

The
Jobseeker's Guide To
Online **BRANDING**



NEW Thinking For Jobseekers
For Tough Times...

Phyllis R. Neill
WeMentor Social Media Marketing

Not So Great At Computers? You Can Still Find Your Next Job Through Online Branding...

The Jobseekers' Guide To Online Branding Workbook is a real-world step-by-step program compiled from years of personal online brand coaching and "best in class" recommendations from what has worked for people all over the world!

3 main things to keep in mind as you are reading this workbook:

THING #1:

Building an online brand does NOT require you to know HTML or computer programming! I assure you that these principles have been put to the test by MANY job seekers who can get around the internet ok but who know nothing about advanced computer skills, and each of them have had success with the tasks and recommended courses of action I provide here. So don't worry - you are not going to have to become a computer programmer in order to market yourself online!

THING #2:

Understand that building an online personal brand is absolutely essential for your success in today's job market. Ten years ago, building a strong resume and learning networking skills were the two most important things you could do in preparation for a job search. Three to five years ago, spending time browsing online job banks was considered "finding a job online". In today's world of the toughest job market AND roughest economy the world have seen in over fifty years, having a strong resume and searching for jobs online will get you almost NO new job activity by themselves. You must learn some new job seeking skills in order to be even remotely competitive with all the other job seekers out there today.

THING #3:

The things I'm going to teach you in this workbook - very few people are doing all of these things well, and very few are doing all of these things consistently.

Therefore, your shot at success is actually very, very high - if all you do is simply "show up", and execute minimally on the principles I outline in this book.

How great is that!

Phyllis R. Neill is the President & CEO of WeMentor Social Media Marketing, the first company in Birmingham, Alabama to specialize exclusively in the creation and execution of the perfect blend of social media "word-of-mouth" for businesses. Along with business partner David Sher, a lifelong well-respected Birmingham entrepreneur, they have come together to mentor businesses on social media strategies and good old-fashioned marketing.

This book is a gift from WeMentor Social Media Marketing to our friends who have lost their jobs in this tough economy and haven't had to look for a new job in a number of years. Our hope is that this book will give you the tools to market yourself in a completely different, and more effective, way.



We would be delighted if you connected with us in the Social Media World:
www.facebook.com/wementorsmm www.twitter.com/wementorsmm



The Jobseeker's Guide to Online **BRANDING** Workbook



Phyllis Neill

The Jobseeker's Guide to Online Branding

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We help businesses make money with social media marketing.

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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations. You are one of the SMART folks who have decided to take control of your own destiny. To take control of how you are viewed by the outside world. To take control of your image, your PERSONAL BRAND - in order to set you apart and land your next job.

You've probably noticed that businesses are flocking to the Internet, creating their own strong online brands. They are doing some of the same things I'm going to teach YOU to do. They are being successful in moving lots of product and making names for themselves.

So - if it works for businesses, why can't it work for YOU?

Because in many ways, your personal brand is no different from a business' brand. You have a "product" to sell (yourself), you have a "niche" to focus on (your area of work expertise), and a desire to grow your business (get promoted).

But businesses usually have many people on staff that not only have the time to make all this happen; they know a lot about computers!

There are several things I'd like you to keep an open mind about as you read and "work" through this workbook:

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THING #1: understand that building an online personal brand is absolutely essential for your success in today's job market. Ten years ago, building a strong resume and learning networking skills were the two most important things you could do in preparation for a job search. Three to five years ago, spending time browsing online job banks was considered "finding a job online". In today's world of the toughest job market AND roughest economy the world have seen in over fifty years, having a strong resume and searching for jobs online will get you almost NO new job activity by themselves. You must learn some new job seeking skills in order to be even remotely competitive with all the other job seekers out there today.

THING #2: building an online brand does NOT require you to know HTML or computer programming! I assure you that these principles have been put to the test by MANY job seekers who can get around the internet ok but who know nothing about advanced computer skills and each of them has had success with the tasks and recommended courses of action I provide here. So don't worry - you are not going to have to become a computer programmer in order to market yourself online!

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THING #3: I'm going to teach you about things in this workbook which very few people are doing well, and more importantly very few people are doing consistently. Therefore, your shot at success is actually very, very high - if all you do is simply "show up", and execute minimally on the principles I outline in this book. How great is that!

Throughout the upcoming pages of this workbook, I will be taking you through a very organized and detailed approach to create your own strong online personal brand. This process will not happen easily and will not happen without work and dedication on your part. But, I will be with you all the way - coaching, advising, and teaching. I have packed this workbook absolutely full to the brim with checklists, worksheets, exercises, lists, and provocative questions, all designed to help you milk every last drop of value out of my recommendations on building your personal brand.

My hope for you is that by the time you complete this workbook, you will be well-known in your online industry circles, perfectly Google-able, and established on many social networking sites as an "old timer". You will be thought of as a valuable commodity. You will be full of confidence, well-

INTRODUCTION

connected, and well thought of. YOU will have a strong personal brand. And your job search and work life will be better off because of it.

I hope when you finish, you will write me so that I can discover your new personal brand for myself!

I wish you all the very best of luck and hope you won't hesitate to contact me if I can help you in any way.

Sincere regards,



Phyllis Neill

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CHAPTER ONE:



**The Importance of Staying
Competitive Using a Digital
Personal Brand**

CHAPTER ONE:

Staying Competitive Using A Digital Personal Brand

If you are just now re-entering the job search phase of your life for the first time in several years, there's no doubt you are reaching a stunning realization: people are NOT finding jobs the way they used to. The internet is now a primary medium being used to find new jobs for people, and in many more effective ways than just following job boards.

In the "old days", the "personal brand" you relied on in your networking and job seeking efforts was limited to the reputation you'd gained as a professional – what your resume said about you, the way you dressed, and the level of success you'd reached in your career.

Nowadays, your personal brand has become "digital" – that is, your brand is online - whether or not you've paid any attention to it.

Some of you might be reluctant to acknowledge or believe how much influence the internet is having on your job search right now. "Hey; I hit www.monster.com at least once a week to look for jobs; I'm on the internet" is what you might be thinking. "I've got a terrific blue suit, a really strong resume printed on the finest linen paper, and I make a great first impression – I DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THE INTERNET IN MY JOB SEARCH". So – it's time to give you a crash course in what job candidates and HR recruiters are doing on the internet these days.

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INDUSTRY TRENDS

Most of us have heard the statistic that roughly 60% of all new jobs are found by networking. Well, the internet has given birth to a new kind of networking effort we refer to as “social networking”. Social networking is a concept that describes participation in sites on the internet that is designed to draw like-minded individuals into sharing information about themselves with others. There are social networks on the internet for just about any genre you can think of – here are just a handful of examples to show you what I mean:

- Cake decorating - <http://cakeland.ning.com/>
- Bacon lovers - <http://www.mrbaconpants.com/the-social-network-for-bacon-lovers/>
- Motorcycle enthusiasts - <http://www.motozania.com/>
- Women in business – www.womenco.com
- Career networking – www.linkedin.com
- General social – www.facebook.com

The major characteristic of a social network is that you go there to SHARE information, not just read information contributed by others. A social network has participant-driven content and is successful based upon just how much participation it gets.

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So...with all of this in mind...did you also know the following?

- ❑ One in five employers use social networking sites to research potential job candidates. (<http://tinyurl.com/c7233h>)
- ❑ Of all HR professionals using online social networking sites, 53% do so to search for passive candidates. Just over two-thirds say that social networking helps them reach candidates who they otherwise wouldn't know about or couldn't contact. (<http://tinyurl.com/dzx3xg>)
- ❑ LinkedIn officials say the site has seen a 36% increase in membership over the past six months as executives scramble to rebuild their networks.
- ❑ 44% of employers use sites like MySpace and Facebook to check out job candidates, and 39% have looked up the profile of a current employee. (<http://tinyurl.com/d3jqky>)
- ❑ People's social networking site profiles that reveal questionable behavior or attitudes can be harmful to job seekers, as 82% of employers say that something they perceive as negative on a profile would affect their hiring decisions. (<http://tinyurl.com/d3jqky>)

So, by now, I believe you are starting to see the importance of making the decision to begin participating in several social networking sites online. But before you choose the sites in which you will participate, it is important that you first figure out how you want people to view you online. After all, their first impression won't be formed this time by

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watching you speak in a meeting, or seeing the crisp linen paper you used for your resume. So – you’ve got to control from the very beginning exactly how you want to be perceived online. Thank GOODNESS you picked up this book, huh!

CHAPTER TWO



Developing Your Personal Digital Brand

CHAPTER TWO:

Developing Your Digital Personal Brand

Before you leave this chapter, I want you to be able to answer the following questions:

1. What do I want others to know about me in the first 30 seconds of Googling me?
2. What is a personal brand, really - the "no fluff" answer?
3. Why do I need to polish and digitally present my personal brand?

Your Digital Brand

"*Personal Branding*" is the buzz word in the industry right now, and developing the time to create a strong digital personal brand just might be the thing that differentiates you when landing your next job. **Everyone** already has a "reputation" of sorts - when your name is mentioned in a professional setting, there are things that come to the minds of other people. It might be the way you carry yourself, your sense of humor, how knowledgeable you are about certain subjects, how detailed (or not!) you are, and a myriad of other things. In the past, these "perceptions" that made up your personal brand were relatively hard to quantify - unless you happened to be a celebrity!

By now, you've already read Chapter One which contained all of the staggering statistics about who is online, and how much interaction is now taking place online. Well, this means that your "personal brand" no longer

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has to be word-of-mouth, or vague and amorphous. Your brand is touchable, tangible, readable, and viewable online. It has the capability to really "wow" people, but it also has the potential to bore people to DEATH.

IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME...go right now to www.google.com and type in your name surrounded by quotes, and see what comes up (use whatever name you use in a professional setting – for example, I would use “Phyllis R. Neill”, including my middle initial.) In fact, write down the top 10 sites that come up within the first 5 pages of your Google search, because I will want you to refer back to this later. Go ahead - I'll wait:

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TOP 10 WEBSITES THAT COME UP WHEN I GOOGLE MY NAME:

1.....

2.....

3.....

4.....

5.....

6.....

7.....

8.....

9.....

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10.....

Google Quiz Results: (circle "yes" or "no")

1. Did any of the above links contain a picture of you? (add one extra point if picture is a professional headshot) **yes/no**
2. Did any of the above links contain a place to download your resume online? **yes/no**
3. Were any of the above links YOURNAME.com? (in other words, www.suzysmith.com) **yes/no**
4. Did any of the above links contain information demonstrating your expertise in your industry? This can be an interview, an article you wrote, an article where you are mentioned, etc. **yes/no**
5. Did any of the above links take you to any comments you might have made to any blogs or articles written on the subject of your expertise and background? **yes/no**
6. Were any of the above links showing recent contributions you've made to Twitter?
7. Are any of the above links to your profile on LinkedIn and/or any other professional social networking sites such as Naymz, Spoke, and others ? **yes/no**
8. Are any of the above links to your blog? **yes/no**

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9. Are any of the above links to your podcast? **yes/no**

Ok - give yourself one point for each "yes" answer, with the possibility of a bonus point for two "yes"'s from #1. Then, see where you rank in these results:

8-10 points - you are a personal branding MAVEN. You have really been working on your professional skills, and you completely understand the value of branding yourself as a competent expert on the internet. The main thing I can help you with in this book is how to sustain your awesome brand with some specific planning tips and tricks.

5-7 points - you are doing an above-average job of making sure that influential folks (and potential employers) can find you on the internet. There are just a few areas of your personal brand that you need to shore up, and with a little bit of time, attention, and a PLAN, you'll be at the top of your branding game in no time.

3-4 points -believe it or not, you actually have AVERAGE exposure to your personal brand, compared to others in the marketplace right now.

0-2 points - ok, so you're not the Coca-Cola or Kleenex of your industry/niche. YET. But don't worry - that's why you bought this book, now isn't it? You're TOTALLY going to be there by the end of this book,

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and it's going to be easier than you might think.

What exactly IS a "personal brand"?

"Personal" obviously refers to YOU. Branding - well, that's typically thought of as Coca-Cola, Xerox, and Kleenex. What do those three products have in common? They all have a very strong, recognizable brand. There are some very distinct adjectives that come to mind when you think of these brands:

1. Coca-Cola - refreshing, fun, red, market leader in soda
2. Xerox – copiers, professional
3. Kleenex - soft, comfortable, strong

A "brand" is more than a product description. It is a feeling, an emotion, a state of being. A brand is at the very core of what a company stands for.

So...what do YOU stand for?

If someone had to describe you as an emotion...would you be...

Sadness?

Romance?

Excitement?

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You are going to be spending a lot of time throughout this workbook looking inward, exploring the very truths about yourself and your being, so that your personal brand and your subsequent "marketing" of your personal brand are as genuine as they can be.

WHY DEVELOP A PERSONAL BRAND?

Well...because you can!

Because you *should*.

Ok - to be more specific, here are 5 really good reasons to build a personal brand:

1. **Packaging** - in business, when you are creating a product, the last stage in the preparation for selling that product is packaging. If you're making Popsicles™, the packaging decisions are the kind of paper that will be wrapped around each Popsicle, and the type of box they are sold in. For your personal brand, "packaging" will mean the finished product that is viewed by a potential employer.
2. **Differentiation** - as we learned in Chapter One and the beginning of this chapter, more people are online today than ever! However, there is a very small percentage of the business population who has taken the time to put together all of the various components of their personal

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brands online, which gives you a unique opportunity to really "stand out" at this time.

3. **First impressions** - first impressions are now happening online. You now have the unique opportunity to position your "brand" exactly as you want to be perceived.

4. **Passive job search** - whether or not you are actually currently looking for a new job, having your strong personal brand "plan" enacted online is a form of passive job searching. There has recently been a strong surge of HR professionals and recruiters who are heavily using online social networking sites - not to replace face-to-face encounters, but to enhance the quality of the face-to-face encounter.

5. **Networking** - much like what we talked about above, the most effective networking is always going to take place face-to-face - BUT - online social networking sites and links to your personal brand efforts are a great jumping-off point to find more quality folks to network WITH face-to-face.

Before you leave this chapter, let's take a little bit of time to summarize what you have learned.

In a sentence, what did you learn about your personal brand by Googling your name?

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In Chapter Two, I gave you several reasons why people find it important to develop an online digital brand. Based on where you are currently in your life and in your career, list two reasons why developing an online digital personal brand is most important to YOU PERSONALLY:

1.....

2.....

Now, building on the understanding of a digital personal brand, what it's for, and how it will help you reach your goals, let's start doing some of the work of figuring out what YOUR brand should look like.

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CHAPTER THREE:



**Creating the Framework for
Your Digital Personal Brand**

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Creating the Framework

Before you leave this chapter, I want you to be able to answer the following questions:

1. What makes me unique from others?
2. What is the "summary" of my personal brand message?

What makes me unique?

First - I have to say that developing your personal brand is NOT complicated. I promise you it's not. Now - I wouldn't say it's EASY - it will require some real soul-searching on your part. BUT IT IS NOT COMPLICATED.

I have read enough literature from so-called branding "experts" who delight in complicating the issue of "personal branding". They will throw out all kinds of marketing and psychology terminology that the average normal businessperson doesn't use in everyday language. And as a result of all of this, there is a LOT of information in the marketplace today on building a personal brand - and VERY little information on how to actually, physically make it happen! So - that's where we're going to go in this chapter - we are going to help you actually, physically create your online personal brand "plan" (say that fast 3 times if you can).

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So...without devolving into marketing "jargon" and keeping my pledge to speak in everyday businessperson language - what are our first steps in creating this "plan"?

Well, there's a little bit of research I'd like you to do. Please make the time to put some of your thoughts down in this section of the book, because we will refer back to it later. Think of this chapter as finding valuable pieces to a really great puzzle, and future chapters are going to help you figure out how to assemble all these disparate pieces.

You will want to first figure out how to articulate what makes you different and unique. You should really devote some good quiet time to contemplating this particular subject, because it's sometimes not easy to put your finger on.

Here are a couple of tasks you can perform to facilitate the answers you seek here:

- Ask your best friend this question "if someone you'd just met asked you about me, how would you describe me, in one or two sentences?"

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- Ask a current or former co-worker "if you had to tell someone else what I was KNOWN for, what would you tell them?"

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- Reflecting on yourself, would you say that some of your greatest strengths lie in solving issues that require great brainpower, or great aptitude/empathy?

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- What are three things about your everyday work style that you are really proud of, that not many other people do frequently, or do well, that you would say you're fairly well known for?

1.

2.....

3.....

- Write down, in rank order, a list of 5 adjectives that most accurately represent you:

1.

2.....

3.....

4.....

5.....

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Figure out what your values are

"Values", easily put, are the things that are most important to you. How can you figure out exactly what your "values" are? Usually, you can take a look around at the things you are currently spending the most time doing, and chances are, those things embody your values. Think about your perfect job situation. Now, begin stripping things away from that perfect job: good job title, office instead of cube, good salary, boss that you trust, fun work environment, etc. Once you've stripped EVERYTHING away, start adding back the bare minimum things that this job would HAVE to contain for you to still think of it as your perfect job. We all value several "somethings" - the trick here is to figure out what you value MOST and be able to articulate it.

What are some things you value? You obviously value your children, your mate, etc. so try to list PROFESSIONAL things you value:

1.
- 2.....
- 3.....

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Find some folks who you admire, and figure out what they are doing that sets them apart, as well. Are there physical things they do on a regular basis that seem to have contributed to their successes? Are there attitudes that they cultivate? See if you can put your finger on those things that your admired peers do to make them successful and outline a few of those things here:

1.
- 2.....
- 3.....

What are you GOOD AT at work? There are all kinds of different areas of a company. You may be in sales currently but you just know that you are really gifted in product development, and you find every opportunity in your spare time to assist the development team with your ideas. You might be a really good speller or have an awesome grasp of grammar. If

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someone were hiring you for a new job, what are you POSITIVE you could accomplish that would persuade a hiring manager to take a closer look at you? Whatever that is, think about those things that you know you are really good at, and list them below:

1.

2.

3.

Now that you have completed these exercises, look back through the answers you provided in each of the above sections. Study these answers, and figure out if you left out anything important. You might leave this section alone, mull it over for a day or two, and come back later and add to it. You might let a trusted friend, partner, or advisor review it and have them remind you of things they know to be true about you. Now...is any firmament starting to form yet in your head around your personal brand?

Just always remember that marketing yourself with your personal brand does NOT mean you are making stuff up! You are NOT trying to be something that you are not. That is not the point of this exercise. The point of this exercise is

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to be able to describe yourself succinctly, but memorably. Brands are complex and are NOT comprised of just one thought or emotion.

What is the "summary" of my personal brand message?

Now that we've really done the hard part of digging deep and evaluating everything we know to be true about the strengths you want to "market" as part of your personal brand, we need to be able to articulate these areas to others in a meaningful way. We need to get this part right UP FRONT, so that as we start building your brand online, we are consistent in your message, and confident that we "got it right".

A good formula phrase for articulating your personal brand message is as follows:

My name is _____, an (adjective) (noun). I am unique because of my (phrase 1) and (phrase 2). I am here to (ask for what you want).

Here are some real-life examples of what I'm talking about:

My name is Phyllis Neill, a social media strategist. I am unique because of

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my ability to deliver tough-to-hear information in a positive, constructive way, and also because of my experience as a woman at a young age in executive management. I am here to ask for YOUR business with regard to social media marketing where I can show you how to make more money and connect more effectively with your clients and prospects.

My name is Sue Shaper, a happily employed and experienced computer programmer. I am unique because of my ability to interface well with non-technical customers and also because of my relentless attention to quality in documenting my code. I am here to meet like-minded individuals in order to broaden my network of fellow programmers.

My name is Fred Thompson, a 20-year sales executive. I am unique because of my ability to meet and exceed sales quotas by being an "anti-sales" person, and also because of my goofy but very likeable and earnest personality that gets me noticed. I am here to find a new career in sales management in the healthcare industry.

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So - using the format and the examples above - let's see you draft YOUR personal brand message summary:

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CHAPTER FOUR:



**Now Getting Your Digital
Personal Brand Out There
And Propping It Up!**

CHAPTER FOUR:

Now Getting It Out There And Propping It Up

We have spent lots of time over the past few chapters assembling the "straw man" of your personal brand. NOW is the time to MAKE IT DIGITAL and prop up that straw man online!

I am meeting with so many professionals these days who have really outstanding backgrounds and credentials, but no internet presence whatsoever. Even if computers aren't your "thang", you NEED to make sure you are visible to colleagues and potential employers, regardless of your industry. And really these days, it's relatively easy and inexpensive to do. YOU NEED TO BE VISIBLE ON THE INTERNET!

Now that we've got your personal brand all worked out, let's make sure that you smear that personal brand all over the internet. But before you do that, there is one more component to digitizing your personal brand – and that is to have an outstanding picture of yourself that you can use along with your personal brand statement to build a strong profile on every networking site you choose.

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Now Getting It Out There And Propping It Up

Get A Professional Headshot Made

Get a professional headshot taken and upload it on your profile. You have very little time and space to establish your reputation on Twitter, and a good headshot will go a long way toward assisting with this. If price is a constraint, you could have headshots made and get the electronic version of the file for around \$100 at Target. Now – I’m sure that you have pictures that friends and family have snapped of you recently that look awesome. However, you are going to be attempting to portray an image to prospective employers on the interview – without the benefit of ANY verbal cues to your advantage. A professional headshot will go a long way toward enhancing the digital personal brand message you created in the previous chapter.

Also, some advice from me on your professional headshot. If you get your headshot made at a traditional portrait studio, they will have various poses that they will want to shoot you in. However - make sure that the pose they shoot you in most frequently is a shot that captures you from just below the chin upward. Why? Because as you will start seeing, no matter what size picture you upload to a profile section of a social networking site, most sites reduce the size of your picture to “microscopic”. If you have a chest-up or waist-up picture, no one will be able to see your face at all – which is the point of the picture to begin with! So, make sure that your picture will scale nicely when it’s shrunk way down.

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Now Getting It Out There And Propping It Up

Buy a web domain comprised of your name

Now that you have a strong brand statement and an outstanding headshot to go with it, there's one more acquisition we need to make, and that is to buy a website that is comprised of your name. www.sueshaper.com.

www.fredthompson.com. www.joefranklin.com. You get the idea.

"Oh no! She said I didn't have to know a lot about computers to do my personal brand, and now we're talking about web domains, and I don't even know what that is!" Well, relax. I promise this won't be that complicated, and I will walk you through each step.

There are lots of places online where you can purchase a domain name. My personal favorite is www.godaddy.com. So...here are some simple instructions for purchasing your name as a website:

1. Go to <http://www.godaddy.com>.
2. In the middle of the page in orange, there's a blank box next to "Start a Domain Name Search". Type in your name here – as one word, no spaces. Include your middle initial if that's how you are already known professionally, or that's how you want to be known. Example –
sueshaper
3. Click "Go".

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4. Now – you are looking to see if your name as a domain was available or not. If your name is NOT available, go on to #5. If your name IS available, go on to #6.
5. Aw, shoot – your name is not available. Ok, we can work through this – we’ve just got to get creative. There are a couple of things you can do here:
 - a. Add your middle initial to your name if you didn’t do that originally OR take away your middle initial if you DID do that originally. Just hit your browser’s “back” button and search again.
 - b. Add your middle NAME to the name you’re searching for. Even if you have what can be described as a fairly common name (i.e., Jane Smith), the addition of your middle name raises the odds that it’ll be available as your own domain.
 - c. You will notice that there are LOTS of other domain extensions for which your name is probably available, such as .net, .info, .me, .org, etc. I strongly recommend that you “hold out” for the .com extension. Why? Because .com domains are easier to remember and are really the “standard”. If you can just get creative enough, you can find a domain name that is available.
6. Yipee for you – your name is available! It will cost you \$9.99 per year for the rights to hold your name as a domain, which is really a bargain. Now...there are many other options you can purchase to go along with your new domain. However, for now – since you’re new at this – I would

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advise you to only purchase the domain name, and ignore all the other stuff at this time. You can always go back into your account and buy other features and add-ons at a later date. The way to do this? Just keep scrolling to the bottom of the page and looking for “Proceed To Checkout” or “Continue To Checkout”. You may have to go through 3 or 4 pages before you actually get to the checkout, but just keep looking for the prompt to get there.

You are now the proud owner of www.yourname.com. And it didn't even HURT, did it? We will learn a little later on in the book exactly what I want you to do with this domain, but that will come after we get you involved in some of the internet's social networking sites.

SPEAKING OF social networking sites...as we mentioned earlier, there are zillions of social networking sites available today, with new ones popping up every hour. However, for the purpose of our digital personal brand exercise in this chapter, we're going to hone in and focus on two of them: LinkedIn and Twitter.

LINKEDIN (www.linkedin.com)

Some of you may already have your LinkedIn profile up and running. That's TERRIFIC! But now it's time to beef it up by lacing your personal brand messages throughout your profile so that there will be continuity later on with

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all your online digital branding efforts. Then again, you may not have stumbled across LinkedIn yet. Either way, let's take a look at LinkedIn and get you situated with your new personal brand.

LinkedIn has become the online "business card" of virtually all serious professionals today. There might have been a time that LinkedIn was only known about and used by people in the technology industry, but that is DEFINITELY no longer the case. On LinkedIn, you will see elementary school teachers, small business owners, authors, freelancers, administrative professionals, senior executives, and more.

The key to LinkedIn is really taking the time to fill out all of your professional information as completely as possible, and then making the time to update it as your career moves and changes. "View Profile" to find the link you can give others so they can come right to your profile on LinkedIn. Mine for example is <http://www.linkedin.com/in/phyllisneill>.

Your best chance for success is to COMPLETELY and TOTALLY fill out all of the sections of LinkedIn that have to do with your career. Yes, what you are essentially doing is a cut and paste of your existing resume. And yes - there might be other places on the internet where people can easily pick up a copy of your resume. BUT...they won't necessarily. Potential networkers and hiring managers will tend to do a deeper dive on people they find interesting AND

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can immediately see their work background, rather than having to click to a zillion other places to try to find it. This is an IMPORTANT investment in time, so just DO IT. But don't forget that the "summary" section of LinkedIn is where you can really highlight your personal brand statement.

ADDING CONTACTS ON LINKEDIN

You should begin right away getting LinkedIn with everyone you worked closely with at your most recent job. Then, go to your past employers and become LinkedIn with people there, as well. Finally, do some searches for people you've worked with in non-traditional ways, such as in church groups, PTA committees, etc. and get connected with those folks, as well. My rule of thumb is to NOT accept or extend a LinkedIn invitation to anyone you've either never spoken to in person OR never seen examples of their personality or their work. This advice is really subjective though, and you will learn to develop your own "gut" for people you accept and people you don't. LinkedIn is MEANT to be a collection of your own personal network, so it's perfectly acceptable to "turn down" or ignore solicitations from people who are a "friend of a friend".

GETTING RECOMMENDATIONS ON LINKEDIN

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There is mixed advice on the internet when it comes to the helpfulness of getting recommendations from current and former co-workers on LinkedIn. I'm of the school of thought that they can absolutely be a terrific testimony to the personal brand you're already working really hard to cultivate. In fact, after receiving and carefully reviewing several recommendations you receive from co-workers, you might even re-think your personal brand based on the reviews!! DON'T BE AFRAID to reach out to people you work with or people you worked with in the past and ask them to provide you with a recommendation. It is a very commonplace activity in today's business world and a profile with a number of good recommendations from each job worked is a strong indicator to a potential new employer that people overall enjoy working with you and like what you do.

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CHECKLIST FOR LINKEDIN:

- Professional "headline"
- ZIP code where you are currently
- Choose industry from pull-down menu
- Post your photo
- Add all current and past positions, titles
- Education
- Websites
- Summary - make sure to add your personal brand statement here
- Get recommendations
- Contact settings

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BEING SUCCESSFUL USING TWITTER

There are many online tools today's job seekers have at their disposal, but none is currently more underutilized - and more beneficial - than using Twitter. In case you haven't started using Twitter yet, it's a website where people make statements using 140 characters or less (called "tweets"), and other people who like what they say follow them. The "statements" or tweets people make are things like:

- Links to interesting articles or content.
- Statements or comments about what that person is doing currently.
- Blurbs on things they've done to be successful with a particular project.
- Quotes from famous people.

When you sign up for Twitter, you are asked to upload a photo of yourself, and to list a bio. Upload your lovely headshot for likeability purposes, and make sure that your bio is your personal brand statement that you crafted back in Chapter Two.

Then again, once in a blue moon, some Twitter users will inject statements

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that are total non-sequiturs, to really define their zany sense of humor, or to give the followers some sense of their personality. As long as you don't get carried away, I think this is terrific and something you should do, if you are so moved. DO remember that anything you say contributes toward your personal brand, so I don't advise being too graphic or too racy. Some of the funnier and more random tweets I've seen:

I don't eat bacon. So let me know...good idea or bad?

<http://tinyurl.com/3vcep4>

Wondering how long it takes a dog to fully digest a stick of butter?

I'm not sure how I missed this one, but 46% of women said they'd rather give up sex than the internet. mmm...

<http://tinyurl.com/93rgva>

Here are multiple ways to be successful with the networking opportunities Twitter has to offer:

- When signing up for Twitter at www.twitter.com, use your real name, and a semi-professional e-mail address. It will be hard to be taken seriously if someone has to reply to you as "Chickendanceguy1445".

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- Make sure to upload your headshot onto Twitter. People socialize on Twitter with people who have pictures.
- You should follow the "Golden Rule of Social Media" on Twitter as well, which is "*give value FIRST, then ask for stuff*". Your best bet for success is to spend 70% of your time giving value, and only 30% of your time asking for a job.
- Connections - you will invariably run across people on Twitter who are looking for the types of people YOU know. Hook them up wherever possible.
- Information/links - your Twitter pals will be looking for information on specific tools, etc. Share with them links you've run across that you found helpful. Also, you are out there looking for a job, and you will invariably run across jobs that you don't want. Pass those jobs along to other folks who are searching, as well.
- Expertise - even if you are currently unemployed, you have some area of your career where you are an expert. Share your thoughts and opinions on that subject and provide advice to folks looking for it.
- "Love" - giving attention, commentary, agreement, and support - giving "love" on Twitter can really endear you to others.
- Set up your own personal plan for how you will utilize Twitter, and follow that plan each day. My suggestion would be to spend 30 minutes

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per day on Twitter, with one day set aside as "prep" for what you will "tweet" each day. Remember the 70/30 rule mentioned above in #4? You should then plan to spend around 20 minutes on adding value, and 10 minutes directly asking for what you want.

- Once a week, build up a list of articles to links that you not only find interesting, but are aligned with your area of expertise. You will now have an arsenal of links you can post throughout the week without having to spend time each day looking for them.
- Each day, in the 20 minutes you will spend "adding value," spend your time doing the following: post a link to interesting/relevant article or two, re-tweet other people's tweets that you found interesting, comment on other people's tweets, search for interesting, relevant people to follow, and send out a personal direct message to each new person that decides to follow you.
- Each day, in the 10 minutes you will spend asking for what YOU need, spend your time doing the following:
 - Ask for what you want - examples could be "anyone hear of any PR jobs in Birmingham AL?"
 - Broadcast what you need - "I am looking for a Project Manager job in Dallas, TX - any info for me?"

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- Be consistent and WORK YOUR PLAN. The more you show up and contribute, the more visible you'll be. Commit to a minimum of 30 minutes a day OR seven tweets a day, whichever seems more reasonable for your specific needs.

There are LOTS of recruiters and companies on Twitter right now, so it's definitely "the" place to be. Just remember the rule of thumb on Twitter is the rule of thumb for all good social media etiquette these days, which is: bring value to your fellow Twitterers FIRST - then, ask for help. How do you bring value? Post an interesting quote or link, re-tweet someone else's interesting quote or link, pass along valuable information you've just learned, etc. It'll take you less than 5 minutes to sign in and start tweeting.

CHAPTER FIVE:



Marketing Your Digital Personal Brand

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Marketing Your Personal Brand

At this stage, if you have followed the book chronologically and worked each of the steps along the way, you've made some HUGE progress – and you should really congratulate yourself. Now that you've mastered your personal digital brand, it's time to take it one step further, and actually start to play with it; to market it in other ways outside of social networking. Here are a few of my favorites for you to try:

Start your own blog!

Yep, you heard me - START YOUR OWN BLOG. What, you say? You can't write very well? You have no earthly idea what to write ABOUT? Well, to all that I say you are WRONG. Want me to prove it? Ok - humor me for this next exercise - I promise to explain where I'm going with this.

Remind yourself from Chapter Three what your VALUES are and what two things make you unique. Look back at your "personal brand message summary". Remember the example of Sue Shaper? We'll use her as an example of how you can take the key components of your personal brand message summary, and figure out just 100 words you can write about what your blog will be about. It might go something like this:

My name is Sue Shaper, a happily employed and experienced computer programmer, who is unique because of my ability to interface well with non-technical customers and also because of my relentless attention to quality in

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documenting my code. I am here to meet like-minded individuals in order to broaden my network of fellow programmers. I started this blog as a personal forum to talk about some areas of my industry of which I am very passionate. Please stay tuned as I share some of my thoughts on a weekly basis, and maybe you'll share your comments back with me!

Congratulations - you've just written your very first blog post!! Now let's officially create a blog for you. There are many, MANY different "free" blog products out there, but I'm going to guide you toward ONE of them - because it's well-known, and because it's easy. www.blogger.com. Go head over there and sign up for a free account. Some words of advice:

- Come up with a clever (but not cutesy) name for your blog, but more important, make sure it's relevant.
- Come up with some kind of plan for how you will update your blog with some frequency. I would advise updating it at least once a week. It will help if you keep a notepad with you with blog ideas so that you can write down a topic when inspiration hits you.
- Try writing three or four blogs at a time, when inspiration DOES strike you, and then set them up to debut once a week. It's nice to not always have to be updating your blog at 11:00 pm on Sunday night to make your self-imposed weekly deadline.

Creating your own "launch" page

Now that you have a strong personal brand, and you have created a strong presence for yourself on at least LinkedIn and Twitter AND you have a blog, now it's time to utilize that domain you purchased back in Chapter Four of your name. What you want to do now is to create a page where people can use as a launching pad to visit all of the areas on the Internet where your work can be accessed; hence, a "launch" page!

And here is a list of all of the great branding information you will now be able to include on your official "launch" page:

- Your LinkedIn profile
- Your Twitter profile
- Link to your blog
- A copy of your resume
- Your headshot

If you purchased your domain name through www.godaddy.com, then you will have the ability to take advantage of a free hosted page, where you can create your "launch" page.

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Write articles

Another terrific way to strengthen your personal brand as an expert in your field is to write and submit articles. Article-writing is fast becoming one of the top ways small business owners are becoming known as experts in THEIR field, so this same method can work beautifully for you.

How this works: websites need CONTENT. Many businesses do not have the time, the effort, or the desire to write their own content for their site. As a result, they look to other resources where they can get FREE “content” for their sites. As a result, there are article directories that have cropped up where you can submit your articles, and if accepted, your article is for display in their directory. Businesses meanwhile can come in and browse all articles that are relevant to THEIR sites, and they may choose to publish YOUR article on THEIR site. The benefit to you? Your “author’s profile” box gets published along with the rest of the article, which means that when your article is interesting enough, people come to check out your blog for more information. You may also now brag that you are a “published author” on your resume!!

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So – which ones should you submit to? There are MANY different kinds of article directories out there – just Google “article directories” and you’ll see how prolific article writing is. Some of the bigger ones that you should definitely plan to submit to are:

www.ezinearticles.com

www.articlesfactory.com

www.associatedcontent.com

Now, the other thing you will find after really looking around is that there are article directories that are specific to a genre, so you will want to do some investigating on the genre in which your articles are suited.

Now, you might be asking yourself – how in the world do I go about writing an article for submission? Well, chances are, your previous blog entries can already be re-purposed into articles with a little bit of rewording and rearranging. Take the time to view the content of other articles similar in content to yours to get a feel for how people are putting their articles together. It will not take you very long to get the hang of it, and you’ll be cranking out articles in no time.

CHAPTER SIX:



Maintaining Your Digital Personal Brand

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So there you are: blogging every week, tweeting important information daily, keeping up with folks on LinkedIn, submitting articles you've written – oh, you're quite the digital brand master now, aren't you!!

It takes vigilance to maintain your personal digital brand online. Once you've developed online relationships, it takes conscious effort to make sure you maintain these relationships as time goes by. Additionally, you will want to continually grow your relationship base. So...here are some checklist items for you to take a look at once a week to make sure you are performing the proper maintenance with your relationships:

- Branch out and look around at other social media sites in your niche. Find one or two of those that seem particularly fitting, and spend time participating in them.
- Once a week, update your status on LinkedIn.
- Edit your personal e-mail signature and add the address to your "launch" page.
- When is the last time you reached out to a former co-worker, just to say hello and ask about their dog Fluffy? Or, in the past 2 months, have you touched base with that interesting woman you met at the Kiwanis meeting who has similar interests as you? If you haven't done either of these things (even if you don't really know Fluffy and haven't ever been to a Kiwanis meeting), then you are not doing enough to protect your important network. You should be in touch with every person on your

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personal contact list a minimum of 2 times a year. If you are not in touch 2 times a year, then they are not really in your network. There are many different ways to be “in touch” – simple reach-outs like a quick e-mail, to more elaborate touches like having lunch together.

- Develop some kind of electronic way to maintain a list of everyone in your personal network. This means tracking their name, e-mail address, physical mailing address, and an area to briefly log your last contact with them. This can be arduous to get going at first, but once the list is up and running, it’s very easy to record your interactions going forward, and it’s **INVALUABLE** for reminding yourself who you haven’t reached out to in a long time. I personally have always loved ACT for this purpose, but you could even use an Excel spreadsheet if you like – just make sure that you keep up with updating it.
- Don’t forget the US Mail. In this day of electronic contact, there is still something very special about getting something physical in the mail. Keep up with your contact’s birthday and shoot ‘em a card once a year. See an interesting article in Newsweek that reminds you of them and their cause? Cut it out and mail it to them. The holiday season? Send them a holiday greeting card.
- With your personal network, focus your reach-out efforts on finding things you can do for them. Find out every time you contact them what they need at this particular time. Are they looking for a vendor referral, do they need a recommendation on a new daycare for their child, or are

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they looking for a job? The best possible way to maintain strong ties with your personal network is to focus on what you can do for them during “peace time”. And besides being a savvy trick for keeping in people’s good graces, it’s really the most satisfying way to maintain close relationships, “karma”-ckly speaking.

IN CONCLUSION

Well, we've come to the end of my book on Online Personal Branding. I hope by now you've marked up the book with thoughts and notes in each section, dog-eared sections you want to come back to, and highlighted areas of particular interest.

I hope too that what you've found is that when you "get going" on many of the principles in this book, other amazing ideas and schools of thought occur to you as a result of this updated thought process.

I hope you will drop me a line at phyllis.neill@wementorsmm.com and let me know of your successes. Likewise, I hope you'll drop me a line on other areas you'd like me to cover in future editions of this book.

And one final piece of advice: in order to make the message on your "personal branding iron" really adhere, it's got to stay in the fire for awhile! People are not going to recognize your brand overnight, no matter how "cool" you are. But with a little time, patience, and continued participation in online brand building activities, you'll definitely become "marked".

And I sure hope you have fun doing it!

Phyllis R. Neill