

Personal Branding Quiz: How Are YOU™ Doing?

How is your personal brand doing? Are you presenting yourself in the best possible light? Are you making you the brand of choice in your career?

Watch out! If you don't believe you actually have a personal brand, think again. Just by virtue of being you in your career, you have a personal brand. It exists in the minds of your audience – the people who most influence your work life – in how they *perceive, think, and feel* about you right now.

Whether you have worked consciously on your personal brand or not, you may be making mistakes that can seriously undermine your career advancement. So, why not learn from the errors of others? Here's a quiz to help you determine if you're committing some common errors that could set your personal brand back a notch or two. The outcome is that you'll know exactly how to rectify the situation and keep your brand on track.

1. *Do you work on less important, easier tasks before tackling the tough ones?*

Successful personal brand builders define their priorities every morning and stick to them. If you do easier tasks first, you will most likely find yourself so tired at the end of the day that you won't have energy to complete the more challenging tasks later on – and those tasks are probably also the most important tasks for your career. You need to be fresh and clear-headed for the jobs that require more from you, so the best time to tackle them is first thing in the morning.

2. *Do you act like you understand something when you really don't?*

One of our worst fears is to look “stupid,” isn't it? Worried about looking like a fool, we often don't ask questions. Assume you've been given a task to complete, but you're not sure of the objectives – and you don't ask for clarity. You might end up doing nothing at all because you don't know *what* to do, or you could end up doing something that isn't appropriate for that task. So, there you are – exposed for not understanding it anyway! Bottom line: Asking for clarification is actually quite *smart*!

3. *Do you underestimate the importance of proper eye contact?*

Proper eye contact is critical to your personal brand. Staring at someone makes you appear as though you're trying to dominate him or her, while looking down can appear as low self-esteem or a sign of nervousness. Find a happy medium between an intimidating “stare-down” and averting your gaze. Watch, learn, and model television interviewers to see how well they vary their eye contact.

4. *Do you think how you “look” to others only means your person or your office?*

Your look doesn't stop with your clothes, your body, your face, or even your office. It extends to every place where you are responsible for *its* “look.” If you walked out to a parking lot with a well-respected top executive, only to discover that the backseat of his car was filled with dog hair, old bottles, and trash, his personal brand would certainly be busted in your eyes, wouldn't it?

5. *Do you ignore the importance of silence as a powerful “sound?”*

Without the rests in music, there would be no rhythm; speech has rhythm, too. So, sometimes, just sitting back and *listening* is the best “sound” you can make. Done well, it can actually convey confidence, intelligence, patience, and reflection.

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6. Do you fail to answer questions directly?

A direct question only has *one* answer. For example, let’s say your company is pondering two different campaigns your ad agency has developed. You’re asked which campaign you prefer, and you say: “Well, Campaign #1 could potentially be more visible and noticeable, but Campaign #2 is actually more on strategy. So, I guess there are benefits to both campaigns.” Did you answer the question? No! Give a direct answer first; *then*, explain your choice. Strong personal brand builders do.

7. Do you fear feedback?

Feedback is one of the greatest gifts we can give or receive. So, why do most people hate it? The truth is that you really can’t develop a personal brand unless you receive feedback to find out how your brand is working for you. Asking for feedback says to others that you’re a professional, that you want to improve, and that you are confident. Conversely, learning to *give* meaningful feedback is also powerful, especially if you want to be a leader in your organization. You will not only help others improve but can also offer them the encouragement they need to excel.

8. Do you believe “if it isn’t 100% perfect, it isn’t done”?

You’ve heard the old “80-for-20” rule, right? “*If it’s 80% done, then it’s good enough – it’s done.*” Most of the time, this holds true, and people who don’t believe it are most likely spinning their wheels, trying to finish that little extra bit that won’t make a difference in the long run. At the same time, those who *do* adhere to the 80-for-20 rule are finished with the original project and moving on to the next one. Where do *you* fall into this range of perfection?

So, How Did You Do?

Count the times you answered “Yes” to the questions above and then check your score below.

- If you have 1-2 “yes” answers, well done! You obviously have a strong personal brand, but keep working on it until you reach a score of “0.”
- If you have 3-8 “yes” answers, the good news is that you’ve uncovered several opportunities to strengthen your personal brand. Choose one or two areas which you think could make the biggest difference in your desired personal brand image, and create an action plan and a deadline by which you want to change those behaviors.

Whatever your score, learning to present your desired personal brand image can make a huge difference in your job and your progression. You owe it to yourself to make sure you define and communicate the best possible personal brand for your future and your career.

BRENDA BENCE

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

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Brenda S. Bence is an internationally-recognized branding expert, Certified Executive Coach, dynamic trainer and Certified Speaking Professional, and the author of several books. Her award-winning *How YOU™ Are Like Shampoo* personal branding book series began with *How YOU™ Are Like Shampoo: The Breakthrough Personal Branding System Based on Proven Big-Brand Marketing Methods to Help You Earn More, Do More, and Be More at Work*, the first step-by-step personal branding system for defining and communicating your personal brand for greater success in the workplace.



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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