying for a role, attending an interview, or pitching yourself for a promotion, keep your message consistent. The same goes for sharing posts on social media or showing your public support for certain causes. All these actions contribute in one way or another to your personal brand.

When applying for jobs online, remember that your Profile is what recruiters find and see first – they have the option to then download your CV for more information about you. Uploading and regularly updating your CV *and* profile is the best way to make sure you keep your message consistent and don't miss out on any job opportunities. This is a great way to 'sell' your work achievements and build your personal brand. CareerJunction allows you to sign up for Job Alerts, sent directly to your inbox. You can choose how often to be notified about jobs that match the role you are looking for.

## **Demonstrate your leadership potential**

Don't be shy to share your knowledge and thinking with the world, particularly if you have an interesting perspective that cuts against the grain. Start conversations. Encourage engagement. Share your thoughts about the industry you work in or the role you are responsible for. What has worked for you? How do you imagine the future? Show others that you have a

voice and build thought leadership into your personal brand.

## Embrace lifelong learning

Keep up to date on industry trends and socio-economic developments in the world around you. Be curious and stay committed to learning and growing. Find subject matter experts and thought leaders you admire and follow them. Read their blogs, sign up for their webinars, enroll in their online courses. Take the time to learn from your company's competitors – what are they doing differently? Consider upskilling by taking accredited courses every one-two years. Be open to learning from the senior people at your company, who were once where you are now in your career ... they may have some valuable insights to share. Employers will also notice your efforts to learn and grow.

## Parting thoughts

When building your personal brand, remember that it's a marathon – not a sprint. Do something small every day to go the extra mile. Embrace learning and the opportunity to grow, being honest with yourself about the challenges you need to overcome to close any professional or personal gaps.

Finally, remember that demonstrating a positive attitude towards your work, helping others, and expressing yourself clearly and consistently are key aspects of building your personal brand and accelerating your career progression.

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