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Highly recommended reading!”**

— Stephen W. Green, Vice President, Policy, Government and Public Affairs, Chevron Corporation

Master the Brand Called



The proven leadership personal
branding system to help you earn more,
do more, and be more at work

Brenda Bence

SENIOR EXECUTIVE COACH AND INTERNATIONAL BRANDING EXPERT

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Are YOU™ the brand of choice in *your* workplace?

The world's most successful brand names inspire loyalty and trust. You rely on them again and again for their quality, innovation, and performance. What would it mean for your career, your job satisfaction—and your income potential—if your boss, colleagues, and customers felt the same about YOU™?

This groundbreaking book provides you with the only start-to-finish system for defining, communicating, and taking control of your leadership personal brand at work, whether you are leading yourself or leading others. Modeled after proven big-brand marketing methods, *Master the Brand Called YOU™* guides you step-by-step through *corporate* branding techniques never before adapted for *personal* use.

You will learn how to:

- Identify the 6 essential positioning elements that define your leadership personal brand
- Master the 5 everyday activities that most clearly communicate your brand as a leader
- Avoid the top 20 Leadership Personal Brand Busters® that could keep you from success
- Increase both your earning power and your job satisfaction
- Build on-the-job trust and loyalty in YOU™

“The only book I’ve seen that provides a foolproof process for defining and establishing your personal brand in the workplace. Finally, someone has made personal branding simple!”

Thomas J. White, Group Head of Human Resources, Zurich Insurance Group AG



Brenda Bence knows top talent. After earning her MBA from Harvard, this award-winning author spent the bulk of her career as an executive in Fortune 100 multinationals, building brands across dozens of countries that span four continents. Now, as a Senior Executive Coach, she has guided hundreds of leaders from more than 60 nationalities to transformational growth and success. Trusted by many of the world's most recognized companies, Bence is at the forefront of leadership personal branding on a global scale.



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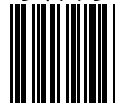
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Master
the
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YOU^{TM®}

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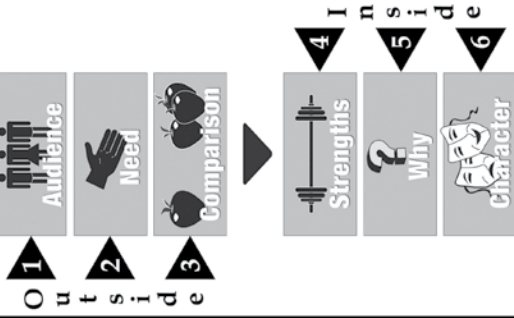
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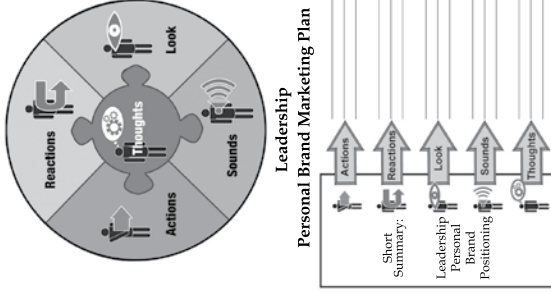
The Proven Pathway to Branding YOU™

Define it



Step 1

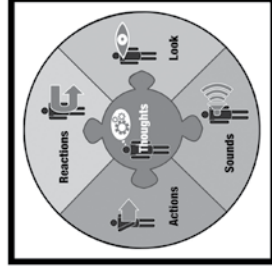
Communicate it



Step 2

Avoid Damaging it

Leadership Personal Brand Busters®



YOU™

Step 3

1

Do You Need a Leadership Personal Brand?

I always worry about people who say, “I’m going to do this for ten years [but] I really don’t like it very well. And then I’ll do this...” That’s a little like saving up sex for your old age.

— Warren Buffett, Chairman of Berkshire Hathaway and the “Oracle of Omaha”

I have had the wonderful fortune of living in, working in, and visiting more than 80 countries, and as a result, I’ve met thousands of people from various walks of life all around the globe. And there’s one thing that I have come to know as the truth: **We are all fundamentally the same.** We all ultimately want the same things: to earn a good living, enjoy our work, stay healthy, have a happy family life, enjoy meaningful friendships, and ultimately make a difference in some way.

So, if we’re all the same, why would I write a book about leadership *personal* branding? Because while we are all fundamentally the same, we also each have specific gifts and talents that are as unique to us as our individual DNA. It’s a bit of a paradox: We’re the same and yet we’re unique. And it’s up to each of us to learn how to use our specific gifts and talents to make our lives and careers the best they can be—to make that difference in the world that we hope for. I also believe that it’s up to each of us to learn *self*-leadership before we even begin to think about effectively leading others. This is where leadership personal branding comes in.

You've heard of serial killers? Well, think of me as a "serial brander"—I just can't stop branding! As a corporate marketer, I have worked for Procter & Gamble and Bristol-Myers Squibb on four different continents, where I was fortunate enough to manage many well-known brands like Pantene, Head & Shoulders, Vidal Sassoon, Ariel, Cheer, and Enfamil. I spent years defining, launching, and building brands all around the world using a definitive process and framework that corporate marketers have used for years to craft and communicate brands.

You may not have known that such a process exists, but trust me: Great brands don't get to be great by accident! It's only because of the process put in place by good, strategic marketers that these brands make millions. And it's only because of this process that successful brands not only survive but thrive through economic ups and downs.

You Aren't a Product Brand, But ...

Several years ago, when I began actively coaching individuals to reach their goals and develop their own brands, I started to experiment with applying these same principles of corporate branding to people. I took the elements and framework used by corporate marketers and adjusted them to work for self-branding, so that we—as individuals—could thrive in our careers the same way successful name brands have thrived in the marketplace. Over time, I perfected this approach until it evolved into the unique leadership personal branding system I am sharing in this book—a system that walks you step by step through the process of building your own brand as a leader, whether you are focused on leading yourself or leading others. This is how you craft and effectively communicate YOU™.¹ That's right—the trademarked YOU.

Today, you—or YOU™—can apply the same system in your work life that corporate marketers have used for years to build wildly successful product brands. Just as a corporate marketer uses this proven process to build mega-brands like Pantene, Apple, or Evian, you, too, can build the brand of YOU™.

Bring New Energy to Your Job

We all want to earn a good living and enjoy our work, but statistics indicate that few of us do. In fact, research shows that about 75% of

1. YOU™ is a registered trademark of Brand Development Associates (BDA) International, Ltd.

employees today are unhappy with their jobs. Can you imagine this? We spend more than half of our waking hours at work, yet 75% of us are unhappy while we're there!

If you're one of those people who aren't as satisfied at work as you'd like to be, defining your own leadership brand can help you start to enjoy your job again. Once you define and clarify your role at work and what you want to accomplish—which is what leadership personal branding is all about—your work will have new meaning. Knowing who YOU™ are can help you eliminate that groan that escapes from your throat when the alarm goes off in the morning. Yes, you *can* be happy, fulfilled, and motivated on the job.

When you look at your work as an opportunity to build a brand for yourself, you start to make every minute of your career count. It brings new energy and purpose to your job. When people ask you what you do, you'll be able to answer the question with enthusiasm.

Grab the Steering Wheel of Your Career

Author and motivational speaker Nido Qubein said, "Life doesn't give you what you want; it gives you what you deserve." What you focus on is what you get. So, if you want a better career and a more satisfying work life, it's up to you. Your success at work is in your control, and a large part of the foundation of that control comes from learning how to master the brand called YOU™.

Defining your brand is only the first step in the process, though. It makes no sense to get clear on the brand you want and then leave it in a desk drawer. In order for your brand to serve you well, you need a roadmap to help you *communicate to others* what you want it to stand for. That's how you achieve your goals. That's how you change your work life for the better. That's how you master self-leadership and become a leader of others, if that's what you want in your career. And that's how you grab the steering wheel of your career and drive it to where you want it to go.

Believe It or Not... You Already Have a Brand as a Leader

When I speak about leadership personal branding at conventions and corporate gatherings, often an audience member will say, "Sounds very interesting, Brenda, but no thanks. I'm actually not into *self-promotion*, and I'm not a leader. I don't have—or even want—a leadership personal brand."

It's then that I break the news: **You already have one.**

It's true. You don't have to sit down and give your brand any thought to have one. Just by virtue of being you in the workplace, you are branded. And whether or not you lead others, you *do* lead yourself. The question is: Do you have the leadership personal brand you want?

If you don't take control of your leadership personal brand and make a conscious decision about how you want to be known, you may be leaving an impression that actually works *against* your success. Are you living up to the potential that YOU™ could achieve if you took charge of your brand consciously rather than leaving it to chance?

Don't Like the Brand You Have Now? Change It.

Many years ago, a famous man discovered the hard way that his leadership personal brand wasn't what he wanted it to be. Alfred Nobel was a very successful and wealthy Swedish industrialist who lived in the 1800s. He was widely credited with two inventions—dynamite and the detonator (the apparatus that causes dynamite to ignite from a distance). He had made millions from these two inventions, and he was living a wonderful millionaire's life.

Alfred's brother, Ludwig Nobel, was an equally well-known and wealthy businessman who had developed successful inventions of his own. You might say that Alfred and Ludwig Nobel were the Bill Gates and Steve Jobs of their day.

In April of 1888, Ludwig Nobel died. But the death notice that showed up the next day in the newspaper was switched, and it was *Alfred's* obituary that appeared, not Ludwig's. So, Alfred Nobel had the rare opportunity of opening up the morning paper and reading his own death notice. Can you imagine how powerful that would be?

But Alfred must have cringed when he read the headline of his obituary. It labeled him "The Merchant of Death" because of all of the work that he had done with dynamite and detonators. In that single moment, Alfred Nobel realized that everything he had done would forever associate his name with death—unless he took control and did something about it.

That was the day the seed was planted for the Nobel Prizes. Alfred didn't want the name "Nobel" to stand for death and destruction, so he made a plan to develop a series of prizes for those who confer "the greatest benefit on mankind." When he died, he left the bulk of his millions to the establishment of the awards that eventually included five categories: Physics, Chemistry, Physiology/Medicine, Literature, and Peace.

Look at what the name “Nobel” stands for today—the most prestigious prizes awarded for the highest achievements of humankind. While you’ve no doubt heard of the Nobel Prizes, you might not have known about the other work that Alfred Nobel did in his life. This is a true testament to the fact that he was successful in changing his brand so that his name could stand for what he wanted.

The same holds true for you. If you aren’t happy with the brand you have now, you can change it. As author Carl Bard said, “Though no one can go back and make a brand-new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand-new ending.” This book can help you kick start that brand new beginning.

A “Systematic” Way to Master Your Brand

Now that you know you already have a brand, it’s time to take control of it by learning how to manage it. Since the advent of personal branding, several books have been written on the subject. What I have tried to do with *Master the Brand Called YOU™* is to offer you a **complete system** that covers every possible aspect of building a leadership personal brand for yourself. This book goes beyond the theory of personal branding to bring you tangible applications for your brand within your day-to-day work life. It’s a do-it-yourself, no-nonsense guide to achieving greater success at work through branding yourself. It’s simple, easy to read, and has worked for thousands around the world.

Master the Brand Called YOU™ is designed to take the guesswork out of figuring out what your brand is and how to make it work for you. Through this proven step-by-step system, you will:

- Define your own brand using a Leadership Personal Brand Positioning Statement format, which is modeled off the six core positioning elements used by the most successful product brands in the world.
- Communicate your leadership personal brand through a Leadership Personal Brand Marketing Plan that will help you take charge of the five activities you do every day that most impact your brand.
- Avoid damaging your leadership personal brand by learning from the mistakes of others. This is one of the most unique and fun parts of the system—my Leadership Personal Brand Busters®. These will help you bypass the most common pitfalls to

establishing your brand so that you'll know what to watch out for before you even get there.

- Use the graphic labeled “The Proven Pathway to Branding YOU™” on page 14 like a map to understand each step of this leadership personal branding system. Don't worry if it doesn't all make sense to you right now. It will—I promise.

I will also give you tangible tools to help you check the development of your leadership personal brand three months from now, six months from now, and further down the road. You will discover ways to assess your progress so that your brand will stay on track and evolve as your career moves forward.

As you read these pages, I hope you will experience many “ah-ha!” moments that stem from the power of thinking of yourself as a unique and individual brand. I hope you'll see how you can use leadership personal branding to make tangible changes in your career. Those changes can bring you the kind of success you have always wanted but weren't sure how to achieve, resulting in increased income, greater job satisfaction, and faster career progress.

Input Equals Output

Master the Brand Called YOU™ is an interactive, action-oriented experience, but your leadership personal brand won't be handed to you on a silver platter. I can guarantee you one thing for sure: What you put *in* to defining and communicating your brand as a leader is exactly what you will get *out* of it. The more time and energy you devote to this process, the faster and better your results will be.

Get ready to feel empowered as you take charge of your brand and become the Brand Manager of YOU™.

2

The Power of Brands

A brand is a living entity—and it is enriched or undermined cumulatively over time, the product of a thousand small gestures.

— Michael Eisner, former CEO of Disney

No book about leadership personal branding would be complete without an understanding of the powerful and influential role that brands play in our modern-day lives. *Time* magazine once reported that the average American citizen living in a large urban area runs across an estimated 3,000 brands every single day. When I first read that statistic, I couldn't believe it. But then, the proof was right in front of me when I would walk down Michigan Avenue in Chicago and look at all of the signs, or I would stand in Times Square in New York City and see brand after brand after brand.

In fact, I suspect that seeing 3,000 brands—which is almost certainly an even larger number today—holds true for anyone living and working in a large urban environment anywhere in the world. Ride in a taxi from downtown Bangkok out to the airport with hundreds of billboards lining the way, or walk down a supermarket aisle in London with the myriad of brands peering down at you.

Think about it. How many brands have *you* seen today on product labels, the side of a bus, the top of a taxi, or on the Internet? Everywhere you look, brand names are screaming for your attention. Brands are everywhere, and they are such a part of our day-to-day lives that we may not even think about them.

But out of those thousands of brands you encounter every day, if you're like most people, you will probably stay faithful to a handful of brands throughout most of your life. After all, great brands build intense loyalty. How about you? What brands are you loyal to? Would you consider it out of the question, for example, to buy anything but a Canon camera or to switch from using your Gillette shaving cream? Why? What is the allure of that favorite brand of yours? What does it offer you that no other brand can?

Brands can be extremely big and influential, too. Take Coca-Cola as an example. That one brand alone brings in an estimated \$16 billion in sales every year, more than *\$1 billion every single month*. As of this writing, that represents more than the Gross Domestic Product of 86 different countries. How's *that* for powerful?

The Untouchables

So, what do we know so far? We know that brands are everywhere, that they can create intense loyalty, and that they can be mighty big. Is there any question why I find brands so fascinating?

But what's even more amazing about brands is that they are all this ... yet, you cannot touch them. You can smell the aroma of a Starbucks cup of coffee, you can taste the kick of a Mentos when you pop one in your mouth, you can hear the sound of Microsoft's Windows booting up, you can feel the wet aluminum of a cold can of Sprite in your hand, and you can see the golden arches of McDonald's logo. But you cannot *touch* a brand. The smell, touch, or sight of a product is really only a representation of that brand. The brand itself is actually intangible. Its power exists only in your mind.

Can these intangible "brands" truly influence the way we act and think? Let's explore.

Powerful Brand Images

Great brands are like people. They have a personality and a character all their own. To demonstrate what I mean, pause for a moment, look around you, and find two doorways that you can see from where you are. In the first doorway, imagine that Mercedes Benz—the brand—is standing there as a *person*. What kind of person would the Mercedes Benz brand be? Is it a man or a woman? What profession does this person have? What is this person wearing? What is the income level of this person—low, medium, or high? What is his or her favorite pastime?

Now, look at the second doorway, and imagine that Ferrari—the brand—is standing there as a person. What kind of person would the Ferrari brand be? Is it a man or a woman? What profession does this person have? How is this person dressed—more formally or more casually than Mercedes Benz? What is the income level of this person—higher or lower? What is his or her favorite pastime?

Compare the answers to both sets of questions. If you're like most people, your answers will be quite different. Even though Mercedes Benz and Ferrari are both high-end luxury cars that can get you from one place to another, the brand images of Mercedes Benz and Ferrari are not the same. That's because you *perceive*, *think*, and *feel* differently about these two brands. Those perceptions, thoughts, and feelings have been carefully created in your mind by smart marketers who understand the art and the science of branding.

That's right. Branding, whether of a product or a person, is both an art *and* a science. On the one hand, brands appeal to your logic—you *think* rationally about them—so, this is where the science comes in. But branding is also an art because brands appeal to your emotions—how you *feel* about them.



Consider This

Think for a moment about the brands that have earned your loyalty. Maybe you have even traveled out of your way to find and buy that special brand that's like no other. What if you could harness that same kind of power with your own individual brand as a leader? You can. Building your leadership brand at work can help you have that type of influence on the job.

Branding People?

I firmly believe that people—just like products—are brands, too. Let's use examples of people we probably all know—starting with celebrities. What do you perceive, think, and feel when you hear the name “Ashton Kutcher”? What do you perceive, think, and feel when you hear the name “Hugh Jackman”? Both of these actors are good-looking leading

men, but they create very different perceptions, thoughts, and feelings, don't they? Now, let's throw "Jackie Chan" into the picture... you have different perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about him, too.

Think of any category of well-known people—how about singers this time. Consider Taylor Swift... Lady Gaga... Adele. Again, they're all very different. That's because each of these individuals has a very specific brand that is absolutely unique and ownable as compared to the others.

"But, wait a minute, Brenda," you may be saying. "These examples are celebrities, and they have the funds and the means to hire full-time image specialists to manage *their* personal brands!"

Fair point. But you don't need high-priced help to define and communicate your *leadership* personal brand. The system shared in *Master the Brand Called YOU™* will help you build your brand without writing checks to a publicist. It's designed for the millions of people all around the world who may not be famous and certainly don't plan on turning their individual brand into a global household name. What you want to do is define yourself in *your world* in order to achieve your personal career goals.

Leadership Personal Branding Is Not All About You

What is this concept called "leadership personal branding"? I like to define it as:

*The way you want people to perceive,
think, and feel about you as a leader
in relation to other leaders.*

Just like product brands such as Mercedes-Benz and Ferrari exist in our minds, so your own leadership personal brand exists in the minds of others, as they perceive, think, and feel about you in relation to other leaders at work.

Let's look carefully at this definition, and focus on three key words: perceive, think, and feel. They've been carefully chosen for a reason.

Perceive: Perception in branding is reality. When it comes to your own brand, it doesn't matter who *you* think you are. What matters is how *others* perceive you. If others perceive you differently from who you actually believe you are inside, you're probably not communicating the brand you want.

Think: On the one hand, branding is a fairly rational exercise, so our brains have a lot to do with how we think about brands. There are logical reasons why we choose one brand over another. The same holds true in leadership personal branding—what do others *think* about you?

Feel: On the other hand, branding is also an emotional process. Earlier in the chapter, you thought about brands that have earned your loyalty over the years. Stop and reflect on one of those brands right now. What is the *feeling* you have about that brand? Trust? Admiration? Gratitude? We establish connections with brands, and these connections go far beyond what the products actually do for us. We're loyal to these brands based on *emotional* connections—and it's the same with leadership personal branding. The way people feel about you has a profound influence on your success. The stronger the connections you create with others, the more powerful your individual brand will be.

Colleagues' Brands at Work

Still don't believe the average person has a brand? Think of someone in your current job who is enjoyable to be around—the kind of person you look forward to seeing and speaking with every morning. Stop for a moment and consider: How do you perceive this person? What do you think about this individual? How does he or she make you feel?

Now, consider a different person you work with who—let's be honest—you really *don't* enjoy working with all that much. It's that one person who seems to cause you problems and tie your stomach in knots. How do you perceive him or her? What do you think about this individual? How does *this* person make you feel?

Can you see how these two people have very different “brands”? And their brands have nothing to do with who *they* think they are. Their brands exist in *your* mind, based on how you perceive, think, and feel about them. And if they haven't taken the time to define their best possible leadership personal brands, they may be seriously limiting their success by presenting themselves in a way that is different from how they want to be seen.

The Experience of YOU™

As a brand *passionista*, I enjoy finding analogies between corporate brands and personal brands. With that in mind, here's a favorite that

absolutely speaks to the importance of creating a powerful leadership personal brand. (See how long it takes you to figure out which corporate brand I'm describing.)

- If you had invested \$10,000 in this company when it first went public in 1992, it would be worth more than \$1,000,000 today.
- According to an article on *Forbes.com*, this brand currently has approximately 18,000 stores located in over 50 countries.
- If you haven't guessed it yet, this should help: Every morning, millions of people start their days by visiting one of this company's outlets for their favorite cup of java.

Yes, indeed, I'm talking about Starbucks.

Now, a lot (and I mean a *lot*) has been talked about, written about, and discussed about the Starbucks brand—and for good reason. Starbucks became the game-changer for the centuries-old, staid coffee industry.

But what can Starbucks' branding success teach you about your own brand? What follows is an analogy originally based on a *Brandweek* magazine article (with updated statistics to reflect today's prices):

- Coffee, when it is in its natural bean state, is a commodity that sells for about 3 to 5 cents per cup.
- Add packaging and a brand name to that coffee, place it on a grocery store shelf, and the price rises to 10 to 50 cents per cup.
- That same coffee offered up with service and a smile (say, at a Dunkin' Donuts) increases the price to about \$1-\$2 per cup.
- Then there's Starbucks, which sells its coffee worldwide for anywhere from \$4 to \$8 per cup. Imagine—people flock there by the millions to spend *four times more* for a cup of coffee than anywhere else.

How does Starbucks get us to spend so much more of our hard-earned cash—and feel good about it while we're doing it? Because it offers its consumers so much more than just a good cup of coffee; it provides a *rewarding coffee experience*. At Starbucks, we're paying for the pleasure of taking a break during the day—watching the skilled baristas concoct our favorite choca-locca-mocha-frocha (I can never get those names right) and enjoy a relaxing chat with friends after a night out.

That's what differentiates Starbucks from the dozens of other coffee brands out there and what has built such strong brand loyalty through the years, despite its higher price tag. So, what does this demonstrate?

People will pay more for a superior experience.

Applying this truth to your own brand as a leader means that if you want to earn more money, advance in your career, and rise to positions of greater responsibility, you must think about the *experience* you offer on the job. Think about it ... would you want to work with you? What would it be like to be your colleague, your peer, your boss, or your direct report? What would that *experience* be like? Again, it's all about the way key people perceive, think, and feel about YOU™.

Taking Control of YOU™

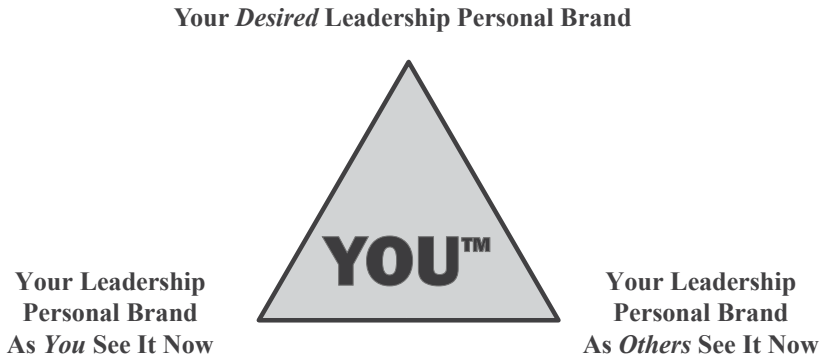
As I said earlier, you already have a leadership personal brand, even if you didn't think you needed or wanted one. Your brand may be out there doing its thing, creating perceptions about YOU™ without you even being aware of it. People may be thinking and feeling about you in ways that aren't at all how you want to be perceived, just like Alfred Nobel. Most people I've met find this idea intriguing... and a little bit scary. They don't like the idea that their personal brands may be running amuck without knowing what to do about it.

The leadership personal branding system in this book will help you uncover and eliminate any disconnect between how others see your brand and how you *want* to be seen. Some of the questions you will answer as you move through the steps of the system are:

- How do you take control of your leadership brand if it exists in the minds of others?
- What can you do to make sure your brand as a leader is what you want it to be?
- How do you want others to perceive, think, and feel about you?
- How can you make your leadership personal brand something that is definable and that you own?
- How do you communicate your brand effectively?

Your Leadership Personal Brand Triangle™

Take a look at the Leadership Personal Brand Triangle™ in the graphic below. This is a concept I developed to help you understand how well your current brand is aligned with your desired brand.



For your brand to be strong, all of the descriptions at the three points of your triangle should be the same. How do you get a crystal clear and consistent grip on what those three points stand for right now? Do what I call “The Five Words Exercise”:

Step 1. Sit down and ask yourself: “What five adjectives would I use to describe myself as a leader at work?” Don’t overthink it, but do think in both positive and negative terms. An example might be: Strategic, hardworking, intelligent, team player, impatient. Write down your five words right now.

Step 2. Ask: “What five adjectives would I *like* others to use to describe me as a leader at work?” This is the foundation of your *desired* leadership personal brand. Write down those five words as well. How similar or different are they from the first set of words?

Step 3. Next, recruit someone you trust to be your “brand ambassador.” Give that person the names of five to ten individuals to interview (people you work with). Have your ambassador ask those people individually to share the first five adjectives that come to mind when they hear your name. The ambassador should ask your feedback providers to keep their answers to specific words and not phrases; this helps ensure that the exercise outcomes are simple and

easily analyzed. By the way, make sure the ambassador does not write down anyone's name or note who said what; anonymity is key to this exercise! For this approach to work, all information must be kept confidential.

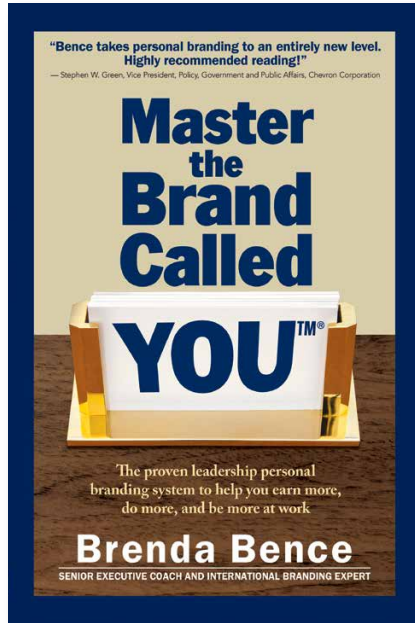
Step 4. Once you receive the compiled list of words from all five to ten people, spend some time reviewing the list. What similarities or trends do you see? What adjectives are similar or different? When you see words repeated, you will know that they are part of your brand. When you see a variety of different words, it may indicate that you're acting one way with certain people and another way with others. Beware: This inconsistency can lead to leadership personal brand confusion.

Once you work through the entire *Master the Brand Called YOU™* personal branding system, you will be well on your way to aligning the three points of your Leadership Personal Brand Triangle. No matter how successful you already are, you will then have the opportunity to distinguish yourself further in the workplace.

Just as Starbucks can command a much higher price tag than a standard cup of coffee at a local cafe, so YOU™ can create a premium leadership personal brand that commands a bigger paycheck, better perks, and/or brings you greater recognition and satisfaction in your career.

Think of it this way: Your leadership personal brand is what you stand for in the minds of others. Who is _____™? Insert your name in the blank, and let's begin.

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