

## Developing Your Personal Brand:

I was running a coaching session with a senior individual recently and he had just been successful in securing a new role with a new organisation. He was looking for some advice on how to make his new job a success and what he should concentrate on going forward. My advice consisted of 4 words: Develop your personal brand.

He was then keen to explore how he could continue to focus on managing his career whilst at the same time performing well in his new role and what approaches he should consider to put himself in a good position to make his next move in a couple of years' time or so. All good sensible discussions to have when you are able to step back from the detail and take a long term view about your career. My advice to this second set of questions also consisted of 4 words: Develop your personal brand!

In the first situation, it is really important before moving to a new job- and that equally could be within an organisation as well as outside in a completely new environment- to think about what impression you really want to make on people. That could be your staff, your boss, your new customer or supplier contacts, in fact all stakeholders. This is your opportunity to grow your brand, to shape your persona, to perhaps leave behind past baggage.

Think about it. If you were a new packaged goods product about to be launched in a supermarket, someone would have spent hours agonising over your packaging, your positioning, your communication strategy, to say the least. It's no different for individuals in new roles, and you have a small window of opportunity to get it right.

Strong relationship building skills and internal networking abilities can obviously be helpful here, but it is equally important to think deeply about What you are communicating about yourself rather than How. A good coach can help enormously here.

Similarly, in the context of managing your career going forward, it is equally important to consider what you stand for, how you want to be perceived and who you want your messages to get to. Developing this externally focussed approach is so important if you want to manage your longer term career aspirations whilst also running your demanding day job.

Again, all the rules of good networking apply, but it's also important to think of additional communication channels, perhaps related to professional development, when constructing your external campaign. Building your contacts and relationships with recruiters over a period of time can be equally helpful.

When I talk about developing your personal brand, I'm not talking about wearing the right clothes or ensuring your online presence is squeaky clean or that you become a frequent Twitterer, I'm talking about something more fundamental: What's really at the heart of what people currently think of you (your brand essence), what would you ideally like them to think (brand stretch) and lastly how do you say it (communication strategy)? Again, think about working with a coach to help you succeed in this area.

**(Glenn Steward is a professional business coach and Director of The Trading Edge Co. and author of the Ebook 16 Rules for Jobseekers)**