

# ▶ Standing Out

## 10 Tips to Building a Rockin' Personal Brand for Domestic Managers and Staffing Professionals

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If I had just 5 seconds to give you my best advice on personal branding—for any individual or profession really—it would be this: **Stand Out.**

I know that sounds very open-ended, but once you unpack it, it really boils down doing everything you can to be a star among your peers, while keeping to the values and expectations that define your career choice.

For me as a designer, that can truly be open ended. We're all a little strange anyway and drifting off the reservation a bit only adds to the intrigue and interest in who we are.

For the domestic services professional, it means something a little different. Standing out in a space that embodies, and in some ways defines attention to detail and conservative professional etiquette takes a more specific approach.

The following are a few tips to help you polish your personal brand—and hopefully stand out next time you're vying for a position or promotion.

### ON PAPER

#### 1 Lead with your **strengths**.

Where do you shine? What parts of your profession do you enjoy most? Audit your resume and determine the one or two skills or pieces of work history that define what you'd like the future to look like and highlight those. I'm not suggesting you neglect a well-rounded approach to your resume, only that building on the skills you love and feel strongest in will only translate to satisfaction for your employer and increased professional bliss for you.

#### 2 Create a **values statement**.

According to studies, one of the strongest consumer messaging lead-ins is, "We/I believe..." Consumers (and employers) like to know there is passion in what you're offering. Identify what makes you tick, what motivates you to excel in your field. These emotional drivers will help you define your passion and create your own values statement. Include it. Lead with it if you can.

#### 3 Know your **audience**.

Obvious, right? But all too often neglected. Research the person or company you'll be contacting. Include a detail or two about them or their history in your cover letter. This says that you cared enough to invest in them **before** an interview, and that you already have a level of respect for their accomplishments. In addition, especially for those who have extensive professional backgrounds, this research will also allow you to cater the resume you provide to that specific employer's needs and history.

#### 4 Craft your message.

As an employer myself, I prefer quick, to the point introductions. Intellectual investment in any “product” is incremental, so don’t ask your “customer” to wade through a 6-paragraph cover letter before they get to your resume. Keep your cover letter or introductory email brief but informative. Two paragraphs is ideal. **Paragraph 1:** Mention what you’re applying for and what interested you in the specific position (ref. Tip #3 for a bit of flattery here). **Paragraph 2:** Touch on your strengths and your skill set as they relate to the position in question and speak to how you feel you can contribute to filling their specific need. Add a quick but polite closing that mentions your resume (attached, link, etc.) — *aaaand out.*

#### 5 Simplify it for them.

**Tip 5a:** Save or export your resume as a PDF. PDF format is universal to all devices and can be viewed by most browsers. It’s one of the only file formats that almost guarantees readability by the recipient. Also, a **Save as PDF** or **Export as PDF** option are nearly universal among word processing and document creation apps.

**Tip 5b:** Good or bad, we live in a mobile world. What this means to employers and job seekers alike is a whooooole lot of 11pt. copy that will likely, at some point be viewed on a tiny mobile screen. What that means to you is your prospect could skip you over from his boat while he’s perusing applicants on the weekend.

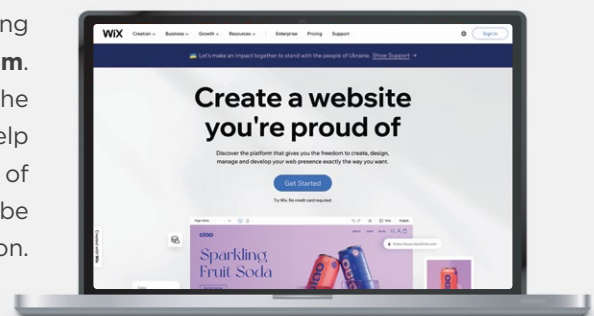
There are a couple of solid ways to address this situation. If you prefer to stick with a print-document-style format, you can work to (re)design your resume in such a way that is can be more easily read on mobile devices. This means testing type styles and sizes for mobile viewing on your own device(s) until you’re happy with it. *\*\*If you take this route, make sure you find a happy medium between the printed and the screen-viewed document so it remains effective both ways.\*\**

A variation on this is to create a second version of your resume formatted for mobile use. This can be distributed as such or even posted as a live link and added to the header of your print resume – “[View mobile version here.](#)” ~ *not an actual link ;)*

Another more involved option is to create a web version of your resume (call it a personal website if you must) using one of the site-builder services such as **Wix** or **web.com**. This option may entail a bit of a learning curve, but the result is generally worth the investment—and it can help you to look tech-saavy and ahead of the curve. Most of these services offer a selection of templates that can be easily modified to accommodate a resume presentation.

They also include the ability to design for desktop and mobile viewing, giving you the flexibility to satisfy both in a single presentation. For the

print-folks out there, visitors can simply print your “resume” from their desktop computer. You could also include a link on the page to a downloadable PDF version if you choose. This path-to-mobile solution gives you a lot of flexibility (the freedom to use more color and imagery, easily create different employer-specific versions, include a contact form to set up interviews...) The possibilities are really only limited by your time investment and the site-builder’s capabilities, just keep your target in mind before going overboard. Plus, once you’ve made the time investment, you can essentially add your resume to your business cards and other correspondence. **[BONUS]**



## ONLINE

### 6 Separate the personal from the professional.

Being true to who you are is important, but certain things don't belong in a business conversation. Try to create a wall between your personal presence and your professional one. Your personal views or preferences may not always jibe with a prospective employer. Creating separate profiles and screennames that don't easily lead them back to your personal presence is a good first step.

### 7 Pay attention to your profile images.

A professional headshot is best. It doesn't have to be stiff and somber-faced. If you're a happy person, smile. Wear your favorite bow tie or earrings. This is a place where, within reason, you can use small details to speak to who you are. BUT – be well groomed, cover those tattoos and **don't post a selfie**.



### 8 Be active in your professional social media.

Don't let your social media accounts stagnate. LinkedIn is more than job site, it's a professional community. Every post you make, share or like there helps to build your personal brand. You post at least 3-5 times a week and check in daily to see if there is anything that sparks an engagement. Keep it as business-related as you can but do your best to keep it interesting and fun too. Seeing that you're active within your professional community can go a long way with a prospective employer.

### 9 Complete your profile.

I know the options, especially on LinkedIn can seem daunting. You don't have to check every box, but a profile with little or no intro, 3 years of work history and a bad headshot won't generate much interest—at least not the kind you're looking for. Do some research. Find a few successful peer profiles—ideally outside your geographical region—and take note of how they've made use of the options available. Build on these ideas to help make your own profile more robust.

## IN PERSON

### 10 Live your brand.

This is a universal tip, and one that should be obvious, but some folks (and businesses) still get it wrong.

Dress the part, speak the part and bring the **branded you** to life. Get to know that brand by heart. Until you're comfortable in those shoes, refresh yourself before each meeting. Go back through your social media interactions, reread your resume and cover letter, and make sure you can speak to your values and experience without missing a beat. When an interviewer feels a disconnect between what they think they know and the genuine article, it can lead to second guessing and doubts.

All tips aside, the real key to any great brand, personal or corporate, is being genuine. At its heart, your industry is about people. Authenticity is the buzz these days so don't always mask who you are behind bullet points and industry jargon. Find a comfortable balance within your professional profile (your brand) that delivers those important details while still presenting you as a real person with a passion for what you do—and for the position you're seeking.

**Be true to yourself and your brand will be true you.**