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Rebranding Yourself for Success

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Rebranding yourself for success

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Work on a “new” you and let the world know about it.

Getting ahead in one’s career requires qualities that have been oft-repeated, such as hard work, good communication skills and a can-do attitude. How one is perceived is also important, especially when meeting new professional contacts. It is an opportunity to build one’s personal brand but very often, people fail to make it count.

“What do you say when someone asks, ‘What have you been up to lately?’ Don’t waste the opportunity with a ridiculous platitude such as ‘not much’ or ‘same old, same old’,” says **Dorie Clark**, author of *Reinventing You: Define Your Brand, Imagine Your Future*. “It’s not that difficult if you plan in advance. If you’re going to an event where you’ll be meeting people, go into it with one thing you want to talk about.”

“It could be a project at work that you’re passionate about. It could be a class you’ve taken up to expand your professional skills. There’s no perfect answer or one answer, but if you have just one interesting thing to say, it could make you a far more powerful conversationalist and it would leave a stronger impression on other people.”

Learn new skills

Speaking to *Perspectives@SMU* on the sidelines of the Singapore Management University (SMU) Executive Development event, ‘Reinventing You: Powerful Branding Secrets for Aspiring Women Leaders’, Clark described ways to sharpen one’s personal brand. Learning a new skill is

one way, but other than intellectual inertia being an impediment, people often overestimate what constitutes learning.

“If you pick an emerging trend (and) apply yourself to it, it would be much easier to become recognised as a leader in that field.”

“When people think about learning, they think of something huge, like ‘I should become fluent in Spanish.’ That would take years!” Clark says. “When it comes to taking a class, people think, ‘Oh, I need to go back to school. I have to quit my job to get a master’s degree.’ That’s completely overblown.”

She adds: “If you really want to be hyper targeted, if you really want to know about something really specific, paying an expert is a terrific way of doing it. There are also websites that serve this purpose. One of them is called LiveNinja, and another is Clarity.fm. These sites have experts on a whole range of topics.”

A quick check of these sites unearthed experts who charge anything from US\$0.50 per minute for common skills such as musical instruction, to US\$375 per hour for highly specialised ones such as law. While there is a big difference in price, these disparate fields share one common feature: there are plenty of people who provide such services.

“If you pick an emerging trend,” explains Clark, “something that you can see will be important in five or 10 years, because everyone is starting from the same place with regards to that nascent industry or trend, no one has an advantage over you. If you really focus and apply yourself to it, it would be much easier to become recognised as a leader in that field.”

Building your brand

Another way of being recognised as a leader would be to create content. However, content is not restricted to just writing.

“The other objection I hear is, ‘I’m not a writer, so I can’t create content’. I try to push back on that,” Clark says, “because you don’t have to write it – it’s all about the ideas, not the format. If you want to start a podcast featuring interviews with interesting people, that’s a great idea. If you want to use your iPhone to shoot videos of yourself talking about different issues and upload them onto Youtube, that’s another way of doing it.”

All of the above may not be excessively difficult to execute, but what if one simply has no time or is just not interested? How do you then maintain your personal brand?

“What would be immediately professionally advantageous would be rekindling old ties,” Clark muses. “Presumably your existing network already knows who you are and what you can do. If you can keep in touch with them, update them when you change jobs or if you are moving into a new direction, they can be your core advocates and connect you with the opportunities you need to succeed professionally.”