

Establishing Your Leadership Brand

Six Simple Steps

All leaders have a leadership brand, either intentionally or unintentionally. The right one can have huge benefits. Likewise, the wrong one, significant consequences related to your effectiveness as a leader. A leadership brand communicates your value proposition and enables you to maximize your *impact* and *influence*. How do you build a leadership brand? You must be intentional and focused. Here are six simple steps to help you establish your leadership brand. Use the space provided to complete each step. *Validate every step by checking with your stakeholders.*

1. *Identify Your Leadership Expectations*

Answer these key questions and write down your answers:

- What results do I want to deliver in the next 12 months?
- Who are my key stakeholders – boss, team, peers, customers, employees, investors, etc. – and what are their expectations?
- What are the expectations of my company?

2. *Describe Your Real Leadership Self*

This step is about substantiating your current state. Think about the results of any assessments you have taken and feedback you have received. Answer these key questions and write down your answers:

- Who am I inherently as a person, professional, leader (strengths and weaknesses)?
- What are the leadership attributes and behaviors that I already demonstrate and am known for?
- What are my values? My passions?

3. Prescribe Your Ideal Leadership Self

This step allows you to think about the type of leader you aspire to be. Answer these questions and write down your answers:

- What are the qualities I would *ideally* like to represent as a leader?
- What are the attributes required for future leadership roles in my profession?

4. Define Your Brand Identity

This step helps you begin to really crystallize the essence of your leadership brand. Answer these questions, experiment with different words and phrases, and write down your answers:

- Are there key words or descriptors that capture both the traits that come naturally in your *real* leadership self with those that are critical for your *ideal* leadership self?
- What words or descriptors best describe what you want to be known for and how you will have to act to get there?
- Can you narrow your words down to **only six** descriptors? Is there a combination of three, two-word phrases that really capture your brand?

5. Construct Your Leadership Brand Statement

Consider all that you've identified in the previous four steps. In this step, you will bring everything together in a leadership brand statement that connects what you want to be known for with your desired results.

Complete the phrase:

I want to be known for _____

so I can deliver _____

_____.

Now, before finalizing your brand statement, validate it with these pressure test questions and revise it accordingly:

- ✓ Is this the brand statement that best represents who I am and what I can do?
- ✓ Is this brand something that creates value within my company and my stakeholders?
- ✓ What risks am I taking in living this brand statement?
- ✓ Can I live this brand?

6. ***Make Your Leadership Brand Real***

Here is your final and most important step. This is how you make certain that you will *live* your brand identity, making it sustainable and ensuring that it's embodied in your day-to-day work.

- i. First, share your brand statement with your stakeholders and seek actionable suggestions, on a practical level, on what you can do to live your brand every day.
- ii. Develop an action plan that you can commit to; make sure your actions steps are achievable and observable.
- iii. Share your action plan and commitment with your stakeholders.
- iv. Create an ongoing feedback loop with stakeholders, checking in with them regularly to get their thoughts and suggestions on how you are doing.

Establishing your leadership brand is an ongoing, iterative process. It requires discipline and focus. It's also contextual to the role and responsibilities you have as a leader. Over the course of your career, your leadership brand should evolve in response to the expectations you face at different times in your professional life. Leaders with the self-awareness and drive to evolve their leadership brands are more likely to be successful over the long term. Good luck!