

Underused Hot Spots for Your Personal Branding Iron

Scott Ginsberg, *That guy with the nametag*

I'll never forget what my mentor told me: "Don't communicate in any way to any person without the stamp of your personal brand."

Everyone has a personal brand, whether they know it or not. And everyone has a personal brand, whether they like it or not. But only those who actively and consistently create, maintain and imprint their personal brands on the people with whom they interact will sizzle!

But what is a personal brand? Peter Montoya, author of *The Brand Called You*, defines it as "a personal identity that stimulates precise, meaningful perceptions in its audience about the values and qualities that person stands for." But your personal brand is only as strong as the moments in which it is manifested.

Now, because YOU are the product, because YOU are what people want, and because YOU need to make an UNFORGETTABLE first impression; everything must be stamped with your personal brand. And I'm not just talking about the obvious hot spots like your website, business cards, marketing materials and promotional items. I'm talking about those underused and overlooked places that could benefit from a little more of you.

The "From" Line

Recently, my friend Paul told me to change my "from line" on my outgoing mail. It used to simply have my email address, but then I changed it to say HELLO, my name is Scott, my personal brand, which also happens to be my website URL and the title of one of my books. And as soon as I made the change, Paul said it stood out amidst all the other emails and enticed him to read my message first!

The "from" line is a perfect, yet underused hot spot to stamp your personal brand. Let's say you're known as "The Tax Law Queen." Great. Put that instead of your email! It will stand out among the hundreds of emails in your recipients' inboxes.

Try this quick exercise – it's deliciously fun. Go to your inbox right now, start at the top, and slowly scroll down through ALL of your emails. Then look at the "from" lines. Which ones stand out?

Here are some of the "from" lines in my inbox:

- J-RITZ (Rapper/Producer in Portland, OR)
- Paul & The Ripples Project (The President of a non-profit)
- Warp Speed Errands (Personal Concierge Business)
- Dan Poynter & Para Publishing (Author/Publisher/Seminar Leader)
- EZ Way Web Connections (Website Designer)
- DON the IDEA GUY (Writer/Creative Consultant)

NOTE: My inbox has 511 emails, and these were the only 6 that stood out. That's exactly 1.1%. What does that tell you?!

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Signatures

Email signatures are wonderful. Use them. But don't put TOO much information. Whatever program you use for email – Outlook, Eudora, Yahoo, Hotmail – find out how to customize your signature. There's nothing more frustrating than receiving an email from someone who wants to talk further, get together or have you send her something, that doesn't have any personal information in the email. At the end of every email you send, cross reference the following information:

- *Name
- *Title
- *Company/Organization
- *Mailing address
- *Phone numbers
- *Email address
- *Website
- *A few sentences about yourself, your company or your job

Think how many emails you send out each day: what if each one reinforced your personal brand?

Answering the Phone

I once read an article about a seedy bar in North Carolina called "He's Not Here." The name originated from an owner who was accused of attracting customers of the, shall we say, unfaithful nature. And because of the fear of jealous wives rampaging for their husbands, the bartender always answered the phone by saying, "He's not here!"

Now, although the personal brand of that business isn't exactly proper, you've got to admit – that's a damn clever way to answer the phone. And consistent. And memorable. And funny.

Sadly, only a small percentage of people do this; either because they're too lazy, they'd rather just utter the canned "This is Jim..." or they can't think of anything creative to say.

A few years ago I was invited to be a guest on a local morning show to talk about my first book, HELLO, my name is Scott. But I knew the DJ's would give me a hard time. So, when they dialed my number (on the air) and waited for me to pick up, I answered with, "HELLO, my name is Scott...?"

The three DJ's started laughing so hard, I had to hold the phone away from my ear! They were dying! They even complimented my creative approach to answering the phone. And so, ever since then, I've never answered the phone another way – and people still laugh almost every time.

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Voicemail

Among all the mediums through which we communicate, voicemail always gets treated like the redheaded stepchild:

"Hi this is Randy. Leave your name and number and I'll get back to you."

This is an example of a typical outgoing message that makes callers feel like they really are talking to a machine. Now, we all hear this cookie cutter message about a dozen times daily. And it doesn't necessarily make a voicemail message bad; but it does mean the voicemail is not being fully leveraged.

My friend Gina owns a company called It's Your Stuff. She is a Professional Home Stylist who creates a designer look in people's homes with their existing furnishings, art and accessories. I called her the other day, and although I missed her, here's what her voicemail said:

"Hi you've reached Gina of It's Your Stuff. Sorry I missed your call, but I'm out making someone's home beautiful! Please leave a message."

Perfect.

These examples should stimulate some great ideas to find ways to incorporate more of you in all that you do. Remember: your personal brand underscores all that you do and say. But don't forget to make it manifest in all the media through which you do and say it.

(1,102 words)

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Scott Ginsberg is a professional speaker, "The World's Foremost Expert on Nametags" and the author of *HELLO my name is Scott* and *The Power of Approachability*. He helps people MAXIMIZE their approachability and become UNFORGETTABLE communicators - one conversation at a time. For more information contact Front Porch Productions at www.hellomynameisscott.com.

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