

CAN PEOPLE BE BRANDED?

Three Simple Steps to Turn “You” into “YOU™”

By Brenda Bence

Do you have a favorite brand that you’ve been faithful to for years and years? Perhaps it’s your favorite brand of sportswear or shampoo, and maybe you’ve even driven out of your way to find and buy that one brand that is like no other, even though you know it’s more expensive?

If brands are so powerful that they can bring out such loyalty in us, then why shouldn’t *people* be branded? Wouldn’t you like to evoke that kind of loyalty? Indeed, the question isn’t whether people *can* be branded. The question is: How do you create a personal brand that makes YOU™ – the trademarked you – the “brand of choice” in your workplace? Take a moment and think about what that would mean for you in terms of promotions, recognition, and higher pay...

Are YOU like Shampoo?

Now, of course, I’m not insinuating that you are a product like a bottle of shampoo. But the truth is that we are all *like* shampoo! Just as shampoo has to offer the customer great hair, you have to offer value in the workplace, or you’re out of luck – or out of a job - right? But don’t worry – personal branding doesn’t mean you have to walk around in a sandwich sign, advertising yourself. There are actually many more subtle ways you can work on your personal brand without anyone knowing it.

Take Six Elements, and Call Me in the Morning

Your favorite toothpaste or shampoo didn’t get that way by accident. Using a proven step-by-step framework consisting of six powerful elements, corporate branders work hard to earn your loyalty and succeed in the marketplace. Those same six corporate branding elements – with a few adjustments – are just what the doctor ordered for your own personal brand, too. These elements make up your Personal Branding Positioning Statement™, which is Step One in the proven Personal Branding System outlined in my new book, ***How YOU™ Are Like Shampoo:***

1. **Audience** – Who do you most want to influence with your personal brand at work, such as your boss or your clients.
2. **Need** – What functional and emotional Needs do they have?
3. **Comparison** – Who else might they consider to help meet those needs?
4. **Unique Strengths** – What talents and strengths do you bring to the table that will make you memorable to your Audience?
5. **Reasons Why** – Why should your Audience believe you can deliver the Unique Strengths you say you can?

6. **Brand Character** – What is your personal brand temperament that is unique to you? Most people are loyal to Pepsi or Coke, even though the products themselves are very similar. It's the "character" of the brands that makes the difference.

Your Personal Brand Positioning Statement™ allows you to *define* the personal brand you want in order to achieve greater success at work. But defining your brand is only the first step! What good is a definition if you commit it to paper, but then stash it away in a drawer?

Consistency, Consistency, Consistency...

If you don't work on *consistently communicating* your personal brand in the workplace, it's a bit like having fifteen minutes of fame – it will be gone in a flash – with no career advancement. So consistently communicating your brand to others is Step Two of my Personal Branding System. Again, no one has to know that you're working on your personal brand, but you can still become known as the "brand of choice." How do you do that? By communicating your desired personal brand – consistently - through the five activities we all do every day that can dramatically influence how others perceive, think, and feel about YOU™:

1. Your ... **Actions**
2. Your ... **Reactions**
3. Your ... **Look**
4. Your ... **Sound**
5. Your ... **Thoughts**

Put these together into your Personal Brand Marketing Plan, and that's how "you" become "YOU™." (Download a free Personal Brand Marketing Plan template at www.HowYOUAreLikeShampoo.com.)

Step Three - and the final step - of the **How YOU™ are like Shampoo** Personal Branding System is to *avoid damaging* the personal brand you've worked so hard to define and communicate. How? Learn from the mistakes of others by avoiding what I call "Personal Brand Busters™." If someone else falls down a hole, you would want to know exactly where that hole was in order to avoid falling in yourself, right? Avoiding Personal Brand Busters™ that others have committed is how to ensure you stay consistent in communicating your personal brand.

The **How YOU™ are like Shampoo** Personal Branding System is a no-nonsense approach that allows you to take advantage of the same proven methods that marketers have used to catapult best-selling corporate brands to the top. There's no reason why you can't evoke the same kind of loyalty in your personal brand that you have for your favorite shampoo! Becoming YOU™ is not only fun, but can spell greater job satisfaction and more money in your pocket. Now, who doesn't want that?

*Brenda Bence is Founder and President of Brand Development Associates (BDA) Int'l Ltd, a Bangkok-based firm that helps companies and individuals across the globe build successful corporate and personal brands. Her book - **How YOU™ are like Shampoo: The breakthrough Personal Branding System based on proven big-brand marketing methods to help you earn more, do more, and be more at work** – was released in early 2008. See www.HowYOUAreLikeShampoo.com or www.BDA-Intl.com or www.BrendaBence.com*