

## Need Employment Insurance? Master Your Personal Brand

In today’s topsy-turvy marketplace, job security may seem like a pipe dream. In the midst of downsizing, stock market confusion, and layoffs, how can you make sure to keep your name off any pink-sheet list? One key way you can create employment insurance is to learn to define and effectively communicate your unique personal brand at work.

Here are some personal branding tips for insuring you’ll have a job even if times get tough:

1. ***Understand the needs of your audience.*** We tend to think that personal branding is an ego thing – that it’s all about “you.” But just as successful corporate marketers make sure their products fill a need for consumers, personal branders have to make sure their brands fill their audience’s needs as well. If you aren’t exactly sure what your boss needs from you, *ask!* Then, do all you can to meet those needs. Become indispensable. It’s a surefire way to make certain you remain valuable in the eyes of your employer.
2. ***Know your strengths, and leverage them all.*** What talents and skills do you bring to your company? Are there any strengths that you aren’t fully utilizing at work? Can you offer more skills than you offer now? Give every talent that you have to your company, and you will be someone your company can’t afford to lose.
3. ***Go beyond your job description.*** As you leverage your strengths, think about doing more than your job description specifies. Anyone who does only what is required of them will be among the first to go in a layoff situation. That’s why strong personal branders look for ways to go beyond their job descriptions. Be prepared to show flexibility and versatility. Find ways to be proactive, getting tasks done before you have to be asked to do them. Think about making your supervisors’ jobs easier for them. Not only will you become a great asset to your employer, but you’ll also find you will take greater pride in what you do.
4. ***Strengthen your credibility.*** Do you want to be known as one of the best in your company at what you do? Use experience, education, and endorsements to elevate you to a top-performer image. What experience do you have that proves you can perform certain tasks on the job? Are you using all of your appropriate past experience that you can? Can you take a seminar or a course to strengthen your credibility on the job? Are you asking clients and supervisors for endorsements or testimonials that you can use to show your value?
5. ***Be mindful of your personal brand character.*** Think of your brand character as your overriding attitude, temperament, and personality. It’s like the difference between Pepsi and Coca Cola. Their ingredients are pretty much the same, but each brand has a “character” all its own created by smart marketers. The same holds true of smart personal branders. Remember that employers want to work with people they like. Is the character that you display on the job the type of character that will appeal to your audience? This is a critical part of successful personal branding.
6. ***Be consistent.*** Everything you do must communicate your personal brand. If you remain consistent with your brand, your employer will know that you can be counted on to deliver every day. This means that you must look and sound the part of your personal brand, too. Dress professionally, and make sure to speak articulately. Study body language, to learn how to present

yourself as open and friendly. All of these efforts will not only help you keep a job but may even get you promoted.

7. **Learn to manage your reactions.** We have all fallen prey to knee-jerk reactions, but they’re almost never worth it. Nine times out of ten, you’ll look back on an angry response and wish you could turn back the clock. So, at a time when you think you might fall prey to a knee-jerk reaction, learn to take a breath, and hold onto your emotions. Take the time you need in order to express your opinions rationally. It will do your personal brand good... and you won’t regret it later.
8. **Maintain a positive attitude.** Don’t get sucked into the abyss of “misery” that seems to spread whenever the stock market takes a dive. No matter what is happening around you, thinking negatively will do nothing to help. In fact, it may just take you down with the ship. After all, science is beginning to discover that your thoughts may have more power than we ... well, *thought*. So, work on keeping your thoughts positive and expect the best. It will not only make your life easier during trying times but it can also help you create a better future ... sooner rather than later.

Whether or not you worry that your job could be in jeopardy, mastering your personal brand is one of the very best ways to not only insure job security, but to command a higher salary and advancement in your career as well. Becoming known for your powerful personal brand puts everyone on notice that you’re someone to watch. What better job insurance is there than that?

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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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