



Me, Myself, and Inc.

Brand and market yourself for greater job search visibility and career success.

“Why should I hire you?”

For a job seeker, the answer to this recruiting question is probably the same reason why some choose Nike footwear, Starbucks coffee, or an Apple computer over other product choices: Because, like certain brands, YOU bring value that fills a need better than anyone else.

If you were a box of cereal hoping to end up at the checkout, you would have to first grab the shopper's eye from among other boxes and brands on the shelves, then convince him why you're the best thing since sliced bread so he'll put you in his cart.

So, as a job seeker, among thousands of other job seekers, how do you separate, differentiate, and elevate yourself from the rest of the competition?

You begin by building You, The Brand.

YOU are the product.

Brands are important. By filling NEEDS and adding VALUE, they create a sense of certainty, consistency, and credibility, which translates into user security, comfort, and loyalty. A home security company doesn't just sell alarms; it also promises peace of mind.

As a job seeker, you are your own CEO: You create, and you maintain your own brand of services. This identity articulates the benefits you offer an employer. Included are your credentials, experience, and actions that help build a profile and reputation that are unique to you. All brands have reputations; a positive one keeps people coming back. So while you may dress as professionally and have the same academic background as another candidate, your internships, volunteer work, and summer as a teaching assistant demonstrate an ability to be proactive, to lead, and to manage others. Determine your message.

Know thyself.

To describe yourself, you must first know yourself. Building You, The Brand begins with asking What is my purpose? What difference do I make? What qualities and characteristics do I want people to

remember? What achievements make me proud? What is my passion? You are a package deal; enthusiasm is as important as experience. Monitor your appearance, how you speak, your résumé, your choices, how you handle pressure and time, how you behave, etc. These all contribute to how recruiters perceive, connect, and relate to You, The Brand. And YOU get the job if you meet or exceed their expectations and needs.

Your answers must be honest, and they must be strong and compelling. Otherwise, keep refining them. Get to the core of what you offer. That will help determine your long term strategy and goals and help identify what sets you apart from others. Focus on achieving clarity to build self-awareness, self-confidence, and self-control.

Create positive PR.

Visibility is essential for brand awareness. Promote yourself effectively by interacting with teachers, associates, and the community. Attend events, assist with projects, teach, volunteer, intern, or mentor. If you have an online presence, be sure to keep your digital footprint clean (See Online ID-iocy).

Have a strategy and campaign to market yourself. Network to develop relationships. People like to be associated with winners; that's the power of the brand. Business cards are the most common means of conveying information and your sense of style. Keep the design and layout professional and organized. And don't forget your 30-second pitch (See Elevator Speech: Job Search Infomercial).

Sometimes, no matter how well you brand yourself, some folks choose Coke over Pepsi. It doesn't necessarily mean one is better; it may just be personal preference. So don't be discouraged!



i n a nutshell:

Brands can live or die according to perception:

- **Direct your services and skills to meet the employer's needs**
- **Your choices, voice, and actions all reflect your brand**
- **Reinvent when needed, but hold true to your core beliefs; brands are time-tested**
- **Brand success is based on producing, not just posturing**
- **Provide value, not just a product; focus on doing more than just the job**
- **Be memorable for the right reasons**

Know who you are, and speak up for yourself. Different drummer or not, your brand is unique.