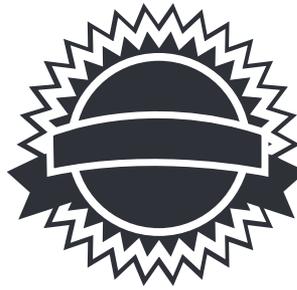


# Top 10 Personal Branding Tips



## 1. BE AUTHENTIC.

Who are you and what do you want? What have you accomplished so far? What are you passionate about? What are your goals? Ask friends or relatives to describe your best qualities and greatest achievements or take a self-assessment test online or through your college career center.

## 2. LEARN HOW TO INTRODUCE YOURSELF.

Once you know who you are, the next step is being able to communicate that to others. "Tell me about yourself" is a much harder assignment than it seems, especially in professional situations. Learn how to concisely, confidently say your name, your recent history and your goals, then practice, practice, practice until you're comfortable telling your own story.

## 3. SHOW YOUR CONFIDENCE.

While it's never a good idea to project arrogance, many students err on the side of self-deprecation. Even if you feel inexperienced or awkward in professional situations, never make fun of yourself or put yourself down. If you project confidence and comfort with yourself, others will be comfortable with you.

## 4. DEVELOP THE TOOLS OF THE TRADE.

Just as a company or product needs marketing materials, you need various items to "market" yourself to recruiters, networking contacts, grad school admissions committees and others. These materials include your resume, cover letters, email address, voicemail message, online profiles and website or blog. Every representation helps to reinforce the brand you want to present, so be professional and consistent across each medium.

## 5. SHOW YOUR CARDS.

Business cards are a great way to show your professionalism and desire to keep in touch with the people you meet, and they are increasingly popular among career-minded students. Don't worry if you don't have a title or company; just print simple, professional-looking cards with your name, phone number and email address and, if you'd like, your college and major. VistaPrint is a good resource for free or inexpensive business cards.

## 6. DRESS FOR SUCCESS.

Make sure your personal appearance matches the image you want to project. Find out what kind of clothes are appropriate for your desired industry and invest in the best you can reasonably afford. When in doubt, err on the side of formality.

## 7. BUILD A PROFESSIONAL ONLINE IMAGE.

Everyone is Googling everyone else these days, so be vigilant about your online identity. Even if your social network settings are tight, take down any photos of partying, drinking or "unprofessional" behavior just in case. Then, enhance your brand online by creating a strong profile and becoming active on LinkedIn, the professional social network.

## 8. TAKE A WRITING CLASS.

Guess why the "I Judge You When You Use Poor Grammar" group on Facebook has over 400,000 members? Even in the days of IM, texting and Twitter, writing and speaking skills still matter. Use proper grammar, capitalization and spelling in all professional communications (that means no LOLs, BRBs or ROTFLs!).

## 9. ASK FOR FEEDBACK.

Find a professional you trust—a friend, relative, professor, etc.—who will be candid with you and ask this person to tell you if there are any areas where you're getting in your own way. For instance, do you say "like" or "you know" too much? Do you come across as hyper, entitled or uninformed? If necessary, take a class or get some coaching in any area where you could use some polish.

## 10. REASSESS YOUR PERSONAL BRAND REGULARLY.

Your experience, ideas and ambitions are going to evolve as your career develops, so make sure your personal brand is keeping up. Just as you should regularly update your resume, remember to regularly revisit your self-introduction, wardrobe, online profiles and other elements of your personal brand every few months. Be flexible.

*Use by permission of PWC.*