Personal Brand Handbook:

Your Guide To Establishing Your Personal Brand



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HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE...

A guidebook designed to provide an in-depth overview of how to establish your personal brand

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Meet Melanie Borden

Chapter 1:

Defining Your Personal Brand Vision & Goals

The beautiful thing about a personal brand is that it's unique, just like each individual person is unique. Your personal brand gets to be authentically crafted, expressed, and marketed based on your overarching mission. Becoming the face of your own brand is a powerful move, and a popular one. Why? Because more and more leaders are noticing its incredible impact. Consumers are no longer just buying, they're investing. Which means a lot of emphasis and value is being placed on the person behind the product. People want to do business beyond a transaction with those they know, like, and trust. Not to mention, personal brands are nearly impossible to copy or replicate. Just like a fingerprint is your own unique stamp in this world, so is your personal brand. We'll be exploring in detail how to build a forward-facing brand throughout this handbook, so stay tuned!

First up, it's essential to get clear on your overall vision and the goals needed to achieve it. Your vision should be about the essence of your brand — personality, values, and purpose. The goals should be about how to best express these traits — colors, fonts, images, copy, etc. that resonate with your ideal audience and make the impact you desire.

Clarity on both your vision and goals is paramount for designing a stand out, wow-worthy brand positioned for ultimate influence and impact!



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Now it's time to get into the tangibles of how to do this:

For brand vision, ask yourself these questions:
- What does my brand stand for?
- How do I want people to *feel* when they find my brand?
- What makes my brand different and unique?

By painting your brand vision with clarity and specificity, you set a clear direction for your personal branding efforts and ensure that every action and decision you make going forward aligns with your desired outcome (no throwing spaghetti at the wall here!).



For brand goals, ask yourself these questions:
- What colors, fonts, and images will express my core brand values?
-What does my brand voice sound like? Does this reflect personality and flair?
-What platforms do I want my brand to be highly visible in?
-Who is my ideal audience and why?

Understanding the depths of your target audience, their needs, and crafting a compelling brand narrative that resonates with them is the key to accelerating your path forward as a thought leader and brand creator. Creatively marketing your personal brand is the ultimate goal to take it from the sidelines to the spotlight. Another gem to consider, is what sets you apart from others in your field and how you can leverage your unique strengths and experiences.

It may be tedious to go through all these questions and truly get a pulse on your personal brand, but trust me when I say it's worth it! Don't skip this part. These reflective responses will shape a solid foundation in which you can build your brand from. If the foundation isn't sturdy, it will crumble. So take the time now. That's not to say your brand is set in stone and can never change. That's absolutely not true! In fact, I've never met a human who doesn't go through changes; therefore, expect your brand to go through those growth spurts with you. However, always coming back to the drawing board and setting a grounding compass for yourself will pay off big in the long run.

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Take an inventory - What are your goals and values?

Your brand is a direct extension of you. Some argue it's their best accessory, I'd agree. Wear it proudly! Don't underestimate the power of authenticity. Your audience is drawn to your genuine relatability and how you choose to share your values and aspirations. Be true to yourself, and let your personality shine through.

In the process of defining your brand's vision and goals, it's essential to take a step back and examine your own. Taking inventory of your goals and values is about introspection, aiming to dig deep and uncover what truly matters to you. This is the key to a winning, heart-centered strategy.

Ready to set S.M.A.R.T goals? These are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-oriented.

Ask yourself these questions:

- How do I want to show up for my brand in my day to day life?
- How will I track my brand's progress?
- Is this realistic and sustainable for me to do?
- What resources do I need to make it happen?
- Why am I passionate about building a brand?
- What are my target deadlines and growth trackers?

Now it's time to get out the calendar and make space for your new goals! Envision yourself integrating successful steps. Start setting achievable mini goals. Having actionable tasks gives you a better sense of direction, making you feel more confident in the process. This is where you begin to take the dream from paper to reality. As you start figuring out your personal goals, you set the stage for a journey of self-discovery. Congratulations! This is an overlooked step that takes immense courage, I see you.



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Decide: What is Your Mission?

Now let's give those dreams the wings to fly, shall we?



It's time to take it to the next level by determining your brand's mission. Your brand mission defines the essence of your brand — your core principles, purpose, and the impact you wish to have.

Your mission statement should clearly express what your brand does, how it does it, and why it does it. This should be about one sentence total. Sounds simple? Believe it or not, this is actually the step that should take the most amount of time. You want a mission statement that's clear, concise, and memorable. Remember, brevity is a superpower!

Evaluate your mission statement's effectiveness by asking yourself these questions:

- What's the top goal with my brand?
- Why is this goal important and valuable to me?
- What kind of impact do I want to have?
- Who do I want to impact / what's my unique edge?
- How will I create this impact?

Once you've answered these questions, you'll notice patterns and key phrases in your responses. You'll be able to identify similarities and stand out differentiators. Side note, it can often be difficult to see our own unique characteristics. If you're struggling with this, pull in a friend or family member. Ask them what they see in you that's unique, what they love most about your personality, and how you make them feel. Aligning their answers with your responses will help to craft the perfect mission statement that feels right for you!



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Standing Out and Staying Relevant - What's your Unique Value Proposition?

So far, you've got a good handle on what makes you stand out. Now, it's time to put it into words. Say hello to your brand voice!

When identifying your unique value proposition (UVP), consider the strengths you bring to the table and all of the new insights you've gathered about your audience - their interests, practices, aspirations, etc. Now, how can you benefit your audience based on this market research? What solution or talent do you possess that can add value for them? How is your approach different from what's already out there? This is your UVP.

When drafting a UVP, I always suggest testing a few options to see what sticks. A great way to do this is through A/B testing. For example, you might have some different options that look like this:

- Option A: The most reliable platform for finding freelance work opportunities.
- Option B: The most affordable platform for finding freelance work opportunities.

First ensure both of your statements are promises you can deliver on and then see which one resonates most with your audience. Given the example above, if most of your audience was drawn to "reliable platform" that would indicate they place value in reliability and consistency. If, on the other hand, they were more drawn to "affordable platform" that would indicate they place value on price and ROI (return on investment). This not only helps you choose a statement, it also gives you valuable insights about your audience.

Once you've nailed down your UVP, share it. Great places to share are in your LinkedIn headline, your brand's website, and other social media profiles. Your UVP should be front and center, this is the main attraction after all (well, runner up to you of course!). Consistently reinforcing your brand is crucial for brand visibility. I'm sure you have jingles and phrases stuck in your head from good brand marketing: "American runs on Dunkin," anyone?

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Chapter 2:

Your Visual Identity

Your personal brand's visual identity is how you visually communicate your unique personality, values, and expertise to the masses. It encompasses all the visual elements associated with your brand, which include:

- Logo
- Color scheme
- Brand fonts
- Content shared
- Templates and layouts
- etc.



Developing a strong, cohesive visual identity for your personal brand helps make your communications more effective, professional, and trustworthy in the eyes of your audience. It ensures that your brand is memorable and distinct in an otherwise “saturated” marketplace.

How to Decide on Personal Brand Logo Style

Choosing the right logo for your brand can be a challenge. But certainly not one that you can’t conquer! The logo is the visual of everything you stand for - and something that will be attached to absolutely everything you create. Take Nike's iconic swoosh, for example. It's simple, yet it speaks volumes about the brand’s love for determination and athletic excellence. So before drafting, think about what main message you want to send with your logo. Think of this as the visual representation of your mission statement.

When deciding on a logo style, you have two primary options: a typed logo or a stand-alone icon. For a typed logo, consider the fonts and colors carefully to reflect your brand's personality and values (more on this later). A stand-alone icon requires even more attention to color choice, as it should be instantly recognizable and evoke the right emotions without the accompanying brand name. For example, you see a red dot in a circle and instantly think of Target, right? Now that’s a logo done right! In both cases, keep simplicity, timelessness, and uniqueness top of mind to stand out from the noise and become the next Nike swoosh.

Your logo should also be responsive. For optimal recognition, you can take your logo and create variations for it. Consider a primary and secondary logo, a submark logo, and a logo mark. With these variations you won’t have an issue with scaling and you have more opportunities for placement. Just remember to keep them consistent and within your guidelines!

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How to Create Personal Brand Logo

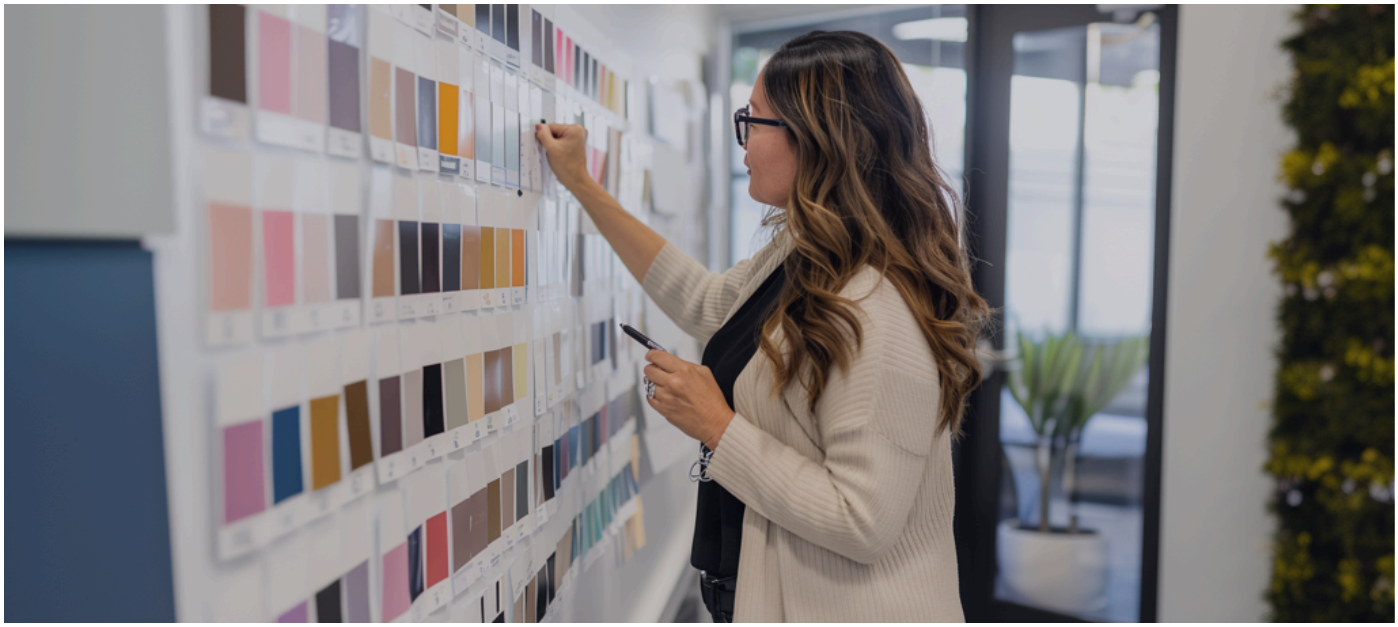
Creating a personal brand logo isn't as daunting as you think - it's actually quite fun for that creative genius in you! There are a variety of resources and platforms available to help make the whole process easier and cut down on the learning curve (and the price tag that often goes with it). If you're a right-brained kind of person, then the more DIY platforms like Canva may be more appealing, where you can choose from an abundance of templates and customize your design with tons of fonts, colors and graphics.

If you lean a little more left-brained and prefer an automated approach, AI platforms such as Dall-E and MidJourney can generate quality custom designs based on your preferences. If you use these resources, focus on feeding the program a prompt that covers all elements you want integrated (see how all that early foundation work comes into play!). You can later take these logos and refine them to your liking within seconds on platforms like Illustrator, Photoshop, and even Canva. Other sites like design.com can help develop your logo and also allow for editing.

A nice in between option for you mid-brainers out there is outsourcing to freelance platforms like Fiverr or Upwork, or exploring custom designs on Etsy, where you'll find a personalized touch and diverse pool of talent to assist.



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Establishing Brand Colors & Fonts

Onto the really fun part — picking your brand color and fonts! These assets are the main characters of your visual identity, so selecting them thoughtfully is crucial.

Choosing your color palette is about conveying the correct emotions. There have been countless studies that prove the power of Color Psychology. Take a quick peek on Google and check them out, it's fascinating! Based on our psychological experiences, it's been shown that color directly influences our moods and behaviors. Like the color red, for example, is often representative of an emergency and provokes a sense of urgency. In branding, this is a bold color that states authority and passion. Contrastingly, blue is associated with the ocean and the sky, giving off a calming effect. In branding, it's often associated with professionalism, stability, and tranquility. Consider the recognizable impact of each color and how the associated emotions fit within your brand's personality. Ultimately ask yourself, how do you want your audience to feel and how do you want to feel with these colors?

Hot tip: Use platforms like coolors.co to help visualize your brand palette.

Now that your colors are dialed in, it's time to navigate the world of fonts. Whether you prefer a creative or more corporate approach, you'll want to consider readability along with flair. Creative fonts add personality but should remain legible, while corporate fonts should convey professionalism but not be too generic. Striking a balance between creativity and functionality is the sweet spot. When choosing your font, opt for a "font family," involving a single style of text available in multiple weights or bold gradients. By using a diverse font family, you can maintain consistency across designs while incorporating a cohesive range of font styles.

Hot tip: Websites like dafont.com, Google Fonts, or WhatTheFont are perfect to browse a variety of options and hopefully land on one for yourself!

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Chapter 3:

Should you have a website?

To keep it short and simple (because brevity is a superpower) — get the dot com! Now onto why.

Establishing your personal brand is essential in today's competitive digital landscape. While social media platforms like LinkedIn provide a space for networking and showcasing professional achievements, having a website offers special advantages. It serves as a centralized platform where you can display your work, expertise, services and accomplishments in a more comprehensive manner. It also provides the flexibility to customize layout, content, and design. And unlike social media platforms where you're essentially renting a space you don't own, a website is more in your control and ownership which yields less risk of loss.

A website is also incredibly invitational. Every and all things you and your brand live here and your audience specifically goes to your website to access that. This opens many beautiful opportunities to present your thought leadership and share valuable, exclusive content with your community. Through blog posts, articles, and case studies, you can demonstrate your industry knowledge and benefit-driven offers, positioning yourself as a trusted authority in your field. This not only attracts potential clients or employers seeking expertise but also encourages direct, personalized engagement within your community (and we love meaningful connections!).

Last, but certainly not least, a website enhances your credibility. Just think of how you would perceive a brand if it didn't have a website. While you loved what you saw initially, this lack of verified credibility might deter you from seeking it out further. A website is a timeless piece of professionalism that sends the signal you take your personal brand seriously and are committed to investing in your development. And if you invest in you, others will too!

By providing clear contact information and calls-to-action, you make it easy for visitors to engage with you and take the next steps in their relationship with you. Overall, a website is a valuable asset for professionals looking to differentiate themselves in the digital world.



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What to Include on Your Website For Your Personal Brand

Now that you've got the dot com (way to go!) it's time to build it out. What should you have on it? Here's a suggested guide.

When establishing your personal brand on a website, there are several key branding elements you should consider to effectively communicate your identity and vision to your audience. First and foremost, your logo! This is the visual cornerstone of your brand and should always be in front of as many eyes as possible, as much as possible. Typically the header section is the perfect place for maximum visibility, plus it automatically populates across all your web pages.



Calling next to the stage: brand colors. As mentioned, your brand colors emulate a certain emotional reaction and since you've put top-tier thought into it, this will really captivate your ideal audience. Your website colors are like that first impression feeling you get when you walk through someone's front door. Make sure it's warm and inviting to your ideal consumer. Use this aligned color scheme consistently throughout your website to reinforce brand recognition and create a cohesive visual experience for visitors. You want this to be a pleasurable experience so they keep coming back.

Additionally, typography plays a significant role in conveying the tone and personality of your brand. Select fonts that are legible, appropriate for your brand's aesthetic, and reflect the vibe you wish to communicate.

Consider incorporating social icons for platforms such as LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, etc. Incorporate these icons on your website, ideally in the header or footer, to encourage visitors to engage with you on social media too. Social icons are powerful tools for connecting with your audience and extending your reach across various platforms. Never underestimate the human touch! You can also customize the icons to match your brand's aesthetic and style, further reinforcing brand coherence (bonus!).

Always leverage your social media presence to drive traffic back to your website, because this is your brand's true home. Share links to your blog posts, portfolio projects, or resources, enticing your social media followers to check out your website. By interlacing your website and social media efforts, you'll never miss an opportunity to connect.

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Chapter 4:

OTHER FRESH TIPS: Utilizing AI to Your Personal Brand's Advantage

While it's true that AI can refine images, produce captivating assets, and generate compelling copy, its utility extends far beyond aesthetics. One key way to leverage AI for your personal brand is through data analysis and insights. AI-powered analytics platforms can sift through vast amounts of data from various sources, such as social media, website traffic, and audience demographics, to provide valuable insights into audience behavior, preferences, and trends. That's why they say data is the new gold...because it is. There's no better value than understanding your audience on a deeper level!

For instance, AI analytics can reveal which types of content generate the most engagement, which demographics are most receptive to your messaging, and which channels are most effective in reaching your target audience. This removes all the guesswork so you can proactively fine-tune your content strategy to focus on topics and formats that are proven to benefit and resonate with your audience most.

Some AI Tools for Data Analysts:

- Julius AI
- Microsoft Power BI
- Sprout Social
- etc.







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TBG Personal Brand Toolkit

At The Borden Group, we're always on the lookout for innovative tools that can elevate our work and creativity. That's why we've curated a list of resources for you that we've found incredibly useful. Whether you're designing, strategizing, or seeking inspiration, these tools might just be what you need:

🎨 **Canva**: For user-friendly graphic design, Canva is our go-to. Its intuitive interface and vast library make it a staple for creating visually stunning assets quickly.

- Link: https://www.canva.com/

🎨 **OtterAI:** This is a speech-to-text transcription service that uses artificial intelligence to convert live conversations, meetings, and recordings into searchable, shareable text.

- Link: https://otter.ai/home

🎨 **Design.com** - This platform offers a bunch of resources for designers. From templates to design inspiration, it's a goldmine for anyone looking to enhance their design skills.

- Link: https://www.design.com/

🎨 **Ai Avalanche's MidJourney Prompts** - Need inspiration for your MidJourney logo development? Look no further. With this collection of 1,000 fill-in-the-blank AI image prompts, you'll enjoy a limitless array of stunning and unique images right at your disposal.

- Link: https://aiavalanche.com/sp/1000-midjourney-prompts/

🎨 **Column 5's Brand Strategy Development Site -** Offering free downloads, this site is a treasure trove for those developing a comprehensive brand strategy. It's packed with resources that guide you through the extensive branding process.

- Link: https://www.columnfivemedia.com/services/brand-strategy/

🎨 **ChatGPT Black Magic:** ChatGPT Black Magic is the go-to online resource for mastering ChatGPT, featuring video tutorials, prompts, and the latest tips. Learn to perform seemingly magical feats with the most advanced prompts and techniques available.

- Link: https://aiavalanche.com/sp/blackmagic/



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Meet Melanie Borden

Founder & CEO, The Borden Group



Where it all began

Just a few years ago, everyone around me was losing their job, and I didn't know where I'd turn if I lost mine. I turned to LinkedIn™ to start building my personal brand, opportunities, and business. I'd successfully created marketing strategies for my employers–tech companies, retail, and high-growth startups–so I leveraged those skills to build my own.

I used my experience in marketing oversight, social media, strategy, reputation management, and others to make my own brand visible, approachable, and attractive to customers. It worked! I grew my platform, my reach, and my bottom line.

Since then, I've worked with brands, including C-suite executives, founders, companies, and non-profits, to expand their reach, amplify their messaging, and increase their marketing effectiveness.

Along the way, I've been featured in or quoted in LA Weekly, Entrepreneur, Good Morning America, Adello, Daily Mail, CXO Outlook, The Epoch Times, Working Mother Media, Hip New Jersey, New York City Biz List, Fast Company and most recently, the Wall Street Journal.

I am also a member of The Forbes Agency Council. I work best when I combine my team of LinkedIn™ community managers, creative writers, and designers with your in-house team of marketers, giving you a consistent presence and fast impact on this platform.

When you're ready to go from lurking to leveraging on LinkedIn™, let's talk.

For more insights and resources, visit Melanie's website at www.humantobrand.com