

Module 1, Lesson 1 TRANSCRIPTION

Welcome to Breakthru Branding.

Glad to have you with us. I'm Kimberly Faith.

We are in Module 1, getting ready to start Lesson 1. This Module is an overall approach to look at personal branding. Lesson 1 is going to specifically discuss what personal branding IS and is NOT.

It is time to make room for a new perspective.

I want you to clear out some things that might be holding you back, and begin to grow some new seeds of growth over these next 21 days together.

In Lesson 1, you will discover why the old view of personal branding is no longer relevant.

I want you to understand and embrace the concept of personal brand equity. Personal brand equity is the bigger picture of what we are trying to build with our personal brand.

There is a paradox inherent to personal branding, and I want you to embrace it.

Let's start with what personal branding is NOT.

I have this conversation come up quite a bit when I am training thousands of leaders at companies around the world. People seem to have one of these three outdated ideas.

The first is the dreaded self-promotion mindset. They think that personal branding is only about marketing yourself and I want you to know that that is the wrong emphasis. That is like putting the emphasis on the wrong syl-LA-ble. Did you catch that?

Personal branding is not just about looking out for yourself, nor is it about promoting only the team. People seem to have an opinion that this is mutually exclusive, that if you are out there promoting yourself, that somehow you are taking away from the recognition that the team deserves. But it really does not have to be that way.

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This is what I will show you as we go through Breakthru Branding together.

Then finally, I want you to know that personal branding is not solely about your online identity; it is not just about networking; it's not about maintaining a false or even exaggerated persona of yourself, or any other singular view of this concept of personal branding.

Therein lies the real issue -- personal branding is not a single focus on any one avenue.

That, my friend, is where the power lies.

The old definition of personal branding, is described in Wikipedia as being "the practice of people marketing themselves as brands" and while previously it was described as being self improvement, this suggests that the overall concept comes from self-packaging.

This term is thought to have been first used and discussed in 1997 by Tom Peters, so I do have a big thank you to Mr. Peters.

But I must tell you that this overall definition of personal branding is really quite old. I want you to erase it out of your head.

Personal brand is found in the white space around your name.

Think about that for a moment. The white space around your name. This vast emptiness, where you have to ask yourself -- what comes to mind when others see or hear my name? What comes to mind when they think of me?

I want you to know that that impression happens in an instant; it only takes a few seconds, and that is what we're talking about.

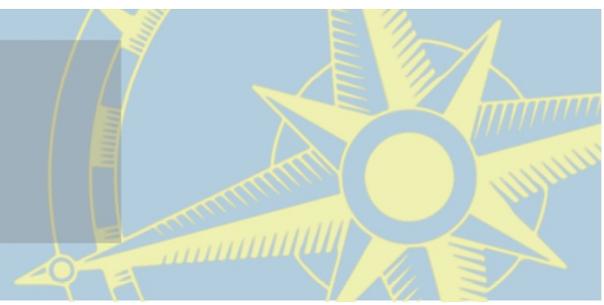
It's that white space around your name when people relate to you.

I've come to call it the "I square" factor. This is really about the whole issue of instant impression. You hear a name; you receive an impression. You receive an email; you have an impression.

I show logos all the time when I'm working with corporations, and I will show them as many as 10, 20, 30 different logos and have people shout out to me the very first thing that comes to mind. You might have heard me talk about this

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concept before.

It doesn't take long. Sometimes it's a good impression; sometimes it's not a good impression. Sometimes it's not even an impression at all; it's simply a groan or a grimace, or even worse -- there is no recognition at all. It is a vast emptiness in that white space around a brand.

I want to bring this back to your brand.

My personal brand -- you see it right there; I have "my personal brand" written, but I want you to cross off the "Y." Because from now on, when you think of "MY personal brand" I want you to think of "MI personal brand."

What does that stand for? It stands for "micro impressions." Because that's what the personal brand is -- it's a series of small actions done consistently over time. I talked about that in the Getting Started video.

Small actions have big impact.

The reality is that the world has changed.

Even the other day I was invited to a baby shower and you know what I purchase for the baby at a shower now? I purchase their personal domain name. Because I have a fundamental belief that by the time these children go into the workplace, it's going to be imperative that they have their own website.

The world has certainly changed, and that means our approach to personal branding also has to change.

So let's take a look now, to what personal branding IS.

What is it when I say "personal branding"?

I believe that it is a multi-faceted art.

Let me start with the word "art." Art means that there's no single way that it's done. It's a matter of what's important to you, and that is very different than what might be important to another.

I want you to realize that it is a comprehensive and systematic approach to your overall career. It's looking at the big picture and not just looking at one small

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piece of it.

This is where my background in systems thinking has been so critical. Because when I first dove into this field of personal branding, I realized as I looked around that everyone was looking at only one piece of the puzzle.

Now you can take it a step further when you take a systematic approach to your career with the intention of investing in lifelong relationships.

I know some of you might be saying -- well, Kim, of course I can. That's what I do already.

But we're going to be talking about relationships that are both visible and invisible.

People do well when they're having relationships with people that they have a contact with on a daily basis. But the more we go virtual, the bigger our organizations are, the more opportunities we have to expand, grow and change jobs, change companies -- all of a sudden, it means that it takes a different skill set to reach out for some of those relationships that appear invisible because we don't see them every day.

Personal branding is about knowing your value. That, by far, is one of the most important takeaways that I hope you get out of this course. It's not only knowing your value, but more importantly, being able to articulate that value in a way that is comfortable to you.

Please hear me clearly, folks.

I am not talking about this issue of making sure that you are bragging about yourself. There are lots of ways to know and own your value without doing the old bragging version of it. That gave personal branding a bad rap.

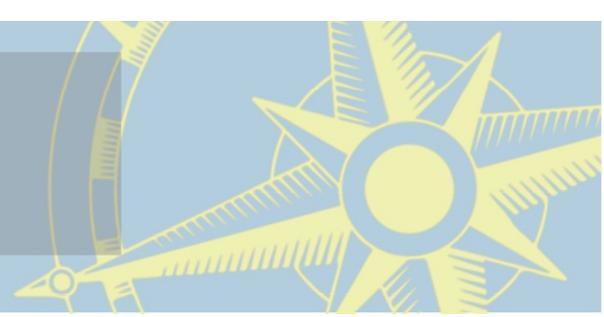
The third bullet is -- a form of authentic self-expression.

I think all of us crave that understanding of what it means to be authentic, and all of that results in personal brand equity.

That might be a new term that you haven't heard -- "personal brand equity." So let's talk about that specifically.

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As I define personal brand equity, I can define it in one simple sentence.

-- It is a collection of your perceived value that has been built over time.

There it is.

A "collection" means all the different levels that we work with; "over time" is all the way throughout our career; and "perceived" is the perception that others have of us.

That's a pretty powerful statement.

Just like a return on an investment for a retirement account, your value grows exponentially due to the strength of your brand, due to the relationship currency that you choose to circulate, and due to your foundation of authenticity, and then the Relevance Factor, which we will dive into later in this course.

All of these things add up to what I call personal brand equity.

When we talk about this whole concept of personal branding, people sometimes ask me -- well, Kim, it seems like it is a bit of a paradox.

On one hand we say "invest time and focus on your personal brand," but on the other hand we say "don't get too cocky; don't go too far on the other side and make it all about you."

On one hand we say confidence is absolutely critical, a career differentiator, but we don't want the confidence to go too far the other way where it's off-putting and arrogant.

When we go through this entire course together, I want you to think about the fact that it's all about balance; it's about balance and it's about finding what works for you, and I can guarantee you that we will find exactly that.

So here's the reality -- we can choose to ignore this whole concept of personal branding.

A lot of people would actually prefer to stick their heads in the sand and ignore the whole concept -- but it's happening anyway.

We can either swim upstream against the flow, or we can swim downstream with

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the flow -- it's happening.

So here's the question for you.

Why not do it on your own terms? Why not do it in a way that makes you comfortable and puts you in the driver seat?

"The chasm I see careers fall into can be summed up into two words" -- and I even want you to write down these two words -- "MISSED OPPORTUNITY."

Let me state that again -- Missed opportunity.

I meet people where "their career is not going backwards, but it's not going forward either. They are stuck in the dreaded neutral zone."

For every interaction that we have with people -- this is the reality.

Each interaction we have at every level is an opportunity to advance our brand, and to create that personal brand equity that I'm talking about.

A lot of people -- they do just fine when they interact with people; they don't necessarily go backwards, but they miss an opportunity to go forward. That is where that neutral zone comes into play, where you are stuck in that "nice" zone, that "friendly" zone, that "supportive" zone, and you're wondering one day why you're not making more progress.

When is brand equity important?

Here it is.

Brand equity is important when others' long-term belief in you overrides a short term event.

Sometimes things happen and we get hit.

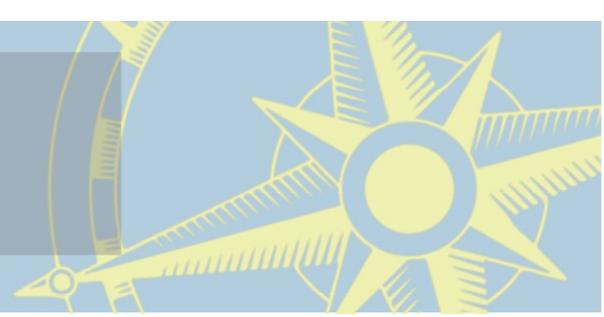
Life happens.

Sometimes business or projects fail.

Sometimes we have issues in our personal lives. As we all know, that can change in an instant.

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Then sometimes it's not necessarily anything negative, but it's the fact that you have a big project, a big idea and you need to get people on board; you want to have them on your team. While you have data and some information, really the best that you can offer to them is two words -- "trust me."

"I need you to trust me on this one."

You have all probably been in at least one of these places at some point in your career.

That is when I have found that personal brand equity is the most powerful.

And listen closely here, because there will come a time when you say -- I know what's happening, and I know what others might be saying, but I'm going to bank on the fact that the people who know me and know my brand -- they will know better, and they will go to bat for me, and they will rise above whatever the short term situation is at the time.

That is when having personal brand equity will serve you very well.

I want you to begin thinking about brand equity as an asset. It is an asset for you. Is it possible that your personal brand equity might be even more valuable than equity of your home?

I fundamentally believe when you stop to think about it, that there are times in our lives that your personal brand just might be as valuable -- if not more valuable -- than your home equity.

If I can get you to be thinking about the equity of your personal brand as an asset, then that would be half the battle. That is the perception shift that I am hoping you will make as we go through this course.

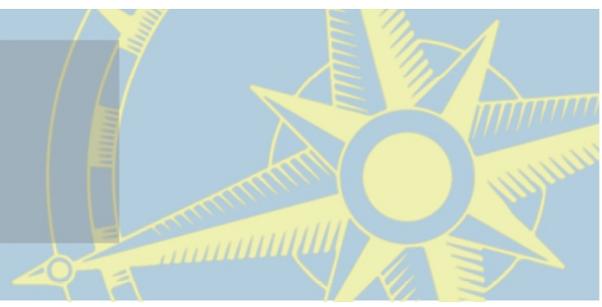
It really is an investment in yourself. When you invest in yourself, do you know what the number one return is?

Confidence.

It's confidence. I see it over and over again. When people are prepared for each one of the issues that we will be discussing, they come across more confident and then that confidence pays dividends over and over and over again.

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I want you to ask yourself -- am I ready to make personal branding an ongoing part of my professional repertoire?

I have seen it fundamentally change careers, and I know for a fact that it can change yours too.

I want you to make a commitment. Look at the world around you differently for the next 21 days. I want you to pay extra attention to what words some people say and what words others do not say.

I want you to look around and see the leaders in your organization, and look at all the factors of why someone might seem like they have confidence and executive presence -- notice the way they sit, the way they stand, the way they talk, the way they dress.

And then when you see someone else who you know for a fact has really good expertise and really good credibility, yet for some reason they don't come across as confident. Why? I want you to make a mental note about what is not working, so that we can add those observations to our discussion as we go forward.

Thank you so much for joining me for Lesson 1. I look forward to seeing you in Lesson 2.