

HOW WOMEN CAN DEVELOP THEIR OWN UNIQUE BRAND

(BRAND “YOU”!)

Corporations spend millions of dollars to develop and build their own unique brands. We are surrounded by many successful product brands on a daily basis (Shoes, Spirits/Wines, Clothing, Fragrances, etc). The list is endless. Branding is a consistent message about “something”. When we brand ourselves, we send out a consistent message of what we want others to know about us. Branding doesn’t happen just by deciding it’s a good idea. There’s a lot of work that goes into it – it’s a process that will take time to develop. Branding yourself allows others to know who you are and be valued for it. It helps you attract what you want to become more attractive to others; it inspires confidence and allows you to walk your journey with integrity and confidence; and lastly, it distinguishes you in whatever field you have chosen.

Following are eight critical steps to accomplish in creating your own unique BRAND “YOU”:

1. Dig Deep Inside Yourself To Unearth The Unique “YOU”

The very first step is to *model your brand on your authentic self*. There's only one like it in the world, which makes it (1) distinct from any other and (2) something you and only you can pull off. What words speak of your personal value system, that metronome for personal behavior — what you stand for, what you want to live up to, what you consider most important to your inner life and well-being? When you discover what resonates with your soul, trust it. Your challenge is to capture the essence of what you have to offer, create interest and enthusiasm for it, and enhance your image in the business world. Once you’ve discovered and captured your essence, project this energy out in every occasion and in all of your interactions with others.

2. Define Your Dreams - Put Them Into Action

You are very likely to get what you ask for, because when you finally uncover and get serious about your heart's desire, the universe starts listening. When you think of a mission statement, think trumpets in the background, imagine a drum roll. Companies with powerful mission statements and employees that embrace these statements walk the walk and talk the talk. Create both mission and vision statements for yourself and write them out. When you commit your dreams to paper, you release them out into the world. Then when you speak of your dreams you move

them another inch closer to reality.

3. Go After Your Target Audience With A Vengeance

No matter what your brand's mission or your financial goal or your personal dreams, identifying and earning the devotion of your target audience are the interlocking and necessary means to reaching those objectives. But don't be unrealistic. Don't try to be what you are not. If it is a bad fit, it wouldn't have worked out anyway. Before you try to appeal to your audience, do a 180-degree turn and stand in their shoes.

4. Don't Crash and Burn—Find Out What's Stopping You

Fear stops you in your tracks. It's critical to overcome these inner fears while developing your brand strategy because in many cases the thing you are afraid to do is in fact the one thing you *need* to do to solidify your brand.

Recruit a Band of Brand Cheerleaders. The road to success is a lot smoother when it is lined with cavalcades of supportive colleagues and zealous mentors to sing your praises, open doors for you, and provide sage advice. Look for guides, teachers and promoters among your friends, your family, and your colleagues to smooth your path and to help create an atmosphere for success. Be a good student — otherwise your mentor will lose interest. Listen to her advice and then put that advice into *action!*

6. Learn the Secrets to Packaging Your Brand

In any business situation, appearances count, big-time. Your challenge is two-fold: to make your exterior appealing to your target audience, and to make sure your exterior is as much a genuine reflection of your interior as possible. What does your audience want to see? What kind of package does it respond to, feel safe with, understand, respect, admire? What kind of package can you put together to motivate, or even *excite*, your audience?

7. Get Comfortable in Your Own Skin

So you're flawed. Who isn't? Cultivate a personal style, identify your own personality, accept its markers and integrate them into your brand

strategy. Do you sparkle? Do you demonstrate your creativity or your competence in action and word? Are you curious, earnest, self-deprecating, sure of yourself, steady, clever, or adventurous — and *how* do you show it? A lot of people think charisma is something you are born with — and they're right. But what not everyone knows is that we're *all* born with it. Whether or not we all *use* it is another question.

8. Devise a Plan and Get On With It!

Brand success asks you to think about your brand in this very intense, obsessive way: writing it *down*, talking it *up*, and putting it *out* in the universe to fulfill its destiny. Managing yourself, your product, your time, your family, the information you receive is a lot, but as CEO of your life, who else is going to do it? Keep your eye on the prize and constantly and consistently work towards that end. Hey, no one said branding was easy...but the rewards for this effort are HUGE.

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