

Put time and thought into your brand campaign

By Anne Messenger
Contributing writer

Tide. It's laundry detergent. You didn't need me to tell you that. Mom used Tide, and it comes in easily recognized boxes and bottles. They're orange. Always orange.

Those are the images that have come to mind over the years as I was in the detergent aisle at the grocery store. If I was buying, it was Tide — the company succeeded in embedding its brand in my mind.

Tom Peters moved "brand" to another level in the 1990s when the terms "Me, Inc." and "personal branding" became popular www.fastcompany.com/magazine/10/brandyou.html. The "product"? No longer a box of detergent, but oneself, with consistency and repetition the underpinnings of the packaging, and message.

Today, a job seeker would do well in crafting a personal brand campaign. It doesn't have to be complicated, but it does take thought. The goal: getting bought (hired) by the right buyer.

Here are questions and answers for creating your own brand.

Q. What is a brand, anyway?

A. Type "define brand" into Google and you'll get more than 8 million hits. My favorite marketing guru Seth Godin defines "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." sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2009/12/define-brand.html

I like to think simple, though, so I'm going to cut through the words and suggest thinking of one's brand as what makes someone memorable. In the case of a job seeker, "memorable" should bring words to mind like "professional" and "dependable."

Q. What about "campaign"?

A. That "define + [word]" is one of my favorite Google tricks. This time it yields: "a series of actions tending toward a particular end." Ooohhh, I like that for job seekers.

Q. What makes a job candidate memorable?

Where to find help with personal branding

According to Brand-Yourself.com, 80 million people are searched daily on the Internet by employers, colleagues, clients and partners. Advice on reputation management and "personal branding" abounds online. Here are three sites that could be helpful to you:

BRAND-YOURSELF.COM

"Create a Remarkable Web Presence." Go to: twitter.com/Brandyourself or brandyourself.com.

Syracuse University student "played" in the Syracuse Technology Garden's Student Sandbox (www.thetechgarden.com/studentsandbox) to develop this company and capture venture capitalists' interest along the way. The site walks users through the process of creating an online presence, allowing them to build Web pages and profiles that represent who they are, leverage social networking and monitor who's talking about them.

ZING YOUR BRAND

"Your brand won't sell a thing if it ain't got that zing." Go to: twitter.com/Maryvandewiel or www.zingyourbrand.com and click on

A. Presence, on paper, electronic and in person.

We're going for a positive presence here, a consistent impression that is attractive to people especially hiring people.

Presence — with consistency and repetition — is what will make you memorable.

Think of who you are, package it into a message and be prepared to deliver that message in different ways, from a resume to a job interview to the way you answer the phone to introducing yourself when a friend stands in line with you at the grocery store and says, "Oh, hey there's so-and-so [potential job connection]. I'd like you to meet him!"

Q. What would some campaign elements be for a job seeker to establish a brand?

A. Again, I'm going to think simple. Investment of time and thought will bring consistency to your personal brand campaign. Here are some actions to take to position

"Branding FAQ."

Owner Mary van de Wiel came to my attention through a colleague at the Women Presidents' Organization (www.womenpresidentsorg.com), whose New York City chapter members she wowed. Her website is crisp, lively and fun. Click on "Branding FAQs" for great ideas on branding for businesses. After all, job search is a business!

DAN SCHAWBEL

"Personal Branding Blog — Navigating YOU to future success!" Go to: twitter.com/DanSchawbel or www.personalbrandingblog.com.

Schawbel maintains a high Twitter profile, with succinct but substantive career-related tweets that resonate with Gen Y and beyond.

— Anne Messenger

you as a professional who's in a job search mode.

Set up communications mechanics. Instead of a cute e-mail address (godaddy4@hotmail.com), set up a businesslike Hotmail, Yahoo or Gmail account such as gsmith@gmail.com.

Delete the answering machine message delivered by your 5-year-old or a musical jingle. Instead, record something like, "Hello, this is the Smith family residence. Please leave a message and we will return your call shortly. Thank you." Set up paper and e-mail mechanics. Nail down that resume! Other items should flow from it and be consistent in content (although a summary version) and style.

Think about setting up an automatic signature for your e-mails with your first and last name and your phone number. Other elements may include your address and a LinkedIn URL, if you have one.

About Anne Messenger



Anne Messenger

A career strategist and senior professional of human resources for more than 25 years, Messenger is president of Messenger Associates Inc, which has offices in Syracuse and Binghamton. This is Messenger's third appearance in MoneyWise. On Jan. 11, she wrote about organizing a job search and explaining a job loss to family and friends and on Feb. 8 she explained how to write an impressive resume.

Next week in MoneyWise:

Lisa Dunn Alford, Onondaga County Commissioner of Aging and Youth, explains how the agency's Senior Community Services Employment Program helps older workers improve their skills and train for new jobs.



Lisa Dunn Alford

This week on WCNY-TV:



Scams that target consumers over the Internet will be highlighted on this week's episode of "Help Wanted." Experts will have advice on how to spot a scam and the steps consumers can take to protect themselves. Catch it at 8:30 p.m. Wednesday. Comment on the show at www.helpwantedinteractive.com

Get connected at Syracuse.com

Share your ideas on Anne Messenger's advice, add your experiences and tips and find helpful links to more information at www.syracuse.com/job-advice.