

How to build a personal brand to compete in the job market

Anyone currently looking for jobs or has been on the job hunt recently is familiar with the harsh reality: the modern job market is extremely competitive. Whether you are applying for a brand new position or trying to get that promotion you had always wanted, chances are, employers have their eyes set on someone they like or value more. A smart way of making yourself stand out among the crowd is to build a noticeable personal brand that will set you apart from other candidates. Here are some essential pieces of information you should know about personal branding, and how you can use it to compete in the job market.

What is personal branding?

A personal brand entails many things, but in essence, it is a form of identity that differentiates you and showcases your unique value proposition to employers. By defining your potential worth, you are not only showing employers how valuable you will be, but you're also making yourself open to better job opportunities and even pay raises in your existing job.

However, building a personal brand is easier said than done, and there is no simple way of doing so. A compelling personal brand entails strong academic background, strategic networking, experience in professional skill development, and oftentimes, a curated online presence. Above all, a strong personal brand remains authentic and consistent at all times and will help the person resonate with employers while assisting with their career goals.

If you want to build a compelling personal brand that will help you attract lucrative job opportunities, keep the following tips in mind.

Define your unique value proposition
Before anything else, make a list of your key strengths, skills, and experiences that

make you unique. These can include your academic degrees, but make sure they are at least somewhat related to the job you're hoping to land. You can also list any professional skill development training or programs you have completed - which again, should be relevant to the field you're applying to. Your value proposition can also include your achievements and passion for the job - two things employers are always eager to learn when scouting for potential employees.

Build a personal brand statement

After you have identified every aspect of your unique value proposition, start writing a clear and concise personal brand statement. This should be a brief summary that captures what you are, what you do, and of course, the value you will bring to your future workplace. A lot of modern candidates mention their personal brand statement in their resume, which is an easy way of introducing yourself to the employer. You can also use this personal brand statement during interviews - though make sure not to sound too artificial - and in your online profiles and portfolios. Keep in mind that a good personal brand statement creates a strong first impression, which

immediately makes you more memorable than the hundred other candidates applying for the same job.

Curate your online presence

Nowadays, a lot of jobs, both at home and abroad, require a range of experience in modern technology and/or social media. As such, a notable online presence goes a long way in shaping a personal brand that employers will notice. Make sure your social media profiles, especially LinkedIn, reflect a professional image and align with your brand statement. Remember to regularly update your Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn profiles with relevant professional information, and whenever you can, share relevant industry highlights to engage with fellow professionals. This will eventually build your image as an industry expert, further adding value to your personal brand.

Strategic networking

Who you keep connections with is often the deciding factor for landing lucrative jobs. Building a strong professional network at the early stages of your career is an important step in building a personal brand that will stand out to employers. A good way of doing this is by attending professional seminars, visiting industry events, and joining relevant associations, which will help you meet with other professionals interested in the same topics as you. Don't be afraid to seek out more experienced professionals for their insights, and whenever possible, collaborate with them so your personal brand reaches out to more people. A good network also adds credibility to your own name - expanding your career opportunities down the line.

Seek testimonials

A good personal brand is backed by other people. As such, you should reach out to previous colleagues, clients, supervisors, and employers for testimonials, which should highlight your skills, qualities, and dedication. Positive testimonials are a great boost to your personal brand and are reliable proof of what you are capable of. You can also use these testimonials in your personal brand statement, or put them in your LinkedIn profile to add more visibility to your name. Not only will this enhance your professional reputation, but also expand your scope of job opportunities.

