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## Seven Steps to Building “Brand You.”

### STEP 1: Find Out Who You Are

Answer these questions and don't be glib.

- What is your product?
- How is “it” special?
- How is it different from others' similar offerings?
- How can I demonstrate its trustworthiness?
- How can I demonstrate I'm with it?
- How can I demonstrate “cool”?

This will not only get your tangible assets (experience, companies, etc.) down on paper but your intangibles – your attitude and character. This will help you get in touch with your unique self and who you are in the marketplace of work.

**STEP 2: Create Your Yellow Pages Ad** Look at quarter-page Yellow Pages ads. See how they say a lot with only a few words? Pick three favorites. Do they communicate their brand's specific values? How are they competing to make their brand stand out and shine?

Now create a first draft of your own ad. What can you offer -- in 10 words or less -- that absolutely no one else is offering? Use bold and specific words.

Finish by telling people where to find you, be it e-mail or Web site. Next, print out your ad and post it on your office wall.

### **STEP 3: Put It on a Bumper Sticker**

Write a list of eight words that describe your work. Be creative. Think about who you are, your product, your skills, your attitude and your point of difference.

Now, pare down the list from eight words to four. Create a phrase from those remaining words. This phrase should be fun and to the point.

Go to your local office supply store and buy blank, printable bumper stickers. Write or print your unique phrase on one of the bumper stickers. Stick it in your car or in your office window for all to see.

### **STEP 4: Make Your Calling Card**

Come up with your own job title to fit your identity – a madcap moniker. Have fun with it, but use words that make your case. Look at other job titles and notice what's cool about them.

Brainstorm. No inhibitions allowed. Go as far as to call yourself “Rocker of Boats” OR “Catalyst for Revolution.” Try several variations until you arrive at the five-word-or-less title that's unique to you.

Take the plunge with this title and have it printed on business cards with your name on it. Use the cards when you are feeling relaxed. Work is serious, so serious that we might as well have some fun with it.

### **STEP 5: List Your Projects**

Pick one of your current work projects and describe what it would take to make it WOW! Write a revised project description, emphasizing the WOW! Remember, any project can be turned into gold with imagination and hard work.

Reduce the revised project description to five bullet points and put it on a 5-by-7-inch index card. Put that index card somewhere visible. When doing the project refer back to the card, as a reminder of how to make your project WOW!

### **STEP 6: Contacts, Contacts, Contacts**

Even though you are working on Brand You, you never work on any project alone. You have to create a community of useful and supportive people. From your contacts come your clients.

Your lunches and your meetings are all opportunities to create new contacts. Don't feel uncomfortable about this. Make contacts of people outside of your traditional circle. That's where the new ideas that will come in that will enhance Brand You.

Organize your contact list. If you haven't seen someone on the list in a while, make plans to get together NOW.

### **STEP 7: Time Is All You Have**

If Brand You is represented by your projects, then you need to weed out all the other distractions in your life and focus on what's important.br>

Everyone knows someone who says they are going to do their “thing” (write a book, start a business, etc.) when they “find the time.” The time is now. You may have to make sacrifices, but if you want it, do it.

Examine your calendar at a microscopic level. Does what you did today reflect your priorities? Become obsessive about your time and lose those things that get in the way of what you want to do.

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Tom Peters: Business and Career Coach. Tom Peters, author of 'Re-Imagine!' offers advice and tips on getting re-energized at work and building your own personal brand. AOL Coaches gives you the advice and tips you need for better living.

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