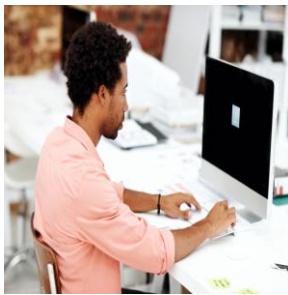


Personal Branding Trends for 2014

Throughout the year, I monitor what's happening in the world of personal branding, working with clients around the globe. At year's end, I analyze the data points to predict future trends. My take on 2014? It will be a year of personal branding evolution – not revolution. Of course, evolution is the key to survival, especially in our competitive international marketplace. Here are the trends that will have the most impact on the brand called YOU.

Social Access at Work - from Restricted to Required



2014.

Many companies have been reluctant to allow employees to access social media while at the office. In fact, according to a study by Statista that was released in September, one in five U.S. employees are not allowed access to Facebook, one in six aren't allowed access to Twitter and one in ten aren't even allowed access to LinkedIn. YouTube and other sites are also restricted at many companies. Over the past year, however, I have seen numerous companies loosen their restrictions or eliminate them all entirely, and this trend will accelerate in

There are two reasons for this. First, companies realize they are losing the war. They can block social media sites from corporate infrastructure, but they can't prevent employees from using their mobile devices to tweet, check in on Facebook and update their LinkedIn status. Second, they understand that employees need social media to do their job because every employee is a brand ambassador. This goes for human resources, too. Employers are discovering the value of recruiting new hires through their employees' networks of excellence. That image of employees using LinkedIn solely to search for another job – on company time, no less – is woefully outdated.

Social Savvy – from Optional to Essential



If you don't have social media skills, your brand will wither up. Period. Social media is no longer simply a lighthearted, youth-oriented way to differentiate yourself. Adopted by virtually every demographic segment, social media is now perhaps the most powerful tool in your competitors' suite of marketing tactics. Most employees, regardless of their role or generation, will be expected to participate in their organization's social branding efforts.

In branding, we highlight the distinction between rational brand attributes and emotional brand attributes. Rational brand attributes are concrete, deliverable traits – the table stakes that get you into the game. Emotional brand attributes help you connect with your audience on a much more meaningful and emotional level, allowing you to differentiate in a compelling way that tips the scales in your favor. Having social savvy enables you to tap the impact of

authenticity and immediacy, building a personal bridge to your audience. Today, regardless of your role or level, understanding how to use social media to do your job better is a requirement, even if your superiors don't realize it. Whether you're sourcing staff, solving problems, enhancing relationships, developing new products, or performing research, you will thrive only if you know how to leverage social media to deliver greater value to your company.

Digital – from Final Frontier to Launchpad



At Reach, we always say, "Be real before being virtual." By this, we mean work on your brand in the real world before building your brand online. That's still true, but the timeline is compressed. Your online identity should be drawn from your authentic traits, but that digital identity needs to go live as soon as possible. For your audience, digital now precedes real. We continually research brands online, and we often search for a digital profile of people before we meet them. Before heading to the conference room, we check out our colleagues who are on the meeting attendee list. We scour prospects' LinkedIn profiles before meeting them. We Google potential candidates when deciding whether to interview them.

I had a great conversation with Mitch Joel for the Reach Personal Branding interview series. In his new book, *Ctrl Alt Delete*, he talks about "digital first" – how our first place to go for information or services is online. This is a trend that will gain momentum. It means you need to be vigilant about building and managing your online brand because it now delivers your first impression.

Video – from Black Tie to Business Casual



If you've been reading my personal branding trends for the last several years, you know that video always features prominently. It's the next best thing to being there, allowing you to deliver a complete message and build memorable, emotional connections with viewers. Until recently, a lot of video-related personal branding activities were limited to studio shoots. And although these highly polished videos aren't going away, user generated video using online video applications is on the rise. It's not the pure YouTube approach, this is video captured and created by amateurs using professional online tools that assist in professionalizing the video presentation. Catharine Fennell, CEO of videoBIO said "In 2013 we have seen over 500% growth in the SaaS-based online application side of our business compared with 100% growth in our video production services division. People are learning when they need the full production, polished video and when user generated video is adequate, and sometimes more authentic."

Just as our comfort level with apps and social media has soared, so will our comfort level with video. More and more people work remotely so video will become even more important for workplace interactions, allowing you to "be there," no matter where you really are. We'll also incorporate it into our regular communications. That means using video to send thank you notes to clients, create introductions to prospects, and feed weekly "go-team" messages to geographically dispersed staff.

We'll hold Google+ hangouts to chat with colleagues and network contacts. Conference calls will no longer be confusing audio experiences, thanks to real-time video conferencing with our team. As these formats become more common, don't let their casual and impromptu nature become an excuse for poor quality. If you're video conferencing from home, you should still dress for success. If you're recording a pitch, take time to rehearse so that your voice is carefree but not careless. The days of canned videos are on the wane, but a video that screams "amateur" will have an equally negative impact on your brand. To make sure that even your casual videos are brand builders, find a place with the right lighting and background, and make sure the audio quality is great. Create a consistent place to produce your videos. Like the set for your favorite show, your setting can create a unique visual symbol for your brand itself.

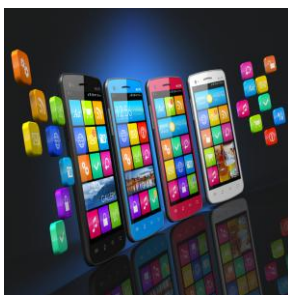
LinkedIn Profiles – from Employment Line to Branding Lifeline



Virtually every personal branding keynote and workshop I delivered this year included LinkedIn content, and almost a third were devoted to LinkedIn. This was not my doing; it was requested by my corporate clients. The corporate mindset about LinkedIn has shifted from "this is a job search/hiring tool" to "LinkedIn is a valuable branding tool for my company, and I need my employees to take it seriously." I have some clients who are investing time and talent in helping their employees build stellar profiles and learn how to use LinkedIn to do their jobs better.

In addition, thanks to the vast feature enhancements LinkedIn rolled out in 2013, the site is quickly becoming the hub of your online identity – sometimes outpacing the impact of your personal web site. Your LinkedIn profile often shows up first in a Google search, so it's likely the first place people visit to learn about you. And it allows you to build a truly three-dimensional profile of who you are, complete with images and embedded videos.

Mobile - from Desktop to Handheld



Your personal branding activities are becoming easier to do on the fly. That's because they sit in your pocket. There are more and more apps that make it easy for you to build your brand on the go. In fact, in the coming year, more of us will spend more of our brand-building time with our mobile apps than with an old-fashioned browser on a desktop computer. In fact, many of us don't even have a conventional desk anymore. Here are just a few of the most valuable and user-friendly apps available today:

- LinkedIn Contacts gives you a way to bring together your contacts spread across address books, email accounts and calendar apps.
- Lunchmeet helps you find geographically appropriate contacts so you can expand your network over lunch.
- VideoBIO lets you record video from your iPad or iPhone, edit it and share it via Twitter, Facebook or email.
- UStream Live Broadcaster lets you broadcast yourself in real-time.

Find the apps that make personal branding easy to do and part of your regular routine.

Online Content - from Create to Curate



When social media became hot, it seemed as if every career-minded professional started their own media channel. "I must have a Blog," many thought. They set out to build their own content machine – creating original content – even if they didn't enjoy writing or have much to say. That has gotten old. The Blog has become another mouth to feed – one more item to maintain on a seemingly bottomless "to-do" list. This rush to become Rupert Murdoch or Ted Turner has subsided. And with good reason. It's not always about the content you

create; more often, it's about the content you curate – your ability to be on top of everything that is happening in your industry/job function that will be in demand in 2014. After all, that's what Murdoch and Turner did: they didn't become successful by personally writing content themselves. Instead, they created outlets that showcase what their staffs and other professionals have produced, from journalism to entertainment.

With the volume of media messages skyrocketing, being on top of what is happening in your area of expertise – being able to find the right content, comment on it and share it with your brand community – will be an even more valuable skill than penning thought-leadership content yourself. Distilling volumes into valuable nuggets while providing your commentary will make *you* more valuable and your brand more visible.

Charitable Causes - From Afterthought to Starting Point



Every major company engages in some type of philanthropy, but there is a trend toward companies whose entire mission is tied to giving back. In a recent article published in *Strategy+Business*, James O'Toole talks about the new business structure—the B (for benefit) corporation. Patagonia is perhaps the best known example of this model, which has been gaining traction in the U.S. Facilitating the growing social entrepreneurship movement, B charters permit boards to make decisions that benefit society, even when those actions aren't in the immediate interest of shareholders (note how different this is from the nonprofit structure).

As more and more millennials enter the workforce and move into more senior roles, values will enter into the equation more than they have in the past. In *Fast Future: How the Millennial Generation is Shaping Our World*, David Burstein writes, "Millennials are highly connected to – and are extremely conscious of – their values. They see the world from a values perspective. Reaching [them] requires a real investment in social responsibility." As companies become more serious about social responsibility, you'll want to think about your role. In branding, it's important to know your values and connect them with what you do and how you do it. Your values, and the causes you support, are facets of your brand. In the past we have talked about the blending (not balancing) of work and life. Now there is one more



element – your world – how you want to contribute to something bigger than yourself.

What do these trends add up to? Incredible opportunities! There have never been so many powerful ways to tell your brand's story – not only for your company's benefit but also for the benefit of your communities, both local and global.

About William Arruda

Dubbed the Personal Branding Guru by Entrepreneur, William Arruda is a motivational speaker, talent development consultant and CEO of Reach Personal Branding. He is credited with turning the concept of personal branding into a global industry. His new book *Ditch. Dare. Do! 3D Personal Branding for Executives* is an adventure where fearless early adopters, career-minded professionals, and enlightened companies join the 3D personal branding revolution.

