

Personal Brand and Why It's So Important

Your personal brand is the overall impression that comes to mind when people are in your presence. It's the mental picture they conjure up when they hear or speak your name. It's your *gestalt*, that collection of personal characteristics and professional results that represent you to the world.

We often assume that delivering the expected results is all that it takes to move ahead. That's rarely the case. Everything sends a message about you to others. And whether or not you're conscious of what your brand is, you still have one. That brand can be positive, negative, mixed, or neutral and affects different people in a variety of ways. Not everyone will be favorably impressed with your brand. They don't need to be. But for those to whom you are seeking to sell your product, that is, YOU, your brand needs to resonate positively with them.

The challenge then is to be the master of your own personal brand identity. That means that instead of letting others define your brand for you, you identify the elements of your brand and define it for yourself. How can you do that? You can shape perceptions of you simply by defining and acting in accordance with your leadership ideal and presenting yourself in a compelling, persuasive manner. Express yourself and what you stand for to everyone you interact with – clients, colleagues, family, friends, everyone. Do this consciously and consistently, and you will create an effective and powerful personal brand.

The following will help you discover the brand message you want to put out into the world. By knowing and managing your personal brand, you are more in control of what you want your message to be.

**To bring up your scores in all areas of this Leader Report,
take our 6-session webinar, Your Brand Matters.**

**This sample report contains only 1 area (Packaging) of the
4 areas of personal brand.**

Leader Report: Your Brand Matters)(Sample Report)

Scoring

Your Overall Score

- If your score is between 80 and 100, you Rock! Your personal brand is in excellent shape. If you have scores below 3 in any area, though, you may want to bring them up to a 3.
- If your score is between 60 and 79, you're probably in pretty good shape, but may have some areas where you need to focus.
- If your score 59 or below, you have some work to do. Don't wait. Choose one section with the lowest scores and develop a plan so that you can start to make the appropriate changes now.

Individual Sections

If your score in any one of the four sections is:

- between 20 and 25, you've knocked it out of the park. You have a very high degree of talent in making sure that your brand matters.
 - between 15 and 19, you're doing great. You have an average to high degree of talent in making sure that your brand matters.
 - 14 or lower, this is an area you'll need to develop depending on where you are headed in your career.
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About the future of your Brand

- As you look through the next several pages, decide which of the 4 categories you want to increase and choose up to 2 focus areas.
- Develop a 6-month plan, with monthly goals, for getting yourself there. **Download the electronic 6-month plan** with instructions and sample goals from the Leader Report section on our site.

Leader Report: Your Brand Matters) (Sample Report)

Packaging

Total Score _____

Score	Transfer your scores here from your on-line assessment results.
	11. My work, management, and leadership styles are highly valued (fit in well) for the work culture that I'm in.
	12. My leadership presence (the way I talk, walk, dress) is consistent with the brand message I want to convey.
	13. My electronic presentations, reports, other materials, emails, etc. have a consistent look and feel that aligns with the brand message I want to convey.
	14. My work space is organized such that it gives off a positive impression for leaders at my level and above.
	15. Under pressure, I handle myself in a way that sends the message that I am a confident leader.

A well-put-together package gets noticed. See each "First Step" below for initial ways to adjust your image. Take the *Your Brand Matters* webinar for a deep dive into how you can capture the best parts of your personal brand so that they consistently represent you.

Question 11: Not every style fits with the organizational culture you're in. For example, in a very laid-back culture, a work style that's more "Wall Street" might not fly. The same is true for your management and leadership styles. If they are very different from the organizational culture you're in, and, if the culture you're in doesn't prize differences in approach, you may need to make some adjustments. **First Step:** Note the work styles, management styles and leadership styles of those who are successful in your work culture. What are they? How are your work, management and leadership styles the same or different from theirs? What 2 things (in you) can you adjust right now?

Question 12: First, you need to know what brand message you want to send, then you need to align everything about you with it. For example, if you see yourself as a decisive leader but you are hesitant to speak up at the right moment, there will be a mismatch between what is conveyed and what you want to convey. If you shrug your shoulders when you talk, you'll send a message that you're not sure. **First Step:** Make a checklist of the attributes of someone who has the leadership presence that you aspire to. Then see how your current attributes match up against that list.

Question 13: **First Step:** Look over your own work products -- what goes out the door or what goes out electronically -- and see if your brand is well represented.

Question 14: **First Step:** First, decide what impression you want to give off about yourself. Next, assess your work space to see how it's projecting the image you want. Finally, make any needed adjustments to your workspace to represent the impression you want.

Question 15: If under pressure you (for example) get defensive, give up your voice, strike back at others, or get overly emotional, and you do it consistently, you are sending a message and leaving an impression. And if that impression conflicts with how you want your brand to represent you, that's a problem. **First Step:** Start noticing how you respond under pressure. And if it's not the way that's getting you noticed positively, note what behaviors you need to acquire (fast), what behaviors need to be changed, and which ones you need to throw out altogether.