



WHAT IS Personal Branding

...AND DO I REALLY NEED IT?



What is PERSONAL BRANDING...and do I really need it?

“Personal branding” is one of those phrases that gets thrown around a lot these days. We often associate brands with celebrities or other highly influential people, or we think about “brand names” like clothes or cars from a particular company.

Because of this, it can be easy to think that personal branding doesn’t apply to most of us.

Yet it *does*—especially now with the effects COVID-19 has had on our work and businesses.

Now more than ever, we need a way to stand out, differentiate ourselves, and make it very clear what our strengths, gifts, and talents are.

Creating a personal brand is, arguably, the most impactful thing we can do for our careers moving forward.

Why?

Because when it comes to starting or transitioning a business or organization, launching a new product, or establishing yourself as an authority or expert in your field, your single greatest asset is **yourself**.

There is *no one else* with your DNA, strengths, experiences, or lens on the world. Your most unique characteristics and qualities are what set you apart.

Personal branding is the mechanism to help you showcase all of that uniqueness and build a life and a business around *being you*.

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Personal branding IS MUCH MORE **than a logo**

When I launched brandiD in 2007, most people had never heard of personal branding. Today, the term has become a buzz phrase, and yet it's still misunderstood.

Many people still associate branding solely with a company's name or logo.

A brand, however, encompasses so much more than that.

A brand is the experience a company gives to anyone who comes into contact with it.

It's the feeling you receive when interacting with a business, whether you've purchased something from them or not. It's the relationship that's built between a company and their past, present, and future customers—continuously and over time.

The best brands are the ones who've thought long and hard about what experience they want people to have when they interact with their company, and they make sure they give that experience to people every chance they get.

These “chances” are called customer touchpoints.

Customer touchpoints are the transactions—big or small—that your brand has with a potential (or current) customer. These touchpoints include things like:

- **How you answer the phone**
- **The look, feel, and message on your signage**
- **Your visual displays**
- **Your website**
- **The tone, message, and layout of your receipts**
- **How you respond to emails**
- **Your return policy**
- **Where and how you advertise**
- **Your promise of value (reputation)**
- **What your business stands for**
- **Who you advertise with (think guilty by association) ;)**

If you strategically and thoughtfully provide a great experience for people at every touchpoint, you've got yourself a really memorable brand.



Your personal BRAND COCKTAIL

Personal branding can be viewed as a mixture of three main ingredients: essence, reputation, and marketing.

Your **essence** is what makes you, *you*. It's your core values, your passions and desires, your personality, and the soul of who you are. When it comes to uncovering your personal brand, your essence is usually the toughest part to nail down—yet it's by far the most crucial aspect of your branding cocktail, and the one most brands and businesses overlook.

Your **reputation** includes how others view you and what you're known for. That can be your skills, strengths or talents, unique characteristics, or special personality traits—anything that makes you distinguishable in the eyes of others. This component of your branding cocktail is important to consider so that you're highlighting the aspects about you that resonate with others and draw them to you and your business.

Finally, **marketing** is how you share who you are and what you have to offer with people in the world at large and out on the internet. There are many different avenues for marketing yourself and your brand, but the ones that best align with your personality and your goals will be the ones you'll be able to do most consistently, and will also make the biggest impact with the customers you're trying to reach.

A UNIQUE FRAMEWORK for personal branding

Over the past decade I've been reading, researching, culling information, and studying with some of the best and most innovative minds in the fields of entrepreneurship, personal branding and positive psychology. It led me to combine that collective wisdom with my own business-building practices to create the proprietary personal branding framework called SOULiD.

The SOULiD Framework helps you uncover your personal brand as well as pinpoint the best ways to use it in your business and market it to others. When followed, the framework not only allows you to find the essence of your personal brand, but it can also be the launchpad that helps you:

- ✓ **Find and create work you love**
- ✓ **Articulate who you really are and what you stand for**
- ✓ **Identify your purpose, mission, and your guiding principles**
- ✓ **Increase your confidence in projecting who you truly are**
- ✓ **Live from a place of joy, happiness, and contribution to the world**
- ✓ **Differentiate yourself from others**
- ✓ **Connect on a deeper level with your target client, customer, or patient**

As you can see, personal branding has the potential to have a huge impact on your business, as well as on your feelings of purpose and contentment as a business owner. The possibilities are endless!

How to develop your personal brand with the SOULID FRAMEWORK

The SOULID Framework helps you uncover and expand your brand through four main actions: **s**trategizing, **o**ptimizing, **u**tilizing, and **l**everaging. Let's dive into each action in greater detail...

Strategize

As the name implies, the point of this section is to get strategic and dig into who you are, so you can get to your essence and uncover the most important ingredients of your personal brand. The goal is to focus on self awareness and identity so that you can connect the personal parts of yourself to your business. In addition (and with the help of a web-based, systematic [360-degree survey you can find here](#), you can get a glimpse into how others perceive you in the world. When you partner both of these aspects together, you'll be able to identify and amplify your unique skills, strengths, vision, and desires. You'll know exactly who you are, how you show up in the world, and what makes you and your brand one-of-a-kind.

To start digging into your essence and uncovering your personal brand, you'll want to focus on the following key questions:

1. What are your core values?

What key behaviors do you hold sacred, and what matters most in

your life? What are your core beliefs or convictions? These are feelings and sentiments that we will defend no matter the odds and at the risk of being the only person in the room sharing them.

These beliefs are important to our personal brand because they clearly communicate who we are underneath the surface.

Identifying and articulating your values allows them to serve as decision-making guideposts for your personal life, much like corporate or organizational values help guide actions and decision-making at

companies and organizations. Examples of values can be humor, integrity, faith, and innovation, just to name a few.

2. What is your vision?

Your vision is aspirational. It's focused on where you or your business are going (not where you currently are). It's also external-focused, meaning it's what you see as possible for the world because of your presence, your products, or your services.

A vision can be lofty and should feel hard to reach. It's part of the reason you do the work you do, and even though you may never solve the problem you are working towards, your work is making a positive impact towards it.

3. What is your mission?

While your vision statement is outward-facing, and describes the impact you'll have on the world at some point in the future, your mission is internal, and describes your current role or motivation. It's your own individual why—why you get out of bed every day. It's your personal value proposition, the role you, or your company, will play in helping realize your grand vision. In other words, your mission or purpose is how you, or your business, are currently working towards achieving your future vision and how you impact the world.

Optimize

The second action in the SOULiD Framework is to figure out how to best optimize your personal brand – or, in other words, how to use it and market it so it makes the biggest impact for your business.

In this section, you shift the focus off of you for a bit and place it on your target audience, so you can really nail down the group or groups of clients who have the needs and desires that your solution can solve.

To begin defining these client groups, spend some time answering the following questions:

1. What makes you unique?

Take a look at your 3-5 main competitors and analyze the ways in which you're similar and different. Do a side-by-side comparison of their products, services, or other offerings – how are you different in the value you create, the results you provide, your method of delivery, or any other facet that might help you stand out.

2. Who is your ideal customer?

If you're a business owner, non-profit executive, blogger, or anyone serving another person or population, knowing who your ideal customer is is a MUST. Having this knowledge will make your marketing tactics much easier as you develop content of any kind from blog posts, website content, and print marketing materials to speeches and books.

You want your content (whether it's a résumé or marketing material) to connect with the people you'd like to work with and serve, so getting crystal clear on who those people are, what motivates them to take action, and what needs they are seeking to have fulfilled is key.

3. What are you selling?

If you're a job seeker, you're selling yourself. If you're a solopreneur (say, a coach or consultant) or business owner, you're selling a service or product. If you're an authority, educator or innovator, you

may be selling courses, books, workshops, and speaking gigs. Another product you can sell is an event or experience of some kind, such as a retreat or group mastermind.

Figuring out what you're selling can come before or after identifying your target customers. Knowing your customer will help you position what you're selling.

4. What's your O-Factor?

To earn customers, your offering needs to be obvious to the consumer. If you're working in a competitive and crowded space like leadership or career coaching, then you have to make it even more obvious why your services are the best fit for your ideal customer. Attracting customers becomes so much easier (and sometimes effortless) when you do this, yet many business owners create offerings they want to sell and deliver without making sure that their offer is aligned with their market's needs.

Your O-Factor is the relationship between your service and the need of the consumer. The more obvious this relationship, the higher your O-Factor will be. To determine your O-Factor, consider the following questions:

- **What's the problem I am solving as my ideal customer looks for a solution?**
- **What about my solution feels on point to me? Why would a customer consider my solution for them?**
- **How obvious is my customers' need?**
- **How obvious is my solution? How easily can they choose to purchase my solution?**
- **What can make my solution more obvious?**

Utilize

The next action in the SOULiD Framework is to take all of your inner strategy work, as well as the optimization work you did around your target market, and put it to use – to create the messaging, structure, and direction for your brand.

To get started, you're going to focus on two main things: determining your unique value proposition and determining your WHY.

1. Your Unique Value Proposition (UVP)

Also known as your brand statement or elevator pitch, your unique value proposition is your “pick up line” for new business or clientele. It's a method to easily communicate what you do, whom you do it for, and what makes it (and you) unique.

The UVP is comprised of three parts: what benefits you provide, who you provide them to, and how those benefits are provided in a unique way.

Using these three parts, here's an example of how we crafted our UVP for brandiD.

Benefits provided: Uncovering, positioning, and marketing people

Who do we provide them to? Entrepreneurs, innovators, and thought leaders

How do we do it uniquely well? Through an introspective process, we tap into the real you—your authentic soul—to define your personal brand and then help you project it online.

Then we simply put it all together into a complete sentence and wordsmithed it as much as possible. Here's what came out:

UVP: We help entrepreneurs, innovators, and thought leaders uncover, position, and market their authentic souls online, empowering them to thrive in work and life.

2. Determining your Why

This is different than the vision and mission you developed in the **STRATEGIZE** section—that came from a personal and motivational standpoint. For this section, we are going to look at your Why through a marketing lens and explore **why** your clients or customers might seek you out. These answers are less about what YOU think makes you and your approach unique and more about what consumers think makes you the clear choice for them.

Your marketing Why helps you delve deep into your customer's mind and define why they would use your product, offering, or service. Defining it will help you understand what motivates them, as well as how they define, and aspire to see themselves. It will help you speak directly to their core in a way that captivates them and inspires them to take action.

Leverage

The final step is to leverage the brand you've developed. Now that you've defined it—not just for yourself, but in a concise, captivating way that reveals your soul to potential clients and colleagues—it's time to explore how to amplify your brand in ways that work for you!

The first thing you need to do is get a baseline read on **how you're showing up online right now**. One great tool to help you do that is the Online ID Calculator, which you can find by going to [OnlineIDCalculator.com](https://www.onlineidcalculator.com). It's free and takes you through questions and exercises that will help you understand the current picture of what your online representation looks like.

Next, you're going to spend some time thinking about your goals for changing or expanding your online presence. What actions do you want to take or, what strategies do you want to employ to create a higher profile online? Maybe you'd like to speak at events, or maybe you'd like to increase your presence on social media. Consider what avenues feel right to you.

When that's done, turn your attention solely on social media for a bit. Leveraging the power of social media can be a huge advantage to your personal or business brand—in today's world, it's a must-do. But with so many platforms out there, how the heck do you know which ones to be active on?

Many people think you need to be visible and active on all—but that's not the best approach. You want to identify the top one or two platforms that your ideal customer is on, and spend your time and attention there.

The final step is to create your own marketing plan. All the deep introspective work you did in the Strategize section, plus identifying the fit between your consumer's need and your product in the Optimize section, as well as the clarification you did in your communication points in the Leverage section culminate into the final ingredient of the personal branding cocktail—marketing.

A marketing plan helps you focus on what you need to do to get to where you envision your future brand—personal or business.

The example below is for a web design agency whose target customer is restaurant owners.

Sample MARKETING PLAN

Objective:		EX: Land 10 new clients in the next 2 months	
Target audience:		EX: Restaurant owners who have little or inconsistent online presence and need to sync or showcase their brick and mortar business	
Challenges (what are the potential weaknesses in the product, service, or in reaching the target customer):		EX: Restaurant owners are so busy, they barely have time to deal with marketing.	
Key Messages (identify 2 to 4 messages that you want to repeat over and over to your potential consumers):		EX 1: By building your web presence we can help you attract new customers. EX 2: We will do everything for you—all we need is 3 hours of your time, your menu, your logo, and the rest will be created by our team.	
Tactic	Implementation Needs	Deadline	Status
EX: Identify the top 20 restaurants in downtown [city] and analyze their web presence. Reach out to the ones whose web experience doesn't match their in-person restaurant experience.	EX: Time, money and Google	EX: 3 days	

Now, here's a marketing plan for you to complete with your own answers so you can start planning and taking action!

Fill In Your MARKETING PLAN

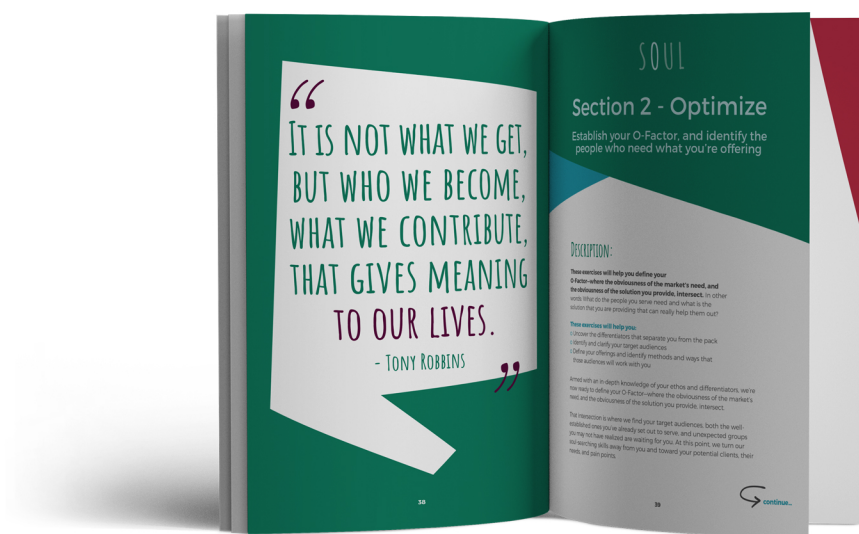
Objective:			
Target audience:			
Challenges:			
Key Messages:			
Tactic	Implementation Needs	Deadline	Status

There you have it! When you focus on your personal brand cocktail of **essence**, **reputation**, and **marketing**, you'll create the perfect mix of an experience for your customer—one that's both emotional and memorable and keeps your business top of mind for years to come.

You'll also have the perfect way to differentiate yourself in the world and on the internet, so no matter how—or when—you need to transition your work or business, you'll always be ready.

Interested in going even further into the SOULiD Framework?

YOU'VE GOT TWO FANTASTIC TOOLS:



Our workbook, [**Build Your Personal Brand: The Definitive Guide to Soul-Based Marketing**](#), is chock-full of exercises, questions, and resources that takes you step-by-step to uncovering an authentic personal brand that resonates powerfully with your target audience.

Our course, [**Build Your Brand**](#), is a 7-module, self-study course that takes you through the fundamentals of building your personal brand. Led by yours truly, brandiD founder Rachel Gogos, you'll find all the questions, exercises, and guidance you need to uncover your own unique essence.

