

Coaching from the **milewalk Academy**

LEADERSHIP MONTHLY

LIVE

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Monthly Strategies, Tactics and Tools to Support Your Leadership Development

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Summary: Leadership Monthly Live for December 2019!

In this session, Andrew teaches the importance of personal branding!

If you're reading this, I KNOW you care about your personal and corporate reputation. With the importance of social media and "digital footprints," your online and offline brand is more important than ever.

Whether you like it or not, you need a stellar one because if you don't define your own personal brand others will decide internally for themselves. Don't leave this to chance.

So, let's discuss how to make sure you know how to shine on and offline!

1. Why is your personal brand important?

Let's face it. We are digital whether we like it or not. This matters whether you're inside your organization, outside your organization, between organizations, and from just about every imaginable direction. Consider these scenarios:

For your career progression outside your current company. A great reason to keep a stellar brand is it's popular for recruiters to use social media during the job interview process. A recent CareerBuilder survey indicated 70% of employers use social media to screen candidates during the hiring process and 43% of employers use social media to check on current employees. These numbers seem right to me.

For your cachet on behalf of your current company to help grow the business (if applicable). Companies want their people to have cachet when it comes to "being seen from the outside." Are you a sales person, thought leader, subject matter expert, or recruiter? This list goes on and on and might be applicable to you.

For your career progression inside your current company. You need to have a great internal corporate resume and reputation. That succession planning database should be filled with accolades and you ought to be a likable person. It helps climb the ladder.

Here's a mildly funny, but true story...Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon, is quoted as saying, "Your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room." I'm sure he wasn't the only one to say this. Probably the richest though.

"Do you want to focus on being successful or significant?" 4-28-19

2. Figure out who you are and where you're going.

The short version of this is your internal focal point. This might include your Elevator Pitch (a la Andy's Describe Yourself in One Sentence video).

Include who you are, what you do, for whom you do it, and how they benefit. That's a story in and of itself right there. Speaking of stories...

"If you don't have clarity on who you are or what value you offer, how do you expect anyone else to know? Get clear. Get focused. Get movin'."

3. Learn how to tell your story.

The longer version is you have a story and can use a few more words to tell it. This includes where you've been, what you've done, and what impact you've had on the world.

Everyone has a story. Only a few tell theirs (at all or well for that matter).

- What are the top 3, 5, or 10 unique things about you?
- What was a pivotal moment in your life/career?
- What are your stages? (You might know mine for example: School, Information Technology Consultant, Recruiter, Author, Coach/Trainer, Dog Daddy, Husband)

Create a seamless story with stages. Create mini stories too.

The best coach on telling your story is Bo Eason. He wrote *There's No Plan B for You're A-Game*. It's on my shelf. Can't wait to read it.

"You are not an actor in your life. You're the writer. If you dropped it for a while, just pick up the pen. It'll still have ink in it." 3-9-17

4. Do a little reconnaissance.

It's good to know what others think of you. The easiest way to know is ask.

Ask what they think your special gift is. Ask how they view you. And, remember, you KNOW you, but others have assembled a version of you in their mind. Find out what that version looks like.

5. Define your audience.

Ever so important is who you want to know you.

Keep in mind, your audience might also be someone you don't know yet, but want to "invite" (not literally) or attract to get to know you. This could be a recruiter or a prospect or a group you want to give a speech to.

Consider your coworkers, future employers, networking groups, communities, and so on. You can alter or expand this audience over time.

6. Define your level of visibility.

As you craft your brand, determine not only the target audience, but also how far you want your brand to reach. You can think in terms of range of geography (company, town, state, domestic, international) and market (industry, solution or process line, etc.) and other relevant parameters.

7. Identify relationships and get connected online and offline.

It's important to nurture and expand the reach of your brand. Who do you want to get connected with? Network with?

Who can you communicate with or interact with or learn from online? Use the social platforms such as LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

Don't be so quick to ignore these. You can become an instrumental part of a group or interact with influencers, authors, and many more key people to help you grow.

Consider who you want to associate with, affiliate/partner with, and professional communities you can join.

And, remember, who you associate with is every bit a part of your brand as what you directly share with the world!

"Merit can be bought, but passion—never. The only people able to change the world are those who truly want to. Unfortunately, the others will try to hold you back." 10-26-13

8. Create thought leadership material.

There is no greater accelerator of your personal brand than the collateral you share with others.

These days, anyone can create “How Tos,” editorial, opinion pieces, and other various forms of information sharing. Scroll through your LinkedIn feed and you will be barraged with these.

Don't let that deter you. If I would have thought that way, you would never be reading these very words!!!!!!

Here are a quick, ten wonderful ways to share your knowledge and perspective.

1. Projects (e.g., presentation packages you can discuss, LinkedIn Profile)
2. White papers (subject matter expertise to share your knowledge or attract customers)
3. e-zine Articles (for online magazines on anything related to your field)
4. Online articles (e.g. longform LinkedIn posts, personal blogging)
5. Press releases (did you recently join a company or do something major?)
6. Podcasts
7. Videos
8. Speaking engagements
9. Conferences
10. Personal website

The most important aspect of this is to get started and be consistent. While I enjoy sharing pieces of content every week, you might only need to do this monthly or quarterly. This will BUILD over time and stay with you forever.

“To most, you're merely a walking-around, daily “finished” product. Your experiences are invisible, just like your thoughts, the hard work, the 100s of writes that never make print, the rewrites, or even their rewrites. Life is like that. Share yours. It might make you more endearing...with a dash of piquancy. Oh. And don't forget to share something small each day...just like my daily dispatch.” 4-1-14

9. Establish your credentials and attach them to “your platform.”

In addition to your “shares,” you want to make sure your story and accomplishments are front and center and visible.

This is not bragging. This is sharing!

Here are ten sample “explanations” you should cite:

1. Detailed personal biography (or LinkedIn Summary or similar)
2. Important projects
3. Presentations
4. Publications
5. Certifications
6. Academic degrees
7. Awards
8. Associations
9. Affiliations
10. Speaking videos

10. Work the inside of your company.

The outside world should know you, but the inside world **needs** to know you.

They need you and your fabulousness. It'll also do you well to get connected, get involved, put forth the effort, be seen, and pursue the right opportunities.

Take every opportunity you can to volunteer, take on new assignments, and network with the right people.

As I like to say, “It’s not who you know. It’s not what you know. It’s who knows what you know.” Catchy, right?

11. Remember, the little things matter.

Details. The whole is made up of all the little details. So, make sure this stuff is in order:

- Pictures (wherever they are of you in all your beauty)
- Headlines
- Comments (on yours and other people’s pages, platform)
- Social media banners (LinkedIn, Twitter, and anything public)

Be clean and consistent.

Thought Provokers...

Below are some thought-provoking statements or questions for you to finish or answer. It will be much more effective if you truly engage and take the time to think about each one. Consider this a bit of structure to get yourself in order before building or enhancing your personal brand. Write this out. Don't type this out. You'll be surprised at what happens when you do that. 😊

1. The area I want to contribute and be known for in this world...

(Really think about this. Perhaps create your elevator pitch and your why!)

2. The most important aspects and interesting areas of my personal

evolution and story are... (Investigate the Bo Eason material if you want additional structure here.)

3. The people I want to help most and attract are... (You need to think about your audience...really think about them.)

4. Coaches, mentors, influencers, colleagues, and others I can get connected with and engage with who will help me build my personal brand include... (Identify people you know off the top of your head and spend time researching this too.)

5. Thought leadership material I can package up that's readily available includes... (Think quick-start stuff that you already have! And, don't underestimate its value to others even if it's second nature to you.)

6. A realistic schedule I can adhere to in developing content for my platform and brand is... (Identify the schedule, the deliverables, and start assembling what this branding can look like!)

Leadership Challenge...

Time to start building or enhancing your brand! Remember, this doesn't need to happen overnight. Start with the first step and build. You will be amazed at how much your brand can change in such a short period of time and how much content you can accumulate in one year. If you want to have a strong brand, it's more important to be clean and consistent than anything else!

Week 1: Create the centerpiece for your personal brand. What do you want to be known for? Identify clearly your headline or elevator pitch. This is about who you want to be going forward. It can be who you've been in the past, but keep in mind you are starting NOW.

Week 2: Take stock of what you have and what you'd like to build. Identify the few assets you have that can be "brand builders." These include presentations, projects, white papers, articles, or whatever else you already have completed. Additionally, identify the types of collateral and assets you'd like to build so you can start assembling your plan going forward. Routines are your very best friends going forward. They help you stay consistent.

Week 3: Assemble your team. Identify who you want in your corner. Who will help you grow yourself and your brand? Which people and groups do you want to associate with? Who do you want to meet? Start connecting with people. Take the steps. Work inside and outside your company.

Week 4: Polish up your profiles and visible pages! Start cleaning your pictures, banners, and so forth and add the collateral as appropriate. Then, keep adding and improving on a consistent basis!

Remember, remember, remember...this is a process that should be enjoyed over time. It doesn't need to all be done in a week.

I've spent years building my brand and it's still a work in progress. For me, it's fun to keep piling up all these great assets for you. The world needs you to help too!

Let me know how you're coming along on the challenge and, most importantly, have fun with it! ☺

