



EPISODE 34

# How to Build a Personal Farm Brand

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**TIM YOUNG:** We've all heard the term corporate branding, but what is a personal brand, and do farmers need one?

Hey, it's Tim Young of [Small Farm Nation](https://smallfarmnation.com)!

Today, I'm going to tell you why you need to develop your own personal farm brand, and how to do it.

From a marketing perspective, a sustainable farm business is quite unique in the scheme of business models.

Like other businesses (big and small), a sustainable farm business needs to build a strong business brand in order to thrive.

Yet, the heart of any farm business is, what?

**It's the FARMER.** After all, the farmer is what makes a farm, a farm.

And, the best farms are those where the farmer has established something of a personal brand that is just as strong as the farm brand he or she created.

For examples of this, look no further than Will Allen at [Growing Power](#), Will Harris at [White Oak Pastures](#) or the outspoken Bauer (farmer) [Willi](#) in Germany, who admonished his customers that all they care about is cheap, industrial food free of claims.

I would suggest you need the name Will or Willi to establish a personal farm brand, but there's this [farmer named Joel](#) who has also broken through the clutter and established a personal brand.

But, in each case, the personal brand is intertwined with the farm brand.

In other words, the perception of the farm business mirrors the perception of the farmer.

Of course, these farmers are well known, but how did that come to be?

After all, there's [over 3 million farms](#) out there, so why is it we only hear of a few well-known farmers?

And what's the secret to breaking through and establishing your own farm brand persona?

Here are 8 tips that can help you to achieve just that.

### **Personal Brand Tip # 1 – Take a Stand**

Leaders take stands, and that's what each of the farmers above have done.

Whether it's a stance FOR something (animal welfare, soil fertility, etc.) or

AGAINST something (CAFO's, GMO's, etc.), these leaders take a stand.

But it's more than that...they frame their message in such a way that paints a positive outcome for the consumer. In other words, they don't just "rant" about what's wrong.

They paint a vision of how the world and its inhabitants could be far better off by pursuing their vision. So people are drawn to them because they are associated with a vision of a better world.

## **Personal Brand Tip #2 – Be Consistently Present**

Whether it's through a blog, interviews, podcast or social media posts, leaders are consistently present. They drive their message home consistently and persistently.

If you're a larger operation and have access to public relations, then use the media for this.

If you're a smaller operation or one-person show, this is what blogging, social media and content marketing is all about. It levels the playing field.

Either way, just get out there with your message, consistently. After all, the saying is, "repetition is the mother of all learning," right?

So leaders drive their point home, and do so effectively because they...

## **Personal Brand Tip #3 – Create Sound Bites**

Wanna know why Donald Trump really beat Hillary Clinton? Just answer these questions, or ask anyone around you to:

What did Clinton want to do if she became president?

What did Trump want to do if he became president?

I defy you or anyone else to coherently answer the first question, since her losing slogan was nothing more than, "I'm with her."

As for the second question, we all know the answer. Trump wanted to "make

American great again." So folks on the Trump train repeated that mantra and, now we have years worth of exceptional Saturday Night Live material; and a continued career for Alec Baldwin.

Listen; sound bites work.

Several times, I've been picked up by the media—everything from widespread media like NPR and Fox & Friends to farm industry media like ACRES USA and others.

Often, the reason I was contacted was sound bites...ways I had distilled my message in a repeatable nugget.

For instance, Good Food Awards promoted my farm business [in a press release](#) because they picked up on this sound bite I said:

“If all dairies feed grain to their cows, and if all grain is essentially the same, then how unique can the cheeses really be?”

The point I was making, and wanted people to remember, is that milk from pastured cows results in a unique cheese flavor profile.

The sound bite is what people remember...it's what gets repeated. Think:

“Trust, but verify” – Reagan

“I have a dream” – King

“Ask not what you can do for your country...” – Kennedy

“Being president is like running a cemetery: you've got a lot of people under you and nobody's listening.” – Mr. Clinton

So, the goal of sound bites is to allow folks to recall what you said and why you said it. So don't just rant about what you believe in.

Put in the time to distill your message into sound bites so that are easy for others to carry the torch and repeat your message.

#### **Personal Brand Tip #4 – It's Not About You. It's About Them.**

What's in it for me. Start your message by asking that, from the customer's/reader's perspective. Whatever message you're trying to convey, start with, “what's in it for them?”

In other words, you want to change the world or create something for THEIR benefit. You're the change agent. They're the beneficiary. Once they clearly understand how they benefit...why the change you represent is much better for them, they'll hop aboard your train.

So think about how you'll fulfill the customer's need, whether it's solving a problem or satisfying a need.

### **Personal Brand Tip #5 – Show the REAL You**

Particularly on social media, show the real you. This means it's not all business all the time.

Share something about you, whether it's talking about your family, or sharing that picture of you in that ridiculous Halloween costume with your kids, or you in a social gathering.

Just be real, because your goal is to relate. And people relate to REAL people, not corporate icons.

### **Personal Brand Tip #6 – Be Transparent**

Being transparent means having the courage to be vulnerable. To let people know you're afraid, or made a mistake. It shows you're human, and it builds empathy.

And that's critical.

Because empathy allows people to care about you as a person. So, don't always try to be "right."

You're taking a stand, you're pursuing a better way of life..but you want to still be a human, struggling to get "there".

### **Personal Brand Tip #7 – Help "Them" to Get Involved**

Before you hit "publish"...before you make that speech, answer this question:

How can my audience take action or get involved?

In other words, what do you want them to do? Because, if you don't give your audience a way to get involved...an action item...then they'll absorb your message and go onto the next post in their Facebook feed.

And your message will be forgotten, until they stumble across you again.

So ask them to vote with their fork today by doing this thing

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Or to foster change by contacting this person today \_\_\_\_\_  
about legislation  
Or by \_\_\_\_\_

Look, we all need guidance. And your followers need you to guide them to the actions that will help you to succeed as the change agent you represent.

So don't just deliver the message. Tell them what they need to do to help you achieve the vision.

### **Personal Brand Tip #8 – Act One to Many. Think One to One.**

The best way to build your brand might be to sit down with each person individually, but that's not realistic.

Instead, we have to use technology, such as email marketing, blogging, podcasting and social media.

So, in that sense, we're acting one:many. We create one post and distribute it to many people. And that creates leverage of your time, which is what we want.

However, your message needs to resonate in such a way that it sounds like one:one.

If I read your post or hear you on a podcast, I need to believe that you are talking to me specifically.

I think the farmers I mentioned earlier excel at this. They're relatable and their messages always resonate with me, and likely with you.

That's the goal. To speak to MANY, but come across as if you're speaking to ONE.

Is it an art? Sure.

But it's an artful science you can master.

### **Closing Up**

Here's what I'd like you to do to get started in building your personal farm brand.

It's just one thing...I want you to create a powerful sound-bite reflective of your farm brand, that is less than nine seconds long (to read). Preferably much less. Because the average sound bite these days is seven seconds.

If you want help with this, you know I've got a tool to help you. I developed a sound bite formula just for you to help you develop a memorable media sound bite:

And it's free, of course.

Just go to [smallfarmnation.com/bite](http://smallfarmnation.com/bite) and download it.

That's b-i-t-e like you're biting a piece of artisan cheese.

Use that template to nail your sound bite.

Then, once you've got it nailed, use it consistently to reinforce your brand message.

You can even include it in quotes in your social media image headers.

**Now, If you're in the [Small Farm Nation Academy](#), you can post your messages in the forum and get my help in nailing your message!**

By doing this exercise and following these tips to build your personal farm brand, you can attract fans and followers, as well as invitations from media outlets from stories.

Believe me, I know. The NY Times, NPR, [CNN](#), Southern Living Magazine and many others reached out to me over the years, all because of content I produced on my blog where I:

- Took a stand

- Was consistently present

- Used sound bites

- Spoke to my specific audience

- Was vulnerable and [shared our personal struggles](#)

- Was always transparent

- Provided ways fans could affect change, and

Crafted personal messages to widespread audiences

Remember, the heart of the farm brand is you, the FARMER.

Now, create your own sound bite...one that lets your fans clearly and quickly grasp what you stand for.

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Well that's it for this episode, [Small Farm Nation!](#)

Remember, you can keep up with me and all my content at small farm nation dot com

There's a link on the site to my FREE Farm Marketing Group on Facebook, where thousands of farmers discuss issues important to growing their farm and food businesses.

Of course, we'd love to have you in the [Small Farm Nation Academy](#), and you'll find more information on that on my site at small farm nation dot com

As always, you can find the show notes from this episode on small farm nation dot com, and don't forget to subscribe to this podcast on iTunes or elsewhere. If you already have, please take just a second to leave a review on iTunes! I read 'em all and I sure do appreciate it!

Okay, until next time here's to hoping Get Growing!