

A PERSONAL BRANDING GUIDE

STAND OUT

FOR ENTREPRENEURS AND PROFESSIONALS WHO
WANT TO DIFFERENTIATE THEMSELVES FROM THE
CROWD

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Introduction

When I was a kid, we would frequent this ice cream parlor called Lake View Milk Bar. When I would go past that place, I would shout at the top of my voice “Lake View ice cream! Lake View ice cream!” For me, Lake View was the best ice cream in the world. I was a little kid, barely seven years old, and what does a little kid want? Just play out in the sun and enjoy ice cream.

Branding is how you make people feel around you. It's that feeling you get when you take someone's name or think about them.

During the industrial era, most people did manual jobs. Companies provided job security, and it was common to see an employee climb up the corporate ladder and retire after having worked in just one company all his life.

Labor was almost like a commodity; an employee's job was to follow instructions. However, things seem to have changed now. Most manual jobs are automated and taken over by machines.

Information is available more easily, both employers and employees are looking for something different.

Talent has become more valuable today than ever before.

That's where Personal Branding has become very important. It helps you stand out from the crowd. It shows the world the value you bring to the table.

It positions you as a person of authority. Every information you give out to the world becomes more strategic and centered around what you want to achieve.

What Makes a Successful Personal Brand?

Here are some of the factors that make a personal brand successful.

Awareness

Branding begins with awareness. If people are not aware of your existence, then how could you be a brand? You don't need a million followers.

You could be well-known in a small circle of influential people.

Experience

Great brands create an experience for their audience. Retail stores are a prime example. Experience is about feeling.

Today, it's not just customer service; it's about customer experience. I believe it's always been about customer experience.

Personality

Every brand has a personality. Whether you're a personal brand or a business, you do have a personality. And sometimes, your personality rubs on to your business. A lot of times, a business is just an extension of the business owner.

When I say personality, I mean the way you are as a person.

Many people hide their personality. I'd say bring it out.

Eventually, people connect with your personality more than anything else. In the next chapter, we'll discuss how to build a magnetic personality.

Authority

Are you an expert at something?

People tell me, "Vinil, I'm not sure if I am an authority on anything." Well, everybody is an authority on something.

If you only watch movies, you could write movie reviews, and you could become the go-to person for anything related to movies.

If you are a foodie, you could be an authority on food.

If you are a guy who goes out to restaurants and enjoys good food, you could write restaurant reviews.

Once upon a time, I was running an event business where I would promote a lot of restaurants. Almost every day I would get someone calling and asking me, “Which is the best place to go out tonight?”

I would give great recommendations. Soon, I became the go-to guy for events that were happening around my city.

Value

A great personal brand provides value.

Value can be entertainment; it can be information or any other benefit. A lot of people think that they have to be PhDs at something to provide value. No. Everybody can provide some value.

Entertainment is a value that is easy to provide.

Information is also easy to provide. If you are a local, you probably know more about your city than most people.

Emotional Connect

Emotional connect is very important to any personal brand.

The connection happens when you share a common ground. We tend to follow people who we aspire to be or people who are just like us.

Sharing your journey, or your personal stories of winning, losing, and challenges builds that emotional connection with your audience.

How to Build a Magnetic Personality

We are all drawn to people with magnetic personalities. But how do we build that magnetic personality?

#1 Have Goals and Ambitions

We are attracted to people who are ambitious.

Even if you are not very successful but if you have very strong and highly ambitious goals, people look at you more positively.

#2 Be Decisive

When was the last time you saw someone who was decisive and sure about his actions? Were you attracted to his personality?

Great world leaders tend to attract a great following because they are sure about their actions. One doesn't need to be sure about the result, but if he is decisive and assertive about his actions, that's another factor in building a magnetic personality.

#3 Be Authentic

Authenticity means people must believe what you're saying. If you're not authentic, people won't believe you. And if people don't believe you, your credibility takes a hit.

Warren Buffet said, "We can lose a lot of money, but we can't lose our reputation." And your reputation is built on being authentic. An authentic person attracts friends and followers.

#4 Focus on your Grooming

When I was younger, I didn't care about grooming. I said, "My work is going to speak for itself."

The moment I started grooming myself, I started standing out from the crowd. People started recognizing me and listening to me.

A wise man said, "If you don't invest time and money on yourself, why should someone else invest in you?"

I believe that being well groomed and well-dressed is a skill.

Remember, style is not a matter of money; it's a matter of being a little bit creative.

I remember I had a very successful entrepreneur come down to my event. I had met him a few days earlier at his office when I wasn't that well-dressed. But at my event, I always try to

dress up better than everyone else. His body language at his office, and my event was completely different. At my event, he gave me importance. So don't underestimate the power of being well groomed and well dressed.

#5 Develop A Positive Self-Image

What do I mean by self-image?

When I talk about self-image, it's not the image of yourself that you see in the mirror.

It's not the image the world sees about you, but it is what you think of yourself subconsciously.

Do you think of yourself as successful? Are you confident?

People with great personalities have a very positive self-image.

#6 Learn to Adapt

Charles Darwin said, "It's not the strongest of the species that survives, but it's the species that adapts."

Every day, we see new technology coming through, people who can adapt and change course are the ones who will thrive.

#7 Be Humorous and Take Risks

People love being around others who laugh a lot. Have a sense of humor, and lighten up a bit.

And more importantly, take risks,

People are attracted to risk takers. Richard Branson's blog has pictures of him jumping from airplanes, and doing all kinds of crazy stuff.

#8 Improve Your Public Speaking Skills

Great speakers mesmerize us.

The best politicians win elections predominantly with their public speaking prowess.

Whether you're talking to a group of five people or a group of 100, you must be able to connect. It's ironic that one of the biggest fears of people is public speaking.

#9 Develop Social Skills

To be successful in school, you need study skills. But if you want to be good with people, it's important to develop social skills.

#10 Demonstrate Strong Body Language

We communicate a lot before we even speak a word. More than 50% of all communication is body language.

A strong, powerful body language communicates a lot about you.

Language is a fairly modern part of our evolution. We still have our primate instincts inside of us.

Before we had language, human beings communicated with their bodies. Even today, most of our communication is through our bodies.

Here is a summary of this chapter.

- Have bigger goals and ambitions.
- Be assertive.
- Be authentic.
- Be well-groomed.
- Focus on self-image.
- Be willing to adapt.
- Have a sense of humor. Take risks.
- Become a better public speaker.
- Develop your social skills.
- Demonstrate strong body language.

Identifying your Target Audience

The biggest mistake in branding is not having a target audience.

Sometimes I ask people, "Who's your target market?" They say, "Everybody." Well if everybody is your target market, then nobody is your target market. Branding is not about being everything to everybody. It is about catering to a certain audience.

Identify an audience that is suitable for you. Justin Bieber might have a different audience as compared to Elton John. The audience that goes to an Elton John concert may not go to a Justin Bieber concert.

Each of them has a different audience, and they cater to that specific audience. As a brand, it's very difficult for you to cater to every audience.

Once you identify a target audience, you then want to profile them and create an ideal customer profile, which gives you opportunities to communicate your message to the right channels.

Choose the most appropriate Channel of Communication

Once you are aware of your audience, choose a channel of communication most relevant to your audience.

If most of your audience is on Instagram, then that's your tool to communicate. If they are on LinkedIn, then that's a tool you should master.

Depending on who they are, your audience could even be offline. I know people who still communicate through offline mediums.

The Soul of Branding

The soul of branding is storytelling. People love stories. Our brains get activated when we hear stories.

How do you become a great storyteller?

Dig into your past.

There are a lot of stories from your past that you can tell the world. Sometimes people tell me, "Oh I don't have stories." Even if you've been living under a rock all your life, you still have stories.

Just dig into your past, you will find several stories worth sharing with your audience. All your challenges, fears, and failures can be great stories that build an emotional connection with your audience.

The Beginning and the End of Your Story

The most important part of your story is the beginning and the end. Both should be interesting. It should captivate a person's attention. People tend to lose interest if the beginning of your story is dull. Similarly, a story that ends abruptly, or doesn't have a proper conclusion won't impact your audience as much.

How Long Should Your Story Be?

People ask me how long my story should be? It should be anywhere between 30 to 180 seconds if it's a YouTube Video.

If you're a great writer, you can write it. If you're not a great writer, you can communicate your stories through audio or video. All you need is a voice recorder or a smartphone.

How to Build Your Authority?

Building authority means establishing yourself as a thought leader in your niche, and ensuring that people look up to you.

Here are some ways to build your authority.

Speaking Opportunities

Every city has speaking opportunities. Even if you're in a small town, you can look for an opportunity in your town or a city close to yours, where events are going on.

A lot of summit and conference organizers are constantly looking for speakers.

Some can even be paid opportunities, however many of them are not paid at all. These are great places to get some visibility and expose your knowledge and personality to an audience.

Sometimes, it is as simple as sending them an email and a personal profile.

Have a Book in Your Name

The fastest way to position yourself as an expert is to have a book in your name.

Being a Published Author can give you several benefits.

1. It's a shortcut to credibility. You are instantly recognized as an expert.
2. It Increases your visibility dramatically. It gives you access to promotional opportunities – both locally and online, like sending out press releases, holding book signings, workshops, be invited to write guest columns at local and online publications, becoming a desirable guest for local TV and radio stations.
3. Increases your brand perception.
4. It's a great way to display your knowledge and expertise.
5. A book in your name is an opportunity to connect with your existing audience and an opportunity for them to share your insights with others. So you don't just connect with your existing audience, but you build a newer audience. It's like putting a message in a bottle and throwing it in the air to see where it takes you.

6. The book leaves a legacy of your thoughts long after you are gone.

If you want to become a published author without writing, check out this [self-publishing guide here](#).

Media Mentions

If you write interesting stories with a great angle, you'll be surprised that the media might cover you. The media is always looking for new, interesting stories, and content.

Approach the media, make connections, and share valuable information. If they cover your story, you can gain a lot of popularity.

Guest Posting

With blogs, guest posting has become quite popular. I know people who think guest posting is more effective than mentions on mainstream media.

Guest posting is writing an article on someone else's blog. A lot of blogs are looking for interesting content. If you have brilliant content, you can be a guest poster on someone else's blog. It's a great way to gain visibility.

Your Interviews on Publications

There are a lot of online publications today, and it is much easier to get your interviews published than ever before.

All you need to do is identify these outlets, and send them an email. The best option would be to write down all the interview questions and answers and email it to them.

Press Kit

A press kit is information specifically for journalists and the media. It's about positioning yourself as a person who is newsworthy.

Have your logo, your past information, your stories, a bio, and a profile in your press kit.

The importance of a press kit is that it has your story. It has information about your business or your job; it has high-resolution photographs and logos. Include press releases, media mentions, any interviews that you've given in the past, awards, or any philanthropic involvement.

Anything that makes you look like an expert, and brings out the good qualities and your past achievements should go in your press kit.

How to Handle Criticism and Bad Press?

I meet people who've tried out all my methods. They've gotten attention, people are following them, and they're having a lot of fun. And all of a sudden, they have somebody who goes out there and writes something negative about them. And when they see it, they freak out.

They're like, "Oh my god, someone has written something negative about me."

I know people who can't sleep at night because someone wrote something negative about them. The first time it happened to me, I got disturbed as well. It could happen to you, but if you're well prepared for negative criticism, you'll be able to handle it very easily.

So, let's look at typical reactions from people.

#1 Don't respond at all

Some people don't respond at all. They allow it to die. Usually, that's one-way people handle criticism.

#2 Fightback

Some people respond and fight back.

#3 Prove that you are right

There are others who try to prove that they're right.

Which one of these methods do you think works best? In my opinion, I rarely respond, and I rarely fight back. I have a process that I use when handling criticism and bad press.

I first decide if it's worth replying. Sometimes, certain criticisms are not worth a response, so during those times I don't respond at all.

I rarely reply immediately. When you reply immediately, you're either angry or emotional and there is a very high likelihood of doing something stupid.

So, resist the temptation to respond immediately.

Let things calm down, and once your emotions have fizzled out, respond in a non-threatening way.

Don't attack the person. Respond politely but assertively. If you can, hire a public relations specialist to deal with this.

Make sure your response is not harsh nor critical. You cannot attack criticism with another criticism. Instead be polite about it.

Conclusion

Building a personal brand is a long-term strategy. Committing to it for the long term is important.

The biggest investment you can make is in yourself. And that's something many of us don't think about.

I've had a lot of fun putting together this report.

Feel free to follow me in [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), or [Instagram](#).

Wish you success and happiness in life.

Your Friend,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vinil Ramdev". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'V'.



About the Author

Vinil Ramdev, entrepreneur, author, personal branding consultant, was born in Bangalore, India, attended college at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, Florida in the United States of America where he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Marketing in 2004.

Since then, Vinil has been involved in starting and growing several businesses predominantly in retail, marketing, media, publishing and on the internet.

He is also an author of four books that are sold on Amazon and distributed worldwide.

Vinil was the Managing Editor of a nationally circulated print magazine in India. He participated in NDTV's hot debate "SMEs Orphans of India," which was broadcast on NDTV Profit's Money Mantra on 8th August 2012.

He has been a guest speaker at various conferences like Franchise India Expo – the largest retail and franchise expo in India, Main Street Matters: Art of the Smart Start – a radio show on BlogTalkRadio, and has been featured on Deccan Chronicle.