

# Building a Strong Personal Brand | Beyond OSU: Artifact

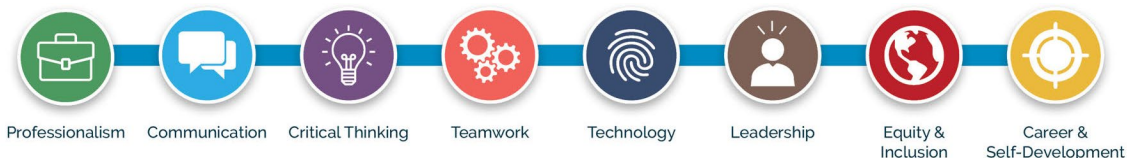
## Assignment Overview:

In this assignment, students reflect on their past and present brand (even if they didn't realize they had one) and formulate clear objectives to build a strong and consistent personal brand to project in-person and online for career purposes. A personal brand isn't defining everything you are in your personal life, but it is the reputation you want to evoke in a social and community context.

- Learning Outcomes:**
1. Identify the purpose and elements of a personal brand.
  2. Design an outline for a comprehensive and authentic personal brand.

**Beyond OSU:** This assignment falls under the **Beyond OSU I (Prepare) learning outcome #2: Apply life-long career development concepts through the creation of career relevant artifacts.**

**NACE Competencies: Skills developed completing this assignment:**  
Professionalism, Communication, Critical Thinking, Career & Self-Development



## Student Worksheet:

**If you don't define yourself, someone else will.**

A **personal brand** is the vehicle for your story. It's a way to communicate and connect your skills, talents and values to colleagues, peers and professionals. It is your working reputation and the collective elements of who you are and what you stand for. It exists both online and in-person and builds over time through consistent narratives and storytelling.

**Example:** You may not know Beyoncé personally, but you know her business brand. If you did meet Beyoncé and her brand matched her values and personality, then she has a **GREAT personal brand**. A personal brand should reflect your best qualities and reputation.

**Step 1: Self-reflect and analyze your present brand** (completing a brand audit).

Regardless of knowing it, you already have a brand. In reflecting on your work, how do you feel about the brand you project? What do people who don't know you well assume as your persona (via social media, social interactions and your content)?

Positives of your brand (left columns) and self-perceived weaknesses (right). \*  
Examples: *left: I re-post good industry content. Right: my photos are not professional.*

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**\*If you haven't given your brand much thought, it might help to assess all the pieces of a personal brand (below), then return to step 1.**

**What is your strongest content?** Catalog your assets (hard and soft skills), experiences, achievements, connections, groups, relationships, cultural capital (life experience, hobbies, exposures, interests, abilities to connect w/ others). Think "living resume."

## Step 2: Creating a Vision.

What values would you like to project (i.e. reliable, cool, informed, trustworthy, etc.)?

What reputation do you have/want?

## Step 3: What are your Niche Audiences?

You cannot be all things to all people! **Example:** Professional writers and publishers in the Graphic Novel category.

## Step 4: Define the “You 2.0” Version (personality and culture). Put keywords into action.

Add descriptors to anchor your brand: Hard-working, results-driven, creative, risk-tolerant, highly-motivated, fearless, etc.

The key elements you want to project are in areas such as: authenticity, values, integrity, creativity, charisma, trust. Be genuine by being your brand.

## Step 5: Writing your Brand Message

Taking all the elements you have completed above, start formulating a concise message. This should be 1-3 sentences on what your personal brand represents. It should feel like a condensed elevator pitch! Most are 1-2 short sentences.

**Consider what makes you unique professionally in your combination of skills and vision?**

A brand is not just a resume of descriptors other people see; it's a series of stories that you've communicated clearly and consistently over time. It should also offer a solution to something or someone. **Brand message examples:**

“Keeping it awkward, brave, and kind.” —**Brené Brown**      “Travel smarter, cheaper, longer. Where do you want to go?” —**Nomadic Matt**  
“Empowering ridiculously good marketing.” —**Ann Handley**      “Translating the geek speak and simplifying the complex!” —**Brian Fanzo**

## Step 6: Living your Brand.

List 4 ways you can embody your brand. *Examples:* 1) When asked “how are you?” use that to express your brand. “I’m doing well and excited to be meeting with you today.” 2) Being mindful of what posts I am making that represent who I am and what I want to inspire in myself. 3) Creating monthly posts about new technologies in agriculture.

## Step 7: Creating a Media Plan and Objectives.

What channels will you use to build your personal brand? What are your next steps? **Come up with 6 objectives!**

**Examples:** Make my LinkedIn profile match my other profiles for consistent branding using great photos; microblogging on social media to gain connections; building an online portfolio of work and sharing it on Instagram; using CareerTok to post my content and see what others are doing; dressing up for my professional organization’s meetings. **Be creative!**

## Notes for Instructors:

These are your assignments, so please adjust them as needed to fit your schedule, point system and course outcomes. While these are designed intentionally at this length, we know that career development is not a one-size fits all process. Be mindful of your audience and their specific career needs. Feel free to add industry specific strategies for students to learn professional expectations. The goal is to have them really think though their professional persona and how to benefit from their personal strengths and qualities.

### Suggestions for this assignment:

**Length:** You can add more questions to this assignment to tailor this to your class or topic. Coach students through your industry's expectations on how to present themselves to employers, peers and potential mentors and colleagues.

**Assessment & Submission:** Please assess this assignment in line with other work for your course, and direct students in how you would like them submitted (printed and turned in during class, filled out electronically and submitted via Canvas, etc.). In terms of scaffolding, this assignment could precede the Elevator Pitch, LinkedIn Profile, Network Map or LinkedIn Job Search assignments. Assignments could be used in this exact sequence or selected based on the needs of the course.

**Additional Resources:** Please consider using the robust online resources the [Career Development Center](#) offers you and your students. For more information on using the Career Development Center's tools, events and workshops in your classroom, please [visit our website](#).



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