

Traveling Around the World With Your Personal Brand in Tow

Can anybody deny the world has gotten much smaller over the years? In fact, these days, working globally has become the norm. But this can potentially bring on challenges when it comes to traveling to different countries with your personal brand in tow. After all, every culture is different, and what’s polite and appropriate in one country may be interpreted as rude in another. So, how do you stay true to your personal brand on the road while making sure you don’t damage relationships along the way?

The challenge of communicating your personal brand across multiple cultures is always top of mind for me. I extensively across the globe, speaking, training, consulting, coaching, and holding book signings in such diverse and interesting places as Prague, Hong Kong, Singapore, India, the Netherlands, the U.S. and, of course, where my Asian offices are located, Bangkok, Thailand. I often travel as much as 175,000 to 200,000 miles per year.

What have I learned (or re-learned) about personal branding by being exposed to so many cultures? While the foundation of my personal brand has remained the same - I don’t actually alter my brand significantly from place to place - I do make adjustments to ensure that my brand is not off-putting.

I really believe it pays to think about how your personal brand will work within each culture you visit. It isn’t that you change your personal brand depending upon the country you visit, but you may need to make some alterations in the way you present it. It’s important to do research ahead of time and learn the customs of the place you’ll be visiting. After all, you’re on someone else’s turf, and no personal brand will do well if it looks like you don’t care about being a good guest.

So when it comes to presenting your personal brand during international travel, keep in mind these tips:

- Your personal brand needs to be somewhat malleable. It should be adaptable enough to fit into different circumstances and locations while still remaining true to the foundation of who YOU™ really are.
- You can’t ignore the context of any given situation. As you prepare for a trip outside of your native country, try to find someone from that particular culture and ask questions. What is considered polite, what is considered rude, and what do people in that culture value most?
- If you can’t find someone to talk to who has lived in that location, do your research. Read a book (the series called Put Your Best Foot Forward is great) or find a trustworthy website that will help you learn pitfalls to avoid in a particular country.

Remember: No matter how much work you’ve done to define and develop your personal brand, if you arrive in a country unaware of important cultural differences, you run the risk of not fully communicating who YOU™ really are.

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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