

Personal Branding Myth #2:

“Personal Branding Is All About How You Look and Dress”

Let's say you pick up a box of cookies at a supermarket because the packaging catches your eye. It looks upscale, gourmet, delicious. But, when you open the package and try one of the cookies, you're disappointed. The cookies don't taste terrible, mind you, but they don't taste any better than the less expensive cookies with the average packaging. You may have fallen prey to the packaging once, but it's highly likely you'll never buy those cookies again.

What if you were to buy a car because of how it looked? You might discover that while it's beautiful on the outside, it gets lousy gas mileage and sends you repeatedly to the mechanic. It would most likely change how you feel about your beautiful, new car.

The same is true of personal branding. A great “Look” might fool someone briefly but wearing Armani or Prada will only get you so far. If the individual underneath that Look can't deliver, it isn't going to fool anyone for long. Personal branding has more depth than that, just like you (or, in this case, YOU™!)

To say that personal branding is only about how you look and dress is a little bit like saying McDonald's is only about its golden arches, or that Starbucks is only about the mug that holds your coffee. It's just skimming the surface of what those brands are really about.

Sure, your Look is one element of your personal brand. After all, if you're trying to convey a personal brand of “impeccable accuracy,” and you dress in a sloppy way, that Look clearly won't represent your personal brand well. A sloppy appearance will definitely make it more difficult for people to believe you perform with impeccable accuracy. On the other hand, if you dress impeccably but don't perform impeccably, that won't work either.

So, your personal brand extends far beyond just Look. It involves how you perform, who you are, what you can offer, and what makes you distinctive in the workplace. In short, your personal brand is all about your uniqueness, your strengths, your talents, and what you want to be known for on the job. Your personal brand is about what you do and who you are.

Real personal branding starts with carefully defining what YOU™ stand for and then setting out to communicate that with consistency. You must do the work “inside” before you can successfully communicate your personal brand on the “outside.”

Clients who have followed the *How YOU™ Are Like Shampoo* Personal Branding System have learned how to craft and effectively communicate their personal brands at work. It's simple, it's enlightening, and it will make a positive and immediate difference in the way people perceive, think, and feel about YOU™. And that's what leads to better job satisfaction, more trust and loyalty at work, and - ultimately - a bigger paycheck.

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The bottom line is: There are many elements that have an effect on how well your personal brand is communicated. Your “Look” is only one of them. To find out more about the four other critical activities you do every single day that most impact how you communicate your personal brand, be sure to re-read Chapters 12-16 of *How YOU™ Are Like Shampoo*.

Brenda S. Bence is an internationally-recognized branding expert, Certified Executive Coach, Certified Speaking Professional, and the author of several award-winning books, including the *How YOU™ Are Like Shampoo* personal branding series and *Smarter Branding Without Breaking the Bank*.



In one of her recently released books, *Would YOU Want to Work for YOU™? How to build an executive leadership brand that inspires loyalty and drives employee performance*, Brenda brings her many years of transformational coaching successes, insights, examples, and real-world stories to the rewarding task of helping leaders reach their full potential.

After earning her MBA from Harvard, Brenda spent the bulk of her career as an executive in Fortune 100 multinationals, building brands across dozens of countries spanning four continents. Now, as President of her own company, Brand Development Associates International, she travels the world speaking, training, and coaching individuals and companies to greater success through creative, yet practical, corporate and personal brand development. Visit www.BrendaBence.com.

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