



## **INFLUENCING BRAND PERCEPTION: WHAT ARE PEOPLE SAYING ABOUT YOU?**

In personal branding, as in life, the little things matter. Every move that you make and everything that you put your name on reflects your brand. Brand and reputation are closely linked. Companies are constantly evaluated by the way they are perceived by the competition, the media and their customers. You are constantly being judged based on perceptions as well.

A brand is all about perception, and as frustrating as it might be, you don't always have control over how potential clients or the public sees you. That said, with the right focus, strategy and consistency, you can certainly influence how your personal brand is perceived. Pay attention to what you are putting out there – everything from how you dress, how you communicate, what activities you participate in and who you choose to work and socialize with, contribute to your overall brand image.

Cultivating your brand means investing time, effort and eventually money into determining what you want to communicate and how you want to communicate it. Once you have clarity, content and a plan of action, you will be well-prepared to implement it.

Here are four important areas to consider when determining your personal brand strategy and how you might influence perception:

- **Brand Attributes** – These are the adjectives or “descriptors” that best describe you. What are the qualities that you want to exude and be best known for? When you make decisions about your brand collateral, website, promotional materials etc., ask yourself if they truly represent the attributes that you have chosen.
- **Brand Identity** - Visual continuity is a critical aspect of brand building. It's important that you create a “face” for your business and that this is replicated in all facets of your image. This not only includes your logo, letterhead, packaging, website, advertising and promotional materials, but also your personal wardrobe and presentation style.
- **Brand Definition** – Make sure you clearly define your brand in a way that you want others to perceive you. In one sentence (often referred to as your tagline), you should be able to eloquently communicate what you do and how you can help the other person. For example, my tagline is “I help female entrepreneurs build powerful, confident personal brands with style.”

- **Brand Message** – In Politics, one of the Golden Rules is to stay “on message”. This means that everyone on the team understands and is able to clearly communicate the same brand message. A thread of continuity should run through all aspects of your business – from employees to your website and collateral materials. Whether I speak to an employee, peruse your website or receive a letter from you in the mail; I should walk away with a sense of your brand attributes and an understanding of your message.

A strong brand contains an element (or elements) that its target market emotionally connects to and therefore stands out in that consumer’s mind. In order to be memorable – and to influence the emotional connection that a potential client has with your brand, you must be consistent with your brand attributes, identity, definition and messaging in everything that you do.

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Liz Dennery Sanders wants you to build your buzz and be successful beyond your wildest dreams. As the CEO of Dennery Marks Inc., a brand development and celebrity outreach firm, she founded **SheBrand**, to help female entrepreneurs build powerful personal brands, attract more clients and position themselves as authorities in their industries. You can reach her directly at [info@shebrand.com](mailto:info@shebrand.com) or [www.shebrand.com](http://www.shebrand.com).