



BizQuack

Branding
Yourself

We are taught to know a subject before we speak on it. We don't get up in front of a class and make a presentation without knowing everything about the subject.

As small business owners we are constantly marketing our businesses. We talk about the Value Proposition that our business offers. We proudly display our logo, our web site as well as a business tag line. Perhaps the biggest investment for a business startup is getting out the business name.

We seek expert advice to tell us how to best present our business.

In this session we are going to take a different approach to marketing your business by preparing you to market your business's most important asset, and that is you.



As a small business owner, you are not only the face of your business, but you are the business.

This great business asset is the one thing you know more about than any other person.

I truly believe that you cannot rely on your prospects to call you, to buy your product or service if they don't know about you;, and the best way for people to know who you are and what you do is for you to tell them.

Branding yourself, self-promotion, will help make new connections, make others aware of who you are, what you do, how you do it, and why you do it, build trust and further your business growth.



Branding yourself is not bragging or boasting; it's a method of communicating to others who you are and what you do. When you start a business and then grow a business, you are out promoting, and the single biggest asset that sets you apart from your competition is you.

To maximize the benefit of this lesson, there are only two requirements:

To Believe in yourself

To be totally committed and passionate about your product/service.

Definitions are always important; they help us to better understand the scope of a lesson and what the important take-aways are.

“Branding yourself means that you create the right kind of emotional response when someone hears your name, sees you online, or meets you in real life.” It's all about you, what you want others to know about you, it's who are.



The first question is: What do you want to be known for? But before you answer that question, create a list of unique qualities that you possess. This is not a time to be shy. Write whatever comes to your mind. Examples of words may include:

Funny

Smart

Knowledgeable

Organized

Caring

You should be able to come up with at least one dozen adjectives or nouns that best describe you. From that list select the top three and these will make up part of the message you want to convey to the world at large.



Now let's go back and answer the question, "What do you want to be known for?" As an example, ***I want to be known as the person who can best help a small businesses achieve sustainability and profitability.***

With the list of the best qualities, you possess and with a statement of what you want to be known as, we will spend the rest of this session building your brand and telling the world about it.



Building a Brand Story – Remember, you are the brand

Nobody will listen to and act on your message if it isn't clear, no matter how expensive your marketing message may be. I believe that even if you have the best product or service, you will lose to an inferior product/service if a competitor's message is communicated more clearly.

I believe that your target market is looking for brands that will satisfy a need and is communicated in a simple clear way.



The most powerful tool we can use to organize and deliver information is a Brand Story. In his book, ***Sell with a Story***, Paul Smith suggested the following components that make a good story:

A time indicator. Every story has to have a beginning and relating to an event is a good starting place.

A place indicator. The event you related had to occur in a specific place.

A main character. In this story, you are the main character.

An obstacle. What happened at that time and place that started you thinking about where you are now?

A goal. What is your “noble or worthy” goal? What is your vision?

Events. This is where you share what has happened and how you arrived where you are today.



The best way to start is by taking each of these six areas and make notes in each section over a period of several weeks. New thoughts will come, but don't worry about the length of your story. These notes have a lot of possible uses, including writing a book 😊.

Because stories have to be shared and short, impactful content is critical. At the end of your writing/thought process go back and highlight several sentences in each section. These are the ones you consider most important, and which will become the core of your story. Now put these highlighted sections together to create your 3-to-5-minute story. (Memorize and practice sharing your story).



As you begin building your personal brand you are, at the same time, branding your business.
Once again, I remind you of the importance of having the foundation to your Vision Based
Business Plan complete and updated if necessary.

Vision

The Why

The Story (which you just completed)

Detailed description of product/service

Target market identification and validation

The Value Proposition

The Promise

The Delivery



Branding yourself occurs when you share your story, using all possible avenues. It should also be interwoven in your overall marketing plan. This allows for the branding of your business within your personal branding efforts.

Tools needed for the process:

Your name: Many of us have more than one name or have a “nick” name that we are known by. In my case I use both Nick and Nicholas and I had to select one for my personal branding effort. I selected Nick. Be consistent in your use.

Your name will be used in a great portion of your overall marketing effort. It will be associated with your product/service, company name and logo.

A recent picture: A “glamour” photo taken twenty years ago won’t work. Have a picture taken now or use one taken within the last six month. The goal is to be recognized as you look now.

Next complete the following:

A video of you sharing your personal story.

A handout with your picture and your story



The self-branding “How To”

Self-Branding means that whatever marketing or promotion you do features you as the spokesperson.

Before you reach out. Take a few minutes and review your current marketing venues. Look at your website, are you expecting your target market to buy your product or service? Does your website convey the message that you are the expert on the product/service you offer and the difference between you and your competition is you? The awesome value proposition that your business offers is a result of your personal involvement.



Who needs to know?

The answer is everyone! Take a look at your current People Management System. Of the names in your system how many know your story, specifically one similar to the one you just finished writing?

How to get the story out:

Armed with a 3-to-5-minute, compelling video story, it can be placed on your out-bound e-mail. A QR code is simple to produce and can be directed to either your video (preferably) or to your story flyer. It can be included on all your printed material as well as on-line marketing. It can be labeled “My Story”. A business card alone may be useful, but one that also gives access to your personal story becomes a powerful marketing weapon.

It can be published in its entirety, once in your monthly newsletter then an ongoing QR code can lead new subscribers to learning your story.

In other words, any marketing material (in person, in writing or online) should provide access to your story.



Getting the name out:

Your name has to be seen, heard, and associated with your vision for your product or service.

Let's examine what you can do to get seen and heard.

Get Out: first step is to start doing things. It means going out for coffee, or lunch. It means attending social events, and conferences to meet new people. It also includes spending less time with your TV set and using that time to meet new people.

Getting involved in your industry: Most professions have an association in which you can participate. Becoming a leader in your industry also requires being known not just by your prospects but also by your peers. Get active and strive to give back by getting into a leadership position. The goal is to have your competition say, "yes, I know him/her; they are well respected in our industry."



Blogging: This is your best opportunity to share your knowledge and to showcase your thoughts, ideas, and work. There are several free blogging platforms available for your use. I don't recommend using your blog as a sales pitch but to impart value and to share personal insights. The secret to having a powerful blog is the content you share and the consistency of the delivery. Yes, your blog is a great way to share your story. Blog weekly!

Newsletter: Many small business owners have a monthly newsletter. Make sure that the title of your newsletter is your name followed by the product/service you offer or your tag line if appropriate. Yes, your company name and logo should be incorporated in the body of the newsletter. As always, quality of content and consistency are critical to create ongoing readership.

Video: In addition to posting your written blog, make a video of yourself reading your blog and posting it on your You-Tube channel.



Weekly breakfast meeting: Select a coffee shop and host a weekly or twice monthly meeting for 3 to 5 of your contacts. This is both an information sharing (not selling) about what is going on in your industry as well as offering a mini-networking session for the participants.

- Structure the meeting so you can use the same format each time you meet.
 - Invitations should be extended in person or by phone.
- This is part of your marketing budget. Your cost should be somewhere between \$5 & \$8 per person for a Bagel and coffee.
- This is a great way to “touch” people. If you see 3 people per week for 40 weeks you have reached out to over 120 people.
- This type of small meetings tends to develop into other opportunities for referrals and future business.



Give a talk: Public speaking is often considered one of the most frightening things to do. There are ample opportunities to present your expertise to a group; most civic organizations (Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, etc.) need a speaker every week. Trade Associations, business groups, and most clubs have monthly meetings and need a speaker. Preparing a 20-minute presentation, not a sales pitch, which has a pertinent valuable message about your industry or something that is happening in your community or about your hobby, are all topics that can be presented.

- You may have to do some initial marketing, either sending a flyer on your presentation to specific groups, asking your data base for introductions to groups or listing yourself as an available speaker in an on-line platform. After several presentations, you will find that people will start calling you.
- Record a 3 minute video on your topic and your availability to speak and post that in all your marketing outreach, including your newsletters.



Write a book: Over the years I have listened to many inspiring stories from business owners, sharing their own journey about their entrance into their profession. Others share unique insights on their profession which are helpful to a consumer.

As an author you gain credibility and trust.

It labels you as an expert in the topic.

Publishing a book is inexpensive and becomes a great gift to prospects and customers.

It becomes a topic for a talk.

It's a marketing piece with a long shelf life.

Personal Brochure: Small business owners spend a lot of money creating brochures and flyers on their company and the products and services they offer. These marketing materials are filled with pretty pictures and graphics and expound the virtues of their products and services.



Giveaways: Promotional items also have a great shelf life. I believe that they are great marketing pieces, provided they have the right information imprinted on them. The critical components are your name and what you do. Next your contact information and then business name.

Remember, this session is on branding yourself, making your name well known. We are not discounting the importance of your business name, but as you look around you easily recognize

such names as:

Jeff Bezos - Amazon

Elon Musk- Space X and Tesla

Mark Zuckerberg – Facebook

Each of these highly successful businesses still keep their owners name in the limelight.



Give of your time: Small business owners live a life that is focused on their business. The words I hear when I asked about outside involvement are; “I don’t have time for anything else. “Giving of your time and talent without expecting anything in return is a must, not an option. I am speaking of involvement where you share your time, talent and possibly your treasure to benefit others. The following are a few of many possibilities where you can get involved:

- Your place of worship.
- Civic Organizations
 - Charities
- Coaching/helping with youth sports

Within each of these categories there are many opportunities for participation. Remember, the purpose for this activity is to roll up your sleeves and work without expecting anything in return. Good things will happen, friendships will be formed and eventually your hard work will lead to unsolicited business, and yes, people will learn your name.



Public relations: I define public relations as your appearance in print, television, or on-line media. The great part about this marketing process is that while it involves some effort on your part there is no cost to you. Your name, when promoted by others, gives you both credibility and trust.

Local TV talk shows: Many local television stations offer a talk show during which local people are featured. There is usually a “director” for the show and that is to whom you have to send your information with your unique **value proposition** and your **WHY**.

Radio talk shows: Like the TV stations, there are many local radio shows that feature community activities and businesses. Find out who is responsible for the show and send them the same type of information.

Newspapers and other publications: Another opportunity to send your information with the hope of getting your story printed. Research is the key to make sure that the person responsible for selecting the content is the one who receives your information.



Out of the box:

The previous material, although very effective, is the tried and proven method for branding your name. The following are a few other personal branding ideas:

- Offer a podcast
- For all your snail mail mailings (birthdays, thank you cards, anniversaries, etc.) have a caricature made and incorporate it into each occasion.
 - Collect and publish personal testimonials
 - Set up a pop-up store
 - Co-sponsor an event with another business: i.e. showcase yourself at an art gallery.
 - Sponsor a contest
 - Step out on the street (wear a billboard or ask a question on your shirt)
- Create a personal campaign on “National Days” (national ice cream day offer free ice cream cones to your customers kids: do a joint promotion with a host)
- Create and distribute a creative calendar with your name on it that people want to display
 - Create a contest and offer a prize



Success is a choice!
Will you work hard enough to
achieve it?

