
INTRODUCTION

Find out who you are and then be that on purpose.

- Dolly Parton

This book is all about you and your career. You picked up this book because you are looking for your branding edge, an advantage that will allow you to “turbocharge your career.” But what does that mean?

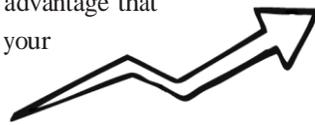
A turbocharger on a racecar sucks air into the engine and forces it into the combustion chamber at an extremely high velocity. When you hear the high-pitched whine of an Indy 500 racecar engine as it goes by, you are hearing the turbocharger.

And what do you get when you turbocharge an engine?

Power and speed.

A turbocharger helps an engine achieve greater efficiency and more power, and that makes the car go faster.

This book is about helping you get the same thing from your career—power and speed. Your branding edge is the advantage that comes from understanding the nuances of your personal brand and the critical role it plays in advancing your career. Your personal brand acts as a turbocharger, pulling in what is unique about you to create maximum efficiency and more power. If you want to push forward in your career, find more clients, get promoted, do more meaningful work, get a raise, land that dream job, earn that bonus, and be recognized for the contributions you can make, then you are looking for *Your Branding Edge*.



Get to Work Actively Managing Your Brand

This book requires something of you. It requires action. You must do something. Those who put these ideas into action most quickly will see the

most benefit. A presentation coach once told me to make sure that I put clear emphasis on my key message, so let me make sure that I am clear. My main message is that *you need to actively manage your personal brand* in order to maximize your potential and turbocharge your career.

*Actively Manage
Your Personal Brand*

There are lots of books with personality tests, leadership tests, or career tests. Books that will help you discover what your purpose is, tap into your passions, and find out who you are. The difference between those books and the one you are holding in your hands is that this book is more about encouraging you to take action. It's not enough just to know who you are; you have to do something with that. It's not enough for you to passively read this book. If you truly want to turbocharge your career, you must take action. You need to let other people know who you are. Don't just sit there and let your career happen to you! Do something about it! Make it happen!

This book is meant to be used. It should be dog-eared and tattered by the time you are done with it; my mother would call it a "well-loved book." In order to facilitate an action orientation, I've included exercises and action steps for you to take throughout the course of reading this book. It may be helpful to you to read through the book first, then come back to do the exercises. But let me be clear: *This book is meant to stir you to action!* These guided exercises will help you draw out your personal brand and strategize an action plan to highlight that brand.

I have also highlighted some online resources to assist you on this journey. By the time you have finished this book, you will have a complete action plan for richly expressing your personal brand to achieve the greatest impact on your career. This critical information can then be distilled into a one-page personal branding action plan. If you fully engage in this book, you can achieve amazing results.

I realize that some people may pick up this book or download it just to have an interesting read on the plane ride home. Others will want to dive in completely and immerse themselves



in the work by downloading a workbook and other materials from Your-BrandingEdge.com/BookExtras. If you are looking for a quick read, print out your branding edge action plan template, read straight through and simply fill out the action plan. If you are looking for a deeper exploration to turbocharge your career, download the full workbook and take the time to do *all* the exercises to help you craft a highly refined personal branding action plan. In my branding work, I have developed strategies in (literally) six minutes, six months, or six years. Obviously, the more time and energy you devote to building the plan, the more confidence you will have in the accuracy and effectiveness of that plan.

The concepts in this book are not new; any marketer will recognize these as classic best practices. The purpose of this book, however, is to do more than just share best practices. I will show you how to *apply* these practices to your life. If you are a student just beginning to think about making your mark in the professional world, these concepts may be new to you. If you've stagnated in your job, this book will help you map a path to reinvigorate your passion for life and perhaps empower you to reimagine your career. If you're a professional looking to move into the upper echelon of your business world, many of these concepts will seem obvious. You may want to use this book as a reminder to help you get back to the basics. Once you are able to master the seven principles of personal branding, you will discover your branding edge.

This book is filled with stories of others who have learned how to inject new energy into their own careers. For several years, I have been developing and delivering a program to help people strengthen their personal brands in order to expand their career oppor-

I am my own experiment.

I am my own work of art.

—Madonna, singer/songwriter,
business woman, cultural icon

tunities; make bigger contributions to their companies, their industries, and their organizations; and do more personally meaningful work. Throughout this book, you will hear stories that show the amazing results that come from putting these strategies into action. You'll read about a woman who was (finally!) promoted to vice president of her company, a college sophomore who landed a killer internship in the field of her dreams, a full scholarship NCAA athlete who followed her dream to

become an artist, and an insurance executive who was promoted (twice!) right in the middle of the worst recession in the last seventy-five years. These strategies work, whether you are an entrepreneur trying to grow your own business, a corporate manager stuck in a lifeless job you no longer have passion for, or a college graduate or job seeker facing a saturated job market.

I'm sharing these amazing stories with you to illustrate each of the individual strategies and to inspire you to reach your career goals. Wherever you are in your career, this book will take you to the next level. Even if you implement just one of the strategies, you will see momentum and progress in your career.

And what if you implement them all? Just ask Christine Kalafus, owner of Stitch LLC and creator of couture windows in country homes throughout Connecticut. This insurance agent turned entrepreneur built a thriving business due to her steadfast attention to implementing all of these strategies and *actively managing* her personal brand. You will read about Christine throughout the book in the sidebar boxes of "Christine's story," included in each chapter.



The classic principles I'll share in this book have helped businesses grow and expand for years, but now we're going to apply those principles for your benefit. I have spent my professional career building brands and have learned from some of the greatest marketers of our time. Branding can be an unbelievably powerful tool; it forges titanium-strength bonds with people and moves them to effective action. And we can put it to use for you. Branding is the reason fans stand out in the cold overnight to get a new iPhone, and branding is the reason toilet paper can make someone a millionaire. We're going to use branding to turbocharge your career.

Come Back Again and **Again**

You will want to revisit the concepts in this book over and over again, because the messages contained here will have different meaning for you at different times in your career. Building your personal brand is the work of a lifetime, not the work of a few hours spent with a book. *Enjoy the process*, take time and delight in all of the different discoveries you make about yourself. This book will take you through a process of understanding who

you are, and, more importantly, you'll identify who you want to be and map out a path to be what you want to be, no matter what that is.

Are you ready to find your branding edge? Let's turbocharge your career!

GET YOUR EDGE

Begin to turbocharge your career today!

To get the most out of this book, download your branding edge action plan right now with all the exercises and questions at YourBrandingEdge.com/BookExtras so that you can do the written exercises as you go along.