



Build a personal brand

Stand out from the crowd of jobseekers by building on your strengths and key attributes

BY AUDRINA GAN

A PERSONAL brand is made up of your distinct talents and what you represent. Says Ms Catherine Chan (right), founder and personal brand coach of Iconiq Image: "Personal branding is about determining who you are, what you stand for, why people value you and planning how you can use it to serve others."

From celebrities, employees to students, everyone has a personal brand. A strong brand can help you in the job search process, especially in an overcrowded job marketplace.

Since personal branding brings together your values, strengths, skills as well as character, you need to ask yourself a few questions before you integrate your unique set of attributes into your own brand.

These should include the set of values and principles you live by and the

strengths and skills you employ. Also, be aware of and manage weaknesses that can hinder you. Ascertain your passions and explore how you can pursue them as these help you to grow and reinforce your brand.

Being clear about who you are will help you to persuade hirers with greater confidence. Beware of past regrets, failures and disappointments that hinder you from progress. Learn from your mistakes and refocus the energy on your potential instead.

PROJECT THE RIGHT IMAGE

Your appearance, behaviour and communication should be aligned with who you say you are. For example, you cannot project sharpness with spelling errors in your curriculum vitae (CV) and turn up in ill-fitting clothes at an interview.

"Consistency is the key to unlocking people's confidence and trust in you.

It makes people comfortable with you. When people are comfortable with you, they buy you," says Ms Chan.

Having online presence is only a part of brand-building. Making face-to-face connections helps people to remember you. The next time they know of a job opening, they can recommend you.

Brand-building also entails using your strength to help others. Get involved in relevant projects, volunteer work and events. These give you opportunities to hone your skills, expand your network and increase your visibility.

GETTING THAT DREAM JOB

To snag a potential job interview, pen your distinct attributes and related achievements in your CV.

During the interview, Ms Chan adds, you should share stories of how you used your attributes to achieve results and overcome challenges as well as identify what you are good at and relating these to the position you are applying for.



PHOTO: ICONIQ IMAGE

Says graduate Yan Ping, who found a job before graduation: "Personal branding has allowed me to repackage myself as who I already am. It also helped me to dress to my personality, giving a positive first impression.

"A resumé only tells the employer what skills, knowledge and experience one has, while personal branding has given me that added advantage of expressing my personality in a positive way during that short span of interview time."

Says another jobseeker, Ms Emily Seck: "The personal qualities Catherine had observed and highlighted in her evaluation resonated with me.

"It has definitely given me a greater understanding of myself, and using that to approach challenges ahead with greater confidence."

However, Ms Chan adds that many people mistake personal branding as self-promotion on social media, and overdoing it comes across as off-putting.

Personal branding is an iterative process that will continue to evolve. Who you are and what makes you unique today will change tomorrow, based on your experiences and skills and passions you develop along the way.

Be proactive

