



UNIT 1

Importance of Personal Branding for a Business

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Speak in terms of the impact and influence that you want to have in life and work
- ✓ Understand your personal style in terms of your personal brand



While we all define success in a way that means something to us personally, we often look to others for inspiration and ideas. Whether success to you means earning recognition; making money; or achieving education, financial, career, emotional, or other goals, this course will give you tools you need to take yourself there as a reflection of your personal brand.

Your Personal Brand

Thinking of people who have ownership over their personal brand can be a bit challenging. First, let's look at some corporate brands that we are probably all familiar with, such as:

- McDonald's
- Coca-Cola
- Nike
- Toyota

What is it about these brands that make them memorable?

Now, consider some people who have a particular look about them. Who are they? What makes them memorable?

Brand Elements

Elements of your personal brand include your entire package, such as:

- Body language
- Image (including how you dress, your hair, and accessories)
- Communication skills
- Credibility
- Managing difficult situations
- Social media presence

In commercial terms, a brand is the customer’s perception of a product. Organizations build that perception by paying attention to areas such as:

- Product development
- Research and innovation
- Marketing
- Sales
- Return on investment
- Bottom line
- Finances in the black or red
- Community involvement

In reality, though, the brand is the consumer’s perception and nothing more. In a similar way, your **personal brand** is people’s perception about you. People who do business with you have pretty high expectations about what a particular brand provides them, and they will review all aspects of you to form their perception.

Having a personal brand doesn’t mean that you have to dress in the same uniform every day (although you might dress in a consistent pattern), or that you are an eccentric individual (although you may be). It doesn’t mean that if you are an introvert you must become gregarious, and it does not require that the extroverts mask their feelings or thoughts about things.

What does developing a personal brand mean to you?



In what ways will developing a personal brand benefit you?

What will you do with it once you have it developed?

Your Brand Approach to Others

Brand Style Assessment

Choose the phrase that most closely reflects the way you see yourself (not the way you want others to see you). Sometimes you may feel that more than one statement fits; if that happens, choose the one that is most like you most of the time.

1. When I meet someone at a cocktail reception, I like to:

- a. Learn lots about them
- b. Tell them about myself
- c. See what's on the food table
- d. Hover on the fringe, observing, and interacting as people approach

2. When I attend a networking event or workshop, I usually:

- a. Listen attentively to all introductions
- b. Don't need to be introduced; we all have name tags
- c. I listen to most of them, but if they are too long-winded my attention drifts elsewhere
- d. I avoid these events because I have too much else to do

3. When I am in a managerial or leadership role:

- a. People on my team come to me for direction
- b. I check every step of the project
- c. I encourage them to be independent
- d. I avoid giving negative performance reviews



4. When I go to a meeting, I usually:

- a. Volunteer to take notes
- b. Sit near the meeting chair, but avoid taking notes
- c. Sit with a least one seat between me and the next person
- d. Sit beside another person

5. When I meet someone I know fairly well:

- a. I ask about how their day is going
- b. I share a story or a joke
- c. I get right to the point
- d. I introduce the conversation by outlining its purpose

6. When I am at a meeting and someone is doing a presentation:

- a. I want it to bring a few laughs
- b. I try to imagine how the presenter feels
- c. I try to analyze the logic of what's being discussed
- d. I get bored or impatient if it does not flow well or engage me

7. When people enter my work space or home, I usually:

- a. Invite them to sit down
- b. Tell them to sit down
- c. Let them decide where or whether they want to sit
- d. Pull out a chair for them

8. When I am speaking with people:

- a. I prefer to stand close to them
- b. I like to keep three feet or more of distance between us
- c. I need to have room to step back if they get too close
- d. I don't mind if they are close to me

9. When I deliver a presentation, it:

- a. Is well organized
- b. Connects to people on an emotional level
- c. Is powerful
- d. Is entertaining

10. My telephone calls:

- a. Are almost non-existent now; I text for efficiency
- b. Avoid small talk and focus on purpose
- c. Are animated and lively
- d. Tend to be quite long

11. Publicly speaking on a cell phone:

- a. Keeps life interesting
- b. Makes most people uncomfortable
- c. Helps me learn what people are thinking about



- d. Should be avoided

12. When my work group celebrates a big win, I tend to:

- a. Attend the party
- b. Organize the party and invite everyone
- c. Focus on the time and money it involves
- d. Avoid the party if possible, but put in an appearance if I have to

13. Which of the following interests you the most?

- a. Ideas
- b. Information
- c. People
- d. Actions

14. You respect when you and others pay attention to:

- a. Intelligence
- b. Authority
- c. Relationships
- d. Performance

15. You pride yourself on being able to:

- a. Solve problems
- b. Look after details
- c. Inspire others to action
- d. Make quick and effective decisions

Results Tabulation

Assessment Tool Results

Check your answer to each question in the Branding Style, and circle the answer below that relates to it. For example, if you selected statement a in question 1, you would circle the symbol beside 1a below. Once you have finished transferring your answers to this page, count the number of each symbol.

Scoring Guide				
1	2	3	4	5
a.o	a.o	a.Δ	a.o	a.o
b.□	b.Δ	b.→	b.□	b.□
c.→	c.□	c.□	c.→	c.Δ
d.Δ	d.→	d.o	d.Δ	d.→
6	7	8	9	10
a.□	a.o	a.□	a.→	a.→
b.o	b.Δ	b.→	b.o	b.Δ
c.→	c.→	c.Δ	c.Δ	c.□



d.Δ	d.□	d.o	d.→	d.o
11 a.□ b.→ c.o d.Δ	12 a.o b.□ c.→ d.Δ	13 a.o b.→ c.Δ d.□	14 a.→ b.Δ c.o d.□	15 a.o b.→ c.Δ d.□

Totals

Δ _____ □ _____ o _____ → _____

Scoring

If you scored highest in the:

- Δ category, your primary style is **Pragmatic**
- category, your primary style is **Enthusiastic**
- o category, your primary style is **Accommodating**
- category, your primary style is **Detailed**

Debrief

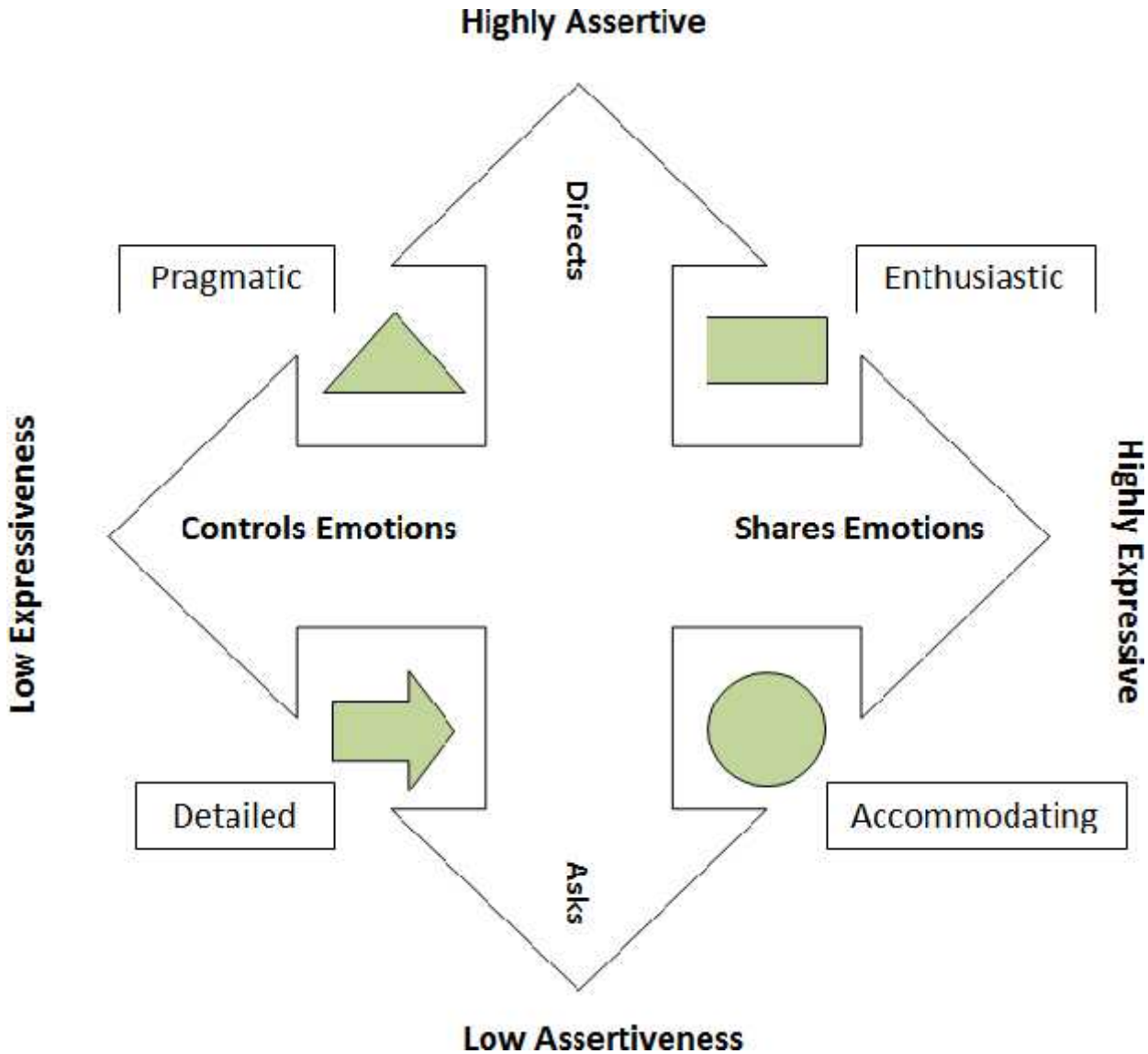
Overview

These results will give you a good idea of your self-perception: the way that you look and act in front of other people, which is the foundation for your personal brand. Keep in mind that while things can be in sharp contrast on paper, as people we are much more of a blend of all these types. Depending on how close our scores are, we can flex our behavior between styles (within our comfort and ability levels) to suit our purposes.

No one type is any better or worse than the other – they just provide us with a platform to talk about who we are and how we behave. If you scored within three points of another category, you may find it quite easy to stretch yourself and behave in the manner of that other category. If you are farther away, you will find stretching to appeal to people with other tendencies a little more challenging, but you can learn to get along with all kinds of people.

Brand Assessment Matrix

Here is a visual representation of the results of your assessment:



Understanding Styles

Sometimes our approach needs to be adjusted in order to present our brand in a way that other people will resonate with. If, for example, you are pragmatic, you may find that people who are an accommodating style have the most trouble relating to you. You are more assertive than they are, and less expressive. They value expression in order to relate to people and have a need to have people understand one another. They are also less assertive than you, and if you have a tendency toward aggression, they will often avoid getting to know you.

The Pragmatic Style (Δ)

The pragmatic style is demonstrated by being highly assertive and lower in expressiveness (the top left quadrant in the diagram). The pragmatic style is characterized by decisiveness; direct, quick speech; loud tones; direct eye contact; a bold visual appearance; and a respect for personal distance. Your personal spaces at work, home, or the gym all denote a powerful presence. Your handshake is firm.

Strengths include getting to the heart of the matter quickly, being direct, and presenting a position strongly. Challenges include listening, demonstrating patience, a tendency to argue, and not taking the advice of others who have more experience or expertise to offer.

The Enthusiastic Style (□)

Enthusiasts express their emotions and are assertive; see the top right quadrant in the diagram. The enthusiastic style expresses opinions easily and can be very persuasive in their approach. They use a lot of inflection, expressive tones, and are animated when they speak. They tend to be active and demonstrate a lot of movement and enthusiasm about everything they do.

Their workspaces are often cluttered and they are comfortable with close physical proximity. Challenges can include listening and paying attention to details, a tendency to generalize frequently, and to exaggerate or be overly dramatic.

The Accommodating Style (o)

The accommodating style is characterized by a tendency to low assertiveness and high expressiveness. This style focuses on relationship integrity. They listen, use supportive language, and thrive when everyone is working well and without conflict. Their speech is often at a slow to moderate rate, using soft tones. They demonstrate patience, build trust, and use supportive language. They do not need to shake hands, although they will if that's what everyone else is doing. This style prefers to hug.

Their workspace will contain family pictures and sentimental items. Their challenges can include handling conflict when it does arise, keeping opinions to themselves, and dealing with data and figures.

The Detailed Style (→)

The detailed style is found in the lower left corner of the diagram and is depicted by low levels of assertiveness and low levels of expressiveness. This style focuses on details, facts, and figures. They use precise language and avoid bringing emotion into the conversation. They use little vocal inflection, speak economically, and control their emotions.

They will avoid touching (shaking hands and particularly hugging) if possible, and maintain a very strong sense of personal space. If there are things hanging in their office, they will be related to charts and graphs. Their desktop will be tidy and well-organized. Challenges can include being too focused on details and losing sight of the bigger picture, and not paying attention to people's feelings.

Looking at the Outside

Dress for Success

The way you look is what people see first. It is the basis for their opinion about you before you even have the chance to speak.

What kind of image are you presenting?

No matter what type of work you do, your image needs to support that, not contradict it. Since the 1980's, and particularly in North America, there has been an acceptance of wearing blue jeans as part of the corporate uniform. Fridays in particular became "casual day" when all employees could wear blue jeans or casual wear. In order to protect the corporate brand, staff often contributed a dollar or two to a charity. Front-line staff would wear a badge saying that they were dressing down for charity.

This push for casual wear has changed the way many workplaces look today. CEOs dress in suits and ties in some companies, and in T-shirts and sandals in others.

No matter what clothing you select to help you create an impact when you enter a room or meet someone new, there are a few rules. We refer to these as **Seven Factors for Success**.

Factor One: Iron

Clothing needs to be clean and free of wrinkles. Get rid of that rumpled college or "just rolled out of bed" look. Learn how to use an iron and use it regularly.

Factor Two: Grab a Needle and Thread

Buttons, zippers, and other fasteners need to be properly attached to your clothing to give you a polished look.

Factor Three: Footwear

People notice what your feet are wearing, too. Your shoes need to be clean and in good condition. Learn how to apply shoe polish and purchase good quality footwear. You can lessen your credibility significantly with a nice outfit and a poor looking pair of shoes.

Factor Four: Hair

Your hair needs to be clean (even if the style of your mop is a messy one). No one wants to be around the smell of dirty hair, and some styles really trap smell.

Factor Five: Teeth

Your teeth need to be clean. You don't have to follow the trend of whitening and braces for adults, but your smile is founded on your teeth, and they need to be well looked after in order to support your image. Getting your teeth cleaned regularly also helps to keep your breath fresh.

Factor Six: Dressing Up

Dress for the position that you want and the respect you are after. If everyone around you wears baggy shorts and skater shoes because you sell skateboards, that's one thing. If you work in a design company, an art gallery, or a

jewelry manufacturer, you will probably dress differently than members of a law firm. If you want to reinforce your brand and have an impact, you still need to dress well wherever you are. Look carefully through your wardrobe and select clothes that will serve you.

Factor Seven: Glasses and Accessories

Long time glasses wearers have a gift for being able to look through a pair of smudged or dirty lenses, but your customers, colleagues, and manager will notice that layer of grime. Keep a microfiber cloth handy to keep your glasses clean. Pay attention to watches, cuff links, and jewelry with the same attention to detail.

Business Etiquette

Having good manners doesn't just mean you make a positive impression; they are also good for business. No matter how formal or informal your personal brand is, people still care about social skills and manners (even if they don't come out and say so). Rules about which fork to use for the salad, or not talking with food in your mouth, are examples of **good manners**. **Etiquette**, however, takes the discussion about manners to a higher level.

Emily Post, famous for her approach to etiquette, manners, and ethics, defined etiquette like this: "Whenever two people come together and their behavior affects one another, you have etiquette. Etiquette is not some rigid code of manners; it's simply how persons' lives touch one another."

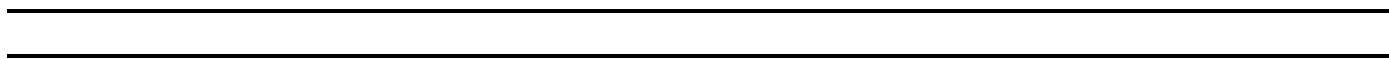
When you apply your awareness of etiquette in different situations, you demonstrate that you want to be taken seriously. You become an ambassador for what you do and who you work with.

How You Sound

Do you have a "**phone voice**?" This is the voice you always use when you answer the phone; there can be total chaos around you, but when you pick up the phone and say, "Good morning," the caller hears calm professionalism.

In contrast is the voice we use on the street or at the market. Some of us have grown up using what we might call "**street language**," or language that is commonly spoken with friends outside of the workplace. In business, however, we want to be clearly understood and so we apply a veneer or polish to our language. Sometimes a vocal or image coach will teach you to drop your street language so that it stops creeping into your business conversations and so that we are more easily understood.

When it comes to how you sound, you have to make a decision based on what's important to you and the brand you represent. Does your accent create a barrier in some way? If not, there is no need to change it. But if your accent prevents people from understanding you, or if your street language is having a negative impact on your brand, then it may be worth doing something about.





The 80/20 Rule

The 80/20 Rule, or Pareto's law, says that 20% of what is on your to do list will bring 80% of your results. Make sure you are working on the 20% to make the most of your time. When it comes to the low value, time-consuming tasks, make sure that you delegate them, or take them off your list completely!

Improving Your Concentration

Concentration is a skill that is learned and can be vastly improved. Many of us work in an environment of distractions and interruptions like e-mail notifications, the Internet, stimulants like coffee or soda, and meetings. All of these things interfere with our ability to set aside a solid chunk of time to concentrate and work. The day is so broken up, it seems like there is only five minutes available at one time to actually get work done. Instead of talking about it, we must get focused, set up time for uninterrupted work, and then get that work done.

If you feel like you can only concentrate for very short pieces of time, start there. Assign yourself a task and then work for 45 minutes, giving yourself 15 minutes of each hour to check e-mail, grab a coffee, or touch base with your team. After several days of this discipline, start increasing your time so that are working for 50 minutes, then an hour, and then an hour and fifteen minutes. You'll be amazed at how much you can accomplish when you buckle down and really get into it!

Developing Confidence

Confidence is not just about how you feel; it affects how you look. When you think about your brand, and the promotion of it within your career, you need to be confident. Just thinking about your personal brand and the impact that you can have on your life is a sign of confidence.

Can we project self-confidence even when we don't feel self-confident? Yes, there are several techniques that you can apply in order to gain confidence.

Pretend You're Confident

Imagine yourself to be a confident person. Get that image in your mind and act it out. Stand up straight, dress better, and try to play the part. If you visualize yourself as confident and successful, that will help you to do things confidently and achieve success. When you feel your confidence slipping, visualize and use positive words to build yourself up.

Do you agree with this idea?

If so, what could you do to implement it in your life?

When Your Positive Self-Talk Doesn't Listen

Sometimes we can be so hard on ourselves that we will actually argue with that voice in our head and therefore can't get the positive message track to enter our consciousness. One helpful way of breaking this pattern is to interfere with it. When you catch yourself listening to negative self-talk, play music that inspires you and sing or hum along. It is much more difficult for those negative messages to persist through music. The music can also be the positive message that you need at that time.

Do you agree with this idea?

If so, what could you do to implement it in your life?

Make Eye Contact

Confident people look people in the eye; people who aren't confident don't, unless it is a cultural restriction. Don't stare or make people uncomfortable; find that comfortable level of engaging in eye contact. (In some cultures it can be considered rude to look people directly in the eye. Make sure that you know your audience.)

Do you agree with this idea?

If so, what could you do to implement it in your life?

Dance

While this one might get you gasping (for confidence and air!), dancing is a great way to build yourself up. First, we know that the benefits of physical exercise are great, but did you ever think to let yourself go within a class of other likeminded people who are all learning at the same time? Often, you can take a class or two before you have to pay the fee. Then you can decide whether you are more of a salsa, flamenco, or ballroom kind of person.

If you don't have a partner, don't worry because lots of times there are other dancers there on their own. Or, you can take a class in line dancing. Whichever you decide, dance (or even yoga or guitar lessons) will force you to focus on something that you can enjoy.

Do you agree with this idea?

If so, what could you do to implement it in your life?

Know Your Stuff

Your confidence can't be all a front. While you are looking people directly in the eyes, standing straight, and otherwise acting as if the world were your oyster, you also have to know what you are doing. If you are prepared and sure of your facts, you've got a better chance of projecting confidence.

Do you agree with this idea?

If so, what could you do to implement it in your life?

Rehearse

Rehearsing can be as simple as writing out a speech or your intended conversation with someone and practicing it in front of the mirror. For example, you could do a role-play with a trusted friend or colleague as the interviewer



before you interview for a new position. To tackle your underlying fear of failure, include imagery with your rehearsal: imagine yourself succeeding.

Do you agree with this idea?

If so, what could you do to implement it in your life?

Pep Talks Work

Rather than dwell on the things that didn't work or the things that didn't go well, focus on what you did accomplish. Give yourself a mental pep talk at the beginning or the end of every day. Remind yourself that you have done some things well.

Do you agree with this idea?

If so, what could you do to implement it in your life?

Read Inspiring Biographies and Autobiographies

Build a file of stories that inspire you most. Remember that our capacity far exceeds our usual level of performance. Accept the fact you will have ups and downs just like everyone else. Experiencing them through reading will help reinforce that concept.



Do you agree with this idea?

If so, what could you do to implement it in your life?

Be Thankful

No matter how bad your circumstances, there is probably somebody worse off than you. As well, build excellent support around you. There are a lot of tremendous people out there to spend your valuable time with. However, relationships are fragile. You must be prepared to devote some time to them.

Do you agree with this idea?

If so, what could you do to implement it in your life?

Push Yourself to Accomplish Short-Term Goals

There is no greater way to build confidence than to get things done. Push yourself to get at least three things accomplished each week that move you closer to your goals. Develop a habit of getting things done and being productive.

Do you agree with this idea?

If so, what could you do to implement it in your life?

Do Something for Yourself Every Week

You deserve it. Find a way to celebrate what you have accomplished or overcome. Give yourself some kind of tangible reward for your efforts.

Do you agree with this idea?

If so, what could you do to implement it in your life?

Confidence Builder

Four Steps for Success

One of the tools that we can use in building confidence is a process to help us communicate effectively and with assertiveness. This tool involves a four step process based on Think-Act-Feel-I Need.



Framework

The four steps can be framed as follows. Make sure that when you are referring to someone's behavior that you talk about the behavior and not the person.

1. When I witness _____ or When you _____

State what you are seeing without making a judgment. Be a videographer and only state what you can see or hear.

2. The effect (the consequence to me) is _____

This is your reaction.

3. I feel _____

This is your feelings on the matter. There could be range of adjectives here including disrespected, unsupported, upset, angry, etc.

4. I would like _____

Setting Goals

What Do You Want?

If you really don't know what you want, it's hard to represent your brand and have the impact that you want. Many times, people are looking for the easiest route they can find. As an example, they ask for money in the belief that if we have all the money we could possibly want, everything else would be ours for the taking. However, we all know that isn't exactly how it works. Money doesn't buy happiness, although it does make the search a little easier.

One of life's fundamental truths is, "Ask and you shall receive." Kids can ask for what they want, whether it's an ice cream cone or a new toy. As adults, we seem to lose our ability to ask for what we want, and we can really struggle when it comes to asking for or accepting help. Remember, the world responds to those who ask! There are many different asking strategies. We can create abundance in our lives just by mastering the art of asking assertively.

There are three reasons why we don't ask for what we want.

- We believe that it's not right to ask.
- We lack confidence.
- We fear rejection.

Some people don't enjoy the rewards of asking because they don't ask effectively. Here are five ways to ensure that you get results when you ask.

Ask Clearly

Be precise. Think about your request. Take time to prepare; maybe even write out what you want and practice. Words are powerful so choose them carefully.

Ask With Confidence

You are more apt to get what you want if you speak up and sound confident, rather than hesitant and unsure of yourself. The worst that can happen is that you will be denied, but it probably won't put you in a worse situation than before. If this route is closed, look for another.

Ask Creatively

What can you do to make sure you make an impact and to make certain your request doesn't get lost in the crowd? How could you make your request stand out? How can you make your request fun? Schedule some time every month to dream up new and different ways to ask for what you want.

Ask Sincerely

When you really want help, people will respond. Be willing to be vulnerable. Tell it the way it is, lumps and all. Don't worry if your presentation isn't perfect; ask from your heart.



Help Others

We live in a world of reciprocal relationships and energy. When you give, you get. When you are ready to lend someone a hand, do so. The more you can help others, the more likely that someone will be available to help you when you need it. Be giving of your time, and accepting of theirs.

Go For It!

Think of something that you truly want from others or something that you could use help with.

How can you start the ball rolling by asking today?

What techniques might you use?

Identifying Dreams and Setting Goals

Part of the reason people struggle with where they want to go in life is that their goals are vague and ill defined. “More confidence” and “more money” sound really good, but unless we get really clear about what they mean, we may never reach those goals.

Identifying Your Dreams

It is important to give some thought to what we want and how we are going to get there. Right now we’re going to take some time to think about our own hopes and dreams. From that, we will set some concrete goals.

What area(s) of life do you want to set goals in? Some ideas:

- Career (responsibilities or a specific position, or maybe even your own business)
- Income
- Relationships (marriage, children, family, friends, colleagues, customers)
- Things to learn
- Hobbies to take up
- Volunteer activities or charities to support
- Recreational activities
- Home, vehicles, or other possessions to purchase
- Places to travel to
- Spiritual
- Health (examples: lose 20 pounds, exercise more frequently)
- Educational
- Behaviors and habits to develop or change

Now, clearly some of these are achievable in the short term while others will take longer. Some will obviously take more work than others.



SPIRIT

If the goal is quite large, it needs to be broken down into several small, achievable goals that will help you get where you want to go. Good goals should have SPIRIT!

Specific

Be specific about what you want or don't want to achieve. The result should be tangible and measurable. "Talk to people" is pretty ambiguous; "Talk with two of my co-workers each day" is specific.

Prizes

Reward yourself at different points in the goal, particularly if it's long-term. If your goal is to set up a meeting with a new colleague, for example, you might purchase a special treat for yourself afterward.

Individual

The goal must be something that you want to do. If your spouse wants you to lose 20 pounds but you think you look fine, you're not going to want to work towards the goal.

Review

Review your progress periodically. Does the goal still make sense to you? Is it still giving you energy and something you find motivating? Are you stuck? Do you need to adjust certain parts of it?

Inspiring

Frame the goal positively. Make it fun to accomplish. You could make a poster of the end result, frame it, and post it on the wall.

Time-Bound

Give yourself a deadline for achieving the goal. Even better, split the goal into small parts and give yourself a deadline for each item.

Getting Some SPIRIT

Goal Statement One

Check to make sure you have included each of these elements.

Specific	
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Prizes	
Individual	
Review	
Inspiring	

Who will you check in with?

When are your check-in dates? What should be accomplished by each one?

Date	Task



Goal Statement Two

Check to make sure you have included each of these elements.

Specific	
Prizes	
Individual	
Review	
Inspiring	

Who will you check in with?

When are your check-in dates? What should be accomplished by each one?

Date	Task



Goal Statement Three

Check to make sure you have included each of these elements.

Specific	
Prizes	
Individual	
Review	
Inspiring	

Who will you check in with?

When are your check-in dates? What should be accomplished by each one?

Date	Task

Being Flexible and Resilient

When you are setting up big goals (which can include this shift you are making in having personal impact and creating your personal brand), there's a very good chance you will hit some setbacks. People you thought would be supportive may not be. You may let your guard down and have your brand tarnished. Your ability to bounce back after these setbacks is essential in reaching your goals. Being able to apply some flexibility and resilience is a way to measure how successful – and happy – you are.

Some people may appear to be more resilient than others. While this ability may be innate for some, a lot of the behaviors are learned. The evidence of learning means that we can all develop traits of resilience and flexibility. We have organized our top five tips as the 5 D's.

Develop a Positive Self-Concept

Resilient people know that they are worth it and they see themselves in a positive way. A positive self-concept does not mean you have to behave like someone who is self-centered or selfish. It does mean that you perceive yourself in a positive way.

Develop Relationships

Resilient people tend to give to and be a part of strong networks. Friends, family, business partnerships, and colleagues are all a source of support when things are not going well. Accountability partners can help get things back on track.

Develop Appreciation

Focusing on things that are going well helps bring more good things into view. This will help you to regain a positive mindset if you have let go of it. It also helps you to deal with challenges more effectively than if you are focusing on what's going wrong.

Develop Acceptance

No matter how positive, flexible, and resilient you are, there are things that cannot be changed. Resilient people accept these things, instead of spending precious energy fighting things that cannot be altered.

Develop Vision

When you look at your life, your goals, and your business from a distance, problems and setbacks seem less important than when they are close up. Develop your vision and then focus on the ability to call it up whenever you wish.



Networking for Success

Networking is an effective way for you to build your brand. However, building a network can be a difficult thing for a lot of people. If you are inhibited at all, the idea of introducing yourself to people can be daunting. If you are outgoing, people may have the impression you just want to meet them to further your career or grow your business. The real purpose of networking, however, is that you bring something to the group that is helpful to them (not you specifically) without expecting something directly in return.

For example, if you know someone who needs their house painted, and you know a painter, you could introduce the two. You do not gain directly from the referral, except that now it's possible that the person you refer and the painter will both think of you when they have a need or a referral for you.

There are plenty of networking groups available to help you get out into your community and to get known. Building a network takes time and patience. If you are hoping to get business or recognition from a group, expect it to take a year or more. Your results will depend on how involved you are.

Here are some excellent tips to try as you start to build or expand upon your network:

- If you are a strong writer or teacher, you can write for a variety of media (such as local news, websites, and blogs). Just make sure your work is getting read and that it's work you are proud of.
- If you enjoy presentations, then volunteer to sit on a panel or start looking for paid workshops and conference presentations.
- Get away from time wasters, such as water cooler gossip, or people who socialize excessively at work and are not getting things done. You don't want to be associated with these people because they will not be a good reflection of your brand.
- Spend time with mentors and coaches in the workplace that you can learn from, even if it's just while sharing a meal or break together now and again.

Brainstorm some networking strategies that might work in your area.

Further Reading:

✓ *Boothman,*