

Five Reasons to Hop on the "Brandwagon"

What, me? Branded? If you think branding is only for the big guys like Coca-Cola, Nike, or Starbucks, think again. Personal branding is not about a big ego and it's not only for companies with big payrolls. Creating a brand is especially important for entrepreneurs and solo professionals to help us be uncommon among the common.

I launched my own re-branding journey in 2006. Here is a bit of what I have learned so far from Certified Reach Branding Expert, Wendy Terwelp of Opportunity Knocks TM(www.knocks.com).

First off, building a personal brand is not about being fake. So often we are skeptical when it comes to image because we've been "sold" so many times based on flash and dash. Personal branding is at the opposite end of the spectrum. It's a way of expressing yourself honestly and authentically. So in other words, it's okay to be yourself. What a refreshing thought.

Personal branding is not just a logo and a look. Your logo and color scheme are part of your personal brand, but they are what's known as your identity. Your brand, on the other hand, is the unique promise of value (USP) people will discover when they work with you.

As Wendy says, "Your brand is a way of identifying and communicating what makes you a star and using those qualities to separate yourself from your peers or competitors and increase your success. Personal branding is the strategy behind the world's most successful people. People like Oprah, Richard Branson, Tony Hawk, Queen Latifah, Steve Jobs, and Bill Gates." Hmmmmm. That's pretty good company.

A personal brand program will help you stand apart. There are a bazillion competing offers. You have to be different in a way that draws and attracts. Personal branding helps you figure how you are different and gives you permission to say so.

Branding helps your bottom line, too. Your products and services should be unique to you, not everyday commodities. Wendy advises, "Move away from offering a commodity because commodities compete on price. Branding helps you move to value based pricing that is far better for business growth and stability."

One of the biggest surprises so far in this whole re-branding thing has been the sheer energy payoff. It is so liberating to think outside of the box and create a line of products and services that are unique to my company. **Big fun!**

Beth Cole owns The WebServant, www.theweb servant.com, where she helps coaches and consultants prosper online.

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