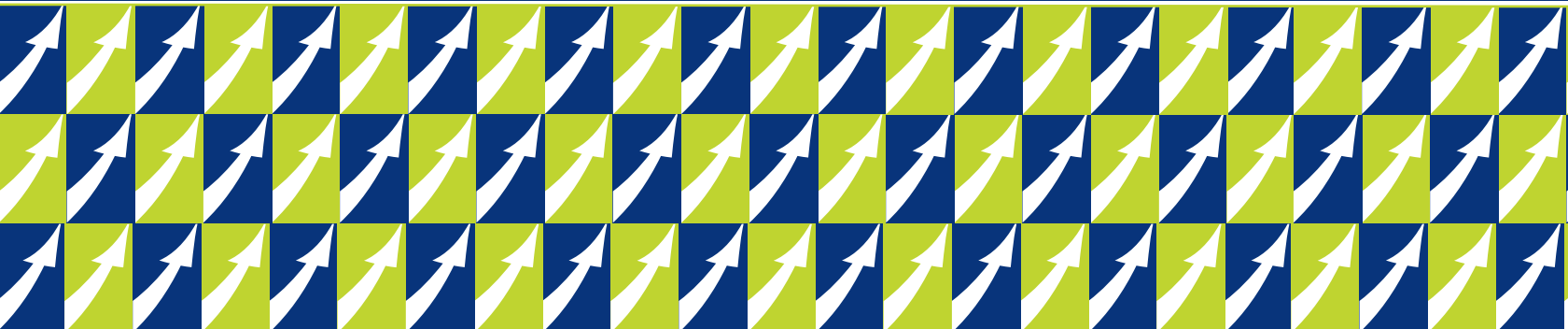


PERSONAL BRANDING PLANNER

90 Days to Career Acceleration



PERSONAL BRANDING PLANNER

90 DAYS TO CAREER ACCELERATION

PUBLISHED BY BEYOND B-SCHOOL

A trusted partner to over 50 MBA programs—including top-tier schools like Wharton, Stanford, MIT, University of Virginia, and Cornell—Beyond B-School is an executive education company that produces and delivers training resources and services to enable students and professionals to advance their careers. Our team of industry experts are leading authors, speakers, and career coaches who work with businesses, executives, and schools worldwide.



INTRODUCTION

Congratulations, you're about to venture out on a journey toward professional growth.

This Personal Branding Planner will guide you through the exact actions you need to take to build and strengthen your personal brand, achieve your career goals, and create the professional future you envision for yourself.

That is, after all, what personal branding is about. Being future oriented. Focusing on your POTENTIAL, not your past. It's about what you CAN do, not what you've DONE.

By committing to using this Planner, you will be able to unlock what you CAN do.

A strong personal brand can help you compete and stand out. But it takes hard and consistent work.

Powerhouses the likes of Beyoncé, Oprah Winfrey, Sheryl Sandberg, Richard Branson, Jeff Bezos, Arianna Huffington, Mark Cuban, Bill and Melinda Gates, and countless others have gained worldwide visibility and success from actively forging and promoting their personal brands. They've put in the time and effort, and produced incredible results.

This Planner is designed to help you DO the work and achieve your desired outcomes.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN USING THIS PLANNER

Personal branding is a career gamechanger. But the problem is, most of us fail to invest in our most crucial asset: Ourselves.

We get too busy. Overwhelmed. Caught up in competing priorities.

And so, advancing our professional profiles falls to the bottom of the to-do list.

Every. Time.

That is, until now.

Armed with this 90-Day Planner, you can cut through the clutter and noise, and get straight to it.

GET REAL RESULTS

- ✓ Grow your brand
- ✓ Strengthen your network
- ✓ Accelerate your career

WITHOUT A HUGE TIME COMMITMENT

You can produce outcomes using this Planner, if you can find as little as...

- ✓ 10-15 minutes per day
- ✓ 2-3 hours a week
- ✓ 25-40 hours over the course of three months

FOCUS

+

ACTION

- ✓ Set your own schedule
- ✓ Determine your own pace

- ✓ Hold yourself accountable
- ✓ Keep track of your progress

= YOUR RETURN ON TIME INVESTMENT

- ✓ Expand your network
- ✓ Increase your professional endorsements
- ✓ Pitch your way to job offers, promotions, leadership opportunities, and more

BENEFITS YOU CAN SEE IN THE SHORT TERM

- ✓ Propel your professional journey forward
- ✓ Stand out
- ✓ Compete
- ✓ Get in the door
- ✓ Land the next opportunity
- ✓ Get ahead
- ✓ Fuel career acceleration

BENEFITS YOU CAN SEE IN THE LONG TERM

- ✓ Get noticed
- ✓ Be pursued
- ✓ Get referred
- ✓ Feel confident
- ✓ Habitualize the practice of personal branding—a game-changing, lifelong career skill

WHAT YOU WILL ACCOMPLISH

Over the next 90 days, as you go through the step-by-step process of discovering and expressing your personal brand, you will achieve three critical outcomes:

#1: Develop and launch a personal branding strategy that will accelerate your career

#2: Position your personal brand to help you meet your next career goal within 90 days

#3: Create a personal branding foundation that will adapt, evolve, and grow with you throughout your entire professional life

ACCELERATE YOUR CAREER IN 3 PHASES

Section 1: KNOW YOURSELF: UNCOVER YOUR STRENGTHS | WEEKS 1-5

As personal branding expert William Arruda says, brands are not created, they're unearthed. During these weeks, you will work on unearthing the unique promise you offer.

Section 2: KNOW YOUR VALUE: UNLOCK YOUR POTENTIAL | WEEKS 6-10

Once you're clear about who you are and what you offer, it's time to see what your target audience wants. Throughout these weeks, we will work together to create the you that will be in demand.

Section 3: PITCH YOURSELF: UNLEASH YOUR BRAND | WEEKS 11-13

You don't have to become famous to achieve your goals. You simply have to get your brand in front of your target audience—employers and the individuals that influence these key decision makers. During this third stage of the 90 days, you will focus on increasing your visibility and credibility by building and growing your community and authority.

& BEYOND

Personal branding is a lifelong, ongoing activity. Your achievements, your growth—your life is in constant motion, and so, too, should be your personal brand development. This is a linear process, but it's also cyclical and iterative. That means you can complete this Planner once over the course of the next 90 days—or over the time it takes as fits your schedule—and return as needed as you evolve, giving you the chance to refine the work you've accomplished and keep moving forward.



By Week	At a Glance	Time to complete
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declare your next career goal. • Write a personal Mission and Vision Statement. 	1-3 hours
Weeks 2 & 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct self-assessments to identify your greatest strengths. • Refine your personal Mission and Vision Statement. 	5+ hours
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an accomplishments portfolio. 	5-10+ hours
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write your personal story. 	1-2 hours
Weeks 6 & 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct company research. • Build a list of target companies. 	2-4 hours
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the specific problems you can solve for potential employers with confidence. 	5 hours
Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify how you position yourself to each unique target. 	2-3 hours
Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an audit and overhaul of your personal brand presence, online and offline. 	3-5 hours
Week 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimize your elevator pitch to be used in networking settings, interviews, cold emails, when adding LinkedIn connections, and more. 	3-5 hours
Week 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the value you will contribute to your network. • Establish an ongoing practice of networking. 	5+ hours
Week 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Author original content and establish your authority online. 	5+ hours

TURN GREAT IDEAS INTO ACTIONS THAT DELIVER, WITH THIS PLANNER

Thinking, learning, and reflecting can only take you so far. Without action, knowledge alone isn't transformative.

And that's what we'll help you do here. We'll teach you how to build your personal brand and how to put these lessons immediately into action and see results in real time.

Here's a key of the symbols you will see representing types of actions. They appear throughout the planner as illustrated.

TYPE OF ACTION	1. RESEARCH	2. REFLECT	3. ANALYZE	4. CREATE
SYMBOL				

TYPE OF ACTION	5. COMMUNICATE	6. TARGET	7. GO	8. TRACK
SYMBOL				

WHO THIS PLANNER IS FOR

Developing a personal brand is beneficial for anyone looking to advance professionally, whether that's as you launch your career, change fields or professions, or seek out a promotion.

Here are the three personas we've developed this Planner for and the types of professionals that can benefit from this 90-Day Planner, no matter what type of growth you want to achieve.

SEEKERS

You're looking for the next job, whether you're launching your career or ready for the next move.

SWITCHERS

You want to move in a new direction—changing industries, geographic locations, functional areas, or company type or size. Many of the elements of developing a personal brand that apply to "seekers" will also apply to you, but you have extra work to do to make the case for why you're equipped to make the change. It will be up to you to reformulate your job experience and talk about your potential for what is, in effect, a new area for you. Even if you haven't worked in a particular area before, you can leverage personal branding to communicate the value you bring in a powerful way and demonstrate why your past experiences make you ideally suited to a given new experience.

CLIMBERS

You're looking for career growth within your current company through a promotion. In effect, you're seeking a new job within the same company and so many of the recommendations that apply to traditional job seekers will apply to you. Your goal will be to harness personal branding to encourage your employer to see you in a new light.

WEEK 1: DECLARE YOUR NEXT CAREER GOAL

“Begin with the end in mind. Envision what you want in the future, so you can work and plan towards it.”

—*The second habit of Stephen Covey's classic book, The 7 Habit Habits of Highly Effective People*

You're ready for growth. You're ready for change. And building a personal brand can help you achieve these and more, but as a very first step, you have to spell out what, exactly, you're looking for.

Don't worry about what you have (or haven't) accomplished. Now is the moment to concentrate on what you are capable of.

As to how you'll get there, that's what you'll spend the next 90 days working toward.

But first things first.

Week 1: Declare Your Next Career Goal

WHAT YOU WILL ACCOMPLISH

- Declare your next career goal.
- Write a personal Mission and Vision Statement.

PLAN YOUR TIME

- **Time to complete?** 1-2 hours
- **When can you accomplish?** Within this week or on your own schedule.



#1: DEFINE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO CREATE IN YOUR CAREER.

This is the goal you'll be working toward throughout this 90-Day Planner.

Here are some thought starters...

What industry are you in/want to enter/be seen as an expert in?

What specific companies are you interested in working for?

What specific positions/roles do you want?

Four Goal-Setting Tips

1. **Go for it.** There are no right or wrong answers.
2. **Be specific.** The more precise you can get, the better your chances are of reaching your goal.
3. **Be flexible.** Expect your thoughts to evolve between today, day 90, and beyond. Get too attached to an idea and you risk potentially never thinking you've "arrived," unless every box is checked. Any good marketer knows that what's key is to stay agile and be willing to adapt, in real time.
4. **Remember:** This is only the beginning. As you do the work in this Planner, the goals you have for yourself will become crystalized or modified, or even change altogether.

What does career growth look like to you?

(A promotion, a pivot, growing into a thought leader?)

Where do you want your career to be in 90 days?



#2 AND 3: DRAFT YOUR COMBINED PERSONAL MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT.

This is the very first draft of the story of you—the brand—that you will write, revise, adapt, perfect, and customize throughout this 90-Day Planner.

Here are some thought starters to help you answer the question...

Who are you? What do you bring in terms of work experience, skillset, and education?

What are your objectives and how do you go about meeting them?

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS, AT A GLANCE

What Are Mission and Vision Statements?

According to top management consulting firm Bain & Company¹:

- **A Mission Statement** defines what a given company's business is, its objectives, and describes its approach to reaching those objectives.
- **A Vision Statement** describes a desired future objective and positioning of a given company.

What Do Mission and Vision Statements Accomplish?

Together, Mission and Vision Statements put forth a given company's or person's purpose, goals, and values.

¹ <https://www.bain.com/insights/management-tools-mission-and-vision-statements/>

What can you do and what problems do you solve?

(Think of both your technical and soft skills.)

What is your perception of your personal brand right now? Describe the value and promise you offer as a product (individual) to your consumer (potential employers).

Where do you see yourself? How do you plan to evolve?



#4: REFLECT ON WHERE YOU ARE AND WHERE YOU WANT TO GO.

Where are you now? What do you think it will take to get where you want to go?

FOUR STANDOUT MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS IN ACTION

Richard Branson

Tie-loathing adventurer, philanthropist & troublemaker, who believes in turning ideas into reality. Otherwise known as Dr Yes

Arianna Huffington

Founder & CEO of Thrive Global whose mission is to end the stress and burnout epidemic.

Tiffany Dufu

CEO of peer coaching platform The Cru and author of *Drop the Ball: Achieve More by Doing Less*. My life's work is advancing women and girls.

Satya Nadella

As CEO of Microsoft, I define my mission and that of my company as empowering every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more.



 **WEEKLY ACTION TRACKER**

OUTCOMES

NEXT STEPS

SECTION 1

KNOW YOURSELF: UNCOVER YOUR STRENGTHS

“Be proactive. Your life doesn't just 'happen.' Whether you know it or not, it is carefully designed by you. The choices, after all, are yours... And in doing so, it gives you a perfect opportunity to do things differently to produce more positive results.”

—*The second habit of Stephen Covey's classic book, The 7 Habit Habits of Highly Effective People*

What drives you? What talents do you have? Why should employers be interested in you? What do others see in you? Why are you trustworthy? In this section we'll work on the task of uncovering the true you—the one employers can't wait to hire and promote.

WEEKS 2 & 3: GATHER DATA

“Your brand is what people say about you when you’re not in the room.”

—Jeff Bezos, founder, CEO, and president of Amazon

Any strategic marketing plan is incomplete without a thorough analysis of the current situation at hand. Since you're the product in this case, it's time for self reflection.

Over these two weeks, you'll review what you offer through self-assessments and leverage these insights to update how you describe yourself on your LinkedIn profile, resume, job applications, and more.

Weeks 2 & 3: Gather Data

WHAT YOU WILL ACCOMPLISH

- Conduct third-party assessments to identify your greatest strengths.
- Refine your personal Mission and Vision Statement.
- Put the insights you uncover about yourself into action with key updates to your social media profiles, cover letters, resumes, website, and other digital platforms and files.

PLAN YOUR TIME

- **Time to complete?** 5+ hours
- **When can you accomplish?** Initiate during these two weeks and then conduct on your own schedule.



#1A: CONDUCT A DO-IT-YOURSELF (DIY) 360 ASSESSMENT.

- Create a list of three to five people to ask for feedback about you as a professional colleague.
- Reach out and schedule short (15- to 30-minute) 1:1 meetings or calls.
- Conduct your 360 review sessions:
 - Ask each participant about three to five things that make you stand out.
 - Record each call and take notes.
 - Follow up after each response and ask for more details and examples.
- Create a 360 assessment summary, using the table on page 18.
 - Review each individual's comments.
 - Look for common themes.
 - Group them by category.
 - Arrange the categories in a way that fits your needs (most important to you, most frequently mentioned, most likely to influence your career, etc.).

DIY 360 ASSESSMENT

What are my top strengths?	Person #1 (name) <i>Ex: Former manager Mary says that you're....</i>	Person #2 (name)	Person #3 (name)	Person #4 (name)
#1	<i>Detail oriented</i>			
#2	<i>A customer champion</i>			
#3	<i>A creative problem solver</i>			
#4	<i>A passionate mentor</i>			
#5	<i>A strong communicator</i>			

TIP: Use this as a picture to paint yourself, but not to box yourself in. These people know what you've done but can't necessarily speak to what you're yet capable of.



OPTIONAL #1B AND #1C

- If applicable, find and review other assessments you've taken at school or for employers to gather additional insights.
- Take an optional assessment, such as the Kolbe A², Fascinate Advantage³, CliftonStrengths⁴, or StandOut Strengths Assessment.⁵ (Note: Some of these require a modest fee of under \$100.)

What are your top qualities, according to these assessments?



#2: REVISE YOUR PERSONAL MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT FROM WEEK 1 BASED ON LEARNINGS FROM #1A-1C ABOVE.

Here are some helpful thought starters...

What have you learned about yourself from these assessments? What stands out? What are your unique strengths?

² <https://www.kolbe.com/> ³ <https://www.howtofascinate.com/> ⁴ <https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/253850/cliftonstrengths-for-individuals.aspx>
⁵ <https://www.marcusbuckingham.com/>



#3. BASED ON THESE NEW INSIGHTS, UPDATE YOUR...

- ✓ Social media profiles
- ✓ Cover letters
- ✓ Resumes
- ✓ Website
- ✓ Other digital platforms and files



#4. MAKE THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ENDORSEMENTS PUBLIC.

- Use the "request a recommendation" feature on LinkedIn to source recommendations on your profile from colleagues who shared positive feedback in your DIY 360 assessments, where appropriate.
- Ask these (and other) contacts to endorse you for any skills they mentioned in your 360 review on LinkedIn, where applicable. While you can't ask for LinkedIn endorsements directly through the platform, you can privately email, text, or message contacts on LinkedIn asking them to endorse you for the skills you list on your LinkedIn profile.
- Use the "Kudos" feature on LinkedIn to thank people who shared their time to give you professional feedback.



 **WEEKLY ACTION TRACKER**

OUTCOMES

NEXT STEPS



WEEK 4: WHAT HAVE YOU ACHIEVED?

“Everyone in organizational life is constantly being watched and evaluated by bosses, clients, vendors, peers, subordinates, and these people’s significant others. Every day with every bit of human interaction you engage in, some member of this crowd forms an opinion about you.”

—David F. D’Alessandro, former CEO of John Hancock, and author of *Career Warfare: 10 Rules for Building a Successful Personal Brand and Fighting to Keep It*

Past success is no guarantee of future potential, and, as we alluded to in the introduction, personal branding isn't about the past—it's about looking forward. That said, there's incredible value in gaining an understanding of the skills and strengths you've developed over time and recognizing how these have translated into tangible accomplishments. That's because once you dive into personal branding, you'll realize you're in constant startup mode, continuously looking for ways to learn from your failures and successes.

Reflecting on what you've done and where you've been will help you articulate what you can yet do and where you're capable of going.

Week 4: What Have You Achieved?

WHAT YOU WILL ACCOMPLISH

- Create an accomplishments portfolio.
- Put it to use in job interviews, in performance reviews, on your professional portfolio website, on LinkedIn, and more.

PLAN YOUR TIME

- **Time to complete?** 5-10+ hours
- **When can you accomplish?** Within this week or on your own schedule.



#1: GATHER MATERIALS ABOUT YOUR PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

- Positive feedback from colleagues
- Proudest work achievement summaries
- Education
- Internship summaries
- Professional awards
- Work samples
- Continuing professional education



#2: CREATE YOUR PORTFOLIO BY DOING ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Printing everything and storing it in a binder or folder.
- Digitizing everything and putting everything in a presentation or portfolio website.



#3: KEEP YOUR PORTFOLIO UPDATED ON AN ONGOING—IF NOT DAILY—BASIS.

- Create a "Wins" or "Accomplishments" email folder or label for the positive feedback you receive.
- Update your records when you receive an award.
- Create project briefs for projects you're proud of.
- Keep track of positive verbal feedback.

TIP: Thank the person over email and screenshot their response.



#4: PUT YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS PORTFOLIO TO USE:

On your professional documents:

- Resume
- Cover letters
- Website
- Social media

TIPS:

- If you have sensitive information in your accomplishments portfolio, blur this out for a public audience, share it only on a password protected page, or describe the wins in generic, rather than specific, terms.
- Use the "request a recommendation" feature on LinkedIn to source recommendations on your profile from colleagues who have provided positive feedback about you featured in your portfolio. You can use these on your personal website as well.
- Use the "Kudos" feature on LinkedIn to thank people who give you recommendations.

- When applying for a job.
- When negotiating for a raise or promotion.

TIPS:

- Use your portfolio to describe three or four of your biggest wins and how your responsibilities have grown more complex.
- Wrap up with the following ask, "I'd love to discuss a salary adjustment to reflect my increased contributions."

During performance reviews.

TIPS:

- Curate examples that show how you've supported the company's mission.
- Give your boss the materials ahead of your review to guide the conversation.



WEEKLY ACTION TRACKER

OUTCOMES

NEXT STEPS



WEEK 5: WHAT'S YOUR STORY: WHERE ARE YOU HEADED AND WHY?

“The most powerful person in the world is the storyteller.”

—Steve Jobs, the former chair, CEO, and co-founder of Apple, Inc.

Knowing your story will offer you a powerful way to sell yourself. So this week is dedicated to crafting your personal narrative, giving it direction, and making it compelling, so you can begin putting it to use when networking, interviewing, seeking out promotions, and more.

Week 5: What's Your Story: Where Are You Headed and Why?

WHAT YOU WILL ACCOMPLISH

- Create your personal narrative.
- Optimize the story you share about yourself on LinkedIn as well as your resume, cover letters, website, and more.

PLAN YOUR TIME

- **Time to complete?** 1-2 hours
- **When can you accomplish?** Within this week or on your own schedule.



#1: DISCOVER AND WRITE YOUR STORY.

- Watch the commencement speech⁶ Steve Jobs gave to the Stanford class of 2005 in which he shared a story of how his past path led to his current self for inspiration for your story.
- Read through the following storytelling prompts.
- Draft 2-3 stories.
- Consolidate your favorite elements, then edit and refine into one final story.

⁶ <https://news.stanford.edu/2005/06/14/jobs-061505/>

STORYTELLING PROMPTS

What's something that happened to you in your personal life...?

1. That will inspire others?
2. From earlier in your life?
3. With a lesson you've learned?
4. That was a defining moment in your life?
5. When you had a personal transformation or a self-discovery?
6. About when you faced a challenge and used your expertise to solve it?
7. About a mistake you made and what you learned from it—in a humorous way?
8. That reveals your passions, hobbies, and interests outside of work?
9. About a challenging or sad incident that motivated you into action?
10. About a person who influenced or challenged you?

What's something that you experienced in your professional life...?

11. How have you gone above and beyond for a company or client?
12. Why do you love the work you do?
13. How has a mentor or colleague influenced you?
14. What are your greatest strengths or skills? (Refer to your Accomplishments Portfolio from Week 4 and assessments from Weeks 2 & 3.)
15. What accomplishments are you most proud of? (Refer to your Accomplishments Portfolio from Week 4.)

What has been most significant about your educational life...?

16. Why did you decide to enroll in your college and/or graduate school program?
17. Why are you transitioning from one field to another?
18. What has been the most significant experience you had while you were pursuing your degree?
19. What skills did you acquire while in school that you most value or makes you most excited?
20. Did you have an internship that shaped your thinking or interests?

When were you transformed by a specific time or experience in your life...?

21. A time when you or your family moved locations?
22. A time in another country?
23. A time in military service?
24. A trip or travel adventure?
25. An influential person who counseled you or set an example?

STORY #1:

STORY #2:

STORY #3:



#2: REVIEW YOUR STORY AND REVISE IT USING THE CHECKLIST BELOW.

6 Steps to Effective Storytelling, a Checklist:

Does your story...

- Speak to your target audience (hiring managers and recruiters)?
- Show your human side?
- Stay on message?
- Convey your values?
- Get to the point?
- Evoke a reaction?
- Make you seem special, unique, and memorable?



#3: BRING YOUR REVISED STORY TOGETHER USING THIS FOUR-PART RECIPE:

1. Open with your personal story (developed here during Week 5) to captivate someone's attention.
2. Next, identify your target audience's—recruiters' and hiring managers'—problems and pain points.

TIP: You may have drafted some of these during Week 1 and you'll uncover more of these during Weeks 6 & 7.

3. Close with how you can solve these problems through your expertise and specific talents and skills.

TIP: Use supporting evidence gathered in Weeks 2-4 and additional insights you'll dig into in Weeks 8 & 9 ahead.

4. Pick your format for showcasing your story—a video of you talking, a PowerPoint presentation, an article, or short summary.



#4: REVIEW YOUR LINKEDIN HEADLINE, HEADSHOT, BANNER, AND "ABOUT" SECTION:

- Does how you present yourself align with your story?
- Update anything that can be improved.



#5: REVIEW YOUR RESUME, COVER LETTERS, WEBSITE, AND OTHER DIGITAL PLATFORMS AND FILES:

- Do the words you use to describe yourself align with your story?
- Update anything that can be improved.

THE 4 ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR STANDING OUT ON LINKEDIN

1: **Headline**

The first thing people read on your profile, your headline can help you get discovered and attract interest. Make sure yours:

- Tells a story about you so visitors will want to learn more.
- Uses keywords relevant to your industry and skills.
- Shares a little bit about something you enjoy to act as conversation starter or icebreaker.

2: **Headshot**

To project your most professional self:

- Have a professional or talented photographer take the picture.
- Ensure there's good lighting and a solid, simple background.
- Wear clothes that you would wear to work.
- Make sure to smile and look relaxed.

3: **Banner**

To make sure this profile real estate helps reinforce what you want people to know about you:

- Create a custom design combining visuals and colors that reinforce your brand.

4: **About**

For an effective profile summary:

- Start off by sharing who you are.
- Identify or name the problems you solve.
- Describe your specific skills or successes.



 **WEEKLY ACTION TRACKER**

OUTCOMES

NEXT STEPS

SECTION 2

KNOW YOUR VALUE: UNLOCK YOUR POTENTIAL

“There are many advantages to a customer-centric approach, but here’s the big one: Customers are always beautifully, wonderfully dissatisfied, even when they report being happy and business is great. Even when they don’t yet know it, customers want something better, and your desire to delight customers will drive you to invent on their behalf.”

—Jeff Bezos, founder, CEO, and president of Amazon

You've put in the work to figure out who you are and what you've accomplished, what you want next and where you're headed. Now it's time to dig into what it is your target audience wants and needs—and position yourself as the answer and the solution. That takes market research, positioning, and the perfect pitch. So let's get started.

WEEK 6 & 7: IDENTIFY AND RESEARCH YOUR TARGET MARKET

“Fall in love with the problem, not the solution, and the rest will follow.”

—Uri Levine, Waze co-founder

When it comes to personal branding, you too must fall in love with the problem. That is, your customer's wants and needs. In this case, employers' wants and needs.

At the same time, you have to be careful not to fall in love with the solution. That is, selling yourself. Remember, it's about putting your target market first.

That's why a sizable portion of the task of knowing your value involves getting to know your audience. These are the potential customers who may consider "buying" you as a brand. Market research is the secret weapon of every great brand, and employer market research is the secret weapon of every great potential job candidate.

So that's what this week is about: Conducting the market research necessary to get a clear understanding of your target audience and what they're looking for—what problems they're trying to solve. Once you do that, then you'll be successfully positioned to skillfully position yourself as the solution your target market is looking for.

Weeks 6 & 7: Identify and Research Your Target Market

WHAT YOU WILL ACCOMPLISH

- Conduct market research.
- Build a list of target companies.
- Articulate the problems these companies are trying to solve, which can then be used in job interviews, on cover letters, and when networking.

PLAN YOUR TIME

- **Time to complete?** 2-4 hours
- **When can you accomplish?** Within the next two weeks or on your own schedule.



#1: CONDUCT MARKET RESEARCH TO GENERATE YOUR TARGET EMPLOYER LIST.

Create a priority list of target employers using the "L.A.M.P. method" created by Steve Dalton, author of *The 2-Hour Job Search: Using Technology to Get the Right Job FASTER*.⁷

STEP 1: GENERATE YOUR INITIAL LIST OF COMPANIES.

The first step in L.A.M.P. is to generate your LIST of potential targets. Reflect on the questions below to start brainstorming, then add the companies you come up with in the table on the next page.

What's your dream employer?

- What industry do you want to work in?
- What size company is the best fit for you?
- Geographically, where are you willing to work?

Who is looking for people like you?

- What companies would employ/are looking for people in your role and area of expertise?
- What industries employ/are looking for people in your role and area of expertise?
- What size company would most benefit from your specific skills?
- Geographically, where are the roles you're looking for in demand?

- Where are the needs greatest for your skillset?
- What are individual companies'/sectors' financial outlook and what are areas for growth for individuals like you?

Who employs your fellow alumni?

- Search your alumni database.
- Check with your career center.
- Use LinkedIn's "See Alumni" feature, which allows you to easily filter alumni by city, company, and function.

What are the best companies for your career?

- Search for trending employers by your industry or field.
- Check out "top company" lists from Forbes, Glassdoor, Vault, and other publications.
- Google "best companies" and the industry you're interested in.
- Get help from your school's librarian, who may also be able to provide access to industry lists or directories.

⁷ <https://libraryguides.mcgill.ca/careerresearch/lampmethod>

YOUR TARGET LIST OF COMPANIES

Company Name	Alumni	Motivation	Postings from Indeed.com
	Yes or No	5- Dream employer 4- Second tier 3- Third tier 2- Not interested 1- More research	Yes or No

STEP 2: CREATE YOUR PRIORITY TARGET LIST AND GATHER INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR TARGETS USING STEVE DALTON'S LAMP METHOD:

- ✓ L (LIST): Now that you've completed the first step in L.A.M.P.—generating your LIST of potential targets, you can advance to the next step.
- ✓ A (Alumni): In the table on page 34 in the column next to your employer list, find out whether you have any alumni connections to the company and fill in Yes or No accordingly.
- ✓ M (Motivation): Go with your gut and rate each company, using a numerical scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being a "Dream Employer."
- ✓ P (Postings): Head to Indeed.com and indicate Yes or No if your target company has openings.

TIP: No need to review any jobs yet. If your target employer is advertising, that's an indication of whether or not it's a good time to get in touch in the near future.

STEP 3: PRIORITIZE YOUR LIST FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.

Sort your list by:

1. Motivation (High to Low)
2. Postings (Yes or No)
3. Alumni (Yes to No)

STEP 4: RESEARCH AND REFINE YOUR TARGET LIST.

Use the exercises below to seek out more information about your prospects:

- Focus on target employers:
 - Currently hiring
 - Where you have connections
- Learn more about each company:
 - By reviewing its...
 - Website
 - Press releases
 - Testimonials
 - Products and services
 - Awards
 - Mission, about us, history
 - Job descriptions
 - Company/employee social media posts
 - Glassdoor reviews, online customer reviews
 - Setting up Google alerts about the company's news
 - Reading professional association and industry websites
- Refine your list by removing and adding companies based on fit

RESEARCH YOUR PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYER

The Basics

TIP: As you seek out information about your target companies, think about ways you can contribute, add value, and solve problems.

History

Values, mission, and culture

Leaders, customers, stakeholders, employees

Products, services, and source of income

Latest news

Main competitors

Industry trends and leaders

SWOT Analysis

Identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats for the company and/or your potential department.

TIP: Focus on the level of detail that is most appropriate. For higher-level roles or startups, you should work to understand the overall company's problems. For entry- and mid-level roles, focus on the specific function, the broader department, or division you're interested in.

Again, think about ways you can contribute, add value, and solve problems.

Strengths

Weaknesses

Opportunities

Threats

The Ideal Employee

TIP: Review and analyze job postings to understand what employers advertise about positions you want. Use a “word cloud” app (e.g., wordclouds.com) to create a picture of the terms used to describe the skills and requirements and mirror these terms in your communication.

Desired skills	
Job requirements	



#2: WRITE A PROBLEM STATEMENT.

- Select one specific company from your target list. (In Week 9, we will work on tailoring these to additional target companies.)
- Articulate your customer's wants and needs.
- Spell out their top pain points.
- Refer to any notes you may have started on this topic during Week 1.

STEP 1: THE PROBLEM.

Summarize the current situation and challenges for whatever level is most appropriate, such as the specific function, the broader department, or division you're interested in or for higher-level roles or startups, the overall company.

What are the goals, wants, and needs?

Who do these problems and issues affect (key stakeholders)?

STEP 2: THE DESIRED OUTCOME.

Describe some of the benefits of solving the problem.

STEP 3: THE ANSWER.

Propose potential solutions.

- Reflect back on....
 - The latest version of your Mission and Vision Statement (from Weeks 2 & 3)
 - The data you collected about yourself (from Weeks 2 & 3)
 - Your professional accomplishments (from Week 4)
 - Your story (from Week 5)
- Summarize how these can address the problem and desired outcomes you've just described. After Week 8, you will be able to further refine this section—the "solution" portion of this Problem Statement.



#3: FOLLOW AND ENGAGE WITH YOUR TARGET COMPANIES AND THEIR LEADERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

- Begin liking, sharing, and commenting on updates that best support your personal brand.



#4: PUT YOUR STORY (FROM WEEK 5) AND PROBLEM STATEMENT TO USE WHEN:

- Applying for jobs
- Interviewing
- Networking
- Adding LinkedIn connections or cold pitching yourself to the appropriate contacts at your target companies

TIPS:

- Tailor each Problem Statement to the unique target audience's wants and needs. See Week 9 for further recommendations.
- See Week 11 for further recommendations for cold outreach.



#5: SET UP INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS AND INFORMAL MEETINGS OR CALLS WITH PROFESSIONALS FROM YOUR TARGET EMPLOYERS TO GATHER INSIGHTS AS PART OF YOUR RESEARCH.

TIP: See Week 12 for further recommendations.



WEEKLY ACTION TRACKER

OUTCOMES

NEXT STEPS



WEEK 8: WHAT PROBLEMS CAN YOU SOLVE FOR YOUR TARGET MARKET AND HOW? THIS IS YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION.

“What is the secret sauce you use to move beyond the information you know into the value of what you offer?...What is the one power skill you use in your business to stand out?”

—Marti Konstant, MBA, workplace futurist and best-selling author of *Activate Your Agile Career: How Responding to Change will Inspire Your Life's Work*

“When you maximize your superpowers, you become known for them. You deliver value on a much higher scale, and become revered for your excellence.”

—William Arruda, personal branding expert, motivational speaker, and bestselling author of *Career Distinction and Ditch, Dare, Do*.

You've completed your initial round of market research. Now it's time to declare not just who you are, as you worked on your story in Week 5, but what you can do for your customer (employer).

In the words of personal branding guru William Arruda, it's time to uncover your "unique promise of value." That is, your value proposition.

3 BRAND VALUE PROPOSITIONS THAT STAND THE TEST OF TIME

Geico: “15 minutes or less can save you 15% or more on car insurance.”

BMW: “The Ultimate Driving Machine”

Walmart: “Save money. Live better.”

WHAT SHOULD YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION SOUND LIKE TO AN EMPLOYER?

- "Here's what you can trust me to do."
- "Here's what you can guarantee will be taken care of (by me)."
- "Here's what I can do to free you up to do other things."
- "Here's what your company no longer has to worry about."

As you work to define your value proposition, there's only one requirement: That it be future oriented, that it looks ahead to what you are yet capable of, instead of simply restating your resume or offering a historical look back at your past.

Uncovering the value you offer takes recognizing your potential for a new level of work. A new environment. A new you.

Week 8: What Problems Can You Solve for Your Target Market? (This Is Your Value Proposition)

WHAT YOU WILL ACCOMPLISH

- Complete self-evaluations to articulate the specific problems you can solve for potential employers with confidence.
- Create a complete set of campaign assets—your own Personal Value Statement, Personal Branded Introduction, Value Proposition, and Elevator Pitch—which you can draw upon to brand yourself, launch your campaign, and tailor your outreach to each individual target.
- Use these statements to complete the Problem Statement you began in Weeks 6 & 7.

PLAN YOUR TIME

- **Time to complete?** 5 hours
- **When can you accomplish?** Within this week or on your own schedule.



#1: ARTICULATE THE PROBLEMS YOU CAN SOLVE FOR POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS, USING THE SELF-EVALUATIONS THAT BEGIN ON THE NEXT PAGE.



#1A: FIND OUT IF YOU SOLVE PROBLEMS THROUGH INNOVATION OR OPERATIONS.

Complete the following questionnaire to find out if you can best address an employer's challenges with your creativity to drive growth or your ability to increase efficiencies or cut costs.

1. I get more joy out of...

- A. Helping my company solve problems in unique ways
- B. Saving my company money

2. If I could do one thing for the rest of my career, I would focus on....

- A. Helping businesses create new and better products and services
- B. Helping business operations run more efficiently

3. Among my greatest strengths are my:

- A. Creativity and passion
- B. Dependability, communication skills, data analysis, and relationship building know-how

4. Any employer that hires me, can count on...

- A. My vision, my perspective, and my ability to see things differently
- B. Me to get the job done faster than anyone else

5. Nobody can quite deliver like I can. I always...

- A. Come up with original ideas
- B. Get things done ahead of time and under budget

6. I _____ what I do.

- A. Love
- B. Am disciplined about

7. I am motivated by...

- A. Uncovering future opportunities
- B. Delivering value today

8. My goal is to...

- A. Do the right things
- B. Do things right

9. My contributions are...

- A. Tough to measure
- B. Easy to measure

10. I generally...

- A. Am comfortable operating without specific guidance, pursue overall goals rather than specific ones, and follow non-linear routes to achieve my objective
- B. Know what my results should be, what steps to take, and who to involve

HOW DO YOU MEASURE UP?

If you answered mostly As, you best contribute through your creativity as an innovator. If you answered mostly Bs, you problem solve by addressing operational (in)efficiency.



#1B: LEARN TO POSITION YOURSELF AS AN IN-DEMAND "T-SHAPED" PROFESSIONAL.

When exploring which types of consultants the company should hire, McKinsey & Company developed the concept of "T-shaped" and "I-shaped" professionals. While both I-shaped and T-shaped individuals⁸ can add value, the consulting firm found that T-shaped professionals are best positioned to help bring new thinking and ideas to light—and that's why today many employers seek these individuals out.

The "T" shape comes from a vertical stroke of a deep skill set from any number of disciplines, while the horizontal line that completes the "T" comes from the ability to collaborate across functions. The "I" shape, on the other hand, indicates a depth of knowledge only in one functional area.

As design firm IDEO CEO Tim Brown has explained,⁹ bringing too many different I-shaped individuals together can lead to problems—as they have difficulty collaborating. Each brings their own perspective, making collaboration a challenge. On the other hand, individuals who are strong team players but lack their own depth of skills and experiences can only contribute through collaboration, not by offering any talent to get things done.

ARE YOU AN "I" OR A "T"? SELF-EVALUATION

I-SHAPED PROFESSIONALS...	T-SHAPED PROFESSIONALS...
<input type="checkbox"/> Can create/contribute but are not known for collaborating	<input type="checkbox"/> Can create/contribute and collaborate
<input type="checkbox"/> Are highly knowledgeable in a given subject matter	<input type="checkbox"/> Possess a range of skills and expertise
<input type="checkbox"/> Advance their knowledge by digging deeper into their field	<input type="checkbox"/> Advance their knowledge by broadening their perspectives and areas of specialty
<input type="checkbox"/> Look for one right answer	<input type="checkbox"/> Use curiosity to ask questions about customer problems
<input type="checkbox"/> Work within their function to solve problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Are collaborative problem-solvers
<input type="checkbox"/> Contribute their individual point of view	<input type="checkbox"/> Can imagine problems from other team members' perspectives
<input type="checkbox"/> Speak about the things they can do personally	<input type="checkbox"/> Brainstorm and help build on others' ideas
	<input type="checkbox"/> Tackle projects as part of a team

⁸ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/andyboynton/2011/10/18/are-you-an-i-or-a-t/#3baba4ba6e88>

⁹ https://chiefexecutive.net/ideo-ceo-tim-brown-t-shaped-stars-the-backbone-of-ideoaes-collaborative-culture__trashed/

HOW DO YOU MEASURE UP?

If your answers indicate that you're a T, this is another way you can position the value you bring. For those that favor the I-shape at the moment, anyone can become a T over time and with effort. Adopting T-shape qualities is something you can work on by talking to people in other functional areas and gaining an understanding of their problems. Becoming a T takes curiosity, bridging silos, asking questions, and broadening your knowledge base.



#1C: DISCOVER YOUR PERSONAL LEADERSHIP QUALITIES AND VALUES.

Review Amazon's 14 leadership principles¹⁰ for inspiration, and select those that best describe the value you bring.



#2: CREATE YOUR PERSONAL VALUE STATEMENT BASED ON THE THREE SELF-EVALUATIONS ABOVE.

STEP 1: DRAW INSIGHTS FROM THE FIRST SELF-EVALUATION.

Ex: [COMPANY] is looking to [SOLVE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS/MEET SPECIFIC GOALS OF COMPANY]. That's something I can help with... as an innovator OR ...by addressing operational (in)efficiency.

STEP 2: DRAW INSIGHTS FROM THE SECOND SELF-EVALUATION.

Ex: Combining a range of skills and expertise in [AREAS THE COMPANY IS LOOKING FOR SUPPORT], with empathy, active listening, and collaborative problem-solving—seeing problems from other team members' perspectives, I can help address [PROBLEMS COMPANY NEEDS TO SOLVE] within my function and across [OTHER RELATED TEAMS/DISCIPLINES].

STEP 3: DRAW INSIGHTS FROM THE THIRD SELF-EVALUATION.

Ex: The specific leadership values you can count on me to contribute include [Examples from Amazon Leadership Principles: such as thinking big, earning trust, and delivering results].

¹⁰ <https://www.amazon.jobs/en/principles>

STEP 4: COMBINE STEPS 1-3 ABOVE.

Ex: [COMPANY] is looking to [SOLVE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS/MEET SPECIFIC GOALS OF COMPANY]. That's something I can help with by addressing operational (in)efficiency.

Combining a range of skills and expertise in [AREAS THE COMPANY IS LOOKING FOR SUPPORT], with empathy, active listening, and collaborative problem-solving—seeing problems from other team members' perspectives, I can help address [PROBLEMS COMPANY NEEDS TO SOLVE] within my function and across [OTHER RELATED TEAMS/DISCIPLINES].

The specific leadership values you can count on me to contribute include thinking big, earning trust, and delivering results.

Congratulations, this is your final Personal Value Statement!



#3: AS COINED BY EXECUTIVE COACHES PAULA ASINOF AND MINA BROWN IN THEIR BOOK *BE SHARP, CREATE YOUR PERSONAL BRANDED INTRODUCTION.*

STEP 1: SHARE YOUR "ESSENCE FACTOR":

Who you are—your essential qualities as a professional. (Review what you wrote about yourself in Week 1 and Week 5 for ideas.)

Who are you?

Ex: My recent MBA from the Stellar School of Business complements my undergraduate studies in chemical engineering as I pursue opportunities as a consultant in the oil and gas industry.

STEP 2: SHARE YOUR "GURU FACTOR":

What you do and what you know—your special areas of expertise.

What do you do? What do you know?

Ex: As part of my studies, I completed a Lean Six Sigma certification and applied this approach to addressing real life issues during my summer internship with Big Oil Co.

STEP 3: SHARE YOUR "STAR FACTOR":

Your distinguishing qualities or characteristics that set you apart from your peers. (Feel free to draw upon your answers from the self-evaluations above for inspiration.)

What do you love about what you do? Why do you do it? What's your passion? What gets you up in the morning to work?

What makes you good at what you do? Identify those natural talents or special gifts or ways of thinking about things that other people don't have that have been important to your success. (Review your assessments and 360 assessment from Weeks 2 & 3 and your accomplishments portfolio from Week 4.)

Why do people like working with you? (Review your 360 review from Weeks 2 & 3 and your accomplishments portfolio from Week 4.)

What do people say about you? (Review your 360 review from Weeks 2 & 3 and your accomplishments portfolio from Week 4.)

Ex: With a passion for high finance, I am always looking for unique investments and approaches to managing money that drive an organization's success.

STEP 4: COMBINE YOUR THREE FACTORS INTO A PERSONAL BRANDED INTRODUCTION.

Ex: I'm Shana Price. I've concentrated my MBA studies in areas that have prepared me for a global role in a top Wall Street Firm. In addition to my courses, I have honed my financial decision-making skills as part of a competitive—and award winning—student investment club. With a passion for high finance, I am always looking for unique investments and approaches to managing money that drive an organization's growth and profitability.



#4: CREATE YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION.

STEP 1: VALUE PROPOSITION: What do you stand for?

STEP 2: DIFFERENTIATION: What makes you stand out?

STEP 3: MARKETABILITY: What makes you compelling?

STEP 4: COMBINE STEPS 1-3 INTO A FINAL VALUE PROPOSITION.



#5: CREATE YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH.

STEP 1: COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

I am a _____ (fill in position title) with _____ years of experience in _____ (industry/industries).

My background is in _____ (industry) and my work focuses on _____ (specific position or niche in your field).

STEP 2: SHARE YOUR STRENGTHS, HIGHLIGHTING THREE SKILLS THAT ARE IMPORTANT AND RELEVANT.

Ex: leadership, problem-solving, and communication. Think soft skills that matter to employers.

My strengths include _____, _____, and _____ (Use three desired skills that are also strengths.)

Or with the following:

I have special expertise in _____, _____, and _____ (Use three skills/strengths.)

STEP 3: SHARE WHAT YOU ENJOY, ARE MOST PROUD OF, AND WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO OR EXPLORING IN YOUR NEXT POSITION.

Be specific about what has excited you the most about the work you've done, and why you've loved doing it. Demonstrate self-awareness about environments in which you shine and excel and situations that bring out the best in you. And don't be too vague or general.

I enjoy/I am most proud of: _____, _____, and _____ (Three areas where you excel and deliver results.)

Also include:

I am looking forward to, I am looking for, or I am exploring opportunities in _____ (desired role, type of position, or industry) so that I can _____ (type of pain or problems you solve or how you'll contribute).

STEP 4: COMBINE STEPS 1-3 INTO A FINAL ELEVATOR PITCH.



#6: REVIEW AND REVISE THE PROBLEM STATEMENT YOU BEGAN IN WEEKS 6 & 7.

Make updates based on your new Personal Value Statement, Personal Branded Introduction, Value Proposition, and Elevator Pitch.

STEP 1: THE PROBLEM.

Summarize the current situation and challenges for a given company.

What are your target employer's goals, wants, and needs?

Who do these problems and issues affect (key stakeholders)?

STEP 2: THE DESIRED OUTCOME.

Describe some of the benefits of solving the problem.

STEP 3: THE ANSWER. Propose potential solutions.

Make any updates to this section based on the Personal Value Statement, Personal Branded Introduction, Value Proposition, and Elevator Pitch you've created above.



#7: USE YOUR CAMPAIGN ASSETS, TAILORING EACH ITEM TO EACH EMPLOYER'S WANTS AND NEEDS.

Adjust and format your Story (from Week 5), Problem Statement (from Weeks 6 & 7), and Personal Value Statement, Personal Branded Introduction, Value Proposition, and Elevator Pitch (from this week) for use...

- On your...
 - LinkedIn
 - Other social media bios
 - Professional portfolio website
- When...
 - Networking
 - Applying to jobs and pitching yourself to potential employers
 - Interviewing
 - Adding social media connections
 - Cold pitching yourself over email to the appropriate contacts at your target companies.

TIP: See Week 9 for further recommendations.



 **WEEKLY ACTION TRACKER**

OUTCOMES

NEXT STEPS



WEEK 9: HOW DO YOU POSITION YOUR VALUE?

“...positioning is not what you do to a product. Positioning is what you do to the mind of the prospect. That is, you position the product in the mind of the prospect.”

—Al Ries, author of *Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind*

In Week 5, you walked through the exercise of drafting a personal story as if you have one, uniform audience. But the reality is, just as marketers have to meet the wants and needs of different customers, you as a personal brand builder also have to do the work of tailoring your story and value propositions to each individual prospect—potential hiring managers, recruiters, business partners, mentors, and more.

In the business world, there's a growing trend toward adopting personalization strategies, with a majority of companies (nearly 70%) making personalization in marketing a business priority, and it's no wonder since personalization has been found to increase marketing effectiveness by 20%.¹¹ In the professional arena, personalization is an important strategy to adopt as well, since most recruiters (54%) say they'll reject resumes that aren't customized and tailored to the position.¹²

So let's dive into how you can adapt your brand to best position the product—that is, you—in the mind of any given prospect.

Week 9: How Do You Position Your Value?

WHAT YOU WILL ACCOMPLISH

- Perfect how you position yourself to each unique target.
- Test the effectiveness of your Personal Value Statement, Personal Branded Introduction, Value Proposition, and Elevator Pitch.

PLAN YOUR TIME

- **Time to complete?** 2-3 hours
- **When can you accomplish?** Initiate this week or on your own schedule and then conduct over a period of time.

¹¹ <https://neilpatel.com/blog/increase-sales-personalizing-website/> ¹² <https://zety.com/blog/hr-statistics#resume-statistics>



#1-3: POSITION YOUR PERSONAL VALUE STATEMENT, PERSONAL BRANDED INTRODUCTION, VALUE PROPOSITION, AND ELEVATOR PITCH TO YOUR TARGET MARKET.

Tailor the campaign assets you created in Week 8 to an additional 2-3 target companies you identified in Weeks 6 & 7.

Personal Value Statement for Company 1

(Name of company: _____):

Personal Value Statement for Company 2

(Name of company: _____):

Personal Value Statement for Company 3

(Name of company: _____):

Personal Branded Introduction for Company 1

(Name of company: _____):

Personal Branded Introduction for Company 2

(Name of company: _____):

Personal Branded Introduction for Company 3

(Name of company: _____):

Value Proposition for Company 1

(Name of company: _____):

Value Proposition for Company 2

(Name of company: _____):

Value Proposition for Company 3

(Name of company: _____):

Elevator Pitch for Company 1

(Name of company: _____):

Elevator Pitch for Company 2

(Name of company: _____):

Elevator Pitch for Company 3

(Name of company: _____):



#4: TAILOR YOUR PROBLEM STATEMENT YOU DRAFTED IN WEEKS 6 & 7 AND FINALIZED IN WEEK 8 TO AN ADDITIONAL 2-3 TARGET COMPANIES YOU IDENTIFIED IN WEEKS 6 & 7.

Problem Statement for Company 1

(Name of company: _____):

STEP 1: THE PROBLEM. Summarize the current situation and challenges for a given company.

What are your target employer's goals, wants, and needs?

Who do these problems and issues affect (key stakeholders)?

STEP 2: THE DESIRED OUTCOME. Describe some of the benefits of solving the problem.

STEP 3: THE ANSWER. Propose potential solutions. Draw upon the Personal Value Statement, Personal Branded Introduction, Value Proposition, and Elevator Pitch you've created above.

Problem Statement for Company 2

(Name of company: _____):

STEP 1: THE PROBLEM. Summarize the current situation and challenges for a given company.

What are your target employer's goals, wants, and needs?

Who do these problems and issues affect (key stakeholders)?

STEP 2: THE DESIRED OUTCOME. Describe some of the benefits of solving the problem.

STEP 3: THE ANSWER. Propose potential solutions. Draw upon the Personal Value Statement, Personal Branded Introduction, Value Proposition, and Elevator Pitch you've created above.

Problem Statement for Company 3

(Name of company: _____):

STEP 1: THE PROBLEM. Summarize the current situation and challenges for a given company.

What are your target employer's goals, wants, and needs?

Who do these problems and issues affect (key stakeholders)?

STEP 2: THE DESIRED OUTCOME. Describe some of the benefits of solving the problem.

STEP 3: THE ANSWER. Propose potential solutions. Draw upon the Personal Value Statement, Personal Branded Introduction, Value Proposition, and Elevator Pitch you've created above.



#5: FIND OUT HOW OTHERS IN YOUR FIELD POSITION THEMSELVES.

Review the social media profiles or online bios of thought leaders, mentors, colleagues, or people who have the job title you aspire to.

- How do they describe themselves and their experiences?
- Do these descriptions apply to you?
- Compare your...
 - Personal Value Statement
 - Personal Branded Introduction
 - Value Proposition
 - Elevator Pitch
 - Problem Statements
- Make any updates as necessary

Study write-ups of conferences related to your field.

- What problems are the keynote speakers addressing?
- What do the speaker bios say?
- Compare your...
 - Personal Value Statement
 - Personal Branded Introduction
 - Value Proposition
 - Elevator Pitch
 - Problem Statements
- Make any updates as necessary



#6: USE YOUR TAILORED PERSONAL VALUE STATEMENT, PERSONAL BRANDED INTRODUCTION, VALUE PROPOSITION, PROBLEM STATEMENT, AND ELEVATOR PITCH WITH YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE.

Adjust and format your story for use...

- On your...
 - Social media bios
 - Professional portfolio website
- When...
 - Networking
 - Applying to jobs
 - Pitching yourself to potential employers
 - Interviewing



#7: TEST THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THESE DIFFERENT WAYS OF DESCRIBING YOURSELF.

- Ask a trusted colleague to review and offer feedback for each of these campaign assets.
- Test them out over time and see which generates more activity, such as...
 - A higher response rate
 - More connection requests
 - Profile views



WEEKLY ACTION TRACKER

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WEEK 10: REFINE YOUR COMMUNICATIONS ASSETS

“If you don’t tell your story, Google will tell it for you.”

—Joanne Tombrakos, personal brand advisor, NYU professor, and author of three books including, [Getting Your Personal Brand Story Straight](#)

"Although people should be judged by their innate worth, it is often a first impression that determines whether someone will stick around long enough to let them reveal it."

—Susan Bixler, professional image coach

Whether you're looking to move to another company or grow within your own, your job is to ensure you're projecting a congruent personal brand presence online and offline.

That means conducting a strategic review to see what you've been telling the world about yourself, and make sure it aligns with your emerging personal brand and your professional goals. You've begun some of this work throughout this Planner, but now it's time for a deep dive and thorough audit.

Week 10: Refine Your Communications Assets

WHAT YOU WILL ACCOMPLISH

- Conduct an audit and overhaul of your personal brand presence, online and offline.
- Update key elements of your personal brand, such as your LinkedIn profile and resume, using the campaign assets you've created throughout this Planner.
- Develop a cohesive brand aesthetic.
- Conduct a competitive analysis of what other professionals in your field are doing right with their online presence.
- Monitor your brand and engagement.

PLAN YOUR TIME

- **Time to complete?** 3-5 hours
- **When can you accomplish?** Initiate this week or on your own schedule and then conduct over a period of time.



#1: CONDUCT AN AUDIT OF YOUR KEY COMMUNICATIONS ASSETS.

Do a onceover and refresh of your resume, bio, cover letters, social media presence, and headshot.

First, evaluate how well these assets communicate, express, and support your brand:

- Is your presence reliable and consistent?
- Is your personal brand authentic?
- Does your brand serve your career goals?
- Are your assets up to date, reflecting your most recent job, responsibilities, accomplishments, and education?

- Have you updated your headline and bio/"About" section based on your Personal Value Statement, Personal Branded Introduction, Value Proposition, or Elevator Pitch?
- Do the people and organizations you follow on social media align with your personal brand?
 - Unfollow any that don't.
- Is the content you're posting, sharing, and liking...
 - ...relevant to your industry and career goals?
 - ...generating engagement (likes, comments, shares) and are you responding in a timely manner to build your network?
 - Remove any content that doesn't fit your brand.

Second, update any of your communication assets as needed, referring to the following campaign assets you created throughout this Planner:

- Mission and Vision Statement (Weeks 1-3)
- Story (Week 5)
- Personal Value Statement, Personal Branded Introduction, Value Proposition, Elevator Pitch, and Problem Statement (Weeks 8 and 9)



2: ASSESS YOUR HEADSHOT.

- Is your headshot professional and appropriate?
- Is it current?
- Is it a high quality photo?
- Is your face front and center?
- Are you wearing formal or appropriate informal attire (what you would wear to an interview)?
- Is the background simple and free of distractions?
- Does it put your "best face forward"? Do you feel good about yourself when you look at this picture?
- Is it engaging?
- Does your headshot come across as comfortable and authentic?

- Are you avoiding these headshot "Don'ts"?
 - Folding your arms
 - Leaning in
 - Holding your hand under your chin
 - Using a selfie, vacation photo, photos with other people or pets
 - Wearing inappropriate clothing
 - Displaying brand icons/logos

If you didn't know yourself and you saw your headshot, what kind of work would you think you do?

...what level would you think you are within a given organization?

Go through the same exercise by reviewing headshots from randomly selected LinkedIn profiles, without looking at the person's title and job.

COMPARATIVE LINKEDIN HEADSHOT ANALYSIS

Person	Function/Industry	What Kind of Work Do You Think They Do?	What Level Do You Think They Are?
#1			
#2			
#3			
#4			
#5			
#6			

What insights do you get?

What impression are you trying to project with your headshot?
To people you know...

To people you're meeting for the first time...



#3: CONDUCT A COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS.

- Research what other professionals in your field are doing and saying to promote themselves online.
- Check out their LinkedIn and other social media profiles and review their activity and engagement to see how they promote themselves and are building their network and get inspiration for your own accounts.
- Use these insights to inform your own strategy.

What are these individuals doing that you admire?
What can you be doing differently?



#4: (OPTIONAL) GET A NEW HEADSHOT.



#5: GO BEYOND THE HEADSHOT. DEVELOP A COHESIVE BRAND AESTHETIC.

- Pick your brand colors.
 - Select one or two colors that pair well.
- Pick your brand fonts to use across your documents and visuals.
- Be consistent. Use these brand colors, fonts, and the same high-quality headshot consistently across your online and offline presence.
- Share your new brand look on your social channels and ask for feedback.
 - Make adjustments if needed.



#6: MONITOR YOUR BRAND AND ENGAGEMENT.

- Set up a Google Alert for your name and search your name within each social media platform.
- Make time to regularly check on what's being said about you, who's engaging with you, and respond as necessary.
- Evaluate what content is performing well (in terms of impressions, likes, comments, and shares) to understand what engages your audience so you can deliver more of what's working.



 **WEEKLY ACTION TRACKER**

OUTCOMES

NEXT STEPS



SECTION 3

PITCH YOURSELF: UNLEASH YOUR BRAND

“The purpose of a pitch isn’t necessarily to move others immediately to adopt your idea. The purpose is to offer something so compelling that it begins a conversation, brings the other person in as a participant, and eventually arrives at an outcome that appeals to both of you.”

—Daniel H. Pink, author of *To Sell Is Human: The Surprising Truth About Moving Others*

You’ve learned about yourself. You’ve researched your target market, uncovered the problems that need to be solved, and articulated how you’re the best one to tackle these challenges with a powerful pitch. Now it’s time to bring it all together, launch your brand, and land that next career opportunity.

WEEK 11: YOU'RE READY, SET...LAUNCH

“The best way to get a job is to not be looking for one.”

—Darrell Gurney, executive coach, career expert, and author of *Never Apply for a Job Again!*

The best way to get a job or new career opportunity isn't to ask for a job or promotion—it's to be the person that is viewed as indispensable. Trustworthy. The ultimate problem solver. You can't be seen as a problem solver by asking for help. Now is the moment to offer help. And establish your experience, skillset, and personal value as the potential solution.

If the thought of putting yourself out there makes you feel uncomfortable, remember—you're not selling yourself, you're selling the answer to your customer's problems. You're selling the solution that will meet your future employer's needs.

Whether we realize it or not, we're always engaged in the activity of selling. All of your efforts to date have led to this moment—closing the deal, securing your next job or promotion, the ultimate sale.

Week 11: You're Ready, Set...Launch

WHAT YOU WILL ACCOMPLISH

- Perfect your pitch to be used in networking settings, interviews, cold emails, when adding LinkedIn connections, and more.
- Develop a 30- to 90-second video pitch to share on digital platforms.

PLAN YOUR TIME

- **Time to complete?** 5+ hours
- **When can you accomplish?** Initiate this week or on your own schedule and then make time for these lifelong activities on an ongoing basis.



#1: ASSESS YOUR PITCH.

Imagine you're delivering a tailored version of your Personal Value Statement, Personal Branded Introduction, Value Proposition, Problem Statement, or Elevator Pitch to your target audience over the phone, video chat, or in person. Select your favorite or most effective of these, based on the tests you've been conducting since Week 9. As you rehearse, consider:

- Who you are talking to?
- What message do you want to deliver to that person?
- How much time do you have?

TIPS:

- At a professional meeting or conference you may only get 4-6 words and 5 seconds as attendees around the table introduce themselves.
 - At a networking gathering with a cup of coffee or glass of wine in your hand, you may only get 15-20 seconds.
 - During an interview, you will get longer, but keep in mind that even then perspectives and agendas will vary.
- Try answering the following common interviewing and networking questions using your pitch:
 - Tell me about yourself.
 - Summarize your experience.
 - Give me the highlights of your career.
 - What would you bring to the team?
 - Why should we hire you?



#2: REVIEW YOUR PITCH(ES) FOR THESE COMMON PROBLEMS.

PROBLEM	SOLUTION
✘ Sound too stiff and formal?	✔ Keep it conversational.
✘ Sound like you're rambling?	✔ Deliver a clearly defined (and succinct) message.
✘ Sound too rehearsed?	✔ Relax and make sure you're speaking authentically and with ease.
✘ Sound too vague?	✔ Provide clear context rather than a vague tagline. State specific skills rather than broad characteristics. Drill down so the listener can build a clear picture of who you are.
✘ Forgetting your customer's needs?	✔ Phrase your pitch and responses in a way that focuses on what they care about and offers solutions for them.
✘ Too much jargon?	✔ Use language that everyone understands.



#3: PUT YOUR PITCH INTO PRACTICE.

- Use it when:
 - Adding new contacts on LinkedIn and other social channels to personalize your introductory message. (See directions below.)
 - Setting up informational interviews. (See directions below.)
 - Cold pitching yourself over email.
 - At networking events, career fairs, etc.
- Create a 30- to 90-second video of your pitch to include:
 - On your LinkedIn as a "Featured Media"
 - On other social profiles as a "pinned" post
 - In job applications that ask for video submissions
 - On your personal website



#4: USE YOUR PITCH TO ADD NEW LINKEDIN CONNECTIONS.

- Personalize your invitation.
- Reach out in a way that flatters rather than asks for something.
- Explain why you want to connect.
- Say how you know them.
- Mention something in common—a mutual career field or interest, LinkedIn Group, or Alma Mater.
- Reference something in their profile.
- Thank them in advance for accepting your invitation.



6 TEMPLATES FOR PERSONALIZING YOUR CONNECTION REQUESTS

1. Hi _____ (name), Thank you for taking the time to connect. I am reaching out because _____. We both _____ (know someone, have something in common, or are a member of a group). Best, (Your name)
2. "It was nice meeting you at _____ event. I enjoyed talking to you about _____. Let's be sure to stay in touch."
3. "I am a fellow member of the _____ LinkedIn group and I saw your comments about _____. I'd love to stay in touch so we can talk more about _____."
4. "It's been a long time since we talked. Hope you are doing well. I see you are now working at _____ company, how is that going? Let's catch up over the phone soon! Do you have time next week?"
5. "In looking at your profile, I see you are a fellow alumni of _____ University. I also noticed we have similar interests in _____. I would enjoy the opportunity to connect and chat sometime."
6. "I was looking at your profile and I am very impressed with your accomplishments in _____. Please accept my request to connect, I'd love to talk to you about how you accomplished _____."

Write a message...

SEND »



#5: REQUEST INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS.

- Ask only people you know or are connected to.
- Send the request over email. Everyone uses it and checks it multiple times a day, which means your message is more likely to be seen. Send a LinkedIn message asking for an informational meeting as a last resort.
- Use an interesting, enticing subject line.
- Explain the purpose of the meeting: To gain information and insights (not a job).
- Don't call it an informational interview. Call it a conversation or career research.
- Ask for a short meeting, 20-30 minutes. Most people can fit this into their schedules.
- Ask for a face-to-face meeting. If logistically possible, request an in-person meeting (at a place that is convenient for the person you are asking) or video call.
- Suggest meeting dates. Make it easy for the person you are contacting to respond. The less back and forth required to pin down a date, time and location, the better.
- Remind them who you are (using one of your pitches) and include a link to your LinkedIn profile. Keep this concise. Only include the most relevant information.
- Make sure you are crystal clear about the topics you plan on covering.

- Do not ask for a job. Don't even mention the word job.
- Include a value proposition that focuses on the problem you will solve for a potential employer, not what you need or want.
- Put the needs and interests of others first. How would the person benefit by meeting with you? How can you help?
- Keep your request free of hidden agendas.
- Prepare for likely objections, such as "I don't know of any jobs," "I don't do the hiring," "I'm too busy," such as: "I understand, but I am actually looking for people to have a conversation with so that I can learn more about XYZ company (Q industry or P occupation or career path). I'm not expecting a specific opportunity as a result of our conversation. If you were me, who do you think I should speak to?"

MEETING REQUEST MESSAGE TEMPLATE

Subject:

[Name of mutual connection] recommended I reach out to you

Hi [Name],

(If this is someone you have been introduced to, start by saying: I received your name through [NAME OF SOURCE] as someone who would be knowledgeable of industry trends and life at [COMPANY NAME].) I am interested in meeting with you to learn about the culture at [NAME OF COMPANY] and what trends you are seeing in your area of expertise [OR SPECIFIC AREA IF KNOWN]. I'm currently attending (or I graduated from) [NAME OF SCHOOL] and am interested in [CONCENTRATION/TYPE OF ROLE]. I've had success [INSERT VALUE PROPOSITION]. I realize your schedule is probably very busy, however, I was hoping you would have 20-30 minutes to meet sometime within the next couple of weeks [OR INSERT A COUPLE OF DATES]. I'm flexible and able to meet at a time and location convenient for you or have a short call.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

Your name

Your email

Your phone number

Your LinkedIn profile URL

Write a message...

SEND »



#6: SET INFORMATIONAL MEETING GOALS FOR YOURSELF, SUCH AS:

- #s of contacts: _____
- # of meetings: _____
- Meeting frequency: _____



#7: PREPARE FOR YOUR INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW.

- Practice how you will introduce yourself in the meeting (refer to your pitch options).
- Draft questions you will ask, such as:
 - What advice do you have for working in _____ (industry, profession)?
 - How have you advanced your career?
 - Do you have any recommendations of other colleagues I may be able to connect with?
 - Thank you for your time. Is it okay to keep in touch?
- Use this general format to frame your meeting:
 - Greetings, small talk: 3-5 minutes
 - Pitch yourself/go over purpose of the call: 3-5 minutes
 - Ask questions: 10-15 minutes
 - Thank you, ask for contacts, offer help: 3-5 minutes



#8: KEEP THE RELATIONSHIP GOING.

- Before and during the conversation, listen for opportunities to offer something in return.
- Sending a thank you message after the meeting is just the first step.
- Follow up with a helpful article or case study.
- Offer to make introductions to someone from your network that the person may benefit from meeting.
- Share industry news and updates on your job search progress.
- Give progress updates based on suggestions they've given you.

HOW TO CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION WITH NEW LINKEDIN CONTACTS

1. Start engaging with the content they share, post, or comment on
2. Send a message thanking them for connecting, such as:
 - “Thanks so much for accepting my invitation to connect. I really appreciate it. (As a reminder, I'm the recent graduate who reached out to you).”
 - “I have a few questions about (X company or industry). Could I send my questions to you in an email or here on LinkedIn? Or if you have 10 minutes, can I get on a call with you?”



 **WEEKLY ACTION TRACKER**

OUTCOMES

NEXT STEPS

WEEK 12: BUILD YOUR NETWORK, STRATEGICALLY

“Courage starts with showing up and letting ourselves be seen.”

—Brené Brown, research professor at the University of Houston, five-time #1 New York Times bestselling author, and *Unlocking Us* podcast host

Consider that more than half—up to 70%—of all job opportunities never see the light of day on public job websites¹³ and nearly all jobs, as many as 80%¹⁴ to 85%,¹⁵ get filled as a result of networking.

And you realize there's some truth in the old saying, it's not what you know, it's who you know. But taking a step back, the greater truth is, it's really about both. That is, successful professionals advance because of the powerful combination of what and who they know.

That's because when you bring together what you know about yourself, your target market's needs, and the power of personal branding, that is when you will truly be able to grow your connections and leverage the power of networking.

And that is what this week is all about, putting everything you have built over the past 11 weeks into action to make the right contacts—people worth knowing, that is—and extend your circle of influence.

Week 12: Build Your Network, Strategically

WHAT YOU WILL ACCOMPLISH

- Define the value you will contribute to your network.
- Grow your network by up to 140+ of the right contacts.
- Get discovered and build connections by creating and sharing meaningful content.
- Establish an ongoing practice of networking.

PLAN YOUR TIME

- **Time to complete?** 5+ hours
- **When can you accomplish?** Initiate this week or on your own schedule and then make time for these lifelong activities on an ongoing basis.

¹³ <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/12/27/how-to-get-a-job-often-comes-down-to-one-elite-personal-asset.html> ¹⁴ <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/12/27/how-to-get-a-job-often-comes-down-to-one-elite-personal-asset.html> ¹⁵ <https://www.payscale.com/career-news/2017/04/many-jobs-found-networking>



#1: COMMIT TO NETWORKING.

- Schedule time every week to work on networking-related activities.
- State your networking goals.

Ex: In the short term, I'm networking as part of my career research. In the long term, I'm networking to stay informed about future career opportunities and land a new job...

- Create a reward system to help you meet your micro-goals or smaller networking action items.

How will you reward yourself?

- Remove obstacles.

What is keeping you from networking?

- Commit to engaging in 3-5 of the following types of activities over the course of this week and in the future.
 - Informational meetings
 - Online/social networking
 - Professional association events
 - Meetups, specialty group meetings
 - Industry conferences
 - Workshops, classes
 - Alumni networking events
 - Volunteering
 - Employer presentations on campus or virtual events



#2: REFLECT ON THE VALUE YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR NETWORK.

What topics can you knowledgeably address and add value to your social network or at in-person or online networking events?

What skills and qualifications do you have to offer that you can showcase to your social network or at in-person or online networking events?



#3: BUILD YOUR ONLINE NETWORK.

Search for and add the following types of contacts. If you successfully connect with 5-10 people per category, you could grow your network by up to 140+ contacts, keeping in mind to focus on quality over quantity—qualified people who you know or want to know.*

- Thought leaders in your industry
- Recruiters and hiring managers in your field
- Classmates, professors, alumni
- Potential colleagues or leaders from your target companies (refer to the list you created in Weeks 6 & 7)
- People who have the title or profession you aspire to have
- Mentors
- People you've worked with
- Friends, family, neighbors
- Former bosses
- New people as you meet them
- Clients, vendors
- Researching by [title/profession] on [social network]
- Authors who write for industry publications
- Speakers who present at industry conferences

*LinkedIn may also limit the number of invitations you can send if you sent too many invitations within a short amount of time or if your invitations are ignored or left pending by your message recipients.¹⁶

¹⁶ <https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/topics/6096/6097/4800>



#4: BUILD VISIBILITY AND ATTRACT ATTENTION.

Like, comment, and share the following types of content that support the topics and skills you brainstormed, including items that...

- Encourage responses
- Are timely and topical
- Include engaging images and hashtags

Use this formula to ensure what you contribute on LinkedIn is varied and engaging:

- $\frac{1}{4}$ **industry/occupation news**
 - Industry news, events
 - Insights, statistics, reports
- $\frac{1}{4}$ **company-specific news**
 - Updates about what the company is doing
 - Job openings
 - Company insights
 - Kudos to colleagues
- $\frac{1}{4}$ **promoting people in your network**
 - Providing referrals, connecting people to each other
 - Surveying people, asking for feedback
 - Praising a given company/organization or individual
- $\frac{1}{4}$ **promoting your work/expertise**
 - What you're working on
 - Offering feedback and advice
 - Educational or career accomplishments



#5: BUILD YOUR NETWORK...

On a daily basis:

- Commit to engaging with or commenting on at least one post.
- Review LinkedIn notifications and send personalized LinkedIn messages or emails when appropriate about:
 - Work anniversaries
 - New jobs
 - Promotions
 - Birthdays
- Scan your LinkedIn feed for news from your network or companies you follow, and like or leave a comment.
- Like or share one article related to your career goals on LinkedIn.
- Look for articles to share that mention target companies.
- Review group discussions and add to the conversation on:
 - LinkedIn
 - Facebook Groups
 - Slack communities
 - Other professional communities
- Read industry publications to stay on top of current events.

- Monitor job boards
 - Indeed.com
 - LinkedIn
 - Niche industry sites
 - Your school's job postings

On a weekly basis:

- Send outreach to 3-5 people you would like to meet with from your list of networking contacts.
- Follow up with existing contacts.
- Conduct at least one informational meeting.

On a monthly basis:

- Attend at least one virtual or in-person networking event.
- Plan your outreach for the month—who do you need to contact and when?
- Assess your progress and evaluate what's working.



#6: PUBLICIZE YOUR GOALS.

- On social media
- Among colleagues and friends
- With a job search group



#7: GET A PARTNER, SOMEONE YOU TRUST TO HOLD YOU ACCOUNTABLE.

- Regularly check in with each other.
- Share your successes, challenges, and goals.



 **WEEKLY ACTION TRACKER**

OUTCOMES

NEXT STEPS

WEEK 13: ESTABLISH YOUR AUTHORITY

"With a strong personal brand, you become the only option in the eyes of your ideal customer."

—Amber Hurdle, author of *The Bombshell Business Woman: How to Become a Bold, Brave, Female Entrepreneur* and CEO of Amber Hurdle Consulting, a multi-award-winning talent optimization firm

This journey began with a dream, to achieve your next career goal.

Now, thanks to the work you've put in, you've not only developed a personal brand, you've cultivated influence and created a clear path to making your professional aspirations a reality.

And now for the final steps of the journey: Establishing your authority.

This week, you will initiate key activities that will strengthen your authority—tactics you count on to accelerate your professional growth throughout your career.

Authority doesn't mean you have to be a Nobel Prize winner, but you do have to have something to contribute. And it all starts with being original, going public with something that is yours.

Week 13: Establish Your Authority

WHAT YOU WILL ACCOMPLISH

- Author original content and sell your authority online.
- Encourage others to sell your authority.
- Expand your platform beyond your personal network.

PLAN YOUR TIME

- **Time to complete?** 5+ hours
- **When can you accomplish?** These are activities you can initiate this week and continue throughout your professional career.



#1: CREATE A PLATFORM TO ESTABLISH YOUR AUTHORITY ONLINE.

Beyond sharing, liking, and commenting on content created by others, advance to creating your own thought leadership content and platforms:

- Write blog posts on LinkedIn and platforms like Medium.
- Share your original presentations (slides, videos from events, case studies, white papers, etc.).
- Start a Facebook Live/Instagram Live/LinkedIn Live series, or weekly Twitter chat.
- Create and share your own video series (such as how-to or motivational content).
- Conduct a survey and publish your findings.
- Interview experts and share their advice.

TIP: Down the line, you can advance to creating your own website, newsletter, or podcast.



#2: ASK OTHERS TO SELL YOUR AUTHORITY.

- Continuing outreach you may have started in Weeks 2-4, seek out:
 - Endorsements
 - Recommendations
 - Testimonials

- Ask your contacts for referrals to hiring managers, recruiters, or other people you'd like to be introduced to:
 - Remind the contact how you know each other.
 - Reference the job or the person you would like an introduction to.
 - Explain why you're qualified.
 - State why you're interested in the job or meeting the person.



#3: EXPAND YOUR PLATFORM.

Go beyond authoring content for your own personal social channels, and...

- Write for industry publications and groups.
- Pitch yourself as a source to journalists covering your profession on platforms like Help a Reporter Out or SourceBottle.
- Speak at or help lead industry conferences.
- Create professional networking groups or become a leader among existing groups.

HOW TO ASK FOR A REFERRAL, TEMPLATES

Hi [name of connection],

Hope all is well with you! I came across the [job title] role at [company name] and am interested in applying. Would you be open to sharing my LinkedIn profile with the hiring team so they know about my interest in this role? Happy to chat more if you have the time as well. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Hello [name of connection]: I wanted to reach out and ask for your help. There's a job for a [job title] at [company you're connected to] and I'm very interested in applying for it. You may remember, [state how you know each other]. Based on what I read, I believe I would be a great fit for the role.

- [#1 qualification you meet]
- [#2 qualification you meet]
- [#3 qualification you meet]

I have been watching [company] and am excited about [something interesting the company is working on]. Additionally, [company]'s focus on [volunteer projects the company supports] aligns well with the volunteer work I've been doing at [volunteer organization].

If you need more information, I'm happy to have a conversation if that would be easier.

Thank you in advance for your help and support!

Your name

Phone number

Email address

LinkedIn URL

Write a message...

SEND »



 **WEEKLY ACTION TRACKER**

OUTCOMES

NEXT STEPS

CONGRATULATIONS, YOU'VE COMPLETED YOUR 13-WEEK PLANNER!

...and along the way, you've uncovered your strengths, unlocked your potential, and unleashed your brand.

You're on a roll. Momentum, motivation, and the milestones you've hit are all on your side. And there's no need to stop.

Personal branding is a cyclical process. Each action you have taken and those yet ahead have the potential to create a powerful ripple effect, impacting how you are perceived as a professional, with those perceptions creating new possibilities for you, in the form of new connections, networking opportunities, meeting invites, job offers, and more.

Now's your chance to...

- ✓ Review what you've accomplished.
- ✓ Complete any action items you may have skipped.
- ✓ Celebrate how far you've come.

Whether you've achieved your goal and are ready to move onto the next big thing or your aspirations have evolved and you're ready to keep going, the work of personal branding is like building a product. To continue to watch your network and authority take off, it helps to visualize and adopt a growth mindset, as illustrated below.

BUILD → TEST → MEASURE → LEARN & OPTIMIZE → REPEAT

Weeks 1-13 have been about building and testing. Now it's time to measure, learn, optimize, and repeat.

MEASURE

What does success look like to you? What are some concrete KPIs (key performance indicators) or metrics you can track from your efforts?

LEARN & OPTIMIZE

What have you learned throughout this process? How will you adapt your strategy going forward?

REPEAT!

Now get back at it. Go replicate what's working and keep on learning from every opportunity you take to grow your brand!



BEYOND B-SCHOOL

FOOTNOTES

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