

How to make your mark in the office



There's more to being a great PA than expert typing skills – your own personal brand is also crucial to career success **SAYS SUE CURRIE**

Take the popular Australian brand Billabong – you know what it looks like, you know what to expect, quite simply you know it's a brand you can trust. So why not build a similar reputation for yourself? To succeed in your career it's critical to establish strong relationships, through personal branding. But what is personal branding? It's about more than having a recognisable quirk or distinguishing yourself from your colleagues:

Personality – communicate the inner essence of you – your uniqueness, qualities, strengths, skills and passions
Package – your visual communication. How do you appear through dress and personal presence?

Promotion – building recognition and reputation
 Before you set off on the path of building your career it's a good idea to really think about who you are and what you stand for. As a PA you are an integral part of the team. But wouldn't it be a good idea if you really matched the executives you work with to your own personal style.

Do a personal audit to determine your values and vision. Does your vision align with that of your company? Do you need to acquire new skills such as intelligence, confidence, responsibility and being receptive to change? By understanding your values, life and work skills and how to apply them to your role, you will have a strong foundation for exhilarating work.

At the office, every email, voice mail or phone call you make creates impressions that build your business brand. In person how you shake hands, make eye contact and

how you conduct yourself in social situations all go towards your personal brand. You need to take care of the details. High standards of personal presentation and presence will help you stand out as a well regarded assistant.

There is definitely an underlying code of dressing, which is smart, polished and professional. By understanding the brand qualities you want to project with the work you do, you can create a look that is suitable, creative and stylish to help make your mark.

Write down some adjectives of the type of person you would like to be. Cut out and collect words, images and colours from magazines. Keep images of clothes and shapes that appeal to you and reflect the words you have chosen for yourself. Create a brand portfolio of ideas and visual examples. As you do this exercise you will begin to discover your style and what appeals to you. This is your logo – your own personal brand.

First and foremost we need to be good at what we do. But what can give us an extra edge? Volunteer to organise a special event to help build relationships with colleagues. Network either formally or informally. Send thank you notes or items of interest internally or perhaps to suppliers that have gone out of their way to help you. Being actively involved in your work community will help you make an impression and build those all important relationships to ensure your career success. ■

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