



## **Building Your Unique Personal Brand By Maria Seddio**

Each of us has a unique and indelible impression that we make on others. First impressions combine with confirming information to create an enduring belief about our character and our credibility. What are we about? What is most important to us? Can we be trusted? Do we know what we are doing? Are we capable of leading others?

*“What we become known for”* is another way of conceptualizing personal brand. Personal brand is comprised of the things that people believe about us because we have demonstrated that they are true. When we talk about brand we are talking about a conscious, mindful approach to sharing ourselves with others so that they can quickly understand the values and qualities that drive our behavior. Brand is a consistent experience, backed by positive and confirming beliefs.

Credibility is a key quality that should be built into every brand. Let's look at credibility:

**Credibility = Trustworthiness + Expertise**

There is no easy reference guide on how to build credibility. Generally, it is defined by a person's ability to demonstrate trustworthiness and expertise consistently over time. Trustworthiness consists of such things as: doing what you say you will do, sharing similar perspectives, interacting with sufficient frequency and having others view your behavior as appropriate. Expertise includes technical expertise, knowledge of internal and external customers, and an understanding of the ins and outs of getting things done.

**Brand = Credibility + Character (Positive Personal Qualities)**

Whenever you enter into a new role or a new working relationship as a result of involvement in a new project or team, you will need to quickly establish credibility with your stakeholders so that they will trust you, be willing to support you, and show you how to successfully navigate the organization or initiative. People will be watching to see if you have the necessary skills as well as the personal commitment to deliver what you say you will on a consistent basis. You will know that you have established credibility when people trust that you can get things done in ways that help build the business and are supportive of your team and your colleagues. You will know that you have established a unique personal brand when people consistently describe you by naming the qualities that you aspire to represent and embody.

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