



PERSONAL BRAND GUIDE

Welcome to GetSmarter's Personal Brand Guide. This guide has been created to help you, the South African working professional, develop an understanding of how and why you need to build your personal brand in order to advance in your career. Use this guide to practically apply the tips and knowledge to successfully harness, shape and market your best career asset, you.

LEARNING TO LEVERAGE YOURSELF

In the modern working world, it is no longer enough to rely on an exceptional CV to advance your career. Employers, clients, colleagues, business acquaintances and managers are increasingly turning to alternate channels to gather information about you, whether you like it or not.

It is now necessary to make sure that the information that is available about you promotes or sells your professionalism, personality and ability. In a way, you are now a marketer for your very own brand, brand YOU. How you manage this can make (or break) your career success in today's competitive talent market.

SO, WHAT IS A PERSONAL BRAND?

To put it simply, your personal brand is your professional reputation. It's how you choose to package and communicate yourself, your career and your skill set. Whether you are actively managing it or not, you already have some form of personal brand.

YOUR PERSONAL BRAND CAN ALLOW YOU TO:

- Establish credibility
- Increase your online influence
- Secure work and career growth
- Attract employment opportunities
- Expand your professional network

STAT 1:

According to Business Week,

87%

of headhunters use Google and social networks to make decisions about candidates

STAT 2:

75%

of recruiters have eliminated candidates based on what Google revealed.

ACTION 1: GOOGLE YOURSELF

People make decisions about you based on what they can find on the internet. The easiest way for someone to check your credibility is through a simple Google search.

So, how are you faring?

Type your name into Google.com and see what comes up in the search results.

CHECKLIST: GOOGLING YOURSELF

- Y/N Are these search results what you were expecting?
- Y/N Are you comfortable with your colleagues, clients, employer or future employer knowing this information about you?
- Y/N Does this information support your professional image?
- Y/N Is this information in line with your career goals and vision?

Your online presence should add credibility to your CV, confirming who you say you are and add a sophistication and authority to your personal brand.

Ultimately you want to make sure the information that a Google search brings up about you is accurate, updated, and reflects what your personal brand stands for.

TIP: Set up a free Google Alert for your name to ensure you know what is being published about you online. Every time your name is mentioned publicly online, you will receive an email with the link.

TIP

Try a few different search criteria. For example: your full name, your full name plus your industry, and your full name plus your location. Remember to also check the “Images” tab for any inappropriate images that might have been pulled from your social media channels. Under “Search Tools” change your location to your country to see results specific to your location.



MANAGE YOUR DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

The information that Google reveals is what you, and what others, have shared about you on public online platforms. Knowing what you've got out there is the first step to shaping your personal brand moving forward.



92% of companies use social media for recruiting.



3 OF 4 hiring managers and recruiters check candidates social profiles, even if they aren't provided.



1 OF 3 employers rejected candidates based on something they found on social profiles.

ACTION 2: CLEAN UP YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

1 What privacy settings do you currently have on your profiles on Facebook, Twitter, Google+ or LinkedIn?

2 Do you have anything compromising on any of your profiles, such as inappropriate (or out of context) photos that you've been tagged in; opinionated posts or comments that you've shared relating to sensitive topics; information in your bio that could potentially position you in a bad light?

3 Do you have any inactive social media accounts or blogs that you may have forgotten about?

4 Are you mentioned on any third party websites that could be detrimental to your personal brand? If so, can you contact that website and remove the mention?

TIP

Shying away from joining social media channels or ensuring everything about yourself online is "top secret" may also negatively impact your personal brand. Online is the perfect way to build your personal and professional personality, and it is possible to enjoy a personal online presence, while maintaining the professionalism of your personal brand.

DID YOU KNOW...

Justine Succo, former head of corporate communications for **InterActive Corp**, was fired over a controversial tweet sent just before she boarded an 11-hour flight from London to Cape Town. During her flight and unbeknownst to her, the tweet destroyed her personal brand in seconds, as the Twitter community banded together in outrage, to make her an internet phenomenon. The initial tweet was retweeted over 2,000 times.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Your personal brand is your professional reputation, and it is important when it comes to establishing credibility, attracting opportunities, expanding your network, securing work and increasing your online influence.
- Having no personal information on Google can be just as brand damaging as having inappropriate or irrelevant information.
- It is important to monitor what you publish on social media, and keep your privacy settings in check.

TIP

For more information on how to manage your privacy settings on Facebook, click [here](#).



BUILDING AND DEFINING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

If you've gotten this far, you have probably succeeded in wiping the slate clean and you're ready to start the real work involved in building and defining your personal brand. The key here is to define what you want to be known for, and build it into your brand from the bottom up.

ACTION 3: START WITH WHAT YOU HAVE

- What social media profiles do you have?
- Have you defined which social media profiles you will use to position yourself professionally, and which will be strictly personal?
- Do you have a personal email account? Is the name of this email account professional?
- Do you keep up to date with industry news?
- Do you attend any networking events?
- Do you have current, professional, personal business cards?
- Do you have your own blog or website? Do you post regularly?

Can you say yes to just one of the above? If so, you've already started building your personal brand. Now it's time to work on shaping and strengthening it.

TIP:

The username and domain you choose to use in your email address can impact your personal brand. For example, **hello@marysmith.com** or **marysmith@hotmail.com** portrays a much more polished and professional image than **mary_123@yahoo.co.uk**.

“All of us need to understand the importance of branding. We are CEOs of our own companies: Me Inc. To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You”

– TOM PETERS,
AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN

DEFINING BRAND YOU:

While crafting the perfect personal brand, it's important to define the consistent image you're going to be presenting about yourself. A poorly defined brand that conveys too many different messages and values can be detrimental for your career advancement. You'll need to take into account who you are, how others perceive you, and who you want to become professionally. If you don't define these things, the public will define them for you, by what is already available. Now is your chance to define yourself, and your career.

- What makes you unique?
- What is the one thing that you do better than anyone else?
- What do you stand for above all else i.e. your personal values?
- What three words would your colleagues, clients or friends use to describe you? What three words would you use to define yourself? Are they aligned?
- What makes you get out of bed in the morning?
- What skills do you bring to the table that others don't?
- What legacy do you want to leave behind one day?

ACTION 4: CREATE YOUR PERSONAL VALUE PROPOSITION

Who are you? It's time to identify what makes you distinct from the rest. Answering the following questions can help you define your perfect personal brand:

Once you have outlined your own personal value proposition, you can begin to associate it with what you do, and how you do it. Use the answers to the questions above to craft your own personal mission and vision statements that can be used in your CV and online.

TIPS WHEN DEFINING & IMPLEMENTING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

- Be authentic
- Differentiate yourself
- Show progress, not perfection
- Showcase your strengths
- Believe in your own brand

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- You already own a personal brand whether you actively manage it or not
- Start with the basics and build upwards. Pay attention to the detail: your email address is just as important as your activity on social media
- If you don't define your personal brand, somebody else will

TIP:

Don't be put off by the vast array of online platforms – you don't have to be on them all, and some may be more suited to showcase your skills or to network in your industry. The channels you select should be suited to your personal brand and your personal value proposition. Pick one or two and manage them well, rather than spreading your time across several.



*We have to dare to be ourselves,
however frightening or strange that
self may prove to be.*

– MARY SARTON

PUTTING YOUR BRAND TO WORK

Successful personal branding means managing and influencing how others perceive you. It's one thing to define your personal brand statement, but another to actually maintain this position. Portraying a unique but consistent brand across everything from your email address and dress code, through to your CV and what you post on social media can directly and positively impact your career advancement. Here are some practical and unique ways to implement your personal brand

1 UPDATE YOUR CV TO REFLECT YOUR BRAND

Have you given much thought to how you present your CV?

Do you represent yourself in a unique light; a way that helps you stand out when you're stacked high on a pile of other CVs? A CV does not have to be a PDF or Word document.

Think of ways to add your unique flair in this very important, brand-positioning document:



INFOGRAPHIC CV – Highlight the great numbers and facts about yourself and your work experience in a visually appealing way, [similar to this example](#).



VIDEO CV – Show off what is not written on your traditional CV, while highlighting all the usual relevant information, with a video CV. Consider this your professional teaser trailer.



SOCIAL CV – Help employers and recruiters find the right information about you, by including links to your social media platforms (such as LinkedIn and Twitter) in your bio.



WEB-BASED CV – Put your CV online in the form of your own branded website, and instead of attaching a PDF document, include a link to your website in your cover letter.

Take a look at these great visual CV [examples](#) that position people's personal brands in an innovative, yet professional way.

TIP:

If you aren't keen on hiring a designer to help you with your own branded CV, try these free tools online: [cvmaker](#), [onlinecv](#), [doyoubuzz](#), [LiveCareer](#).

2 NETWORK TO MARKET YOUR BRAND

Face-to-face networking creates a lasting impression for the people you meet and is the perfect opportunity to showcase your personal brand to like-minded individuals in your industry. It's a great way to build relationships as well as a select community around yourself, and it is actually easier and cheaper than it seems:

1 Follow industry experts or career mentors on Twitter and LinkedIn. Start a conversation with them by interacting with their posts regularly, in a way that positions you as a like-minded individual.

2 Join groups on LinkedIn that are relevant to your career path or aspirations. Ensure you are an active participant in these groups or on other forums related to your industry, and that you share relevant and current information to position yourself as a credible source.

3 Attend networking events regularly. If you're unsure of where to start looking, try [Business Networking Meetup Groups](#), then search for your country and city.

TIP

Johannesburg Business Club, Cape Town Business Club, and Durban Business Club are some of the biggest SA-based [LinkedIn groups](#) for working professionals.





3 CREATE BRANDED BUSINESS CARDS

Very few employers will supply you with business cards these days. Yet business cards are an extremely useful tool for communicating your personal brand. If you are going to work on being an expert networker, you need to have your own branded business cards that you can hand out at every opportunity. You never know who you might meet next, or how they could help you succeed in your career. Personal business cards can be an easy, cost-effective, and efficient means of making sure your name is remembered after a meet-up.

CHECKLIST: WHAT TO INCLUDE ON YOUR BUSINESS CARD

- Your full name and business
- Your title
- Your personal value proposition i.e. the value you offer and the reason your target audience should buy into you. Think of this as your personal brand promise.
- Your contact information (email and telephone number), as well as your social media and website/blog links if you are using those for personal branding purposes.

Networking is marketing. Marketing yourself, marketing your uniqueness, marketing what you stand for

**– CHRISTINE COMAFORD-LYNCH,
FORBES LEADERSHIP,
BLOGGER**

4 START A PERSONAL BLOG OR WEBSITE

Your website or blog is akin to being your online business card, with even more scope to express your personal brand. It's the perfect opportunity to position yourself and sell your skills and personality, as well as increase your visibility and build credibility to support your other personal branding efforts.

GETTING STARTED ON YOUR BLOG OR WEBSITE:

1 There are many free tools available to start a blog or website, such as [Wordpress](#) or [Tumblr](#). A simple Google search can reveal many user-friendly tutorials on how to get started.

2 Once your blog or website is up and running, spend time considering what content you will share to position your personal brand appropriately. Perhaps you'll only want to showcase your personal portfolio of work, or perhaps you want to write articles on topics relevant to your industry to position yourself as a thought leader in the industry.

3 There is more to a blog than writing an article every now and then. You need to learn to market your blog. Share your posts on your social media profiles, and include a link to your website or blog in your CV.

TIP

The [UCT Web Design short course](#) teaches you skills in how to start a website or blog using the popular blogging system, WordPress.



6 WAYS HAVING A PERSONAL WEBSITE OR BLOG CAN SUPPORT YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

1 It allows you to establish expertise in your field and position yourself as a thought leader or industry expert.

2 It is the perfect opportunity to showcase your personal values, what drives and motivates you, and what makes you unique.

3 It shows you are tech-savvy and have an online presence besides social media, a requirement gaining momentum in today's work environment.

4 It adds credibility to your CV and allows you to demonstrate transparency in your intentions, involvements and past experience.

5 It can be a great way to establish key relationships, by sharing commentary on other influential leaders' online content, and linking to their content.

6 It illustrates and demonstrates your ability to convey information professionally in a written form. Written communication skills are crucial for success in the modern workplace.

The keys to brand success are self-definition, transparency, authenticity and accountability.

- SIMON MAINWARING, AWARD-WINNING BRANDING CONSULTANT



TIP:

Having two Twitter profiles allows you to keep your personal and professional images separate and also limits annoying your friends and family with industry posts.

5 MAINTAINING CONSISTENCY ACROSS YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

Every public online action you take should support your personal brand. Just like your business cards and email address, everything you tweet, pin, like, share or comment on reflects your personal brand, and says something about who you are and what you stand for.

CHECKLIST: YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

Are your social media channels accurately reflecting your personal brand? Use the following checklist to see:

Do your cover photo and profile picture accurately reflect your personal brand?

Are you a member of relevant groups on LinkedIn and do you participate in these groups regularly?

Do you share content that sets you up as an industry expert or thought leader across your social media platforms?

Are your profiles complete?

Is your LinkedIn profile set to public to increase your findability?

If you have a blog or website, have you included a link to it on your social media channels?

Do you have any recommendations visible on your LinkedIn profile? If not, could you approach colleagues or business acquaintances to recommend you?

Can the public see your social media profiles? If yes, does the content you are sharing support your personal brand positioning?

Do you use a language and tone that supports and reflects your personal brand when interacting on your social media channels?

Do you use Twitter hashtags to grow your audience reach on Twitter?

Do you follow and interact with influential industry leaders, as well as take note of and share the content they post?

6 LIVE YOUR PERSONAL BRAND IN PERSON

Without realising it, your behaviour, attitude, communication skills and dress code can all have an effect on how people perceive you. Many modern workplaces don't have a dress code, yet what you wear does matter.

It all comes down to whether your outward appearance and behaviour reiterates what you stand for. Consider how you want others to perceive you professionally. How would you feel if someone you've met before forgot your name? What does the way you dress say about you? The key to your career advancement could lie in making a great first impression.

KEY TAKEAWAYS: Are your social media channels accurately reflecting your personal brand? Use the following checklist to see:

- You can positively impact your career advancement by portraying a consistent but unique personal brand across all your channels, both online and offline.
- 6 ways to practically implement your personal brand, including:



Updating your CV



Finding networking opportunities



Creating business cards



Starting a personal blog or website



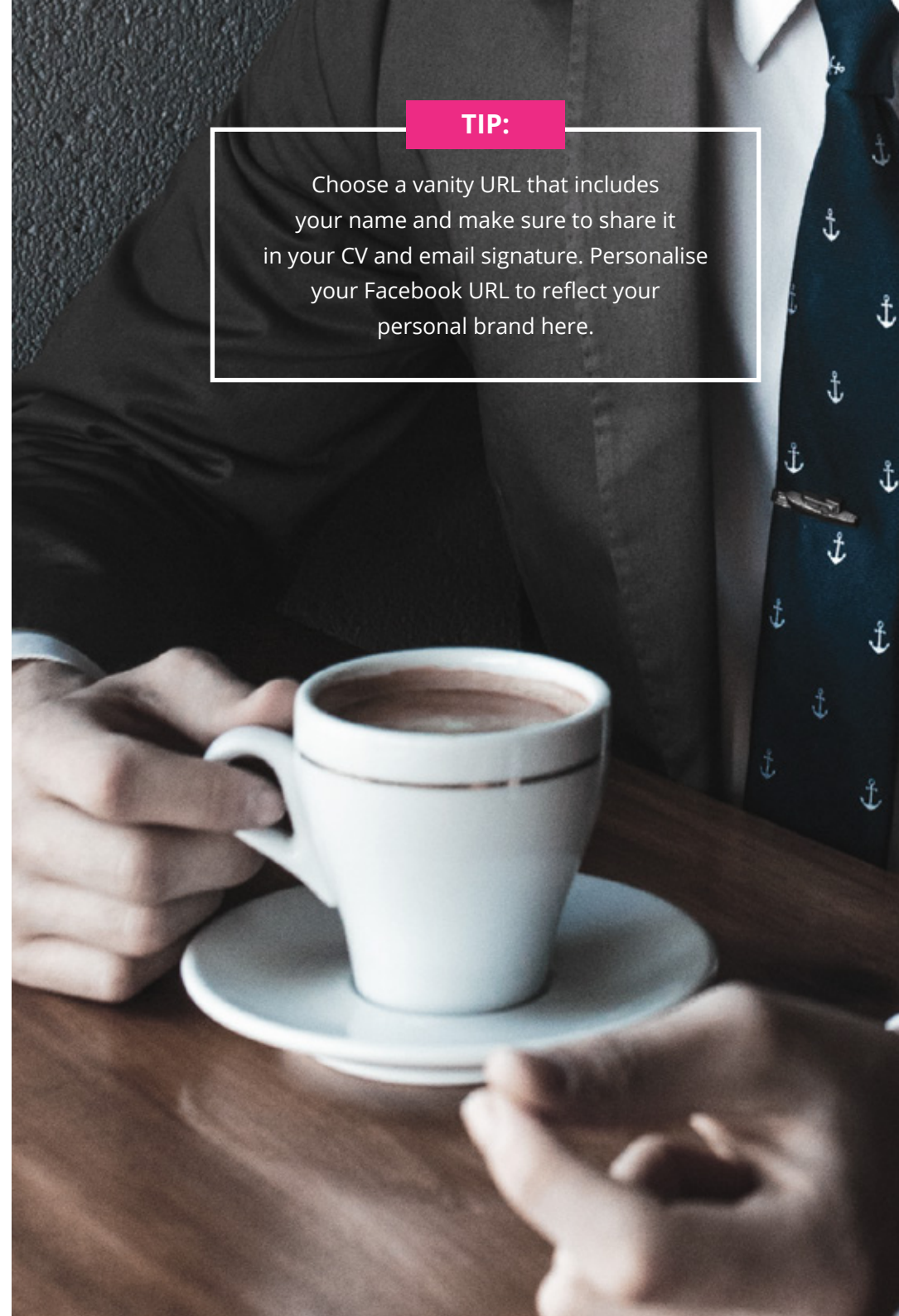
Building your brand online



Living your personal brand daily

TIP:

Choose a vanity URL that includes your name and make sure to share it in your CV and email signature. Personalise your Facebook URL to reflect your personal brand here.



NURTURING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

The unfortunate truth about building your personal brand is that it's not just a once-off effort. A personal brand is something that you need to commit to maintaining and nurturing for the rest of your life; it's something that needs to remain consistent irrespective of changes in your career or professional focus.

ACTION 5: ACHIEVING SUCCESS WITH YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

1 PROVE YOU'RE COMMITTED TO SELF-DEVELOPMENT

Every professional knows that the career landscape, market demands and industry are ever changing. The question is, how well can you adapt?

Continuously show an ability to learn, adapt and keep current, and develop a skill set that makes you indispensable.

2 BUILD CREDIBILITY THROUGH SOCIAL PROOF

It's one thing to say who you are and what you're capable of but do you have proof? Whether you have social proof through recommendations on LinkedIn, mentions on Twitter, certificates that validate your continuous education, or profiles on reputable industry websites, you need to leverage credibility to get your personal brand recognised. You will be judged by what you say you know, and provide proof thereof.

3 GROW YOUR NETWORK AND BUILD ASSOCIATIONS THAT WORK TO COMPLEMENT YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

The old saying of "it's not what you know, it's who you know" rings true when it comes to your personal brand. Work to attract associations that will benefit your personal brand and ultimately your career.

Skills and talents alone are a dime a dozen, you need to be able to add value to others and build great connections.

**- BERNARD KELVIN CLIVE,
AUTHOR**





4 **BUILD A CONCRETE PORTFOLIO OF YOUR PROGRESSION**

Demonstrate what you are capable of by continuously showcasing what you have achieved, how far you've come, and what obstacles you've successfully managed to overcome along the way. Remember, actions speak louder than words.

5 **KEEP UP MOMENTUM**

Don't stop working on your personal brand. Keep your profiles up to date; regularly attend industry events to keep yourself top of mind;

engage on social media consistently; and ensure a constant stream of information on your blog or website.

Your aim is for people to know who you are, what you stand for and what you're capable of, without ever having met you in person. If you have managed to follow the steps of the guide, you should by now have all the right foundations in place for a winning personal brand, and a head start towards advancing your career - the future of your career is in your own hands, and now is the time to take charge!

ABOUT GETSMARTER:

GetSmarter is a premier online education company that partners with prestigious universities and leading organisations to offer a variety of online courses and education solutions.



BE SO GOOD THEY CAN'T IGNORE YOU

Master strategic brand management - for yourself or your business
- with the biggest names in SA.

**THE UCT BRAND MANAGEMENT
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