

## CAREER CORNER

BY SIMA DAHL

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## Define Your Personal Brand

**W**e marketers spend our professional careers toiling on other people's brands, but do you ever think about the brand that is you?

Your personal brand is your character, your competence and your charisma, and it's the way that other people see you. So, starting now, and I mean this very instant, I want you to think of your personal brand just as you would a business brand—one that needs to be nurtured, groomed and loved. Take a minute to consider your personal marketing standpoint, and use it to your benefit.

### Be Special

Simply put, your personal brand is who you are, what you do and why you're special, not just your job title. Think about what makes you special and different from the person next to you, and use it to define yourself. If you don't know, then that's your homework assignment.

### Be an Individual

Long-gone are the days of lifetime employment. We are now constant job seekers, and personal promotion is the name of the game. Our brand recognition, to the extent that we even have personal brand champions, matters now more than ever before.

### Be Outgoing

In an age of referrals, we often find work through our personal network, and it's key to use your personal brand and memorably market yourself to those you meet. Also, follow up by making connections on one of the myriad social networks. Be sure that you use your online profile to underscore your personal brand. If your profile is weak, what does that say about you?

### Be Succinct

Consider the *22 Immutable Laws of Branding* by Al and Laura Ries, specifically Law No. 5: The Law of the Word. A brand "should strive to own a word in the mind of the consumer." This is your ultimate goal in creating your personal brand: You want to quickly and permanently be memorable. The relationship between the brand Volvo and the word "safety" illustrated this point.

### Final Thoughts

While your personal brand may never become synonymous with a single word, carefully consider the position you want to own. When you meet someone for the first time, whether it is in a casual setting or at a professional networking event, you



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have just moments to carve out a place in their mental Rolodex.

Nicely put by Jay-Z in his Lyrics Diamonds from Sierra Leone, "I'm not a businessman; I'm a business, man."

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I read "Purpose Beyond Profits" by Michael Krauss (Viewpoint, Feb. 28, 2010) and I would like to add that he missed "employees" when talking about a people-centered culture. Happy and productive employees are key to an organization's success no matter what the industry and Michael didn't include this important group of people.

Also, I wonder what Milton Friedman would have thought about the article. Would he have acknowledged that as times change, so must [a] company's philosophies and vision? Like Bill Gates' quote in the '70s, "No one will need more than 637kb of memory for a personal computer."

Thanks for listening!

Rhonda Lemke  
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