

MOFE ADE

THE PERSONAL BRANDING PRIMER



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The Personal Branding Primer

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Introduction

15, Writers Block,
Non-Fictional World
December 12, 2018

My Dear Friend,

This is always the hardest part of the book for me to write. I have no idea why I have to include it in the book save writing conventions. Well, and to help you have a general idea of what you'll be spending the next few minutes of your life reading.

The Personal Branding Primer is a bold attempt at me trying to help those that wish to be serious with their personal brand. Every time, I pick up my phone and browse the internet, I come across someone doing something awesome, someone who has taken control of their narrative and is trying to do something that matters.

This short book is for that person. Yes, it's for you. Whether you're at the decision-making stage or already have a personal brand and want to check if you're doing everything right, this is the best way to spend your afternoon (or morning or night or midnight). In this book, I explain everything you'll need to know from creating a truly unique personal brand to harnessing the power of storytelling.

While this is clearly not an exhaustive book that'll take you days to complete, great pains have been endured to present to you everything you need to know about having a personal brand. It takes a straight to the point method and any unnecessary thing has been stripped off to give you the gems of each topic. The Personal Branding Primer is a compilation of research, experience, examples, executable tasks that work and some 39th sense.

I hope this book serves as the perfect primer for the smooth and long life of your personal brand.

Your OG,
Mofe Ade.

Ch. 1

Know Thyself

A personal brand revolves around one person: you. Your personal brand is concerned with how you'll become an authority in your professional field, an expert, and the person to be patronized by people that need top-notch services.

Before you start plotting your takeover of the world, though, you need to thoroughly understand yourself.

What makes you tick? Why are you doing what you do? Which thoughts consume your mind? What skills do you have? Which problems do you wish to solve in the world? When will you feel your life's purpose is achieved?

I'm guessing that you have a general idea of what you want to do with your life. All these motivational speakers have taught us that at least. So at this point, we go one step further and outline the specifics of that general idea. If you want to spend your life making people's homes beautiful, how specifically do you want to do this? Do you want to be the person designing the house or the person executing the design? Will you be more interested in how the furniture makes the house beautiful more than the paint and wall finishes?

The task of knowing thyself and subsequently carving your personal brand based on that blueprint is not a single day's task. Take your time. Recline into your inner chambers. Search into your soul. Dig Deep. Discover yourself. Darn! I sound like one of them now.

SCROLL

To help with this phase of self-discovery, I would strongly recommend that you read [Mastery](#) by Robert Greene. I dare say this is the Bible of Knowing One's Self which cascades into your personal branding efforts. Go get the book.

Find a Niche, Now Zoom In

Congratulations, you've discovered yourself, what you love and what you'll be doing with your life. I hope. Now you need to figure out which industry/field your passion falls into. This is quite easy. If you love cooking you know you're in the food industry.

Now, if you're familiar with the food industry, you should know it's highly saturated with many, many awesome and talented people. So, how do you stand out? You guessed right! By zooming in.

Zooming in requires you to focus on an area of your industry instead of doing everything or what everyone does. In an industry where everyone cooks food, zoom into African meals. If everyone makes African meals, zoom into African meals for children. If everyone makes African meals for children, zoom into African meals for children packaged like sweets. Well, I don't know how feasible that last suggestion is but I'm sure you understand the concept of zooming in.

Eliminate or drastically reduce competition by carving out your niche. In some cases, you can even create a whole new category by merging unrelated skills you have or solving a common problem in your industry using different techniques.

Whatever you do, strive to always stay above the competition. Don't get drowned in the cold, dark red of competition.

SCROLL

Peter Thiel the co-founder of PayPal and Palantir is a prominent advocate of the notion that brands should strive to eliminate competition and monopolize their category. Consume any content of his on this topic and if you can, pick up his book Zero to One.

Define Your Audience

There's a high chance you've come across the phrase 'target audience' before. Well, that's because it's an important step when starting a business or brand. You need to know the person you want to sell to which helps you come up with best ways to reach that person. That person is your target audience. A personal brand must also have its target audience, an ideal customer, the person that'll be interested in your service.

A personal brand without a defined audience is like a tailor who makes a garment for someone he has never seen without that person's measurement. We both know there will be several issues when the customer receives the garment.

To create tailored content for your audience, begin by creating ideal customer profiles. Here you create specific descriptions of people that are likely going to be interested in your brand. You can have more than one ideal customer profile. For instance, someone who sells laptops might have two customer profiles: a middle-aged earning Nigerian and a newly admitted student of a tertiary institution. To make each profile seem real, assign names, an average age, interests and so on.

You should then conduct appropriate research into the lives of your ideal customers. Know them in and out. What makes them tick? Who and what influences their decision making? The more details you have, the better.

A well-defined audience will act as a guide during your personal brand's journey helping you make educated decisions that will resonate with everyone that matters.

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Many people will skip this step. Don't be many people. Define your audience. It'll hasten so many decision-making processes during the journey that is your personal brand.

Ch. 3

Ch. 4

Your Personal Brand Plan

Every business that is serious about making it in this world has a business plan. So should every personal brand. Your personal brand plan is your ultimate document which outlines every important thing about your personal brand.

A personal brand plan should begin with a brief summary of your personal brand. What is your brand about? What does it aim to solve with its existence? How do you plan to sustain the personal brand over time? What indicators have you set to measure your success?

Your vision statement comes next as you outline why you exist and where you want to end up ultimately in the pinnacle of your career. Next, you want to outline your objectives in details. Here you specifically state what you aim to achieve in a period of time. This includes the total amount of revenue, Number of followers, Quantity of Content to be produced, Awards and Recognitions, etc.

Outlining your services and skills in details comes next and then a competitive comparison section where you state how you will deal with existing and future competition sources.

Remember, your audience definition? Include the results of that activity in your personal brand plan. A marketing and promotion framework is then included to complete the document.

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To help with this important step of crafting your personal brand, search the internet for sample personal brand plans and strategy templates. It'll make creating yours way easier

Creating Your Fingerprint

A fingerprint is a unique identifier of a human being. It differentiates him from every other person, doppelganger or stan. No two humans have the same fingerprint. Heck, no two zebras even have the same stripes but I digress. For a personal brand, your brand identity is your fingerprint, your unique identifier. It makes you stand out. No two personal brands should have the same brand identity. Your personal brand's identity includes your name, logo, color scheme and look.

When choosing a name for your personal brand, the easiest route is to go with your birth name especially if it's a unique one. If the name is too long, hard to pronounce or remember you can always creatively alter it. Omobolaji Maxwell Gbadamosi becomes BallerGee or BMax. You can also choose a name that explains what you do. E.g thehypegod, thecalabarchef, etc.

While not common, you might also decide to create a logo for your brand. A popular alternative to this is using your signature. This adds a personal touch and has an added advantage of making you feel like a celeb putting his autograph on everything that matters.

You should also choose a dominant color or color scheme for your personal brand. The color you choose should obviously be something you like. Be aware of cultural interpretations of your logo and how it's commonly used in your industry.

The way you dress and the fashion pieces you wear are also an important part of your personal brand. Having signature pieces helps solidify your image in the minds of your audience. Uncle Zuck is popular for his grey t-shirts and Steve Jobs was popular for his black turtlenecks.

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Gary Vaynerchuck is one of the greatest personal brands to exist the perfect model and one you should imitate in creating your fingerprint. From shortening his name to GaryVee and using his signature on his content pieces extensively, he has been able to create a powerful identity for himself.

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Tell a Story

In a cold world where everyone is trying to sell something or someone, the only way of standing out is by appealing to the emotions of your audience via storytelling. Most people sell themselves by outlining a problem which is usually followed by the solution which is in this case, their service. Storytelling takes another route by explaining the personal brand, the unique experiences that have made you who you are today, why you have dedicated your life to solving problems and the happiness that you have brought to people.

No two people in this world have the same set of experiences hence YOUR story will always be YOUR story. It will always be unique and will resonate with people who have similarly related stories. This creates an emotional connection between your personal brand and them. There's a reason why people love stories. They can be so darn relatable.

You can go one step further by studying how startups and non-profits masterfully use storytelling. Read books, watch videos, study other storytellers. Master the art of storytelling.

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When it comes to harnessing the power of storytelling, few people do it better than Prince EA. His videos rake in millions of views on Facebook and YouTube because he is able to use stories to pass important messages to people. His avid love of illustrations helps his content stand out from people attempting similar things.

The Matter of Platforms

Once upon a time, the only way we knew of important people was from television and radio programs or even newspaper articles. Only a select few had access to these platforms and for the majority, word of mouth and referrals were the only way for personal brands to get gigs. Then the internet came and changed the game. These days, our problem isn't lack of platforms anymore but which platforms to be on. From the top social media platforms to forums, question boards, blogs, and different content hubs, the possibility of exposure is endless.

The first step in the platform selection process is to secure YOUR OWN platform first. Your Twitter or Facebook account doesn't truly belong to you. It can be deleted at any time for any reason. In fact, the whole platform may shut down or become irrelevant years later. You need a website that'll serve as the hub of all your personal ventures. Depending on the type of personal brand you have, your website can serve as a simple CV to show your skills, a portfolio or even a full-fledged blog.

Now, let's talk about social media platforms, where the crowd dwells. Before choosing which platform you will focus on, begin by securing your usernames on all the important platforms. You don't want an impersonation problem or someone benefiting from your personal brand's juice later down the line.

Choosing the platforms you'll focus on will depend on the type of personal brand you have. An artist will definitely be on Instagram. A real estate consultant should be on Facebook. A life/business coach should have a strong LinkedIn presence. An interior designer needs to be on Pinterest. You get the pattern right? It's not rocket science. Focus on the platforms most suited for your personal brand. At the same time, make sure you have a basic presence on other platforms that you might not use actively. Don't leave any land empty.

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When securing your selected name on social media or as a domain name, use Namechk.com to quickly check its availability everywhere with one single search.

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Content That Matters

Content is the fuel to move your personal brand's vehicle from where you are to where you want to be. It is the language used to communicate with your audience, showing them the stuff you're made of.

Before you pick up your pen and start scribbling to greatness, you need to set a tone for your content. This is an overarching style that covers your content which will help determine if you're the funny one or the genius. Yes, you can be a funny genius. From your podcasts to post captions, always remember to stick to the tone of your personal brand to project a consistent image.

In this era of ours, we've gotten to a point of content saturation where we have thousands of articles, captions, and tweets every second. That's a lot. To stand out, you need to create truly unique content. Please, never ever copy and paste someone else works. You're just adding more unnecessary bytes to the internet.

Before creating anything, ask yourself: Of what value is this content piece? Who does it help? Has someone else created this before? Does this piece have an emotional link for people to connect with it? If I see this content piece on someone else's platform, will I consume it? Is this piece really creative? Asking these questions will not only increase the quality of your personal brand but also increase the odds of you being noticed.

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DevanOnDeck is one of the most consistent creators that exist on the internet. Something you'll quickly notice is that his frequency of updates doesn't equal a reduction in its quality. From his style advice to his social media tips, you can see that Devan puts a lot of effort in creating high-quality content that matters. Content that is actually useful.

Ch. 8



Advertise Yourself

What is the use of a lamp placed under a basket, hidden under the table? It defeats the primary function of the lamp: a source of illumination. In that same vein, your personal brand serves no purpose if no one knows about it. If it is hidden in one corner of Instagram or under the barrage of articles on the internet, the majority of your target audience might never see it till the end of times or till when you become disillusioned with your low traffic and hang the boots.

People will not flock over immediately you start producing content. Even if it is the best stuff that was ever created on the internet, others don't just know that it exists. So it is your life's task to make them know. So, how is this achieved? By marketing!

There are two ways to go about your marketing efforts. Outbound marketing which equals advertising and Inbound marketing which relies on using helpful content to draw people to your platform, gradually building trust with them until they've fully been won over. While inbound is the most preferred method of marketing due to its subtle techniques, it is usually better to combine the two methods for the best results. For instance, a veteran film director can release a YouTube video which teaches 5 industry secrets. If left to its organic fate, it might take a long while for that video to gain thousands of views. How do we solve this? That's where advertising comes in. The video is now be sponsored via Google for YouTube pre-roll ads, a short trailer can be made for Instagram and Facebook sponsored posts which lead back to the original video. The aim of spending on the ads is to show the already perfect video to thousands of people almost immediately.

When a steady momentum has been garnered on your platform, you can then reduce the amount of money you budget for adverts as you can now rely on a dependable source of new organic traffic as long as you produce awesome content. You can also come up with other means to put your brand out there like collaborations (see the next chapter), giveaways, competitions and so on. Always remember that you need to constantly make noise about yourself and what you do. Everyone is already preoccupied with themselves so don't depend on the goodwill of others or your awesome content promoting itself. The noise is just too much for your tiny voice to be heard, so grab your mic. Make noise. Be Heard. Show ya self.

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To avoid ad fatigue, it is a good rule of thumb to maintain a ratio of 70% inbound marketing to 30% outbound marketing. So, for every 10 pieces of content you put out, promote the best 3. This will not only dilute your 'salesy' part but will also help you have a reasonable ad budget.

Ch. 10

Make good use of collaborations

One of the quickest ways to get noticed outside your normal circle is by collaboration. Collaborations can be perfect because it exposes you to a new audience set which is in this case; that of the brand you're collaborating with.

When collaborating with other brands there are a jillion ways to go about it. You can decide to have a short collaboration which ends with a giveaway for both audience sets or you could partner to produce a series of content for a specific period of time.

Whatever method you decide to use, collaborations will help solidify the presence of your personal brand which will unlock new doors. To maximize this feature, collaborate with a tangential brand instead of a competitor. A tangential brand has an audience that is slightly related to yours but not directly identical. For instance, a visual artist can collaborate with an interior designer to produce artistic spaces.

You can also ditch conventions and partner with an unexpected brand. A tech blogger might collaborate with a lifestyle blogger probably having a content piece on 'Must-have Tech items when traveling'. On a normal day, these two personal brands look very different but by thinking out of the box, a mutually beneficial partnership has been created.

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Reach out to three personal brands with the aim of collaborating with them over a period of time. Apply the principles in this chapter when discussing the terms of the collaboration.

Become the Juggler

If you're like most personal brands, you do not have the luxury of having a marketing team, design team, sales team or a business development team. You are your creative director, designer, marketer, salesperson, and accountant. With only you at the helm, it is vital you constantly learn about solutions or hacks that'll make your life easier.

For instance, instead of retaining a graphic designer on a monthly salary, spend some time learning basic design principles and use web apps like Over and Canva to modify templates that you'll need for your simple everyday content. Have you considered taking free courses online to sharpen your knowledge on how Google and Facebook Ads work?

The internet abounds with different articles, books, videos, and webinars that can help you save costs in the long run. You can also attend workshops or even have one-on-one training on essential skills that your personal brand needs to survive. Most times, all you need is just a Google Search away.

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You do not want to compromise the quality of your personal brand to save a few bucks. For complex tasks that need specialized skills, outsource them to those that can handle it. Nothing speaks more ill of a brand than an unprofessional look.



Offline is Importanter

Everyone knows that connections are the way to survive in the business world. You know someone who knows someone that knows someone. However, these days some have relaxed in getting new acquaintances or don't even try to ignite relationships with others primarily due to the existence of tech. They find solace in vague connections with potential allies by watching their snaps and stories.

In a world where everyone messages each other via WhatsApp, going out of your way to meet up with people will give you an edge. There are just so many vibes and cues that cannot be picked in a message or even a voice call. Experienced people know this and will always maximize any opportunity they have to meet people. How can you harness the power of offline connections if you're not doing so already?

Get a business card. Yes, some people still ask for it. You don't want to be left hanging when the CEO of that company you've been eyeing asks for one. Take note of your personal appearance as people do judge books by their covers. You should have a clean and sharp appearance that matches your online branding efforts. If you find it hard to talk to people, learn conversation skills and try to apply them by meeting new people. Attend events as often as you can and look out to make at least one new connection.

Rather than seeing offline as a backup or not even considering it at all in your personal branding efforts, look at it as an important part of your personal brand's body. You won't do away with one ear because you have another now eh?

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Why do you think people pay thousands of naira to attend industry events? They do so not only to benefit from the seminars, keynote addresses, and workshops but to meet up with new people they otherwise might not have the opportunity to meet normally. It is also harder for a big personal brand to shun you in person than them not replying your DMs.



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Ch. 13

Get a Mentor

A popular Nigerian proverb highlights the fact that no matter how many clothes a young person might have he will never have as many rags as an elderly person. The experience of an older person, someone who has seen and experienced many things in life and business can never be compared to that of a younger person just starting out. Having personal mentors is not only important but vital in your personal brand's journey as they show you the best roads to ply, the portholes to avoid and which bends to take.

When choosing a mentor, you might find it helpful to go with someone in your industry who has walked the distance. Such people are usually happy to mentor someone who they like and see a potential in. In most cases, a relationship with a mentor is beneficial to both parties especially when you are willing to offer your energy and skills in return.

Some people also find it helpful to have more than one mentor, choosing different mentors for different aspects of their personal brand. A fashion designer might decide to have an experienced tailor, an artist, an established business mogul and a style legend as mentors. Even though a deep relationship might not be equally formed with all mentors, the mentee has an edge of learning from a variety of personal experiences.

Of course, when working with a mentor you should know they serve as a guide for you and not someone who will provide all the answers and solutions to your personal brand problems.

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A relationship with a mentor should be mutually beneficial. Be willing to offer something of value to your mentor like your energy and time in return for precious counsel.

Maintaining your Personal Brand

A garden that is not swept regularly or has untrimmed flowers will soon be referred to as a 'bush'. Starting a personal brand is quite easy when compared with maintaining it to always have the same or even higher levels of quality.

Maintaining your personal brand involves monitoring certain indicators to check if you're still meeting up with the goals you outlined at the beginning of your branding efforts. It can be quite easy to forget why you started with the many distractions around us so always check to see if you're meeting your goals or working towards them. This will keep you on the right road to your personal brand's excellence.

You also need to ensure that none of your social media platforms looks outdated when compared to the rest. Ensure your profile picture, bio and tone are consistent across all media. Deactivate old accounts that are no longer in use and might still show up for search queries related to you.

Always have a view of what people see when they look you up. Do a quick Google search of your name. What pops up first? Is it something in tandem with your personal brand or something that contradicts it? If you have a popular personal brand, check to see if you've been verified by Google. If you have, edit your Google card to show people what you want them to see about you. Talking of verifications, you can also reach out to social media platforms with necessary means of identification if you are having impersonation issues. The last thing you want is someone benefitting from your personal brand's equity or worse still, duping people using your identity.

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To always remain in the loop of what's being said about you, set up Google Alerts for mentions of your personal brand.

Ch. 15



Reputation is Everything

No matter the number of social media followers you have, the sleekness of your logo or how perfect your Instagram feed is, your reputation is the pillar of your personal brand. The way you treat those that interact with your brand will do more than what you try to portray. So, have a good working relationship, deliver your jobs, thoroughly understand your field and really have the skills you claim to have.

Always remember that word of mouth is the fastest and most reliable way to grow your brand... or destroy it. Guard your personal brand's reputation at all cost.

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"The way to gain a good reputation is to endeavor to be what you desire to appear" - Socrates

