



**YOUR PERSONAL BRAND**

**TELL PEOPLE WHAT YOU STAND FOR, WILL  
STAND FOR AND WHAT SETS YOU APART.**

PERSONAL BRAND WORKBOOK  
MORE THAN A RESUMÉ

JANUARY 2015

## STAND OUT IN YOUR JOB SEARCH

In today's job market, as a graduating college senior launching a career, a junior looking for an internship, or even an experienced job-seeker, it's tough to stand out. A strong GPA and lots of extracurricular activities won't guarantee you'll land the job you want, or that you'll even land the interview. There are many qualified candidates out there. You need to stand out. As a career-launch coach I know this: The secret to standing out is to impress hiring managers and recruiters with the unique you—in person, on paper, and online. You need to create career marketing tools that will make the authentic you come through. It all starts with building your personal brand.

### WHAT IS A BRAND? WHAT IS A PERSONAL BRAND?

Your college/university is a brand. Do you search on Google instead of Bing? Drink Bud Lite not Miller Lite? Prefer to shop REI rather than at Sports Authority? Chose an iPhone 6 over a Samsung 5? If so, you are buying brands. What is a brand?

***A brand is more than a logo, tagline or slogan. It is the meaning a product, service, business or organization creates in the marketplace to differentiate itself from others.***

Got it. But, what does the term personal brand mean? What it means and what it means to both you and potential employers is vague. That's because it's become a job search buzzword. It's trendy to say you have a personal brand. It sounds important, but it's an ambiguous term and therefore not helpful. I don't like the term but, I also know it's not going away anytime soon. In this workbook, I'll provide you with a definition to the term, and then guide you through defining your personal brand in ways that will help you in your job search.

### TELL PEOPLE WHAT YOU STAND FOR, WILL STAND FOR AND WHAT SETS YOU APART.

Here's a definition that resonates with me.

***It's your reputation. It's about bringing who you are to what you do and how you do it. It's about making your mark by being yourself—your best self. Think of your personal brand as your unique promise of value. It's what you're known for and how people experience you.***

- Your personal brand represents what you stand for and sets you apart. Not what you wish to be known for.
- Your personal brand is expressed through your education, career and job accomplishments (not tasks,) skills—hard and interpersonal skills, and how you present yourself.
- Your personal brand is represented by your resumé, LinkedIn Profile and other social media, in your networking efforts, interviews and correspondence with potential employers, and of course daily in the work you do.

### YOUR PERSONAL BRAND IS YOUR VALUE.

Value means to make a judgment or have an opinion of what something is worth, its usefulness or its benefit. That's exactly what interviewers are assessing during an interview. They are making a judgment about what you are worth to the job and to the company.

Value also means a quality that gives something special worth.

- What are your unique strengths, skills, and attributes?
- What are you known for? What do you want to be known for?
- What will make you stand out in the eyes of potential employers?

When you are clear and authentic about your value, your personal brand will come through as genuine and deserving of an interview by employers because they will be clear about who you are and what you offer.

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### MY PERSONAL BRAND

Jane Horowitz has championed college students in their job searches from colleges and universities across the country, and with majors from engineering to fine arts, from computer design to banking. Jane has made a measurable and lasting difference in college students' lives.

AN EXERCISE TO GET YOU THINKING.

Do you doubt the effect branding has on decision-making?

Write down the brands you buy frequently or are loyal to and why you choose them. Think about what these qualities say about your values. Are you an Apple products loyalist or PC and android person? Is your car domestic or foreign? What does that say about you? That's the power of branding.

Brand

Brand qualities I identify with:

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What this says about me:

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Brand

Brand qualities I identify with:

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What this says about me:

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Brand

Brand qualities I identify with:

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What this says about me:

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## YOUR PERSONAL BRAND DISCOVERY

### WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

Looking back, uncertainty about the value I brought to the marketplace manifested like many of you, at the beginning of my career, and also when I was not aligned with an [organization's culture](#). To move forward, I needed answers to:

- What are my marketable skills? What is my core area of expertise? (Companies are always looking to hire people who have a core area of expertise.)
- What do I stand for? What sets me apart?
- What is my reputation?

I did two things to help me figure out my personal brand. These exercises can work for you as well.

First, and this is how I start with clients, I took a personality test specifically Myers-Briggs® Type Indicator. Are you a detail-oriented or a big-picture visionary? Are you a planner or are you spontaneous? These answers matter to your brand and give you an indication of the work style and environment that will best suit your brand. Check with your school's career services center. Many offer personality type assessment testing at no cost.

The next thing was hold a focus group about me. I've sat through focus groups hundreds of times and understood the insight groups can generate. I invited colleagues, a few friends and asked one to moderate the discussion. I listened intently to hear what others saw as my strengths and weaknesses.

The goal of a focus group about you is to identify qualities you may not have recognized in yourself. It's also important to listen to what they don't say about you. You might find a skill you thought was part of your brand may not be.

### CONDUCT A SURVEY

If you can't conduct a focus group, send a survey to friends, family, professors, former bosses. A pattern will emerge. Sample survey questions.

- What three words do you use to describe me?
- When you think of me, what comes to mind?
- What do you think are my strengths? What are my weaknesses?

Find and showcase your strengths so you can stand out from the crowd. By tapping into your unique skills and talents, you will craft an accomplished-based and personality-rich resumé and stay top of mind to hiring managers and recruiters.

In addition to the survey, conduct a self-assessment. Below are some of the questions I ask clients to answer about themselves to help understand what they stand for and what sets them apart.

### ASSESS YOUR STRENGTHS

Think of your strengths in three skill areas:

**Knowledge-Based Skills:** Acquired from education and experience e.g., computer skills, languages, degrees, training and technical ability.

**Transferable Skills:** Your portable skills that you take from job to job e.g., communication skills, analytical problem-solving and planning skills.

**Interpersonal Skills:** Your unique qualities e.g., dependable, flexible, friendly, expressive, and collaborative.

- What are the strongest beliefs you have about yourself?
- What have you achieved so far? What are the greatest accomplishments of your life to date?
- When in your life have you felt most creative?
- About what have you taken the strongest stand?
- Describe a memorable moment – something that had an impact on you.
- What do you really freaking like to do?
- What are you really really good at?
- What activities do you find boring?
- Where have you had success? What are you doing? What tasks are you performing?
- What do you spend your time on?
- When people talk about you or give you praise, what do they say?
- What do you talk about?
- What do people you work with and are friend with value most about you?
- What activities draw you in so entirely that you lose track of time?
- Look back to a high point that occurred over the past 18 months. What are you doing? What is the nature of the impact you are having on yourself and others?

## WRITE YOUR TOP STRENGTHS

Write your top five strengths on the spaces below. For example, you might use words like “analytical,” “curious” or “make the complex simple.” With each identified strength, include an example using the P.A.R. approach—what was the problem you needed to solve, what action did you take and what was the result—to demonstrate that strength. These examples are helpful when preparing for behavioral interviews.

1:

Problem:

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Action:

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Result:

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2:

Problem:

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Action:

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Result:

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3:

Problem:

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Action:

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Result:

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4:

Problem:

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Action:

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Result:

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5:

Problem:

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Action:

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Result:

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## OWN UP TO YOUR WEAKNESSES

Everyone has weaknesses. I eschew the word because it feels so negative and believe we should all operate from our strengths. Let's assume when I say weakness I mean the things you are not naturally as good at or simply things that don't interest you, or areas where you haven't focused your energies.

Weaknesses can be a sign of:

1. Lack of interest: It's just not your thing.
2. Lack of education or training: You can develop the skill.

It is really important to know both your strengths and weaknesses. That way you can say "yes" to those things that utilize your greatest strengths, and you can say "no" to activities that aren't going to engage you or give you meaning and purpose.

These questions will help you identify your weaknesses.

1. What are the weaknesses I am aware of?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. When working on a team, what roles do I avoid that may be important to my goals?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. When faced with an overwhelming obstacle, what's most likely to cause me to give up?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What was the least successful project I have ever tackled and what tripped me up?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What do I avoid doing until the last minute?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. When I've received feedback, what do people tell me I need to do more or less of?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

As you did to identify your strengths, ask people you know to share what they see as your weaker side. Often others see perspectives we don't see in ourselves.

### MY WEAKNESSES

- Did anyone identify a weakness that you weren't already aware of? List them here:

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- Did you discover that others saw strengths in you that you thought were weaknesses? List them here:

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Look at the weaknesses that you and others identified. Which weaknesses are not essential to your career goals? These weaknesses are not a great place to focus your attention.

Which weaknesses might hold you back from getting where you need to go? This is where you'll want to focus your energy.

Go deeper and identify three weaknesses you want to overcome because they may hinder your ability to achieve your goals.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## VALUES ARE YOUR COMPASS

What makes you tick? A good way to figure this out is to look at your values—your personal compass. Values give direction to the choices you make and the way you behave.

When you are able to pursue a career, job, activities and interests that are in line with your strengths and values and what's important to you, you have a great opportunity to achieve your goals.

Your values can point your decision-making in the right direction so you can spend your time in the best-fit areas for you. It's powerful when you align who you are with what you do and how you do it; spending your time on pursuits that have meaning to you.



Values can be hard to define until someone or something violates them. Think about some of the most memorable conflicts you've had in your life. Examine them closely for what really bugged you. What crossed the line? What value did that violate? Chances are, if you remember the conflict, it's because it touched on one of your key values.

For example:

You said something to your good friend in strictest confidence, only to find that your friend shared what you said with someone else. You feel completely betrayed and will no longer trust your good friend. Your values of trustworthiness and loyalty were violated, and you will operate "on guard" from now on.

### IDENTIFY YOUR TOP VALUES

Go through the following short list of career/work-related values. Eliminate words that don't resonate with you and circle the values that are important to you. If you have a value that's not on the list, add it.

Then select your top five, and write them down.

Acceptance ▪ Accessibility ▪ Accomplishment ▪ Accountability  
Accuracy ▪ Adventure ▪ Affection ▪ Affluence ▪ Altruism  
Ambition ▪ Assertiveness ▪ Balance ▪ Bravery ▪ Calmness  
Celebrity ▪ Challenge ▪ Charity ▪ Competitive ▪ Collaboration  
Curiosity ▪ Dependability ▪ Determination ▪ Empathy  
Enthusiasm ▪ Excellence ▪ Expertise ▪ Fairness ▪ Family  
Flexibility ▪ Generosity ▪ Growth ▪ Humor ▪ Imagination  
Impact ▪ Independence ▪ Intelligence ▪ Justice ▪ Kindness  
Knowledge ▪ Leadership ▪ Learning ▪ Loyalty ▪ Mindfulness  
Openness ▪ Optimism ▪ Passion ▪ Perfection ▪ Power  
Prosperity ▪ Punctuality ▪ Recognition ▪ Reliability  
Resourcefulness ▪ Respect ▪ Responsible ▪ Risk-taking  
Security ▪ Spontaneity ▪ Stability ▪ Strength ▪ Sympathetic  
Teamwork ▪ Understanding ▪ Vision ▪ Wealth ▪ Winning

### DEFINE YOUR VALUES BY WHAT THEY MEAN TO YOU.

It's important to be clear about the meaning behind the values you chose because people can have different interpretations of the same word. For example, to one person, family may mean having time to spend with your family; to another family means a sense of community among your work colleagues.

Value:

What it means to me:

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What do these values look like for you in your career? In the workplace?

## BUILD YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

You now have enough information to start articulating your personal brand.

**Skills/Strengths:** Which of the strengths you identified would you like to showcase to prospective employers?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Values:** What values are at the top of your list?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Your brand statement showcases your strengths and values.

Below are two suggested formulas you can use to write your personal branding statement.

***the value you create + who you are creating it for + the expected outcome***

***the value you provide + how you do it uniquely + whom you do it for***

Example: For a client who had an internship and was ready to launch his cybersecurity career, we wrote:

*"I use my technology and problem-solving skills, and ability to make the things that are complex easy to understand to improve work processes that save my colleagues time and the company money."*

What a great answer to the one question you know you will get on an interview...tell me about yourself.

**Don't rush through the next two steps. It takes a lot of thought and time to get this right.**

## WRITE YOUR PERSONAL BRANDING STATEMENT




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## WRITE YOUR RESUMÉ SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Your personal statement is the launching off point for your resumé summary of qualifications or opening paragraph (resumé objectives are passé) and LinkedIn Profile summary statement.

For his resumé, this client's personal branding statement became...

**COMPUTER FORENSIC AND DIGITAL INVESTIGATOR**  
EXPERIENCED IN INVESTIGATIVE TECHNIQUES AND A STRONG  
TECHNICAL SKILLS BACKGROUND

Curious and resourceful with the patience to obtain, organize, simplify, solve problems, and then report information. Remain open-minded considering all possibilities, with ability to see the big picture and the patterns and implications of actions. Depended upon and trusted by employers, co-workers and team members.




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## MARKET YOUR BRAND

You just completed the hardest part of building your brand. You assessed and examined some big questions around your strengths, skills and values. You asked others for feedback because your brand is held in the minds of those around you. So what do you do with all of this valuable information?

You market yourself. You create career marketing tools that reflect the essence of who you are, not just what you've done. Think about the career and job you are pursuing to create a resumé and the appropriate marketing materials.

- Engineering majors, create a one-page fact sheet that includes your bio and mini-case studies about the projects you've worked on.
- In a creative field, produce a sample reel or video and a website.
- Going into teaching, create a photo montage of you interacting with students.
- Communications and marketing majors, develop a portfolio to showcase your work.

### IT TAKES 30 SECONDS TO FORM A FIRST IMPRESSION.

The following is a true story.

Riding in an elevator I couldn't help but overhear a conversation between two young men discussing a job applicant. Both appeared to be in their late twenties.

General Manager: "He had a perfect resumé. He showed up in jeans and flip flops."



Employee pointing to his polo-like shirt: "I'm not dressed any better."

General Manager: "You already have the job. Too bad, he was great on paper." He then made a gesture with his hands that suggested he was done with this applicant.

I had to ask.

The young men worked for Lakeshore Athlete Club, a fitness club in Chicago. The club requires its employees to wear a uniform — black warm up pants, red logoed polo-like shirt and athletic shoes. Appropriate for the company and job. The general manager said this particular job candidate's resumé stood out among the hundred or so

received because of where he received his certification. Both men believed based on this applicant's work experience he was mature and reliable. The general manager said just by his appearance he knew the applicant didn't take the interview seriously.

Was the general manager right to dismiss the candidate? I don't know the answer; I didn't see the applicant and I wasn't in the room. But, here's what I do know. Your appearance is a visual representation of your personal brand.

### SOCIAL MEDIA FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

After reading a resumé and determining interest, the hiring managers or recruiter goes to LinkedIn. On LinkedIn, your personal brand is represented by having a complete profile that includes:

- A current professional-looking photo. Your photo is the strongest visual representation of your brand.
- Active participation in groups; engaging people in your career field.
- Companies you are following.
- Contacts.

It's also likely the hiring manager or recruiter will do a Google search to uncover what they can about you. If you have a Twitter or other social media accounts, update the profiles to include your personal branding messaging. Personal branding demands consistency in how you present yourself.

As a brand you increase your value to others, but only if you build your brand strategically so that others are able to see that value.



**DEFINE YOUR PERSONAL BRAND TO  
CHOOSE THE BEST-FIT  
CAREER AND EMPLOYER**

## ENGAGEMENT FUELS BEHAVIOR

You've probably watched Mike Rowe's TV show, "Dirty Jobs." Viewing the show you might think it's about the awful, stinky jobs no one wants. It's not. Instead it challenges the idea of why certain jobs—clean jobs, are seen as successful ones, and dirty jobs—well, not so much. What I love about the series is that Rowe is showing what it means to be passionate in your work, how teamwork actually works and the real definition of determination.

I purposely wrote, "...passionate in your work," because here's what Rowe says which I support wholeheartedly.

**"You don't follow your passion. You always bring it with you, but you never follow it."**

Most of your life you've been given advice from well-intentioned people to find your passion. It's what you've been taught to pursue to find success. What I've learned is "what is your passion" is not the question you should be asking yourself. Instead, ask: Are you engaged in what you are doing? Are you fulfilled? Are you learning? To be engaged means you are committed and feel connected to your school or to your job.

You deserve to work at a career and in a job you find rewarding. Where you are engaged with the work you are doing, developing new skills, with opportunities for advancement, and you are well-compensated.

The important assessment work you've done so far helped you understand who you are, what you value most, what you are good and not good at. Now, let's identify what your needs (must haves) and wants (desire/future-thinking) are from a career and job.

## IDENTIFY THE CAREER AND JOBS THAT WILL ENGAGE YOU

### What energizers you and what you find rewarding?

- What would I do if money weren't an issue?
- What are my favorite activities?
- What type of people am I drawn to?
- When am I most energized? What am I doing?
- What has added meaning to my life and gave me a sense of fulfillment?

### What are my needs, wants and don't wants?

- What kind of life do I want to create? What does that look like?
- What does the work environment look like – do I have an office, a cubicle, or work from home? How am I dressed? Do I walk or drive to work?
- Do I find working under pressure too stressful? Or, is a faced-paced work environment better for me?
- What kind of boss do I work best with? Who do I want to be around for 8+ hours a day?
- Do I need recognition and awards to be motivated?

**Look at your life experiences.** Examining your experiences in this way will help you to understand what motivates you.

- What have I done that made me very proud?
- When am I most committed to something?
- When have I been most engaged? What am I doing?
- What is most important to me, and why?
- What activities give me a sense of purpose?

Now separate the passionate activities from the real passion that lies beneath to find ways to integrate what you find rewarding, fulfilling and engaging into your day-to-day activities, and even into your work. For example you might be passionate about playing soccer but the real passion is competition.

Often, we can't see the connection between our passions and our work at first glance. But if you know why you're passionate about what you're passionate about, you can figure out how to infuse that into your job search.

## UNDERLYING PASSIONS THAT ARE MOST IMPORTANT

Ask yourself:

1. Was there a common thread across my responses?
2. Why do I love what I love? (What's the passion behind the passionate activity?)

Passion:

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Passion:

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**How can I further explore this passion?**

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**How can I further explore this passion?**

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Look at how you can use your passions to build your brand and possibly form the foundation of your career. Keep in mind that this is just another data point in your job search. The true power will be when you look across your strengths, values, and passions to arrive at your purpose.



## IDENTIFY YOUR BEST-FIT OPPORTUNITIES

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**Skills/Strengths:** Which of the strengths you identified would you like to showcase to prospective employers?

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**Weakness/Area of Development:** Which of the weaknesses you identified will you need to focus on to conduct a successful job search and/or in your career or job?

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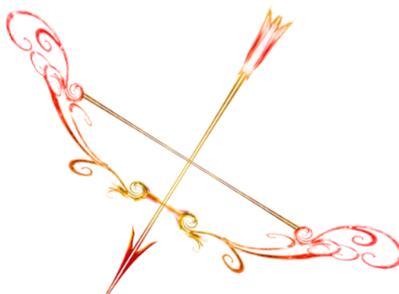
**Values:** Which of the values you identified are most important for you to find in your career and work?

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**Engagement:** What type of career and work might connect you with the things you know will engage, fulfill and reward you?

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**Purpose:** What do you want to achieve from your career, job and life?



	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Potential Career				
Potential Employers	• • •	• • •	• • •	• • •
Potential Jobs	• • •	• • •	• • •	• • •