



SHINE THROUGH YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

Just like marketing a brand, you too have a personal brand. How are you promoting it?

Personal branding is integral to the success of any company no matter what size.

So what is it? Personal branding is really personal relations. Public relations is essentially communication and building 'relationships' with your 'public'. It's how you or your business is seen and how you interact with other people that will build your reputation. To be successful you need to communicate who you are in all you do — not just in business but in your everyday life.

After all, business and companies are based on people. People make products for people. People sell to and serve other people. People work with people and for people. Therefore it is that personal aspect of your business dealings that can make all the difference.

If you are a business owner, you are the public face of your organisation. You represent what that company stands for. Employees also represent the company brand.

If you want your business or yourself to succeed, you need to be in personal alignment with what your company represents. Not everyone loves their job — but why does it help if your personal aims, vision and values are in alignment with what the organisation represents. Why not share with your employees, suppliers and customers your values and vision for your company.

“Personal branding is the emotional connection between the product and customer.”

Kevin Roberts, CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi, who has written a book on branding, called *Lovemarks*, says “to me, it's all about spirit, not about values”.

“Lovemarks go beyond the relationships to a loving relationship. If you're not in love with your business,

why should your employees or your customers be? If you want to create a lovable, you've got to be passionately in love with your own business.

“And if you haven't fallen in love, don't expect your employees or your customers to fall in love,” says Roberts.

Therefore personal branding is more than just your image and the outer package that you present to the world. Although appearance and packaging do play a major part in representing yourself and your company in a positive light. Personal branding is the emotional connections between the service or product and the customer.

A number of managing directors of companies in Australia have recognised the power of personal branding in building a strong company. They have established a memorable face behind the company to add a personal perspective to their business. Examples include Julia Ross [Julia Ross Recruitment], Shelley Barrett [ModelCo], Sarina Russo [Sarina Russo

Group], John McGrath [McGrath Real Estate] and John Symond [Aussie Home Loans]. These people are inextricably linked with their companies and are very clear about the brand image they project. They are examples of where the personality of the company shines through the CEO.

Building a strong personal brand has the added bonus of building further recognition and media exposure. These people are known and used by the media as spokespeople in their area of expertise and as commentators on business issues. They are sought after as keynote speakers, television personalities and are invited to participate in numerous high profile and industry events. Through this personal public relations strategy, the exposure they receive is more credible than advertising.

Are you in love with your company and can you work toward establishing a strong personal brand? ■

By Sue Currie