



## **Building Your Personal Leadership Brand**

*Just as businesses need to build their brands, so leaders need to build their.*

by [Andrew Cooke](#), [Blue Sky GPS \(Growth & Profit Solutions\)](#)

You probably already have a personal leadership brand. But do you have the right one? And is it the one that will take you from where you are to where you want to be? This is an important question as it is your leadership brand that conveys your identity and distinctiveness as a leader. It communicates the value you offer. If you have the wrong leadership brand for the position you have, or the position you want, then your work is not having the impact it could. A strong personal leadership brand allows all that's powerful and effective about your leadership to become known to your colleagues, enabling you to generate maximum value.

What's more, choosing a leadership brand can help give you focus. When you clearly identify what you want to be known for, it is easier to let go of the tasks and projects that do not let you deliver on that brand. Instead, you can concentrate on the activities that do.

### **Five Steps to Building Your Leadership Brand**

#### **1. What results do you want to achieve in the next year?**

The first thing you should do is ask yourself, "In the next 12 months, what are the major results I want to deliver at work?" Take into account the interests of these four groups:

- Customers
- Investors
- Employees
- The organization

#### **2. What do you wish to be known for?**

What are the six key descriptors which you need to have to balance your strengths and qualities? A good way to do this is to ask your boss, peers and some of your most trusted subordinates. *"What are the traits that someone in this role (and/or future role) should*



exhibit?" Their responses will help you to refine your list. For example, the traits you ultimately select might include being collaborative, deliberate, independent, innovative, results-oriented and strategic.

### **3. Define your identity**

The next step is to combine these six words into three two-word phrases that reflect your desired identity. This exercise allows you to build a deeper, more complex description: not only what you want to be known for, but how you will probably have to act to get there. For example, the above six descriptors could be combined into the following three phrases:

- Independently innovative
- Deliberately collaborative
- Strategically results-oriented

Test these ideas with your colleagues.

### **4. Construct your leadership brand statement, and then test it.**

In this step, you pull everything together in a leadership brand statement that makes a "so that" connection between what you want to be known for (Steps 2 and 3) and your desired results (Step 1). Fill in the blanks:

*"I want to be known for being \_\_\_\_\_ so that I can deliver \_\_\_\_\_."*

For example: *"I want to be known for being independently innovative, deliberately collaborative and strategically results-oriented so that I can deliver superior financial outcomes for my business."*

With your leadership brand statement drafted, ask the following three questions to see if it needs to be refined:

- *Is this the brand identity that best represents who I am and what I can do?*
- *Is this brand identity something that creates value in the eyes of my organization and key stakeholders?*
- *What risks am I taking by exhibiting this brand? Can I live this brand?*



## 5. Make your brand identity real

To ensure that the leadership brand you advertise is embodied in your day-to-day work, check in with those around you. Do they see you as you wish to be seen? If you say you are flexible and approachable, do others find you so?

Share your personal leadership brand with others. Let people know your evolving as a leader and ask them for their feedback. The exercise of forging a leadership brand requires day-to-day discipline to make it real, courage to make the changes you need to make, and humility to ask and take on the ideas and advice of others.

Your leadership brand isn't static; it continually evolves to the different expectations you face at different times in your career. Leaders with the self-awareness and drive to evolve their leadership brands are more likely to be successful over the long term — and to enjoy the journey more.

### About Andrew Cooke

Andrew Cooke is known for his work with executives, managers and teams in helping them to grow, develop and achieve results. Using a blend of consulting, facilitation and coaching he is noted for his ability in "bringing people potential to life". Andrew takes the time to understand and assist successful business executives in creating a customized plan that allows them grow and develop their leadership effectiveness and improve organizational performance. In doing this he guides executives to manage, direct and make change work for them and their stakeholders and teams in an increasing volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous business environment. From this he helps others to become more successful in both what they do and how they do it.

Andrew demonstrates a proactive attitude and empathy that blends enthusiasm, energy and a pragmatic approach in engaging leaders and their stakeholders. He has over thirty years of international business experience and insights on which to draw, and has worked with blue-chip clients and other leading businesses across a range of industries. Andrew is passionate about helping others to be more successful personally and professionally



### **Qualifications & Accreditations**

Andrew is an experienced international expert in executive coaching, leadership development and business consulting. He has qualifications, certifications and accreditations from recognized leading global organizations, including:

- International executive coach with certifications for Marshall Goldsmith Stakeholder Centered Coaching and Global Leader of the Future 360<sup>0</sup> Assessment
- Masters of Business Administration (MBA), London Business School, UK
- Bachelor of Business BA (Hons), University of Plymouth (UK)
- Diploma from the Institute of Marketing (UK)
- Accredited DISC Facilitator & Coach