

# What Is Your Personal Brand Promise?

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A personal brand goes much beyond what you have done so far in your career!



26 August, 2018 by Rahul Gupta

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The American Marketing Association defines a brand as "a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors".

### Learning from Product Branding

When we buy a Gillette product vs. another razor we are ready to pay a premium price as the product experience differentiates it from the rest. Similarly, when we buy an Apple phone, we pay a huge premium compared to other smartphones as the product experience is quite superior. Perhaps a similar feeling would be by owning a Tesla car. These companies have been the hallmark of innovation and their brand name represent superior product experience compared to others.

There are other brands who create the perception of superior quality in our mind. Such perception may not be measurable and is more intangible in nature. They mainly achieve this through an emotional connect that makes you feel that being associated with the brand makes you different. Brands like Tumi, Louis Vuitton, Coach, Burberry, Hugo Boss, Canali, Armani Exchange, Michael Kors, Jimmy Cho etc. are positioned as luxury brands and we feel emotionally connected having bought them and by keeping them as prized possessions.

### What is a Personal Brand?

Tom Peters, an American Writer and author of bestseller In Search of Excellence, wrote an article in 1997 titled The Brand Called You. The article speaks extensively on the Why and What of Personal Brand. As per Wikipedia, this article is the first mention of personal brand as a topic.

Personal brand combines the two aspects of branding that is mentioned in the beginning of this article. However, the product in context is the individual who wants to position himself/herself in the mind of others. Personal brand stands for promise of the value that you will deliver to your stakeholders.

Just to understand this with few examples, we can see personal brand at play in pretty much every field. [Sachin Tendulkar](#) in Cricket, [Amitabh Bachchan](#) in Movies, M K Gandhi in Politics, Steve Jobs and Bill Gates in IT, Indra Nooyi in FMCG, [Baba Ramdev](#) in Yoga, A R Rahman, R D Burman and Kishore Kumar in Music, APJ Abdul Kalam in Science are just a few examples. Each personality mentioned here triggers a positive image about them in their associated field.

### The five dimensions of personal Brand Equity

As per Marketing guru Philip Kotler, brand equity is the added value endowed on products and services. It may be reflected in the way consumers think, feel, and act with respect to the brand, as well as in the prices, market share, and profitability the brand commands for the firm.

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Investopedia defines Brand equity from a financial angle, brand equity refers to a value premium that a company generates from a product with a recognizable name, when compared to a generic equivalent. This definition is equally applicable to personal brand. A personal brand equity not only helps you establish yourself as a trusted person in your area of expertise but also provides a lot of advantages both financially and otherwise.

**In my experience, the five dimensions of personal brand equity include:**

**Brand Value:** What is the value you add to your stakeholders? If Sales is your area of expertise, are you seen as a Sales leader?

Playing in your strength area helps you shine. One also need to invest in building knowledge, network and community in the area of expertise. This requires careful planning and investment.

**Brand Differentiation:** Are you seen the same way by stakeholders as compared to others in your area of expertise? Do you bring out-of-box thinking on the table?

Thinking different comes by having deep understanding of your industry and functional areas. Also by being in the company of people who are not afraid of expressing contrarian views one often get exposed to various perspectives.

**Brand Visibility:** Are you visible enough to people so that they can see your contributions to body of knowledge, company or society at large?

There is a thin line between creating the right visibility vs. over-communication. Also, visibility comes through meaningful conversations rather than mindless chatter.

**Brand Recall:** Do people remember you or seek your help when they are stuck in a situation? Do they relate you to the area of your expertise?

It is not easy to achieve brand recall. It takes a lot and a combination of the above three dimensions when executed well helps in achieving recall.

**Brand Loyalty:** Do people follow you? Do they contribute or help you when you need it?

Followership is a very important aspect. Today the audience is not easily convinced as data is at their fingertips and if you are not providing value to them, they quickly move on. Most audience is intelligent to differentiate average vs. good.

**The risk of building a personal brand**

While building a personal brand demands a lot of hard work yet the story does not end there. A personal brand also endows one with the responsibility to deliver the brand promise at every interaction point. When the experience differs from the image of your personal brand, it often leads to confusion followed by brand erosion in the mind of others. Continuously investing and improving on the five dimensions of personal brand equity will help manage the expectations better and will help you build a strong personal brand.

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Rahul is passionate about Strategy and Change Management. He has around 15 years of experience in Management Consulting, Business Transformation and driving Strategy and M&A across multiple industries, business domains, technologies & geographies. Rahul holds an MBA from XLRI and is a Gold Medalist in Engineering from Jadavpur University

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As RBI's six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) headed by Governor Urjit Patel has begun its three-day deliberations from yesterday, all eyes are on whether the key rate increased or not. Strongly guided by the persistent inflationary pressures, unabated rupee fall, widening Current Account Deficit (CAD), sky-rocketing crude oil prices and dim central bank's task is well cut out. In an exclusive interview with Manali Jaggi of BW Businessworld, Iyer opines on the factors the RBI can weigh while deciding on the rates it tomorrow. Edited excerpts:-

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