

BUILDING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND & BECOMING AN INFLUENCER

barbara

Corcoran sees big promise in crowdfunding: "The access to capital isn't at your local bank—it's online."



Whether you crowdfund or bootstrap or raise venture capital or wind up on a reality TV show like Shark Tank, Corcoran's story makes clear that determination and common sense go a long way in business. With the right attitude, you can find opportunities. With the right opportunities, you can succeed.

And the journey is worth it because you design the destination. By becoming an entrepreneur, Corcoran says, "you're 100 percent in control." You can invest your job. "Do you know how much better that is, to create your own world exactly as you want it?" she asks.

"You can



Learn More About Crowdfunding With Our Epic Guide

Crowdfunding—jumpstarting an idea by raising small sums of money from a large number of people, usually by offering rewards to backers—has democratized capital. The money to fund your idea exists, and you can have it if you run a successful campaign.

We've poured hours into assembling a special guide that will help you do just that. Featuring the stellar writing and actionable advice that you've come to expect from *Forbes*, the guide includes over 13,000 words worth of tips from people who've raised big bucks: Startups, Clothing, the Oxo-Tip, Who Gives A Crap, and more!

We even scored an interview with *Forbes* co-founder Dan

you haven't already, go to [Forbes.com/Crowdfunding](#) or call us; it's worth every cent.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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What Is a Personal Brand?

A personal brand is much more than a flashy logo or a color palette. A personal brand goes far beyond having a nice-looking business card. A personal brand is not just about having a website with your name on it, although that's certainly part of it.

Your personal brand is how you present yourself, both online and offline, to your ideal audience. Your personal brand is the image you put forth. It's what you stand for. Your values. What you're all about. The core of who you are as a person.

It's the combination of your values, unique skills, experiences, stories, personality, and image, all presented authentically to your audience.

Every person is now a brand. Everyone can constantly put themselves out in front of their audience. Everyone can add value to their audience. Everyone can communicate their message loud and clear. With everything you share with your audience, you're building your brand.

The question is whether you're actively taking control of your brand. Do you want your brand to develop on its own, with no guidance from you, or do you want to be actively in control of the process? It's always best to be the one in control of your personal brand.



Why You Need to Build a Personal Brand

Every entrepreneur, coach, consultant, freelancer, etc. should be building their own brand. If you are trying to build a business of any sort, it's important to build your own personal brand.

Personal branding allows you to stand out from the competition. Your competitors can't bring what you bring to the table. They simply don't have what you have to offer. You're unique. Only you are you.

You have unique experiences, strengths, beliefs, perspectives, skills, and insights that set you apart from everyone else. Building your personal brand allows you highlight your strengths.

Personal branding allows you to charge a premium price. Because you bring unique value to the table - value that no one else offers - you can charge a premium price for your services.

When you craft a strong personal brand, you can charge a higher price for your products and services because they're exclusive to you.

Personal branding highlights your expertise. A significant amount of personal branding involves the content that you share with the world. The more valuable the content you share, the more you demonstrate that you're an expert who should be trusted.

With every piece of content that you share, you establish yourself as an expert in your field. The more you show that you're an expert, the more people will trust you.

Personal branding allows you to attract your ideal audience. When you're an expert, you attract those who need your help the most. They want help from you because



you're the expert. It also generates more referrals from others in your field. And it allows you to charge a premium price.

Personal branding puts you in charge of the narrative. Your personal brand will evolve, whether you want it to or not. If you use social media, have an email list, write a blog, or speak to groups, you're already building your personal brand. The question is whether you're building the brand intentionally.

Personal brand building ensures that you're the one forming people's ideas and opinions about you. You're in control of the story.

Personal branding increases your visibility. As you build your personal brand, you'll become more visible. You'll attract more fans on social media, who will share your content with their tribes, which will then attract more fans.

You'll also be featured in more media outlets since they're always looking for experts. And you'll be invited to speak at more places. As you build your brand, your platform will also grow.

Personal branding shapes the content you share. Without a personal brand, you have nothing guiding you in terms of what content you should be sharing with your audience.

Personal branding gives you guidelines as to what you should share with your audience. You should only share things that are in line with your brand. Anything off-brand shouldn't be shared.

Personal branding connects you more with individuals. People connect better with other people than they do with companies. The more you work to build your brand, the more individuals you'll attract. They'll be attracted to your values, personality, and insights.



The more individuals you attract, the more you'll build your overall business.

Personal branding allows you to become an influencer. An influencer is someone who significantly shapes the opinions of their followers and has a big influence on how they behave. There are some significant benefits to being an influencer.

Big brands want to work with influencers, which can generate revenue for you. You often receive free things from companies who are interested in partnering with you. And you frequently get requests from the media to speak or just to attend events.



How to Build a Personal Brand

Step #1: Determine who you really are. Building your personal brand is about sharing your authentic self with the world.

Ask yourself: What unique skills do I have? What are my core values? What am I most passionate about? What unique experiences have shaped who I am? How can I most effectively serve my core audience? What do I have to offer that no one else does?

Step #2: Determine what you want to accomplish. Once you've identified the core of who you are, it's time to think about what you want to accomplish with your personal brand.

Ask yourself: What would I like to accomplish, both personally and professionally? What do I want to be known for? If I could be the world's foremost expert on a topic, what would it be? What key message do I want to communicate? If I could only give one piece of advice, what would it be? What is the "personality" of my brand?

Step #3: Identify your target audience. There is a core demographic of people who will resonate deeply with you, your brand, and what you offer. This core demographic is your target audience.

To identify your core audience, ask these questions: Who can I most effectively help? Who will benefit most from my skill set and knowledge? Who am I most passionate about serving? Who will resonate most with me and my brand?

It can also be helpful to create a persona for your ideal client. This should include demographic information, desires and aspirations, as well as pain points and challenges that they face.



Step #4: Determine your Unique Service Proposition. Your USP is simply your brand summed up into a single, powerful compelling statement that describes exactly what you do for your audience.

A USP typically looks something like this: I help (target person) to (achieve X) so that they can (outcome). Your USP doesn't have to say everything about your brand, but it should get right to the heart of who you are and how you help your audience. It may help to give your USP a unique name that will stick in people's mind.

Don't skimp on this step. Creating your USP gives you a high degree of clarity about what your brand is all about.

Step #5: Start treating yourself as a brand. In every communication with your audience, whether a blog post, email, podcast, social media post, etc., you stay true to your brand message. You constantly speak about the problems you solve, constantly encourage your audience, constantly voice the message of your brand.

It also means creating a strong, compelling website to serve as your home base for all your online activities. It means creating a media page or media kit on your site for media inquiries. It could mean not answering emails yourself, but having an assistant answer them.

Step #6: Optimize your website. Your website functions as your "home base" of sorts. It is one of the primary places people get to know who you are and what you do. Your website also functions as one of the primary ways you turn visitors into paying clients.

Optimizing your website includes: having a professional logo designed, showing off your USP, using professional photos, using testimonials, presenting a clear call-to-action, creating a compelling "About" page, creating a services page, giving away free resources, creating a contact page.



Step #7: Develop your content strategy. The primary way you're going to build your brand is by creating strategic content, such as blog posts, videos, social media posts, emails, affirmations, and podcasts. Each piece of content you share with your audience should serve to build your brand.

We recommend the “Pillar Method” for your content. The Pillar Method involves creating longer pieces of content that function as pillars, of sorts. These pillar pieces are then cut up into smaller pieces of content that are shared across a variety of social media platforms. Using this method allows you to repurpose a single piece of content in a variety of ways.

Step #8: Constantly add value to your audience. It's essential that you constantly give value to your audience without asking for anything in return. The main thing people should take away when interacting with your brand is how much value you provide.

There will be times when you ask for a sale or ask someone to become a new client. The main emphasis, however, should be on adding value to your audience.

Step #9: Build a community. One of the best ways to build your brand is to build a community of people who can share ideas, support each other, and reach out to you directly. You create a tribe of passionate people who care about the same things you do.

Some simple ways to build a community include starting a private Facebook group where people can encourage each other and share ideas, hosting live events where you can interact personally with your tribe, or creating a membership site where people can get exclusive access to you.

Remember, that this strategy takes time. You can't rush it. Building an identity and being recognized is a huge venture. Is it work? Yes. Will there be roadblock? Yes. Will you eventually be riding on a rainbow? No. But it's worth it. Don't give up!