

Your personal brand - Relevant or irrelevant in a digital world

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The world has changed. The way we do business has changed. The way we consume every day stuff has changed. These significant changes will change individuals - ready or not? You and I will either thrive in a digital world or become extinct.

The key culprit responsible for the above mind-boggling changes is technology trends. Technology is pervasive. It has its own beat, resulting in the fact that every business, every household, every community and every person is today a digital entity. We find ourselves left with little self-empowerment and almost zero personal control of our brand called "ME".



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Let's take a moment to look in the rear-view mirror. The analogue mirror. In this analogue world, you and I were king and queen of our personal brands. We decided what perception we wanted to be labelled with, we decided what presence we wanted and where we aimed to market our personal brands, we chose where to play; how to play and what to play. In summary, we were the CEOs of brand ME. So, rightfully as CEO of our personal brands we needed little external support or fanfare.

Let's take a look at the elements that we consciously or unconsciously executed to build and maintain our personal brands in the analogues era. I coined these the 10P's of personal branding:

- **Plan:** Have a plan, every CEO of brand ME needs a guiding light
- **Purpose:** Find and define your purpose for life
- **Positioning:** What are others saying about you?
- **Promotion:** Market yourself at every given opportunity
- **Partnerships:** Network for success
- **Personal style:** What are you famous for?
- **Power:** Build influential and reputational power
- **Package:** Image and outward appearance matter
- **Persistence:** Never give up!
- **Passion:** Love what you do and do what you love

You will agree with me that the above seems like a tall order and a lot of work. This recipe has worked for eons. The result is that millions of individuals have gained financially by ensuring that their personal brands fulfil the above personal brand strategy. However, in an ever-changing, superbly dynamic digital world, personal brand fluidity is called for. The above model maybe too cumbersome to manage. The power of managing our brands has shifted from us to the virtual realities of this world. In essence if you don't exist in the digital world – you basically are irrelevant. Digital first/physical second is the new process for personal brand equity build.

What does the framework look like in the digital world? What changes are required:

- **Project re-invent:** Brand 'You' has to undergo a reinvention to survive in a digital world. Re-assess what defines you? Is your USP (unique selling proposition) still unique in a changing world, especially for digital immigrants. Are you still passionate and in love with who you are and what you do?
- **Project relevance:** Do you have the skills, behaviour, personality and aptitude to build and manage your personal brand digitally? Are you an authority and thought leader in the sandbox that you choose to play in?
- **Project real time:** In a digital environment, gone are the days of having to manage your brand from 8am to 5pm. Your brand is active and mobile in a digital world - it is always on. The physical and digital world are one, seamless connection exists between the physical and digital eco-systems. We are real time brands.

As CEOs of our personal brands, we have the responsibility to ensure that our brands survive this digital tsunami. Long live brand me!

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