

Top Strategies for Getting Visible and Getting Ahead.

*Attract More
Clients.
Take Control
of Your
Career.*



Your Career by *Design*

Top Strategies for Getting Visible and Getting Ahead

Be Proactive Not Reactive

Are you one of the many professionals who thought that keeping your head down and doing a good job would get you ahead in your career or business?

- Did you think the goodwill you engendered at your company or with your clients was sufficient for being successful?
- Are you unhappy with where you are in your career?
- Do you need more clients but can't get the visibility?
- Do you need a game plan to get things moving in the right direction?

As William Jennings Bryan said:

*“Destiny is not a matter of chance, but a matter of choice.
It is not a thing to be waited for; it is a thing to achieve.”*

Taking control of your career is a necessity in today's business climate. The days of waiting for your promotion or for recognition because you do your job well has been replaced by aggressive self promotion that highlights the value added you provide to your company, your boss, or your clients. Competition for jobs and for businesses has never been greater as companies shed employees at a rate considerably faster than they could be absorbed in the workplace. With the unemployment rate hovering near 10% careerists and entrepreneurs need to take action now to make sure that they are not affected.

You already know the issues, so how do you fix the problem. I am sure you have heard a lot about personal branding and wondered, “What does that have to do with me?” Your professional success is directly related to how you are viewed – your reputation – and how visible you are in your respective industry. By carefully cultivating your own personal brand – what people think of when your name is mentioned – and how you get the word out – your communications plan – you become proactive in managing your career and not reactive because your circumstances have changed.

The following are the top strategies for getting the visibility you need to get ahead.

Strategy 1: Find Your Differentiating Factor

What sets you apart from your competitors?

The best way to figure this out is to first look at what you have in common with your competitors. In order to do your job or provide your services what strengths, talents, degrees, background etc. do you have that everyone else has? Then try to determine how you are different from others. How do your particular skills enhance the work you do above and beyond what your competitors provide? Is it your background that is unique or the way you deal with clients? Does your thought process provide some value added beyond the norm?

Let's use this example. Let's say that you are a financial advisor working for an investment management firm. The chances are you have a degree from a well regarded school, experience working with a vast array of clients, a good performance record, have good listening and writing skills, problem solving skills, etc. But what makes you unique? Perhaps you have a uncanny ability at connecting with the financial needs of particular clients and are able to structure their portfolios in a way that provide them with the financial security they want. Or you have industry experience in a particular investment group and therefore have greater insight into that segment of the market. Or you have many years of experience and have gone through numerous market cycles and are clear on the warning signs.

Whatever your particular value added or differentiating factor, it is important that your employer or your client understands how they benefit directly from this special talent or strength or knowledge. Going back to the example above, this advisor can be referred to as the advisor who REALLY LISTENS to their concerns, or the SPECIALIST in investing in commodities or retail, or the SAGE or VISIONARY when it comes to analysis of market movements. The bottom line has to be that this particular expertise enables this advisor to provide service above and beyond the competition and that is what he should be known for.

Using me as an example, my experience as an entrepreneur provided me with tremendous insight into how difficult it is to be successful and what it takes to stand out in a competitive industry. In addition, as an executive recruiter I spent over 20 years positioning professionals so they could capitalize on and create opportunities that moved their careers forward. So when I asked my clients how they describe me to their colleagues and friends, overwhelmingly they said "Mary is the career coach who helps me brand myself so I can self promote."

Strategy 2: Identify Your Target Audience

- Who needs to know about you?
- Who are the decision makers that affect your career or business?

It is critical to your success for you to understand not only how you want to be perceived but by whom. Whether you are trying to advance internally or grow your business externally you have to identify who you want to reach and only then can you decide how best to reach them.

Target audiences have to be very specific, the more specific the better. It's always hard for entrepreneurs to narrow down their target audience because they believe that doing so would limit their profitability. The reality is that the more focused your target the easier it is for you to reach them. A narrower niche affords you the opportunity to really penetrate your target audience by developing a greater understanding of what they want and what they need.

The same specificity holds true if your target audience is internal. Once you define your goals you can determine who in the company (or outside the company) would have impact on helping you obtain your career goals. Your targeted audience doesn't always come from the most obvious suspects so a better understanding of how information flows and who influences the decision makers is important.

Strategy 3: Put It Into Words

So you know you are special. Now what?

This is where the elevator pitch comes in. An elevator pitch is exactly what it sounds like. It is a pitch that encapsulates who you are, what you do, and the benefit you can provide to the listener in less than 2 minutes, the time it would take to reach your floor if you were doing this in an elevator.

When conveying your personal brand in a pitch to either a client, a prospective employer or in conversations with your current employer, it is critical that it focus on the benefits derived from your differentiating factors. But you first have to make them want to listen. A powerful opening is critical to them wanting to hear more.

When I find myself at cocktail parties or even in an elevator I usually start my pitch with the following personal branding statement:

I help clients self promote. I use my 25 years of experience as an entrepreneur and career professional helping executives and entrepreneurs stand out from the crowd by positioning them for success.

In these two sentences, I let the listener know who I work with, that my value added is my extensive experience in the field, and what I can do for them. This is not my elevator pitch but without fail I am always encouraged to tell more, and of course I do.

Everything you do professionally should reflect your personal brand. Whether it is a bio or resume, an article you want to write or a speech you want to give the idea is to use every opportunity to convey your brand. If you are the financial advisor who really listened, then a talk given to an audience of middle aged investors about market movements and the security of their assets would certainly be in order and on brand.

A perfect example of being on brand all the time is the company Volvo. When you hear the name you immediately think of safety. In all their ads, articles, and promotions the safety of their vehicles is their number one brand. Clearly if you are looking for a high performance car (Porsche, BMW come to mind here) Volvo is not your brand. But if you are looking for a well crafted safe vehicle for your family this is the car you would test drive.

Strategy 4: How To Get The Word Out

Earlier in this report I said that your reputation and your visibility are what will define your success. Strategy 4 is all about gaining visibility. Now that you have a clear consistent message about who you are and what you can deliver, then the next step is creating a communications plan that ensures that you are constantly in front of your target audience.

With the proliferation of social networking sites, it is imperative that you use them strategically and on brand in your communications plan. Evaluate your networking ideas by determining if you are reaching your target group. Keeping these sites current and being active with the various groups and associations can be very time consuming so choose wisely. As in determining your target audience, a smaller number of niche sites is preferable to a shotgun approach to networking.

Your real world offline communications plan should also be focused on reaching your desired group and getting the visibility you want. Attending or speaking at conferences, writing articles for trade journals (on and offline), volunteering for assignments or providing pro bono work that provides the right visibility are all ways to stand out and be on brand.

The key is constancy. If you decide to blog or send newsletters or join groups you must keep up with your commitment or you lose credibility and a following.

So Get Started

Unearthing your unique promise of value, and understanding and communicating your personal brand is not an easy task but without the work there is no glory. As the Benjamin Disraeli said:

Action may not always bring happiness; but there is no happiness
without action.

Contact me for a free no obligation 30 minute Stand Out and Succeed Consultation where we will discuss:

1. What standing out means to you – where do you want to be?
2. What are you doing to stand out now?
3. What is preventing you from moving ahead?
4. Some initial steps you can take to reach your goals.
5. Help get you excited and motivated about your possibilities.

Email me at Mary@yourcareerbydesign.com to set up your free consultation.

About the Author



Mary Rosenbaum is Certified as a Personal Branding Strategist and Career Coach with over 25 years of experience as an entrepreneur and a career professional.

Throughout her career she has worked with companies ranging in size from small entrepreneurial ventures and start ups to major financial institutions with thousands of employees. She has lectured on job search structure and strategy, personal branding, and transition. She has appeared as a guest speaker on the Fox Business Channel.

Her unique approach to helping clients grow their businesses and build their careers comes from her

extensive experience and first hand knowledge of what it takes to be successful in a competitive industry. Positioning professionals so they can capitalize on and create opportunities to move their careers forward is her passion. This unique combination helps clients reach their full potential and achieve their career goals.

Your Career By Design provides career coaching to finance, legal, real estate, marketing and sales professionals and entrepreneurs who would like to take control of their careers through a better understanding of their worth. We provide group and individual coaching to help you unearth your unique promise of value and create an effective communications/marketing plan.