

Special Edition

of the **Take Charge of Your Talent**

# Creating a Powerful Personal Brand

complimentary resource

exclusively for the ICMA Coaching Program

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# Creating Your Personal Brand – *multiply the payoffs*

*What is a personal brand?* A personal brand is a promise you want to keep, that creates a preference for you and your talent. It lives in language, images, your actions, and accomplishments. It supports you in being the hero of your talent story.

*Why would you want a personal brand?* A powerful personal brand transmits a strong signal that is clear, catchy, and compelling. It lets your audience know what you stand for and what you are prepared to deliver. It helps to create the opportunities that are aligned with your hopes and allows you to more easily express your talent.

*How does the branding process work?* This is a creative process. Some people find that something clicks for them rather quickly; others need to stay with the process for a period of time in order to discover a great fit. We suggest using a three-phase process: phase I: reflect and rough out, Phase II: check for focus and fit, and phase III: polish and make public. A good way to begin is with a brand audit.



## Brand Audit -- *Where do you stand?*

For better or worse you already have a brand: ways in which your audience perceives who you are and the value you can provide to them. How do you think others have branded you? Use the chart below. Ask a coworker, supervisor, and friend to tell you what they think your brand or promise is. After you have their thoughts, jot down how their view of your brand benefits you and also how it may create limitations for you.

Who	"Brand"	Benefits for you	Limitations for you



## Phase I – Reflect and Rough Out

Work the 3 steps (promise, proof points, opportunities) in any order that you like. You are welcome to start the process with the promise you'd like to make, some key proof points, or the opportunities you are hoping to attract. You can play with the three. With all three phases of this process, we encourage you to work with another person to avoid getting stuck in your own head and to get some fresh ideas. Who could be a Talent Catalyst and a generous listener to help you? Phase I is a rough draft, so let ideas flow. You can leave editing and refining to Phases II and III.

**YOUR BRAND** + **YOUR PROOF POINTS** = **Opportunities for You to Enjoy**

(your promise)	(career assets)	(what you want)

Figure 1

Here are some questions (in italics) that someone serving as a Talent Catalyst can ask you to stimulate your thinking.

Talent Catalyst: *In which box in Figure 1 would you prefer to begin -- brand, proof points, or opportunities?*

(Proceed to ask these questions in the order that the “hero” prefers. Listen generously; reflect what you are hearing; make suggestions with permission, and take brief notes, just as you did in the Talent Catalyst Conversation. )

Talent Catalyst: *What is a **Promise** you'd like to make to your audience? (Probe deeper as needed: Why is that promise important to you?)*

I promise to \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

*How can you express your promise so that it creates a preference for you and your talent?*

Talent Catalyst: *What are some **Proof Points** that show your ability to keep that promise?*

Here are some tangible ways that demonstrate **I have kept** my promise (assets that I currently have):

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Here are some tangible ways that **I will demonstrate** I can keep my promise assets you want to create:

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Talent Catalyst: *What are some **Opportunities** that you'd like to create?*

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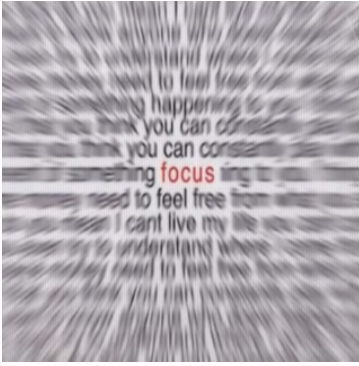
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With your rough draft responses, fill in your brand equation.

**YOUR BRAND** + **YOUR PROOF POINTS** = **Opportunities for You to Enjoy**

(your promise)	(career assets)	(what you want)

Congratulations! You have completed Phase I of your personal brand.



## Phase II – Check for Focus and Fit

In Phase I you came up with the raw materials that you need to create a powerful personal brand. Now it's time to focus in and make some firm choices. Try on each of the possible promises you could make and use these three questions to determine whether or not that promise has the makings of a powerful personal brand. Once again we suggest that the Talent Catalyst ask the questions, reflect what is heard, and make brief notes.

- Does the promise/brand inspire you?
- Does the promise create a healthy stretch?
- Does the promise represent you the way you want to be represented?



## Phase III – Polish and Make Public

A powerful brand is like a radio transmitter with a strong signal. To reach its audience it needs to have a place on the dial where the audience can find it. In phase III take the opportunity to hone your message and determine how best to connect with your audience.

When considering going public with your personal brand, does it pass these three tests?

- Clear – is your audience able to easily perceive your message?
- Catchy – is it sticky; something that your audience is going to remember?
- Compelling – is it going to move your audience to take the kinds of actions you would like them to take?

Once you are happy with your brand and proof points, it's time to go public. Your Talent Catalyst can help you by asking the following questions.

Talent Catalyst: *How are you going to broadcast your promise and proof points? (In an email signature, website, daily actions, projects, etc.?)*

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Talent Catalyst: *If you have concrete assets, where do they live; how can your audience access them? (On a wiki, web site, bulletin board, desktop, etc.?)*

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As with all aspects of Take Charge of Your Talent, the branding process can be revisited for different projects, different areas of your life and career, or different periods in your life. Tony's real life story, illustrating the process, is documented on pages 122-125 of the book, *Take Charge of Your Talent: Three Keys to Thriving in Your Career, Organization, and Life* (Berrett-Koehler, 2013).

Your personal brand is a valuable tool in attracting what you want and in multiplying the payoffs from your efforts.

And, as always, enjoy your talent!