Personal Branding:

Differentiate or Die

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IT's a brand new 'brand' world indeed. The need to differentiate yourself from the crowd has become paramount in the search for professional glory. Your brand is in your hands. You can mould it; shape it in any way you think will offer you visibility. How can we become the chief brand managers of brand 'Me'? We are required to often take a hard look at ourselves & ask - what do I have that others are not able to offer? What is my unique selling proposition? Branding also lets us embark on a journey of self-discovery & self-awareness. You need to very carefully choose and cultivate the features that you'd want to showcase to launch the brand 'Me'. Personal branding is the process whereby people and their careers are marked as brands.

But are there downfalls to personal branding vs. company branding? Truth is personal branding is easier than company branding. Why? Because if you believe in your talent, in your skills and ability - it's easier to sell what you believe in, your image is already created - you just have to market it. How do you market yourself? That's easy. You must become.

Personal branding is a revolution in the way we manage our careers or businesses. It's a way of clarifying and communicating what makes you different and special and using those qualities to separate from yourself from your peers so that you can greatly expand your success. Personal branding is the strategy behind the world's most successful people. People like Oprah, Madonna, Richard Branson and Bill Gates. It is the difference between an ordinary career or business and an exceptional one.

Foreigners know Bangladesh as a country of flood, famine and disaster. They draw a picture of micro credit and its pioneer Dr. Muhammad Yunus. Perhaps Bob Martin is well known than Jamaica, similarly Nelson Mandela than South Africa. There are thousands of examples of people exceed their institutions or country. They are not familiar for their establishments; establishments are familiar for them. Shariful Islam, Editor of Bangladesh Brand Forum said every one has some exclusive qualities which are rare in others. Branding yourself does not mean you have to change yourself totally. You just have to color your existing qualities. Many can cook, but how many of them prepared an item that has eclipsed Fakruddin Biriani in its fame? Many can draw, but how many of them are as well known as Zainul Abedin or S.M. Sultan? Individual branding has differentiated them from others. Now individual branding has become a selection tool for employers to select right employees from countless job seekers. Even in the case of promotion, there is no substitute to individual branding. Chairman of DCCI Husain Khaled rightly said "It's not only for businessmen or professionals, branding is for all." If you type an email, you're branding yourself. If you have a conversation with a friend or family member, you're branding yourself. How you dress, what you eat, and how you talk all contributes to your brand. Think of your brand as the summation of all the associations about you that are stored in people's minds.

Personal branding may be external or internal. Just type 3 adjectives that you feel describe yourself. This is your internal branding. Your internal branding is how you perceive yourself. Then you ask one of your friends to write three adjectives about you. Whatever your friend writes it is your external branding. Your external brand is how you project yourself to the world. When you learn how others see you, you can "play back at them" by acknowledging their expectations. Instead of trying to fight your own branding, this actually helps you reconnect your external brand with your internal one. I encourage you to carry out this exercise with your friends, family, and coworkers.

By branding yourself effectively you will be able to establish yourself as an expert in your chosen field, differentiate yourself from your peers and increase your confidence and self-motivation. First, you have to find your exclusive qualities, then you have to nurture and school these qualities. It is only a matter of time before your peers or competitors jump on the 'brand wagon. 'So uncovering, building and nurturing your brand now will ensure that you get out in front of the pack and experience professional success beyond your dreams.

Personal branding is basically the way you market yourself to the world. Your personal brand is what other people think of you. In some ways it's outside your control, but you do have some influence over it. The good news -- and it is largely good news -- is that everyone has a chance to stand out. Everyone has a chance to learn, improve, and build up his or her skills. Everyone has a chance to be brand worthy.