



Career Management Column L&MB - [Rita Balian Allen](#)

“Building Your Personal Brand = Building Your Reputation and Credibility”

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Do you actively enhance your visibility within your organization and your industry? Do you put yourself in a position to meet new people and reconnect with existing contacts? Do you actively and strategically build your personal brand?

People may find it overwhelming to do the required personal due diligence to identify and define their personal brand. This is an on-going process we must engage in when managing our careers. Once you have defined and identified your brand, the equally difficult work begins to create and build your brand. The purpose is to find opportunities that demonstrate and showcase your talents and experiences as well as build your portfolio, track record and credibility. There are many ways to do this effectively, some very obvious and traditional while others require creativity. How you package yourself will reflect your style and tell your story in a way that allows you access to the various venues in which you would like to execute your presentation.

As we build our careers, we create a history that begins to tell our story and establishes our credibility. Another way of looking at this is to put it in terms of defining and leveraging our track record, which is something many of us aren't accustomed to doing on a regular basis yet need to do with focus and discipline. The following are a number of ways that can enable us to do just that.

Keep copies of performance reviews, awards, authored articles, presentations and other testaments of your work history, track record, expertise, and credibility. Obtain written references, testimonials and/or statements from colleagues, managers, peers, clients, staff, professors, vendors and other key contacts who can attest to your experiences, skills and knowledge. Create your own professional "scrapbook" that captures all of your achievements. Think of it as keeping an inventory, taking stock, compiling a snapshot of all the great things you have achieved over time. In short, don't take any reminders of your hard work for granted. They all serve as a way to chart your progress and history and to provide relevant examples of your achievements as needed. All of which are a reflection of your personal brand; and how you are building that brand.

Another part of building your track record, *or your personal brand*, is being mindful how you show up and engage, and the impression you leave behind. How we present ourselves to others will greatly impact our track record and credibility. It's important to focus on the positives and not dwell on the difficulties. Exude enthusiasm and personal energy that is inspiring, motivating and positively influencing. As we keep our professional "scrapbook", it is an opportunity to be grateful for our talents, successes and contributions and to celebrate them! Optimism and gratitude are part of the process. It is equally important to show gratitude to others. Certainly a thank you is absolutely a must, however, truly and selflessly acknowledge the role someone has had in your success and express your utmost gratitude openly. Put other people's interest's front and center and reach out to offer help, initiate without being asked. Sincerity and authenticity in showing support and collaboration to express your appreciation is essential. Again, all of which are a reflection of your personal brand; and how you are building that brand.

Build strong credentials as you progress throughout your career. In addition to gaining new roles and responsibilities, round out your credentials with professional experiences that extend beyond your position. Be active in professional organizations, serve on boards, committees and/or volunteer organizations that will provide opportunities to expand your network, add depth to your knowledge and experience, and enhance your visibility in your profession, industry and/or community. Additionally, seek out ways to give back to your profession, industry and community, and consistently make this a part of your portfolio. Not only is it rewarding personally, it creates new relationships that can lead to new possibilities and paths. Continue to grow your network and focus on building, establishing and nurturing long lasting mutually rewarding relationships. Be there for others in your network and seek out ways to be of service to them. Include mentors in your network and be a mentor to others. Identify a variety of key alliances and strategic partnerships. Again, all of which are a reflection of your personal brand; and how you are building that brand.

Education and continued learning is also critical. Being well-read and educated is an asset that will always round off your "package" for the better. Education is one piece of our credentials. We gain

experience through different work roles, but just as important through experiences we build outside of our jobs. Get involved and be active - join a variety of professional associations that meet different objectives for you and play a role in these organizations. Make a difference by building your content expertise outside of your job responsibilities. Become a thought leader and content expert by staying informed, understanding the best practices in your field, and keeping apprised of trends and challenges. This level of knowledge will ensure that you are sought after as a subject matter expert. It enables you to achieve a different level of demand in your industry, and can allow you to gain a powerful edge in the marketplace. Again, all of which are a reflection of your personal brand; and how you are building that brand.

The best way to enhance your credibility, *and your personal brand*, is through actions rather than words. This could include writing articles and blogs, publishing white papers, teaching classes and/or courses, speaking on panels, presenting at association meetings, delivering content at conferences, as well as facilitating sessions at trade shows among a variety of other possibilities. Put yourself out there to continuously learn and add to your knowledge base; and then be ready, willing and prepared to share that knowledge as a thought leader and content expert. You want to be sought after as a resource and go-to professional. Build a solid reputation as someone who delivers results both on the job and as a serious and trusted professional who knows his/her field. Again, all of which are a reflection of your personal brand; and how you are building that brand.

Be strategic and thoughtful about how you are building your credibility and enhancing your reputation...and keep in mind as you do so, it will also be a reflection of your personal brand and how you are building that brand. Project who and what you want people to see and think when they hear your name. Stay true to your brand as you build your track record, your credibility and ultimately your reputation. Stay positive, be happy and push yourself out of your comfort zone to try new and different things. Enjoy the journey along the way!

Ask Rita: Do you have a career question and/or a career story to share? Email your questions or stories to rita@ritaballenassociates.com

Rita Balian Allen is the president of Rita B. Allen Associates, a career management firm specializing in executive coaching, leadership development, management training and career development. She is a lecturer at Boston-area universities, a sought-after speaker and presenter, the author of numerous articles, blogs and the newly released book, "*Personal Branding and Marketing Yourself: The Three Ps Marketing Technique as a Guide to Career Empowerment*". Rita was voted one of the top ten executive coaches by the Boston Women's Business Journal .