

## **How To Be Heard Above The Noise!**

**by Dick Brusio**

As professional speakers, it's absolutely critical that we position ourselves uniquely in the marketplace by creating a brand that makes us truly stand out. To achieve true success, we need to be "Heard Above The Noise."

A number of years ago, highly renowned author and speaker, Tom Peters addressed the importance of creating a personal brand in the popular business magazine, *Fast Company*. Peters wrote an article entitled, *The Brand Called You*, where he stated, "You can't move up if you don't stand out. Regardless of age, regardless of position, regardless of the business we happen to be in, all of us need to understand the importance of branding."

In this same issue of *Fast Company*, in the article, *What Great Brands Do*, Scott Bedbury, the marketing genius behind Nike and Starbucks, says, "A great brand is in it for the long haul: If you take a long-term approach, a great brand can travel worldwide, transcend cultural barriers, speak to multiple consumer segments simultaneously, create economies of scale, and let you operate at the higher end of the positioning spectrum, where you can earn solid margins over the long term."

Unquestionably, all of us should give serious consideration to applying Bedbury's long-term branding approach to our careers as professional speakers. In addition, it's essential to create a brand that is both congruent with who we are, and is positively extraordinary. Seth Godin in his popular book, *Purple Cow*, says, "It's no longer good enough to be good enough. Only the exceptional, the amazing, and the remarkable have a chance to build awareness, word of mouth and profits."

So, how do you begin the process of creating an exceptional, amazing, and remarkable brand? It starts with some fundamental questions:

### **What am I most passionate about?**

According to Tom Connellan, "One person with passion is better than forty who are merely interested." But Mother Teresa said it best, "To work without love is slavery." So ask yourself, "Am I speaking on topics I love to talk about and addressing the audiences with whom I most want to interact?"

### **Do I have a vision of what my career will look like in the future?**

Katherine Logan says, "A vision foretells what may be ours. It is an invitation to do something." A vision, then, is a picture of the future... what things will look like down the road. According to the remarkable Helen Keller, "The most pathetic person in the world is someone who has sight but has no vision."

If you're absolutely passionate about what you do and have a clear vision of what you want your career to look like in the future, then you're ready to begin the process of creating your brand. If you already have a brand, you need to honestly answer one more question:

**Have I developed a truly “distinctive” brand?**

In his insightful book, *The Brand Mindset*, Duane Knapp writes, “The key to thinking like a genuine brand is understanding the requirement to be distinctive. It’s not an optional kind of idea. It’s not possible to have a genuine brand without achieving the perception of being distinctive.”

Howard Putnam and Tom Peters provide additional insights into launching the branding process. Putnam, former CEO of Southwest Airlines, says, “Until you figure out who you are, understand what business or businesses you are in and establish your uniqueness, success will be difficult to attain.”

Peters, in the aforementioned article, *The Brand Called You*, encourages each of us to ask, “What do I do that adds remarkable, measurable, distinguished, distinctive value? ... If you’re going to be a brand, you’ve got to be focused on what you do that adds value, what you’re proud of, and most important, what you can shamelessly take credit for.”

Admittedly, the process of creating a distinctive brand takes time and commitment, but needs to be a top priority. On a personal note, I determined, after several attempts at branding myself, I wanted to be recognized as a branding/creative marketing expert who positions his clients to be “Heard Above The Noise” in the marketplace. My brand is now congruent with who I am (the oldest of nine children, former broadcaster, media producer, professional speaker and branding consultant), and conveys what I do in a clear yet distinctive manner.

My desire is that you, too, will create the ideal brand for you. I encourage you to invest the time to determine what sets you apart in the marketplace. It’s an investment well worth making!

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