

How to Build Your Global Brand ~ Through Mentoring

What if the world could assess your skills and expertise based only on a simple graphic or icon?

When you see  you know the intrinsic value proposition, products, services and impact.

What if that was you? What if people could understand your global essence through twitter?

That is the crux of what it requires today to build a personal brand identity that stands out. To be clearly above the rest, the dramatic differentiator is your global intention. Consider this though, how do you prove it? I would like to suggest you can demonstrate through active learning, practice and sharing what you know. Mentoring has been proven to be one of the best ways to show the world how you hone and integrate your skills and attributes into your world... but let's not get ahead of ourselves.

At this point, you may ask yourself, am I a brand? The answer is yes and no. You are an individual, not a company or a product. You are not repeatable yet you may have similarities. To capture the interest of others, potential clients, business partners, future employers or a global audience as an emerging or emerged expert you do have to secure the position. To break through, you need to make an indelible impression (synonym to brand) on your intended audience. There are numerous ways to build your brand, simply Google "build your personal brand" and there are over 500 experts – bloggers, journalists, coaches, branding experts and marketers with dozens of great ideas. To make it easy, simply follow their suggestions to build your brand and voila – you have it. Ahhh, but wait. Is it truly differentiating you from the global masses? Remember, the world is so much smaller than it used to be. Does it accurately identify you as the true expert in your field just because you say so or... because you have

demonstrated it? After reviewing hundreds of sights – yes, that’s why I know there are over 500 “experts” out there when you Google the subject – I found several that really hit home with me. Everything from the strategy that you need to [build your own brand](#), which entails creating an original visual identity—AND verbal identity to the *five* easy steps, or *seven*, or *ten*, that you need to follow to get known. They all have seriously good content, information and features that can help.

A Step Further...

Sure, we need to have a strategy—which is the tactical foundation, pulling all of your planning for each visual and verbal expression of your personal brand. The strategy defines your deliverable. *Who are you? What significance do you bring to the relationship? You* formulate your strategy that differentiates and positions *you* against the rest of the field, or the world. Your strategy is based on your skills and personal attributes and qualities that you have honed and developed through experience and engagement. This is where you need to ask yourself two critical questions – “How will others perceive me as the expert in my areas of skill?”, and “How can I prove that the attributes I profess are truly qualities that have been tested and practiced?”

But Wait, There’s More...

What if you could demonstrate to the world of your continued development in your core skill areas, your personal attributes AND show your desire to be more than an educated professional but a life-long learner and teacher? In other words, you haven’t stopped honing your skills or developing your personal attributes because you chose to join in the growing network of mentoring.

This may come as a revelation to many of you but we all go through a process of learning that encompasses three stages. First we are *taught*; initially it may be through an experience or class room or even individual educational goals such as books, webinars or certifications. We

take notes, we may even take tests to see if we retain the knowledge. It is not until we actually *practice*; not just writing the business plan but implementing it, not just understanding what a budget is and does but actually developing one and holding to it, not just saying “I have integrity” but practicing it, do we really incorporate the teaching. These activities are what help us assimilate the knowledge into our skill set and what hone our personal attributes such as honesty, integrity and agility thinking.

Personal Practice - Ethics

My favorite university “practice” when I am privileged enough to be a guest speaker or visiting professor, is to propose the following scenario to help others understand the issue of *practice* and the importance for us all.

“You go into a grocery store, knowing you have \$50.00 in your account until payday. You complete your shopping adding it all up in your head and consider yourself lucky that you came in under budget. You determine that it must have been the in-store sales that helped you stay under and you walk out with \$9.50 in your pocket. As you are loading your supplies into the car you realize that they failed to charge you for the bag of dog food on the bottom of the cart. What do you do? What if it was only a \$2.00 item? What if you were in charge of a \$350,000,000 budget and you found out you were undercharged on a contract by \$1,750,000. What if it was only \$600.00? What do you do? When you can actually not just say what you would do, but walk back into the store and connect with the store manager have you truly integrated ethics into your being. Practice!”

So, What Makes a Good Mentor?

The following information came via courtesy of one of my online Google searches that we consistently use with all of our mentors – it succinctly covers some of the best characteristics of

leadership that you can integrate into your core skills and personal attributes and is arguably a true representation of what it takes to be a strong leader.

- ❖ **Active Listening** A mentor listens well and demonstrates to their mentees that their concerns and issues have been heard and understood. This promotes confidence and builds trust, which is essential for any great mentoring relationship.
- ❖ **Build Trust** The more a mentee trusts you, the more committed he/she will be to the relationship. Be realistic and understand that trust develops over time, through spending quality time together, respecting your mentee's boundaries, following through on your promises.
- ❖ **Identify Goals and Vision** A good mentor will help the mentee identify their goals, what's important to them, their strengths and development needs.
- ❖ **Encouragement** Effective mentors encourage their mentees. It is as simple as complimenting your mentee on their accomplishments and positive traits, and commending them in front of others. Give them confidence to move forward despite their fears and doubts.
- ❖ **Informal Teaching** As a mentor, you may need to do some informal teaching, so keep your eye out for teachable moments. Help your mentee find necessary resources and contacts. If appropriate, teach them new skills and help them acquire knowledge. Add model effective behavior.
- ❖ **Inspire Greatness** Do inspiring things yourself and model greatness; be a role model. Set a great example and help your mentees find other inspirational people and situations.
- ❖ **Provide Developmental Feedback** If you observe your mentee making mistakes, you should be direct with him or her and provide corrective feedback. Indicate some better ways to do something or how to act. Offer useful suggestions on what the mentee can do the next time.

- ❖ **Connector** Try to provide visibility for your mentee and their strengths. If possible, open doors for them to meet new people and take on challenging assignments. Make sure their abilities and strengths are noticed by others.
- ❖ **Learn** Don't be too proud to learn from the protégé's questions and experiences. The best mentoring is a two-way relationship in which people with various experiences, cultures and places in life learn from one another. One of the best ways to gain global mindset is through learning – and global mindset is one of the top rated skills looked for from leaders in this global economy.
- ❖ **Build Your Brand** Walk the talk and show your mentee the importance of working ON their career and personal brand, and not just IN their career. Encourage them to get 360 feedback, engage in self-reflection, and determine what makes them unique, compelling, and differentiated. Encourage your mentee to engage in building their network, connections and impact through groups, social networks like LinkedIn and help them become the emerging “expert” in their own field.

You and Your World

It may seem a bit sweeping to imply that your global outlook on the world can create a prodigious personal brand, but in the real world, it is precisely your attitude that has guided you to your profession and has helped you develop your talents, skills and attributes. It is how you learn, practice and teach those skills as a mentor and leader that will make a difference in the world – not just your brand. In a 2012 audit of some of the Fortune 500 companies I found that there were five key personal attributes that consistently were brought up in conversation and responded to as critical for leadership development and positioning. I have incorporated them into a process that I call GLEAN™. They are not new, and I did not invent them, but they have been brought together into a concise process that helps leaders understand how they relate to their leadership skills, their leadership brand and their leadership success. Global Mindset, Leadership Quotient, Ethics, Agility Thinking and Negotiation and Communications Skills in the

Virtual World are all part of GLEAN™. As a mentor I integrate them into my own mentoring style and share them with my mentees wherever applicable. As a professional in the global economics of business education, mentoring and futurist learning it is integrated into our own company as a critical component of leadership success and I hope that everyone will someday be aware of the need for professional branding to be externally engaged in.