



DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING
AND ADVERTISING COLLECTION

Victoria L. Crittenden, *Editor*

Tell Me About Yourself

*Personal Branding
and Social Media
Recruiting in the
Brave New Online
World*

Stavros Papakonstantinidis



BUSINESS EXPERT PRESS

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Tell Me About Yourself: Personal Branding and Social Media Recruiting in the Brave New Online World

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First published in 2019 by
Business Expert Press, LLC
222 East 46th Street, New York, NY 10017
www.businessexpertpress.com

ISBN-13: 978-1-63157-523-5 (paperback)

ISBN-13: 978-1-63157-524-2 (e-book)

Business Expert Press Digital and Social Media Marketing
and Advertising Collection

Collection ISSN: 2333-8822 (print)

Collection ISSN: 2333-8830 (electronic)

Cover and interior design by S4Carlisle Publishing Services Private Ltd.,
Chennai, India

First edition: 2019

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America.

To Nikoleta, Konstantina² and Leonidas²

Abstract

What is branding and what makes people passionate about it? How can people develop and maintain a unique online persona? Who are the current trendsetters in personal branding? What makes social recruiting so important in today's business world? Why is it necessary to set up a personal brand strategy early on? What are some future trends in social recruiting and personal branding?

The rules of recruitment and job searching have undoubtedly changed as a new breed of concept workers enters the global workforce. Today, we are witnessing the emergence of a non-age-specific generation of professionals who are exposed to ubiquitous digital technology and seek a more impactful job, an easygoing life, and a safe future.

We could call them Gen X, Gen Y, millennials, or digital natives. The book *Tell Me About Yourself: Personal Branding and Social Media Recruiting in the Brave New Online World* introduces the term *social natives* to explain why these individuals are unique. They share bits of information at a rapid pace and are capable of processing projects parallelly. They live on their phones and are in favor of graphics over text. Social natives prefer to read on smart devices, get the news through their timelines, and function better when they join networks. Social natives started realizing the importance of personal branding as a means to stand out from the crowd and attract viewers, followers, advertisers, and, eventually, employers.

Social natives are now looking for jobs in various ways that did not exist five years ago. Emerging technologies, artificial intelligence business tools, wearable gadgets, and social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, BranchOut, Twitter Jobs, Glassdoor, Viadeo, XING, and Bayt, define today's fast-paced professional world. Social natives use blogs, podcasts, online bios, video résumés, images, selfies, recommendations, and endorsements to publicly demonstrate their skills.

Such online technologies facilitate the recruitment and selection of job candidates via the integration of intelligent software applications in the web-based talent search. The breadth and depth of information increase as HR managers and recruiters embrace new digital tools and platforms. Tomorrow's successful organizations use Big Data, business intelligence,

and People Analytics, as well as a plethora of social media screening tools to recruit and retain great talents.

This book will help you understand how social media in professional recruitment works. It will also inspire you through various success stories to take personal branding toward professional career development seriously. Finally, this book examines social nativity as a social phenomenon and presents the latest trends in career development and social recruiting.

Keywords

human resources management; online personas; personal branding; recruiting firms; social influencers; social media; social networking; social recruitment

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Preface

This section at a glance:

- Tell me about yourself
 - Opportunities in a brave new online world
 - A brief history of the Internet
 - The development of social recruiting
 - The era of personal branding
 - The significance of personal branding
 - Reasons to read this book
 - The questions this book aims to answer
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Tell Me About Yourself

It is one of the most commonly asked questions during job interviews. Recruiters, hiring managers, or business owners often kick off interviews with a simple and straightforward question. Is it though? You can start a friendly conversation with people you would like to meet or catch up with. When the “tell me about yourself” is asked during a job interview, it can make you sweat. What should you say to demonstrate that you are the perfect candidate for the job? How much of yourself should you expose to build rapport with the interviewers and get them to trust you? What do they want to hear from you?

In a question like this, the recruiter does not want to hear your life story. The interviewer wants to know how your achievements relate to the job for which you have applied. Your answer will allow you to demonstrate how much you know about the available job position and the company’s values. It will also provide you with the opportunity to highlight your skills, experience, and personality. What is more important for you? How are you going to start answering such question? Will you repeat

what they already know by reading your resume? Will you try to surprise them? Remember that the hiring manager wants to hear what makes you the best candidate for a job. And because usually hiring managers kick off the job interview by asking this question, it can help you find the right words to make a great first impression. In other words, the “tell me about yourself” question allows you to brand yourself and bravely sell it most impressively.

Brand and sell yourself? You may wonder, “Why should I brand myself?” Personal branding is to publicly answer the “tell me about yourself” question using social media. This book is about personal branding in the digital era. In Aldous Huxley’s (1932) famous dystopian novel, *The Brave New World*, Hatcher’s director and one of his assistants are showing to a group of young boys the developments in reproductive technology, hypnopedia (sleep-learning), psychological manipulation, and classical conditioning as elements that will profoundly change our society.

Of course, this book is not about Huxley’s world. This book is about our efforts to stand out in today’s professional world and meet with its demands to bravely expose ourselves on the Internet. Whether we consider it ethical to do so or not, our brave new online world expects us to function as brands that are ready to compete in a competitive and adaptive marketing landscape.

Opportunities in the Brave New Online World

The Internet has impacted the way we communicate, share information, and share and exchange messages. The Internet is not merely a new channel of communication. Instead, it is a unique environment in which people interact, work, and learn. It has affected a broad spectrum of our daily activities. The Internet is the context and not merely a tool with limitless content (Hooley 2012). The Internet has raised social implications, and it is critical for scholars to explain computer-mediated communication.

The Internet brought to people’s lives a profound change in the way they search for information and share intelligence. There are over 40,000 search queries posted on Google every second. This translates into over 3.5 billion daily searches and 1.2 trillion searches per year worldwide (Internetlivestats.com 2017). The Internet has become ubiquitous.

Personal computers or laptops are no longer the only devices that allow people to connect online. They used to be, but not anymore. Users can access the web using mobile devices as well. New technologies emerge regularly, such as the Internet of Things (IoT), which integrates online access with purchase of personal accessories (glasses, watches, jackets, etc.) and domestic appliances (fridges, closets, coffeemakers, etc.; Meola 2018). The dynamic changes due to emerging technologies in the Internet-driven social sphere or the online world are becoming increasingly visible and recognizable. How people organize their data (e.g., using cloud computing), how they ask search engines for anything, including wondering “Who they are” or “What to vote,” and the kind of other personal search queries they post have changed completely. There are more than 1 billion search queries on Google every day. Google reports that “15 percent of the searches it sees every day have never been seen before.”

In 2010, Google introduced the “autocomplete” feature. All you have to do is to write the first few letters of a word, the Google search engine completes the rest and does the search. It suggests possible words or phrases that might apply to your search based on your frequently used past search queries. This has led to autocomplete feature yielding some pretty funny results. For instance, the classic “what would happen if . . .” query is able to bring the most unexpected results such as “what would happen if the sun exploded?,” “What would happen if there was no moon?,” and so on. People ask Google to find them a job, to help them with their relationships, or to assist them with changing their lives. Also, people ask Google for advice on their personal branding.

The Internet profoundly affected almost every aspect of social life. With the use of social media, the lines between private and public life have blurred. Nowadays, it is quite common for social media-savvy users to expose their personal moments on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, or Snapchat. Their daily schedule is posted online, so their followers know where they are, what they are doing, what they like, and how their life looks like. They see no problem with it. Sometimes they do not have to post their actual experience when they can fake one. Molloy (2017) reports that a Moscow-based company specializes in renting out a grounded private jet for professional Instagram photo shoots for those social media users who wish to satisfy their vanity to get more likes from their followers.

An interesting and somewhat controversial story of personal branding is that of Dan “Blitz” Bilzerian, who is commonly known as the King of Instagram. He demonstrates an enticing and outrageous lifestyle to over 20 million Instagram followers as a playboy and professional poker player who hangs out with celebrities and top models. In Ayres’ (2017) story on *GQ Magazine*, which is titled “The truth about Dan Bilzerian,” the reporter questions Bilzerian’s true identity and origin of wealth. This might as well be another story of an Internet persona who managed to take full advantage of the existing opportunities in our brave new online world.

Do we trust the Internet for everything? The report, “Future of Truth and Misinformation Online,” reveals that Americans are confused about what will happen in the future information environment; 51 percent support the statement that the information environment will not improve, whereas 49 percent say the information environment would become more trustworthy (Anderson and Rainie 2017). People seem to trust social media as a more reliable source of information than traditional media (Ingram 2016). College students use Wikipedia and other free online sources as educational tools in their academic life. People trust crowd-sourced readers such as Yelp.com and online platforms such as Booking.com or Tripadvisor.com for reviews and peer recommendations before they complete their digital customer journey and decide (Edelman and Singer 2015).

People use the Internet for entertainment purposes as well. Online games, music streaming applications, contact-less purchases, online wallets, web torrents are all examples of online social entertainment behaviors. With the rapid proliferation of e-commerce, scholars start examining the implications of the so-called online currency, Bitcoin, especially whether or not it can contribute to the actual economy (Holmes 2018). The new online world is full of surprises and opportunities for people to stand out from the crowd and make an impact. How do companies take advantage of the new online environment?

Employer branding, CEO branding, social and mobile recruiting, millennials’ recruiting, talent acquisition and retention, and trust and transparency are among the most discussed trends and topics in business.

Glassdoor for Employers (2017) published a statistical guide for recruiters collecting several recruiting and employee engagement statistics from well-known trend watchers like Deloitte and Gallup. The findings provided in the following demonstrate what drives jobseekers and employees to apply for a job or cultivate a sense of meaning within their current job environment.

About 66 percent of millennials expect to leave their organization by 2020. Source: Deloitte, *Millennial Survey 2016*, January 2016.

- About 39 percent of women say the reputation or brand of the company is “very important” to them when considering a job move. A somewhat smaller percentage of women (32 percent) say the same about the company’s cause. For 33 percent of men, the company’s brand is “very important,” but only 22 percent feel the same about the company’s cause. Source: Gallup, *Women in America*, October 2016.
- As much as 72 percent of CEOs are concerned about the availability of key skills. Source: PwC, *19th Annual Global CEO Survey*, 2016.
- Organizations that invest in employer branding are three times more likely to make a quality hire. Source: Brandon Hall, *The True Cost of a Bad Hire*, September 2015.
- Organizations that invest in a strong candidate experience improve their quality of hires by 70 percent. Source: Brandon Hall, *The True Cost of a Bad Hire*, September 2015.
- Glassdoor users report they use an average of 7.6 job sites during their job search. Source: *Glassdoor.com Site Survey*, January 2016.
- About 10 percent of the more difficult job interview process is associated with 2.6 percent higher employee satisfaction later on. Source: *Glassdoor Economic Research*, October 2015.

(Glassdoor for Employers 2017)

A Brief History of the Internet

The rapid proliferation of the Internet in the early 1990s raised questions in the global business environment. The World Wide Web as a new communication platform was expected to enhance and facilitate considerable knowledge of humanity, businesses, cultures, and languages. The first version of the Internet was primarily a nondynamic representation of information, published by the few users who had access and the recourses to maintain a website. The dotcom bubble collapse in 2001 signified the eruption of Web 2.0 as the more interactive version with user-generated content, which was promising radical changes in the way people use the World Wide Web. A more interactive version of the network now offers unlimited access for all, facilitating the emergence of new tools and modes that have radically altered how business communications are carried out. Nevertheless, we see rigorous academic debate among those, including sociologists and academicians, who are opposed to the broader notion of the Internet as the *sine qua non* to human interaction.

Amid the sudden transformation of global social processes, the Internet has turned out to be a mixed blessing. The Internet functions as an active channel of communication, which can facilitate compassionate and empathic exchanges across cultures and languages. It signifies the birth of alternative occupational opportunities at a time when traditional organizations seem unable to recruit and retain the best minds. On the other hand, the Internet may also amplify cultural differences as to how people seek and apply for jobs. As the influence of traditional recruiting channels will be reduced or even vanish, the gap between computer literates and computer illiterates will be more evident than ever before (Manafy and Gautschi 2011).

The emergence of online Social Networking Sites (SNS) ushered in a massive shift in today's labor market. Human Resources Management (HRM) models have transformed the scope of employee–employer relationships and ushered radical changes in how people function in a range of spheres, including in interpersonal, intercultural, organizational, and mass communication contexts. Millions are logging into SNS every day, making it hard to calculate with precision the total number of users and the average time they spend on the Internet.

This book looks at how social media is shaping a new reality in (HRM) processes and the experiences of candidates involved in recruitment. Until recently, the process of seeking a job or recruiting the best minds made companies either to post their job vacancy on the corporate website or to post an expensive job advert on the newspapers and online job boards (i.e., Monster.com). Newer job-posting sites such as Indeed.com and SimplyHired.com interface with LinkedIn to perform abductive searches of significant job boards all around the globe, thereby providing users with a natural, one-stop search.

Traditional recruiting practices will likely continue to decline in global influence, as social networking websites and other forms of online HRM business process services are available. Social media already plays a major role in recruitment and job search. The social media statistics as presented below are fascinating:

- About 75 percent of male Internet users as well as 83 percent of female Internet users are on Facebook.
- According to recode, 44 percent of teenagers asked to choose one social network if “trapped on a deserted island” chose Snapchat, ahead of Instagram (24 percent) and Facebook (14 percent).
- Female Internet users are more likely to use Instagram than men, at 38 percent versus 26 percent.
- As much as 29 percent of Internet users with college degrees use Twitter, compared to 20 percent with high school degrees or less.
- About 81 percent of millennials check Twitter at least once per day.
- About 91 percent of social media users are accessing social channels via mobile devices.
- About 22 percent of the world’s total population uses Facebook.
- LinkedIn boasts more than 530 million user profiles.
- On any given day, Snapchat reaches 41 percent of 18- to 34-year-olds in the United States.
- YouTube overall and even YouTube on mobile alone reach more 18- to 34-year-olds and 18- to 49-year-olds than any cable network in the United States.

(continued)

- Facebook continues to be the most widely used social media platform, with 79 percent of American Internet users.
- Instagram received the silver medal with 32 percent of users, with Pinterest coming in a close third with 31 percent, and LinkedIn and Twitter at 29 percent and 24 percent, respectively.
- The average LinkedIn user spends 17 minutes on the site per month.
- As much as 51 percent of Instagram users access the platform daily, and 35 percent say they look at the platform several times a day.
- Almost 80 percent of time spent on social media platforms happens on mobile.
- Katy Perry has the most worldwide Twitter followers, at 94.65 million.
- Over 400 million snaps are shared on Snapchat per day, and almost 9,000 photos are shared every second.
- Just 10,000 YouTube videos have generated more than 1 billion views.
- More than half of all YouTube views are on mobile devices.
- Instagram earns \$595 million in mobile ad revenue per year, a rapidly increasing number.
- About 100 million hours of video content are watched on Facebook daily.
- As much as 88 percent of businesses with more than 100 employees use Twitter for marketing purposes.
- The user-submitted YouTube video with the most views is “Charlie bit my finger” with over 845 million views.
- Pizza is the most widely Instagrammed food, directly ahead of steak and sushi.
- Blogging continues to grow, with over 409 million people viewing more than 23.6 billion pages each month on WordPress alone.

(Lister 2018)

The Development of Social Recruiting

There are currently 467 million LinkedIn users. Of those, 106 million are actively using LinkedIn monthly, whereas 40 percent of users use LinkedIn daily, following at least one of the 1.5 million professional groups on LinkedIn (Domkundwar 2017). LinkedIn is not the only professional networking website. Listed in alphabetical order are the names of several online communities and networking sites where job searchers and recruiters meet and exchange ideas: Angellist, Bark, Bayt, Beyond, BranchOut, Data.com Connect, Doostang, EFactor, Jobcase, LocalsNetworking, Lunchmeet, Marketbase, Meetup, Opportunity, PartnerUp, Plaxo, Sumry, Twylah, VisualCV, Xing, and Zerply.

Although the numbers mentioned previously are still not matching the vast number of professional résumés posted on job sites, soon social media will outnumber anything else in the area of recruitment. The reason for SNS' rapid and constant growth is the fact that they are easier to use and, most important, free of charge. Although SNS first promised to provide people a social space to meet and chat, they have turned into a significant boon for HRM specialists (Gibbs, MacDonald, and MacKay 2015).

Social media is even described as the panacea of communication and interactivity among the members in the business world. The option by Facebook to classify our friends based on occupation and schools, as well as the various professional applications of LinkedIn, the online reviews on Glassdoor, and the growing use of Twitter job feeds, shows that competition is high and multifaceted. What started as a social trend is currently shaping the future of business performance. This transformation begins with recruiting the most talented human capital. Companies now look for highly qualified recruits, as career seekers are actively using the SNS.

Employers no longer need to use the paid services of an HRM firm for the first stage of the recruitment process. Until now, HR managers and recruiters had to review CVs mailed directly to the company's offices or posted online on a job board. Then they would have to screen the information and decide from the two- to three-page profile which candidate was to qualify for the next round of the recruiting process. With the use

of social networks, jobseekers have already uploaded online their information as well as academic and professional qualifications. Upon hearing from prospective employers, candidates may also submit their response online. Professional recommendations offer ready access for HRM or colleague review. Also, candidates who are building their online personal and professional profiles can uncover the full identity that will allow them to pursue their dream career.

Employers now look for candidates with extended networks of interest. Profiles enriched with their pictures, friends, thoughts, affiliations, and group memberships stand to perform better. A person's online profile on LinkedIn offers information in greater depth about his/her professional qualifications than a static piece of paper, and it also provides the recruiter an opportunity to assess a candidate's social profile in unguarded moments.

Even though SNS are poised to completely take over the hiring process, there are still enough number of candidates who do not have an active presence in social media. So, how can HRM address the needs of those career seekers who are not using new social networks to look for career opportunities? What are the ethical issues raised by the growing demand for people to share their personal thoughts, news, and highlights publicly? In what way does HRM tackle the growing interest of corporates to overly use social media to recruit best candidates to fill vacant positions?

It is perhaps effectively argued that continuity in the business environment remains one of the critical factors affecting the functioning of any organization. The "people factor" establishes a baseline competency criterion for the health of an entity, and social recruiting presentation is no exception. Recruitment is a two-way street. HRM professionals acknowledge that to attract and retain the most desirable candidates, excellence in organizational performance must be evidenced in marketing. Where compensation and professional benefits to employment are not availed, recruitment may fail. Communication of current market offerings in the profession is destined to be a foundation for the survival of any business in turbulent environments.

Unconventional elements in the HRM environment are now at the center of strategic planning in recruitment campaigns. Social media

marketing arrived on the scene during a period of global change in business. Universal, cost-effective solutions, afforded by access to social media-based marketing, initiated a more complex, yet vital, arena of professional identity for professionals; social media(ted) character is a quality taken for granted in recruitment relations (Gibbs, MacDonald, and MacKay 2015).

The rapid adoption of social media by the professional world in communications, marketing, and HRM developed the concept of social recruiting. As more companies look online to hire the best talent, the online users have begun to adapt themselves to the new online environment and its demands. Users are increasingly seeing themselves as brands and, thus, recognize the need to communicate publicly and digitally their skills and expertise. Hence, the era of personal branding has just begun.

The Era of Personal Branding

In traditional marketing, branding is much more than a logo and a slogan. In his blog, Dempsey (2017) writes: “a brand is a feeling and emotion, something much deeper than just the visual appeal.” Marketers work toward building and maintaining their product’s brand identity as how customers should perceive it (Labrecque, Markos, and Milne 2011). A well-established commercial brand expresses its core values, purpose, and messages to the public.

Think of brands like Nike, Red Bull, Apple, or BMW. What all those brands have in common is their strong perceived impression. In other words, it is about creating brand equity or brand premium. The moment you see a brand or a logo, for example, Nike’s swoosh logo, you start thinking about sports, energy, innovation, and reliability, depending on the brand or the logo that you see. How does this happen? This is because well-established brands have personalities. They have a sharp and bright soul. Just as commercial brands, humans can also develop a publicly perceived impression. If brands can communicate their character, so can humans.

Personal branding is a rather new term and new concept in literature. A simple comparison on Google Trends reveals that until 2010, “personal branding” was not commonly used and searched as much as the terms “self-presentation” and “self-promotion” were. Since 2010, personal

branding has been widely discussed and searched on Google, more than any other similar terms. Labrecque, Markos, and Milne (2011) argue that through branding individuals are able to capture and promote their strengths and unique characteristics.

Personal branding is a

process by which individuals and entrepreneurs differentiate themselves and stand out from a crowd by identifying and articulating their unique value proposition, whether professional or personal and then leverage it across platforms with a consistent message and image to achieve a specific goal. (Schawbel 2010, p. 6)

Let's simplify these definitions. Social media allows individuals to openly and directly communicate with each other online. Consequently, several online users are able to establish several communities of interest that offer them a chance to stand out and increase their popularity.

Just as a jobseeker would craft the perfect answer to the interview question "tell me about yourself," individuals who want to develop their online personal brand should ask themselves what they stand for and what makes them unique. As marketing experts test and cultivate their brands to look and behave like humans, individuals should do the same. They should identify their unique value proposition and find the one thing that they do exceptionally well. Whether individuals sing, dance, dress, or play video games, their primary concern should be to identify their audience and get to know them well.

Personal branding is not merely about creating and posting online a resume to promote profile visibility for organizations looking to hire. People who are into self-branding should think of themselves as brands in a highly competitive market (Barnett 2010). These personal brands should always project qualities that make them appear creative, unique, and exciting to their followers and subscribers, in other words, qualities none too easy or common to come by. Personal branding includes a representation of people's personalities through a variety of media. The pattern is clear. Keep your followers happy and entertained. This will bring you more viewers and will increase your popularity. This will

generate more leads and revenue. Of course, this is all in theory. It is not that simple in practice because not all can succeed in creating a long-lasting personal brand.

Is personal branding only for those select few who want to share their uniqueness with their online followers? Of course not. Many online users need to realize that most probably they are already involved in personal branding, even if they are not aware of it. This is due to the power of search engines such as Google, Yahoo!, and Bing. Once someone's name appears on the Internet, they become a keyword. Search engines can bring up your name if someone types it into a search engine bar. No matter what individuals aim to establish or find any kind of occupation, carefully crafting and protecting your personal brand and digital reputation has become a necessity.

The Significance of Personal Branding

Personal branding is a significant aspect of job candidates' planning for their careers (Friedman 2015). The job market nowadays is more competitive and limited than ever. Companies often outsource their operations or recruit people from a global pool of candidates via the Internet. A job candidate with a strong and competitive personal brand has fewer chances to run out of professional options. Also, personal branding on social media might either strengthen or weaken a candidate's profile depending on the kind of information that appears online.

A recent study conducted by Jobvite reveals that a growing number of companies adopt social recruiting strategies and modern recruiters engage in social screening by searching for future employees (Van Nuys 2017). In 2006 during the recruitment process, only 11 percent of employers were assessing their job applicants' digital footprint (search results and social media), but in 2017 almost 70 percent of recruiters used social media and search engines for the same reason (CareerBuilder 2017). The same study revealed that 50 percent of employers used all major search engines (Google, Yahoo!, Bing) and major SNS (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram) to assure that the job applicant has a professional online profile, and 37 percent also checked what other online users, friends, and followers are posting about the applicant. As much as 24 percent of

the surveyed employers answered that they regularly checked online for a specific candidate's profile to determine whether or not to reject his/her application.

The primary task for job candidates is to market themselves by using the power of digital tools to their advantage (Labrecque, Markos, and Milne 2011). Hence, jobseekers should become more aware of the opportunities provided by personal branding and offer anything that protects their online reputation. In today's environment, our own brand and digital reputation accompany us in anything we do. Even in social events, for example, meeting others at a party, people no longer share their personal phone numbers. All they do is to connect on social media and start checking each other's profiles.

It is no secret that companies are reviewing candidates' social media accounts and they are looking for information to either hire or reject a person based on his/her online content. Therefore, our personal brand is probably the most important asset to building and maintaining our career. Jobseekers are not helpless. If employers can screen online the jobseekers' profiles to decide whether to hire or reject them, so can jobseekers do the same. Jobseekers can decide whether they want to work for a company or not based on information available online about that company. Also, people can take advantage of personal branding to increase their popularity and impact on society. There are too many success stories of individuals who managed to build a strong personal brand online and developed their own business. This book presents some of the most recent success stories to inspire and encourage people to take their "personal brand" seriously. So, what do you think? Is a book on personal branding worth reading?

Reasons to Read This Book

Instead of stating vague reasons to read the book, the author chose to present important statistics collected by Erskine (2016) from various online sources. The statistics posted on Entrepreneur provide evidence why people should get involved in developing and maintaining their own brand.

The Power of Employees' Personal Brands

- When brand messages are shared by employees on social media, they get 561 percent more reach than the same messages shared by the brand's social media channels.
- Brand messages are reshared 24 times more frequently when posted by an employee versus the brand's social media channels.
- On average, employees have 10 times more followers than their company's social media accounts.
- Content shared by employees receives eight times more engagement than content shared by brand channels.

Personal Branding Helps Sales and Marketing

- Leads developed through employees' social media activities convert seven times more frequently than other leads.
- Sales reps who use social media as part of their sales techniques outsell 78 percent of their peers.
- As much as 92 percent of people trust recommendations from other individuals (even if they don't know them) over brands.
- Marketers, who prioritize blogging, are 13 times more likely to enjoy positive ROI.

The Power of Social Media in Recruiting

- Employees at companies that invest in personal branding initiatives are 27 percent more likely to feel optimistic about their company's future; 20 percent are more likely to stay with their company, and 40 percent are more likely to believe their company is more competitive.
- As much as 95 percent of the recruiters believe that the job market will remain or become more competitive. If you don't stand out online, your competition will.
- About 75 percent of HR departments are required to search job applicants online.
- About 85 percent of U.S. recruiters and HR professionals say that an employee's online reputation influences their hiring

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decisions at least to some extent. Nearly half say that a strong online reputation influences their decisions to a great extent.

- About 70 percent of U.S. recruiters and HR professionals have rejected candidates based on information they found online.
- Of all executive recruiters, 90 percent say they conduct online research of potential candidates.

Personal Branding for Online Reputation Management

- Reputation damage is the number one risk/concern for business executives around the world, and 88 percent of them say they are explicitly focusing on reputation risk as a key business challenge.
- Of all executives, 87 percent rate reputation risk as more important or much more important than other strategic risks their companies are facing.
- Of respondents who experienced a reputation risk event, 41 percent say the loss of revenue was the biggest impact.

Growing Your Business with Personal Branding

- Out of all business decision-makers, 84 percent start their buying process with a referral. Google is the very first place people look for a referral.
- Of all Internet users, 65 percent see online search as the most trusted source of information about people and companies.
- About 53 percent of decision-makers have eliminated a vendor from consideration based on information they did or did not find about an employee online.

Erskine (2016)

The Questions This Book Aims to Answer

It is not easy to make promises. Things are changing, and we should adapt to the new personal and professional conditions. This book aims to inspire you and make you more aware of your own brand. The following questions aim to help you develop a clearer understanding of the scope of this book.

1. What is branding?
2. What makes people passionate about branding?
3. What is personal branding?
4. How can you develop and maintain a strong personal brand?
5. Who are the current trendsetters in personal branding?
6. What makes social natives unique?
7. What should we know about social recruiting and social screening?
8. Why is it necessary to set up your personal brand strategy early on?
9. What are the future trends in social recruiting and personal branding?
10. What should organizations need to know about the brave new on-line world?

In the following chapters, this book discusses real-life stories and business practices to explain the concept of personal branding. The target audiences of the book are social media enthusiasts, college students, job-seekers, hiring managers, job recruiters, HR practitioners, digital marketing consultants, and entrepreneurs. The next section provides a brief description of each chapter to set the scene.

Setting the Scene

Chapter 1 introduces the concept of branding. It starts with a discussion on consumer brands and ends with a discussion on personal brands. It explains the evolution of branding over the years, from the typical notion about branding being merely logos, colors, and fonts to be the heart and soul of organizations. Marketing has become more emotional, and as such, this chapter discusses the four passions of branding.

Chapter 2 focuses on the importance of personal branding. This chapter includes definitions of terms and synonyms regarding personal branding. This chapter offers a historical background to how personal branding evolved with the use of technology and social media. It discusses the concept of online social entertainment and its impact on how people communicate, share information, and enjoy their time. Finally, the chapter provides the readers with suggestions about how to set up their brand and explains what makes a personal brand successful.

Chapter 3 explains the terms *social natives* and *hashtag generation*. This chapter provides a theoretical background on human behavior describing how the *digital natives* who were born and raised in the technological era have become social natives who live and breathe in a ubiquitous, connected, and continuously online world.

Chapter 4 discusses the evolution of recruitment. It emphasizes the impact of social recruiting on society and how it shapes a new reality in the brave new online world. In this chapter, we talk about the promises of a new El Dorado to jobseekers who create new jobs or seek for employment anywhere in the world. Finally, this chapter discusses the trend of gamification in recruitment.

Chapter 5 talks about you. It provides suggestions to set up your personal branding strategy. It explains why it is vital to start branding yourself early on and why you should Google yourself periodically. The chapter offers information on how to remove unwanted data from the

Internet. It also discusses many stories of people who either found or lost a job due to social media. Finally, the chapter concludes with a recap of what we should do to fortify our brand ecosystem.

Chapter 6 concludes with a forecast on personal branding and social recruiting. It discusses new trends in social recruiting and job searching. It explains the impact of Big Data predictions and People Analytics applications. The chapter highlights the effects of social media in the brave new online world and dares to ask its readers whether or not the book met its promises. Finally, the book's author provides his thoughts on a global discussion regarding a concept that is still evolving and growing.

CHAPTER 1

From Brands to Humans

This chapter at a glance:

- Why branding?
 - The evolution of branding
 - Emotional marketing
 - The four passions of branding
 - Passionate branding
-

PewDiePie

Real Name: Felix Arvid Ulf Kjellberg

Country: Sweden

Social Media: YouTube

His Story: If you like video games then chances are you've heard of PewDiePie, the leading video game commentator of all time! A former Industrial Economics student, Ulf Kjellberg began elaborating his videos back in 2010, and by 2012 he already had a fan base of 1 million subscribers. He dropped out of university and started working on a hot dog stand to fund his business. Luckily for him, he wouldn't need his degree to make a living. Felix's fan base kept growing at exponential levels. Today he has over 39 million subscribers, and his videos have been viewed over 10 billion times, making him the most subscribed YouTube Channel. He has a fortune of approximately 12 million dollars.

(James 2018)

Why Branding?

Before we start talking about social media, recruiting strategies, intelligence software applications, video resumes, personal recruiting strategies, and other new terms and concepts in business, we need to step back and talk about branding. Why branding? Branding is more than just a logo, few graphic elements, colors, and slogans. A brand is a company's soul and personality. Our name has the same qualities as a brand when we communicate it in public. Whether the brand is Nike or someone named John Smith, what matters is how we "sell" it.

The notion of branding goes back to ancient Greek and Roman times when tradespeople used symbols and signs as a means to communicate what products they had on offer (Roper and Fill 2012). The concept of branding might also have come from the earliest forms of organized farming, in which farmers would burn a mark into the skin of cattle to differentiate and establish their ownership over the animals (Roper and Fill 2012). What we can decipher from these arguments is that the concept of branding stems from two main ideas: (i) Brands are used to communicate a message through association for a target audience, and (ii) brands function as a differentiating factor.

Today, brands are commonly explained as being "a manufacturer's way of adding value and giving its products or services an individuality that sets it apart from the rest [i.e., the products and services of competitors]" (Roper and Fill 2012, p. 108). Moreover, the notion that brands add value to products and services that goes beyond their functional attributes seems to be widely acknowledged by marketing researchers and professionals today. However, whether these branding theories can be extended to include humans is still a topic of discussion among academics (Shepherd 2005).

A growing body of academic researchers have been investigating human behavior and personal branding in the online world (Chen 2013; Gandini 2016; Harris and Rae 2011; Khedher 2015; Labrecque, Markos, and Milne 2011; Lair, Sullivan, and Cheney 2005; Parmentier, Fischer, and Reuber 2013). For instance, when discussing celebrity brands, Roper and Fill (2012, p. 190) explain: "the image of the sports star no longer belongs to the club but the individual sportsperson in recognition of the fact that the individual has now also become a brand."

The concept that a person can be a brand name as well was first formally discussed by Kotler and Levy (1969). They write that “personal marketing is an endemic human activity, from the employee trying to impress his boss to the statesman trying to win the support of the public” [and] “thus, the ‘product’ can take many forms, and this is the first crucial point in the case for broadening the concept of marketing” (p. 12). The primitive notion of personal branding goes back in time as Kotler and Levy argue that there are similarities in trade practices between the modern times and the ancient times in relation to marketing goods, services, and humans.

Can a person be a “product” and, therefore, a brand? This dilemma could be both criticized and supported. From an ethical point of view, one would argue that humans should not function as products. From a practical point of view, it is in the very nature of humans to compete based on their skills and qualifications. Who is the strongest, fastest, or fittest? Who scores more goals or baskets? Who receives better grades in class? Who earns more money at work? Just as marketing teams aim to promote their products’ competitive advantages, humans do the same in any aspect of their life.

There are many issues that we need to consider in this debate. Personal branding evangelists tend to emphasize the idea of “Work with what you’ve got! . . . And make it special” (Peters 1999, cited in Shepherd 2005, p. 593). On the contrary, critics argue that in marketing, products respond to the market’s demand and adapt to customers’ needs. Once a product is deemed as no longer adhering to this fundamental marketing principle, it becomes obsolete and is removed from the market. Can we claim the same for humans?

Humans always adapted to new living conditions. If today’s fiercely competitive marketplace demands humans to stand out from the crowd and promote their expertise or uniqueness, personal branding seems to offer them an escape route. Shepherd (2005) highlights the many brand challenges that forced consumers to become more skeptical about marketing, such as brand conflicts, brand abundance, overpromising, or marketing scams. However, as Shepherd (2005) argues, we should not discard the possibility of extending and applying the marketing principles to people.

Marketing scholars contend that brands can have human characteristics since customers can more quickly generate feelings with other humans than they do with objects. Experts in marketing manage brands strategically to make the necessary associations between the product and its customers (Khedher 2015). For example, the new iPhone X had managed to generate so much anticipation and enthusiasm among its clientele that buyers chose to wait in long queues outside the Apple outlets, all night long, wanting to be the first to get hold of the new model (Gibbs 2017). What makes thousands of people anticipate the arrival of a product with such passion and loyalty?

Just like humans, a brand also has attributes such as skills, personality, and relationships (Biel 1997, cited in Fill 2005). Brand skills are the technical characteristics and functional abilities that the brand has and delivers. Brand personality refers to the brand's "fundamental traits concerning lifestyle and perceived values, such as being bland, adventurous, exciting, boring or caring" (Biel 1997, cited in Fill 2005, p. 394). Lastly, brand relationships refer to how each brand interacts with its consumers. Nowadays, we see brands chatting with customers on social media, providing health tips, career advice, safety instructions, and lifestyle tips.

It appears that there are several similarities and a healthy relationship when it comes to distinguishing between traditional and personal branding practices. Humans can be a brand, and the reverse is also true, in marketing parlance (Khedher 2015). The next section discusses the evolution of branding and how humans started adopting brand practices in the way they communicate.

The Evolution of Branding

For decades, brand building has been a mixed blessing for both companies and marketers. Branding is a mature concept that evolved over the past few years because of the rapid growth in the use of the Internet, particularly social media. Companies like Procter & Gamble have been the precursors of building strong brands by using mass media. The market today is highly competitive with new products, services, and brands that appear online. In such a turbulent marketplace, traditional brands try to protect their reputation and maintain their lead over competitors. Due to

the barrage of mass media, individuals are overwhelmed with millions of messages or advertisements; this in turn leads to products losing their identity and becoming nearly invisible in the marketplace.

Marketing is changing and has reached the point where companies can no longer market directly to the masses. The traditional way of building a brand by using mass media is obsolete and has nothing to do with the emergence of new ways of doing it today. Traditional mass media is no longer communicating to consumers' subconscious. That is why brands investigate alternative ways to build stronger and more humane brands.

This complicated and lengthy process is both a science and an art. There are no good recipes to follow, but there are feelings to develop. With the rise of digital media, alternative approaches are coming out. This section aims to explain the evolution of the concept of branding mainly to identify the new, "prototype" approaches that pioneers in marketing are putting into practice today.

The purpose of branding is to permit companies to be identified and to differentiate their products or services from others. Brands aim for recognition and recall. The Saatchi & Saatchi CEO worldwide and chairman from 1997 until 2016, Kevin Roberts, says, "the race to brand led to commodification—the erosion of distinctions, rapid imitation of innovation, higher standards of product performance and—accelerated by technology—a final transfer of power to consumers" (Manafu 2004). Indeed, it helps the customer to choose when a purchase decision is involved. Identification, differentiation, and recognition are the keywords of strong brands. As branding is turning into a complicated business concept, successful brands aim strategically to stimulate customers' real feelings.

Why are people willing to pay more to buy Christian Dior? Are Christian Dior dresses more than a regular product? A brand is a set of associations and expectations for a company's products or services; in other words, it is an implicit promise of what the buyer can expect and what meaning it has in a customer's life. As a consequence, branding is not a combination of logos, slogan, or advertising. It is an ensemble of implicit messages that cultivate a deeper level of connection with the customer. Consequently, the established brand–customer relationship will influence humans to prefer and choose a specific group of products or services over others.

Brand loyalty is what marketers have been trying to achieve for years with mass advertising. They have created an exceptional connection with the masses via TV commercials, telling stories to garner mass attention. The traditional marketing model used mass media to reach a broad audience, which has been tested successfully and widely discussed among professionals. However, this model is considered old-fashioned and, therefore, no longer satisfactory, as it makes no emotional bonds with the target group.

There are several factors involved in the branding process that can explain the limited impact of the use of traditional mass media. The clients' needs and behaviors are constantly changing, which affects how they receive messages. For instance, a person who is tired will be less likely to listen to what brands have to say on television. The competitors' strategies will also influence the way marketers build their brands. A good example is the commercial battle between Apple and Samsung. If one of these two brands stop being aggressive over each other, they will probably have to implement another strategy that seems relevant to their perceived brand image.

It is certain that the process of branding is complicated and companies cannot merely rely on mass media and traditional advertising anymore for brand building. There are too many messages, and an individual cannot absorb them all. People try to avoid them every day and install "TiVo" in their house or subscribe to Netflix and other streaming services. Consumers watch thousands of messages every day in subways, streets, TV, newspapers, buses, taxis, stadiums, public parks, shopping malls, universities, e-mails, and websites.

If branding cannot rely on mass media anymore, what strategy should marketing professionals adopt? Nowadays, customers collect information from everywhere. They do not expect to learn about a new product or service from the mass media. A Facebook friend's recommendation of a product or a good review on booking.com is a more efficient way to reach more customers.

Multinational corporations like Nike, Starbucks, or Marks & Spencer had at one time to manage an identity crisis due to customer rebellion. The closing of plants, decline in the quality of work conditions, the disrespect shown to the environment, and unfair trade practices are

issues raised commonly today. Moreover, it is a fact that customers do not understand the reason for the huge money spent on mass media and wonder why corporates should be spending all that money on mere advertisements when there are many other critical social concerns that need resolution, such as racism, discrimination, inequality in the society, and environmental pollution. So what can be an excellent strategy to communicate with modern consumers?

Emotional Branding

Branding is not only about ubiquity, visibility, and functions; it is about bonding emotionally with people in their daily life. Only when a product or a service kindles an emotional dialogue with the consumer, can this product or service qualify to be a brand. (Gobe 2010)

Emotional marketing has become a buzzword in business. As customers get more and more critical and suspicious, companies have to behave like humans. For years, companies have focused on profit, economies of scale, and mass media advertising to reach a broad audience, but along the way forgot to care about what keeps them in business—their customers. Emotional marketing treats customers as human beings and involves emotions and feelings in the brand–customer relationship. Nowadays, brands try to listen and discuss with consumers. For example, Procter & Gamble abandoned the “better, cleaner, sharper” advertising model of their line of products to go with the model of “proud sponsors of moms” that salutes all the mothers for all the sacrifices they made to see their kids succeed in life.

The president of Hallmark Loyalty, Scott Robinette, writes that “emotionally loyal customers relate to the brand as they might to other human beings—feelings of affection, a common history, possibly a sense of trust and two-way” (Robinette et al. 2000, p. 2). Creating emotional connections or sharing familiar stories is the new way of thinking. Companies now understand this process and focus on their brand identity, the living experience, and the emotional connection with people.

An interesting point of view comes from Kevin Roberts (2006) and his concept of Lovemarks. In his book *Lovemarks—The Future Beyond*

Brands he explains the simple evolution of brands to “Lovemarks”—from simple products to trademarks and then brands. Now that people adore products and become loyal to them, brands become Lovemarks that embrace emotions and talk straight to people’s hearts. The iPhone, Samsung Galaxy, Starbucks, and The Body Shop are some examples of brands that turned into Lovemarks. Roberts makes a point that “Lovemarks are created and owned by the people who love them.” With Lovemarks the process is entirely different than with brands. A stronger tie is created to replace the information of what a product can offer to consumers. Lovemarks create stories and experiences that their customers are willing to share on social media for free. Marketing is not a narrative anymore but a passionate love story.

The Four Passions of Branding Innovation

We have to do it differently. There are more possibilities, many choices, and we have to hit the audience quicker and in the heart. (Roberts 2006, p. 12)

Branding innovation today can be summed up by four types of passion:

- **Passion for Values**
- **Passion for Ideas**
- **Passion for Life**
- **Passion for People**

Passion for Values

Mass advertising can help build brands, but authenticity is what makes them last. If people believe they share values with a company, they will stay loyal to a brand. (Schultz and Yang 1999, p. 23)

Companies tend to forget their values or at least how to publicly communicate them. However, identifying values and building a corporate culture is now a primordial asset. For customers, a great company is a

company that cares! As a consequence, to create an emotional connection and healthy relationship, customers and employees have to identify themselves with the corporate values.

Companies need to have a clear identity and so have identifiable values. Those values help each group to differentiate and establish a credible, reliable, and trustworthy long-term relationship with its customers. Modern consumers seek respect, passion, honesty, responsibility, and creativity. Today's message is: "Be respectful, passionate, responsible, and innovative, and I will give you my trust and my loyalty." In 2018, Nike decided to feature Colin Kaepernick, the San Francisco 49ers quarterback, in the thirtieth-anniversary "Just Do It" campaign. Colin Kaepernick has been banned from NFL due to his decision to kneel during the national anthem at the start of an American football game, as a form of protest against injustice and police brutality in America. This decision resulted in a storm of discussions in America, with consumers either praising Nike for standing by Kaepernick or burning their Nike shoes in public.

Brands like The Body Shop have a clear identity and positioning. It is easy for the customer to create a connection with that brand and be able to identify themselves with it. Anita Roddick, Founder of The Body Shop, had a clear understanding of what values could generate. From one outlet in Brighton, UK, in 1976, she established a global brand with 1900 stores in almost 50 countries. Roddick's philosophy of living in a better world is reflected by the values of her company and products. The Body Shop highly promotes corporate social responsibility and environmental protection policies. The brand is supporting community trade, refusing to practice animal testing, activating self-esteem, defending human rights, and protecting the planet. All these values are creating the "aura" of The Body Shop brand.

Passion for Ideas

Seth Godin (2009), author of *Purple Cow: Transform Your Business by Being Remarkable*, argues the more choices we have, the more confused we, the customers, become. As there is such abundance of product offerings in the market, the customer journey becomes an odyssey. Should they go online or visit a brick-and-mortar store? Should they wait until the new product hits the market or should they buy it immediately?

Awareness is not a priority anymore, but big ideas and concepts are. Seth Godin uses the term “Purple Cow” as a metaphor for a “Remarkable” product. It is the passion for ideas. People have to be fascinated by innovative products and services. Companies have to reinvest in building something new and outstanding to be notable on the market. In this case, the remarkable product will have to be targeted at a specific niche market and not directed at masses to be successful.

Kevin Roberts (2006) argues never to give customers what they want but to give them what they never dreamed possible. Word of Mouth marketing results to five times more sales than a paid media impression. Also, studies have shown that consumers are 90 percent more likely to select a brand recommended by a friend (Erskine 2016). Godin calls it “the idea virus.” If the product is noteworthy, a viral communication will take place by itself. Customers will not only buy the product, they will also share it on social media. They will make selfies and brag about it. There are millions of YouTube videos showing users unboxing the new iPhone or a new toy. People love success stories, and they are thrilled when they become part of them.

Good ideas can come from anyone. The new mobile application stores (mainly App Store and Google Play Store) provide the platform where ideas flourish. Entrepreneurs, web developers, and ordinary businesspeople are all engaged in finding the new design that people will love. Already there are many examples of such applications that received global acceptance, such as WhatsApp, Viber, Uber, Instagram, Angry Birds, Spotify, and Google Maps.

Passion for Life

There is nothing to it. You only have to hit the right note at the right time, and the instrument plays itself. (Johann Sebastian Bach, as quoted by Erskine (2005, p. 75))

A new marketing approach is to let customers and employees “live the brand.” Social media allowed people to talk freely about their experiences with products. Nowadays, customers have countless options such as blog posts, customer reviews, thumbs-up and thumbs-down, the “like” button, and emoji to show their support or rejection of brands.

Brands sponsor and produce live events, games, and competitions to strengthen the emotional connections with their audiences. These “living media” allowed brands to be more innovative and remarkable in their interactions with the audience. Red Bull is a pioneering brand in such marketing approaches that satisfy the “wings” brand concept. Red Bull either produces or sponsors remarkable events in various fields, such as in arts and music, with the Red Bull Flying Bach, the High Culture meets Urban Art, the Red Bull Music Festivals, and so on. Also, Red Bull is highly active in sports by organizing and supporting events such as the B-Boys show (motorbikes), the Formula 1 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, the Red Bull Storm Chase (windsurf), the Dakar Rally, and hundreds of sponsored activities all over the world.

Advertising was essential, but now the integration of media, communication, and marketing is vital. The increasing media costs left space for alternative media vehicles that entertain, nurture, educate, and sensitize customers. At its best, public relations is a strategic marketing and branding tool to accomplish a stated business objective.

Passion for People

Employees want to love the company they work for, and if they do—big surprise—they do better work. All of a sudden, the brand is about more than just marketing. Passion for people is the last point and maybe the most important one. Branding is not only about external communication. Indeed, internal branding is essential and functions as an asset to building a brand image. Branding is the soul of the company, and the employees are the first to live the brand. It is more than necessary to align the corporate culture with the brand’s values. Internal communications and branding today create strong bonds between the company and its people.

Nowadays, employees are the brand’s real “ambassadors.” They are the face and personality of each brand. After all, the employees are standing on the frontline when facing the customers. Successful brands have quickly realized that the first customers of each product are its employees. The happier the employees are, the best the brand will be communicated and served.

Employees are the ones who can emotionally connect with customers. Nevertheless, companies often overlook their most critical audience—their employees. Employees are without doubt an asset that companies have to involve in the branding process. Engaging employees will convert them into advocates for the brand identity.

How can companies motivate employees to support the brand? In a *Harvard Business Review* online article titled “Selling the Brand Inside,” Mitchell (2002) argues on the necessity to inform employees about the brand’s goals and actions. He writes,

Why is internal marketing so important? First, because it is the best way to help employees make a powerful emotional connection to the products and services you sell. Without that connection, employees are likely to undermine the expectations set by your advertising.

Employees do not always understand what the company promises to the public. Human resource departments plan initiatives such as intranet discussions, internal competitions, social invitations, newsletters, and digital signage, among others. Such internal communication initiatives aim to strengthen the values, mission, general strategy, and the vision of the brand to employees.

Employees have to be brand ambassadors from the bottom-up to top-down. The entire organization has to engage in internal branding efforts to support the frontline employees. If there is no coordination and alignment between what the brand entails and how the employees behave, the audience will receive mixed messages. Such a lack of clear communication will lead to failures in branding and marketing.

For a study at Arizona State University on “brand confluence,” researchers hired actors to interact with customers pretending to be salespeople (Conner 2014). Some of the actors were instructed to behave in a way that was highly aligned with the attributes of the brand they were selling, and some others did the opposite, by acting misaligned. The study showed that the customers who interacted with the highly aligned employees with the brand’s attributes rated the brand as desirable, trustworthy, and valuable. On the contrary, customers did not seem to make a

clear distinction between the brand and its disengaged employees. Therefore, the customers commented negatively on the brand overall, only because of a bad experience at the point of sale.

Because employees are directly in contact with the customers, they have a lot of influence on the brand image. That is why a strategic plan has to be implemented by companies to build a robust internal communication that would positively affect their public perception. Employees have to know and represent the brand values. Also, employees have to understand and feel part of the strategy that drives the general business. In other words, the primary objective of internal communication experts is to motivate employees to live the brand.

How can companies achieve it? Primarily, storytelling helps the company spread the message faster and easier. Second, simulating involves the training of people so that they can practice and boost their confidence before contacting customers. Third, selecting engages attentive recruitment from the HR division. The company must attract the best talents and the ones that are sharing universal values. Finally, surveying is saving money on the external communication, to study employee behaviors and receive constructive feedback.

In other words, active internal communication involves recruiting, interviewing, selecting, training, and increasing employees' career prospects. Rewarding and recognizing good work and leadership will help people to enhance motivation and to develop their sense of teamwork. If all these conditions apply, employees are living the brand, and ideally, they become the brand.

The key to managing the employee dimension of each brand is the ability to deliver to employees the following principles. Employees need a challenging job, a cause to believe in, a continuous learning environment, a fascinating career plan, personal involvement of the work tasks, a sense of ownership and accountability in the business, and positive recognition of excellence. In this way, employees will develop the internal drive and motivation to work for a company that cares about them. As a consequence, they will care about the customers and will treat them with respect.

Starbucks is a brand that quickly invested in the human factor and implemented the model that shows that great people, excellent work

environment, and satisfied clients make good money and happy shareholders. Starbucks CEO, Howard Schulz, keeps repeating the brand's model in interviews and presentations. Schultz considers his company's employees as "brand ambassadors." The company uses the term "partners" to highlight their importance in delivering the Starbucks brand values. As the Starbucks CEO highlights, the brand was built "first on people, not on consumers; this is the opposite approach from that of the crackers-and-cereal companies" (Argenti 2007, p. 90). The Starbucks CEO recognizes that the most expensive advertising campaign will never erase the mistake of one coffee barista. Starbucks is an excellent example of a brand that managed to build a reputation from the heart and the strength of human spirit.

Passionate Branding

Branding has now a lot more choices to reach customers in various exciting ways with the four passions of branding innovation, as discussed in this chapter. Branding innovation needs to have a passion for values, ideas, life, and people. Passionate CEOs need passionate managers who will coach passionate employees. Today's marketing landscape requires creative ideas, feelings, exciting moments, and people who are willing to share the story and become the brand.

Consumers want to be a part of their favorite brand's story. They get emotionally attached to products and services. It looks like the time of the small and local grocery shop in the corner is gone. Nevertheless, customers want to bring back that kind of relationship. It is a love story. They want to love and be loved. Through a variety of success stories in global branding, the first chapter set the scene for the rest. Branding is everywhere, and that includes humans too. The next chapter builds a bridge between brands and humans to strengthen the book's argument that personal branding is a serious business.

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BUSINESS EXPERT PRESS

Tell Me About Yourself

*Personal Branding and Social Media
Recruiting in the Brave New Online World*

Stavros Papakonstantinidis

What is branding and what makes people passionate about it? How can people develop and maintain a unique online persona? Who are the current trendsetters in personal branding? What makes social recruiting so important in today's business world? Why is it necessary to set up a personal brand strategy early on? What are the future trends in social recruiting and personal branding?

The rules of recruitment and job searching have undoubtedly changed with the entry of a new breed of concept workers into the global workforce. We are witnessing the emergence of a non-age-specific generation of professionals who are exposed to ubiquitous digital technology and seek a more impactful job, an easy-going life, and a safe future. Social natives are looking for jobs following strategies that did not exist five years ago. Artificial intelligence, advanced software, wearable gadgets, and social media define today's fast-paced professional world.

Social natives use blogs, podcasts, online bios, video résumés, images, selfies, recommendations, and endorsements to demonstrate their skills publicly. In comparison, global organizations take advantage of big data, business intelligence, and people analytics, as well as a plethora of social media screening tools to recruit and retain great talent. This book will help you understand how social media recruitment works and encourages you to take personal branding toward professional career development seriously.

Stavros Papakonstantinidis is an assistant professor of strategic communications and a certified professional for online training. He has been assigned to be Cedefop's delegate for EU-related research projects on the labor market as Greece's Individual Country Expert. He received his doctorate in social sciences from the University of Leicester, his MSc in strategic communications from Ithaca College, and his BA in communication and mass media from State University of New York (SUNY) at New Paltz. He has 15 years' experience working in hospitality marketing, public relations, and organizational communication.

DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND ADVERTISING COLLECTION

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ISBN: 978-1-63157-523-5



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