



PERSONAL BRANDING / REPRESENTING YOUR BRAND

We are all a brand. Seth Godin defines a brand as "...the set of expectations, memories, stories and relationships that, taken together, account for a consumer's decision to choose one product or service over another. It is how we present ourselves, talk about ourselves and how we are remembered by others. Branding applies to all aspects of life, professional and personal. It is the first and last impression of YOU.

Professional branding is critical for your career. The words that others use to describe you, are your brand. You own it. It may be a definition that comes from a collection of interactions or a single opportunity you had to gain respect and credibility in a brief encounter.

Social Media. What you post on the Internet is your brand. And, it does live forever. It is how you are represented on Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, blogs, and so on. In other words, the brand of YOU is everywhere you put a comment, post or uploaded something to the world wide web! Before you hit send or enter, think how it represents YOU.

Dress the way you want to be treated. The way that you dress can earn you respect. You know how they say, "Dress for the job you want, not the job you have"? At events, being well-groomed, having good hygiene, and dressing professionally tells people that you mean business. As I am on the younger side of people who attend events, I am particularly careful to step up my professional attire game. I can't recall that last time I met a CEO who wasn't wearing a full suit at a show. If you're not sure what the attire is for a particular conference or company, my recommendation is to always over-dress rather than under-dress.

1. How You Look

What photo should you use in your social media profiles and how does that reflect your personal brand? If you want to display a professional personal brand, is it appropriate to use a holiday snap or badly taken photo? Similarly if your personal brand is a creative fashion diva/ model, then a bad pose or amateur photo will not do your brand any good!

Your photo on social media becomes as important as a logo for a business. It is a way of people trusting you and understanding who you are and what you stand for. An unprofessional model photo will make people think that you are an unprofessional model and not the top model you actually are!

#LimpopoBeautyModeling will be associated with your photo and brand, ensure that you represent our brand well! People will also google you and the photo's you share on facebook etc is what they will see when they google you. Does this make you look like a professional model someone wants to represent their company?



2. What You Say and Do

Make sure that whatever you say and do on social media represents your personal brand and gives a consistent view about you. Don't get into heated discussions on any of the tools and try to stay clear of religious, political, racist and gender comments, etc. Consider what swearing says about your personal brand and if you do swear (even mildly), will that impact on who engages or interacts with you? Humour in particular is an area fraught with danger. What you know to be a joke might not come across as a joke when written down without associated body language or tone.

3. Being Aware of Other Factors

There may be other factors that you need to take into account when thinking about representing your personal brand on social media. These could include personal security, your personal circumstances and fellow models. Do you post things that agrees with your sponsor's views? For instance, if you are a finalist at miss Earth where you have to be an ambassador for the environment and use glass instead of plastic, did you post photo's where you hold a plastic water bottle? Some pageants are very strict on this and so should our modeling school be strict on having you represent us to the best of your ability.

4. Personal security

It is important at all times to think about your personal security when you create and update your social media profiles. You should regularly check your security settings on your profiles in each of the tools. Many tools have the option to automatically indicate where you are posting from. You need to decide whether you should turn this on or off depending on your own requirements. You also need to think about your personal security when writing status updates. It is not always appropriate to talk about holidays or the names of your children in such a public arena if people are able to find out where you live! If you are alone at an event rather post after the event, rather than telling strangers that you are at a certain place at that moment.

5. Your personal circumstances

Don't discuss problems and your irritations on social media. It can only make you look like a high maintenance model or someone who can't deal with stress. If a hair brand wants an ambassador and google you, will they find photo's of you constantly complaining? Or saying embarrassing things about that time of the month? Do you think they would want you as an ambassador if you post negative things? What does your hair look like on all your social media photo's? As a model people expect you to look the part all the time!



Why a Personal Brand Is Important?

Positive social media presence is not only your doorway to existing opportunities, but the way to create more of them in the future.

A great example of building a brand to create opportunities and become a leader in the industry is Limpopo Beauty. Many Pageants follow what we do and use our themes, we even have models faking being in our academy on social media. But your brand goes beyond being a model at Limpopo Beauty, you are a representative and every big photographer and designer keeping an eye on our social media is a potential opportunity for you to be booked! But if your social media profiles don't make you look professional, will they book you?

If you don't use our #tags and become a good ambassador for our brand, do you think they will book you to represent their brand? Business owners are constantly looking for new ambassadors and models are perfect for any brand, you just need to build your brand well enough that people start asking for you and only you! What will they find if they google you? Your professional model photo's that you constantly shared on social media? Or bad selfies and negative comments? Big companies book through agencies, will they find that you are part of Limpopo Beauty and have a profile on our website or will they rather contact an agency with a similar model with your look? Make sure you represent your brand to the fullest!

Generation DIY should not try to sell themselves and tell everyone how good they are. They should actually show it with social media activity, advertise their own philosophy and promote creative ways of thinking. **Social media allows you to become a leader**, not just a follower, and make your ideas heard by entrepreneurs, journalists, business owners, employers, educators and whole communities.

Ways to Build Personal Brand

According to Jan H. Kietzmann and Kristopher Hermkens social media uses seven functional blocks: identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation and groups. You can consider these blocks the building material for personal brand and learn to use them for your benefit:



1. Identity. To build a personal brand you should represent your identity so that employers understand who you really are, what your goals and professional skills are, and the expertise and relevant knowledge you bring. There are several ways to introduce and promote your identity.

- **Website:** Use a website as the central location where you want to drive traffic from your social media accounts to. You are listed on our website www.limpopobeautymodeling.co.za by tagging us you drive traffic to our website who will go and view your professional profile.
- **Blog:** There are several reasons why we should encourage students to blog. What's equally important is to show what you know when it comes to demonstrating understanding in a field. Post regularly, and use your blog space to explore new ideas and information as you progress on your career journey. Here's a list of
- **Social Accounts:** These should be polished, professional in appearance and should reflect what you are doing to pursue your personal calling.

2. Conversations. It is important to quickly respond to messages or comments on your blog to keep the conversation going. Commenting on other blog entries in your industry/field is also a way to communicate. Make sure it is always positive, professional models don't complain or argue online!

3. Sharing. Social media is a great tool to share anything within several clicks, and is an opportunity for you to get maximum exposure. There are different ways you can do this:

- Review best practices shared by social media marketers. Many continually research the potential of each kind of social media and publish free, helpful tips for maximizing exposure.
- Make sure you post relevant content with clear and well-written headlines.
- Add visual content to attract the attention of the audience.
- Consider the specificity of each social network and tailor your posts accordingly. Always use #LimpopoBeautyModeling
- Make sure you are sharing the right content with the target audience and respond to each and every comment and suggestion you receive.



- Become a group leader by creating an industry/field related group in LinkedIn or Facebook. Begin relevant conversations, discuss news, answer questions to keep the conversations active and your account will get maximum exposure within and beyond your network.

All of these activities will create a positive image in any community, gather followers and encourage them to share your messages in their network. More sharing means more exposure, more recognition and more possibilities. Always give recognition to your brand

#TheTitleYouWonAndTheYear #QueenOfTheNorthTeen2016 this title forms part of your brand! As well as

#LimpopoBeautyModelingAcademy Always promote who you are and what title holder you are! Don't just win a title and let the sash hang in your cupboard, work with it, get more exposure!

Success Story: I got to be the Hannon Ambassador for Limpopo where I received R1000's make-up/hair care products every month for a year, I got this from Social media, and all I had to do was share a photo or product tip twice a month with their #tags! Do you think they would have given me this amazing sponsorship if my social media didn't show my brand as professional? They saw how well I represented other sponsors and my own brand, which gave me this wonderful sponsorship! Katryn Barwise

Even more reason to always promote your sponsors and the Limpopo Beauty brand as well as your titles! Do charity projects with your title to be in the newspapers regularly this will all help when people google you, they will find your name in various publications with worthy projects, not just a bunch of selfies you posted on facebook! Act like the person you would like to become!

5. Relationships. Positive social media presence means building reputation, and that is not possible without establishing relationships. Use social media to build networks. LinkedIn is the best known platform for building professional relationships, however other social platforms can bring the desired results. Just make sure you change the conversation style according to the platform.



6. Reputation. After building relationships, it's important to grow and establish a positive online reputation. For the most part in social media, reputation is centered on trust, and comes from not only the person but the content they share. The higher the number of followers, likes, shares, favorites, view counts, ratings, etc. the more popular and trustworthy a person is considered.

Building your personal brand may sound like a bit of marketing hype but it's actually the chance for you, as a Generation DIY representative, to create your image of a reliable model and fashion icon/young industry expert, to show what you have to offer, and to change the job market situation to your benefit. Doing this can only help you to secure new opportunities to create a brighter future for you not only as a model but also as a leader in the industry. You will soon get booked to judge at events, get paid to MC at functions and share your life story and experiences with others! Remember to always stay true to your brand and represent Limpopo Beauty well.

Notes:
