

You Are Your Brand

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SUBJECT(S): Career Development, Communication, Management, Marketing

GRADE LEVEL(S): 9, 10, 11, 12

≡ OVERVIEW:

This lesson will teach students about the concept of a personal brand, as well as encourage them to develop their own. Students will begin by reading an article to spark discussion about how they develop their personal brands and how it affects their leadership styles. Then they will think about and develop their own personal leadership style by writing about what they would like someone to say in a speech if they were to give them a lifetime achievement award for excellence in leadership. Students will ultimately understand their current personal brand, as well as how they would like it to develop as they grow and mature.

≡ NBEA STANDARD(S):

- Communication, I. Foundations of Communication
- Marketing, I. Foundations of Marketing
- Career Development, I. Self-Awareness
- Management, IV. Personal Management Skills

≡ RELATED ARTICLES:

- [“The Business Behind the Swagger: A Look at the ‘3 Kings’ of Hip-Hop”](#)
- [“The Art and Skill of Effective Public Speaking”](#)
- [“Roadtrip! A Year of Brand Building and Self Discovery Inside the Wienermobile”](#)

- “Part II: Hip Hop Artist Kayvon Asemani on Building His Brand and Controlling His Destiny”
- “Part I: Hip Hop Artist Kayvon Asemani on Building His Brand and Controlling His Destiny”
- “NOMsense Bakery and the Nuances of ‘Dessert Maximalism’”
- “MoZIAH Bridges Is Bringing Dapper Back”
- “Jordan Williams on Overcoming Challenges and Choosing Your Own Path”
- “Following Trends at the Intersection of Fashion and Business”
- “Educator Toolkit: Your Personal Statement”
- “Building a ‘Work Brand’ that People Will Brag About”

Common Core Standard(s): Key Ideas and Details, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Objectives/Purposes: Students will evaluate their personal brand and understand how it affects their leadership style.

Knowledge@Wharton Article: “You are your Brand: Defining a Personal Leadership Style”

Other Resources/Materials:

- Article
- Index cards
- Paper
- Post-it notes
- Pens
- Sandwich bags

Tying It All Together:

1. (10 mins) Pass out an index card to each student with a different number on it (example: 1-30; depending on how many students you have in your class). Have them quietly put their name on the blank side of the numbered index card. Then, pass out 10 post-it notes to each student and have them put their assigned number somewhere on each post-it. These numbers are how you will keep track of the students, so they should match the number you have given them on the index card. Once the students have written their names on the blank sides of the index cards and their numbers on each of the post- it notes, you can collect the index cards. Then have students write the 10

people, places or things that they prize the most and could not live without on the post-it notes. They can also write their hobbies and skills on the post-it notes. This can be anything including their grandmother, their ipod, their favorite book, video game or a parent, guardian or mentor. Encourage them to be specific where appropriate. Make sure that they do not put their names on the post-its. Then have the students put all 10 of their completed post-it notes (with the item and the number) in one plastic sandwich bag. Collect all of the bags and put them aside.

2. (15 mins) Have students read the article “You Are your Brand: Defining a Personal Leadership Style.” Lead a discussion on the article and be sure to have the students answer how you develop your personal brand and how your personal brand affects your leadership style. Have students think about their personal brand and consider how one’s personal brand affects their personal leadership style.

Examples of CEO’s personal brands from the article include:

- The Progressive Corp.’s Northeast Agency general manager Meryl Golden said her personal brand is best described as “work hard, play hard,” and that it absolutely bleeds over into her management philosophy. “I’m a direct communicator and my ‘work hard, play hard’ attitude keeps my job in perspective,” she said. “It also means I nurture other people who work hard, and I sell them within the company to help them find opportunities – which makes them more loyal to me.”
- For Anu Shukla, a serial Silicon Valley entrepreneur who is currently president and CEO of a web applications company called Rubiconsoft, classic entrepreneurial qualities define her personal style. “I am tenacious and optimistic, and like any good entrepreneur, I am fueled by the thrill of picking off the impossible and making it happen.” In terms of her leadership style on the job, “as an entrepreneur I have a group vision I want to achieve for the company. My drive means I expect my team to rally around and make it happen,” Shukla told the audience.
- Travelocity CEO Michelle Peluso’s personal brand focuses on passion and love for the job. “I can’t do things unless I love them. I work extremely hard, so I believe you must have fun on the job to make that worth it.” The work-as-passion approach makes success self-fulfilling as a leader, Peluso added. “I believe in having fun always. It’s selfish; if my team is fired up, then Travelocity will succeed.”

3. (10 mins) Take each bag with the post-it notes that students worked on in the beginning of class and put them and a piece of paper on different desks or in different parts of the room. Have students circulate around the room and read the comments and write a response to that student. Responses may include what they think the person is like, what their personal brand and personal leadership style is based on what they have written on the post-it notes, or advice or a message of encouragement. It may be helpful to do an example first. This should be done anonymously so students should not comment on their own and they should not put their names or initials next to the comments.
4. (15 mins) Now that students understand the concept of a personal brand, it is time to have them develop their personal brand and consider their personal leadership style. To do this, have students create their own personal brand based on their goals and values. Then have them incorporate these into a writing activity. Have students write a speech that someone would deliver about them when they receive a lifetime achievement award for excellence in leadership. This is a chance for them to display their own personal brand as well as other future accomplishments they hope to achieve. Be sure to have them write in the third person.
5. (At the end of class) While students are writing, put the sheet of comments and the index cards with their names in each plastic bag. Then pass the plastic bags back to each student with their 10 post-it notes and student comments. Have students compare and contrast the lifetime achievement award speech that they wrote about themselves and what their peers said about them. Lead a discussion about the ways in which what a person values affects their personal brand.

Practice Outside of the Classroom: Have students think about how they would describe the personal brand of leaders around them.

Also, suggest that students view the WGYF video: [From Bioscience to Haute Couture: Tony Wang's Wide-ranging World](#) to learn about how one young man thinks about his personal brand.

What Worked and What I Would Do Differently: When I taught this lesson I gave students the option to write their hopes and dreams on the post-it notes as well. Overall the lesson worked very well. I found students were very interested to read the comments other students had written about them, so you definitely do not want to hand back the comments until the very end of class.

