Personal branding and self-awareness

“In today’s competitive environment, students need a way to differentiate themselves from their peers. They need an “X” factor that makes them indispensable. In short, they need a personal brand.”

Holly Paul, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP US Recruiting Leader.

What is a personal brand?
Your personal brand is the combination of your

- Core values and motivators
- Skills, abilities, strengths and weaknesses
- Qualifications
- Interests
- Employment goals
- Ability to relate to other people.
- Self awareness to recognise the different facets of your personal brand

A personal brand projects your image. If you don’t understand your personal brand then it is hard to effectively persuade others of employability.

To be able express your personal brand it is important for you to spend time:

- Identifying your strengths and weaknesses
- Finding ways to overcome weaknesses
- Promoting your strengths
- Using a number of mediums to deliver the message about your employability

Everyone has a personal brand, whether they are aware of it or not. It is important for you to define yourself or recruiters will define you based on evidence they find in a Google search. You need to spend time reviewing how recruiters perceive you and what your core goals are.

In job seeking environments that are increasingly connected and fast-paced, self-awareness has become even more vital to employability. An essential component of employability is building, differentiating and protecting your personal brand.

Develop your personal brand - Clarity of “personal brand” and self-awareness

- **Goal and outcome awareness**
  - Define your aims and reflect on what you want from your interactions with your professional networks and ensure that you are authentic in these interactions
  - What are you passionate about, what drives you? If you find these questions difficult to answer, friends and family can sometimes offer insights; or take a self-assessment test like those on http://www.myfuture.edu.au

- **Skills**
  - Being able to identify and articulate the skills you have to offer an employer is essential
  - To convincingly explain your skills to an employer, you need to provide examples of how you developed or demonstrated your skills. Specific examples with results statements are important! View our leaflet on Employability Skills online at http://careers.monash.edu.

Market your personal brand – through use of marketing tools – both active and passive

- **Active marketing tools** - Resumes and cover letters support and define your brand and tell your personal story. Highlighting your employability skills with evidence to back up your skills claims is essential. Having an ‘elevator pitch’ where you can quickly introduce your top selling points in one to two minutes is also important. See details on our webpage http://www.careers.monash.edu

- **Passive marketing tools** – your internet presence is often used by recruiters to find out more about you. You can work on these to improve your internet footprint and ensure when someone searches for you on Google the information they find adds value to your brand and doesn’t detract from it.
Internet profile

“Social media sites provide direct representations of who their candidates are in public without the veneer of an interview room and a high quality suit.”
Andrea Culligan, Graduate Recruitment expert, CEO of Unigrad

Most people have some internet presence, be it only on Facebook, and so will return results from a Google search. Increasingly in the recruitment process internet searches by recruiters are becoming routine to gain more information about candidates and this informs what recruiters believe about your personal brand.

Authenticity is very important in creating your online profile. Build an online brand which aligns with your genuine interests. Don’t ask questions on forums where you are not interested in the answers, don’t be too scattergun in your approach. Consistency of interest, for example a Twitter feed consisting of up to date information in a particular area, is much more convincing a description of an ongoing commitment to your field.

Tips for different sites

Facebook
- It is obvious but always worth repeating, be careful of your search visibility, remember you can untag photos, videos and remove posts that are undesirable from your wall. Check your fan groups and be aware of what they say about you.
- Limit the access of your professional contacts - do set up lists within Facebook for specific access.
- Many organisations have a presence on Facebook and announce updates on their graduate program / vacation fair recruitment, so it is good to become their fan – to ‘Like’ their page.
- Mentoring schemes like Willing and Able mentoring for students with disabilities now use Facebook as a major communications tool and it is a good way to keep up to date.

Linked In
- You should view your profile on Linked In as an online resume and follow all the conventions of a normal resume when you enter details about your education and previous employment – see ECD’s Writing a resume leaflet for more details [http://monash.edu/students/career-connect/apply-for-a-job/resumes.html](http://monash.edu/students/career-connect/apply-for-a-job/resumes.html)
- Make connections with people you genuinely know. Linked In is your professional network. Don’t spam people you have not met or have no connection with through an industry or field with contact requests and be thoughtful about connecting with people who make contact with you.
- Join professional associations relating to your field of interest and add to forums and reply to questions to raise your profile. You can also build your profile by doing this on question and answer sites such as Quora, Vark and StackOverflow.

Twitter
- Sharing links of interesting articles and resources that relate to your professional area is a great way to look up to date to recruiters. However, Twitter is the most open of any of the social media sites so do be careful what you post
- Consider whether you wish your twitter profile to be linked to your Facebook account or your Linked In account. You can keep your Facebook personal by making your Twitter and Linked In professional only; alternatively you can use hash tags #in and #fb to post tweets to your Linked In profile or Facebook respectively.

Other sites e.g. Personal Blogs, MySpace or Coroslot (portfolio site)
- Personal blogs and other sites where you can display your work can be useful in defining your personal brand if you can keep them up to date (really not worth it if it will look like you are inactive) and publicising your work makes you comfortable, however there is always the risk of plagiarism!

General enquiries
T: +61 3 9905 4170
E: careerconnect@monash.edu
monash.edu/careers

This Information was current at the time of writing and is intended as a guide only. Adapted by Monash University Career Connect.