

Personal Branding Magazine

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 3



**Interviews
With**

Julia Allison
Judson Laipply
Tay Zonday
Brian Solis
Amy Martin
Brian Clark


**The 2010
Personal
Brand Award
Winners!**



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The 2010 Personal Brand Awards

This year, some of the most prominent, inspiring and influential brands claimed a Personal Brand Award. Each individual was constantly active as a blogger, as a speaker, on social networks and Twitter. It was almost impossible to avoid them! Jeremiah Owyang claimed the coveted Gold Award, after a unanimous decision. He is a leading brand online, with thousands of followers and is constantly giving value to the world. Congratulations to Jeremiah!

Gold

Tony Robbins

Silver



Dr. Oz



Tory Johnson

Bronze



Keith Ferrazzi



Guy Kawasaki



Jessica Lee



Publishers Note:

Volume 4, Issue 3 focuses on teaching you how to become internet famous through video, social networking and blogging. We've collected stories from the most well-known internet superstars to teach you how to do it, too! We spoke with Julia Allison, Judson Laipply and Mr. Chocolate rain himself, Tay Zonday. Gracing the cover is Chamillionaire, who is a Grammy-award winning musician, and someone who has pioneered the use of social technologies in the music industry. I've always said that visibility creates opportunities, and when more people know you, the possibilities are endless!

Dan Schawbel

Publisher

Personal Branding Magazine



Cover Feature

Changing The Rules of the Internet Branding Game An Interview with Chamillionaire

Tiffany Monhollon, Personal PR Columnist



Exclusive Interviews



Is Being Famous Worthwhile? An Interview with Julia Allison

Jay Deragon, Relationship Networking Columnist

From Nobody to Somebody An Interview with Tay Zonday

Dan Schawbel, Publisher



The Evolution of Judson Laipply

Katie Konrath

Brain Solis Puts Brains Before Brand

Ivana Taylor, Living the Brand Columnist



From Traditional to Internet Superstar An Interview with Amy Martin

Maria Elena Duron, Brand-u-university

Become a Well-Known Blogger

An Interview with Brian Clark

Ryan Paugh



Featured Columnists

Your Virtual You

Jack Humphrey, Blog Marketing Columnist

6

How I Built My Personal Brand Online

Celes Chua, Personal Excellence Columnist

8

The December Book Review

Georgina Taylor, Book Critic Columnist

11

What Should You Blog About?

Vikram Rajan, Entrepreneur Branding Columnist

13

Do You Need Email Rehab? How to Work Smarter, Not Harder, When It Comes to Messaging

Debra Shigley, Workplace Success Columnist

16

Build a Strong Brand with Harry McCracken

Howard Sholkin, Brand Communication Columnist

18

Expert Advice

4 Tips for Creating a Virtual Presence

Ardath Albee

20

Accidental Branding: How I Created the Virtual Creative Sage™

Cathryn Hrudicka

21

Your Reputation Precedes You

Michael Durwin

22

It's Only Virtual Until You Meet Someone

Rich Nadworny

23

5 Tips to Personal Brand "Working Capital"

Sam Decker

24

Staking Your Brand's Claim in the Digital World

Susan Gunelius

25

You Are What Google Says You Are

Tom Martin

26

Own Your Online Footprint

Chris Moody

27

Quarterly Spotlight:

Internet Fame

by Miriam Salpeter, Co-editor

Are you taking full advantage of the tools available to enhance your personal brand online? Are you achieving your business and career objectives? This issue's columnists offer some great tips to help achieve your goals.

The first thing to remember? It's not all about you! Celestine Chua explains how important it is to be a role model. If you write, do you think about what your readers want? Are you sharing valuable information that will make people want to come back again and again? If you make your audience your #1 priority, it's likely they will appreciate you and your value, which in turn increases your online cache.

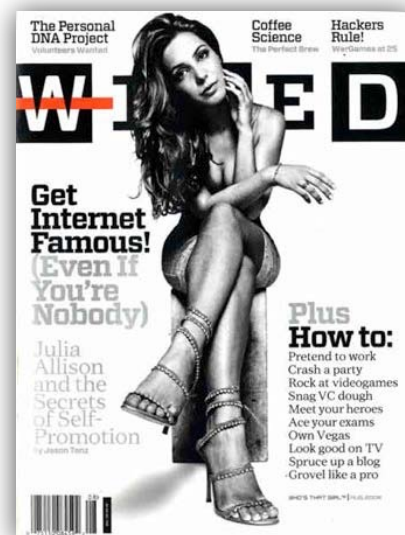
Authenticity (as always) holds a lot of weight in this issue. Are you faking it? Michael Durwin makes an important point when he says: There is no "virtual" you: Your online self is a direct extension of your real world self." How should you respond? He says, "Be yourself: But try to be the best you can be — your reputation precedes you." Rich Nadworny agrees, "If you stand for something online, you'd better act that way in real life."

Once you identify what you offer, it's much easier to extend your reach. Sam Decker explains that social media "is primarily about an exchange ...a *personal* brand is best built by facilitating give and take. That might look like connecting people, retweeting or contributing to others' ideas and projects." Are you making that two-way connection?

One great benefit of using the social web to share information about you is the opportunity to avoid the "push and pray" method in favor of the "pull and stay" approach. Georgina Taylor's book review notes that Scott Stratten's book *UnMarketing* offers a strong case for the latter, which is about "focusing on engagement as a means of building trust, creating value for the customer by giving them a sense of support from your business." What are you doing to engage your target audience?

Success is about so much more than just being online. In his interview with Harry McCracken, Howard Sholkin, founder of technologizer.com, explains that he attributes some of his success to going "where smart people are, rather than expecting them to come to us." For him, that meant having a presence on Twitter and Facebook, which was key to growing his site's traffic. Jack Humphrey echoes this sentiment, noting that "your virtual you must span your own domain and key sites around the Web where your targets hang out."

Extend it a step further, as being where they are is an important lesson for anyone. When I coach job seekers and entrepreneurs, that is advice I offer: find "your people." If you are lucky, they are spending time in social media, but maybe it makes more sense to physically go where they are. That may mean attending conferences or speaking engagements in person. It's worth it.



Miriam Salpeter (@Keppie_Careers) is a CNN-named "top 10 job tweeter" whose cutting-edge career and job search advice has appeared in major media outlets such as the *Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *ABCNews.com* and *NBC news*. Read her highly regarded blog: www.keppiecareers.com.

Cover Feature:

Changing The Rules of the Internet Branding Game

An Interview with Chamillionaire

By Tiffany Monhollon, Personal PR Columnist



When you think of Grammy-award winning hip-hop artist Chamillionaire, the first thing that comes to mind is probably one of his hit singles like “Ridin’.” But as his loyal fans know, the story of his rise to success — including a 50/50 major label deal that rivals that of most signed artists — is a savvy personal-branding case study at its best. So, for this issue focusing on taking your brand online, we talked with Chamillionaire about how he launched his brand using innovative digital techniques, his thoughts about where the music industry is headed, and his unique love for technology and innovation.

This issue, we’re focusing on taking your brand online. Can you describe the brand “Chamillionaire” in your own words?

My brand pretty much started off just being about music and recording. And then it grew into being about overall business. Most people in the industry know I’m a more business-oriented rapper. I was lucky enough to see so many other entrepreneurs out there, and I knew when I got into music, I was going to turn myself into a business. I pride myself on that — doing good deals.

I did a deal with Universal and ended up getting 50% of the revenue. Most people don’t get deals like that.

Taking your brand online is certainly something you have experience in. Can you tell our readers a little about how you brought your brand online?

I was ahead of the curve. That’s something you have to keep in mind. People who are successful online are the ones who are ahead. If you can be that person, you can get your start on things earlier. Like, at one point, I was asked if I had faked my Twitter followers. I didn’t do anything special. I just started earlier than other people did. I did all kinds of branding things. Every show I have, I tell the thousand people there to follow me on Twitter. I was doing serious grassroots marketing, every time keeping the online in mind.

I used to do live shows on my website. My DJ would mix songs, and all the users on the forum board would go crazy. Now, it’s not uncommon, but I was doing this back in 2000, and people were shocked to hear a rapper and a DJ making live music on a website. So I took the money I made and invested it back in my website. I did things that would grow an audience. I started building an e-mail list. I build this huge following — I could e-mail half a million people and get a response instantly. And that really helped me negotiate when I got to a major label.

How big a role has technology played in your career and your success?

A lot, man. It’s everything when it comes to music. So many artists and musicians don’t realize how much it affects them. But now you can’t be someone in the music industry and not get how by Napster affected the industry. You can act like technology doesn’t have anything to do with you, but it does. Now the iPhone and the iPad — that’s what people are spending money on these days. Not CDs. And you really have to understand what the audiences are purchasing. So, when I talk to my nieces, I ask them about it. And they say things like, they want an iTouch. They aren’t saying they want music. They say, “I can get that easily.” So, I go to tech conferences so I can stay on top of what’s coming next. Most people in my industry don’t understand how many people are playing Facebook games. But I like to know that stuff — what’s going on and what’s coming next.



Chamillionaire (above) says, “I go to tech conferences so I can stay on top of what’s coming next..”

Continued on Page 5

Obviously, as a celebrity, you have a certain amount of influence over your audience. But how has social media opened you up to be influenced by them?

Man, it definitely has. People never touch on that! People never really touch on how much influence people you can reach out to have on you. I've been using that for a while. Like, I ask what instrumentals people want me to rap on. And when I get a good response on one, I know I've got to rap on that. And they feel like they're part of the process when you're really authentic in what you say. When I ask a question, it's something I really want to know. And my fans know I'm serious.

What interested you in going to tech conferences?

I've been interested for a long time, even when I was independent. I wanted new things, gadgets, to figure out how to make them work for me. When I signed a major label, working for a company that spans the world, I started meeting so many smart people who always knew what was coming next. A world of people I'd never been around. And all these people who knew what were coming next, they had advantages because they had information. I started getting so much from every source I could. I kicked it into gear. I started going to tech conferences. Now, every day, I'm on the search for knowledge.

How much time do you spend keeping up with what's going on in the tech and social media space? Why is it so important to you?

It can be a lot sometimes. There can be information overkill. I pay attention to TechCrunch and Mashable. They post about everything. So I step away to go to the studio and record. And when I get tired of looking at studio walls for a week, I take a break and catch up. But I don't pay attention to the gossip stuff. Even in the tech world, there's a lot of important stuff but a lot of gossip, too. If you can push that stuff out, it helps. It's like that in the rap world, too. I don't read the gossip blogs, though. I might be missing out on some fun stuff, but I want to know what's going on instead of what's funny.

Let's talk about Twitter. You have almost 700,000 followers there. When did you start using it?

I got there before a lot of other rappers. Ashton and MC Hammer were there before me. But at tech conferences, people there told me about Twitter. I didn't get it. It sounded so boring. Why do you want to tell people about walking your dog? But then I started using it, and now I get it. And I had to take that as a learning experience. Now, when people aren't explaining something well, I get on anyway and check it out for myself. And I try to see if I could use it for myself.

Do you run your own Twitter account?

I hear about people who don't, and I think it's crazy. Unless you're Obama, you don't need someone to tweet for you. You have a phone! You can't have someone pretending to be you. People have more sense than that. They know! For the most part, you sound like a robot, and you don't get much value out of that.

So, what's next for you?

I'm actually gonna take my audience and try to steer them online. I've trained a lot of fans to buy CDs. I feel like people don't want CDs anymore. They just don't want them. That's the truth. I might want their music, but I don't want their CDs. So I am going to launch a new website that will be a new way of thinking for a lot of people. Try to build something major without a major label. I want to do something crazy that the labels say you can't do. You have to find stuff that interests you. Who wants to be stagnant their whole life? So many things interest me.

Tiffany Monhollon is a PR and Communications professional. She does a lot of research and writing on the topics of management, HR, career development, generations in the workplace and similar subjects. Her blog is called [Personal PR](#).



Your Virtual You

Jack Humphrey, Blog Marketing Columnist

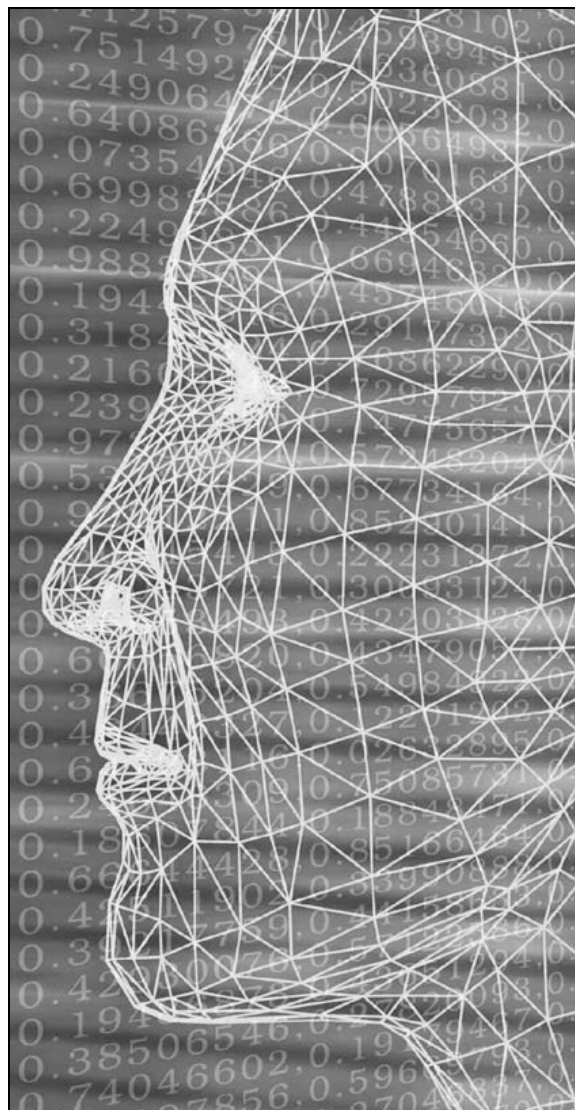
With Facebook, there is much more than meets the eye, especially when it comes to tricks and tools to build a very large following. Most people seem to use it on a very minimal, surface level. Don't be most people!

Really get into it and read all you can about tactics savvy marketers are using to brand themselves there. With over half a billion users, it is worth the time to learn everything you can about Facebook branding.

One such place is Facebook. With the largest network of people in the world outside of Asia, it's a fact that just about everyone's target market is represented on Facebook.

Things you need to know about when branding on Facebook:

1. **Fan pages versus personal accounts:** It is important not to friend everyone who asks on your personal account. Reserve this for people you know in the flesh and important business contacts whom you don't mind seeing your occasional rant about eating establishments or music preferences. Fan pages are for professional networking and building a large following, and keeping the two apart is good for both personal and business reasons.
2. **Don't let people see your fan page wall until they "like" it.** Offer an incentive to like your fan page that you deliver after they hit the Like button. Never send people directly to your wall.
3. **Make a good welcome tab.** Look up "making a fan page reveal tab" to read how to make a professional, effective tab.
4. **Note little-used features like the Discussions tab and Groups.** Most people don't take advantage of these, but the Discussions tab alone could well cement your brand in people's minds if you commit to getting active discussions going.
5. **Tie your website in with Facebook completely.** Don't hide your Facebook fan page from your website visitors. Facebook can generate a ton of traffic for your main site if you integrate widgets, like buttons, and any of a number of other Facebook tools into your site.
6. **Facebook ads are cheap and infinitely targeted.** You can dip your toe in Facebook ads without coming close to breaking the bank by targeting your ideal demographics. Start slowly and use it primarily to bring more fans to your fan page. It gets harder to manage a good return if you use Facebook ads to send people directly to your site or elsewhere on the Web. Use your wall posts to get your new fans signed up for a mailing list, for example, once you have them in your sphere of influence on Facebook.



Not long ago, your only serious option for online branding was your own website and search engine marketing. Things have changed a lot with the advent of social media, and today, your "virtual you" must span your own domain and key sites around the Web where your targets hang out.

Jack Humphrey is widely recognized as one of the most accomplished and experienced online marketing experts today. In 2002, he wrote a ground-breaking eBook called *Power Linking*. Downloaded by tens of thousands of website owners and SEOs, and still heralded as one of the most important guides to link building and SEO strategy, *Power Linking* put Jack on the map. <http://jackhumphrey.com>



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Is Being Famous Worthwhile?

An Interview with Julia Allison

Jay Deragon, Relationship Networking Columnist

I recently spoke with Julia Allison, who is a journalist, TV commentator, and co-creator of the lifecasting portal NonSociety.com. She has appeared on MSNBC, CNN, MTV, Fox News, and on the cover of *Wired Magazine*. Julia's goal was never to be famous, but fame has followed her. Below is our conversation:

What makes people famous, themselves or their audience?

The key to leveraging yourself and your content to become known is 1) discover your micro-niche 2) provide value to your audience 3) make sure you & the content are educational, entertaining, or inspiring (bonus points for all three!) and finally 4) let the proper members of the media know your story.

Given the implications of social media how often does one need to be present to become known?

The critical elements are pretty straightforward: add value to someone's life in an entertaining or inspiring manner - and figure out how to let people know you're doing it! Even the cast members of the Jersey Shore do this: they entertain people, make them forget their problems, and frankly, allow them to feel better about themselves by contrast.

Do people set out to be known and famous or does it happen by chance?

I suppose it depends upon the person. I think most people stumble onto it. That's certainly what happened to me. When I first began writing my dating column at Georgetown, I just wanted an excuse to talk about relationships with my classmates.

I didn't think it would lead to national news stories, or Aaron Spelling optioning the rights to make a show, or getting an agent. That never occurred to me. That said, later on, I realized that I wouldn't get the type of job I really wanted as a TV host or as a columnist without becoming somewhat well-known. So it can go either way.

Lady Gaga is known and famous. Many media stars are known and famous. Can anyone become famous and if so how?

The rewards are well known: opportunities come to you which you couldn't have gotten otherwise (in my case that meant tv shows, endorsement deals, writing opportunities, business partnerships, my agents & managers, being able to meet and interview a wide variety of fascinating, successful people). The burdens are more insidious and tricky to navigate - losing control of your public image, being pre-judged by people who have never met you, negativity, feeling misunderstood (for a variety of reasons), and the constant reminder that you can't please everyone.

At the end of the day, I'm really proud of what I accomplished, but if I had to do it all over again, I would certainly do it differently. Then again, I take ownership of my mistakes, because I wouldn't want to give up everything I've learned. One of my favorite quotes (by Eckhart Tolle) is: "life hands us whatever experiences we need for the evolution of our consciousness."

Jay Deragon is the Managing Partner - Strategy Link to Your World - linktoyourworld.com. For the last three years, Mr. Deragon has been consumed with, and focused on, the emerging market of social networking.



"Add value to someone's life in an entertaining or inspiring manner."
- Julia Allison



How I Built My Personal Brand Online

Celes Chua, Personal Excellence Columnist

2 years ago I started my personal development business online. At that time, it was a brand new site with no presence at all. Using just the platform of my blog, The Personal Excellence Blog, my business has since grew and evolved into a well regarded and established brand in the industry. I've been listed as the World's Top 30 Coaching Gurus by Coaching Gurus International, along the likes of top coaches like Tony Robbins.

I've also received over 20 media hits by prominent media outlets, including CNN International, Asia One, newspapers, magazines, online news sites and radio. The Personal Excellence Blog is one of the top personal development blogs online, with over 350k page views a month.

In establishing my brand online, there are many things I did which worked very well. Here, I'd love to share with you 4 tips which you can use to build your brand online.

Be authentic

When brands try to communicate via a pre-established image, they lose people quickly. Authenticity is what connects you with people. Talk to your audience as friends, not as strangers or "followers". Your audience is people, not just a statistical figure. In my articles, I often share my personal experiences and think from their perspectives, and because of that my readers are able to relate.

Offer lots of value

Imagine the behavior of a hungry squirrel in a forest. The squirrel scouts around for food, and when it realizes there's no food, it'll move on to the next place. Will it return? Probably not. You can imagine online behavior to be the same as that of a hungry squirrel in the forest. Online, the equivalent of food is the value you offer. When you offer lots of value which is inexhaustible, the reader becomes glued to your site, and has no reason to go anywhere else. At my blog I share my best advice in the form of free articles and eBooks which took hours to write. Because the readers know the content has high value, they subscribe and keep returning time and again. One of my readers told me before that he had 23 tabs open in his browser, all of which are articles on my blog.

Be a role model

Set a high benchmark for your behaviors and actions, and adhere to that. In running The Personal Excellence Blog and my business, I set a high standard of behavior to live up to. To me, it's clear that if I do not live up to these standards, there's no reason why I should expect anyone to. Changes begins from myself. When my readers see me creating big results, they naturally follow my blog, and take in my recommendations.

It's all about your users

When running your business, don't forget that it's built on people. Always hold your users/audience/readers as the #1 priority. Think about what they want, then create that. When you always have them in mind, they will reciprocate with their loyalty. With everything I write, it's always about what the readers want. If I think that an article isn't of value to the readers, I'll not post it. This way, they know that I only offer them the best, and they look forward to the things I produce.

Celes Chua is a peak performance expert and founder of The School of Personal Excellence, a training school to help others achieve their highest potential and live their best life. She writes at the popular [The Personal Excellence Blog](#) and has been featured in prominent media like CNN, Asia One and Today for her personal development work.





From Nobody to Somebody
An Interview with Tay Zonday
Dan Schawbel, Publisher

I recently caught up with Tay Zonday, who is one of the original YouTube phenomenon's, moving from online video to a mainstream celebrity figure. Tay's famous "Chocolate Rain" video has received over 60 million views, and he's appeared on CNN, Jimmy Kimmel Live, and other mainstream television shows.

How did you choose your career path? What obstacles were there when you began?

My career path chose me. I was a graduate student in Minneapolis working toward my Ph.D. in American studies. Music was a serious hobby, and I performed at small open-mic events. When YouTube got big in 2006, I saw many musicians reaching a bigger audience online than they could in their local music scene. I stopped performing at open mics and started recording music in my living room to upload to YouTube. This eventually led to the full-time pursuit of entertainment.

You're known as Tay Zonday, but that's not your real name. Why did you choose this pseudonym/brand that you're known for?

In January 2007, I Googled "Tay Zonday" and it returned zero results. Because of this, I knew the name had never been used before. I also wanted a performing name that had no ambiguous spelling when spoken in conversation. If somebody overhears "Tay Zonday" in line at the grocery store, it's easy enough to spell in a search engine or Web domain.

"Tay Zonday" also appealed to me because my birth name, Adam Bahner, did not seem marketable or attractive. Some names roll off the tip of the tongue; my birth name doesn't. I also believed that my main career path would be as an academic professional. I wanted to separate my artistic life from my professional life.

I planned to publish papers, go to conferences and apply for academic jobs as Adam Bahner and continue my music hobby as Tay Zonday. Eventually, Tay Zonday became much larger than Adam Bahner and the practical distinction was moot.

Why did you choose the Internet as a way to distribute your video for "Chocolate Rain"? Do you think it would have been successful without the Internet?

The Internet is a very honest place. It allows one to publish content, to receive honest feedback and to republish content that integrates that feedback very quickly. For a musician, this is a much better growth dynamic than singing at local theaters and cafes, where release of new content is slow and feedback is rarely honest. The Internet has become self-evident and is hard to discern as a method of distribution for independent artists. Independent artists can no longer grow by showing films at the local megaplex or selling Blue Ray discs at the gas station. The Internet is the only option outside of niche audiences like film festivals.

In the moment when your video went viral, how did it change your life and what doors opened for you?

The "Chocolate Rain" video was posted on Digg.com in July 2007 and hovered on the front page for about a week. Somebody saw it on Digg and posted it on 4chan, a raucous Internet forum known for practical jokes. They prank-called Tom Green's online show by busting out into a chorus of "Chocolate Rain" during a phone call, and from there, major media attention expanded as it was featured on Carson Daley's TV show and various national news outlets. I was interviewed on CNN Saturday Morning. I did dozens of radio show interviews, including Opie & Anthony in New York.

"Independent artists can no longer grow by showing films at the local megaplex."
- Tay Zonday

Continued on Page 10

From Nobody to Somebody – Continued from Page 9

I was pictured on the front page of Sunday's *Los Angeles Times* and featured in *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Toronto Star* and other print media. I appeared on Jimmy Kimmel and did prominent commercial work with Dr Pepper, Firefox and other brands before 2007 was through.

The media coverage peaked in August 2007 but the press momentum continued as I won a YouTube award in March 2008, was parodied on television by South Park in April 2008, was part of Weezer's Grammy-winning "Pork & Beans" music video in June 2008, MC'd Google's "YouTube Live" event in November 2008, did a prominent campaign with TurboTax in 2009, was featured in a Super Bowl ad by Vizio in 2010 and just recently worked on a product launch with Hasbro. I dropped out of my Ph.D. program with a Master's degree in the summer of 2008 and moved to Los Angeles to pursue entertainment full time. I would not have been able to do that without an Internet audience and the resulting opportunities.

What do you think differentiates you from other voice actors and musicians?

Most people say I have an unusually deep voice for my stature and that my music belies easy categorization. Sometimes in entertainment, you just have a shtick — a combination of factors that fits a vacant sensation in the public taste. I don't wake up feeling like I compete with a lot of other people for uniqueness. Maybe I compete with them for exposure, but not particularity. You see artists like Ke\$ha and Lady Gaga who bend over backward to be particular. I guess I don't have that problem. What you see is what you get. It probably doesn't work for everything, but it works very well for some things. \

When you saw traction on your first YouTube video, how were you able to capitalize on it?

Everybody wants to know how much money everyone else makes and how they do it. This social curiosity must come from evolving in the jungle. Before civilization, if your neighbor had a fire and two cooked animals, you had better figure out how they did it. We have an insatiable urge to investigate individual success built into our genes.

Generally speaking, YouTube income comes from three places. First, there are ads that YouTube runs against video traffic in the YouTube Partner Program. Second, there are retail items like apparel and music tracks that you can tell your YouTube audience to buy. Finally, there are advertisers that sponsor uploaded videos. I have been able to capitalize on YouTube success through each of these methods.

What three pieces of advice could you give people who are looking to make it big on the Internet?

First, I am always surprised by how many people choose unmarketable names. If you Google your startup brand name and lose the search war to Internet noise, you need to restart with a brand name that gets zero results. If your brand name is a victim of search confusion, the costs of your own business instantly skyrocket because you must invest in expensive search optimization. The risks of investing in your business skyrocket because whatever dividends can be measured in market share or notability are diluted across search competitors. Too many conversations I have with friends seeking advice end bluntly with, "That name is a problem. Just Google it."

Second, there is a lot to be said for gearing content toward what is already popular in search. PBS just made a YouTube video in which Cookie Monster auditions to host "Saturday Night Live." (<http://youtu.be/C-PkQRh3QXA>) Why? "SNL" is popular in search and therefore in the public consciousness. Publishing related content that diverts search traffic from relevant topics has a Midas touch: It makes you relevant, too. Sometimes you'll even get lucky like Greyson Chance and become as relevant as the content you related yourself to.

Finally, it is also helpful to publish regularly. The Internet is truly a global city that never sleeps. Failing to publish regular content is like having a store in Times Square that is open only 9–5. The economics just don't work. You miss too many new eyeballs and lose too many old eyeballs if you are not pushing branded content regularly.

Dan Schawbel is the publisher of Personal Branding Magazine and the Founder of Millennial Branding.



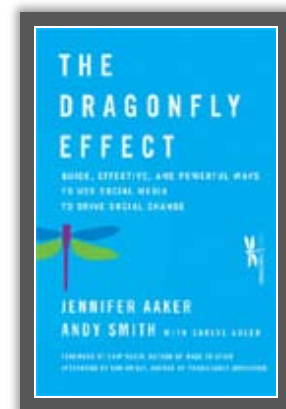
The December Book Review

Georgina Taylor, Book Critic Columnist

The Dragonfly Effect: Quick, Effective and Powerful Ways to Use Social Media to Drive Social Change

By Jennifer Aaker and Andy Smith

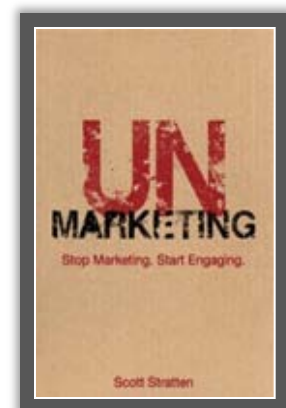
John Lennon once said that we have to “sell peace like a product.” Authors Jennifer Aaker and Andy Smith show us how in *The Dragonfly Effect*, a book about harnessing the power of social media for good. The dragonfly requires its four wings to move in harmony in order to fly, a metaphor that introduces the four pillars of their model: Focus, Grab Attention, Engage and Take Action. *Focus* refers to having a clear goal and call to action for the audience. The message must be one that *grabs their attention* and leads them to *engage*, at which point it’s on you again to *take action* and respond to their involvement. The authors present a strong and sustainable model for leveraging your social marketing touch points, peppered with specific tips on using different technologies and case studies of initiatives that exemplify harnessing social media for good. As inspiring as it is informative, *The Dragonfly Effect* is a must-read for anyone who realizes the incredible force of today’s technologies for bringing people together around a cause, a good idea, peace.



UnMarketing: Stop Marketing, Start Engaging

By Scott Stratten

The back cover of Stratten’s book gives readers a feel for what they’re in for in his book *UnMarketing*. His “Praise for the Author” section includes tidbits like “‘This book is the greatest business book in the world, besides mine.’ — Author who only gives testimonials to people who give him one in return.” This book reads like a manifesto against the core hypocrisy of marketing — that we continue to sell things in the ways we hate being sold to. A highly entertaining read, *UnMarketing* provides a strong argument against the Push & Pray method, presenting the favorable alternative as Pull & Stay. The latter method focuses on engagement as a means of building trust, creating value for the customer by giving them a sense of support from your business. *UnMarketing* is a great read, but don’t take my word for it. Like every social media marketing author should, Scott Stratten walks the walk — engage with this book and his various online touch points and you’ll see for yourself the value of his marketing approach.



Resonate: Present Visual Stories that Transform Audiences

By Nancy Duarte

Resonate is a beautifully designed book that preaches what it practices: storytelling through design. The layout of the book is intelligent, intuitive and highly conducive to her message: It is the job of the *presenter* to appeal to the heart and mind of an audience that has no responsibility to listen. Duarte presents speech-mapping techniques to help visualize a presentation, a number of paradigms and tips for effective speech-making, and case studies that prove her point about what all effective speech-givers have in common: their ability to resonate with an audience. A great complement to her 2008 book *Slide:ology*, *Resonate* takes the reader beyond slide design to story design. Read it as a guidebook, flip through it for inspirational fodder, just get it — if you expect your future will bring you once again to face an audience just waiting to pull out their Blackberries.



Georgina Taylor currently works in the consumer products division of L’Oreal.

The Evolution of Judson Laipply

Katie Konrath

You might not recognize Judson Laipply's name immediately, but you definitely know him. In fact, you've probably watched him dance — more than once! A couple years ago, Judson struck the equivalent of oil on YouTube when a short video of him dancing rocketed to the top of the charts.

That video — The Evolution of Dance — has been viewed over 157 million times and is one of the 10 most popular YouTube videos ever. In it, Judson blazes through four decades of iconic dances in six minutes. He dances like everyone from Elvis Presley to Michael Jackson to The Bangles to MC Hammer to *NSYNC. In a recent interview, we asked Judson how he managed to dance his way onto computer screens across the world and how he leveraged that to build his speaking business.

You've said before that you created your Evolution of Dance to bring a comedic end to your motivational speeches. What were you doing before the Evolution of Dance video to build your online presence for your speaking business?

When I first started speaking (in 2000), the Internet as we know it was just barely showing its power. Traditional marketing was still the most viable way to build business. I spent a lot of time going to conferences, building relationships and an awful lot of time making VHS promotional tapes. In 2003, I got a Hi8 videotape and was able to start using that to create promotional videos (now in both DVD and VHS) but still had to mail them out.

How did you create the dance that propelled you to YouTube superstardom?

I was sitting in an audience watching a black comic make fun of white people dancing at a wedding. His whole bit revolved around when he attended a wedding and was the only minority person there. He referenced the number of times a song would come on — and people would all run to the dance floor and do the same dance.

I had begun speaking on the topic of change and wanted to do something that reflected that at the end of my shows. I got a sudden burst of inspiration and realized it would be fun to see some of those dances he talked about in a medley. Then I thought it would be *really funny* to see them in order. I ran up to my hotel room and wrote down the title "The Evolution of Dance" and the first 12 or so songs that came to mind. The rest is history.

Did you do anything to help your Evolution of Dance video go viral on YouTube? Or was it a complete and wonderful surprise?

Not really. I never even told anyone it was up. Once I started getting some idea that there was traction, I sent out the link to my 500 or so MySpace friends. (MySpace...that's how we know it was a while ago!) That's really all I ever did.

Why do you think your Evolution of Dance was such a massive success?

Analytically, I think there were several factors that came into play:

- 1. Timing.** The rise of high-speed Internet was just reaching the tipping point in late 2005 and 2006. My video came out in the spring of 2006, and people were able to watch it without having to wait forever for it to load.
- 2. Language or lack of.** Music/dance are universally spoken. You don't have to understand a specific language to enjoy the music and dancing.
- 3. Media traction/YouTube's rise.** My video paralleled YouTube's rise into the mainstream. Every time the media wanted to talk about YouTube, my video was a top choice to use as an example.
- 4. Emotional nostalgia.** Every person has experienced at least one of the dances at a moment of high enjoyment, so the dance has an emotional anchor to that moment, which brings a smile to their face.

"You Don't have to understand a specific language to enjoy the music and dancing."
- Tay Zonday



Continued on Page 13

What changed after the video went viral?

It was very nice to have be able to be more reactive in my business (not recommended for long-term sustainability) than proactive. I was able to pick and choose what I wanted to do and pursue for a year or so. When the video began to gain traction and I realized it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, I decided to “ride the wave” until it slowed down. I have been fortunate to be able to help keep the wave up by doing things along the way to stay relevant.

What did you do to take advantage of all the attention in order to build your speaking business and online presence?

Mostly, it was staying true to who I was and what I wanted to do. I always wanted to be a speaker and I wanted to continue to do so. When I got offers or projects that would take me away from that, I was able to say no. I also made sure that whenever I was on TV, in an article, or mentioned in some media outlet, to make sure they said that I was a speaker.

If any of our readers succeed in having something of theirs go viral, what's the most important thing they have to do to make sure they don't shoot themselves in the foot?

You cannot live off a viral entity. I was a speaker before the video took off. I had over six years and over 500 shows to build my product and speaking skills. Once the video hit and I was able to gain credibility, I kept on doing what I do best. I didn't try to create something after the fact. To use a viral entity to your best advantage, it has to align with whatever your product or brand already is doing.

Finally, we have to ask: In many of your videos, you're always wearing the same Orange Crush shirt. Is that a deliberate personal branding decision?

The first video I put up, I gave no thought the what I was wearing. I just picked out the footage that had the clearest audio and video. For the second one, I wanted to make sure that people knew it was me. The original video was compressed, shot from a great distance and had a washed out spotlight that kept my face from really being seen. The Orange Crush shirt became a way to make sure people knew it was me.

Katie Konrath blogs about innovation and creativity at getFreshMinds.com.

What Should You Blog About?

Vikram Rajan, Entrepreneur Branding Columnist

You should realize by now that, sooner or later, blogging is going to be part of your personal branding. The question remains: “Why would anybody want to read your blog?” Of course, prospective clients may check you out before calling. Your blog also encourages referrals and brands you an expert. You're convinced yet still wondering, “What will I write from week to week?”

The simplest approach is to treat your blog posts as a series of interview questions. You're going to be discussing various aspects of your expertise. Truly, your blog articles will mirror the frequently asked questions you answer everyday. To help you get started, and to keep you blogging, I put together a list of 20 blog prompts.

1. Tell us about your latest or upcoming speaking engagement (or media reference).
2. Tell us about your target market and its need for your services.
3. What are the top two or three concerns of your clients?
4. Name three things your client should do or prepare before seeing you.
5. Are there a few tasks or a checklist most clients should do?
6. What are two or three misconceptions about your field or practice?
7. What should a new or prospective client ask you (or a peer professional)?

Continued on Page 14

Brazen Careerist

Featured Blogging



What Should You Blog About? – Continued from Page 13

8. Can you explain a popular acronym, jargon or credential in your field?
9. Are you doing anything with a charity or another organization?
10. Have you hired anyone new or are about to?
11. Can you applaud your partner, staff, client or colleague?
12. Any new regulation, ruling, legislation or obligation in your field?
13. Tell us about what you're reading relevant to your market/profession.
14. Have you learned anything new at a conference?
15. Tell us about and link to a recent report or survey.
16. Any important dates or new trends to address?
17. What makes you distinctive, different or better than your peers (or competitors)?
18. Tell us a client success story others can learn from.
19. Can you share with us a time when someone recommended you? A colleague, a client?
20. Any relevant examples or metaphors from pop culture (movies, sports, celebrities)?

Top number lists, checklists, diagrams, reviews and name dropping help to summarize your expansive knowledge into blog nuggets. Now, it's up to you to attach catchy titles and keyword tags to your topical answers. Blog posts become more interactive when you include bullet points, images and questions prompting comments.

It's not necessary to blog every day. Often, less is more: A weekly blog article is great; bi-weekly is fine. Consistency and relevance are more important than sheer quantity. Blog posts shouldn't be longer than 500 words; 300's ideal. Remember, you can link to longer articles, e-book downloads and slide presentations in your blog posts. While your writing should reflect your personality, blog posts should conform to standard conventions of grammar, spelling and punctuation. Remember, your blog writing reflects your accounting excellence.

Your e-mail signature is a great space to mention your blog. Readers will keep coming back as you remind them. Savvy blog readers will subscribe by RSS. Still, you should publish a newsletter that highlights excerpts of your blog posts. Likewise, publish links back to specific articles on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter.

As your contacts realize that you answer informative questions (and don't just self-promote), they will tell others about your resource. Thus, you have increased your word-of-mouth marketing. It all begins with playing those 20 questions. Surely, you know the answers already. It just takes discipline to sit down and write.

As entrepreneurs, we are busy! We prefer spending time attending to client matters, staff or family, rather than writing blog posts. Traditional ghost writing or subscribing to pre-written content seems like worthwhile alternatives. Unfortunately, such substitutes often create generic or drab results. Blogs should convey your personality along with your expertise. Your clients and referral sources don't want you sounding like every other accountant. Your blog writing should bring out what's special about you.

By playing 20 questions above, your blog will remain relevant and timely. You will never run out of ideas or topics to write about. Your blog will be informative while branding you. If you're having any trouble with blogging, please ask me your questions.



Vikram Rajan is a Practice Marketing Advisor™ with CoGrow. Vik helps insurance and investment advisors, accountants, lawyers and real estate professionals market themselves better within all the compliance and ethics rules. To learn more, visit www.ViksMarketingBlog.com.



Brain Solis Puts Brains Before Brand Ivana Taylor, Living the Brand Columnist

What's been your online branding strategy? For the answer to this popular question, I turned to Brain Solis, author of [*Engage: The Complete Guide for Brands and Businesses to Build, Cultivate, and Measure Success in the New Web*](#), and a globally recognized thought leader, digital analyst, sociologist, and futurist.

How did you build YOUR online personal brand? Was it intentional or serendipitous?

In the real world, I would be accused of being a little more introverted than extroverted. I had insight and experience and when I saw new media forming and gaining traction, I felt this might be the vehicle for me to put thoughts and ideas out. In the beginning, I wrestled with finding my voice. But I worked at creating a consistent message and delivering it.

What did you learn from the process?

With social media comes great responsibility. What I had learned initially was that life is not about finding yourself, life is about *creating* yourself. You really can craft a digital persona that you want everyone to see. I learned that it's not how *you* see yourself – it's how you think *others* will see you. I decided to use new media to intentionally define my persona.

What do you see that everyone else is missing when it comes to building your virtual brand?

This is a hot conversation right now. There are people who measure a brand's success by the amount of chatter and conversation that goes on. A successful brand will not just engage in REAL time – but at the RIGHT time. People need to converse less and take a moment to stop and think about what they are actually trying to communicate. Ultimately, you will not be measured on the quantity of conversations that you have, but on what actions and outcomes you generate as a result of your participation.

What would you say are the 3 MUST DO activities for every professional in 2011 to build their online presence?

- Think brand and message strategy. Step away from the keyboard and try to figure out who you are and what you're trying to become.
- Focus on adding value. You will be measured by your actions, by who you know and who knows you. Your social graph says a lot about you.
- Find the right people. Look to reach people who don't know you but should know you.

What's "Digital Darwinism"?

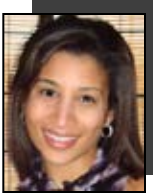
Life has a funny way of evolving around us. People and brands who don't focus on the quality and value that they provide to the digital eco-system will fall away.

What I learned from Brian Solis in our conversation is that you need to spend as much time crafting your personal brand as you would building the house you will live in. Find out what you have to offer, craft a message and a persona around it and then deliver on that promise. Measure your brand influence (Brian likes www.klout.com) and evolve your brand to stay valuable to your audience.

Ivana Taylor is the author of the marketing strategy blog [Strategy Stew](#) and a contributing expert to [Small Business Trends](#). Her boutique strategic consulting firm, [Third Force](#), specializes in helping companies find their best customers and be the one they choose – regardless of price.



"With social media comes great responsibility."
- Brian Solis



Do You Need Email Rehab? How to Work Smarter, Not Harder, When It Comes to Messaging

Debra Shigley, Workplace Success Columnist

Once hailed as a panacea for workplace efficiency, e-mail, as most professionals know, can become the bane of daily productivity. If you find yourself wasting hours sifting through pointless e-mails — and creating, rather than solving, problems through messaging — try these five simple tips to increase your e-mail efficacy.

1. Don't write long e-mails if you don't want to receive them.

People tend to mirror each other's style and format on e-mail (e.g., if they if they abbreviate, you'll abbreviate). Make your e-mails short and sweet. The simple inclusion of salutations — hello, thank you, talk soon — or an occasional, well-placed exclamation point/graphic icon keeps a brief e-mail from sounding terse.

2. Block out time to respond.

Many successful individuals set aside a specific time each day (say, 4 p.m.) to respond to all non-urgent e-mails. By compartmentalizing and focusing your energy, you're less likely to get distracted from projects you're working on throughout the day.

3. Use the rule of threes

Let's face it: E-mail can be a lazy person's tool! If you've exchanged more than three e-mails with someone over a particular issue (e.g., what week should we schedule the conference?), then it's time to just pick up the phone and hash it out. Come on, you remember how to dial digits!

4. Avoid conflict resolution over e-mail

So much is lost in terms of tone and body language. If you have a pressing dilemma, or worse, you've messed up a project at work, better to stop by your boss's office for a two-minute chat than try to craft a perfectly worded message. Moreover, the more sticky the situation, the less you may want an e-mail paper trail. E-mails last forever, and many an employment law case has been won or lost over some "smoking gun" e-mail that seemed benign at the time. Just saying.

5. Don't trade efficient for effective

Research has shown that too much reliance on high-tech communication can actually hurt business relationships. Why? Relationships need to be "recharged" with face-to-face contact that helps build trust and fosters teamwork and engagement. Think about it: It's the same with personal relationships. Texting or e-mailing your friends and relatives is never *really* good enough; you need a visit every now and then to truly stay connected.



Debra Shigley is a journalist and author of the book [*The Go-Getter Girl's Guide: Get What You Want in Work and Life \(and Look Great While You're at It\)*](#).



From Traditional to Internet Superstar An Interview with Amy Martin Maria Elena Duron, Brand-u-university

What does it take to create and develop your personal brand online? We talked to Amy Martin recently to ask her just that. Martin is a social media guru and the founder of Digital Royalty, a digital integration and social marketing firm based in Phoenix. Her company helps celebrities, entertainment and corporate brands, as well as professional sports leagues and athletes build, measure, and monetize their digital universe. Some of Digital Royalty's clients include Shaquille O'Neal, UFC, Tony Hsieh, Discount Tire, and Hard Rock Hotel & Casino.

Martin believes that personal branding is crucial to any successful business, whether you're the CEO of a Fortune 500 company, a small business owner, or a sports league. Fortunately these days, there are so many resources available at our fingertips which allow us to do that, such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and the like.

To create your personal brand, you must first identify it, then come up with a strategy to promote it. If you're not sure where to start when it comes to defining your personal brand, Martin suggests trying to describe yourself to someone else.

Martin also reminds us that when it comes to branding, people don't associate with company logos and corporate headquarters, but with the person and a personality. Humans connect with humans, not logos, she says. This is where social media steps in, as it allows big corporations and celebrities to connect with consumers on a more personal level.

What three tips would you give to someone wanting to create a solid identity online?

1. Listen to both your existing audience and the audience you're seeking to connect with. This is the number one suggestion I give brands and individuals. If you listen carefully, you will have an easier time in developing an effective strategy.
2. Identify the value you provide to your audience. Don't deviate from delivering this value and use this list as a litmus test every day.
3. It takes time to build relationships online, just as it takes time to build strong relationships in the physical world. The more time you spend with someone, the quicker those relationships will develop. Which means, the more time you spend online with your audience, the quicker you will build your online brand.

What's the greatest lesson you've learned in developing your own "virtual identity"?

Listening to your audience and knowing what value you provide to your audience is key.

Loved the fact that you can capture the attention of people with full inboxes! How did you get started?

In the beginning it was all about five steps: (1) listening; (2) experimenting; (3) listening (to the audience's feedback); (4) measuring; (5) refine and repeat. After a few years, the experiments turned into best practices.

Any other things someone "needs to know" in developing and managing their virtual self?

Find ways to bridge the virtual and physical worlds. Nothing replaces meeting someone in person but it's more efficient to maintain relationships virtually. Strive to become a social scientist.

Maria Elena Duron is president of buzz2bucks:word of mouth marketing firm and moderates #brandchat a weekly discussion on Twitter all about branding.





Build a Strong Brand with Harry McCracken

Howard Sholkin, Brand Communication Columnist

I interviewed Harry McCracken, founder of technologizer.com, which bills itself as a “smarter take on technology.” He left the top editorial management position at *PCWorld* two years ago to go out on his own. (I worked with Harry when he was at *PCWorld*.) Technologizer averages 400,000 unique visitors and 1.6 million page views per month. McCracken used his first PC (his dad’s TRS-80) 30 years ago and went online around the same time. His full-time reporting career began in 1991.

McCracken and his colleagues won numerous editorial awards during his tenure at *PCWorld*. Since its founding, Technologizer has been named one of PCMag.com’s favorite blogs and McCracken has been named TechRepublic’s #1 techie to follow on Twitter and Kiplinger’s Personal Finance’s best tech gadget guru. When he’s not writing for Technologizer, McCracken has appeared on CBS News, ABC World News Tonight and Fox News. He has accomplished all of this as an office-less, one-person company. McCracken explains why he made the move and how he’s built a successful business.

When did you think of going into business for yourself and why?

PCWorld was a great gig, but *PCWorld* existed before I got there, and I knew it would do fine without me. I decided that the Internet provided a unique opportunity for a journalist to build a brand from scratch on very few resources and to reach large numbers of readers — and that trying to do so was the single most exciting thing I could do.

You had a reputation with a well-known media brand, *PCWorld*. How did you leverage where you came from to establish your own brand?

Thirteen-plus years with *PCWorld* certainly helped; I had some credibility and lots of good connections. I hoped that I'd be able to transfer much of that value to my own business reasonably seamlessly, and it's worked great so far.

How did the Web aid your plans? What parts do social media and networks play in supporting Technologizer?

Without the Web, none of this would be possible. If I'd said I wanted to start a print magazine on a shoestring and reach hundreds of thousands of readers almost instantly, people would have rightly thought I was nuts. On the Web, it can happen. Technologizer.com is the single most important part of Technologizer, but from the start I knew we had to go where smart people were rather than expect them all to come to us. So our presence on Twitter and Facebook is very important, and they've turned out to be major sources of traffic to the site.

You've been in business almost two years. What are some things you have learned? Any surprises, and how did you handle them?

We launched in July 2008, so it's been a bit over two years. A lot of my original theories have panned out, but the biggest surprise is a neat one: When I started the site, it didn't occur to me that a major brand like *TIME* would be interested in partnering with a small one like Technologizer. We produce original stories that appear weekly on TIME.com and in some issues of *TIME Magazine*, all under the Technologizer name.

Where do you see Technologizer in a year or two?

One of the good things about running a small website is that you can do much of your planning on the fly. But my single biggest emphasis with the site is introducing it to new people and broadening its reach. That starts with creating content that people care about and want to tell their friends about.

Howard Sholkin has more than 36 years of journalism and marketing communications [experience](#). He is the Director of Corporate Communications at IDG.



“The Internet provided a unique opportunity for a journalist to build a brand from scratch.”
- Harry McCracken



Become Well-Known Blogger An Interview With Brian Clark Ryan Paugh

Brian Clark is the CEO of [Copyblogger Media](#), a serial entrepreneur and a recovering attorney. Brian built three successful offline businesses using online marketing techniques before switching to a producer model that involves building, monetizing, and occasionally selling online media properties. For this issue of *Personal Branding Magazine* I spoke with Brian about how online writers and content producers can command attention, create engagement, and influence people as powerful players in the new media revolution.

What drove you to stop building offline businesses and start working in the online space?

My previous business involved real estate brokerage, both commercial and residential. But 100% of our marketing and processes were online. So, I've been building businesses powered by online marketing for over a decade, and in 2005 I simply decided I wanted to eliminate all offline aspects.

What is unique about Copyblogger and how does it help define the virtual you?

When I started Copyblogger in January of 2006, what made it unique was the approach it took to blogging and online marketing -- that what we're really doing (creating content and copywriting) is not new, only the context of online social media is different. I originally started the site so I could demonstrate what I knew and could do in order to attract other joint venture media projects, but it became a brand and a business unto itself.

How do you think that the web has changed since you launched Copyblogger in 2006?

The web is always changing, but the fundamentals of attracting attention and converting that into a viable business remain the same -- providing exceptional value before asking for anything in return, demonstrating expertise, being likeable, etc. With social media gone mainstream, the web today maybe more crowded, but there's more opportunity than ever for your message to spread organically from person to person.

What's more difficult about blogging today? Can you still make an impact in such a crowded space?

On one hand, people aren't as generous with linking out like they were several years ago. On the other hand, sharing content on Facebook and Twitter has become a new form of status, so as long as you have good content, you can not only make an impact, you can make a huge impact.

What are the biggest copy writing mistakes that you see people make on their websites and blogs?

A lot of people can't write good titles (headlines), and some people think they shouldn't have to, that the content itself is all that matters. Sadly, that's not how people function -- you've got to promise them great content with your headline, or they'll never click over in large enough numbers.

How much time do you recommend that new bloggers spend worrying about SEO?

At first, very little, because until you have links or significant social media sharing, you won't rank anyway. That being said, people don't seem to understand that keyword research is incredibly valuable because it tells you the language your audience is using, and you can use it back to them so they respond. Do that with SEO copywriting best practices, and you end up with targeted search traffic too.

Continued on Page 20

"Provide exceptional value before asking for anything in return."

- Brian Clark



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Do you have any copy writing tips for people using social networks (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) to market?

Have great content. So many people think they can simply hop on Twitter, get a bunch of low value followers, and cash in. The power of social networks, Twitter and Facebook in particular, is the viral effect sparked by the sharing of content, not sales pitches. This is why "content marketing" is the new big buzz phrase -- it works better than traditional advertising, because it's virtual word-of-mouth powered by value -- and it exposes you to new people daily.

Ryan Paugh is the Co-founder and Community Manager for BrazenCareerist.com, the leading social network for Gen-Y.



4 Tips for Creating a Virtual Presence

Ardath Albee

In an increasingly digital world, establishing a virtual presence is a necessity. Creating a virtual presence is about presenting a packaged view of your skills, expertise and personality to help people get to know you through what they see, read and hear about (or from you) via the online channels you frequent.

It's likely that you'll create profiles on a variety of platforms, so it's important to do some preparation work before creating them. The aim is to present a consistent persona across all platforms to ensure the perception people have of you is credible.

Create 3 Biographies. You'll need long, short and very brief versions of your biography. Use the longer versions for your LinkedIn profile and your blog's About page. Use shorter versions on Google profiles and other membership community sites. Twitter's bio limits you to 160 characters. Do not write these in resume style; write them more personally as if you are speaking to someone. Allow your personality to shine through. Start with the longer version and then extract key points to create the short and brief versions. Creating bios before you start will help you present a consistent presence across all of your online profiles.

"Google" Yourself. Type your name into Google, Yahoo, Bing and other search engines to see what, if any, information is available about you online. Set up a Google Alert with your name in quotes to make sure you keep abreast of where you're referenced in the future. This is helpful for thanking people who mention you, adding links to your blog or, worst case, addressing anything controversial that may arise.

Determine Your Goals. How you go about creating a virtual presence will depend upon your goals. What will you use your online presence to achieve? Do you want to become known as an expert in a specific area? Are you interested in building a network of like-minded professionals? Do you want to learn more about your industry or how to advance your career? Based on your goals, do some research to learn where that information is being discussed or the people you'd like to know participate. Make a list of platforms to use given what you've learned. For business professionals, I recommend LinkedIn, Twitter and a community site such as Focus.com as well as a blog.

Choose an Avatar. An avatar is the picture you'll use as an identifier for your virtual presence. Because of the normally thumbnail size, a close-in headshot works best. Until you've developed a solid presence, I suggest you use the same avatar across all your online profiles. This helps people recognize you're the same person they interacted with via another online channel. With this preparatory work complete, you're now ready to create your profiles and begin participating online. Remember to listen first, share helpful and relevant insights and promote others more than promoting yourself, and you'll be off to a great start.

*Ardath Albee, CEO of her firm [Marketing Interactions, Inc.](http://MarketingInteractions.com), helps B2B companies with complex sales create eMarketing strategies that use contagious content to turn prospects into buyers. Ardath authors the popular Marketing Interactions blog. Her book, *eMarketing Strategies for the Complex Sale*, was published by McGraw-Hill. Follow Ardath on Twitter at [@ardath421](https://twitter.com/ardath421).*



Accidental Branding: How I Created the Virtual Creative Sage™

Cathryn Hrudicka

Most branding consultants will tell you to be strategic and even scientific about your branding process for a company, including a small business. But sometimes, you can brand yourself accidentally. That happened, in a way, to me when I changed the business model and some of my key service areas over a period of a few years.

My company, which had been established in several markets for a few decades as a public relations, marketing and nonprofit management consulting firm, was known as Cathryn Hrudicka & Associates — a generic positioning of my name with the added implication that I owned a company of some scale. I was not just an independent “contractor”; I was a business owner with a staff and collaborators (the “associates”). However, the name was not particularly colorful or descriptive.

In the early 2000s, I decided to choose a new name that would be a better fit with my personality and the spirit of my business but would still leave me some “wiggle room” and would buy some time while I more clearly defined the newly developing vision for my business, including the new offerings and market niches.



On the spur of a moment, I came up with [Creative Sage™](#) and spontaneously took the pulse of a few people in the room — yep, they liked it and thought it fit me. But what would I do with the new name? How would I roll it out? And isn't a brand more than just a name?

I pondered these questions over the next few years as I gradually moved my business into new areas and industry niches. I also changed my website several times, working with different designers, and began blogging. By the mid-2000s, I had settled on two different branches for my business, gradually phasing down Cathryn Hrudicka & Associates and introducing Creative Sage™. I had two sets of business cards, logos and blog sites. I had become an innovation program designer and consultant, a creativity expert, an executive and transition coach.

By then, I was using social media extensively and became Creative Sage on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Flickr, YouTube and other networks. The name stuck as my company evolved. I needed an avatar and — again, a lucky accident — I uploaded a simple photo of myself in a sunhat with an orange scarf around it, and people responded — it seemed to fit the Creative Sage™ image.

Now, as my company evolves, I'm gradually replacing the hat photo with professional but natural photos and will be launching new programs in 2011–2012. Stay tuned... I think the point here is that my personal branding has been mainly intuitive, yet successful because I've listened to people's comments and used informal crowd sourcing and open innovation techniques to gauge market responses — and I've made changes in my business model and offerings in a similar way. Creative, ongoing, managed transition is what business is all about. To the rest of the world, you *are your company*.

Cathryn Hrudicka & Associates is an expert media relations, social media, marketing and publications consulting company with a proven track record of obtaining extensive media coverage for clients in the entertainment industry, business and technology, and for notable leaders in the nonprofit world, for over twenty years. She is the Founder, CEO and Chief Imagination Officer, of Creative Sage™ and Cathryn Hrudicka & Associates.



Your Reputation Precedes You

Michael Durwin

I've spent the last 20 months watching my son grow from a squirming, squeaking, leaking thing to a little boy with a fun and vibrant personality. We have all spend our entire life developing our personalities. We learn through trial and error what personality traits have a positive and negative impact on our interactions with others. The lessons we learn help us navigate through our personal, professional and public lives. We don't all learn the lessons well, making it difficult to function in society.

When you take your life online, it's no different: We learn which parts of our virtual personalities have positive and negative impacts on others. Unfortunately, what takes us years to learn with people whom we may never see again or who care enough to give us another chance happens in microseconds online and travels around the world to be seen by hundreds or thousands. You know what else? It lasts forever, and anyone can find it online.

Many people refer to your online presence as your "virtual" persona. In an age when parents discipline their children on Facebook, potential employers evaluate you via LinkedIn and clients' lawyers monitor your blogs, your online persona is an active and visible part of your real-life personality. It reveals your character to people you may never meet. So don't be anyone but yourself online, and if you wouldn't say it to your mom, don't say it online.

We've all made mistakes. Most of us have misquoted someone at one point, expounded on subjects on which we're poorly informed, or even passed on bad information we thought was good. We're only human, right? We can be forgiven, right? The Internet can be a very unforgiving place. It can also be an unforgetting place. When you're sharing an opinion online, it can last forever. When you share a fact, researched or not, it can take on a life of its own.

Whether you're the curator of information with millions of followers or you're just beginning to dress your online presence, there are a few important things to consider that will help you craft a successful online presence:

1. **Think before you tweet (as previously noted):** If you wouldn't say it to your mom, don't say it online.
2. **Back up your facts:** Make sure you trust your sources before you quote them.
3. **Learn from your mistakes:** Don't be too proud to apologize.
4. **There is no "virtual" you:** Your online self is a direct extension of your real world self.
5. **Be yourself:** But try to be the best you can be — your reputation precedes you.



Michael Durwin is a seasoned online creative marketer turned entrepreneur and founder of Ranql.Me. Some of his clients include HBO, Microsoft, EMC, Reebok, J Jill, and ABC.



It's Only Virtual Until You Meet Someone

Rich Nadworny

One of the most exciting parts about the digital space is the ability to reinvent yourself virtually. The Web provides a wealth of places where we can try out different personas to see which ones best fit. The ability to reinvent yourself has always been one of the great strengths of our nation. Previously, you moved from the east coast to the west coast. Now, you go on Twitter or Facebook or start your own blog.

The biggest error people make in this reinvention is a simple one: They forget that while you can talk the talk digitally, sooner or later you're going to actually meet some of the people you're talking with online. And in real life, you have to walk the walk. If you're not careful, all of that time spent crafting your online identity can come crashing down and, in the worst case, cause some serious backlash.

Here are some things to watch out for when you decide to create your online brand:

If you stand for something online, you'd better act that way in real life.

Most people have a point of view online that they develop to differentiate themselves from the rest of the noise. When you start developing your own unique point of view, it should be something you really believe in, rather than something that's popular at a certain point in time. But you can't just write about it online; you have to *be* that way in real life. If you talk about the need for collaboration and helping people in your virtual world, you'll need to be open and help real people when they ask for it. It's part of your authenticity, which is critical to any brand.

Getting attention can be good or bad.

How are you building your connections? Do you engage in conversation and dialogue? Or do you write outrageous posts and comments on other people's blogs? It might seem that the latter behavior will get you more attention more quickly. It's a short-term strategy, though. We want our online connections to help us grow our personal brands. If you're just a pain in the butt, people will turn you off sooner or later. More importantly, when you really need other people to help, they won't be there for you.

Don't just create online.

If you're looking to create a powerful online persona, make sure you use that persona offline as well. In fact, use your online persona to create events and connect people to you and to each other by meeting with them face to face. I've seen few things more powerful than people who've finally met in person after following each other on Twitter for a year. Don't make the mistake of hiding behind your computer. People lose their power by staying virtual.

Creating your online identity and trying on new personas is incredibly empowering. Remember to show up, in person, as the real you. That's where the real strength of this medium lies.

***Rich Nadworny** is a digital strategist and online marketer with over 13 years experience. Before starting his own firm, [Digalicious](#), Rich was Interactive Creative Director, Digital Strategist and Partner at Kelliher Samets Volk for 9 years. Rich has helped develop digital strategies and tactics for companies including State Street, Unicef, Stowe Mountain Resort, and Time Warner.*



5 Tips to Personal Brand “Working Capital”

Sam Decker

In business, you put assets to work to create value. Working capital is a type of asset that is most directly used to expand and grow the business.

Think of your personal brand as working capital for the business. Some may argue building a personal brand is an ego thing. Change that thinking. A personal brand builds credibility and trust. That leads to relationships. And relationships help grow a business. As long as you’re authentic, give back and are transparent in your motivations, you can steer clear of narcissism!

Here are 5 principles to build your personal working capital:

1. Give (or offer to give) — Social media is primarily about an exchange. While you can broadcast messages (as Guy Kawasaki does), a *personal* brand is best built by facilitating give and take. That might look like connecting people, retweeting or contributing to others’ ideas and projects.

2. Show up — While a personal brand can be created online, you add more dimension and memorability when you meet someone in person. Pick your core audience, including the influencers, and pick the times and places to see them in person. Ideally, you come into a context that lends credibility to your brand, such as you speaking, or a VIP cocktail hour, or you’re on a board of advisors.

3. Use sound bites — Your reputation and contributions are shared in sound bites, whether it is in person or a tweet. Think about how you describe yourself and your ideas in *Made to Stick* ways. (Read that book.) I’ve seen Chris Brogan (social media guru) speak several times, and you’ll notice his sentences are often fewer than 140 characters when he speaks. Can you guess why? Twitter.

4. Mark your social ecosystem territory — Do you have accounts set up on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Scribd, SlideShare, a blogging platform and any other relevant networks where your profile and content can be discovered? Think about how you can get your message out in a way that is relevant to the context of each network. Focus on the titles and words you use, making them SEO friendly to your topic and editorially interesting (like this “5 tips” article).

5. Amplify creation — If you write a blog or an article or create something that’s worth sharing, then share it! I see too many people write a blog and assume they’ve reached a mass audience. Amplify your creations through your social ecosystem, sharing and then picking specific people who should be notified directly.

Every company’s brand is the result of the people inside, moreover now in this reputation economy. Build those brands, and you’ve created a strong asset base to build value into the company.

Sam Decker is a recognized expert in eCommerce, word of mouth marketing, and direct marketing. A frequent speaker at marketing and eCommerce events and author of an award-winning marketing blog (www.deckermarketing.com), Sam brings more than 15 years of marketing and online retailing experience to Bazaarvoice. As Chief Marketing Officer, Sam is responsible for leading Bazaarvoice’s corporate marketing and PR.





Staking Your Brand's Claim in the Digital World

Susan Gunelius

A fundamental brand-building requirement in the 21st century is an online presence. Fortunately, you can stake your brand's claim in the virtual world using the tools of the social Web without spending a lot of money. The key to success is to follow the three primary rules of brand building — persistence, consistency and restraint — in all of your online activities.

1. Persistence

The first step to building your brand's online reputation is creating a core branded online destination such as a blog. Begin to publish amazing content on your core branded destination that is useful and meaningful to consumers. In other words, persistently create *share-worthy* content that people want to talk about, positioning that content to spread further across the Web than you can accomplish alone.

As you spend more time actively engaging with your target audience across the social Web, you'll develop relationships with them that foster emotional involvement in your brand. Invite those people back to your core branded online destination for further discussion and to find more of your share-worthy content. In time, some of your audience will become loyal to you and evolve into your vocal brand advocates. They'll share your content, talk about your content, and defend your brand from negative attacks. You can't buy that kind of word-of-mouth marketing!



2. Consistency

Next, create additional branded online destinations in order to surround your audience with branded experiences across the Web so they can self-select how they want to experience your brand in the digital space. However, all destinations must consistently communicate your brand promise, and all roads must always lead back to your core branded online destination, which includes your offline brand-building efforts as well. A fully integrated marketing plan that ties all of your brand-building efforts together is the ultimate goal of brand-building in the 21st century. If your efforts operate in silos, you won't benefit from the organic growth opportunities that inherently come from the conversations and content sharing of the social Web.

3. Restraint

At the same time, remember that your words live online for a very long time, so it's imperative that you exercise restraint in your online conversations. If you take the time to integrate your branded online destinations, the content you publish or discussions you join on one destination can connect to your other branded online destinations. In other words, *all* of your online activities must accurately reflect your brand promise or else the work you've done to build your brand presence could be compromised.

Building branded online destinations and leading your audience to your core branded online destination is a long-term strategy that has the potential to deliver significant results, but the heart of your online activities must always be rooted in the fundamental steps of brand building. Act with those basics in mind at all times, and your online brand reputation will grow to new heights of success.

Susan Gunelius is the author of numerous marketing, branding and social media books, including [30-Minute Social Media Marketing](#). She spent over a decade directing marketing programs for some of the largest companies in the world, and today, she is President and CEO of [KeySplash Creative, Inc.](#), a marketing communications company. You can connect with Susan on Twitter ([@susangunelius](#)), [Facebook](#), or [LinkedIn](#).



You Are What Google Says You Are Tom Martin

Smart employees know that ultimately, the most important brand they'll ever manage is their own. But I'm not inventing that idea. No, that honor goes to Mr. Tom Peters and his seminal article on that topic in *Fast Company's* Aug./Sep. 1997 issue, "[The Brand Called You](#)."

But a lot has changed since 1997. Today, you have an arsenal of tools available to build your personal brand: blogs, social networks like LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, content sites like SlideShare, even the comments you leave on other sites/blogs. It all rolls up to create an online version of you... the one everyone finds via Google. But how do you get started managing or creating an online brand?

First, define your most marketable talent or ability, the one that *will create a point of difference*, something you become known for that will translate into opportunities, jobs and success independent of the companies you work for today.

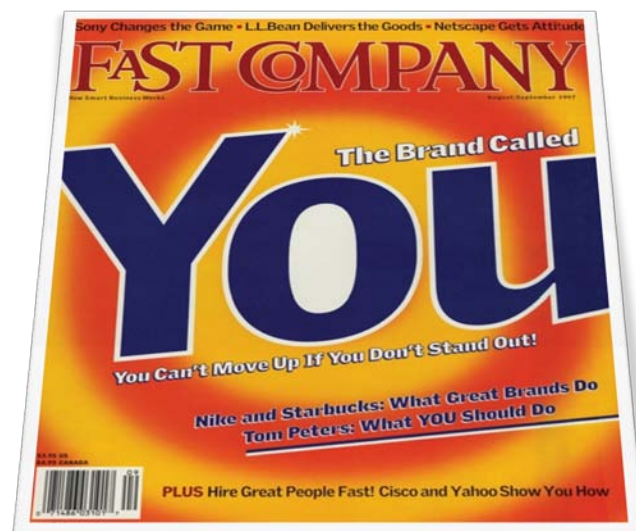
Second, do an online search for that talent as well as searches for keywords and phrases that folks would use to talk about that talent. Study what you find in the first two pages of those searches. Look at the content, the people and the companies that rise to the top. Pay attention to how the top-ranking sites are presenting themselves and the talent for which you want to be known.

Third, select the most appropriate platform to showcase that talent. For instance, if you're a great presenter/salesman, record yourself presenting a compelling issue that you want related to your personal brand and upload that to a video-hosting site like YouTube or Vimeo. Upload a copy of your slide deck to a site like Slideshare.net, and then share the video and slide deck via your blog and your Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn profiles.

Fourth, use [search.twitter.com](#) to find people who are looking for speakers on this topic and offer to speak at their conference/event. You can send them a [link to your previous talks](#) housed on your blog. If they invite you to speak, record that session and repeat the steps above. Most importantly, *always* be sure to promote the fact you're speaking on the topic via your blog, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. This creates more content linking your talent to you. Google will find and index.

If you're not invited to speak at conferences, etc., no worries; go to your local library and reserve one of their conference rooms (usually free). Then invite friends and business associates who will find the talk interesting and record that. You don't have to be fancy: Use a simple Flip cam. The online world forgives production quality and rewards content quality. So focus on the content.

Lather, rinse and repeat as needed until your name is synonymous with a Google search for key terms associated with your key talent. By focusing on a few key brand attributes and creating a stream of quality online content linking you to that key talent, you'll begin to create the online *Brand You* that Peters talks about and that Google finds.



Tom Martin is the founder of Converse Digital [<http://www.ConverseDigital.com>] where he helps people and brands monitor, create and engage in digital conversations to grow their online brand. Want to talk? Just email ConverseDigital@gmail.com, follow @TomMartin on Twitter or subscribe to his personal blog, <http://www.HelpMyBrand.com>.



Own Your Online Footprint

Chris Moody

Today, having a personal brand online is more important than ever. Resumes are being replaced with blogs. Your personal references are being trumped by your online footprint. Here are five things we can do to build an online presence.

1. Get your own domain.

Grab a domain that resembles your name and put a site there. Most hosts have one-click Wordpress installs, and you can have a branded site or blog set up and running in several hours. Even if you have no plans to create your own blog, install a Wordpress theme that aggregates your existing social profiles to have one place for all your information. (Think of it like a branded flavors.me.)

2. Get a branded e-mail address.

After getting a domain, it is extremely easy to use Gmail and have a hosted e-mail address (me@mydomain.com). Even if that isn't an option, you can secure a Gmail address that includes some combination of your name or initials. This is important when you're exchanging info, sending resumes or using your e-mail address professionally. While it is great to know that you're a huge Harry Potter fan, telling a potential employer that your e-mail is hogwartz4life@hotmail.com might not be the professional image you're trying to represent.

3. Secure social media profiles.

While you may not have plans to use Twitter, LinkedIn or Facebook, these sites have huge influence on search engines and might outrank your own domain. Having your name locked down in multiple places can help people find you and secure your space on the Web if you ever choose to use it. Use knowem.com to find all the places your name is available to register with the ones you plan to use or want to have a presence on.

4. Create an online footprint.

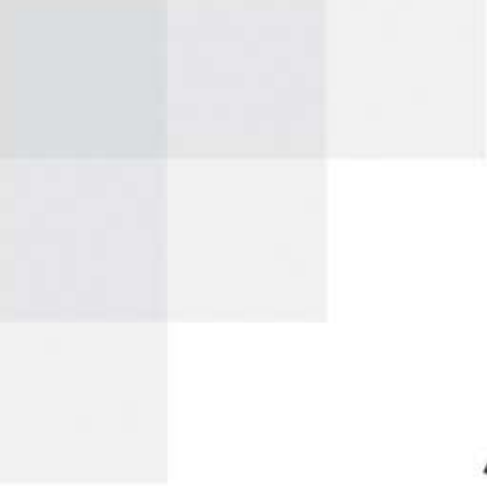
When I interview a candidate for a position that has anything to do with branding or online marketing, I set their resume to the side during an interview. I always start with one question: "Can you walk me through your online footprint?" For me, my blog is my hub. From there you can read my ramblings on marketing, branding and design but branch out to Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and even Flavors.me for more social networks. I share my posts on Twitter and Facebook but try to pull most of the conversation online at chris-moody.com. Walking an interviewer through that footprint is **much** more powerful than going over bullets on a resume. Map out what networks you plan to use and how they feed each other and practice communicating that.

5. Build and engage your network.

Use Twitter to search for folks with similar interests and watch who they're talking to, what they're talking about and find ways to add value to the conversation. Building relationships within your social and professional circles will help you build expertise and connections. This alone has led to numerous hiring and business development opportunities.



Chris Moody is a Product Marketing Manager at Phonebooth.com. He leads their marketing and social media efforts that have been covered by Mashable, Lifehacker, RWW, PC World and many other publications. Chris is also a guest lecturer / co-course developer for a MBA social media course at NC State University. Follow Chris at chris-moody.com.



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