

Your Personal Brand Identity

by **Steven D Huff**

"Give up your on-the-air humor," a young disc jockey in Oakland, California was told by his station manager. While contemplating what to do, the disappointed disc jockey pulled a discarded industry magazine from the waste basket. In the journal, he noticed biographies, record-sales statistics, and interesting facts about pop singers and musicians.

Later that evening, before playing a song, the disc jockey entertained listeners with interesting anecdotes and obscure information about each artist. Then he would identify the singer after playing one of their songs. Listeners responded, the station manager was pleased, and Casey Kasem was off and running. His nationally syndicated "American Top 40" radio show became a national success spanning several decades.

Andrew Carnegie once defined success this way. He said, "I believe the true road to preeminent success in any line is to make yourself master of that line!" Casey Kasem became the master of music trivia and it became his "brand" identity. In other words, his name became synonymous with pop music trivia. Likewise, business people can establish various personal and professional qualities that become part of their brand identity.

Here are a few personal practices that will enhance your brand identity:

- **Be A Problem Solver** -- Someone once joked, "The world now has so many problems that if Moses had come down from Mount Sinai today, the two tablets he'd carry would be aspirin." Of course, business people today face numerous problems and challenges, and there is no shortage of people who can identify them. The real difference is being able to find solutions.
- **Do More Than Required** -- Almost everyone has heard J. Paul Getty's personal formula for success. Getty said, "Rise early, work late, strike oil." Rarely does success come from a lucky break. The reason most people don't find success, and the reputation that comes with it, is because it comes disguised as hard work. Be known for your work ethic, and doing more than is required.
- **Live (and die) By Your Convictions** -- In 1776, during the Revolutionary War, a young man was captured while spying on the British. His solid patriotic conviction prompted a response that will be forever recorded in history. Nathan Hale said, "I regret that I have but one life to give for my country." Few people will go to any lengths to uphold their convictions. If you want to set yourself apart, learn to take a stand for what you believe to be right.
- **Persist Through Adversity** -- Muhammad Ali often talked about the grueling challenge training for a heavy weight fight. Once he commented, "I hated every minute of the training, but I said to myself, 'Don't quit. Suffer now and live the rest of your life as a champion.'" Remember this: If you want to establish a strong personal "brand" identity, and if you want the reputation of a champion, learn to persist through adversity.