

# THE BRAND YOU 50

Fifty Ways To Transform  
Yourself From An  
“Employee” Into A Brand  
That Shouts Distinction,  
Commitment and Passion!

TOM PETERS

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**MAIN IDEA**

*"I believe that 90+ percent of white collar jobs will disappear or be reconfigured beyond recognition within 10 to 15 years."*  
– Tom Peters

*"The fundamental unit of the new economy is not the corporation but the individual. Tasks aren't assigned and controlled through a stable chain of management but rather are carried out autonomously by independent contractors. These electronically connected freelancers -- e-lancers -- join together in fluid and temporary networks to produce and sell goods and services. When the job is done, the network dissolves and its members become independent agents again, circulating through the economy, seeking the next assignment."*

– Thomas Malone and Robert Laubacher, *The Dawn of the E-lance Economy*, Harvard Business Review

The paradigm of the previous era was that employment for life on a corporate payroll was the ultimate in job security and achievement. The new paradigm of the emerging brain-based economy is:

1. Each person has to act like an independent contractor -- even if they are paid by the company.
2. Each person has to add tangible value -- or be replaced by better alternatives that will.
3. Each person is totally dependent on their available skill sets -- which must be upgraded on an ongoing basis.
4. Each person is judged solely on their track record -- the projects that have completed successfully in the past.

In short, everyone today must treat themselves and their careers as if they are a professional services firm with a total staff of one -- themselves. To build the value of their firm, everyone must view themselves as a brand.

Therefore, career management in the new economy should actually be built around the same framework companies use to build brand equity. In particular, the way to build a good brand is to:

1. Have a track record of working on successful projects that delivered impressive, notable results.
2. Create differentiation -- achieve or do something that stands out from whatever everyone else is doing.
3. Continue to add value over time -- by upskilling and expanding networks of contacts with other people.
4. Maintain a laser-like focus on tangible results -- and ignore everything else.

The Brand You 50 are real-world ideas and suggestions for building equity in your own personal brand -- and your own personal professional services firm -- regardless of whether or not you formally work for yourself or someone else.

1. Nobody else can create your brand identity -- only you.
2. You must find ways to differentiate yourself effectively.
3. Job security is based around your branding -- nothing more.
4. To begin -- take a snapshot of where your brand is right now.
5. Never focus on a job -- always focus on the project.
6. Find good ways to package yourself as a brand.
7. Have the mental image of yourself as the company.
8. Your brand will be defined by whatever you value.
9. Your brand must have distinctive attributes and skills.
10. You must understand the dynamics of how you create value.
11. You need a concise, succinct corporate profile.
12. Even your job title must be distinctive and memorable.
13. Your brand is literally defined by where you allocate time.
14. Harness the politics implementation demands.
15. Realize there's no such thing as a "little" task.
16. Become an expert at bootstrapping.
17. Build a portfolio of truly impressive projects.
18. Focus insanely on the one trait of differentiation.
19. Your brand is defined by who your clients are.
20. Become obsessed with how your clients think and feel.
21. Be stunningly good at something distinctive.
22. The growth of your brand is driven by networking.
23. The diversity of your network adds value to your brand.
24. Brand builders obsess over design details.
25. You must consistently add new ideas and products.
26. Undertake only the most audacious, ambitious projects.
27. To build your brand equity, take risks every day.
28. Focus on producing a performance of consequence.
29. Employees should be encouraged to build their own brands.
30. Your brand identity is your most valuable asset.
31. Credibility turns a brand into a mark of trust.
32. The bedrock of brand building is your business card.
33. A dazzling Web site is a must-have necessity.
34. You must become your own self contained PR agency.
35. Be optimistic -- a practiced optimist if necessary.
36. Do something that renews your brand every single day.
37. Develop a formal, written brand reinvestment plan.
38. Be passionately curious about everything and anything.
39. Enlist directors and advisors for your brand building effort.
40. Develop sources for unfiltered information from the trenches.
41. Dedicate time and resources to building your network.
42. Make your own brand special right from the outset.
43. Lead. Set the pace. Have enthusiasm that radiates.
44. Obsess about power -- the ability to get things done.
45. Utilize a proactive word-of-mouth marketing plan.
46. Think global -- the Web makes it achievable.
47. Sell whatever you offer exceptionally well.
48. Ask for the business you want.
49. Commit to excellence -- whatever the cost.
50. Your brand matters.

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