



# Ten steps to the better brand of you

Reid Hoffman, co-founder and chair of LinkedIn, once said: “You are the start-up of you.” In fact, we all are, it is just a matter of becoming an entrepreneur and managing your career the same way you would a business. This will allow you to reinvent yourself as your own personal brand and by doing so, you will change your entire career outlook.

Simply stated, here are 10 steps to building your personal brand:

## 1. Invest in yourself

Take the time to decide what it is that matters most to you. It doesn't have to be earth-shattering, it can be as simple as saying, “I am a mum, a wife and a modern dance teacher.” It sounds simple, but sometimes defining the most obvious can be a difficult task. You don't need to travel this journey alone. When I was figuring out my next step, I hired a career coach. This may seem like an indulgence or a luxury, but in fact it's an investment in your future and can help clarify your business goals.

## 2. Have a mission statement

Now that you have defined your priorities, you should create a space for yourself to thrive. Let's say that you want to be a great mum, then make that your mission statement. Once you do that, it becomes easier to set your priorities.

## 3. Create an elevator pitch

Imagine you are meeting a person who has the power to change your life, would you be able to tell them what you want in the length of an elevator ride? A friend of mine is a travel writer who, for years, has wanted to create luxury travel packages. The thing is that he had never taken the time to formulate that idea into a ‘pitch’, so no one knew that was his ambition. Once he defined it, he started to tell others about it. The next thing he knew he was booking tours on his website and local businesses were recommending him to out of town visitors. Soon his business started to thrive.

## 4. Market yourself

Self-promotion is extremely hard for many of us, but if you're selling a product that happens to be you, well then it becomes easier to promote yourself. If you are a yoga teacher who is conducting virtual sessions, then build yourself a website that allows you to create an online following and do bookings virtually. Perhaps you're a dog walker who works in a specific neighbourhood, then you may want to design a flyer that you can leave at a local dog parks or vets. Make sure to research your market and grow your following from there.

## 5. Be consistent

One of the things that great brands have in common is that they have a logo, corporate goals, strategy and ideals. There is a consistency to the image, the product and the packaging. You should strive to reach for these goals and ideals, too. If you bake birthday cakes, your clients will expect signature cakes that are beautifully decorated and tasty every time. That is how you will build customer loyalty.

## 6. Ask for help

Ask your family, friends and colleagues for advice. If you are still defining yourself, perhaps they can suggest business ideas based on your hobbies and tastes. Go for informational interviews, join organisations of like-minded people with whom you can share your ideas and brainstorm – this can result in strategic partnerships or revenue sharing ideas. If you are new to a country, this is a great way for you to make connections and meet new people. During the pandemic, networking has become easier than ever through Zoom calls and virtual conferences, so take advantage of them as much as you can.

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### 7. Create manageable goals

Make sure that you set realistic, tangible and quantifiable goals. But please, be kind to yourself, you will not reach every one of them but that's OK. Reward yourself for what you have done and look at each day as a new opportunity to reach your goal. Small goals over time result in large success stories.

### 8. Give yourself some space

Create a place for yourself that is your 'work area'. It doesn't have to be an office or a headquarter, but it does need to be yours and you need to feel safe here so that you can create. Make sure that you provide yourself the tools that you need to do your job well. Again, this is not an indulgence, this is something that you need to succeed as a business.

### 9. Reward yourself

One of my clients recently launched a new website, the pandemic was in full swing and everyone was social distancing. Yet the day the site went live, he called me with a glass of champagne in his hand and we celebrated that launch together. It wasn't a huge party, but it was a recognition of all the work and commitment we had put into making his brand come to fruition. These small moments are important, so don't let them go.

### 10. Value your brand

Do not underestimate your worth. You have knowledge and expertise that you have cultivated throughout your life. If you do not appreciate and give it value, no one else will. While building your brand and your reputation, you may need to do some work pro-bono but it's important that you understand why you are doing it and reward yourself accordingly. Perhaps you want to be a web designer or graphic artist, but you don't have a portfolio. Building your friends' websites and designing their logos will allow you to build a portfolio so that you can later sell yourself to others for a fee.

No matter who you are, by becoming the CEO, marketing manager and COO of you, you will create your own personal brand. Hopefully these tools will be useful to you on your journey and will help you to write your own story and become the brand of you.



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After spending 12 years at Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, she created Caliativity Productions, a production and branding company where she is the president and CEO. Calia is also an American State Department alumna with a background in marketing and event planning. She has lived in France, Germany, Denmark, South Africa and the UK for the past three years. She is a graduate of Mills College and the American Academy of Dramatic Arts.

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