PERSONAL BRANDING FOR ENTREPRENEURS

WES BLACKWELL

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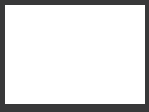
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In other words, don't be an jerkface.

DEDICATED TO THE:

REBELS & RENEGADES,
REVOLTERS & REVOLUTIONARIES,
RISK TAKERS & RULE BREAKERS...

THIS BOOK IS FOR US.



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PART 0

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

WHY I WROTE THIS BOOK

WHY I WROTE THIS BOOK

The era of advertising as we know it is quickly coming to an end.

The jig is up. The game is over. Finito. Kaput.

And if you don't shift your business to move with the times, you'll soon be extinct.

Luckily, this book offers you a proper path for moving forward.

I wrote this book because I've seen firsthand how personal branding can boost your business and increase your income in record time.

After I used it to double my own profits, I later helped a company triple their sales to over $200 million in less than a year. All by using the same strategies you'll find in this book.

So I know this works beyond the shadow of a doubt, because I've seen it proven time and time again to help my clients get results.

My second reason for writing this book might not be something you'd expect from your average author. But then again, I'm far from average in my love of learning and development.

I'm a diligent student and voracious reader of all things related to sales and marketing. And to be frank, when I examined the current literature on personal branding, I found the whole lot lacking.

Most books are devoid of substance and are instead overloaded with extra crap you aren't interested in and don't really need.

It's like all the good stuff gets ripped out and replaced with a bunch of bland filler that won't help you get results.

So when it came time to write my book… Nuh uh. Not me. No way, Jose. I wouldn't be caught dead writing such boring and useless drivel. What a dreadful thought.

Personally, I feel like if not going to blow the socks off my readers and help them discover some revolutionary new way of looking at things, then I see no point in writing or sharing my thoughts.

Because anything less would be a disservice to my audience. And that's not what I'm about.

So then, here's my promise for what's to come in the following pages… No fluff. Just stuff.

I've written this book to be as short, succinct and to-the-point as possible, so you can get what you need from it and start seeing results.

Because as you'll soon discover, when it comes to time… you're running out. And since it's valuable, I want you to make the most of it.

But your future is valuable too. So I've spent countless hours rewriting till I'm blue in the face to ensure this book is comprehensive, helpful, and worth its weight in gold.

My goal is to help you create a valuable asset that will last you a lifetime, and then some…

Your Personal Brand.

But first, an important message I hope some of you find offensive…

MEAN PEOPLE SUCK

WHO *SHOULDN'T* READ THIS BOOK

WHO SHOULDN'T READ THIS

Before we go any further, I want some of you to stop reading this book immediately.

"What?!"

You heard me. I'm dead serious.

I'll refund 100% of your money if you match the following description:

- You want to get rich quick and get paid for doing nothing.
- You're more concerned about looking good than helping customers.
- You mercilessly exploit other people for personal gain.

If that sounds like you, stop reading. Put this book down right now.

I don't want to do business with you. I mean it. Seriously.

I've worked long and hard to get away from those kinds of cancerous attitudes. And I won't allow anyone with that kind of negativity into my life. Nor will I help them with their personal branding.

As you'll later learn, I've seen firsthand how the skills you'll find in this book can be used for evil.

And I absolutely detest the soulless use of sales, marketing and branding for deceptive, devious and dishonorable deeds.

No crooked, cheating, lying, stealing, double-crossing, dirty-dealing, shady, sneaky scam-artists or fake hucksters allowed.

So if that's you, adios muchacho. Please fall off your nearest cliff.

But if you're serious about sharing your message with the world and making a positive impact in other people's lives, keep reading...

We're just getting started.

This book will give you a blueprint for building your personal brand and getting your message out to the world. And you'll do it in a way that will naturally make people more receptive to your offers.

But this is only for people serious about helping their customers find success. You must actually give a shit about the results customers receive by deciding to buy from you.

So if that sounds like you, great!

Turn the page and let's get this party started.

You're in for one helluva ride.

LET'S GET THIS PARTY STARTED

HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM THIS BOOK

GET THE MOST FROM THIS BOOK

Every time someone opens a book, they subconsciously ask themselves, *"How do I get the most out of reading this?"*

So I thought what better way to start than by answering that question. Below, you'll find a quick rundown on how you can get the most out of the lessons you'll learn in this book.

Here are my tips for maximizing your time and gaining everything you can from your experience.

TIP #1: DO THE WORK

The first tip is you've got to do the work.

Now I know that may sound obvious, but you'd be surprised at how many people fail to realize the simple fact that dreams don't work unless you do.

And for this book to work, you've got to read it. That's step one.

To put a puzzle together, you need all the pieces. And if you skip a bunch of pages or browse around, you'll be missing pieces of the puzzle called your personal brand.

Occasionally throughout the book, you'll have exercises to do, worksheets to complete, homework assignments, etc. And it is imperative that you do them. All of them.

Because I didn't include these just for fun. These are the tools you need to build your personal brand.

So if you ignore them, you can't expect to get the most out of this experience. Plain and simple.

This idea comes from the phenomenal book *Do The Work* by Steven Pressfield. I suggest you add it to your reading list and study it when you have the time.

One of my favorite concepts in the book is something the author calls "the resistance" which keeps us from accomplishing our goals.

Below, I have included an excerpt from the book to show you how this resistance can be overcome.

The "Real You" Must Duel the "Resistance You"

On the field of the Self stands a knight and a dragon.

You are the knight. Resistance is the dragon.

There is no way to be nice to the dragon, or to reason with it or negotiate with it or beam a white light around it and make it your friend.

The dragon belches fire and lives only to block you from reaching the gold of wisdom and freedom, which it has been charged to guard to its final breath.

The only intercourse possible between the knight and the dragon is battle.

The contest is life and death, mano a mano. It asks no quarter and it gives none.

There is only one way to get the most out of life… and that is by facing it head on and doing the work it asks of you. Only by "fighting the dragon" can you finally achieve your dreams.

So knuckle up and let's do it.

TIP #2: REPETITION IS KEY TO LEARNING

The second tip is to remember that repetition is the key to learning. The deepest "ahas" and strongest learning moments come from repeated encounters with new ideas.

By repeatedly engaging with a new concept, you gradually build your understanding of it until you finally acquire the idea and integrate it into your own native system of thinking. This is how you learn.

As proof, think back to the time you first learned to ride a bike, drive a car, or play a sport…

At first it wasn't easy, because the concept was so new. New skills, new techniques, new rules.

And the only way you got better was by repeating the experience until it became second nature. You learned through repetition.

There's a great quote by master sales trainer, Zig Ziglar:

"Repetition is the mother of learning, the father of action, which makes it the architect of accomplishment."

And that is so true.

Repetition is required for mastery, and mastery encourages you to take bold action on your goals. And action is the only way you will accomplish them.

So what does that mean for this book?

It means that you may need to read a chapter or do an exercise more than once. And that's okay.

I designed this book to be a well of information you can drink from again and again. So don't judge yourself for it. That's how you learn.

If you find a concept challenging, read the section again or try doing the exercises one more time. Remember, repetition is the key.

Repetition is the fastest path to mastering new ideas, so make repetition your motto for learning the content in this book.

And if you feel resistant to this, try reading this section one more time.

TIP #3: ASK FOR HELP

And if you're stuck, that brings us to tip number three… ask for help.

I didn't just sell you this book to leave you on your own and never be heard from again.

I'm here to help. More importantly, I *want* to help and *love* helping you.

Honestly, it's where I get my greatest joy. There's nothing as rewarding as helping my students experience an "aha!" moment when something finally clicks. That's what I live for.

But to have those kinds of moments, you need to know when to get some support. And there's an old proverb I know that illustrates this point perfectly:

Be strong enough to stand alone,
smart enough to know when you need help,
and brave enough to ask for it.

This a great recipe for success in building your personal brand.

First, you must be strong enough to pursue your dreams, even when no one believes in you. You alone must face your fears and make a stand.

But you must also be smart enough to know when you're in over your head or having some trouble. Check your ego from time to time and admit when you need help.

And lastly, be brave enough to ask for it! The key to success for most people is having the humility to ask for a helping hand. So do yourself a favor and get one when you need it.

Everyone, now matter how big, strong or smart, could use a little help sometimes. So don't get caught in the trap of staying silent because you feel ashamed. That's a fool's game that only prevents success.

Speak up and reach out when you need to. That's what I'm here for.

TIP #4: TRUST THE PROCESS

In order for you to get the most out of this experience, I need you to trust the process. And here's what I mean by that…

Occasionally while reading this book, you may wonder, *"What the heck does this have to do with building my personal brand? And why are we learning about this, anyway? This makes no sense!"*

In those moments, I need you to take a chill pill and trust the process.

Some students just want to skip all the theory and jump straight to the good stuff. All they want is actionable tactics they can use immediately to get results, and nothing else.

And don't worry, you'll get those. But there are some things you need to understand first. Trust me.

A good example of this can be found in the book *Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity* by author David Allen.

David has a unique approach that starts off a little slow…

First, you begin by capturing all your to-do items on paper, and then you look at each item and decide if it's actionable or not.

Then you organize the items and plan potential projects and archive any items you can't act on right now so you can access them later.

Once you finally start planning a project, first you determine your purpose and outline your principles to help you define success…

And the process continues on like this for quite a while before you get around to "doing" anything. Which is kind of counterintuitive to the whole idea of "getting things done."

The author says that when he takes clients through this process, they always say *"this feels awkward, unnatural, and completely unnecessary."*

Of course it does, because you're learning a new muscle.

Think about the first time you tried to hit a golf ball…

It looks pretty simple. You just pick up the club and swing it, right? Well, actually it's a lot more complicated than it looks.

Think of all the things you have to coordinate: your grip, your wrists, your eyes, your hips, your legs, your feet… it's a total body movement.

And if you leave out any part of the equation, you'll either miss the ball completely, or send it flying through some poor sucker's window.

Successfully swinging a shot straight down the fairway can feel a little awkward and unnatural at first, because you're not just smacking a baseball off a tee. It's much more complicated than that.

And the same thing goes for building your personal brand.

The goal-driven entrepreneur often wants to jump right in and take rapid massive action, but usually feels uncomfortable doing the proper planning and setup needed to achieve true success.

And there may be times while reading this book when things feel a little abnormal to you, or you might not understand how it will help you to build your brand.

For those moments, I need you to trust the process and keep moving forward. It's hard to see the big picture when the puzzle is incomplete, so at least make sure you have all the pieces first.

Every time a ship sets sail across the sea, they won't see their journey's end until just before they land. So don't abandon ship halfway before you reach your destination.

It'll be worth it, I promise.

TIP #5: EXPERTS SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY

The reason you should trust the process is experts see things differently.

Often when you're trying to accomplish something, your nose gets buried so deep in the day-to-day, minute-to-minute activity of it you can't see the forest through the trees.

And this is especially true when it's something that's new to you. You don't really know what to look for, or even have any idea what you're really looking at. All you see is chaos and confusion.

But experts see things differently. Their knowledge of the subject helps them see the situation clearly and view the world through trained eyes. So what's confusing to you might be obvious to them.

Here's an analogy to help me explain…

Chances are that at least once in life, you've had a car breakdown or at least give you some trouble.

Maybe it died at a red light, started blowing smoke on the freeway, or just wouldn't start one day when you went to turn it on.

If you're like most people, you pop the hood to see what's going on, only to realize that you have no idea what the hell you're looking at.

All you see is a big mess of metal and plastic, and you don't know what does what or which piece of the puzzle might be the problem.

All you know is that when you turn the key, the car is supposed to go vroom, and it's not doing that now. Something is the matter, but you don't know what.

But once you take the car to a mechanic, they can quickly identify the problem and recommend a solution. Because he's an expert, he looks at the vehicle completely differently than you do.

Where you see nothing more than a pile of molded metal and paneled plastic, the master mechanic sees your vehicle as a set of complicated systems that help the car run smoothly.

First there is the engine system, where chemical energy is converted into mechanical energy. This process helps create the main source of power to put the vehicle in motion.

Then there is the fuel system, used to store the car's gas and supply it to the engine. There the fuel will mix with the right amount of air so it can combust with enough power to drive the engine's pistons.

Then there is the electrical and ignition systems, used to provide the spark necessary to ignite the air/fuel mixture inside the engine, and provide the voltage needed to operate electrical components.

And so on, and so on…

Where you see one thing, the expert sees another. Where you see a problem, the expert sees a solution. Their knowledge and expertise gives them a different view of the world from those who lack it.

And since my expertise is helping people build their personal brand, there are likely some aspects of it I view quite differently than you do.

I hope to enlighten you and expand your vision of personal branding in this book, so you may see it through my expert eyes.

And just like the lens of a microscope, it may take some time and a little adjusting to bring the view into focus. But I promise that if you make it to the end, the vision will be made clear.

So let us begin our journey by keeping these five tips in mind, so you can get the most out of our time together while exploring the concepts contained within the pages of this book.

Stay the course and don't veer far off, and I'll see you at the finish line.



PART 1

INTRO TO PERSONAL BRANDING

THE PROBLEM

ADVERTISING IS DYING

Long gone are the days where you could spam consumers with ads full of bald-faced lies, outrageous claims, and a complete lack of respect for other people's time.

And even if your ads aren't full of hyped-up hogwash, a few bad apples have spoiled the whole bunch.

People today HATE ads. They hate them. Not just dislike… utterly hate.

"People hate advertising. They f---ing hate it… it's all advertiser's fault."

That's what media executive Joanna Coles had to say about it regarding the future of creativity. And that's a pretty bleak future, if you ask me.

And indeed, the future does not bode well. "Banner Blindness" is at an all-time high, and consumers will take every opportunity they can to ignore your ad and avoid your messaging at all costs.

And when ad-blockers and add-ons won't work, *they're willing to pay money to avoid you* by signing up for content subscription services like Netflix, Scroll, and Sirius XM.

But why go to such lengths? Is it really that bad?

Woefully, it is. Unwanted and intrusive ads have crept their way into every media imaginable, completely ruining the user experience.

I've got ads in my email, ads in my browser, ads in my apps. Plus all the ones I see on TV, hear on radio, or read in print. They're everywhere.

And to exacerbate the situation, the internet, smartphones and social media have made this "Advertisement Avalanche" even worse.

In the 1970s, the average American was exposed to roughly 1,600 ads per day. That's already quite excessive, considering it equates to a hundred ads per hour during the 16 hours you're awake.

But fast forward to 2007, and the number nearly tripled to 5,000 ads. And when you throw in the rise of social media and smartphones, the number of daily ads we see today is likely closer to 10,000.

So it's no wonder people hate ads. We're drowning in them. And what's worse, we don't trust them either. Because let's face it… in today's world, you can't even trust the damn news.

And as far as the public is concerned, marketers are somewhere between used car salesmen and politicians on America's list of least trusted professions.

So what makes you think they'll trust your claims about losing weight, preventing hair loss, or getting rich in real estate? Not gonna happen.

The good old days when all you had to do was make a big bold claim about your features and benefits are over. That method of advertising is quickly becoming obsolete.

Why? Because consumers aren't listening anymore. They're tuning out and turning away from the messages of marketers worldwide.

In sum, the world is changing. And if you don't change with it, you'll get left in the dust by those that do. So if you plan on surviving the next decade, you better change quick.

How is the world changing, you ask?

It's quickly becoming smaller.

THE WORLD IS SHRINKING

The world today differs completely from the world of just 20 years ago.

And while the geography hasn't changed, the social landscape has dramatically transformed.

The past two decades have been marked by rapid progress and innovation. But one thing has changed more than anything else…

Communication.

Think of all the ways we communicate that didn't exist long ago…

MySpace came on the scene in 2003, followed by Facebook in 2004. And social media was born.

YouTube changed the way we view video in 2005, and Twitter changed the flow of information in 2006.

Instagram helped you "see what I see" in 2010. And SnapChat helped you keep it private in 2011.

And since then, we've had a decade to play with the toys in Pandora's box and change how we communicate forever. There's no going back.

Why not?

Because we're crossing over into the Fourth Industrial Revolution. And that is a really, really big deal.

An "Industrial Revolution" is a rapid major change in the economy, generally marked by the introduction of new technology. Because once new technology is introduced, things never remain the same.

The First Industrial Revolution began in the mid-1700s with the invention of the steam engine. This innovation helped *mechanize* the means of production and forever change the way we live and work.

The Second Industrial Revolution began in the late 1800s, and was marked by the advent of electric power. Electricity gave us the ability to turbocharge our machines and create *mass* production.

The Third Industrial Revolution began in the mid-1900s, and used electronics and information technology to *automate* our production. And with it, we would see the rise of the modern digital age.

But the Fourth Industrial Revolution is using smart technology and improved communication to transform the world at break-neck speed.

The change isn't linear... it's exponential. And the big problem is that we're having trouble keeping up.

Everyone is scrambling to find solid footing in a world that's quickly being turned upside down. What worked yesterday doesn't work today, and what works today might not work tomorrow.

So how can businesses survive the "land-mines of disruption" lurking in the near future?

Well, here's a hint…

When it comes to communication, we're not so much as exploring new territory as we are covering old ground.

We're not heading in a new direction, we're coming full circle.

Allow me to explain by taking you on a little trip through history…

HOW COMMUNICATION CHANGED

I want you to take a moment and imagine yourself living in the year 1800. Imagine what the world was like for the average person living just two centuries ago…

On one hand, the world was enormous and mostly out of reach. Travel was much slower and more difficult than it is today, so few people ventured far beyond their front door.

But that also meant for the average person the world was quite small. You rarely had good reason to go beyond your town's borders or across state lines. So in essence, life was hyperlocal.

A single farmstead could provide most things people needed to get by, so they rarely had reason to leave. And if they ever ran out of supplies, they'd simply make a quick trip back to town to restock.

And once they got there, who do you think they bought from? The colonial equivalent of corporations like Wal-Mart, Apple and Amazon?

No, they didn't. Because nothing like that existed.

In the year 1800, 94% of Americans lived in a rural setting, and only 10 cities in the world had a population greater than 250,000. So giant global corporations really weren't really a thing yet.

So then, who *did* we buy from?

People… like the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker. And we often knew them by name.

There was Tim the Tailor, Bob the Blacksmith, and Chris the Cobbler. Business relationships were personal relationships with other people, not companies and corporations.

And this is how things had always been pretty much since the dawn of mankind. Until everything changed in the mid-1800s…

For most of mankind's history, advertising was extremely limited and insignificant. You either had to rely on word of mouth, or a sign outside your door that people walking by could see.

And that was pretty much it. You didn't really have any other options, except for maybe hiring a town crier to yell at people and tell them you got a sale going on… the medieval version of spam.

This is the way things were for thousands of years. Advertising was a small scale and person-to-person.

But in the middle ages, we discovered a new way of advertising that could reach much farther than a dinky bar sign or drunk town crier…

We invented print.

After the invention of the printing press, newspapers soon spread their way throughout Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries.

But it would be awhile before newspapers would make their way to America. Paper was scarce in colonial times, and we were a little preoccupied fighting for freedom in the Revolutionary War.

But following independence, more and more newspapers sprang up across the country. One estimate claims that there were just 35 newspapers in 1775, but over 530 newspapers by 1820.

America's population nearly quadrupled during that time and the number of printed publications exploded by fifteen fold.

The size of the American market had finally reached a critical mass... But why was there such a tremendous growth in newspapers?

Well, long before they were on the verge of extinction, newspapers were the way people got their news.We didn't have social media or the internet to let us know what was going on.

And there was no short of cunning capitalists and tenacious tycoons, who understood that by raising the cost of ads, they could lower the price of newspapers and sell more copies than ever before.

For the first time in history, you had the ability to cheaply and easily reach every customer in town and beyond. It was the most cost-effective and efficient form of advertising the world had ever known.

And because of this major breakthrough in communication, the way goods were advertised and sold would change forever.

For most of the 19th century, we would bring our own containers to the store when buying generic commodities like sugar, rice and salt.

But once we started advertising branded goods in the local newspaper, packaged products like a box of salt, a bag of rice, and a pound of coffee quickly became the mainstream way items were sold.

Oats were no longer just oats… they were Quaker Oats, full of integrity, honesty and purity, just like the pilgrim on the box. They were everything a young mother needed to raise her family big and strong.

And just like that, advertising in its modern application was born. But it wouldn't stop there…

As communication increased, so did advertising. They were blood brothers, eternally bound to follow in each other's footsteps with every major breakthrough in communication technology.

Radio stations gave the world audio advertisements in the 1920s…

TV gave the world "radio with pictures" and video ads in the 1950s…

And smartphones would put ads directly in the palm of our hand starting in the 2000s.

And that's how we went from a world free of advertisements to one where we get 10,000 ads per day. All because of advances in technology.

THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

But if getting your ad in front of consumers is now easier than ever, why isn't it working as well as it used to? What has changed in the last few years to rapidly reduce advertising's ability to influence?

Let's look at the usual suspects…

"Are we not getting in front of the right people?"

No… targeting has only gotten more accurate. We know everything there is to know about today's consumer and have more ways to reach them than ever. So targeting and delivery isn't the issue.

"Hmm… maybe it's a problem with product quality or customer service?"

Nope… technology has only made products better. Plus, companies now have to pay the price publicly with bad reviews if their products and services aren't up to par. So that ain't it either.

"I know what it is… it's all those pesky Millennials not buying anything!"

Ha! While Millennials may spend money differently and have less disposable income than previous generations, they average 60 more transactions per year than their Baby Boomer parents.

So then, if those things aren't the issue, what is?

I'll tell you… as the ability of advertisers to communicate with consumers has increased, so too has the ability of consumers to communicate *with each other*.

For the first time in history, we can have a face-to-face conversation with someone halfway around the world as though they were living next door. Distance and time are no longer barriers to connection.

The world has become small once again, just like it was for most of mankind's history living in villages and towns.

Except now our close-knit community exists on a massive global scale.

Humanity is now more connected than ever, all because of the greatest societal change of all time… social media.

Social media has done more for the delivery of news, the sharing of ideas, and the expression of opinions than anything else. It has been a revolutionary development in the way we communicate.

But the most earth-shattering effect of social media is *speed*.

While you may not realize it, the real reason social media has had such a massive impact on society is that it dramatically increased the speed of communication and rate of connection for the everyday person.

To see just how far we've come, let's take another look back at history…

Short of messenger pigeons and horseback riders, people had few options to communicate long distance any time prior to 1775, as that's when the U.S. postal system was first introduced.

But even then, information took forever to deliver by today's standards.

The fastest piece of mail in Pony Express history was Abraham Lincoln's inaugural address. It took seven days and seventeen hours to get from the White House to the state of California.

So even though we had the ability to communicate long distance, it took weeks to get a response. To show how much we've changed, people nowadays won't even wait three seconds for your website to load.

It would be another hundred years before we invented the telephone, but they weren't mainstream until the end of the second world war. And even then, they were limited to the home.

Cell phones didn't become common until the 2000s, so it's only been about 20 years that people have had a cheap and easy way to communicate with each other available at all times.

But social media has made things easier than ever. You no longer have to "travel to town" to engage with others… you can take the whole town — and the entire world — with you everywhere you go.

We live in a society where the average person has access to all the world's information at their fingertips. And while this is certainly a monumental development, it doesn't come without its share of cons.

Specifically, information overload. Content is being created at a rate that far exceeds our ability to consume it:

- 48 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute
- 95 million photos are shared on Instagram every day
- 30 billion pieces of content are posted on Facebook every month

And when you take all that, and dump a bunch of fake news on top and 10,000 daily advertisements, how the hell is anyone supposed to decide what content is worth consuming?

How do we figure out what's real, and what's fake? Who to trust and who to ignore? How do we determine if something is worth our attention or credible and true?

Simple… we do it by evaluating the source.

And people start by considering the sources closest to them they already know, like, and trust…

Their friends. The ones they connect with on social media.

So if you want consumers to start believing your promises again, you better work on becoming their best buddy and pal.

And there's only one way for you to do that…

Your Personal Brand.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF CHOICE

The explosion of information we've experienced in the last 20 years has also brought a fundamental problem with influencing consumers…

The explosion of choice.

Today, consumers have more options to choose from than ever. And while that may seem beneficial, it actually has the opposite effect…

It creates "Choice-Paralysis."

In his book *The Paradox of Choice,* author and psychologist Barry Schwartz argues that more choices actually make us less likely to take action, and to be less satisfied with the eventual decision to buy.

Because with so many similar options, we only have ourselves to blame if we fail to meet our standards with the option that we choose.

Here's an example to show just how many options there are today…

Amazon, the retail giant we all know and love, has over 10,000 search results for water bottles... let me say that again.

There are 10,000 options… for a bottle… that holds water.

How can that possibly be?

Even if they offered 10 different sizes, 10 different colors, and 10 different materials to choose from, they shouldn't end up with more than a thousand unique options. Yet we have ten times that amount.

Why? Because there are ten different brands all offering the same thing.

Not only do consumers have easy access to all your offerings, so does your competition. So the speed and rate of knock-offs, counterfeits, and "me-too" copycats is at an all-time high.

As soon as you do something to differentiate yourself, your competitors do it too. And before you know it, everyone is offering the same thing.

- Everyone offers a diet soda…
- Everyone offers a whitening toothpaste…
- And everyone offers something just like yours.

And if your offer just so happens to be information, God help you… because there are a million other people already offering it for free.

We once lived in a world where many "information opportunities" existed, proportionate to how difficult the information was to obtain. The harder it was to it get, the bigger the potential profit.

That's because the longer it takes to acquire information, the more time there is to take advantage of it. Extraordinary returns almost always occur by knowing some truth well before others.

Therefore, the key factor here is *the speed at which information travels*.

When information traveled slowly, it could easily be hoarded or constrained to limit its availability to the public. This allowed people to position themselves for profit by knowing things others don't.

But with the explosion of information beginning in the late 20th century, information now travels at light speed and comes in greater quantities than we need or desire.

The major downside to this excessive surplus is that the creeping commoditization that happened to paper towels, diapers and motor oil is now happening with information too.

If you *can* be commoditized, you *will* be commoditized. There's simply too much information available.

For example, there are 10,900,000 Google search results for "bigger biceps," but surely there aren't eleven million ways to actually get them.

And this superabundance of redundant information will only get worse and worse, all because everyone has a cheap and easy way to share information with the world… the internet.

Everyone today is a broadcaster, and nothing stops them from being another face in the crowd.

And in a crowded marketplace, there are few options to distinguish your offer in the mind of consumers. And even if you do, it won't be long before your competition copies you.

So with so many voices clamoring for attention, how can you raise yours above the static and noise? How can you stand out in a sea of people where every offer seems the same?

If differentiating your offer is no longer the sure solution, then what is?

Differentiating the *person offering it*... by building a personal brand.

Because all other things being equal, which person are you more likely to trust? The devil you know or the devil you don't? Given the choice, we'd all prefer to buy from someone we know.

Remember that all businesses are people businesses, and we're moving toward an economy where the *who* matters more than the *what*.

And here's why understanding this is so vital to your success…

Without a profound preference for products, offers and information from a particular source, customers will be of increasingly lower sustainable value.

Because when every offer is the same and the market is commoditized, the consequent result is a strong consumer focus on price.

And when there's no discernible difference in what's being offered, why pay more? No one will.

Retail giants like Amazon and Wal-Mart already understand this, which is why they offer their own brands at a significant discount to pilfer customers from name brand products.

Wal-Mart offers its Great Value brand that sells just about every product you can imagine at lower prices, and Amazon is doing the same thing with AmazonBasics.

It even says it on their website: "Everyday Items, Low Prices." Or in other words, "Everything is a commodity, and we sell it the cheapest."

So then, if you can't prevent your competitors from making an offer similar to yours and selling theirs for cheaper, what can you do to make consumers choose your offer instead?

You have to find a way to create a strong preference in consumers to purchase specifically from YOU.

And the best way to do that is to create trust and affinity through a strong emotional connection.

How do you do that?

By building a personal brand.

POWER OF PERSONAL BRANDING

Here's why personal branding is the answer to all your problems with sales and marketing… it's the key to being different in a world full of copycats and knock-offs.

While some competitors might quickly copy your key features and benefits, they won't be able to copy you. Nor the relationship you have with your audience.

Because no two people are exactly alike. We are all unique and individual snowflakes.

So even if they get someone who looks like you, walks like you, and talks like you… it might feel familiar, but it'll never be the same.

As a prime example, let's look at an industry where blatant ripoffs seem to be the norm… Hollywood.

Every year, major movie studios race to cash in on the latest trend and capitalize on the popularity of a recent release. They even have names for it… Twin Films and Mockbusters.

Twin Films are two movies with the same plot, released around the same time, by two different movie studios. Many blame this on industrial espionage performed by production companies.

Mockbusters are movies made with the explicit intent to exploit the publicity of another film and piggyback on its success.

For example, you may have seen the goofy movie *Snakes on a Plane*… but did you see *Snakes on a Train*? It was a straight-to-DVD knockoff that was released three days prior to the major motion film.

But whether the mimicry is intentional or pure coincidence, the important thing to note is that the original almost always outperforms the lookalike when it comes to selling tickets and putting butts in seats.

Hercules starring Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson grossed $244 million in 2014, while *The Legend of Hercules* released six months later starring no-name actor Kellan Lutz absolutely bombed.

So even when it's basically the same story and exact same character, the person playing the lead role is a major factor in the film's success.

Hollywood also has a name for this, and they call it a "Bankable Star."

A bankable star is an actor charismatic enough to be "capable of guaranteeing box-office success simply by showing up in a movie." Think of actors like Tom Cruise, Leonardo DiCaprio, or Will Smith.

Over time, audiences create a connection with these celebs and turn into die-hard fans who support everything they do.

And this same star power applies outside of Hollywood, too. Personal branding works for anyone the same way it works for celebrities.

And more importantly, it seems like personal branding is the only advertising future generations of consumers will respond to.

Here are a few eye-opening studies to back this up…

First, a survey by The McCarthy Group found that 84% of Millennials don't like ads, supporting my claim that people hate advertising.

But a similar study by Defy Media discovered that 58% of viewers don't mind watching ads to support their favorite figures and celebs.

And research published in AdWeek confirmed that 6 out of 10 Millennials will gladly watch sponsored content, as long as it's entertaining, useful, and contains authentic personalities.

So then, it's not so much the pitch itself, as it is the person making it.

To see how personal branding can directly affect the sales of real-world products, look no further than the power of celebrity endorsement.

Celebrity endorsement is a marketing strategy that uses personal branding to help promote a product by associating it with a celebrity who is well known by the target audience.

This helps to attract greater attention, interest, and awareness from consumers, and also evoke positive attitudes toward the endorsed product which ultimately leads to more sales.

And there is no greater example of this power to persuade than Oprah Winfrey. At her peak, she could arguably be called the most influential woman in the world.

Oprah had an everyday audience of millions of people, and whenever she featured a new product, it was guaranteed to sell like hotcakes.

For example, 59 books she featured on her show appeared on USA Today's top ten list, and 29 of them reached the number one position.

But her influence didn't come from being a household name or even having millions of followers… it was her authenticity.

Oprah stood out by creating a more intimate, confessional form of media than existed at the time when she first started.

And unlike typical endorsements, Oprah only chose products she was genuinely interested in, rather than ones they paid her to promote.

This helped her form deep connections with her audience and grow their trust to astronomical levels. To the point where any time she endorsed something, they were guaranteed to buy it.

And with this book, I hope you learn how to do the same thing.

So far, we've mostly focused on the problems plaguing entrepreneurs and the marketing minefield that awaits us in the coming years ahead.

But now let's shift gears by examining the amazing outcomes you can expect to experience once you fully develop your personal brand.

THE OPPORTUNITY

HERE'S YOUR OPPORTUNITY

Let's sum up what we've learned so far:

1) The Old Way of Advertising is Dead

The nails are being driven into the coffin as we speak. Consumers aren't listening and do anything they can to avoid your ass at all costs.

2) Consumers Prefer People They Admire

The explosion of information, advertising and choice has caused consumers to turn to the opinions of friends and authentic personalities as their primary source of guidance and wisdom.

3) Personal Branding is the Answer

Consumers don't mind being sold to as long as it comes from someone they know, like and trust. And the best way for you to take advantage of this is by influencing them with your personal brand.

And while large corporations and pig-headed holdouts might be slow to adapt, there is a limited window of opportunity for you to build your brand and gain valuable market share.

So then, what exactly is personal branding and why is it so important?

Turn the page and let's find out.

WHAT IS PERSONAL BRANDING?

Even though the term has been floating around for a while now, many of the definitions out there are way out-of-date or far off-base.

What's worse, most people complicate the issue by combining the concepts of a "personal brand" and "personal branding" into the same thing, when they are fundamentally different.

And since I've written the book on the subject, it's only fitting that I rewrite the definitions to bring them into the current times.

Let's start by defining what a personal brand is NOT…

- It is NOT what you say about yourself
- It is NOT your presence on social media
- It is NOT your personal image or appearance

So then, what is it?

Well, to borrow the words from branding legend Marty Neumeier, "Your brand isn't what *you* say it is. It's what *they* say it is."

But what does that mean?

It means that your brand primarily exists in the minds of others.

Specifically, in the minds of consumers and the people you're trying to do business with.

If there was a single word that would most closely define personal brand, it would be "reputation."

Because as Jeff Bezos says, "Your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room."

Your personal brand is the general belief, opinion, or feeling that other people have about you. It's how you're viewed by your community and the way these people think of you when you come to mind.

Now that we have personal brand out of the way, let's move on to personal branding.

First, you need to know how these two concepts relate to each other…

Personal Brand is how others perceive you.

Personal Branding is *influencing* how others perceive you.

Therefore, you build a personal brand through the process of personal branding — which is the intentional effort to influence public opinion.

Ultimately, your goal is to raise your credibility, demonstrate your expertise, and position yourself as the go-to authority in your industry.

That's what personal branding is, and why we build a personal brand.

HOW DOES BRANDING WORK?

To influence consumers in your target market, you need to demonstrate two must-have traits:

1) Charismatic Leadership
2) Credible Communication

Charismatic Leadership is the ability to arouse strong emotions in your followers and compel them to pursue a captivating vision for the future.

Credible Communication is the ability to interact in a way that builds consumer confidence and establishes rapport with your brand.

Without consumers believing you have these two traits, you'll *never* influence them to buy from you, no matter how good your offer is.

Here's a pithy quote by Robert Cavett, founder of the National Speakers Association, to help explain:

"Most people are walking around, umbilical cord in hand, looking for a new place to plug it in…"

Imagine a sea of potential customers out there, wandering around hopelessly lost, looking for a place to "plug in" and find a solution.

They need help. They have problems. You, your company, your brand… can solve those problems.

But they don't know you. They have no idea if what you can do to help them. And even worse, they have a million other marketers out there trying to get their attention.

This where the two qualities above come into play...

Charismatic Leadership helps you gain attention and interest.

Credible Communication helps you gain affinity and trust.

Here's how it works…

Influence, in its purest form, is leadership. Your job is to lead your customer from where they are to where they want to be. From problem to solution, from pain to pleasure.

But before they will follow you, they will first ask if they can trust you. Because if you're not credible, you're not worth paying attention to.

Consumers have heard it all before and been lied to a million times. So if you're just another false prophet, they have no reason to trust you. And without trust, sales won't occur no matter how good the offer is.

So then, not only must consumers believe your solution might solve their problem, but they must *also* believe you're a trustworthy person who will follow through on your promises to solve it.

And you do that by positioning yourself as a Charismatic Leader and a Credible Communicator. Later chapters will show you how to do this.

Now, let's look at why this is so important...

WHY IS BRANDING IMPORTANT?

Personal branding is important for all the reasons I outlined earlier:

- The old way of advertising will soon be extinct.
- Consumers only respond to messages from authentic personalities.
- The opportunity exists for you to gain valuable market share.

But not only that, personal branding also tells others who you are, what you do, how you're different, and why you're important.

Those things are critical for creating an expectation in the minds of consumers of the value they'll receive by doing business with you.

And that makes personal branding the key to leading prospects to believe that your offer solves their problem.

Once that happens, you'll enjoy a whole slew of added benefits that come with having a strong personal brand.

So just in case you aren't sold yet, here's a list of ten ways your personal brand will benefit your business.

Let's go over each of them one-by-one…

#1: ATTRACTING THE RIGHT CUSTOMERS

Personal Branding helps you attract the right customer, not just anyone with a pulse. This helps lower ad costs and increase conversions.

For example, it would be senseless for BMW to market their vehicles to Toyota drivers, and vice versa. They're two different people with two unique sets of values.

Personal branding helps you engage the *right* people who are magnetically attracted to your offer because they subconsciously identify with you, your products and services.

#2: CONNECTION AND BRAND LOYALTY

When you infuse personal branding into your marketing messages, you will trigger powerful emotions in your customers that make them feel deeply connected and understood.

They will feel like you just "get them" and this will keep customers connected to your brand long term. Because few others offer this.

When your brand fascinates consumers, they can't help but choose your offer over competitors, even when your competitor's offer is better.

This is how you build brand loyalty and create customers for life.

#3: ACCEPTANCE OF YOUR VIEWPOINTS

The mistake most marketers make is thinking they're only trying to get a customer to buy into their offer, and that's it. But there's much more to it than that.

You're also trying to get people to buy into your positions and philosophies as they relate to your industry or niche.

For example, if you're a fitness trainer, which cardio method do you recommend? Low intensity cardio or high intensity cardio? Aerobic exercise or anaerobic exercise?

If you're a financial advisor, what kind of investing strategy do you recommend to your clients? Do you suggest low-risk or high-risk investments? Stocks or real estate? And so on…

You can't sell your customers on features and benefits alone. You also need to sell them on your positions so they'll more readily accept your viewpoint and purchase your offers.

And the best way to do this is through the trust and affinity you'll develop with your personal brand.

#4: INCREASED SALES AND PURCHASES

Naturally, the more connected consumers feel to your brand, the more purchases they'll make and the more sales you'll gain. Selling is much easier when prospects come to your offer already invested.

Instead of starting cold from scratch, you'll have warmed prospects up to your offer over and made them more receptive to buying from you.

That's the power of personal branding.

#5: INVOLVEMENT AND RETENTION

Not only does personal branding help you get more customers, it also helps you get them involved with your brand and keep them as customers for longer.

This is important for longevity in business, because customer acquisition and retention is the key to sustainable growth. And the most difficult and expensive thing you'll do is acquire a new customer.

Personal branding will help you keep them for longer and make more purchases over the duration to increase their lifetime customer value. This means more money for you with less stress involved.

#6: ABILITY TO CHARGE HIGHER PRICES

In every industry, there are people who get paid very little, and others who get paid a lot more to do the same thing. And there's rarely a proportional difference in their core competency or skill.

Because you could be the best chef in the world, but if no one knows who you are, you won't be able to charge high prices like celebrity chefs such as Gordon Ramsay or Wolfgang Puck.

It's the strength of your brand that determines what you can charge. Not the quality of what's being sold, or even the results it gets.

Remember, it's the *who* you're selling, not the what.

#7: FORGIVENESS OF FAILURES & MISTAKES

Whenever we form a bond with a powerful personal brand, we are tricked by our subconscious mind into believing that we know the person intimately, when in reality we hardly know them at all.

We form mental impressions of others over time with all the little bits and pieces of information we've pieced together. We create a symbolic representation in our mind that seems entirely true and factual.

As a result, we refuse to be swayed from our opinions about that person whenever inconvenient facts arise to contradict our beliefs. We think, "They couldn't possibly do that. That's not the person *I know*…"

This happens every time a celebrity commits a crime and gets a lesser sentence than the average person would. Our judgment is influenced by the subconscious relationship we already have with them.

And through strong personal branding, you'll form the same subconscious relationship with your customers and be easily forgiven for any mistakes you make or inadequacies you have.

#8: BE TALKED ABOUT AND SOUGHT AFTER

When your customers are constantly talking about you and your brand, the less actual advertising you have to do.

Apple has mastered this. Every time they release an iPhone, all they do is announce it and the media and raving fans take care of the rest.

It's all over… TV shows, local news, social media… you can't escape it. And as a result, they spend less money and get better customers. Sweet!

When the market becomes fixated on your personal brand, you won't have to hunt for new customers. Instead, they'll naturally come seeking you because of all the chatter, commotion and word of mouth.

#9: MEDIA ATTENTION AND ENDORSEMENT

Once you're popular enough, you'll eventually attract media attention and influencer endorsements that will have a much greater impact on your business than two people talking about you over a cup of coffee.

An entire industry has sprung up around influencers and their ability to persuade prospects to buy certain products and services, much in the same way as Oprah Winfrey like we discussed earlier.

With strong personal branding, you can attract them to your business to help spread the message and influence more people to buy from you.

#10: OMNIPRESENCE IN YOUR INDUSTRY

Personal branding enables you to achieve such a powerful presence in your industry that customers can't stop thinking about you no matter what they do. It's like the whole world revolves around you.

This state is called "omnipresence," and is the ability to be "present everywhere at the same time." And while you can bolster this with social media, nothing is more powerful than the media of the mind.

As an example, some religious Christians wear bracelets with the initials "W.W.J.D." to remind themselves to ask "What would Jesus do?" as they make decisions throughout their day.

And when you can achieve this same presence in your prospect's mind, it will result in higher-priced sales more often and more referrals and word of mouth than you can possibly imagine.

THE BENEFITS OF PERSONAL BRANDING

As you can see, there are some major benefits of personal branding far beyond what you might expect.

Imagine if you could have all of those perks and profits… it would change your life forever. You'd be raking in money hand over fist for years to come, and it'd be easier than you ever thought possible.

And I speak from experience. I've been in the same position as you might be in now, struggling to make ends meet. And I saw first-hand how personal branding transformed my business.

But before we get into the nuts and bolts that will send you on your way to success, it's important that you see a real life example of what personal branding can do for you.

My life acts as both a story of success and a cautionary tale, because not only will you see how personal branding can be used for good, but also how it can be used for evil.

Turn the page to see why and find out how it all happened…

“IT’S IMPORTANT TO BUILD A PERSONAL BRAND BECAUSE IT’S THE ONLY THING YOU’RE GOING TO HAVE.”

– GARY VAYNERCHUK

THE STORY

MY STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE

"We won't be able to pay the mortgage this month…"

I still remember the disappointed look on her face when I told my spouse we were dead broke, destitute and penniless.

I had hidden my financial troubles for a while, but I could no longer hide the fact that my bank account balance was a big fat zero.

You could see the gears turning in her head as the worry started to build ten stories high…

"How are we going to pay the bills?"

"Where will we go if they kick us out?"

"What about the car payment? The groceries? The utilities?"

It all added up to one big question:

"What now?"

And I didn't have an answer.

But if I didn't find one quick, we were screwed. We'd lose everything.

And even worse, all the stress, fighting and arguments would rip us apart. My family would be damaged and destroyed.

Coming from a broken-home myself, I couldn't stand the thought of failing my family and making them feel the same pain I felt as a child.

Growing up, my father was never around. He abandoned my mother and I shortly after I was born. And it created immense hardship for us as my mother struggled every day just fighting to stay alive.

And like many abandoned children, I blamed myself. I thought I must not have been good enough, and that's why he left me. He must have thought I wasn't worth sticking around.

I carried that belief all throughout life, thinking I was worthless and that I'd never amount to anything. And sadly, it seemed I was about to prove it to myself once and for all…

Because if I didn't come through, I only had one person to blame… me.

It was all on my shoulders. It was up to me. It was my back against the wall with a gun against my head in a do-or-die moment.

Sink or swim. And I thought I was sunk.

But little did I know, that day would be the biggest turning point of my life. From that day forward, the way I would attract new customers would change forever.

Until that point, I had been struggling in my first year starting a new business. I couldn't find a way to get new customers consistently.

And when I tell you I tried everything, I mean I tried EVERYTHING:

I tried going after the low-hanging fruit, but nobody trusted me. They all said they were already working with someone or hung up as soon as I introduced myself.

I tried promoting my business by sending mail to potential customers, but the only time my phone rang was when someone called to yell at me to stop sending them crap.

And I tried every kind of new technology and fancy gadget under the sun. Super duper email auto-responders with cool drip campaigns. Slick and expensive CRMs that claimed to do all my follow up for me. And snazzy apps that were supposed to help me get leads on auto-pilot.

And guess what? None of it worked. None of it. It all sucked.

My efforts to get business seemed like nothing more than a giant waste of time and an endless money pit that drained me of all my hard-earned profits. But for the life of me, I couldn't understand why.

I was nice. I was charming. I was well put-together and good at what I did, but none of that mattered. I thought it'd help if I lowered my prices, but that didn't work either.

And every time I got close, the customer would change their mind at the last minute and go with someone who offered to help them for free.

I was completely lost and utterly frustrated. It seemed I was hopeless.

And if I didn't find something soon, I'd have to go back to a day job waiting tables at the local diner. And I promised myself I'd never do that kind of soul-sucking work ever again.

But I was desperate and needed a way out… and quick.

The due date for all our bills was quickly approaching. And if I couldn't pay them, my family would be in a world of trouble.

We'd get kicked out of our home and forced to sell everything we own. And it would be all my fault.

In failing my family, I'd become just like my father who failed me so long ago. I'd repeat his sins and carry that torment and pain from one generation to the next.

So I just had to find a solution. I couldn't let that happen.

In utter desperation, I spent my last hundred dollars and pinned all my hopes on a sales seminar. I prayed that I would finally find some hidden gold nugget that would be the answer to all my problems.

And luckily, I found it.

DISCOVERING THE SOLUTION

In the middle of the seminar, a guest speaker came on stage and revealed a strategy they used to become number one in their market.

Part of their plan involved writing a weekly column in the local newspaper. There they would share their opinions on the industry and establish themselves as a local thought leader.

But they said the real secret to success wasn't talking about business…

It was how they also talked about their personal life, family and beliefs. In sharing those details, local readers grew to know them over time.

This separated them from the competition. It helped them stand out from all their competitors that customers knew nothing about.

They said their secret to success was creating a strong emotional connection with consumers. They said that mattered far more than anything they did to actually service the customer.

And even better, while their competitors raced to the bottom by lowering prices, they could charge a premium by pre-selling every customer before they even met.

My. Jaw. Dropped.

"Are you serious? No way could it be this easy."

No way could you become the top dog simply by talking about yourself and sharing who you were. Impossible. They must be joking.

But I had already tried everything else and was running out of options. Plus, it was the only strategy shared at the seminar that didn't cost an arm and a leg to start. So what did I have to lose?

Maybe… just maybe, this would work.

So when I got back home, I started looking for a platform to "take the stage." I needed to build my brand in front of a targeted audience of people who were interested in what I had to offer.

No newspaper would publish my thoughts with the low level of success I had, so I had to look for another option.

Luckily, with all the social media sites nowadays, it's easier than ever to reach the customers you need.

I stumbled across one site that seemed like a good fit and quickly began sharing my thoughts about the industry and where things were headed.

Every time someone posted, I jumped in the conversation and shared my thoughts, opinions and ideas with people looking for help.

I frantically commented on every topic I could, desperately hoping to gain some business. Because I was under the gun. I only had about two weeks until all the bills were due.

And if this strategy didn't produce something quick, I would have to abandon ship and go back to the utter misery of waiting tables and wasting my life away.

And even then it'd still be a major loss, because we'd lose the home we had saved so long for.

So this just had to work, or I was all out of luck.

Fortunately, things started happening once I began introducing my personality and humor into my writing. I shared more than just my thoughts on the industry, I also showed who I was as a person.

After a few days of posting, I was surprised to log in one day and find a message waiting for me in my inbox. It was the first of many I'd get.

It was from someone local who wanted to know more about what I could do to help them.

They said they had read all my posts and thought what I had to say was helpful and informative. Plus, my style made them laugh and feel like we would click. They thought I was the perfect fit for them.

"Really? Little ol' me?… I'm the perfect fit?"

I was floored…

All this time I had been wasting my money on shiny objects, fancy crap and worn-out strategies that didn't work.

I spent months chasing customers till they blocked my calls, begging them for business and lowering my prices just so they'd hire me instead of my competitors.

But now, I had a way to get prospects chasing me all by simply by building my brand with a targeted audience.

It was… amazing. I couldn't believe it was this easy. But it was.

My business was transformed. I had found an easy way to acquire customers that didn't cost a dime. I was free from that day forward.

From now on, the bills would get paid on time, and we'd avoid a financial catastrophe.

My family was so relieved when I told them we were all going to be okay and everything would be all right. We wouldn't have to sell our souls or get stuck standing in the bread line.

I continued on to build a nice business for myself with repeat clientele lining up to work with me. Compared to before, life was on easy street.

Once I figured out what I was doing and why it worked, I dug in to discover everything there is to know about personal branding. I decided to become an expert on the subject and master the strategy.

Because it wasn't the marketing that changed my business, or some fancy gadget or new technology. It was the skillful way I applied the practice of personal branding that finally changed my life.

After experiencing such massive success, I just had to thank the person who shared the initial idea with me at that seminar so long ago.

I reached out to the guest speaker and thanked them for sharing their strategy. I showed them how I had taken the idea and ran with it to build my business with my personal brand.

I showed them how it had changed the way I attract new customers and how it made a massive impact on my income and results.

There was a magical synergy in the atmosphere when we talked. We spent the next few weeks reviewing all the success I was having and analyzing the ways I developed my personal brand. We just clicked.

A friendship formed, and it wasn't long before they made me an offer I couldn't refuse…

They were working on a startup project that had the potential to disrupt our industry and change the future of business forever… and they wanted me to come join them.

Naturally, I was a little hesitant and skeptical at first… but as the project picked up steam, it soon became too good of an opportunity to pass up.

We caught the attention of some major players in the industry, and it seemed they were making moves to shut us down. So we were definitely on to something... we just had to find a way to get it to market.

Because as you'll see in a minute, this could be big… REAL big.

And if we were going to pull it off, we'd need all the help we could get.

So to bring me on board, they offered me a partnership in the company. They knew if we were going to succeed, they'd need my help to do it.

After all the struggles and challenges I'd been through in life, this seemed like the opportunity I had been waiting for.

This was my opportunity to redeem myself and show that I was worth something. This was my opportunity to finally prove my father wrong and show him I'd succeed.

So I accepted. I put the business I had worked so hard for behind me, and I moved my entire family out to work more closely on the project. And when I say I was excited beyond belief, I mean I was thrilled…

I knew that soon I'd achieve levels of success never thought possible, far beyond my wildest dreams.

I'd finally prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that I was the person I always knew I could be.

But little did I know, that choice would simultaneously be the greatest decision I ever made, and the biggest mistake of my entire life...

THE BIG OPPORTUNITY

I still remember the first time I met my new partner at their home…

It was beautiful beyond belief, to say the least. It was by far the biggest and most expensive house I had ever been in.

It had a pub-inspired basement with an underground bowling alley…

Amazing views for miles on end in every direction…

And the coolest part was the brand new Bentley sitting in the driveway, with all the bells and whistles you can possibly imagine.

I was sold. Hook, line and sinker.

It was everything I ever aspired to achieve, and what I believed would someday be mine if I just followed in their footsteps.

But I never suspected that path would lead me straight to hell.

Allow me to explain…

First, you need to know why I was so committed to this project.

Like I said earlier, we had the possibility to disrupt our industry like never before. And there was massive upside potential if we could actually pull it off.

Unfortunately, because of all the non-disclosure agreements and confidentiality contracts I signed prior to getting involved, I'll have to remain a little hush-hush about the details of our project.

But here's the essential information you need to know…

Like most industries, the recent advances in smart-technology had set our industry up for major potential disruption.

Things had already changed for us since the addition of the internet, and many individual entrepreneurs and business owners were losing market share to giant corporations online.

Prices and incomes were falling fast, and if we didn't do something soon, it seemed we'd eventually face the same fate that befell book store owners, video rental shops, and taxi-cab drivers.

Like many other industries, the primary way new customers looked for local businesses shifted online to third-party websites. Whereas before they contacted individual businesses directly.

These third-party websites had become the primary source of new information for offerings in the marketplace. And they've done this in market after market, sector after sector.

This has led to a dire situation in many industries, where the flow of new customers is held hostage by giant corporations backed by hundreds of millions of dollars in venture capital.

And unless you pay a king's ransom for access to these leads, they will get siphoned away from you and sent directly to your competitors and the highest bidder. But we wanted to change that.

Our startup project was working on a way to put the power back in the individual business owner's hands, rather than some faceless corporation leeching them for profits.

We had found a way to offer consumers an extreme advantage by using our service as their first means of finding solutions to their problem.

In fact, this advantage had always existed, it's just that individual business owners had no low-cost options to quickly market their offers to consumers on a massive scale.

But with the development of smartphone technology, a cheap and easy path for direct communication between business and consumer now existed for the first time in history.

And for us, this had the potential to render third-party websites useless. With our startup, these titanic tech companies would forever be removed from their positions of power at the top of the food chain.

I cannot overstate the potential impact this change would have. It would transform the way consumers did business with us forever.

And what's more, both parties would benefit. Consumers would enjoy lower prices, and individual business owners would take back control of their industry and raise their profits. It was a win-win.

It was a mission I fully and whole-heartedly believed in, because I knew that in one fell-swoop we would make a massive difference in the outcomes of so many lives.

But it wasn't going to be easy…

Naturally, there were lots of parties interested in keeping something like this off the market. Because if they didn't, it would put their organizations in an extremely precarious situation.

So we knew that nothing would stand in their way to stop us or beat us to market with a solution of their own. And even worse, they had enormous manpower and endless resources to do it.

That meant it would be a battle between David and Goliath. We were picking a fight with the biggest dog in the yard and relying solely on speed and scrappy ingenuity to come out on top.

And they tried every possible attempt to derail us you can think of...

Threats of lawsuits, negative media coverage, low-ball buyout offers… you name it, they tried it. And it seemed to be working.

We encountered challenge after challenge trying to keep things afloat. And with all the stress and overwhelming obstacles, morale was at an all-time low.

Success felt further away than ever. What had once started out as a lofty goal now looked like an insurmountable task of epic proportions... It seemed as though we'd never reach our dream.

Rumors began to spread of throwing in the towel and calling it quits. Funds were running dry, and we saw no way to bridge the mountainous gap before us. Success seemed impossible.

One day my partner called an emergency meeting and revealed they had some bad news to share. Everyone slumped into the office that morning, waiting for the axe to fall... and fall it did.

The money had run out. We hit a dead end funding the project and our bank account was bone dry. All the blood, sweat and tears we shed was for nothing and it was time to pack it in and close up shop.

An aura of doubt and disbelief filled the room… how could we have come so far to just stop now? No one could believe that the big dreams we set for the future were about to fade away.

But after all the cries and complaints, everyone fell into complete silence… we all sat there pondering what this failure meant for our future, and if there might be some way to avoid the dreaded misery…

And then it hit me…

We tried everything imaginable to keep our company alive, except the one thing that helped us find success in the first place…

Personal branding.

I quickly scrambled down a plan on paper and leaped out of my seat when I saw it would save the day.

We weren't fighting just for us; we were fighting for every small business out there. We were fighting for the many brave entrepreneurs who started a business to serve their community and feed their family.

And if we were going to win, we'd need their help. So to raise funds and awareness for the project, we could leverage my partner's personal brand and hit the road to solicit donations for our startup.

If anything could save the day, personal branding was it. So we all pushed our chips to the center of the table and went all in on one last ditch effort to bring home the jackpot.

Event after event, my partner got up on stage to razzle-dazzle the crowd and knock their socks off. When it came to influence, their charisma and communication skills were nothing short of legendary.

And I should know. I was the one in the back of the room collecting all the order forms and credit card payments.

The branding strategy I had come up with worked like gangbusters...

We raised hundreds of thousands of dollars from people desperately hoping for a solution. They were counting on us to come through and save our industry from technological annihilation.

I heard story after story of how they had lost so much of their business to online corporations. They were praying for someone like us to come along and help them make a stand.

And I really thought we would.

I really thought we would make a difference and save them from the same disastrous fate so many entrepreneurs and local business owners had fallen to before.

But suddenly, some disturbing things came to light that made me realize it was nothing but a sham…

THE DARK SIDE OF BRANDING

Before we could launch our project nationwide to help the people who had donated, we needed to do some initial beta testing to ensure it was ready to release to the market.

And who better to test it than the people working at our own company?

We showed them how our solution would help them differentiate themselves from the competition and win more customers as a result.

And if we were going to rely on them to sell consumers on our offer, we would need to first make sure they were sold on it themselves.

To do this, we held weekly meetings where my partner used the same personal branding skills they used in front of crowds to sell our staff on the mission and get them invested in the outcome.

And invested they were. A few of them even approached cult-like levels of indoctrination.

I mean, I was sold on the project… after all, I did develop the whole damn thing. I was involved from the very beginning and took the plan from concept to completion.

I was essential in the early design stages, created the pitch deck for investor presentations, and wrote the sales brochure to solicit donations. I worked non-stop on the project every minute of the day.

But the transfer of conviction and enthusiasm from my partner to our staff was unreal. It was like they had become brain-washed zealots who would walk right off a cliff if they were told to.

Behind closed doors, I once revealed to my partner the secret science behind the powerful persuasion techniques I use in my personal branding. Many of the same secrets you'll find in this book.

It flew in the face of everything they knew about sales and marketing and totally blew the doors off the rinky-dink branding strategy they had used before. This stuff is seriously next level.

Things like the secrets of subconscious selling, the power of personal positioning, and even some banned branding practices that had been outlawed in other countries.

When you combined all these tricks and techniques with my partner's natural charisma and sales skills, it made for one irresistible persona that could influence even the most stubborn nay-sayers with ease.

This was how they became the spiritual head of our movement and led our followers to believe that we were the source of salvation. Not only for the industry, but for their personal lives and financial future.

Looking back, it was truly something special to behold. The power of their personal brand to persuade and influence was mind-boggling.

With my help, they created a legion of crazed believers ready to follow them to the ends of the earth and willingly sacrifice their hard-earned money, time and energy to the cause.

And if I must admit, I was a believer too.

I had fallen under the same dark spell cast on them. I marched right along to the same tune without critical thought or hesitation.

But little did I know, I had created a monster…

And I didn't realize until they broke so many promises I could no longer lie to myself. Too many things added up to paint an unpleasant picture of reality far different from the one being portrayed.

As I began looking into these issues, sure enough I uncovered some terrifying secrets that would open my eyes to what was really going on.

I'll have to remain vague, but here's what I can tell you…

1) It didn't seem like the money we had raised was being spent in the way it was supposed to.

2) Some things came to light that suggested this wasn't the first time something like this had happened.

3) Our project was being rebranded under a new company that no one else knew about it.

I'll leave you to your own devices to put the pieces together.

But what it seemed like was that all the people who had poured their time, money and energy into this project were about to have the rug ripped right out from under them.

After all, why else would someone go through all the effort to secretly form a new company and rebrand something they had spent more than a year promoting?

At the time, it was hard for me to accept that this was really happening.

Despite the overwhelming evidence this was my worst nightmare come true, I still held onto the hope that maybe I had just misinterpreted everything and gotten it all wrong.

After all, we were so close. Like family. They even said it themselves... They wouldn't do that to me… right? Would they?

But the deeper I dug, the grimier it got.

And just like that, the entire facade they had portrayed all came crashing down.

Like the Wizard of Oz, the truth behind the curtain fell far short compared to the great and powerful image they tried to portray.

We had all been duped. Me, the other partners, all of our staff, the thousands of people across the nation who had donated… everyone.

And want to know the worst part?

It made me feel like a liar too.

I was the one who took the order forms and donations…

I was the one who promised our donors salvation was coming soon…

I was the one responsible in the first place, because it was my idea to build their personal brand.

And I did it all under the false pretenses I was actually doing good.

But now I saw the light. Now I saw the error in my ways, and I could not allow these heinous crimes to continue any longer.

I saw my creation for what it was and realized it had to be destroyed…

So I unmasked them in front of everyone and burnt the whole thing to the ground.

I cut through all the smoke and mirrors and brought the lies and deception out of the shadows and into the light. I put together the hidden pieces of the puzzle for everyone to see.

And for the first time, the chink in their armor was revealed. Their true weakness was shown, and not even they could not bear to look in the mirror and see who they had become.

I realized that they too had lacked the approval of their own father. Nothing they ever did was good enough, and it caused a deep-rooted desire to succeed at all costs. Even if it brought others harm.

But that wasn't a philosophy that I could mesh with. We had fundamental differences in the way we viewed the world.

And I wasn't willing to sell my soul just to have it all.

So I left the company, and nearly half of our staff went with me. They saw right through the lies and withdrew their support immediately. It was clear as day who was telling the truth.

At first, I wondered if there was a way to pick up the pieces and lead a renewed charge to victory. We had made so many big promises to our donors and they were counting on us to come through.

But unfortunately, the opportunity to shape the industry's future was lost forever. Some new changes in regulation made our mission impossible, and the chance was gone for good.

What a waste…

What a squandered opportunity to make an actual difference in people's lives and impact the future.

All because of the desire to be perceived as a benevolent and good-hearted person, instead of the desire to actually *be* that kind of person.

WHAT'S YOUR LEGACY?

One thing my business partner always talked about was leaving behind a legacy and putting their stamp on the future.

They desired to make a lasting contribution to future generations so they could leave this world feeling like their life mattered.

But the irony of it all is that in their relentless pursuit to fill the vacuum in their soul, they will leave behind nothing but a bloody trail of death and destruction in every life they touch.

They will never achieve the fame, money or success they desire. No schools, libraries or stadiums will be named after them. And they certainly won't be remembered as the patron saint of our industry.

All that will be left of them is their personal brand.

Their reputation… their character… their name.

And the same goes for you. How will you be remembered?

I asked myself that question after parting ways with them… wondering if I might fall victim to the same path if left unchecked.

But I decided in that moment that I would never let my personal brand be built on the same lies, deception and untruth that theirs was.

I vowed to learn everything there is to know about personal branding and how it works. Not only for myself, but so I could help empower the millions of people out there doing good in this world.

There are so many well-intentioned entrepreneurs out there who are seeking to make a positive difference in their customers' lives.

And in this rapidly changing social landscape, if these good-hearted people aren't able to position their personal brand to align with the times, their businesses will die.

They'll never help as many people as they could have...

They'll never make as big an impact as they should...

And they risk losing the opportunity to make a difference in the world.

Will that be you?

Will you let this once in a lifetime opportunity go to waste?

For your own sake, I hope not.

While I might not have been able to save my industry, perhaps I can help you save yours.

I hope that genuine and sincere people like you and me, who might have struggled in the past to find success, can finally succeed by leveraging their personal brand using the lessons in the book.

It is my mission to help as many people as I can, and the next step of my journey begins by helping you.

My only request is that you use the strategies shared in this book for good and don't repeat the sins of my previous partner and let greed overpower your generosity.

And for those of you like me who've been hustled, ripped-off, swindled, scammed, deceived or outright fooled in the past, remember that the best revenge is a massive success.

And your personal brand is the most powerful tool to help you get it.

So, without further ado, let us begin…

“WHAT YOU LEAVE BEHIND IS NOT WHAT IS ENGRAVED IN STONE MONUMENTS, BUT WHAT IS WOVEN INTO THE LIVES OF OTHERS.” – PERICLES

HOMEWORK: LESSONS LEARNED

We've covered a lot in this first section, and now it's time for you to put the pieces of the puzzle together and draw your own conclusions.

My goal as an author isn't to have my argument accepted, my goal is to expand your mind. And while summaries are surely helpful, the true value of a book is how it engages your brain and elevates your thinking.

Consider this excerpt from Mortimer Adler's *How to Read a Book*:

"When you buy a book, you establish a property right in it, just as you do in clothes or furniture when you buy and pay for them. But the act of purchase is actually only the prelude to possession in the case of a book. Full ownership of a book only comes when you have made it a part of yourself, and the best way to make yourself a part of it— which comes to the same thing— is by writing in it.

Why is marking a book indispensable to reading it? First, it keeps you awake— not merely conscious, but wide awake. Second, reading, if it is active, is thinking, and thinking tends to express itself in words, spoken or written. The person who says he knows what he thinks but cannot express it usually does not know what he thinks. Third, writing your reactions down helps you to remember the thoughts of the author.

Reading a book should be a conversation between you and the author. Presumably, he knows more about the subject than you do; if not, you probably should not be bothering with his book. But understanding is a two-way operation; the learner has to question himself and question the teacher. He even has to be willing to argue with the teacher, once he understands what the teacher is saying. Marking a book is literally an expression of your differences or your agreements with the author. It is the highest respect you can pay him."

Take some time to gather your thoughts and inscribe them on the following pages. Use the questions I prompt you with as a guide.

And remember, "Do The Work."

1. How have the recent changes in communication technology affected your industry? What's different about your business today compared to how it was 20 years ago? Where do you see your industry headed another 20 years into the future? What actions are you taking to prevent yourself from facing potential disruption?

2. What opportunities do you see for yourself with personal branding? How might it help you attract the right customers, get more sales, or charge higher prices? How might it help you reach your goals? How could a strong personal brand help bulletproof your business against recession and beat the competition?

3. What's your ideal vision for your personal brand? What would be the brand of your dreams? How do you want consumers to perceive you? What levels of fame, recognition, and respect would you like to have? What success do you hope to achieve with your brand in the next 6-12 months?

PART 2

CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

As I stated previously, influence in its purest form is leadership.

Your job is to lead your customer from where they are to where they want to be. From their current situation of having a problem, to their desired situation of having that problem solved.

But before you can lead them, they must be willing to follow you. And for them to follow you, you must possess the right to lead.

And there's only three ways for you to get it:

1) Law
2) Tradition
3) Charisma

Allow me to explain…

In the early 1900s, German economist and sociologist Max Weber wrote an essay titled *The Three Types of Legitimate Rule*.

Weber proposed there are three ways you can get people to place their belief in authority: Legally, Traditionally and Charismatically.

Legal Authority derives from a legal system and is based on the recognized legitimacy of society's laws. The rules decide who gets to lead in making important decisions and setting key policies.

For example, most modern democracies rely on a set of laws to determine who gets to rule when the nation elects its next President, Chancellor or Prime Minister.

These people get elected to a position of power, and we allow them to exert authority because of the office they hold. But once they leave office, they lose the legal rights that come with it.

Traditional Authority comes from the established belief in the sanctity of age-old traditions, or "the way things have always been."

Traditional positions of power usually pass down from one person to the next through inheritance. The best example of this is a monarchy.

When the king dies, the prince takes his place. Why? Because that's the way it's always been, and that's the way it'll always be.

But **Charismatic Authority** is different.

It isn't based on rules or tradition, but charm. Dynamic leaders can gain the admiration of a devoted following through sheer influence, charisma, and "gifts of grace."

Charisma grows out of the strength and charm of an individual personality. People don't follow a charismatic leader by virtue of tradition or statue… they follow out of fascination and belief.

Charismatic leaders are skilled communicators, able to arouse strong, primal emotions in their followers and compel them to pursue a captivating vision for the future.

Some prime examples of charismatic leaders would be historic individuals such as Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Joan of Arc, Adolf Hitler, and Martin Luther King Jr.

These leaders all exerted monumental influence over their followers through pure charisma, operating outside the lines of traditional power or legal authority.

Through their magnetic personalities and alluring appeal, they led the people of their nation through dramatic social change and made a lasting impact on the world.

WHY IS LEADERSHIP IMPORTANT?

Now, I know what you might be thinking…

"I'm no Martin Luther King or Mother Teresa! How is this supposed to benefit me?"

I hear you, and no… I'm not expecting you to lead a revolution and change the world.

But you need to understand that as an entrepreneur, charisma is the only leadership option you have.

And consumers have the freedom to choose from more choices than ever. And if you can't inspire them to choose you, they'll choose your competitor's offer instead.

Charisma is essential to gaining your prospect's attention and interest. Without it, you'll have no way of standing out from the crowd.

So if you want to succeed in the economy of tomorrow, then you need to portray yourself as a charismatic leader to the people that matter most — your customers.

And that process begins by borrowing a concept normally used to brand products, services, and companies…

Positioning.

CHARISMA IS ESSENTIAL TO GAINING ATTENTION AND INTEREST

PERSONAL POSITIONING

WHAT'S PERSONAL POSITIONING?

In this chapter, you'll learn what "Personal Positioning" is and how it differs from product positioning or brand positioning that you may be more familiar with.

First, let's cover what personal positioning is not:

- It is NOT a positioning statement that identifies your target market, the customer needs, or any other textbook marketing hoopla.

- It is NOT focusing on the price, product, place or promotion to convince your customers your offer beats the competition.

- It is NOT drawing a positioning map or matrix that compares your offer to others based on price and benefit.

So then, what is it?

To answer your question, I need to first show you the relationship between positioning and promise.

HOW TO POSITION YOUR PROMISE

There's an important concept to understand for promoting yourself as someone your customer should listen to and buy from...

And that's the relationship between positioning and promise.

First, let's start by defining the **Promise**.

You make a promise any time you say *"Buy my stuff and you'll be happy. It will solve all your problems and make your dreams come true."*

Now I may exaggerate, but let's face it… that's pretty much the promise every offer makes.

Next, let's define **Positioning**.

Positioning is a marketing method for creating a specific perception of a certain promise.

Positioning isn't what you do to the offer… it's what you do to the *prospect*. It's how you find a window into the prospect's mind through which you can place or position your promise.

The goal of positioning is to influence your customer's perception of your promise before you present it to them and make the offer.

With effective positioning, you can pre-sell them on your offer and make it seem more credible without even telling them what it is.

And the same works in reverse. If you have "bad" positioning, then your customers won't listen to your promise no matter how good it is.

And for personal branding, positioning matters most for the person making the offer.

PERSONAL POSITIONING EXAMPLE

Let's say you're scrolling through Facebook one day, and you see an offer for charcoal-based toothpaste. This stuff is everywhere lately and seems to be the latest trend in oral care.

Chances are you probably haven't done any research on this stuff and have no idea how effective it is compared to plain-old mint flavored toothpaste. This concept is totally new to you.

So you don't know if you should trust the promise that this goop will do a better job of cleaning your teeth. And neither does anyone else who sees an ad promoting a new product for the first time either.

Imagine that you saw two different ads presenting this offer to you:

The first ad is full of hype and contains a slimy salesman who tries using high-pressure sales tactics and flashy gimmicks to convince you to buy an entire case of this stuff.

Not too convincing, is it?

But the second ad is different. It's an interview on the nightly news with a licensed dentist who recently completed an in-depth study on the cleaning benefits of charcoal-based toothpaste.

During his research, he found that it reduced the number of harmful bacteria in the mouth by 39% more when compared to normal toothpaste. And it made your teeth three times whiter too.

Now ask yourself, which ad seems more believable?

Which ad does a better job of persuading you that the promise being made is credible and true?

Which ad is more likely to convince you that charcoal-based toothpaste is better for brushing your teeth?

Obviously, it would be the ad with the dentist.

Because when it comes to caring for your health, we're naturally more inclined to believe a doctor than a salesman.

Therefore, it was *who* made the promise that made all the difference, not so much the promise that was being made. The positioning of the person making the promise affected your perception of it.

And this happens all the time, but you probably don't even realize it.

For example, when taking financial advice from a friend, who would you rather take it from?

Your rich Uncle Steve who owns four houses and boat and retired early from his career on Wall Street?

Or your broke friend Sarah, who's always late on her rent and got her car repossessed last month?

They could give you the exact same advice, but the positioning of the person sharing it will skewer your perception of what they say.

And like it or not, this is exactly what's happening to you right now. Your prospects are being influenced positively or negatively, depending on how well you've positioned yourself in the market.

WHY'S POSITIONING IMPORTANT?

So now that you have a basic understanding of what positioning is, let's take a deeper look at why it's so important when making promises or offers to your target market.

Positioning has three main jobs:

1) Establish Authority
2) Build Trust
3) Reduce Resistance

These three things help you increase believability and reduce skepticism when making offers. And obviously that's very important if you want to make a lot of sales.

Now let's go through each of these components one-by-one...

#1: ESTABLISH AUTHORITY

The first job of positioning is to establish authority.

Authority is defined as "the power to influence others, especially because of one's recognized knowledge about something."

Any time you expose a consumer to your message, there are several questions they subconsciously ask themselves before deciding to listen:

- Who are you?
- Why should I listen to you?
- Why should I do what you tell me to?

Going back to the charcoal toothpaste example, here's how a consumer might answer those questions regarding the two different ads…

For the first ad with the slimy salesman, they might think, *"This guy is such a scam artist. I'm not listening to anything he has to say. He's obviously just trying to steal my money."*

For the second ad with the licensed dentist, they might think, *"This dentist knows that he's talking about. I should listen to him because he's a doctor and knows much more about caring for teeth than I do."*

The dentist was positioned in a way that naturally established authority, and the salesman was positioned in a way that naturally established he wasn't worth listening to.

#2: BUILD TRUST

The second job of positioning is to build trust. Trust is defined as the "firm belief in the integrity, ability, effectiveness, or genuineness of someone or something."

Here are the questions consumers ask before trusting your claims:

- Why should I trust you?
- How do I know you're not lying?
- Why should I give you my money?

Using the toothpaste example again, here's how a consumer might answer those questions regarding the two different ads…

For the first ad with the slimy salesman, they might think, *"I have no reason to trust this guy whatsoever. He's obviously lying to me just to make a quick sale. This ad is baloney and full of hype."*

For the second ad with the dentist, they might think, *"He's a licensed professional, and he's even done extensive research on the benefits of charcoal toothpaste, too. So he's safe to trust and buy from."*

The dentist was positioned in a way that built trust in his promise, and the salesman was positioned in a way that built nothing but doubt.

#3: REDUCE RESISTANCE

The final job of positioning is to reduce resistance to the promise that your offer makes. This is especially important when your offer makes wild or unsubstantiated claims.

For instance, take the charcoal-based toothpaste offer…

"You're telling me I can clean my teeth with charcoal? You mean the same stuff that I throw in the BBQ on the weekend? That's crazy!"

As you see, a wild promise like that can be really hard to believe.

Because naturally, there's a lot of resistance to the idea that you can clean teeth with something as dirty as charcoal. That's like saying you can wash your dishes with dog shit. It's inherently unbelievable.

And even if your offer isn't promising some wild claim, you still have to overcome the resistance your prospect has from similar offers they've seen in the past.

Maybe they already tried a product like yours previously and it didn't work. That experience only increased their resistance to your type of offer, not make them receptive to more of the same.

But by paying careful attention to the way you position yourself when making a promise to the consumer, you can lower their level of resistance and increase their openness to your message.

By positioning yourself properly, you can establish authority with your customers, build trust in your offers, and reduce resistance to your promises and claims.

Next, let's look at how you should position yourself, starting with the first thing a customer sees…

Superficial Symbolism.

SUPERFICIAL SYMBOLISM

SURFACE LEVEL SYMBOLS

Superficial Symbolism is the basic sights and sounds used to represent your personal brand. Things like what you wear, what you say, and where you're saying it.

Essentially, it's all the things that influence consumers' judgment of you at first glance. The initial impression you make on consumers comes from the things they see and hear about you.

This is important because you never get a second chance at a first impression. Consumers make snap judgments about your authority, credibility and expertise based on what they first hear and see.

Here's why...

Consumers are being bombarded by thousands and thousands of marketing messages every day. Everyone is trying to get their attention to pitch a product and sell them something.

To manage this, consumers have resulted to making snap judgments about the messages they receive. That way they can quickly discern whether they're worth listening to.

And the fastest way to do that is judge you on the surface-level.

Superficial Symbolism has three key components:

1) Uniform and Language
2) Setting and Symbol
3) Known Associations

Now let's go over each of them one-by-one...

UNIFORM AND LANGUAGE

Uniform and Language is essentially a fancy way of saying "what you look like and what you sound like." These are the clothes that you wear, the words that you speak, and the tone that you say them in.

Going back to the toothpaste example, the slimy salesman looked like a used car dealer. He had slicked back hair, a tacky suit and big bold watch to show you how successful he is at selling.

And he sounded like someone who couldn't be trusted either. His word choice and energy made him seem full of hype and like he was more focused on selling toothpaste than telling the truth.

But the dentist looked like someone who could be trusted. He was wearing a lab coat and glasses and had an air of sophistication about him that made him seem like a credible authority.

And by saying he conducted an extensive lab study and citing research statistics, he sounds like he knows what he's talking about too. He presented facts and figures, not just sales fluff and hype.

Notice how the look and sound of each ad led you to make snap judgments about the promise being made, even though it was the exact same product. This is why uniform and language are so important.

Because if it looks like a duck, swims like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it's probably a duck as far as consumers are concerned.

So don't be an ugly ducking when you could be a beautiful swan.

SETTING AND SYMBOL

Setting and Symbol consists of where you are during the pitch, what's in the scene, and how those things symbolically represent the desired outcomes and core values of your ideal customer.

Let's go back to the example of asking for financial advice I gave you earlier. You had the choice to either get guidance from your rich Uncle Steve or your forever-broke friend Sarah.

Instead of talking to them on the phone, imagine that you went over to their house to have a chat. Envision what each of those places might look like and how the appearances might influence you.

When you go to your rich Uncle Steve's house, he's got three sports cars parked in the driveway… a Porsche, a Lamborghini and a BMW.

You enter his massive 8,000 square foot mansion and walk past countless rooms adorned with expensive furniture and fine art.

You walk out the back patio to see your Uncle overlooking his beach-front property and smoking the finest Cuban cigar.

How do all of those things you see in that scene influence you? What do those things say about him and his expertise, credibility and authority when it comes to financial matters?

Are those things you would find in the world of someone who knows a lot about money? Do any of those things represent your own aspirations or core values for personal finances? I'm betting they do.

Now take a moment to imagine what things might be like over at your broke friend Sarah's house. Well, it's not actually a house... it's a run-down apartment in the worst part of town.

You knock on the door and cockroaches scatter from underneath her doormat. Sarah answers and waves to come in, but she can't say hello because she's busy on the phone with an angry bill collector.

You walk inside and head over to the fridge to grab a drink, but it's empty. So you have to settle for a nasty glass of tap water instead.

As you sit down on the couch, the bottom falls out and sinks so low your butt almost touches the floor. Down on the ground, you see past due bills littering the living room and strewn all about.

Now let me ask… would you feel even *remotely* confident about any advice offered in that situation?

Would the bill collectors, empty fridge, and broken furniture make you *more* receptive to Sarah's advice? Or less?

Do I really even need to ask?

Obviously, these examples are extreme opposites.

But I wanted to emphasize the point that the positioning of the person pitching the product matters.

Because when you put the product in a different package, the perception of the prospect differs too.

KNOWN ASSOCIATIONS

Another thing that affects consumer opinion is **Known Associations.** The other brands, people, and organizations you're associated with will influence your prospect's perception of you.

If you associate yourself with credible authorities, you will be seen as a credible authority yourself.

But the other side of the coin is that if you associate with low quality brands and people who've proven they can't be trusted, then consumers will assume you're a second-rate scam artist too.

To see how this works, let's look back at celebrity endorsement.

Brands often try to make their offers seem more credible by associating with a well-known celebrity. And I cannot overstate the persuasive power of this positioning strategy.

Here's an example…

Contrary to popular belief, the former heavyweight champ George Foreman was not the inventor of the George Foreman Grill.

You know who was? Michael Boehm. A guy you've never even heard of.

When the grill first came out, it was called "The Steam Grill." The original spokesperson was a fancy chef from LA that nobody recognized, and the product absolutely bombed.

Boehm knew that he had a killer product and an amazing offer. You could see the grease and fat run right off the grill when you used it. It was easy to show how well it worked.

But without the right spokesperson to position his offer, he would never get the initial attention and interest for his product and gain consumer trust.

After a long search and lots of contemplation about who would be the perfect person to position his product, Boehm reached out to former heavyweight boxer George Foreman.

But why would you have a boxer promote a cooking product? That doesn't many any sense… and that's what many people around the inventor thought too.

But it turns out that George was the perfect fit. Because Boehm knew something about brand association that no one else did…

It wasn't a boxer selling the grill… it was a big guy who loved to eat.

George was the perfect representation of a match between product and consumer values. Because he was someone who struggled with his weight in retirement but knew it was important to be fit.

And with the George Foreman Grill, he could enjoy all the delicious and tasty burgers he wanted without having to worry about the extra fat and unhealthy grease.

Once George signed his name on the grill and started promoting the product, sales took off like a rocket. To date, the product has sold over 100 million units, making it second in sales only to the TV.

All because George Foreman positioned the product, not some fancy LA chef no one knew.

We'll cover this more in-depth in the next section, because it was more than just superficial symbolism that helped sell the grills…

It was also **Perspective** and **Point of View**.

YOU NEVER GET A SECOND CHANCE TO MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION

PERSPECTIVE & POINT OF VIEW

PERSPECTIVE VS. POINT OF VIEW

As you know by now, personal branding is largely about positioning the person presenting the offer. It has little to do with the offer itself. That's why it's called "personal" branding.

Let's look back at the example of the George Foreman Grill for a moment…

Why did George do a much better job of selling the grill than some fancy LA chef?

Well, we could make an argument that George was much more famous and well-known, and while that's certainly true, it isn't the answer.

To see why, imagine what sales might have been like if they used a celebrity chef instead, like Julia Child or Emeril Lagassé. Would they have experienced the same results? Why or why not?

Think about it for a minute before I reveal the answer…

Ready? Here we go…

If we had a time machine to go back and change out George Foreman for a celebrity chef, I bet you dollars to donuts they wouldn't have experienced nearly as much sales as they did with George.

But why?

Well, it's because of George's unique Perspective and Point of View...

The two terms are often used interchangeably, but there's actually quite a big difference. So allow me to define them for you…

Point of View is the vantage point from which a story is told — like the story of the George Foreman Grill. Point of View focuses on *who* is telling the story.

Perspective is the attitudes, beliefs and opinions about the story shaped by your own past experiences and personal history. Perspective focuses on *how* the story is told.

In the eyes of the consumer, your Point of View is greatly determined by Superficial Symbolism. Consumers quickly make snap judgments to determine *"Who is trying to get my attention?"*

Perspective is a little more nuanced, as the word has a Latin root meaning "look through" or "perceive." And every unique individual has a particular attitude or way of looking at the world.

Your perspective differentiates you from other brands, because two people can look at the same subject and see something different.

It's one thing to get stuck in a traffic jam bumper to bumper. It's another thing to see it from a helicopter in the sky.

Same thing. Different perspectives.

For an example of two people in the same industry who have different perspectives, let's use Grant Cardone and Graham Stephan and their views on real estate investing.

For those of you who don't know, Grant is a sales trainer and real estate investor who has built a massive personal brand in the last five years.

He owns like $500 million dollars in real estate and is a big proponent of investing in multifamily properties and apartment buildings.

Now let's take a look at Graham Stephan...

Graham is a YouTuber and a real estate investor, and the content on his channel focuses on the topic of personal finance... things like credit cards, stock investing, etc.

He owns a few rental properties and is kinda in the same place Grant Cardone was when he was just starting to invest in real estate. And this analogy fits perfectly, because Grant is twice his age.

Now let's look at their perspectives on investing in real estate…

Grant Cardone literally positions himself as the "rich uncle you never had." His father died when he was 10 years old, and it left Grant without a successful role model to guide him.

And now Grant tries to be that role model to his audience. He literally says, *"I'm not here to get you excited. I'm here to be an example. I'm not your friend. I'm your Uncle G."*

But Graham Stephan is more like "The Millionaire Next Door."

In fact, that's exactly what he is. Because he films his videos in the garage of his duplex where he rents out the other side.

Instead of seeming like a wealthy older relative, Graham is more like the average Joe who found financial success by playing smart and wants to share some tips so you can get rich too.

These unique perspectives help these brands differentiate themselves beyond the surface level, and even beyond the actual advice they share.

They could tell you the same thing (invest in real estate), but their different perspectives position the advice in unique ways.

Now that you have a basic understanding, let's go back and examine the point of view and perspective regarding the famous grill we've been talking so much about…

BRAND/OFFER/MARKET MATCH

First, let's look at the offer — the actual grill being sold — so you can understand how the brand, offer and consumer all fit together.

The George Foreman Grill is a "Lean, Mean, Fat-Reducing Grilling Machine" designed to be an easy-to-use indoor grill that reduces the fat content of meaty meals by draining greasy oil away from the food.

Now let's examine the typical consumers for this product, who make up the "market" for these kinds of health-driven offers.

The inception of the grill came during the 1990s, in a time when several cultural waves and market trends helped carry this product to success.

First was the fat-free craze and low-fat diets than reigned supreme at the time. Americans were more health conscious about their food choices than ever before.

Second, the promotion of high protein intake by scientists, the federal government and popular health writers helped meat make a comeback as the best way to lose weight on a full stomach.

And lastly, the biggest boon to the Foreman phenomenon was a societal force that has shaken nearly every nook and cranny of our lives — the busy American.

As more and more people found their schedules too full for cooking, the George Foreman Grill saved the day by helping consumers make healthy meals quickly with little cleanup.

The amazing success of the grill is an example of what happens when you match the product being offered with the values of the market it's being offered to.

In the world of business, this is called a **Product/Market Fit**.

A Product/Market Fit is achieved when you create an offer that successfully meets the demands and satisfies the needs of a matching market of consumers.

Consumers in the 90s desired a quick and easy way to make low-fat healthy meals, and the lean and mean grilling machine was the perfect product to fulfill this wish.

But then why did sales slump at first and the product didn't take off until George got on board?

Simple. They were missing the third part of the equation…

The right personal brand to position the offer to consumers.

You can have the right product/market fit, but if you don't have the right person positioning the product to the market, all your work will have been for nothing. Because the consumer won't buy it.

I call this relationship between brand, offer and consumer the **Brand/Offer/Market Match**.

Because to succeed in the world of today's new economy, not only do you need to match the product to the consumer, but you must also match the brand to both of them as well.



This is why the grill didn't sell well at first. It had the wrong person trying to position the product.

By using a chef, the company was trying to establish authority by playing on the point of view commonly perceived by consumers as an expert on food — a five-star chef.

But what the company failed to realize was how the perspective of such an authority would be perceived by the audience of health-conscious consumers in the market.

While a chef might be an expert on cooking food, a chef's perspective on *how* food should be cooked is completely different from the perspective of the consumer they were trying to reach.

Think of your stereotypical head chef in a fine dining restaurant…

This stressed out perfectionist is a true maestro of the culinary arts.

They have an absolute passion for cooking, and a total commitment to only using the finest ingredients on earth to craft world class cuisine.

They push the limits of what we're willing to eat and use fanciful techniques that seem more fit for chemistry than a kitchen. They are painters of the plate and blur the lines between food and art.

Nutrition facts be damned, it's about the presentation, aroma, and taste.

That is what it means to be a chef…

But what the hell does that have to do with cooking a low-fat hamburger? Not a damn thing. And that was the entire problem.

Even though the product fit the consumer perfectly, the audience couldn't relate to the person making the pitch.

And that's why the pitch failed.

If the product was some kind of magical cooking device that you could just throw ingredients into and out would pop a beautiful and delicious meal like it was cooked by a five-star chef, *maybe* it'd work...

But either way, the chef didn't match the values of the mass market everyday consumer the company was targeting. The customers for their product couldn't identify with the person presenting it to them.

And that's when George Foreman came in and single-handedly turned the fate of company around.

George was a boxer. And not only that, he was the heavyweight champ. And a man like that loves to eat.

When we think of a boxer's diet, fine dining Italian dishes and fancy cuisines don't exactly come to mind. That's not what we imagine boxers eating on a day-to-day basis.

What *do* we imagine? The kind of food that muscle-bound monsters are made out of — steak, potatoes, hamburgers, meat, beef. The kind of stuff we all really enjoy eating.

Rocky Balboa wasn't in the freezer punching packaged heads of lettuce, he was in there walloping on frozen carcasses of meat. And that image of boxers is ingrained in the consumer's mind.

But what made George even more relatable was that he was retired.

He was a big man who was getting older and found himself carrying a few extra pounds around the waist now that his boxing days were over.

He knew it was important to be fit, but he still loved to eat. And he couldn't bear the thought of missing out on all the delicious and tasty hamburgers he loved and having to trade them in for a low-fat salad.

And that was how American consumers felt about their diets, too.

Just like George, they didn't want to miss out on all the flavor their favorite foods had to offer. And they carried of lot of guilt from eating those treats because they knew it was bad for their health.

But with the George Foreman Grill, that was no longer a problem.

They could finally eat all of their favorite foods without consuming the unhealthy fat they had been trying to avoid.

They thought, *"If it worked for George, a heavyweight boxer twice my size, then it will definitely work for me."*

And just like that, one of the best selling products of all-time was born.

That's the results you can expect when you match your personal brand to the product/market fit.

And the easiest way for you to do that is to clarify your Point of View and Perspective to determine your **Brand Identity.**

PERSPECTIVE

+

POINT OF VIEW

=

BRAND IDENTITY

HOMEWORK: BRAND IDENTITY

Now that you have a basic understanding of Personal Positioning, it's time to design your Brand Identity.

Brand Identity is defined as "attributes that help identify and distinguish your brand in consumer's minds."

Basically, it helps consumers answer the question, "Who are you?"

But there's one more thing you need to know...

Brand Identity is how you *want* consumers to perceive your brand... **Brand Image** is the actual *perception* of your brand by consumers.

If identity is the voice, then image is what they hear. And the strongest voice you can give yourself is a well-defined identity.

It consists of three key elements:

1. Point of View
2. Perspective
3. Symbolism

Point of View and Perspective is who you are.

Symbolism is how you express it.

Together, these elements form your Brand Identity.

When you have a strong identity, you'll create a favorable image in consumer's minds. It will help you stand out and distinguish yourself from competing brands when communicating to your audience.

On the following pages, you'll find some examples of well-known brand identities, and some questions to help you build your own.

Brand Identity: Tough Loving Parent
Examples: Dr. Phil & John Taffer

Sometimes in life, we just need someone to look out for us and tell us what to do. We need a "father figure" to watch over us and guide our direction toward a path of safety and prosperity.

And while some parents are kind, others are firm. They have no problem getting in your face and calling out your bullshit when you misbehave in a way that's ruining your life.

Dr. Phil describes himself by saying "I'm not the hush-puppies, pipe, and 'Let's talk about your mother' kind of psychologist." He's not afraid to get in your face and make you face your demons head on.

And John Taffer, the host of Bar Rescue, is the same way. He starts every episode by ripping the bar owner a new asshole, but then pulls them aside afterward and inspires them to make a change.

Brand Identity: Revolutionary Innovator
Examples: Dr. Atkins & Wim Hof

Every now and then we meet a rebel who has a radically different way of looking at the world. They go against the status quo and make us question everything we ever thought was true.

From this chaos, the rebel entrepreneur organizes a radical system for living that others can follow to implement their revolutionary teachings into their daily life.

Dr. Atkins created one of the most popular weight loss diets of all time with the low-carb Atkins Diet. This was a radically new approach to nutrition that spread like wildfire in the early 2000s.

Wim Hof is an extreme athlete known for his exceptional ability to withstand freezing temperatures. His secret? The Wim Hof Method — a set of scientific breathing techniques that improve your health.

1. Who are you? What point of view do you see the world from? What's your unique perspective on your industry, market or niche? Are you the rebellious outsider who goes against the status quo, the average Joe who found the secrets to success, or something else? What identity and image would you like to have?

2. How can you use the elements of Superficial Symbolism to communicate your Brand's Identity? How do Uniform and Language, Setting and Symbol, and Known Associations shape your brand's image in consumer's minds? Are they helping you communicate the identity you want? How could you improve?

PSYCHO DYNAMIC VALUE MATCHING

PSYCHODYNA-WHAT?!

By now, I hope you can see just how powerful personal positioning can be in getting consumers to pay attention to your marketing messages and be more interested in your offers.

But now we'll go even deeper and explore how you can build trust and rapport with your market by highlighting the matches in your psychodynamic value systems.

You may have just tripped over the ten dollar word "psychodynamic," so some explanation is in order…

Psychodynamics is an approach to psychology that proposes there are unconscious motivational forces underlying all human behavior.

The term was originally coined by the "Father of Psychoanalysis" Sigmund Freud. But Psychodynamic Theory as a whole was further developed by famous psychologists such as Carl Jung and Alfred Adler.

Psychodynamic Theory suggests we have an unconscious motivational propulsion system that propels us to pursue pleasure and avoid pain.

And this system is the underlying cause of all human behavior.

So the basic assumption of psychodynamics is that human behavior is powerfully influenced by unconscious motives. Like an iceberg, the most important part of the mind is the part you cannot see.

This psychology stuff gets pretty deep, so let's simplify things a bit…

To make the concept of psychodynamics easier to digest, think of your prospects as having a set value system consisting of their strong judgments and opinions about what is important in life.

A **Value System** is an individual's psychological collection of attitudes, personality, aspirations, desires, values and opinions.

Value Systems are important, because by studying your consumer's value system, you'll have a deep understanding of what emotionally drives them at their core level.

You can then use that information, or "psychodynamic profile," to fine-tune your messaging, offers and positioning to align your brand with the way your customer already thinks, feels and believes.

And when you match your values to your customer's values, they will naturally be drawn to your offers and messages, making it an easier decision for them to buy.

To see a real world example of this, let's take another look back at the George Foreman Grill…

The product came out in an era full of exercise videos, lifetime fitness gyms, and no-fat diets. These show the values of consumers at the time.

People's lives were getting busier and busier and they wanted flavorful food that was quick and easy to make without all the unhealthy fat.

So, the inventor took this information and designed a product that matched the market's values. The grill was quick and easy to use, and cooked foods in a healthier way. It was a match made in heaven.

But the positioning was off. Consumers didn't identify with the fancy chef trying to sell them the product. And that's because the chef didn't have values that matched the values of the consumer.

The chef valued fancy food, and the consumer valued *fat-free* food. It was a total disconnect.

But while the chef's values didn't match, George Foreman's did.

Just like the consumer, he was a heavier person who loved to eat, but still desired to be fit and make healthier choices in his diet.

To demonstrate these matching values, George wasn't shown inside the ring knocking out opponents… they showed him grilling burgers for his family at home and "knocking out the fat."

And with that positioning, they also knocked sales out of the park and made hundreds of millions of dollars.

Once both the offer and positioning aligned with consumer values, customers were drawn to purchase the product because of the subconscious value match.

And once you match your values with customers, you'll experience the same success too.

I call this process **Value Matching**.

Value Matching is the deliberate demonstration of the match between your values and your customer's values.

I've designed a three-step process for matching your prospect's value system, and it's single-handedly the most powerful thing you can do to build trust and affinity in your personal brand.

Unfortunately, that's beyond the scope of this book. It would require a textbook-size tome to cover the subject sufficiently and walk you through the lengthy process. Like I said, this stuff gets pretty deep.

But don't worry, I won't leave you hanging.

Next, I'll show you a simple strategy you can immediately implement to begin demonstrating a match with your customer's values…

By showing your **Shared Support and Opposition**.

SHARED SUPPORT & OPPOSITION

Support and opposition are two sides of the same coin. They are motivating forces that propel people to move toward things they support, and away from things they oppose.

For example, you may support one political party, but oppose to the party running against them. You might support ideas like the right to free speech, but oppose other ones like the death penalty or estate tax.

An easy way for you to show matching values is to show your support or opposition for the same things your customers support and oppose.

If you look at the mental makeup of your market, you'll find some things that your customers are strongly in support of, and other things they are vehemently against.

In any group of like-minded people, there are some subjects that bring up strong emotions whenever they're discussed or come to mind.

For example, gun owners passionately support the second amendment and the right to bear arms. But they explode with anger against any attempts at gun control or limits on possessing firearms.

So if you're selling something to gun owners, it would a good idea to show you feel the same way they do.

Because when you do, consumers will subconsciously think, "*This person is like me. They value the same things I value. I can trust them.*"

But when your values mismatch and you support what they oppose or vice versa, it will drive a wedge between you that no offer can remove, no matter how great it is.

When your values aren't aligned, consumers will think, "*This person is different from me. They don't value the same things I value. So I shouldn't listen to them or follow their recommendations.*"

And as an entrepreneur, your main recommendation is to buy your offer. And if consumers won't listen to you because of mismatched values, it won't be long before you're out of business.

Often your values naturally align with most of your customer's values, and there isn't much gap…

But where most people get their knickers in a knot is accepting that by showing your support or opposition to something, you'll alienate the rest of consumers whose values don't quite match.

Many businesses try to be all things to all people, even when that's an obvious recipe for disaster. They just can't bear the thought of stepping on somebody's toes or offending a potential customer.

But when there is little difference between competing products, your brand's value system becomes of primary importance. What you support or oppose is a strong consideration for today's consumer.

Customers today want companies they support to mix mission with money. They want the businesses they buy from to support causes they believe in and rise to take a stand.

In today's economy, it's not enough to simply sell a product or service that customers desire. They also expect you to take a stance on social and political issues before you'll earn their business and loyalty.

Company executives often experience massive heartburn over this, because they can't stomach the idea of offending a potential customer and possibly losing sales.

But what they don't realize is that by showing your brand's personality, you'll attract customers with matching values to you like a magnet.

And the increases in sales from value-matching customers will more than make up for any losses experienced by turning value-opposite customers away.

THE KAEPERNICK CONTROVERSY

Case in point, let's look at Nike's recent endorsement of controversial athlete Colin Kaepernick.

Colin Kaepernick is the NFL quarterback turned civil rights activist when he started an absolute ruckus by refusing to stand during the playing of the national anthem at a game.

When asked about it, he said "I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color."

That's quite a statement, and one that would polarize the nation. His position led some followers to view him as a prophet, while driving away others who now hated him with every inch of their soul.

Kaepernick refused to stand for every game that season, and his actions inspired various forms of protest from other athletes around the league. He'd become the leader of a new civil rights movement.

But it wasn't without its detractors. The NFL experienced an 8% decline in viewership that season, with 30% of viewers citing the political protests as the number one reason they stopped watching.

Nike, the global powerhouse of athletic apparel, took one look at the values of their customers and made one massive wallop of a bet…

They endorsed Colin Kaepernick and supported him in his protests.

In 2018, Nike released an ad featuring Kaepernick with the text, "Believe in something. Even if it means sacrificing everything." As Kaepernick had sacrificed his career with his political statements.

In July 2019, Nike was about to release a shoe featuring the Betsy Ross Flag for the fourth of July. But they withdrew the model after Kaepernick publicly associated the colonial era flag with slavery.

Many criticized Nike's decision as "politically correct madness" and a major business blunder. But their association with Kaepernick has paid off handsomely, because Nike knew exactly what they were doing...

Supposedly, a source with direct knowledge of Nike's customer database revealed some statistics to paint a clear picture of Nike consumers who generally support Kaepernick's protests.

When you look at the numbers, Nike's customer database appears to be over-represented by young, democratic African Americans, Asians and Hispanics. Not older, white republicans and conservatives.

Therefore, the typical Nike customer would theoretically be more supportive of Kaepernick's social justice activism, rather than criticize him for disrespecting the American flag and anthem.

And later research proved this theory correct, as recent Nike customers are much more likely to have a positive view of Colin Kaepernick than the general public.

Essentially, the data and research shows that while a large portion of the public didn't like Nike's endorsement of Kaepernick, they wouldn't be purchasing Nike's products anyhow.

But for those who would, Nike's endorsement of Kaepernick was a clear demonstration of matching value systems, and made those consumers feel more attached to Nike's brand than ever.

And the numbers prove that Nike's bold move has paid off. Nike's stock has risen over 18% since the announcement of the Kaepernick deal, adding nearly $26.2 billion in company value.

The increase comes from a range of factors, but there's no doubt the association with such a polarizing person played a key part in it.

Nearly three years after Kaepernick played his last down of football, his new Nike shoe sold out in less than two hours. The shoes' bottoms are marked with the date he first refused to stand, "08 14 16."

By taking a divisive stand on an issue important to its customers, Nike strengthened their relationship with consumers by demonstrating a matching value system.

In one fell swoop, customers forgave Nike for past transgressions such as inhumane sweatshops, child labor and tax evasion. Those things apparently no longer matter, but social activism does.

Because the company is now worth more than ever, despite the endorsement of a person who drove away some customers for good.

HOMEWORK:

Whether you love them or hate them, ask yourself what you can learn from Nike's powerful playbook. What lessons can you learn from their endorsement of Colin Kaepernick?

Here are some questions to consider that will help you apply this strategy to your business…

- What are three things your customer strongly supports as it relates to your offer or niche? What organizations, beliefs or ideals do they aggressively advocate for?

- And what are three things your customer vehemently opposes? What organizations, beliefs or ideals are they most strongly against?

- And most importantly, how can you show matching support or opposition for these things?

Because this is how you'll attract customers to your brand, like moths to a flame.

In the next section of this book, I'll show you even more techniques to bond with customers as you learn the strategies behind the concept of Credible Communication.

PART 3

CREDIBLE COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATING CREDIBLY

As a charismatic leader, you will capture the attention and interest of consumers. But before they'll buy from you, you must gain their trust.

Building trust is important because it allows consumers to develop a sense of affinity and rapport with your personal brand.

And the best way to build trust is through **Credible Communication**.

First, let us define communication…

Communication is the conveying of a message from sender to receiver.

Your brand is the sender, consumers are receivers. And the message promises to solve their problem.

There have never been as many cheap and effective methods for communicating as there are today. It's easier than ever to get your message out there, so communication is the easy part.

The challenge is getting consumers to believe your message is credible.

So let's definine what you need to earn their belief — credibility.

The word "credibility" comes from the Latin root "credo" which means "I believe."

Credibility is the quality of being trusted and believed in. When you have credibility, you're deemed worthy of trust.

"Credible" comes from the Latin "credibilis" which means "worthy to be believed."

But how do you get credibility?

How do you make consumers believe that you're credible?

To answer that question, we need to go all the way back to the person who coined the term… the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle.

In the 4th century B.C., Aristotle wrote the single most important piece on persuasion ever written. It was a treatise called *Rhetoric*.

In it, Aristotle shared his "**Modes of Persuasion**," which classify a speaker's appeal to an audience. He describes them as such:

"Persuasion is achieved by the speaker's personal character when the speech was so well spoken as to make us think them credible…

Secondly, persuasion may come through the hearers, when the speech stirs their emotions…

Thirdly, persuasion is effected through the speech itself when we have proved a truth or an apparent truth by means of the persuasive arguments suitable to the case in question…."

Logic, Emotion and Credibility... Or Logos, Pathos, and Ethos, as the Greeks called them.

Here's what Aristotle had to say about character and credibility:

"There are three things which inspire confidence in the orator's own character-the three, namely, that induce us to believe a thing apart from any proof of it: good sense, good moral character, and goodwill.

False statements and bad advice are due to one or more of the following three causes. Men either form a false opinion through want of good sense; or they form a true opinion, but because of their moral badness do not say what they really think; or finally, they are both sensible and upright, but not well disposed to their hearers, and may fail in consequence to recommend what they know to be the best course.

These are the only possible cases. It follows that any one who is thought to have all three of these good qualities will inspire trust in his audience."

So by Aristotle's definition, credibility comprises three key elements:

1. **Competence** (Good Sense)
2. **Trustworthiness** (Good Moral Character)
3. **Goodwill** (Care and Concern)

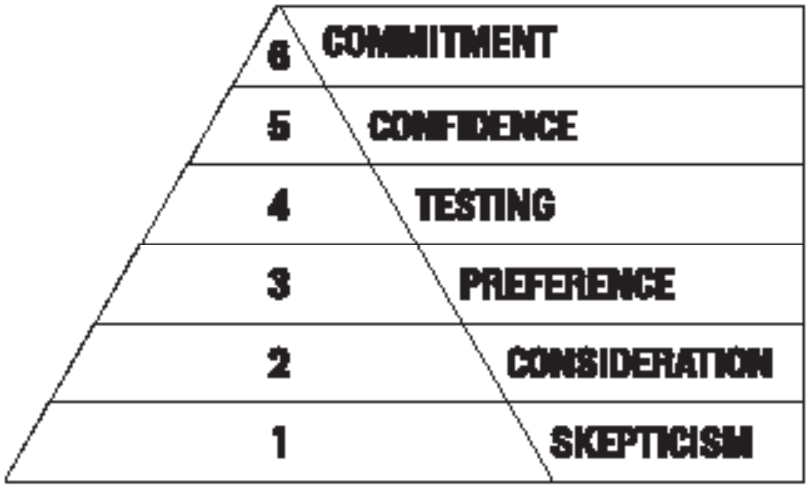
These three elements can be broken down even further:

- Competence consists of your expertise, knowledge and reputation.
- Trustworthiness consists of your honesty, ethics and authenticity.
- Goodwill consists of empathy, understanding, and responsiveness.

These nine factors are how consumers judge your credibility. If any of them are missing from your personal brand, it will hamper the development of affinity and trust between you and the consumer.

But as you strengthen these elements, you will gain more willingness from consumers to commit to an ongoing relationship with you.

To examine how this process takes place, let's look at a concept I call the "**Consumer Trust Pyramid**."



CONSUMER TRUST PYRAMID

The Consumer Trust Pyramid outlines the hierarchy of stages a person must go through before they become a willing customer and purchase your offer.

There are *"Six Stages of Trust"* that a consumer must go through:

1. Skepticism
2. Consideration
3. Preference
4. Testing
5. Confidence
6. Commitment

The first stage is **Skepticism**. This is the initial stage where no trust exists. Since consumers have grown to distrust marketers, they start in an initial stage of doubt and suspicion.

The second stage is **Consideration**. Once you've established that your offer is relevant and might meet the consumer's needs, they're willing to consider your offer as a potential solution.

The third stage is **Preference**. This is when the consumer has developed enough trust and affinity in your brand to prefer you as the primary source of information over other options in the marketplace.

The fourth stage is **Testing**. This is when the consumer makes their first leap of faith by trusting you with some basic personal information, such as their name or email address.

The fifth stage is **Confidence**. After the consumer has tested you and determined you can be trusted, they act with confidence and share more sensitive information such as their credit card number.

The final stage is **Commitment**. This is when the consumer makes the commitment to complete the purchase and finally becomes a customer of your product or service.

Think about the way you typically get introduced to new brands… this is exactly how it happens.

You stumble across their website or social media, and at first you're a little skeptical of the claims they make about their offer and the results it can give you.

But as you explore, you realize there might be some credibility to their claims and you give them some consideration as a potential solution.

As you check out their content, they eventually become your preferred source of information regarding the problem you're looking to solve.

But you're not ready to buy just yet… first you need to see if they can be trusted. So you download their free sample, report, cheat sheet, etc., by giving them your email address in exchange.

After being on their list for a while, over time you've grown more and more confident that their offer can solve your problem. You're finally ready to provide personal info and order their offer.

But the order isn't complete until you click the buy button and commit to the purchase. Not until that moment do you become a customer.

And when you think about it, this is how all relationships develop. Whether it's between business and consumer, or people falling in love.

Let's say you're browsing a dating website and come across the profile of someone you find attractive. Before giving consideration as a potential suitor, first you look at their pictures and read their profile.

If everything looks good, you open the lines of communication and test if you can trust them. You hope to discover that they're just as amazing as their profile claims they are.

If that goes well, you're willing to give them some preference for your time and increasingly give them more trust. You give them your phone number and gradually reveal more personal information.

If the chemistry continues, it eventually leads to enough confidence to go on a date. And you eventually commit to meeting them and taking your relationship a step further.

And this process cycles over as you reach deeper levels of commitment. From first date to relationship, from relationship to marriage.

And the same thing happens in business. The cycle starts over when presenting other offers or asking a higher price. You must continue to develop trust to gain greater commitment.

Now what do you think is the best way to lead potential customers up the trust pyramid and through the sales journey? What style of communication works best?

If you've been paying attention, then you know the answer isn't focusing on your features and benefits. That will just bore them to death and they won't believe you, anyway.

Imagine going on a first date and the other person won't shut about how much money they make, what kind of car they drive, and every other thing they can think of to impress you.

BORRRRRRRRRRING!

Blah-blah-blah. No emotional connection whatsoever.

But the same thing happens with your offers too. When you communicate this way, consumers will quickly tune you out and ignore anything you have to say in the future.

So when communicating, you shouldn't take a fact-first approach. As counterintuitive as it may be, that will only do more harm than good.

Instead, focus on something that has captured our attention since the dawn of time…

Storytelling.

THE POWER OF STORYTELLING

WHAT IS STORY?

First, let's begin by defining the way you'll build credibility — story.

For starters, here are some definitions from various other sources:

"Story — an account of incidents or events."

"Story — an account of imaginary or real people and events told for entertainment."

"Story — a narrative, either true or fictitious, in prose or verse, designed to interest, amuse, or instruct the hearer or reader; tale."

These work well, but only begin to grasp why someone pays attention to a story in the first place.

To understand, try this definition instead:

"A story is a record of how someone deals with danger."

This definition is the best place to start if you want to understand why your consumer listens.

For it is the perceived danger that captures their attention.

HOW TO CAPTURE ATTENTION

The average consumer comes across thousands of ads per day. The sheer number of marketing messages they receive is overwhelming.

So for your message to stand out, you need to capture their attention and hold it from start to finish. Because if you don't, you'll get interrupted by one of the 10,000 other people fighting for their focus.

So you can't just capture their attention. You must *seize* it.

And what seizes their attention? Anticipation.

What creates anticipation? Fear.

What creates fear? Danger.

What is danger? **Change**.

When a situation changes, it requires a change in you.

But if change is too great, it threatens your survival. Anything that threatens your survival creates fear.

Your spouse leaves you. Your car breaks down. You lose your job.

All these changes feel like earth-shattering events that threaten your very survival, causing you to fear.

They immediately raise the question:

"What now? What happens next? How do I survive this?"

And that is the basis for all storytelling.

Think about the way stories hold your attention…

The character experiences a change we perceive as danger.

The danger makes you wonder, *"What if they don't survive?"*

We watch them deal with danger and learn from the outcome.

That's the purpose of story… to learn to survive.

And it's why stories do such an amazing job of capturing our attention.

Because if we don't listen to the lessons they contain, we risk our lives.

HARDWIRED PURPOSE OF STORY

Stories were the world's first virtual reality. They allow us to simulate dangerous situations without having to experience them first-hand. Stories help us prepare by learning how someone else survived.

"A wise man learns from the mistakes of others… a fool, from his own."

Back in the stone age, if you had to rely on your own personal experience to teach you everything, it wouldn't be long before a sabertooth tiger jumped out of the bushes one day and ate you for lunch.

But by listening to stories, you can learn life's lessons without risking your neck.

Stories help us expect the unexpected. So we don't use them to escape reality, but to *navigate* it.

As the hero learns to survive, so do we. Their insights change how we see the world.

And stories teach us not by telling us what is right, but allowing us to feel it ourselves.

Studies reveal that when we're engaged in a story, our brain experiences it as reality. It can't tell the difference. So we don't just observe stories, we take part in them with emotion and feeling.

It is emotion, not logic, that telegraphs meaning. So emotion is what your message must transmit.

This is why story is so much more important than facts and figures.

It's not the facts we remember, it's the story.

That's what leaves the meaning in our minds.

And here's an example to prove it.

We all know the story of Robin Hood, right?

At least, everyone remembers the basic message.

We can even state it in a single sentence...

"Rob from the rich and give to the poor."

But do you remember:

- His real name?
- His king's name?
- What forest he lived in?
- What year the story took place?
- What town the villain was from?

I'm betting you forgot at least one of those things, even though they're all important.

All you remember is the story. Or at least the meaning behind it.

And next, I'm going to show you something that will communicate that meaning like nothing else…

Your **Signature Story**.

YOUR SIGNATURE STORY

WHAT IS A SIGNATURE STORY?

In the book *Creating Signature Stories: Strategic Messaging that Energizes, Persuades and Inspires*, author and "Father of Modern Branding" David Aaker defines a signature story as the following:

"A signature story is an intriguing, authentic, involving narrative with a strategic message that clarifies or enhances the brand, the customer relationship, the organization, and/or the business strategy. It is a strategic asset that enables growth, provides inspiration and offers guidance both internally and externally over an extended period of time."

But what does that mean *really*? And how can you apply this to personal branding?

To start, let's begin by making the concept easier to understand…

"A signature story is a personal narrative that explains to your customer who you are, where you're from, and why you do what you do."

Your signature story provides consumers with the essential context needed to understand you.

This is important, because without it you're just a confusing stranger. And a confused mind says no.

As an example, read the following description of someone and tell me what it makes you think of them.

Ready? Here it is:

A dark vigilante who runs around at night, creeping in the shadows, and punching people in the face.

What a jerk! What makes him think he can punch whoever he wants?

This guy sounds like a real butt head. And certainly not anybody you'd want to be associated with.

But what if I told you that the person who that is a description of is…

Batman.

Changes your whole perception, now doesn't it?

Now he's not some crazed wacko terrorizing people at night… he's a kick-ass superhero beating up bad guys and protecting Gotham City.

But why did your perception change?

Because when I revealed he was Batman, suddenly you had all the essential context needed to understand his actions. That part was missing from the first description I gave you.

Without the whole "saw-his-parents-gunned-down-in-an-alley-by-a-criminal" backstory, none of the Batman legend makes any sense. He just seems like an angry weirdo who enjoys dressing up as a bat.

But once you understand him, he goes from total whack-job to amazing superhero instantly.

This shows the power of a signature story's ability to communicate with consumers. This is why it's so important for you to have one and make sure your audience knows about it.

Because without it, the same misinterpretation can happen to you.

WHY FACTS TELL & STORIES SELL

There's a saying in sales that goes, *"Facts tell, but stories sell."*

It means if you want someone to purchase your offer, tell them a story. Not just what the offer does.

And to sell you on this idea, I'll tell you a story too…

Many of you know that waiters make most of their money on tips, and we usually base tips on a percentage of the total check.

One of the best ways for a waiter to increase the size of your check (and increase the size of their tip), is to sell you a fancy bottle of wine. This can easily increase the tab quite a bit.

But how do they convince you to purchase the $100 bottle of wine instead of the $20 bottle?

Simple… by telling you a story.

That will do way more to sell a bottle of wine than telling you about the year it was made, the flavor profile, or any "facts and figures" type stuff.

I once worked at this fancy restaurant where occasionally we'd have people come in representing the different brands we sold. They came to teach us more about their products and help increase sales.

Once we were visited by someone representing the Mi Sueño Winery in Napa, California. The phrase "mi sueño" is Spanish for "My Dream."

And if you're smart, I bet you can tell where this story is headed...

The winery was founded by Rolando Herrera, who first started out as a dishwasher in a restaurant. Rolando came to America at the ripe young age of 15 determined to make something of himself.

Without his parents' provisions or any financial support, Rolando worked late at night and on the weekends to make his way through high school. He was a student by day, dishwasher by night.

But the summer of 1985 would be a turning point in Rolando's career. The owner of a local winery hired him to break up some rocks around his property so he could build a stone wall.

Later that summer when the work was complete, Rolando approached the owner to thank him for giving the opportunity to work for him.

The owner was shocked — usually the workers he hired never approached him like this to try to make a personal connection. Inspired by Rolando's work ethic and gumption, he offered him a job.

Rolando accepted, and eventually rose through the ranks to become the cellar master of the winery. During that time, he took courses in winemaking at Napa Valley College.

Rolando took that education, and moved from position to position around the valley at various wineries, each one taking him one step closer to his long-held "sueño."

With his advanced understanding of farming and wine, Rolando first launched the Mi Sueño Winery as a side project with a mere 200 cases. It was the first time he'd put his stamp on a wine of his own.

But what started out being intended as nothing more than a "resume in a bottle," soon sold out three harvests in a row. Rolando realized he was now on the way to making his dream come true.

Around 2004, nearly 20 years after Rolando's journey in winemaking began, his gut told him it was finally time to go all-in and commit to the dream he brought with him to America so many years ago.

Rolando took what Mother Nature gave him in the soil of California, and strives to sustainably grow the best possible grapes to meet his goal of producing distinctly balanced wines.

Rolando's care for his vineyard is unmatched. Just listen to the way he describes growing a harvest:

"You have to be consistently present with your children to know what is going on in their lives. Even when you think you know them, they change. The same is true with growing grapes. Each growing season is different, and to be a good farmer, you must nurture and cultivate the fruit and spend as much time as possible in the vineyard. You have to be there. No growing season is the same, just like no stage in a child's life is the same."

Rolando's love for wine and family has brought his winery to where it is today, recently celebrating its 20th year anniversary and producing 10,000 cases of wine per year. They're a massive success.

And to think, it all started with a big dream inside a young boy's mind… *"Mi Sueño."*

Now, I can't tell you a damn thing about how that wine tasted or when it was made. I can't even remember if it was a merlot or cabernet.

But I'll never forget that story. And neither will my customers.

I must've told that story a million times and sold the ever-loving hell out of that wine. And there's a chance I might have just sold you too.

All because of the signature story about who the winemaker was, where he came from, and why he made wine the way he did.

That's the power of a Signature Story.

HOW TO WRITE YOUR STORY

To begin writing a story like the one I just shared with you, first you'll need to know the essential ingredients to a good signature story:

- **Identity** — who you are, how you portray yourself to customers
- **Origin** — where you come from, the path you took to get here
- **Mission** — why you do what you do, your greater purpose

As an example, let's look back to the story of the Mi Sueño Winery:

Identity — Rolando is a prime example of the American Dream come true. He was just a boy who started with a big dream and worked for many years to see it finally come true.

Origin — Rolando is an immigrant, and his story represents the ideal of the American Dream. It shows how you can start from the bottom and achieve anything with the right work ethic.

Mission — Rolando loves his vineyard likes he loves his family, and even likens grapes to his children. He looks after them with love and care, and his mission is to bring distinctly balanced wines to market.

Now, not everyone will have an amazing story like Rolando's...

But if you look back through your personal history, there is sure to be some gold hiding somewhere.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Family Heritage
- Formative Childhood Experiences
- Influential Mentors
- Challenges You've Overcome
- Major Turning Points

And here are some notes for each of them to help you explore those parts of your past in depth…

Family Heritage

Often our family and culture play a major role in influencing the person we ultimately become. Look back to your upbringing and see how your family and cultural heritage may have influenced you.

What were the most important relationships and traditions in your family? How did they shape your character? How did those experiences make a lasting impact on the rest of your life?

Formative Childhood Experiences

Like the foundation of a house, our childhood experiences are the foundation upon which the rest of our lives are built. Our early experiences often affect the structure of our adult lives.

Are there any early childhood experiences that affected you? Such as moving to a new city, watching your parents divorce, or exposure to diverse activities? What are the experiences that shaped you?

Influential Mentors

In the journey of life, we often encounter people along the path who influence the person we become. They guide us on the road ahead and help us reach our destination.

These people can include mentors, family, friends, authors, speakers, teachers or even random strangers you cross paths with. Who are the people that have had the most influence in your life?

Challenges You've Overcome

As with the caterpillar and butterfly, adversity is often necessary to build character in people. It challenges us to find our true self when our circumstances in life become most difficult.

What challenges have you had to overcome? Perhaps you stuttered as a child, went through a terrible divorce, or got in massive debt had to file bankruptcy. How did these experiences change you?

Major Turning Points

Turning points in life are critical times where big decisions lead to big change. Sometimes they can create a mess, but other times they can create a miracle. What were the key turning points for you?

Perhaps an important family member died at a young age. Or possibly your first job influenced the path of the rest of your career. Or maybe you made a decision that meant there was no turning back.

These aren't the only ideas you can use, so if you think of something that's not on this list, use it. I merely intend this to give you some ideas to start with and explore your personal history.

Once you've got the raw materials from your past, then it's time to shape them into a story. I provided some pages at the end of this chapter for you to take some notes and brainstorm ideas.

THE FIVE BASIC STORY PLOTS

In the book *The Seven Basic Plots*, author Christopher Booker outlines seven archetypal story structures that be commonly found in most myths and fiction.

Five of these plots provide superb story structures to tell your story. Read the descriptions below and see which one works best for you.

The Five Basic Plots

1. Overcoming the Monster
2. Rags to Riches
3. The Quest
4. Voyage and Return
5. Rebirth

Overcoming the Monster — There is an evil force threatening the land, and the hero must defeat this monster to save the world. The hero becomes stronger, wiser and more successful as a result.

Examples: *James Bond, Jaws, Star Wars, Jurassic Park, Jack and the Beanstalk, Seven Samurai*

Rags to Riches — The poor hero acquires power, wealth, and/or a mate, but then loses it. Through hard work and determination, they gain it all back and grow as a person.

Examples: *Rocky, Cinderella, Aladdin, Pretty Woman, Scarface, Goodfellas, Slumdog Millionaire*

The Quest — The hero sets out on a long hazardous journey with many obstacles and temptations along the way. But the story isn't over until the hero is triumphant and finally reaches their goal.

Examples: *The Wizard of Oz, Harry Potter, The Lord of the Rings, Raiders of the Lost Ark*

Voyage and Return — The hero goes to a strange land. After overcoming the threats it poses or learning important lessons unique to that location, they return with experience and wisdom.

Examples: *The Hobbit, Alice in Wonderland, The Lion King, Back to the Future, The Odyssey*

Rebirth — The hero falls under the shadow of a dark power and begins acting flawed and immorally. Over the course of the story, they learn the error of their ways and change for the better.

Examples: *A Christmas Carol, Beauty and the Beast, Groundhog Day, How the Grinch Stole Christmas*

You don't have to use these archetypes as a hard-and-fast guide. And many stories combine multiple elements from each type to create a complex plot. The possibilities for your story are endless.

But with the work you've done so far, you have the beginnings of an amazing signature story hiding inside of you waiting to be revealed.

And don't stress yourself out if it takes some time for you to develop it. This isn't an overnight process. And remember that you're creating a powerful business asset that will last you a lifetime. It ain't easy.

After you've finished brainstorming, put a rough outline together showing where the story will begin and end. And indicate the key moments in the middle that demonstrate your character and mission.

When you're ready, give yourself a go at a first draft. You're likely not a trained writer, so go easy on yourself if the first draft isn't an award winner. All drafts need polishing and "writing is rewriting."

Set the draft aside, and let the story marinate in your mind for some time before coming back to it. This might be a few days, a few weeks, or even a month. Let your subconscious work on the story for you.

After some time, give it a second go. You'll come back to the story with fresh eyes and can polish it up to better tell your tale. You can even share it with a trusted mentor or friend to get some feedback.

Eventually, you'll end up with an original story that you can use to communicate credibility to your audience. This is a business asset you can use time and time again throughout your career.

Later in this book, I'll provide you with some more examples as we do a personal brand analysis for some famous individuals you might be familiar with. You can use those stories as inspiration, too.

Next, we'll cover some other kinds of credible communication, starting with something that seems a little counterintuitive at first. But believe me when I say it will help customers bond to you like glue…

Your **Flaws**.

NOTES FOR BRAINSTORMING YOUR STORY:

THE BEAUTIFUL MESS EFFECT

FLAWS AND DISCLOSURE

Often when people think of communicating about themselves, they're tempted to only show the "highlight reel" of their life. They only share the positive moments and filtered pictures of perfection.

But by skewing reality and avoiding any signs of weakness, you only put a barrier between you and the consumer that prevents closeness and connection.

Admitting mistakes, sharing your failures, and confessing true feelings are all expressions of vulnerability we often fear will lead to being rejected and negative judgments.

But contrary to our fears, a recent study proved that having the courage to share your vulnerability with others will often reward you with closeness and acceptance instead.

That's because there's an intriguing mismatch between the way we view own vulnerabilities and how view the vulnerabilities of other people...

We shame ourselves, but we appreciate others.

Researchers have called the paradox "**The Beautiful Mess Effect**."

"We love seeing raw truth and openness in other people, but we are afraid to let them see it in us… Vulnerability is courage in you and inadequacy in me. Vulnerability feels like weakness on the inside, but looks like courage on the outside."

This is important because your ability to sustain an audience's interest depends on how much you let them in and see who you really are.

And the "real you" has flaws, inadequacies, weaknesses, mistakes, errors, imperfections, failures and shortcomings.

Nobody is perfect and everyone has their faults.

To see an example of the difference being vulnerable can make, look no further than two of the world's most favorite superheroes...

Batman and Superman.

Even though they came out around the same time, the Batman franchise has made triple the revenue. It seems he not only makes more money in the comic books, but also in reality

But why is this? What makes Batman so much more popular?

Simple… he's more relatable.

Why? Because he's full of flaws.

Batman is paranoid, untrusting, and self-destructive. He's dark and brooding, and we love him for it.

What's more, he's mortal. He's human. He's the only superhero on the team with no superpowers.

This is why he's so relatable. He's just like us.

Now let's look at Superman… is he human?

Nope, not even close. He's a God.

He's a symbol of righteousness and hope. He does everything right and respectfully. He's always optimistic, and even naïve. He's the big blue boy scout with immeasurable powers beyond belief.

While Superman is busy wrestling with the internal struggles of a guardian over all mankind, Batman remains humbly grounded as a relatable and flawed individual.

The debate over who is the better superhero always devolves down to the playground level of "Who would win in a fight?" As if that determines what makes a character more interesting.

It's obvious that Batman would lose… but that's what makes him better.

For Superman to defeat him, he barely has to break a sweat. He's merely swatting a fly.

But for Batman to hit Superman even once, that's his victory...

To show what humanity can achieve with grit and determination...
To face the impossible and give it everything he's got.

That's what makes him human. And that's why we love him.

PAIN & SECRETS AS SOCIAL GLUE

"What doesn't kill us makes us stronger."

And not only stronger as individuals, but also stronger as a group.

A recent psychological study suggests that despite its unpleasantness, pain may actually benefit us by acting as a "social glue" that fosters a spirit of cohesion and solidarity within groups.

"Our findings show that pain is a particularly powerful ingredient in producing bonding and cooperation between those who share painful experiences... The findings shed light on why camaraderie may develop between soldiers or others who share difficult and painful experiences."

The study showed that sharing of painful experiences with other people promoted more trust and bonding between strangers than a control environment free from pain.

Pain fosters cooperation because it captures a person's attention and focuses their awareness. And when in a group experiencing it together, your fellow sufferers become important to you.

Remember what I said about capturing attention… it requires danger. And pain is most certainly danger.

And also remember that when we hear stories, we feel the emotions shared as though we experienced the event firsthand.

This is why pain bonds us.

Think of the camaraderie and closeness that exists between military soldiers and war veterans. They share the pain from their pasts of fighting in hostile environments and losing their friends in battle.

And when they see that pain in others, they form a special bond or spiritual connection that brings them closer together. And this same process works when you share your pain with consumers, too.

Now let's examine why people trust others…

Despite what you may think, people do not trust for logical reasons. That's because trust isn't something you think, it's something you feel.

And the fastest path to developing trust between two people is sharing stories and revealing secrets.

All of us have at least one secret. And while some secrets might be insignificant, others might profoundly change the way people view us if those secrets were found out.

Whether an individual will share their secret with someone else is usually a question of closeness, or the "social distance" between people.

For example, you might share your secrets with a close friend, but not a complete stranger.

While your friend feels close to you, a stranger feels much further away.

But what's more interesting, is how the sharing of secrets impacts the listener's expectations of how close the relationship will be *in the future*. They expect it to grow closer over time.

And these positive expectations influence the listener to trust you more and eventually confide in you with some secrets of their own.

There is a cool article written in the New York times called *36 Questions That Lead to Love.* And it serves as a wonderful example of how pain and secrets bring people closer together.

The article claims that if you and a complete stranger ask each other these 36 questions and share honest answers, you'll fall in love. Who knew it could be so easy?

Well, when you look at the questions, it's easy to see why…

They all revolve around sharing personal stories and private secrets.

Here's a small sample:

"Tell your partner your life story in as much detail as possible."

"What is your most treasured memory?"

"When did you last cry in front of another person?"

These are super intimate stories we don't share with just anybody...

We only share them with people we are close to.

So the act of revealing such information naturally brings you closer to the people you reveal it to, even if you both started as complete strangers only moments ago.

When you share your painful stories and hidden secrets with your audience, they'll naturally feel closer to you and develop a greater affinity for your personal brand.

THE SECRET OF A $7 MOMENT

A really great example of all this is the story of actor Dwayne Johnson, more commonly known as "The Rock."

Just search for *Seven Bucks Moment: Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson* on YouTube to hear his story.

The Rock shares his story about how he trained hard for years and years hoping to make it to the NFL, but it never panned out no matter how hard he tried.

The day after being cut from the Canadian Football League, he didn't have money for a ride back home. So he called his Dad and ask him to come pick him up…

And it was the longest ride of his life.

He had big plans to take on the world, but the world had beaten him back down. He had no idea what to do next, so he pulled out his wallet to check how much money he had.

Inside was a $5 bill, a $1 bill and some change. That's it.

That's all he had to his name. Seven bucks.

Back at his parent's apartment, he fell into an extreme depression. He hated the world for being unfair and robbing him of his dreams.

Many of the people he had played football with in college were now in the NFL making millions…. meanwhile, he was at home on his parent's couch, dead broke without a hope.

But soon, he realized that the world would one day hear from him.

He didn't know how, and he didn't know when…

But he knew his life wasn't over.

There was something greater for him left in this world...

He just had to find it.

He went on to gain fame as a professional wrestler in the WWE. And he later used that success to springboard himself into a career as the world's most prolific action hero.

From June 2017 to June 2018, The Rock made $124 MILLION. That makes him the highest-paid actor in history, and the fifth highest paid celebrity in the world.

And how could it be any other way?

With a story of struggle like that, how could you not love the guy?

People watch that clip and think, *"He understands me… he's had a seven bucks moment just like me."*

And whether that moment is bankruptcy, divorce, or something as simple as growing up and being teased, others who have shared that experience will bond with you because of it.

Because we've all had moments of feeling like all hope is lost. But stories like The Rock's give us faith that we can change our situation, no matter how hopeless it seems.

So ask yourself what "Seven Bucks Moment" can you share with your ideal customer. What story of struggle and success do you both have in common? Even if they're still aspiring to succeed…

Write these stories down and don't be afraid to share them with your prospects. Use the previous section on writing your signature story to help guide you through the process.

Because sharing moments like these will build an understanding that will allow you to better serve your customers and solve their problems.

WE LOVE SEEING RAW TRUTH AND OPENESS IN OTHERS, BUT ARE AFRAID TO LET THEM SEE IT IN US.

WHAT PAIN AND SECRETS CAN YOU SHARE?

GENEROUS GOODWILL

THE MORE YOU GIVE, THE MORE YOU GET

When it comes down to it, there are only three reasons people won't buy from you:

1. They don't want your offer.
2. They don't have the money.
3. They don't trust your claims.

The first two are basic requirements to be a potential customer.

Because if someone doesn't want what you're selling or doesn't have the money, the likelihood of them becoming a customer is relatively low.

But if somebody wants your offer and has the money to afford it, then all you really need is their trust.

Because without it, you won't get their business.

The fundamental idea behind personal branding is that it's much easier to sell stuff when people know you, like you, and trust you.

When you bond with prospects through personal branding, you'll rapidly accelerate the sales process.

Everything you've learned so far helps you improve the *"Know, Like and Trust Factor"* with your audience to lead prospects on the journey to becoming a customer.

Charismatic Leadership helps you to gain their attention and interest.

Credible Communication helps you to gain their affinity and trust.

The key to personal branding is to position yourself in a way that leads the prospect to trust you and ignore the millions of other marketers advertising to them.

Because without a strong personal brand, you'll just be another face in the crowd. You'll get lost in the sea of voices trying to get your customer's attention.

So then, what do customers need to perceive your brand as being?

1. **Different**
2. **Compassionate**
3. **Helpful**

First, they must perceive you as different from "them" — the other advertisers. Because if it looks like a duck, swims like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it's probably a duck. So don't be a duck.

Second, they must see you as compassionate. Prospects have to believe that you actually give a damn about their pain and suffering. You're not just some scam artist that's in it for the money.

Lastly, they must find you helpful. They must believe that you can help them get what they want.

And the best way for you to do that is to demonstrate you can help them by actually helping them.

What a novel idea.

WHAT IS GENEROUS GOODWILL?

The best way for you to help your prospects and prove they can trust you is by delivering what I call "Generous Goodwill" prior to them becoming a customer.

By freely offering helpful information and advice, you will move prospects one step closer toward their goal, and prove your ability to help them achieve it by demonstrating your competence.

And better yet, this information and advice costs you nothing. Just a little time and effort.

By helping prospects get one step closer to their goal and solve their problem, you've proved they can trust you and that your offer works.

Why?

Because the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

HOW TO DEMONSTRATE GOODWILL

So now that you understand what Generous Goodwill is, how do you actually go about delivering it?

What kind of content should it be?

And what kind of format should it be in?

Good questions.

Here are five ways for you to create goodwill with your audience:

1. **Helpful Information**
2. **Free Samples**
3. **Community Connections**
4. **Exciting Events**
5. **Joyful Entertainment**

Now let's break each one down to give you some actionable strategies for implementing them.

#1: HELPFUL INFORMATION

The first category of generous goodwill is Helpful Information.

These are pieces of information that help your customer to get one step closer to solving their problem or achieving their goal.

By helping your customer make some valuable progress, you will not only show goodwill but also demonstrate your ability to help them complete their journey.

Here are some examples of Helpful Information that you could provide:

- Case Studies
- Cheatsheets
- Checklists
- Ebooks / Guides / Tutorials
- Infographics
- Newsletters
- Reports
- Scripts
- Swipe Files / Examples / Templates
- Toolkits / Resource Lists
- Worksheets / Workbooks

I'll give you some more in-depth explanation on the following page.

Case Studies — stories about how a real-life customer overcame their problems using your products and services. Shows prospects a possible journey from problem to solution.

Cheat Sheet — concise set of notes used for quick reference. It's essential information on one sheet. Aptly named because many students use them to cheat on a test without the teacher knowing.

Checklist — a "to do list" of sorts that helps your customers remember to check off all the items on the list to ensure consistency and completeness in carrying out a task related to their problem.

Ebook / Guide / Tutorial — instructional information that guides your prospect on how to complete a certain task or specific goal.

Infographic — graphic visual representations of information, data, or knowledge intended to present information quickly. Much more visually stimulating than a massive wall of text.

Newsletter — document containing news, articles and other helpful information regarding a specific industry, niche or organization.

Report — collected or researched data that your prospect would find valuable, helpful, and useful.

Script — written text that helps your prospect know what to say or what to write. For example, a sales script for presentations, a script for pitching themselves during a job interview, etc.

Swipe File / Examples / Templates — collections of tested and proven formats, frameworks, or processes that your prospect can learn from to model after or "swipe" (copy).

Toolkit / Resource List — a set of tools or list of resources that your prospect can use to help them get closer to their goal.

Worksheet / Workbook — They usually contain questions, exercises and prompts for prospects to complete and record their answers.

#2: FREE SAMPLES

If you're anything like me, you just love it when you're at the grocery store and discover they're handing out free samples for you to try.

A free sample is a sample of the product that is given to the consumer free of cost so they may try the product first before purchasing.

Although it can sometimes be an expensive method of targeting new customers, the conversion rates are extremely high. After all, it's free!

Here are some ideas for free samples you could offer in your business:

- Free Book
- Free Consultation
- Free Quote
- Free Sample
- Free Trial

Free Book — often used with physical books where the prospect only has to pay for shipping. Works great because not only does it work as a lead magnet, you've simultaneously created a customer.

Free Consultation — an offer to meet with the potential customer and analyze their specific problem and provide some advice and counsel for free. Basically, a free demonstration of your ability to help.

Free Quote — giving the prospect a price or estimate for doing some work or providing a service. Often used in insurance, construction or other industries where the price varies from customer to customer.

Free Sample — exactly what it sounds like. Try before you buy. It could be a sample chapter from your book, a onetime use of your product, or free service that solves a portion of the problem.

Free Trial — an offer to use a product or service for free for a particular period to encourage prospects to purchase it. Often used today with software programs and subscription services.

#3: COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

In today's socially connected world of nonstop interaction, more and more businesses are creating communities to open up the dialog between their brand and prospects.

Communities not only allow you to engage with your customers, it creates a space for them to engage and talk with one another. This helps to build brand loyalty.

Why? Because it's much more difficult to leave a group of people you're connected to than a faceless product or company.

Remember, all businesses are *relationship* businesses.

Here are some ways you might build a community around your brand:

- Challenges & Competitions
- Facebook Groups
- Membership Sites

Challenges & Competitions — helps your customers get a mini-transformation by using some part of your product or service. Participants build a community by sharing results with the group.

Facebook Groups — a place for communication and for people to share common interests and express their opinions in a platform that's hidden away from their friends and family in the public world.

Membership Sites — similar to a Facebook group, but it allows for more control, more function, and fewer ads and distractions from your community's core content.

#4: EXCITING EVENTS

People aren't just attracted to communities online, they're also attracted to live events and get-togethers like industry conferences, seminars or trade shows.

Here are some ways to attract your prospects to exciting events:

- Event Tickets
- Online Webinar
- Replays & Recordings

Event Tickets — you can offer free tickets to a live event in exchange for your prospect's email or more information. Then you can follow up after the event and try to turn the prospect into a paid customer.

Online Webinar — sometimes the physical distance can be an issue, and so it's easier to offer the live event online so people from around the world can attend and still get access to the event.

Replays & Recordings — sometimes the distance isn't the issue, it's the timing that prevents people from attending. By recording the event, you can still provide access to it for those who couldn't make it.

#5: JOYFUL ENTERTAINMENT

Sometimes the goodwill you provide doesn't have to be extremely useful or educational… sometimes all you need to do is entertain and bring a little joy into your prospect's life.

Here are some ways to put a smile upon their face:

- Giveaways
- Quizzes
- Surveys

Giveaways — who doesn't love the opportunity to win free stuff? If you want to make it as effective as possible, make sure the prize is relevant to the prospect and incentivize them to share the giveaway.

Quizzes — a quiz is quite possibly the most entertaining form of goodwill there is. People love finding out more about themselves, even when it's something as silly as "What kind of pizza are you?"

Surveys — a list of questions aimed at extracting specific data and information from a particular group of people. Be sure to make every question count and keep it short, simple and to the point.

And that's it. Now it's your turn to take action and put one of these methods in place to deliver massive goodwill to your audience.

By providing value to your ideal prospect, you will naturally create a bond with them to help close the "know, like and trust" gap.

You've helped them, they've gotten value from you, and so they naturally become your fans. And when that happens, it's much easier to sell them stuff and they naturally want to buy from you.

That's the big picture strategy behind generous goodwill and what you'll accomplish when you implement it into your business.

“ONLY BY GIVING ARE YOU ABLE TO RECEIVE MORE THAN YOU ALREADY HAVE.”

– JIM ROHN

HOW CAN YOU SHOW GENEROUS GOODWILL?

PART 4

BRAND EXAMPLES & ANALYSIS

EXAMPLES & ANALYSIS INTRO

I thought it would be helpful to analyze a few well-known entrepreneurs as an example of how to build your personal brand. These examples show you how the concepts in this book apply.

The personal brands used as examples are:

- **Grant Cardone**, master sales trainer and author of The 10X Rule
- **Gary Vaynerchuk**, social media guru and founder of Vayner Media
- **Russell Brunson**, master marketer and founder of ClickFunnels

I chose these personal brands for several reasons…

First, I am already familiar with their brands and can provide you with a deeper level of analysis than if I started from scratch.

Second, they are all well known. There's a good chance that you're already familiar with their brands too, which will make it easier for you to understand my analysis.

And lastly, I chose these brands because of their differing approaches to personal branding:

- Grant seems to be a natural who subconsciously takes the right actions to build his brand.

- Gary has a firm grasp on the active strategies and techniques used for personal branding.

- And Russell is a born marketer with deep knowledge on the underlying theory behind it all.

As we go through these examples, focus on:

- How do these brands position themselves to build trust, establish authority, and reduce resistance to their offers and messages?

- How do they build credibility by demonstrating competence, trustworthiness, and goodwill toward consumers?

- How do they use the principles of Charismatic Leadership and Credible Communication to build their personal brand?

Now let's go through each of them and examine how their personal branding helped them get to where they are today.

GRANT CARDONE

WHO IS GRANT CARDONE?

Grant Cardone is a master sales trainer, best-selling author, and real estate mogul.

His sales training programs have helped establish him as a respected authority on sales, branding and marketing. And his primary passion is to help people learn how to sell themselves and their products.

He has written many books, perhaps most famously "The 10X Rule," which popularized "10x everything" by encouraging entrepreneurs to set bigger goals and take bigger actions to achieve them.

He has taken the proceeds from his business ventures and used them to invest in passive real estate. And in doing so, he's become the most well-known proponent of multifamily investing and syndication.

Grant is a massive success who has exploded into the public consciousness in just the past ten years. He will surely be revered as the most well-known sales trainer of our time.

But it wasn't always this way…

Grant comes from humble beginnings, hailing from the southwest city of Lake Charles, Louisiana. It's a small town known for its colorful mix of Cajuns, cowboys and the coast.

Nestled halfway between Houston and Baton Rouge, what makes the area so special is that it's just the right balance of culture, history and nature. It is truly a unique place, unlike anything else.

As one of five siblings, Grant grew up in a middle class family, and loved spending his Louisiana summers playing in the lake and running through the swamp just like any young boy should.

But as sunny and joyful as Grant's childhood was, something would happen when he was 10 years old that would change his life forever…

He would lose his father to a sudden heart attack, and with him lose his childhood innocence and carefree lifestyle of living on the lake without worry or concern.

Grant's father was the provider for his family, and with him now gone, it wrecked his mother with worry about how she would care and provide for five young children.

She constantly worried about money. She feared that one day she wouldn't able to make ends meet or pay the bills necessary to provide food and shelter for her family.

But the loss hit Grant the worst. Without a father to guide him, the young boy wandered aimlessly through life without direction, rebelling against authority and becoming known as a "troubled kid."

Lost and without purpose, Grant eventually gave up on his dreams for the future, and recklessly turned to drugs to help soothe his torment and pain.

And it wouldn't be long before his dangerous addictions completely overtook him, ruining every area of his life and destroying his relationships too.

One rainy Louisiana night, Grant's drug dealer stopped by to drop off his latest batch of cooked goods. But little did Grant know, his dealer had set him up to be robbed…

As the dealer left, Grant saw a shadowy figure looming out in the rain. And before he knew what hit him, the mountain of a man stormed in through the door and put a .45 caliber pistol to Grant's head.

Grant was holding a plate in his hand from the dinner he just finished, and smashed it in the mugger's face with all his might. He hoped it would scare him off.

But the mugger turned into a raging monster, and began ferociously beating Grant with the butt of his gun, ripping his face to shreds.

With blood still pouring down the walls, the muggers ransacked the house, took everything Grant owned and left him for dead.

After being rushed to the hospital and getting 73 stitches put in his face, Grant left the ward early to avoid the authorities and returned home to his mother for help.

But his face was so destroyed after being beaten to a bloody pulp, that his mother didn't even recognize him when he arrived. They took him back to the hospital, for fear he might die of his wounds.

Grant has said himself that you would think such a terrible and life-threatening event would finally scare him straight and set him back on the proper path…

But just a few days later, he was on drugs again, throwing his life away.

For two more years, Grant would continue to use drugs every day. It was a black hole he couldn't escape, and his addictions overtook his life.

And one day his mother had finally had enough. It forced her to put her foot down and cut Grant out of her life. He was no longer welcome in her home and banished from the only family he ever knew.

At that moment, Grant felt like he had lost everything. He had lost his father when he was 10, his older brother when he was 20, and now finally his mother at just the young age of 25.

But that was the tipping point. Losing his mother's love was the one thing that motivated Grant to attend a treatment center and finally try to turn his life around.

And it worked.

For the first time in his life, he could stay sober for more than a week and finally kick his evil drug habit. For the first time, he saw the possibility of a better life out there waiting for him.

Despite all the bad choices and bad habits, a voice deep down inside of Grant told him he was special and destined for big things. It had just been covered up by all the negativity in his life before.

At the end of 30 days, Grant's insurance money ran out, and they forced him to leave the program. But it scared him to death to return to the drug-filled life he was trying so hard to leave behind.

On his way out the door, one counselor stopped him, and said something to try to deflate his high hopes and pull the legs out from under him…*"If you don't die… I'll see you back here."*

This confused Grant, as he planned on leaving and never coming back.

During treatment, Grant shared his big dreams of writing books, speaking to audiences, and helping people to live better lives. He had a bigger vision of what was possible for his future.

But the counselor doubted him. He told Grant it was impossible. He told Grant that he was a drug addict and would never amount to more than that, and in saying so tried to crush his dreams…

When Grant was 16 years old, he made a special promise to his mother. He promised that one day he would be successful and help many people, because at the time… he needed someone to help him.

He was a lost little boy and hoped that one day he could be the guiding light for others he needed so badly in his own life. He hoped to turn his story from tragedy to triumph.

After getting sober and finding a newfound lease on life, Grant made a commitment that day to achieve success no matter what. Whatever it takes. Nothing would stop him.

But it was a turbulent time in the American economy. Unemployment and interest rates were both in the double digits.

Despite his high hopes, Grant wondered how he would make it...

Upon the suggestion of a family member, Grant practically stumbled into a career in sales almost by accident.

And at first he was absolutely terrible and hated the entire process.

But he remembered a piece of advice his mother once shared with him that made him persevere…

"*The best investment you will ever make is in yourself. It's a no-lose deal. It will always give you a return. Nobody can take it from you. It's yours.*"

Struggling to make ends meet working at a car dealership, Grant heeded his mother's advice and went all in on investing in himself and developing his skills as a salesperson.

He channeled all of his energy into becoming the best salesman he could be. He estimates he must have spent nearly 700 hours his first year just improving his sales ability and working on himself.

In short time, he doubled his income from $3,000 to $6,000 per month, and by 30 he would accumulate his first cool million.

But he wasn't done there. Grant would save every penny he earned and eventually made a massive play in real estate to purchase his first apartment building.

Today, Grant owns nearly a billion dollars' worth of year estate, all because of his dedication to help other people like him succeed.

Grant's life is the story of a young boy who experienced a tragic loss in childhood and nearly threw his life away on drugs...

Only to turn it all around on a promise to his mother to become a massive success.

HOW DOES GRANT USE PERSONAL BRANDING?

Grant's signature story of overcoming drug addiction and training himself to be a master salesman can be found in his books, interviews, and social media content.

In fact, the story is so well-known and adored by his audience, that his followers have even taken it upon themselves to recreate the story with professional actors on YouTube.

Just search for *"From Drug Addict To Billion Dollar Empire: The Shocking Life Story Of Grant Cardone"* and you'll find it. It's an amazing testament to the power of Grant's story.

Because really, Grant's story is our story. Deep down, we all realize the fact that no matter what hardships and losses may befall us in life, it's up to us to pick ourselves up and keep moving forward.

The story of a young boy losing his father is something we can all relate to. Because we've all lost someone or found ourselves a little confused wondering which direction to go next.

Grant doesn't hide the depths of his despair either. He wholeheartedly admits to his destructive drug use, and how he failed to turn his life around time and time again.

But his rags to riches story is something that inspires us all. Because we hope that no matter how bad things may be, we can always turn it around like he did and come out on top.

With positioning and relating to his audience, Grant views himself as the rich uncle you never had.

In fact, he even proudly refers to himself as "Uncle G."

I think Grant is drawn to this position because he now has the opportunity to be a guiding force for others that he once needed as a little boy. And this drive to help people gives his life meaning.

Here is a brief excerpt from a speech Grant gave, talking about losing his dream of becoming a baseball player to his battle with drugs and addiction. This helps show the connection:

"I'm not here to jack you up. I'm not here to get you excited. I'm here to be an example.

I'm not your friend… I'm your Uncle G.

And when I was growing up, I needed an Uncle so bad after my dad died.

I don't know how much time I have left on this planet, but I want to spend it helping you."

And how Grant helps his audience is by giving them the type of advice you might imagine receiving from a rich uncle who has it all.

The core of Grant's message is that you've got to get your money right. Because without it you won't be able to help yourself or the others that need you most.

I think this stems from Grant's childhood and all his mother's worries about money after his father died. I think Grant may hold poverty partly to blame for losing his way and turning to drugs.

And you can see how this experience shaped the way Grant acts as a role model to his own children. He's an amazing provider for his family, and will never let them experience the pain he knew as a child.

The second part of Grant's message is that sales is the key to growing your income. Because even if you don't work in the industry, you still have to sell yourself and your ideas to those you work with.

Therefore, knowing the principles of selling is a prerequisite for success. Because if you can't sell others, they'll be the ones selling you. "Sell or Be Sold" he warns, in one of his bestselling books.

And while sales may make you rich, investing will make you wealthy. Specifically, investing in real estate. Grant owns a portfolio worth nearly a billion dollars and recommends his followers invest too.

But what makes Grant's message so receptive to his audience is that he is speaking from experience. He's the real-deal, rags-to-riches real estate guru. And his path to fortune was paved with sales.

Grant is the aspirational representation of what many entrepreneurs wish to be… he's influential, wealthy, and in control of his destiny. This makes others believe he can lead them there too.

Grant looks like a businessman, and is often seen presenting in a suit, speaking from either the stage, his private jet, or one of his many properties. The uniform, language, and setting are all on point.

If you had to name Grant's personal philosophy, I guess you would call him the prophet of "Hustle, Grind and Prosper." He's the nonstop business man whose work ethic never quits.

He promotes his followers to adopt a "Whatever It Takes" mentality, telling them "Success Is Your Duty," and warning them they can either "Be Obsessed or Be Average."

And in contrast, he hates whining and complaining more than anything else. He tells his audience, "Don't be a little bitch," and to stop complaining about everything that doesn't go their way in life.

This hearkens back to Grant's own story. It acts as a reminder you've got to pull yourself up by your own bootstraps in life and get yourself out of the mess you've put yourself into.

While on the surface Grant might seem like an overnight success to some, he has created tremendous goodwill for his followers over his lengthy career:

"My overnight success has taken:

32 years
700 interviews
11,000+ unpaid speaking gigs
2,000 paid speaking gigs
3,000,000 air miles
5 PR firms
5 partnerships
5,000 newsletters
3,200 videos
1,100 articles
150,000+ social media posts

And immeasurable amounts of criticism and ridicule."

Between Grant's weekly podcasts, YouTube channel, and daily social media posts, he pours out an immense amount of free content to build massive goodwill with his market.

When combined with the authenticity of Grant's personal story, it's no wonder his audience sees him as a credible communicator that can help them move closer to their goals.

He's a cigar smoking, ball busting, polarizing figure who some argue isn't the best sales trainer. But few can argue he hasn't made himself the most well known.

And that's why he's the charismatic leader of the sales industry.

GARY VAYNERCHUK

WHO IS GARY VAYNERCHUK?

If you already know him, it's probably because you read one of his bestselling books or stumbled across one of his many, many, many pieces of content online.

But in case you don't, then you should know that Gary Vaynerchuk is a man who wears many hats. Although he's probably most well known for his roles as an entrepreneur, speaker, and CEO.

Gary is a serial entrepreneur, and the CEO and co-founder of VaynerMedia, a digital agency firm that focuses on serving major corporations and Fortune 500 clients across the globe.

But he is also the most sought after public speaker in the world. His four New York Times bestselling books and massive presence on social media have created a demand for his ideas worldwide.

And in addition to running VaynerMedia and publishing content nonstop, Gary also serves as the CEO of holding company VaynerX, which houses a collective of modern day communications companies.

But if there was one thing that sticks out most about "Gary Vee," it's that he's a living example of the American Dream.

Gary was born in the former Soviet Union and hails from a small country in Europe called Belarus. And despite their chocolate candies and glazed cranberries, Gary is by far their most popular export.

He was born during a time when deep-rooted, centuries-old antisemitism still plagued the underpinnings of Soviet society. And many human rights violations took place within their borders.

At a ripe young age, Gary witnessed the persecution of his family for being Jewish. And his parents feared that if they did not escape, they would soon be imprisoned for their religious beliefs.

When he was just a young boy, his parents helped his entire family emigrate to the United States. They all lived in a studio apartment in Queens, New York, and began a new life free from fear.

To make ends meet, Gary's father got a job as a stock boy at a liquor store in New Jersey. He eventually worked his up way to manager, and his family moved out to the small town of Dover to join him.

It was there that Gary would have his first experience that made him feel like a true American…

Growing up as a Russian immigrant, Gary didn't speak much English as a child. This made it hard for him to make friends and feel like he fit in with the rest of the kids in his neighborhood.

But one day while playing a game of neighborhood football in the narrow streets of New Jersey, one boy asked him what his favorite football team was.

Not knowing what to say, and probably not even understanding what he was being asked, Gary shrugged his shoulders to suggest that he didn't know.

Being from New Jersey, the other boy told him, "You're a Jets fan now," and Gary's passion for football was born. He watched their next game on the following Sunday and hasn't missed a play since.

In fact, Gary is so passionate and enamored with Jets football, he's made it publicly known that his dream is to one day own the team he fell in love with as a young boy and that made him feel at home.

All the kids in the neighborhood had Jets jerseys they would wear whenever they went outside to play a game of catch. It was practically the uniform of the street to show your allegiance to the team.

But because Gary's family was so poor, a pricey Jets jersey wasn't a luxury they could afford. So he had to play without one, which always made him feel like he didn't fit in.

Sensing his pain, Gary's mother did one of many acts of love and compassion for her son that would touch him for a lifetime… she knit him a Jets jersey of his own.

He finally felt like he belonged. While he didn't speak the language, his shared love for Jets football would know no boundaries in making him feel connected to the other kids in his neighborhood.

Finally, he felt like a true American.

Gary wore his custom homemade jersey all the time. He now has it framed on his wall as a reminder of his parent's love, and the humble beginnings he started from when he came to this country.

He says that he created a fairy tale in his mind somewhere around the second or third grade. He would go from not being able to afford a jersey, to being able to afford the whole damn team.

But the road to get there wouldn't be easy. Gary struggled to adapt to the American way of life and was a notoriously poor student who barely made his way through school with a passing grade.

But what he lacked in book smarts, he made up for in street smarts. Gary would soon show signs of being the "most capitalistic kid" you'd ever meet.

His entrepreneurial spirit started at just six years old. He would go to his neighbor's property, pick some roses from their garden, and then ring their doorbell to sell the flowers back to them.

A year later, Gary started a lemonade stand "franchise" and had his friends operate the stands at eight different locations across the neighborhood on the busiest street corners of New Jersey.

But he wouldn't really hit his stride as an entrepreneur until his teenage years. He started buying and selling baseball cards on the weekends to make thousands of dollars per week as a collector.

Here was a kid who couldn't pass a math test if his life depended on it. But he had no problem running the numbers in the real world and making them add up to a massive profit.

But then something happened that would shape Gary's future forever…

After all those years working in the liquor store, his dad had finally saved up enough money to buy in as a partner and capture his own piece of the American Dream.

Needing Gary's help to succeed, his dad plucked him from the extracurricular activity of trading baseball cards and put him to work in the liquor bagging ice for a mere two dollars an hour.

At first Gary was quite depressed. Now he was not only failing in school, but he had his passion ripped away from him. This made it hard for him to see a bigger future for himself.

But everything would change one fateful day when he experience what he calls "the moment" that would change his life forever. To this day, the hair on his arms still stands up when talks about it.

One day, a man walked in and asked for three cases of Caymus Special Select 1990 Cabernet. It was just named Wine Spectator's wine of the year and had grown in demand because of all the accolades.

Unfortunately for the store, but luckily for Gary, they were all sold out. So he took a back order and curiously wondered why the customer was looking for so many cases.

Gary asked the customer if he was throwing a party or something, and the man said he didn't need a celebration to buy wine… he collected it.

And that's when everything clicked.

"And literally, my life changed. I sat there and I said, 'Frank Thomas, Ken Griffey Jr., Wayne Gretzky… Silver Oak, Caymus, Chateau Lafite… it's all the same shit. I can do this.'"

And from that moment forward, Gary dedicated himself to learning everything there was to know about the subject. He would take his passion for collecting cards and apply it to the world of wine.

But it would still be another 14 years before Gary would make his mark on the world…

Gary spent every day in his 20s working for his dad's liquor store. Every weekend while his friends were out partying, Gary was working away stocking wine and working his face off at his family's business.

But one day while driving to work on his 30th birthday, Gary took a moment to reflect on his life. He assessed how close he was to achieving the goals he had set for himself as a young boy.

While he was making a decent living, and had helped his family build an amazing wine business, he was nowhere near his goal of one day owning the New York Jets.

So something had to change.

Gary had always had a knack for observing human behavior in the world of commerce. And he saw how the internet was quickly changing the way people buy, sell and trade.

If Gary was going to reach his goal, he needed to do something different and not let this opportunity pass him up. He needed to find a way to use the internet to expand his reach.

So that day when he got into work, he told one of the stock boys to run down the store and buy a video camera. And when came back they turned it on and started filming.

What he filmed that day, with bad lighting, terrible audio and all, would be the true start to his empire. It was the beginnings of Wine Library TV.

Gary would become one of the first major video bloggers on the internet. He rose to worldwide fame by growing his family's liquor sales from $3 million to $60 million with his social media presence.

Realizing that he had the ability to replicate these kinds of results for other business and brands, Gary soon founded VaynerMedia with his younger brother, AJ.

Today, Gary is the go-to person on building businesses on social media. He has written four New York Times bestselling books and is one of the most sought after experts in the world.

HOW DOES GARY USE PERSONAL BRANDING?

You can find the story I just shared with you in so much of Gary's content. To the point it has become a legend that his followers retell when sharing stories about their favorite hero.

Gary has been likened to a modern day Robin Hood and aspires to be remembered as someone who "gave way more than he took." And that's why he gives away so much of his content for free.

Gary is the king of goodwill, and centers on a "jab, jab, jab, right hook" philosophy. He promotes giving immense value to your audience before you ever ask for anything in return.

I think his focus on generous giving not only stems from his astute observations on human behavior but also from his childhood experiences and relationships with his mother and father.

Gary grew up in a household and family culture that simultaneously presented two different paths for pursuing your passion.

On one hand, his mother didn't condemn him for being a poor student. She understood and accepted that he had far greater talents outside the realm of school and academics.

On the other hand, his father pulled him into the family business at a young age. This interfered with Gary's interest in trading and collecting cards, comic books and memorabilia.

So unlike most people, Gary has experienced both an encouragement to be authentic, and a demand to follow a path that didn't quite resonate with whom he was.

Gary sees these opposing forces operating in the lives of his followers. He tries to help them navigate the journey to happiness, much in the style of an older sibling or big brother.

He opposes the role of parental and societal pressure to conform to expectations, and instead suggests that people listen to intuition, trust their gut and follow their heart.

One of Gary's core messages is about the "400 Trillion to One" odds you have to be born as a human being. You shouldn't waste the golden opportunity you've been given to live life on your terms.

He believes that instead of chasing paper and chasing clout, people should be authentic and more accepting of who they are. Much like his mother was with him as a child.

But he's not your parent telling you what to do, he's your big brother suggesting a different path. And if you follow him on this road, it will lead you to the happiness and fulfillment you've been seeking.

I think this "big brother mentor" role comes easily to Gary, because it naturally stems out of his relationship with this little brother AJ.

There is a great video showing this relationship on episode #395 of Wine Library TV. It's when AJ turns 21 years old and Gary guides him through his very first wine tasting on such an important day.

You can see the absolute love and affection that Gary has for his little brother, and how he guides him through the process. And he maintains this role in guiding his audience through their own lives.

To see more evidence of this older brother theme, look at the symbolism Gary presents to the public.

First is Gary's physical appearance. True to his message of authenticity, there's no flashy cars or expensive bling. Instead, Gary's appearance is much more humble and down to earth.

You can often find him wearing nothing more than jeans and a t-shirt, with the occasional beanie or hoodie. His face is unshaved and unkempt, and sometimes he even looks like he just rolled out of bed.

But that's the whole point. He's not trying to impress anybody. He's just being real. And you should, too. Because as he'd say himself, *"Who gives a shit about what anyone else thinks?"*

That's why Gary is such an advocate of "Document. Don't Create." Don't waste your time trying to fabricate an image of someone you're not. Just be yourself and your audience will love you for it.

And this attitude is reflected in the visuals of Gary's content too. For starters, his office wall looks like that of a teenager, as it's covered in sports memorabilia and toys to represent his carefree nature.

Not only do you see Gary flying overseas to cut a major deal with a big company. You'll also see him hunting down deals at local garage sales and reselling Nerf guns and Nintendo games for tiny profits.

It's as real as it gets and shows his followers that opportunity is everywhere. You just have to go out and find it. Because vision without execution is just hallucination.

Gary addresses this with his concept of "The Clouds and the Dirt," which is his own take on the idea of the steak and the sizzle.

The Clouds are your vision. They're what you believe in. You "why" for doing what you do. It's the pie in the sky you're reaching for, and the ultimate goal in life you must pursue with patience and passion.

The Dirt is your day-to-day life in the trenches. The sacrifices. The humility. The work. It's the rapid massive action you must take daily on a small scale to move you one step closer to your goals.

And Gary's philosophy is to not spend any time on the things that don't matter. And what doesn't matter is everything in between the vision you dream of and your real knowledge of it.

Be patient in the macro, but apply speed in the micro, and use this once in a lifetime opportunity to create as much content as possible for your audience and followers.

Gary is the king of social media and provides generous goodwill to his audience on every platform imaginable. Wherever his audience is found online, we find Gary there helping them.

And this strategy took him from being a lowly stock boy bagging ice in his parent's liquor store, to the preeminent authority on social media, entrepreneurship, and an authentic path to happiness.

“DEVELOPING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND IS KEY TO MONETIZING YOUR PASSION ONLINE.”

– GARY VAYNERCHUK

RUSSELL BRUNSON

WHO IS RUSSELL BRUNSON?

This next entrepreneur may not be so known to the public. But he's actually quite famous within his niche and widely recognized among his core audience.

Any marketer worth their salt has at least heard of him. Whether it's for his unique marketing strategies, the many books he's written, or the companies he's founded.

Russell Brunson is a digital marketing expert, compassionate philanthropist, and the undisputed sales funnel king. But he is best known as the co-founder of ClickFunnels.

ClickFunnels is a software company that helps entrepreneurs easily create sales funnels for their business. And no one has done more to popularize the idea and take it mainstream than Russell.

He has sold hundreds of thousands of copies of his books, built a following of over a million entrepreneurs, and helped tens of thousands get their message into the marketplace.

But his empire started out as nothing more than the fascination of a young boy…

It all began near the tender age of 12 years old. While Grant was busy playing outside, and Gary was busy collecting trading cards, Russell was interested in collecting what you'd least expect… junk mail.

One night when Russell's dad let him stay up late to watch TV. Once the nightly news and M*A*S*H* reruns were over, a salesy late-night infomercial came on.

While his dad seemed unphased by the big promises of easy riches, it blew away Russell. It was the coolest thing he'd ever seen. You can make money just by placing tiny ads in newspapers? No way!

Russell was so eager to get started, he began mowing lawns just to save up enough money to buy it.

But this would be just the beginning of his love for marketing and direct response…

One day while standing in line at the grocery store with his mom, he noticed a publication called "Small Business Opportunities" sitting in the magazine rack.

After thumbing through it and seeing the hundreds of ways he could get rich quick, he begged his mom to buy it. He was dying to try some of the "amazing opportunities" being presented to him.

She bought it for him, but didn't expect him to do what he did next. He went home and called every single 800 number in the 140 page magazine and sign up for their free info kit.

The following week, the junk mail started showing up. But by signing up for so many offers, the mail quickly began spiraling out of control. To the point where it wouldn't even fit in the mailbox.

Every day Russell would come home from school to find a few letters waiting for his parents, and an entire pile of junk mail waiting for him.

But he loved it. While other kids were busy playing outside or reading comic books, Russell enjoyed playing with the packages he received and reading the sales letters word for word.

Eventually, Russell decided he would try his hand at writing a sales letter of his own. So he saved up some money by doing chores and asked his mom to go to the store and buy him some stamps.

Later she came home with a whopping 38 stamps. But he knew if he could just get three people to buy a $50 product, he would be rich beyond his wildest dreams.

Well, at least for a 12-year-old.

He quickly got to work on a sales letter, but didn't have enough money for envelopes after paying for stamps. So he did what any smart entrepreneur would do… he folded the letter and stapled it.

But his ingenuity wouldn't stop there… since he couldn't afford a mail list of targeted prospects, he simply flipped through the white pages and picked 38 names at random. It was genius!

Russell walked down to the mailbox that day and slipped in his clunky stapled sales letters, feeling like he was finally on his way to becoming filthy rich. He just knew the results would be absolutely amazing.

He started bragging to his friends, saying that once the orders came flooding in, he would move out and buy his own house to live like a rock star. He was a millionaire in the making, ready to happen.

But as you might expect… no one responded to his goofy sales letter or bought his useless product. Yet, that didn't deter Russell from chasing his dream of one day making it big as a marketer.

THE ROLLER COASTER OF SUCCESS

Russell would spend the next decade of his life riding the roller coaster of success. He experienced all the typical ups and downs you'd expect on the entrepreneurial journey to freedom and fulfillment.

From getting scammed on things that didn't work, to major breakthroughs and moments of pure serendipity, Russell has seen it all. He even ran a business teaching people how to make a potato gun.

But his biggest challenge would come from an unfortunate series of events that nearly left him bankrupt and sent him to prison…

As Russell experienced more and more success, his company grew and grew. What started out as a solo venture soon ballooned to more than 100 staff and employees on his payroll.

Times were great. Everything was chugging along at full speed, and it seemed like nothing could stop him. But as they say, trouble tends to happen when you least expect it.

One day, a few members of the team came into his office and said they were having trouble processing continuity orders and running credit cards. And a few hours later, all the payments stopped.

It seemed like a hiccup with their merchant account, so Russell tried calling them. But he kept getting a busy signal. He couldn't figure out what was going on.

What Russell didn't know, was that banks had become suspicious of marketers doing illegal activities with continuity orders, and had just shut down several hundred accounts without warning.

That meant they would stop all their orders and freeze all their accounts until further notice. And that's obviously bad news for someone with 100 employees who have families to feed.

Russell struggled to hold things together, but it all came crumbling down. Every day he was forced to let go of employees, family and friends. And the days he didn't… they left on their own.

It was the darkest time of his life. It seemed like one thing after another kept going wrong…

After spending all his money to pay employees, he could no longer afford their office lease. When he told his landlord the unfortunate news, they threatened him with a lawsuit that would send him to jail.

His in-house bookkeeper had lied about which bills they paid to prevent stressing Russell out. And he soon discovered that they hadn't paid their payroll taxes in over a year and were massively in debt.

And to top it all off, one day he walked into work to discover that his sales staff had been recruited by the company across the street. They were all walking out on him immediately without notice.

At the end of it all, Russell was hundreds of thousands in debt, about to be sued by his landlord and prosecuted by the government, and without a team to help him get out of this hole.

It had stripped his successful team of 100 employees down to a bare bones crew of seven or eight. It forced them to sell nearly everything they had to make ends meet and stay afloat as a company.

With his business destroyed, it forced Russell to start over from scratch and reevaluate his life…

- What kind of business did he *really* want to have?
- Who were the customers he *really* wanted to serve?
- What fired him up and got him *excited* to go to work every day?

This was his chance to finally make it happen.

A MIRACLE IN THE MAKING

But oddly enough, the answers wouldn't be found in business, but in his relationship instead…

Russell married his college sweetheart while he was still in school trying to get his business off the ground. They were soul mates and knew they wanted to spend their lives together and start a family.

But after trying for months with no results, they grew concerned. They wondered if there might be a problem and visited a doctor and get themselves checked out.

The doctors performed test after test, but they couldn't find anything wrong that would prevent a pregnancy. Yet, Russell and his wife tried for nearly two more years with no avail.

And those two years were absolutely excruciating.

They were forced to sit on the sidelines and watch all of their friends start families without a problem. But no matter how hard they tried, it seemed like they wouldn't be able to start a family of their own.

They thought it might be some hidden issue with genetics. Because when Russell's younger brother got married, he and his wife were told they wouldn't be able to have children…

But even they eventually had a baby, despite all the challenges. Even the couple that was told it was physically impossible somehow managed to have a miracle baby of their own.

Russell specifically remembers the night he and his wife heard the news. It was such a bitter-sweet moment for them, filled with tears of both joy and despair.

On one hand, they were elated. His brother's family wasn't supposed to have kids, but somehow they miraculously did. They considered it a miracle and a blessing from God to have such good fortune.

But at the same time, they didn't understand why all the hopes and prayers weren't working for them. They tried nonstop for years on end, but experienced nothing but broken hearts and broken dreams.

That night, Russell's wife cried herself to sleep. She wept for her unborn child, feeling like all hope was lost and that it was never going to happen… it was the darkest of moments in the depths of despair.

But then one day, Russell's wife called him to talk about a clip she had just seen on Oprah. It featured a fertility doctor who helped troubled couples like them finally get pregnant and have a baby.

And the doctor lived in the same city they did! All this time they had been searching for an answer when it was right under their nose.

They quickly called to set up an appointment and were beyond excited to see how the doctor might help them finally start a family.

At the appointment, the doctor explained that it would be a painful and challenging process. But they would try it for three months to see if it works and could help them get pregnant.

Russell and his wife were so excited and hopeful that they had finally found the answer to their prayers. They told all of their friends and family to expect exciting news in the coming months.

After the first month on the program, they went in to have his wife's blood taken, and came back home eager to hear the results. They waited by the phone with bated breath for the call to come in…

But when the call finally came, the nurse had some unfortunate news…

The test came back negative, and they had to start over to try for month number two.

It was depressing, but they knew it was just the first try. So they decided to give it another shot. They went back in, repeated the process, and waited another 30 days to take a test and get the results.

They told all their friends and family they were trying and again, and everyone waited with anxious anticipation, hoping for the best…

But despite all their hopes and prayers, they had failed a second time.

At that moment, Russell and his wife began to have serious doubts. After trying so hard for so long with nothing to show for it, they wondered if having children simply wasn't in the cards for them.

They didn't know if they could take the heartbreak of failing a final time. But after some long conversations and diligent prayer, they gave all their hopes and dreams one last shot.

By pure chance, the end of the third month just so happened to be when Russell was graduating college. So he and his wife's parents were driving up for the final week to celebrate his success.

And the day that they were set to arrive coincidentally was the same day Russell's wife would take her final blood test and find out if the fertility program worked and they would ever have children.

After taking the test that morning, they went back home to tidy up the house and get things ready for the big celebration that afternoon. Russell was finally graduating, and they were throwing a party.

Russell's wife was out in the front yard setting things up, when suddenly the phone rang. Russell froze in suspense, knowing that this might be the call that determined the fate of his future forever…

He picked up the phone, and the nurse answered on the other line. She said she had the test results to share, and Russell wondered if he'd be let down a third and final time and dash his dreams for good…

But this time, the message was different…

It had worked. They had finally gotten pregnant.

After so many years of being met with nothing but failure and disappointment, they were finally going to have a child of their own.

Russell walked outside to his wife in the yard and told her to come close so he could share the exciting news. They grasped each other in a heartfelt embrace and slowly wept with tears of joy.

And the very next moment, both their parents arrived at the house and pulled into the driveway. Russell and his wife shared the exciting news, and everyone hugged and cried in delight.

Later that night, Russell realized that without his doctor getting her message out, he never would have been able to finally start a family.

She had a solution to a major problem, and must have spent countless hours doing whatever it took to get her message out there. All because she believed in her ability to help others and make a difference.

And since she had the courage to do that, his life was changed forever.

Russell finally understood what business is all about. He realized that we all have something to give the world and change people's lives. But most people don't have a way to get their message out.

And looking back on his life, full of all the ups and downs along the way, Russell realized he could use his skills as a marketer to help so many entrepreneurs share their solutions with the world.

He had found his mission in life.

While he may not be able to solve all the world's problem, if he can help spread the message of the people who can, then together they can change the world.

Whether you help people lose weight, become financially free, or even have a baby when it seems impossible… you can make a positive impact in other people's lives.

And this is the underlying reason behind everything that Russell does. It's why he works so hard to give entrepreneurs the tools they need to succeed and make a major difference.

HOW DOES RUSSELL USE PERSONAL BRANDING?

As you may have noticed, Russell's story was quite a bit longer than the other ones I shared with you. And that's because he has done a phenomenal job sharing his personal history with his audience.

He has dedicated entire hour-long segments of his seminars to chronicle his life events. And even filmed a professional ten minute vignette to detail his wife's struggles to start a family.

And if there was one word that could sum up what he stands for, that would be it — family. He's all about funnels, faith and family.

His social media is full of pictures with his beautiful family, having all sorts of fun on exciting adventures around the world. From family vacations to his work with church, they're stuck together like glue.

But whether he's chilling at home or presenting on the stage, Russell's always leading his pack.

He views his following as a family of entrepreneurs that are a rag-tag bunch of rebellious misfits who fight back against the pressures of society by being brave enough to dare to change the world.

We can sum this ideology up in one of his favorite quotes, used by Apple in their famous *"Think Different"* campaign used to relaunch the brand in the late 1990s:

"Here's to the crazy ones.

The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers.

The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently.

They're not fond of rules and they have no respect for the status quo.

You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them. About the only thing you cannot do is ignore them.

Because they change things. They push the human race forward.

And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius.

Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do."

And not only change the world of business, but also change the lives of families around the globe. Russell has generously donated enormous sums of time and money to many charitable causes.

His work with Village Impact helps to build schools for children in poverty-stricken regions in Kenya. And he also supports Operation Underground Railroad to rescue children from sex trafficking.

Russell advises his audience to "follow your purpose, not your paycheck." He tells them that if they just focus on making a positive impact like he has, the money will come and take care of itself.

He once shared a story about the greatest life lesson he had learned from his father. It happened one day when his dad asked him to clean the car before he could go outside and play.

Russell raced to get it done as soon as possible and then asked his dad to come check his work. His dad replied with a question that would shape Russell's life forever…

"Are you proud of it?"

Russell looked back at his father confused, not sure what he meant by the question. So he asked him again to come see if he was done.

"Are you proud of it? Because when you're proud of it then it's done."

Russell took that message to heart. For the rest of his life he would never again call a task complete until he was proud of the job he had done. And this is evident in everything he's accomplished.

But despite those amazing accomplishments, on the surface Russell seems rather ordinary. He has jokingly described himself as "incredibly average" in the past, and maybe even a little boring.

But this image works well for him. He wouldn't quite fit trying to be a slick salesman like Grant or dropping a bunch of f-bombs like Gary. That's not his style.

Instead, he's usually seen in a simple outfit consisting of a plain dress shirt and jeans, and occasionally snazzes it up with a fancy pair of shoes. Basically, he's just the friendly average guy next door.

Russell positions himself as an everyday family man who has an inspirational message to share with the world. And this resonates with his followers because they find themselves feeling the same way.

I think at his core, Russell is still the spirited young boy who fell in love with marketing at such a young age. That same excitement and exuberance can be found in everything he does.

He's like the kid in the candy store. But instead of sugar, his sweets consist of all the tools and techniques he can share with his audience to help them change the world.

THE PEOPLE WHO ARE CRAZY ENOUGH TO THINK THEY CAN CHANGE THE WORLD, ARE THE ONES WHO DO.

WHAT THEY HAVE IN COMMON

WHAT THEY HAVE IN COMMON

Looking at the brands we just analyzed, what do they have in common?

- They all show themselves to be a **Charismatic Leader**.
- They all have a unique **Perspective** and **Point of View**.
- They all use **Superficial Symbolism** to their advantage.
- They all use **Psychodynamics** to match customer values.
- They all demonstrate **Credible Communication** to their audience.
- They all use the power of **Storytelling** to tell their **Signature Story**.
- They all use **The Beautiful Mess Effect** to bond with their market.
- They all create enormous amounts of **Generous Goodwill.**

They do everything I recommend in this book, and that's why they're all successful.

And if you do the same, you'll find success too.

The final section of this book will show you what to do next after you finish reading. It will give you an action plan for success that you can follow to take the first steps to build your personal brand.

PART 5

NEXT STEPS TO SUCCESS

THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG

Heralded as "The Unsinkable Ship," the *Titanic* was the largest luxury cruise liner of its day. Measuring more than four city blocks and weighing over 46,000 tons, the behemoth of a boat seemed invincible.

But just four days into its maiden voyage across the Atlantic, the Titanic would sadly meet her match. The ship struck an iceberg floating in the ocean, and quickly sank to the bottom of the sea.

The tale of the Titanic teaches us the dangers of hubris. By believing you're invincible, ignoring common sense, and failing to heed warnings, you're certain to face the consequences.

"Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

The Titanic received multiple warnings of approaching icefields, but the crew foolishly ignored them and steered full speed ahead straight into their doom.

And now you find yourself in the same position…

There's an iceberg looming in the waters ahead. And if you sail forward without altering course, you'll crash right into it and sink your ship.

Although we'll never know the size of ice that sunk the Titanic, we know for a fact that icebergs typically hide 90% of their mass beneath the surface. As they say, "there's more than meets the eye."

And while most books on personal branding stick to the shallows, I hope I've helped you to see deeper.

This book offers a mere glimpse of all there is to know about personal branding. I've spent years exploring the depths of the subject and uncovering the secret science behind it.

But I'd like to share my findings with you and offer you the opportunity to work with me to build your personal brand.

Together, we'll set sail across the ocean, and guide your brand through calm waters, free from waves or roughness. While other brands struggle just to stay afloat, I'll guide you safely to your destination.

So I offer you the following tools to help you navigate the seas:

- **Personal Brand "Authority Score" Assessment**
- **How to Start a Business Around Your Personal Brand**
- **How to Build Your Business with Personal Branding**
- **And an Action Plan to put you on the Fast Track to Success**

Here's to smooth sailing, Captain. All aboard and bon voyage.

AUTHORITY SCORE ASSESSMENT

How visible is your personal brand?

What are your strengths?

Where do you need to improve?

How do you stack up against the competition?

Are you using the right techniques to reach your target audience?

Are you seeing a return on your marketing efforts?

Don't know? Not sure?

Then I'd like to offer you a free assessment to help you find the answers.

As a bonus for buying this book, you have access to a free personal brand assessment to help you understand where you stand in the marketplace and what areas you have for improvement.

This assessment will help see you where you stack up against the competition and how you can build your brand to beat them.

The assessment will grade you on six key areas:

1. Marketplace Positioning
2. Knowledge & Expertise
3. Prominence & Visibility
4. Business Development
5. Marketing Infrastructure
6. Efficiency & Effectiveness

This is for anyone who is interested in building their personal brand and wants to know how they stack up against the competition.

To get started and take the assessment, go to:

www.WesBlackwell.com/Authority-Quiz/

There you'll sign up and answer a few questions before taking the assessment. Then you'll go through each of the six key areas to grade yourself and evaluate your personal brand.

After completing the free assessment, you will receive an individual score that will help you determine what key areas you need to improve in and what opportunities you have to build your brand and grow.

This is a great first step to building your personal brand. It will help you put some numbers to an evaluation and see where your brand stands in the marketplace and what you can do to improve it.

If your score shows that you have some major room for improvement, or that you're on the right track but have some opportunities to improve in a few key areas, then you should consider working with me one-on-one to speed up your success and build your brand.

We'll work together to help you start a business around your personal brand, or help you build your current business with personal branding.

You can find more information about these programs in the following few pages and how to get started.

Here's to your success, and I hope to work with you soon to build your business and create the brand of your dreams.

HOW TO START A BUSINESS AROUND YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

This is an invitation for up-and-coming entrepreneurs who have yet to hit the annual six-figure mark in their business.

This is for people who either want to start a business but don't know how, or people who have started a business but still struggle to get enough leads or convert prospects into paying customers.

If you desire to build a business that nets you an income of $10k+ per month, then this is for you. Especially if you want to know how to do it WITHOUT paid ads or complicated strategies.

I will work directly with you for 4 weeks on the following things:

1. Helping you find the right business that's specifically suited for you. I will help you identify your ideal customer and attract your perfect client to build a dream business using your personal brand.

2. Sharing all my proven strategies for Psychodynamic Value Matching so that prospects will find you fascinating and be drawn to your offer like moths to a flame. I'll help you develop instant influence, tremendous trust, and overwhelming affinity for your personal brand with your target audience.

3. Creating an irresistible high-priced offer and fine-tuning it so it's aligned with your ideal customer (which helps you raise prices) and making it as leveraged as possible so you spend less time with clients and get them to their outcomes faster.

4. Showing you all my best practices for lead generation and sales so you can create a steady stream of new customers and get clients on demand to solve your cash flow and conversion problems for good.

You'll receive worksheets, templates, and instructions to guide you through each step of the process and prepare you for our one-on-one meetings where we'll work together on building your business.

The skills you learn will last you a lifetime and you can use them over and over again to develop new offers, new businesses, and much more.

The best candidates for this program will have an entrepreneurial spirit, positive attitude, solid work ethic, and a burning desire to succeed.

And since we'll build this business around your personal brand, you must be comfortable stepping into the spotlight and communicating with your audience regularly. The results will be worth it, trust me.

The practices I share with you in this program are the same ones I used to build my business, and the same ones I helped others use to build profitable businesses in the past.

The investment for this program is still very low compared to the value of building a six-figure business that will last the rest of your life and help you finally achieve the financial freedom you've been looking for. Most people will make the investment back quickly with just a few clients, typically three or less.

I will probably raise prices sometime later this year, most likely to the five-figure level, but as of right now I'll probably keep it well under that until all this Coronavirus craziness blows over.

If you're interested in this program contact me at my website below and let me know you're interested in the private one-month intensive to start a business around your personal brand.

I'll write back with a few questions to help determine whether the program is a fit for you and your business. We'll have a quick chat back and forth and if we both agree it's a fit, we can get you enrolled the same day, and get our first session scheduled within a week or less!

Contact me at **www.WesBlackwell.com** to get started!

HOW TO BUILD YOUR BUSINESS WITH PERSONAL BRANDING

This program is for established entrepreneurs who are looking to take their business to the next level and gain financial abundance, time freedom, and increased fame and recognition with consumers.

This is for expert level coaches, consultants, professional service providers, or any other business where YOU are the brand.

If you're having trouble reaching the level of abundance you desire and cracking the high 6-7 figure mark, then this is for you. Especially if you want to achieve a level of fame and prominence to take your income sky-high and achieve true time freedom.

I will work directly with you for 4 weeks on the following things:

1. Showing you some secret tricks and advanced techniques to subconsciously sell prospects on your offer before they even see the pitch. You'll learn how to transplant powerful buying emotions into your customer's minds before they even have a chance to buy.

2. Positioning your brand to gain maximum authority, trust and influence with your most valued prospects. We'll align your personal brand with your target market's core desires and reduce resistance to your offers to get people to buy in record numbers.

3. Sharing all my strategies for communicating with consumers in a way that gains instant influence and affinity. You'll learn how to activate internal buying triggers backed by powerful emotions that will cause customers to naturally feel like buying from you.

4. Bolstering your marketing messages to build motivation in prospects and significantly shorten the sales process. These strategies will help you rapidly accelerate the pace customers come to you ready to buy.

If you've enjoyed this book, then you'll love this program, because it's like personal branding on steroids. This is a no holds barred crash course where I show you everything I know and hold nothing back.

If you've ever wondered what separates the six-figure wannabes from the seven-figure superstars, this is it. You'll learn all my secrets and strategies for breaking through the barriers to success and finally achieving the status, success and income you desire.

The best candidates for this program will have plenty of experience helping people in their area of expertise and have access to a platform they can use to communicate with their audience, such as social media, email list, YouTube channel, etc.

These are the same strategies used to help my previous company triple their sales volume in just under a year. I will work with you one-on-one to build your personal brand and show you everything I know to help you achieve similar results as fast as possible.

The investment for this program is peanuts compared to the value of cementing your status as a recognized name in your industry. This isn't a one-off marketing campaign you only use once, this is your most valuable business asset that will last you a lifetime. It's priceless.

I'm running a special promotion right now with the launch of this book, so make sure you mention it to get the savings before the price of this program permanently increases.

If you're interested in this program contact me at my website below and let me know you're interested in the private one-month intensive to build your business through personal branding.

I'll write back with a few questions to help determine whether the program is a fit for you and your business. We'll have a quick chat back and forth and if we both agree it's a fit, we can get you enrolled the same day, and get our first session scheduled within a week or less!

Contact me at **www.WesBlackwell.com** to get started!

FAST TRACK ACTION PLAN

Congrats! Bravo! Hip-hip-hurray!

You did it!

You made across the finish line and completed the entire book. That already puts you ahead of the rest of the pack.

But your journey doesn't end here... there's still more work for you to do if you truly desire to build a big enough brand to be in the 1%.

On the following page you'll find an action plan to put you on the fast track to success and help you answer the question, "What's next?"

Go through each step one-by-one and only check the box once you've fully completed the step.

No whining if you don't find success and haven't completed the list. Bread won't rise without yeast, and plans don't work without action.

And no cheating! The branding gods are watching you.

Now get out there and get cracking. Take the bull by the horns.

Success awaits you.

BUILD YOUR BRAND CHECKLIST:

- ☐ Read the entire book, cover to cover. No page left unread.
- ☐ "Do the Work!" Complete all the exercises and assignments.
- ☐ Share your best insight from this book with someone it would help.
- ☐ Analyze your favorite personal brands using my theories.
- ☐ Take the "Authority Score" Assessment. It's free and awesome.
- ☐ Brainstorm how to fix the areas of your brand you need to improve.
- ☐ Contact me if you need help starting a new business.
- ☐ Contact me if you need help building your personal brand.
- ☐ Follow me on social media. I share awesome stuff all the time.
- ☐ Envision your ideal future. Capture the vision and write it down.
- ☐ Create an action plan for you to take steps to achieve it.
- ☐ Then take those steps. Kick ass and take names.
- ☐ Kiss your kids and tell them you love them. They need to hear it.
- ☐ Call your mom and give her your time. Ask if she needs anything.
- ☐ Never stop learning and give everything 100%.

