

## Authentic Branding

By Suzi Pomerantz, MBA, MCC

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Take a look at creating your Authentic Branding: Whether you've thought about it or not, you already have a brand at work. Meaning how you're thought of and what you're known for. Your image. Even if you haven't intentionally crafted it in alignment with how you want to be known, you still have a brand. We call that your automatic brand. It's the accidental cumulative effect of everything you've done and said and how it's been perceived.

Once you become aware of this as a strategic leverage point, you can begin to craft your intended brand. Jot down the answers to these questions and then explore it in conversation with either a coach or mentor, advocate or boss in your organization:

Who do you want to be as a leader (or coach, or business owner, or whatever)?

How do you want to be known?

What do you want others to count on you for?

For what are you the go-to person?

What's your best strength?

What is the best use of you in your organization (or team, business, community, etc.)?

What legacy do you wish to be known for?

Whether your goal is buy-in, leverage, influence, political gain, getting heard, selling your ideas, or just getting noticed and recognized for your contribution, aligning your actions and conversations around your intended brand is how you'll get there. It's about visibility, exposure, navigating the politics, building solid, relevant coalitions. Applies internally and externally.

Once you create your brand, you'll need to manage it by training those around you to see you in this new light, and also to build coalition (strategic relationships of influence) with those who can be your champions and advocates and agents in helping others to see you and know you as you'd like to be seen.

Create your relationship plan for creating strategic relationships of influence. Who are the key players in your industry or organization or community? Who influences the decision makers and how can you create an authentic relationship with them? What matters to them and how can you support or serve their mission? What is your plan for managing the relationships as well as the perceptions of you as aligned with your intended, authentic brand? Be authentic, be of service, be open to possibilities. Key action: make sure all your messaging, communications, etc. align with your intended, authentic brand.

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