

YOU



THE
BRAND

MERYL SNOW



an excerpt from
BOOKED IT!

YOU... THE BRAND

One of the greatest ways to articulate your competencies, wealth of experience, skills, knowledge, and your overall worth in today's competitive events industry is to create and nurture a brand that helps you stand out in the crowd. I was speaking at a national business conference in May, and I asked all of the salespeople in the audience to raise their hand. There were 300 attendees, and maybe 25 people raised their hands. Then I asked, "Have you ever tried to persuade a child to eat their vegetables? Have you ever tried to convince someone that your way is better, easier, or faster? Raise your hand if you have ever tried to convince, persuade, or influence someone." All hands rose. Everyone is selling something. From the moment you engage with someone they are judging you. First they judge what you wear and how you speak, then they judge what you're selling, and finally they judge your company. When you think of Donald Trump, (before his presential campaign)

what comes to mind: his hair, his ego, his fortune, or maybe his famous line, "You're fired"? That is his brand. Businesses have a brand, celebrities have a brand, and even you have a brand.

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Everyone has a brand.

Your brand is your unique set of skills, talents, and knowhow.

As aptly put by a management expert Tom Peters, "We are CEOs of our own companies: Me Inc. To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer of a brand called You."

Branding is a means of defining you, your business or company to yourself, your team and people on the outside – the potential clients. Creating an inimitable and powerful brand starts with determining what makes you unique. What are your strengths, goals, passions, core competencies?

What makes you different from your peers?

It is not just enough to know what makes you unique, if you do not target the right people, the efforts are futile. There is a strong need to identify your target audience. This allows you to deliver and 'register' your company on the minds of the right people. Everything you do contributes to your branding endeavor, either positively or negatively. Even the little things count – dressing, behavior to employees, body language, emails, down to behavior on social media. If you want to be successful, creating and managing a brand isn't just an option, it's a necessity.

ENHANCING YOUR BRAND

While everyone has a brand, the only way for people to know your brand is for you to market it. Marketing and relationship building are one and the same, which is why I believe that marketing oneself is a life skill everyone must learn.

In order to sell yourself, you need to know yourself. Make a list of words that best describe your personality. What ideas and thoughts pop up as soon as someone hears your name? Are you creative, organized, dependable, fun, or motivational? Try not to list what you do for a career; instead list how you do it to be successful. Don't be modest.

For example, if you are a florist, you don't just make flower arrangements. What is your process to get the final arrangement? Is there a particular color palette that inspires you? Are you passionate about interior or geometric design? Do you have a keen ability to read clients and interpret the feeling they want to express through the arrangements you provide for them?

Try this exercise by filling in the blanks:



PERSONAL
BRANDING

YOUR Brand Statement

I am a

who..... for.....

PERSONAL
BRANDING

I am Jane Smith, a thriving event professional with a passion for fashion. Engaging solid planning and style, I have produced hundreds of successful events and remained calm and composed.

EXAMPLE

When you're selling you, it's important to show your personality: your likes, dislikes, life story, insecurities, and fears. Your ability to market your talents, achievements, and values inside your organization and within your profession, industry, and community are key parts of enhancing your brand.

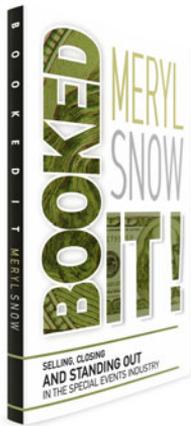
The most efficient way to promote yourself is to allow the conversation to become a give-and-take. Through natural dialogue, the client will realize that you are intelligent, capable, and have or can acquire the desired skills. After you return from a networking event or a meeting with a client, ask yourself: how engaging, relatable, confident, friendly, and trustworthy was I?

Learn from every meeting, and continue to improve on how you are portraying your brand and marketing yourself. At times our industry is merely seen as a commodity. Chicken is chicken; a flower is a flower. The client needs to be educated, but in order to be open to learning they need to like, trust, and believe in you. The event industry can be saturated, at times, with excellent products. A good product keeps you in the game, but it certainly doesn't set you apart.

How can you stand out from the competition?

When all things are equal, people buy from people they like. Be sure to spend more time selling yourself instead of merely focusing on your product.

Make friends, build trust, and the rest will come.



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