



Build-a-Brand

Not a new high-street store for junior marketeers but a set of steps to help you sell yourself, either at interview or when you are pitching. Building your own brand seems to be a new trend at the moment, but why is it so important? My experience has shown that many people are not strong at simply, succinctly and clearly stating to potential employers or even friends in the pub who they are professionally. There could be an argument that if you can't tell me simply who you are, then maybe you don't know, and if you don't know, maybe I don't want to buy into you. As Jeff Bezos says: *"Your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room."* This is an exercise in helping you to write that script.

Many people, when asked about their job answer, at least initially, with their job title. Job titles in many cases in this day and age are getting longer and longer and less and less clear. And let's face it we are all more than our job titles.

How would it be if you could respond with a clear, authentic outline that really informed and engaged the enquirer to want to know more? Before we jump in, let's gather some data; ask yourself and others some simple questions:

1. What is my emotional appeal? This might be a brainstorm of the features of your personality. How do I make people feel? How do people benefit when they work with me? What are the words others use to describe me?
2. How can you describe what field or industry you are in? Consider avoiding the generic titles such as HR Generalist, Marketing, Finance Manager and list the words that describe your work and your target audience.
3. What services do you offer? What makes you stand out above others in what you do?

Now with that data in mind here are a few simple steps to put it all together:

- Your first step should be to describe why do you do what you do and how does it make others feel. As Simon Sinek says in his now famous video “Start with why...” (if you haven’t seen it check it out on YouTube) *“People by don’t buy what you do, they buy why you do it.”* Can you see why a statement such as: *“I am passionate about helping small businesses drive success and build prosperity”* is a much stronger opener than: *“I am a business consultant”*?
- The second stage is to find ways to articulate how you do these things, what expertise, tools or techniques do you use? What makes you stand out from the crowd on how you deliver? To continue our example: *“I deliver for my clients by deeply researching and understanding disruptors in a range of industries and bring their thinking to your business”*
- Stage three is what you do, now is the time to bring in what you can do for people. For example *“I ask probing questions, listen and formulate simple but detailed plans to help all stakeholders understand exactly what is expected of them and why they need to do it.”*
- A final word or two about authenticity: being authentic about what you are saying is absolutely key and I would urge you to consider this on two levels:
 1. On a practical level you need to be able to say this statement out loud without cringing; it needs to feel right and genuine.
 2. Your truth, whilst I won’t lecture you on being honest in your statement I would encourage you to be true to yourself, share what gives you passion, share what you enjoy. If you don’t enjoy blue-sky thinking, don’t sell yourself as a high level strategist, even if you think that’s what people want to hear. If you don’t enjoy auditing, don’t tell people you want to do it. Sell the best of you.

Have a go at building your brand statement and practice saying it to a range of people.