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January 2009

Issue: 21

Dear Lauren,

Happy New Year! The ride through 2008 got a bit bumpy at the end, so welcome to a new year, a new presidency and a new start.

All indications are that the economy will continue to be an off-road kind of experience for some time to come, but there are always opportunities in the challenges - an opportunity to grow personally or professionally, an opportunity to get creative or completely change your life and lifestyle. That which has held us up, held us down, or held us back from change is shifting, so I encourage each of you to use this time to contemplate what it is in your life you'd like to improve this year.

As always, I invite you to forward this newsletter to everyone you think would benefit from and/or enjoy it.

 Forward to a Friend

Wishing you success, balance and freedom every day!

Warmly,
Lauren Still

Developing Your Personal Brand: Vision (Part 1 of 5)

A personal brand statement is the lasting image or impression about what you do and what it means for someone else, such as an employer, potential employer, or networking partner. Having a clear idea of your unique value proposition, or personal brand can help you stand out professionally, in a job search, or when talking

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to others about what your product, service, or business offers. It can be a key component to greater success in almost any endeavor.

Many people have asked me how one identifies or develops one's own personal brand. It is, of course, a delicate balance between who you are in your essence, and a choice about how you wish others to see you. For example, let's say your personality is naturally confident and assertive. Depending on the other party's own personality, position and sensitivities, they may view this as a positive or they may be threatened or intimidated. Thus, awareness and consciousness around your natural strengths and inclinations, as well as whether they may be considered an asset or a liability, can help you to craft your personal brand to your best advantage based on where you wish to go.

I have developed a Personal Branding Model to help people identify the four major areas of a personal brand, and distill the unique characteristics from each into a cohesive personal brand statement. The first of these areas, and the one which will be discussed this month, is Vision. Each month we will explore another area of the model, and the brand statement itself. If you are looking to develop your own personal brand, follow along with each step of the process. (If you need more details or support in this process, please contact me at 303-325-5765.)

Your vision is your picture of where you are going in the future. Why is this so important to your personal brand? If you are planning to climb the corporate ladder and take on broader responsibilities, then you want to create a brand of leadership, responsibility, decision-making and broad institutional knowledge and contacts. On the other hand, if you see yourself specializing in a certain area and creating demand for your knowledge, then your brand might be more effective as a subject matter expert with deep knowledge and experience and an ability to apply that knowledge in multiple applications.

Are you ready to start defining your personal brand? To determine the Vision piece of your personal brand, consider:

- Your general life direction and aspirations, what "could be."
- Your short- and long-term goals.
- Your picture of a happy, fulfilled and balanced future.

What aspects of your vision and direction make you unique? How does this enhance what you have to offer others? Try to distill your Vision into a few sentences that capture your distinctive path for the future.

Karma Corner

Monthly featured business

Did you know that mortgage rates are at historic lows?

Do yourself and your bank account a favor and find out whether refinancing is right for you - you may be able to lower your payment!

Contact Russell at
303.817.2002

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Coaching Question

What do you want to accomplish in 2009?

Next month we will explore your Experience and its relationship to your personal brand.

I'm always interested in hearing your thoughts. Please [email me](#) your comments and ideas for future articles you'd like to see.

Jobseeker Tips: Using Your Network

If you're in the middle of a job search, you've probably heard that you should be networking. But you may not know what that really entails, or if you do, you may be hesitant to start reaching out to people you don't know all that well (or not at all).

Remember that it makes people feel good to be able to help out, and makes them feel valuable when they are asked in a respectful and considerate way. Also, if you approach networking in such a way that you are looking for ways to help others, as well as asking for their assistance, you can "pay it forward" and feel like you're making a difference in others' lives as well. It creates good karma!

So now that you might be feeling a little better about networking, here are a few tips to get you started:

- Put together a comprehensive list of people you know (not just your friends). Segment this into high-potential contacts and secondary contacts. Focus your attention first on the high-potential list.
- Have a letter or quick script ready, which explains why you're contacting them, includes your commercial or personal branding statement, and asks them for specific help (Examples: Can they refer you to someone who would be a good contact for you? Would they be willing to provide a reference? Could they give you 20 minutes for an informational interview?)
- Find networking groups and professional associations to attend.
- Don't forget about online networking with LinkedIn, FaceBook, and other sites. Make sure that everything online is appropriate and professional - HR and recruiters do look you up on the social networking sites to see what they can find!

Happy networking!

Success. Balance. Freedom.

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