

6 Steps to Building Your Personal Brand

What type of content will you be posting? Written, visual, etc.



What are your values and how do you want to get them across?



Who is your current audience and what kind of audience would you like to attract?



What do you want to achieve with your brand?



How to Define Your Personal Brand



What are you most knowledgeable and passionate about?



What tone of voice would you like to use?



How will you best communicate your message to your target audience?



Who are you, and what is your position in the industry?

Whether you're looking for a job or trying to establish yourself as a thought leader in your field, having a strong personal brand is now a vital part of professional life.

The Importance of Personal Branding

There is now an expectation to be able to find out more information and verify credibility of a brand or product online, for example how TripAdvisor and Airbnb have become so prominent in holiday planning. The same expectation now exists for people, and in this case, the product is you.

This is especially true in IT, an extremely competitive industry where employers are more tech savvy. In **Jobvite's 2014 Social Recruiting survey**, 93% of employers said they reviewed a candidate's social profile before making a hiring decision and 55% of employers have said that they have reconsidered a candidate based on looking at their social profile. For a hotly contested role, this means that just one Google search of your name could decide whether you are hired or not.

Job tenures in IT also tend to be shorter than in other industries, due to an increasing amount of work being project or contract based. This means that branding is even more important for IT professionals. If you're not taking care of your brand then you may unknowingly miss out on your next big opportunity.

Attracting Talent

Personal branding is equally crucial for organisations. Potential customers, employees, or even buyers, are going to be looking at the strength of your workforce. This is reinforced by **our recent Sourced Report** which shows company culture as a key attraction for potential employees. Because of this, the days of employers hiding their workforce from public view are long gone.

SIX STEPS TO BUILDING YOUR BRAND

1. Defining Your Brand

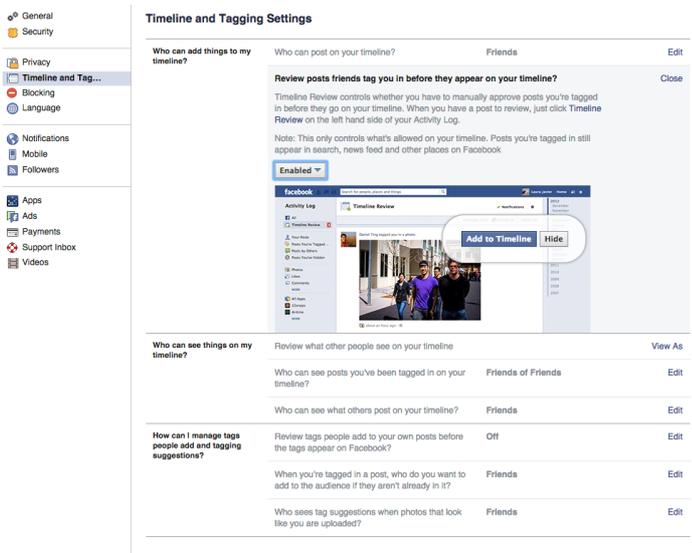
The most important thing to do before you start building your personal brand is to decide what you

would like it to represent. It's important ask yourself the following questions:

If you are unclear on what your brand is, then this will be reflected in the brand itself and you will come across as unfocused to your audience.

2. Social Profiles

When building your personal brand, it is critical to go through all of your social channels and make sure that they are credible. A stray swear word or unprofessional picture can really damage your chances of obtaining a new role.



Once you have checked your existing online content, ensure that you get to review every post you're tagged in on Facebook before they're posted to your timeline. You can change this in the "Timeline and Tagging settings" section of Facebook's settings menu (below).

Once you've taken full control of your existing brand, it's time to start strengthening it. A good place to start is on LinkedIn, as this is the vital social channel in the professional world. If you don't have a profile we would advise you to create one, and make sure you take it to 'All-Star' status. This will ensure your profile is findable and credible. There are plenty of guides to building an 'All-Star' LinkedIn profile, including [this one](#).

Most people stop once their profile is at 'All-Star' status, however this limits your LinkedIn profile to being a shop window. To get the most out of LinkedIn it is a good idea to start building your network.

First, connect with all the people in your existing network. You can do this by manually searching for people or importing your address book from your email account. Next, join a number of groups that are relevant to you, such as alumni or industry-focused groups.

Beyond that, you should start expanding your network by connecting with industry peers, such as those you meet at conferences, or even people you haven't met but who are obviously part of your local industry. Most people these days are open to connecting with other people who share similar interests or skills.

In IT it can also be useful to look at more specialised social networks, such as **GitHub** or **Behance**, where you can showcase your work and build a more detailed portfolio. Nowadays, many hiring managers expect to see code from you, so GitHub is a great place for this. Behance is more geared towards visual or design centric work, which makes it a great tool for showcasing UI/UX and web design work. Take a look at these **GitHub** and **Behance** pages for a good example of how you could set up your profile.

3. Communicating Your Message

Once you've constructed a professional online profile, you can build on this by establishing yourself as a credible voice in your industry. People such as **Bill Bennett** and **Jason Kemp** have used blogging as a



Sourced's Guide to LinkedIn All Star Status

- ★ Industry and location
- ★ Current position
- ★ Two previous positions
- ★ Education
- ★ At least 3 skills
- ★ At least 50 connections
- ★ A professional profile picture

tool to build a great personal brand. Though we're not suggesting you need to be at their level, they're good examples of the positive impact blogging can have on your brand.

Start expressing your thoughts and opinions by blogging on social networks, such as **LinkedIn Publisher**. You can also start your own personal blog or website with tools such as **Medium** or **Wordpress**.

When deciding on a topic to blog about, think about things that are pertinent, whether that's a project you've worked on or a conference you've attended, or just something that's been on your mind. As long as it is relevant to your audience, it can turn into good blogging material. Once you've decided on a topic, do a little research on it. Find similar articles to see where your concept is different, so that you can emphasise these unique aspects.

The infographic is titled "An IT Pro's Guide to Christchurch" and features a world map with lines connecting to Christchurch. It is divided into several sections: "Christchurch has a lot to offer for IT professionals...", "Introducing Christchurch", "Living in Christchurch", and "Summary".

Title: It's often a good idea to go back and think of a title after you've finished your blog in full. This way you can get a clear picture of your content, so that you can go back and create a relevant and marketable title.

Summary: You also need a summary: a short, appetising snippet designed to get people to click through to your blog. You can then use this to market your blog on social networks.

Main Body: The main body is where you make your points or arguments and explore them in detail. This section will make up the meat of your blog. In terms of word count, anywhere from 600 to 1500 words is a good length for blog, so you can give yourself a fair bit of freedom.

Featured Image: Adding images to your blog can really make it stand out, and using basic graphic design tools such as Canva are a great way to do this.

Introduction: The introduction sets the stage for your blog by explaining what it is about and why you are writing it, and should immediately pull your audience in.

Call to Action: The call to action is your final point, where you get the reader to engage with your content in some way. This can be done by linking to a resource, asking them to comment, or asking them to get in touch with you.

Regardless of where you are in your career, if you consistently provide good insight you will become a thought leader in your industry.

4. Getting Heard

Once you've written your blog, you have to share it with people in order to get your brand out there. This will get the people in your network clicking through to your content. In addition, ask people in your network to share it with the people they know. This dramatically expands the reach of your content and thus, your brand.

Facebook and LinkedIn are the most effective channels for this kind of activity, but Twitter can also be effective given you put the time and effort into building a network there. One of the ways to do this is by participating in **Twitter Chats**, online networking events where Twitter users get together to discuss a certain topic.

Another way to extend the reach of your brand is by guest blogging. Don't be afraid to get in touch with credible outlets within your industry and see if you can write some content for them. Guest blogging gives you instant credibility by associating you with an already established brand, and also gives you an opportunity to promote your own blog or social profiles by linking to them.

5. Branding is a Marathon, Not a Sprint

The digital landscape is always changing, so it's important to ensure that your personal brand is dynamic enough to keep up with the constantly moving environment of social media. Letting your social accounts grow stale with out-dated information is a sure-fire way to undermine the initial work of setting them up and making them appealing to employers and fellow professionals.

Expand your blogging strategy to a greater social media strategy, and stick to the schedule you outlined. Get into the habit of making small updates to your social profiles regularly, and whenever you get a blog idea note it down so that it doesn't end up on the eternal backburner. This will keep your audience engaged and ensure that your online presence does not get neglected and become out-dated.

6. Follow Through Offline

It's crucial to remember that your personal brand doesn't just exist on the Internet. Building a credible online brand is all well and good, but it amounts to nothing if you don't carry it through in person.

At work, or at conferences and events, present yourself the same way you do on your impeccably branded social media accounts. Industry events, whether they're formal conferences or **Meetups**, are a goldmine of networking opportunities. For more on how to get the most out of these, **have a read of our [guide to capitalising on local industry events](#)**.

Bringing your online brand through to in-person interactions will reinforce the credibility you have built up online, and further your brand across new networks. This can lead to more opportunities, such as speaking engagements, as you meet more people and establish yourself as a thought leader in your field.

Summary

Building and maintaining a strong personal brand will help you network with other professionals, establish you as a credible voice in your field, and produce career opportunities that may not have come up otherwise. If the idea of building your personal brand seems daunting, don't worry, here are three easy steps you can take right now:

- Define your personal brand.
- Go through your Facebook profile and take control of what is public.
- Identify three thought leaders in your field and see how they have branded themselves.

If you need help in crafting your personal brand, get in touch with the team here at Sourced.