

Personal Branding Myth #4: “Personal Branding Is ‘All About Me’.”

Do you think personal branding is all about you? If so, think again! The truth is that a well-defined personal brand is really about your **Audience** – the person or people you most want to impact with your brand at work and in your career.

Let me illustrate this by looking at corporate brands for a moment. A corporate brand isn’t really just about “the brand.” It’s about whether its Target Market will be interested in *buying* that brand. You can have the most revolutionary product in the world, but if the public perceives it as undesirable, you may as well close the factory.

Smart marketers work to position a brand so that the Target Market will *perceive, think, and feel* a particular way about that brand. This is how the brand’s Target Market – its Audience – comes to understand and embrace the full benefits that a particular brand has to offer.

Let’s take Volvo as an example. Its Audience consists of travelers who see **safety** as the most important benefit in a car. The company responded to the Need of its Audience by focusing its core brand platform on that one important differentiator – safety – to help distinguish itself from other cars on the market. Everything Volvo presents in the marketplace confirms its brand’s safety position. Volvo was the first, for example, to install both front and side air bags, and its engineers figured out how to reinforce the side bars to prevent the roof from collapsing during rollover accidents. You could hardly say that reflects a “me, me, me” attitude, right?

It’s the same with personal branding. The trademarked YOU™ must, first and foremost, meet the needs of your Audience. That’s not to say you should ignore your *own* needs – not at all! Whoever your Audience is – whether it’s one person or a group of people – you must *enjoy* meeting the needs of that particular Audience in order to be happy in your career. But the bottom line is: If you don’t offer something of value that your Audience needs, your personal brand won’t get you far.

So, how does *your* Audience perceive, think, and feel about YOU™ *right now*? (If you’re not sure, there are lots of helpful ways to learn about your Audience in Chapter 3 of *How YOU™ are like Shampoo*.) If your research reveals that your current personal brand isn’t working very well, you can absolutely change how your Audience perceives, thinks, and feels about you. It’s a matter of learning about your Audience and going through the steps to define and communicate a new personal brand that will address what your Audience needs.

So, remember, as the famous singer, Kate Smith, once said, “It’s up to the Audience. It always has been.” When your Audience perceives, thinks, and feels about you the way you want, that’s when you can reach greater success in your career, command a higher paycheck, and ultimately achieve the kind of job satisfaction most people only dream about.

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Achieving Greater Success for “YOU™” and
Your Company Through the Power of Branding

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With an MBA from Harvard Business School, Brenda’s career has spanned more than two decades and has included developing mega brands for Procter & Gamble and Bristol-Myers Squibb across four continents and 50 countries. Now, as President of Brand Development Associates (BDA) International, she travels the world speaking, training, and coaching individuals and companies to greater success through creative, yet practical, corporate and personal brand development.

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