

YOU: The (Online) Brand

The Online Branding Essentials Checklist

There's no substitute for attending one of our workshops, but this checklist can at least give you a basic idea of things you can do to get started so you can "Own Your Name" on the internet.

I. Define Your Brand – Choose mastery

II. Own Your Name – Establish a presence wherever you can

III. Deploy It – Associate your name with VALUE everywhere you can (remember to TAG!)

I. DEFINE your brand as narrowly as possible.

- What do you want to be top of mind for?
- How do you want people to PERCEIVE you?
- Consider your TARGET market.

II. OWN YOUR NAME

I. Fill out your online profiles everywhere you can - so no one else gets your name, and also to start generating lots of Google results for your name. The below are a good place to start.

- LinkedIn (good for Google search)
- Facebook (public profile gets indexed, but not your private info)
- Plaxo
- Twitter (even if you're not planning to use it!)
- Google Profiles
- Any industry-specific directories
- Buy your URL - FAST! (i.e., www.MichelleVillalobos.com)
- Social Bookmarking: Digg/Delicious, StumbleUpon

2. Set up ALERTS for your name, your nickname(s), your brand, your industry & your competitors

- Google Alerts
- TweetBeep
- Twitter searches

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III. DEPLOY

3. LISTEN! Start by listening to experts in your field, paying attention and only delivering information of value. I can't stress this enough - do NOT start out of the gate trying to promote yourself. People can smell it - and they hate it. How to promote yourself without promoting yourself? Deliver value. Answer questions relevant to your area of expertise, send out tips and practical info. Where? See below.
 - LinkedInGroups
 - Facebook Groups
 - Niche groups & online communities in your industry

4. Have a presence, a profile, (in one major spot at least) that accurately and fully reflects your brand. Best choice: your own website or blog.
 - Try Blogspot or Wordpress, both are great for beginners to advanced users alike.
 - Create a static website and integrate a blog, if you'd like to keep updating content but don't want to have to go to a designer/programmer for every little change.
 - On the higher end, a CMS (content-management system) allows you to upload and update your own website easily.

5. CAPTURE your target (friend? connect? email?) to create a NETWORK. Start with people you know.
 - Start collecting email addresses, in ONE central place. Options: CardScan, Address Book, Plaxo, Constant Contact

6. What VALUE can you deliver to your target on a regular basis, and in what format(s)?
 - Offer free stuff
 - Instructional videos
 - Connect people
 - PICK a medium that's a "fit" for you & target:
 - Website
 - Flickr - photos
 - YouTube - video
 - Blog - text/image/video/etc...

7. Have PATIENCE:
 - How long do you REALLY think it should take? Triple that. It's worth it though.
