

## Module 4 Lesson 2 TRANSCRIPT

I am glad to have you back with me here at Module 4 -- all about the stages of building your brand. Today's lesson is Lesson 2, the Shape & Build stage.

Remember when I showed you the branding compass earlier? Shape & Build is the second step in our branding journey. In this particular lesson, you will see how the Shape & Build stage is all about building your foundation. Because much like the foundation of our home, this stage is laying the groundwork for the future success of our career.

What you will discover in this lesson is what skills impact personal branding during this stage, where to find leverage so you can focus, and tips on building that solid foundation.

As I mentioned to you before, this is the longest stage of the entire branding journey. It is a combination of hard and soft skills. In fact, a recent Wall Street Journal article quoted a survey that revealed that 58% of hiring managers surveyed said that the lack of soft skills is limiting their company's productivity.

The Shape & Build stage is often characterized by you taking a few steps forward, and then taking a few steps back. The key though, is to keep moving forward in a positive direction. And it's important to recognize here, that there is a huge correlation between the success of this stage and credibility.

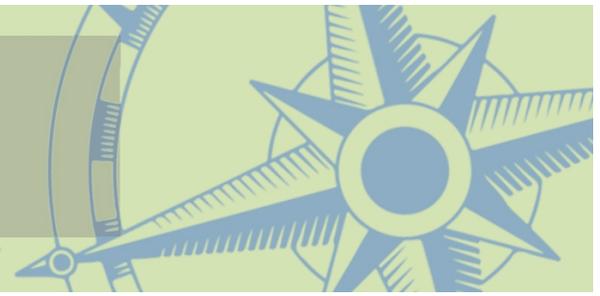
You remember when we talked about credibility on the brand map? This is the bottom axis. It is in this stage that we build that credibility that propels us forward. Shape & Build is a lot of skill building, we tend to try different techniques; we take some risk and this is certainly the stage to try to do that.

Really, there are a lot of areas that I could cover in this section. So what I've done for this lesson is I've looked back at all the different coaching engagements I've had, and I've also conferred with my fellow professional colleagues, and I've decided to pick only the items that I know can seriously enhance your brand or detract from your brand, and I put them into four buckets for you.

Please know that, as you are in a different stage in your career, as you are in different industries, different locations, and so the areas of focus might be slightly

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different for each of you.

For this purpose I'm going to cover all four areas. The first will be about presentations, the next about virtual communications, then we'll talk about conversation, and then what I call mechanics.

Presentations -- please understand that there could be an entire course done just about presentation and communication skills. In fact, the book I co-authored with Jeff Black recently -- "Unleash Your BS (Best Self) - Putting Your Executive Presence to the Test" -- was all about presentations.

For our purposes here today, I will give you three nuggets.

First, a powerful opening to your presentation can make all the difference. Spend some time thinking about what you want the one key take-away to be for your particular presentation. That one message should be included in your opening statement. Perhaps you share a story; use an analogy -- whatever it is you choose, spend some time thinking about a powerful opening. What I have found is that when people invest their energies there, it serves as leverage, because when you start off the presentation well and you have more confidence, it shows throughout the presentation.

The next tip for you is, please don't assume the bad habits of company presenters. Stay true to your brand.

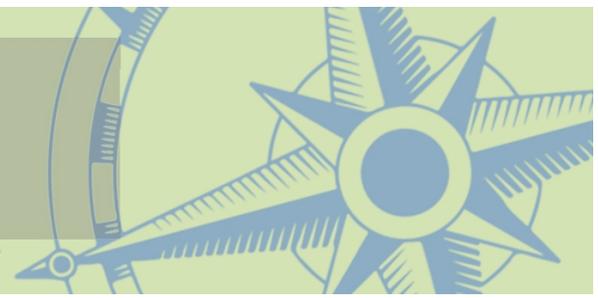
I usually hear one of two things. The first one is -- my boss makes me do it this way -- and the second one is -- well everybody else in the company presents this way.

I need to tell you right now that the reason companies hire people like me is that everybody may not necessarily be doing it in the way that is best for the company or in the interest of the customers that they're serving. You have to make a choice on your own to decide what kind of presenter you want to be, which is a direct correlation to the kind of brand you want to establish.

As far as the boss comment, what I can tell you is this -- yes, you always need to do what it is your boss asks for when it comes to something like this, but please remember that your boss today may not be your boss tomorrow. Don't let the boss define your presentation or communication style. Just know that sometimes we have to be a little more creative in the way we work around it.

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And third, PowerPoint is not the message -- you are the message.

I want you to know that whenever we present, we have two tool kits -- we have an internal toolkit and an external toolkit.

An internal toolkit is what we have with us at any given time. So someone could ask me, "Kim, could make a presentation right now?" and I would have the things that are in my internal toolkit. Things like my voice -- how strong is it, the tone that I use, the speed at which I talk, the power of the pause, the expressions I use in my face, my body language, the gestures I make, and eye contact I have with the audience. These are the things that I have with me at any given time.

On the other hand, we also have an external toolkit -- that's what we need to spend some time planning ahead of time. We have PowerPoint, of course. We have props that we can use, flipcharts, there are handouts, videos and even demonstrations of some kind. There are a number of different kinds of external tools that we have in our toolkit, and many of you probably have ideas of how you can even add to that.

But take a look -- everybody is acting like PowerPoint is the only tool in our toolkit, the only thing that we have in our presentation portfolio, and that is just not the case. Here's the message I want you to take away from this. It's that PowerPoint is not the message; you are the message.

You are the message that you bring to the table. They need to hear from you. We should never have a slide up behind us that does not answer the question "does it add value to my message?" If the answer is no, it should not be up -- plain and simple.

As far as virtual communications, there's a couple of things.

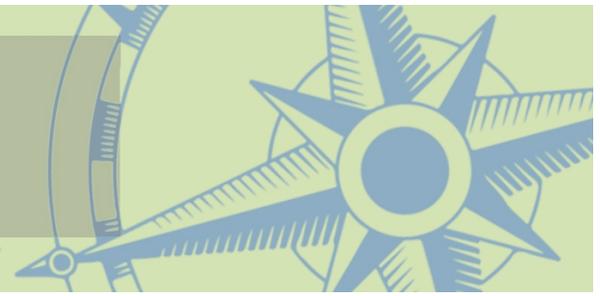
Conference calls and webinars are factors in building your brand. Please don't underestimate these routine tasks. I have often been surprised at how often these things come up.

As part of my coaching when I'm working with someone -- I actually sit in on the webinars and the conference calls that they run, because those things can become detractors from our brand if we're not careful.

So here's a way to check that out. Have you recorded yourself on a conference call and then actually listened to it? And I mean listened to all of it? If you

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haven't, then put that on your to-do list, please. Each one of us needs to know how dreadful we are -- or are not -- to listen to. It really is that simple, and I've actually had instances where someone's inability to be an effective virtual communicator, was what was standing in their way of advancing their career.

Third, you can not use the same skill set with virtual communication as you do face to face. I want to make that very clear, and that's going to be in two different categories.

First, when you have a virtual relationship, especially if you happen to be working from home and everyone else is at the office, you have to make an extra conscious choice to make sure that you build those relationships and build your brand, because it doesn't happen naturally. Even though everybody else has said "oh, great, you can work from home" or work from another location, I want you to know that I've seen this, now, time after time -- that that same person who once said it was OK for you to do that, would then feel that in particular that maybe a little bit later you're "out of sight out of mind" and unknowingly, perhaps have held it against you. So keep that in mind on your end. The responsibility is on your end to make that extra effort to invest in your brand.

The other thing has to do with when you're actually communicating or presenting virtually.

I want to go back to the internal and external toolkit. When I am presenting virtually, I still have my internal toolkit, I still have my voice, my tone, my speed and even my pause.

Do I have my expressions? No. Body language? No. Gestures? No. Eye Contact? No.

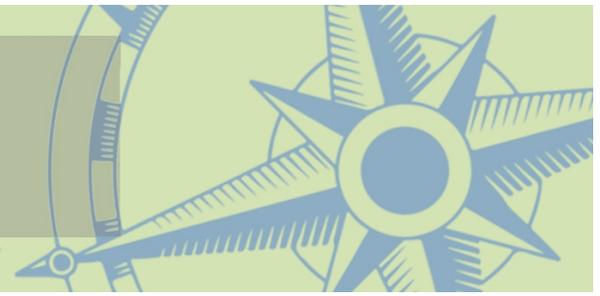
I have just lost 50% of my internal toolkit when I'm presenting virtually. So I have to accommodate for that. What do I mean? Well, when we're presenting face to face, we may use our PowerPoint slides one way. When we're presenting virtually, we may opt to do a lot more builds or show only portions of our screens at a time; we might even have more slides that have single images to keep people's attention longer.

If this is an issue that you face, then make a note for us to have this discussion when we're together on a one on one coaching conversation.

Let's talk about the art of conversation. We have to make a purposeful effort to

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build relationships, up, across and down. In an earlier module, when I talked about the 360 degree colleague surveys, what I have found is that every single time people do well with usually two of the three categories. I have never had anyone who hit it out of the park in all three categories. They either do well with direct reports and their peers, and they're not quite as strong on the senior leaders, or they do well with the senior leaders in the direct reports and yet they don't have a strong relationship with their peers. We have to be very purposeful in building the relationships in all three areas, and for some of you in select positions, you have even more than three.

We have to take the initiative; find a way to be relatable. That means selecting some of those relationships that make us, maybe a little uncomfortable, and brainstorm ways to be relatable. Again, we could talk more one on one.

Please don't forget about emotion.

I want to show you a formula that I have seen to be tremendously impactful, both one on one and with a group. It has to do with the parable of the boiled frog. You see, the longer we are with an organization, the more likely we are to forget what it felt like when we first started with that company.

The story goes like this. If you put a frog in a pot of boiling water he will immediately jump out because he knows he's in danger. However, if you put a frog in a pot of lukewarm water and slowly turn up the heat, well, he will boil to death because he doesn't believe that he's in danger.

The same thing happens to us in organizations. The good news is, it happens to all of us, so don't worry it is not just you. But that also means that we have to be more purposeful.

I found this particular formula can help us do just that. It's one of the most impactful that I've seen.

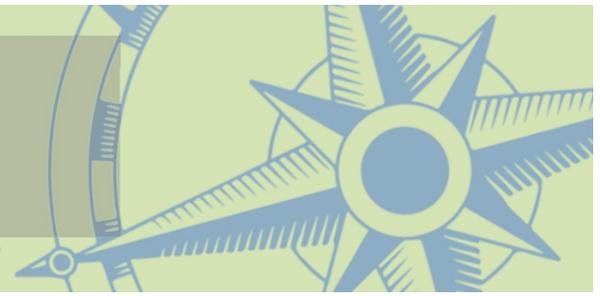
It is -- Emotion + Logic = Caring Strength

It seems simple doesn't it?

But here's the reality. The longer that we are with an organization and the higher up we go, leaders tend to get stuck only in talking only about logic. When someone asks me a question, I go to straight to answering the logic of the situation, and I forget there are other factors that are at play.

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I saw this happen years ago when a CEO was being interviewed after an airline crash. The first question that the reporter asked was a very logical question -- "So tell us about the safety record of the plane" -- and the CEO said, "I'll be glad to answer about the safety record, but first, I want to acknowledge all of those families who are hurting this morning; our hearts and prayers are with them; we are hurting right along with them. Now, I'll be glad to answer your question about the safety record of the plane."

What would happen if he had just answered straight to the safety record? Well, he would have come across cold and unfeeling. So that's a larger example of what we can do on a daily basis with our relationships.

When it comes to mechanics there are a few things that I've seen. One has to do with meeting management; another has to do with written communication, and then also, managing and leading others.

Meeting management. What I want you to remember about running a meeting, is that when you run it well, it pays dividends. Surprisingly, this is the only issue that seems to come up even more than communications, when it comes to establishing the credibility factor in your personal brand.

People who do well with this are the ones you hear about across all three levels, when you hear things like -- they run a good meeting; they are very respectful; they engage everyone at the table; they always start on time, end on time.

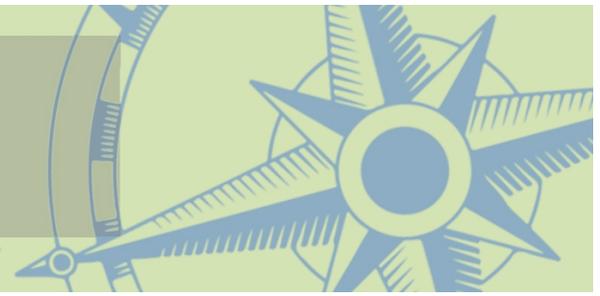
I just want you to know you will receive great dividends for any time and energy you can invest to make sure the meetings that you are responsible for go well.

One issue I have seen come up sometimes in the whole issue around meeting management -- is the "I" versus the "we." Sometimes leaders will get too caught up in talking about -- I did this; I did that -- and they forget to mention the "we," the fact that there was a whole team involved. So pay extra careful attention, and listen how you talk and how others lead meetings and you, yourself will see what I mean.

Then we have written communication. The fact is that written communication matters. I know we are a long way away from beautiful handwritten letters -- I'm still a fan of handwritten letters; I will always be a fan of those, and to be honest with you, today I think they matter more than ever. But in the case of written communication, in reality, most of it is virtual; most of it is by email.

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So the question I want you to ask yourself is -- when people receive an email from you, what comes to mind? Are your subject lines interesting and engaging? Do you write in a short succinct manner so that people can read through it quickly?

I want you to think about an email that you received even today. Based on the brand of that person, you either decided to read it right then when you received it, or you decided to read it later. The same thing happens to you.

When it comes to leading and managing others -- that alone could be a whole separate course, and we all know that there are thousands of books out there. Whether you have consciously or unconsciously fallen into a leadership position, the reality is, is that you have a large impact.

I want to show you just one tool that I have found to be very helpful with my coaching clients for themselves and for leading others.

I want to introduce you to the Tension Productivity Curve. It's one that I knew about many, many years ago, 20-plus years ago. You will on the bottom axis is Tension, and on the left axis is Productivity. You will see from the low end on the left, high on the right, low on the bottom, high on the top. This is a regular bell curve, just like so many things. That makes it easy.

What the science says, is that there is an optimum zone amount the right amount of tension, right there in the middle, and that if we can get to the right amount of tension, we will have the highest amount of productivity -- that is what they call the Optimum Zone. This is what we all strive for, right?

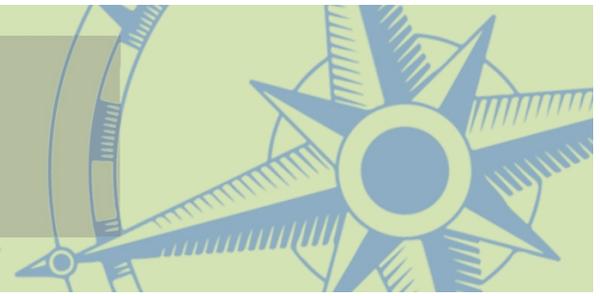
We all live at a certain place on this continuum. I'll use myself as an example. Here's where I live -- I'm typically to the right; I tend to like more tension that keeps me very active and engaged, and it usually works, and I'll stay at a pretty productive level. But I have to be careful, because if I get too much tension in my life, too many deadlines, too many balls juggling, I will quickly find myself to the lower end of the scale where I am not very productive at all. If anything, I would have gone past the point of stress.

You might be asking yourself -- what's the difference between tension and stress?

You see tension is the amount of that force between where we are and where we want to go. Tension is what can help propel us forward, so tension can be a good

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thing. When we don't have enough tension in something, it's not very good. When we have too much tension, it's also not very good. When we are on either of those extreme ends of the spectrum, that is when it is stress, and that is not good for anybody.

I learned this many, many years ago, and I had a boss who was very good at realizing this about the team that they worked with. They would put milestones in place to be able to reduce the tension -- in my case, to move me back to the optimum zone.

I had a coaching client I was talking to, and thought that he knew of somebody that was actually to the left. He actually was sharing to me that his spouse tends to be to the left, and he said they were pretty productive, but they weren't always staying as productive as they would like to be, and if they didn't have enough to do, what actually happened is they would start to move towards the lower end of productivity. Well, these two had a conversation and figured out that if they scheduled a dinner party -- which was putting tension in their system -- that that would in fact kick them both into high gear and put them back in that optimum zone. I thought it was an excellent observation.

So ask yourself -- where am I? -- and then ask yourself -- where are the members of my team?

From that point you figure out -- do I need to lower my tension to move them to an optimum zone? Or do I need to increase the tension by having more deadlines, tighter time frames -- whatever the case may be -- to help shift them towards that optimum zone?

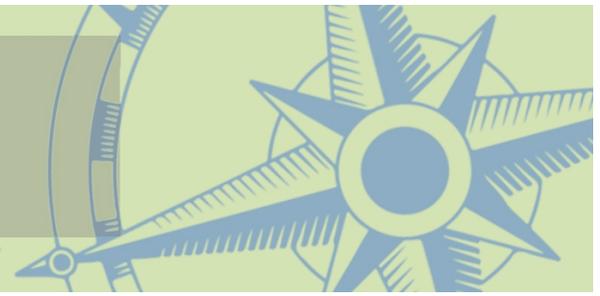
The main take-away here is that one size does not fit all. The question is -- what is best for you, and what is best for your people?

Think about the skills that we discussed in this segment. Which ones do you feel you need to polish? What I want you to know is that the Shape & Build stage of our personal brand lays the foundation. It builds the credibility that the rest of our career depends on -- a very strong foundation, each step along the way. A little effort, to be perfectly honest with you, goes a long way in this particular area. All along, you are building brand equity.

As far as the action step -- I decided I wanted you to give yourself a break today, and I simply want you to think about the learnings. Because what I have seen over time, is that just by the sheer fact that you are now aware of these issues,

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behaviors will begin to shift.

Keep this in mind as we go through the entire branding journey -- every time we start with a new department, a new position, a new company -- we start the Establish phase all over again. Then it leads to the Shape & Build phase and that starts over.

And we will continue this conversation in Lesson 3.