



PERSONAL BRANDING

What is it?

A personal brand is a carefully-crafted representation of who you are—your identity, values, strengths, and motivation—that is consistently relayed to an audience. If you are able to effectively communicate this brand, you are more likely to be recognized in the field, establish reputation and credibility, advance your career, and build self-confidence.

Where do you start?

1. Reflect on who you are: what is your personal and professional identity? What do you uniquely bring to the table? What drives your work?
2. Think about where you want to go as a professional: what do you want to be known for? In what areas do you need to improve to get there?
3. Define your audience: who do you want to reach? How can you adjust your delivery based on this audience? For example, if you know employers in your desired field appreciate innovation, you may want to demonstrate your personal brand through an online portfolio of your work.

How do you do it?

Online

LinkedIn

- Now #2 online social network behind Facebook.
- It is the most professional of social networks – think of it as your “business suit.”
- It is an excellent way to present yourself, your skills, and your expertise in an environment that you completely control.
- Creating a profile allows future veterinary professionals to:
 - Add key words or phrases that help your profile show up in more searches.
 - Get recommendations from past employers or professionals - similar to product reviews, ratings, or testimonials that many people seek before they buy a specific item or subscribe to a specific service.
 - Add a professional headshot to allow people to connect a name with a face to further brand image.
 - Actively participate in undergraduate, OSU CVM alumni, and other professional groups to expand network and increase presence.

Facebook

- You may choose to create a professional account separate from your personal networking account.
- If LinkedIn is your business suit, think of Facebook as your casual attire.
- Similar to LinkedIn in that you can search for common friends, update your progress, reflect your personal brand, and let others know about your professional goals and interests. You can also join groups to increase presence.
- You need to consider privacy controls and settings. With Facebook, there is diminished personal control over content that is shared, unless proper settings are activated.

Other

- Google your name periodically and see what pops up about you. Is there any material that employers would find questionable?
- If so, figure out how to eliminate it and if you cannot, be prepared to be questioned about it. How can you properly address the situation and put a positive spin on it?

On Paper

Resume and Cover Letter

- Content
 - Must be focused and tailored to the individual position in which you are applying, otherwise it may tell employers you don't understand your personal brand.
 - Accomplishments speak louder than responsibilities. Show potential employers, using numbers, facts and statistics, how you improved things at your last position and why they need you to work at their organization.
- Format
 - Is it easy to read and understand? Is it clean, neat, precise, and void of errors? Can a person just glance at it and get a sense of your personal brand?

Business Cards (for veterinary students)

- Should remain simple in content and format. It should include only your name and contact information and be used with discretion after having made a genuine connection. It should not be flashy, include a personal logo, or used as the initial conversation-starter.

In Person

How you look

- First impressions are lasting impressions. Think about how you want to be remembered after you meet someone. If you want your brand to be thought of as professional, in what ways can you present yourself to project that image?
- Your wardrobe and appearance must reflect your level of professionalism.
- How you carry yourself is important to your brand. For example, if you want to portray confidence, avoid standing with slumped shoulders.

What you say and how you say it

- Be a great listener.
- Work toward developing solid relationships, not sales pitches.
- Be articulate, enunciate, and know your "elevator pitch" (a 30-60 second story about who you are and where you want to go).

Where you go and what you do

- The more professional events and meetings you can attend, the better. Try to be engaged and speak to people you don't know. If you can, find out who will be in attendance prior to the event and do some research on them or their company to perhaps find commonalities. It is important to restrict it to well-known information only (undergrad institution, previous employer, etc.); otherwise it could be viewed as overly intrusive.

Other Tips

- Avoid typos, grammatical errors, and using "texting" language (except when appropriate on Twitter). Have your resume, your cover letter, and your profile proofread by someone else at the very least, but making an appointment with someone in our Office is the best way to ensure you are putting your best foot forward.
- Regulate information and postings – use privacy controls when appropriate and be sure to step back and ask yourself if the post, tweet, or link that you want to put out there is professional?
- Be consistent – ensure that the information you post through all of your social media accounts, your resume, and your personal presence reflects a uniform brand and leaves no doubt about your level of professionalism.
- Don't go overboard – it is not necessary to create a personal logo, or brand, in a literal sense, unless you own your own business or practice.
- Put yourself out there – the more your brand is known, the more opportunities will arise!
- As your career evolves, so will your personal brand! Adjust accordingly.

Adapted from <https://www.northeastern.edu/graduate/blog/tips-for-building-your-personal-brand/>