



## **AN INTRODUCTION TO PERSONAL BRANDING**

*A Revolution in the Way We  
Manage our Careers*

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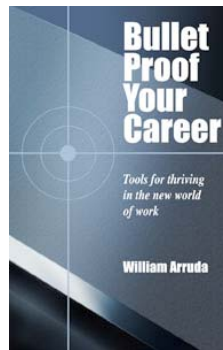
**An Introduction to Personal Branding**  
*A Revolution in the Way We Manage Our Careers*

by William Arruda

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## **The Benefits of Branding**

Since pre-industrial times, people have used branding to develop strong, enduring relationships with customers. Townspeople and villagers who frequented Mr. Jones' pie shop knew that his pies came with real fruit and were always handed out with a warm smile. Mr. Jones made customers feel so special that they didn't mind the long walk, waiting in line and the extra two cents the pies cost.

Today, branding still provides those same benefits—though on a larger, more global scale. For example, Volvo is differentiated from other car companies by its promise of safety and security. Disney stands for family entertainment. Virgin is irreverent and risk-taking.

Corporations benefit from strong branding in many ways. Branding enables them to:

- *Charge a premium for their products and services.* Ever think about why you're paying so much for a Starbucks coffee, when the coffee shop next door charges about half the price?

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- *Increase their market valuation.* Only 10% of Coca-Cola's market valuation derives from the company's physical assets. The strength of its brand accounts for almost 90%.
  - *Extend their product or service lines.* Marriott has used its strong brand name to create new chains of hotels (e.g., Marriott Courtyard) for a different target market (in this case, business travelers who wanted a more home-like experience, or families traveling with children).
  - *Thrive during an economic downturn.* Strong brands survive difficult times. Consider who made it through the dot-com bust alive. It's the strong technology brands with enduring customer relationships—such as IBM and Sun Microsystems—that have succeeded in the e-business arena.
  - *Attract and retain quality employees and partners.* Do you know anyone who would rather work for or with a struggling, unknown company than for a strong brand? We all want our resumes or CVs to boast lengthy experience with strong brand names. When we associate ourselves with these brands, our own professional reputations shine.

But branding isn't just for giant corporations or products on the grocery-store shelf anymore. In the new millennium, *everything* is a brand. London is the world's hippest city. Silicon Valley is the

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California-centered locus of cutting-edge technology. Madonna is an entertainment phenomenon unto herself. Richard Branson is the intrepid entrepreneur. And Oprah is the human brand of show business. That's right: Branding is for people, too.

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## Personal Branding

Just as large companies cultivate their corporate brands, professionals and business owners can—and should—do the same for themselves. In fact, *personal branding* is becoming increasingly essential to professional success. Gone are the days where your value to your company or clients from your offerings alone. Today, people want to buy brands—unique promises of value. Personal branding helps you put yourself ahead of the pack. And each of us has what it takes to be a strong brand.

***"We all have brands worthy of remark."  
Tom Peters***

### *What Is Personal Branding?*

Personal Branding is a way of clarifying and communicating what makes you different and special—and using those qualities to guide your career or business decisions. It's about understanding your unique attributes—your strengths, skills, values, and passions—and using them to separate yourself from your competitors or peers. In this sense, personal branding means clearly communicating the *unique promise of value* that you have to offer your employer or your clients.

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***"The truth is that all of us attain the greatest success and happiness possible in this life whenever we use our native capacities to their greatest extent."***  
**Dr. Smiley Blanton**

Personal branding is *not* just a logo or tag line. And it's not just a series of marketing activities. There are a lot of companies out there offering what they call personal branding services, but what they're selling is no more than personal marketing. They'll build you an identity system, a tag line and logo, and a set of communications tools. But they will have missed the core of personal branding: your unique promise of value.

Successful personal branding is authentic. That means you use your values, passions, and strengths to distinguish yourself from others so you can get the resources you need to advance in your career. Just like with strong corporate brands, successful personal brands are not created; they are uncovered, strengthened, and nurtured.

Because winning brands derive from their unique characteristics, it's critical to understand who you are and what you have to offer *before* embarking on logos, tag lines, and a color palette for your stationery. Understanding your strengths, passions, goals, and

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values will help you focus your brand and translate it into professional success and personal satisfaction. You can learn more about uncovering your personal brand at [www.reachcc.com/extract](http://www.reachcc.com/extract).

### *Why Is Personal Branding So Important?*

Business is becoming more and more competitive. There are numerous others who seemingly offer the same thing that you do – consultants providing the same services and professionals with the same skills and experience. Whether you are an employee in a company or an entrepreneur, you need to stand out from myriad others so that you can be in control of your business or career.

We all know people who just *stand out*. And what makes them stand out is usually not where they went to school or how many years of experience they have. It is usually something more intrinsic, something that is core to who they are and what they believe. Their differentiation is what makes them successful. And you can use what makes you unique to stand out and greatly expand your success, too.

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When you have uncovered, built, and nurtured a winning brand, you'll reap a wealth of benefits, including:

- Enhancing your visibility and presence
- Creating a clear focus for your career or business
- Boosting your revenue, increasing your compensation
- Thriving during economic downturns
- Expanding into new business areas
- Ultimately reaching your goals
- Understanding yourself better
- Increasing your confidence

### *Who Is Personal Branding For?*

Personal branding is for professionals who want to achieve their goals while being true to themselves. A distinctive, memorable and compelling personal brand provides the guidance you need to shape your strategy, and adds enormous value to your business or career. Understanding your brand helps you define your professional direction and keep it on course even during difficult times. It also enables you to uniquely position yourself in a market teeming with rivals. Finally, it helps you stay focused on how you create value for customers (whether they be internal to your

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organization or clients outside of your company). When you achieve all that, not only do you expand your professional success, but you get profound satisfaction from your work.

The days of working for the same company for 30 years, and wearing the corporate uniform are all fading into the past. Creativity and differentiation define success today. Personal branding is about expressing something special, unique, relevant and different. It is permission to be your authentic self.

***"The most exhausting thing you can be is  
inauthentic."***  
**Anne Morrow Lindbergh**

Personal branding is the future of career management. It is just a matter of time before all of your colleagues and competitors start thinking of themselves as brands. If you 'jump on the brandwagon' now, you will have a head start on your competition.

But before you get started uncovering and building your brand, I recommend you take the Reach personal brand quiz. You'll find it at [www.reachcc.com/brandquiz](http://www.reachcc.com/brandquiz).

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Regardless of your score on the quiz, you can increase your personal brand value and greatly expand your success. Refer to the **Reach 1-2-3 Success! Personal Branding Process** at [www.reachcc.com](http://www.reachcc.com) for all the tools and information you.

To get started building your brand on your own terms and at your own pace, check out [www.reachbrandingclub.com](http://www.reachbrandingclub.com). The Reach Branding Club gives you everything you need to succeed.

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## About the Author



Dubbed the ‘Personal Branding Guru’ by the media and clients alike, William Arruda works with individuals and organizations to build strong, memorable brands. Combining his 20 years of international branding expertise with his passion for people, he founded Reach, the world’s first branding consultancy focused on the human side of branding.

William has appeared on BBC TV, the Discovery Channel and Radio America. He has worked with some of the world’s strongest brands, including Microsoft, Ogilvy and Mather and IBM. He has published numerous articles in publications ranging from the *Wall Street Journal* to the brandchannel.com and he has written for the American Marketing Association, the Chartered Institute of Marketing and PR News. William is also the author of *Health without the Health Club* and the upcoming personal branding book, *Bullet Proof Your Career* ([www.bulletproofyourcareer.com](http://www.bulletproofyourcareer.com)). He is a member of the International Coach Federation, holds a Master's Degree in Education and speaks regularly to audiences around the world.

***"What makes you unique makes you successful."***  
**William Arruda**

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## Resources and Other Offerings from Reach



The *Brand Discovery Workbook* with over twenty exercises to help you unearth your brand. [www.reachcc.com/extract](http://www.reachcc.com/extract)



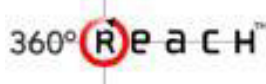
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**Reach Certification:** Use the Reach personal branding methodology with your clients: [www.reachcc.com/certification](http://www.reachcc.com/certification)

### **Personal Branding Resources:**

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