



12 Secrets to Brandazzle™ Your Job Search

*Showcase Your Personal Brand
and Land Your Dream Job*

By Marietta E. Gentles

12 Secrets to Brandazzle Your Job Search: Showcase Your Personal Brand and Land Your Dream Job

The whole job search process could be compared to blind dating. You're not too sure what to expect. You know there are probably other prospects. And you would rather be doing something more fun—like maybe sorting your dirty laundry or watching paint dry. You figure there could only be two outcomes: It's either going to be not as bad as you thought. Or it's going to be a bumpy ride. Believe it or not, the job search process doesn't have to be complete torture. It's actually possible to beat the competition and find a job that's the perfect match for you. If you're wondering what you need to make that happen, **let's just say you have a secret weapon.**

In fact, your secret weapon is actually not too far from you (no, not the bottle of wine tucked away in the cabinet for “emergency purposes”). It's your personal brand. Your personal brand is what sets you apart from all the other schools of fish swimming in the sea.

It's the skills and personality traits that make you unique.

It's what makes you the “go-to” person because you simply do it better.

It's what will make your manager secretly roll in a ball and cry at the thought of you handing in your two-week resignation.

It's what makes you shine.

Here's the thing: Your job search isn't just about *looking* for a job. There are thousands of openings posted daily that you may be qualified for. And there are many you may actually get calls for. But you don't want just *any* job. You want *the* job that's right for you.

Whether you make the connection or not, ultimately, you're searching for a job where your personal brand can shine in all its sparkly glory.

That's why it's important to have a really good understanding of your brand. Understanding your personal brand should be your guide in your job search for two reasons:

It will help you understand what skills you need to showcase or develop for your dream job.

It will help you eliminate jobs that aren't a good fit for your personality.

Are you ready to learn how to land the job of your dreams? This guide will show you how. **It's time to let your personal brand shine and lead the way!**

Secret #1: Branding is a Big Deal

Lately it seems like the newest trend is all about branding. It's like the Marsha Brady of today. You can almost hear Jan saying, "Branding, Branding, Branding!" If you have no idea who Marsha or Jan Brady is, I'll break it down in simpler less '70s television terms.

Branding is a big deal.

Think of a brand as an idea or image tied to a product that makes it unique. When most people think of branding they think of big corporate companies. For example, Apple is known for its iPods, Macs, and apple logo. Macys is known as a premier retailer and its simple red star logo. And Geico is known for saving people money on car insurance and the talking gecko—brilliant marketing by the way. **But branding isn't just for businesses.** Branding is also for the *little*—but not so little—folks out there. If you're a business professional looking to build your career, you better believe that branding applies to you too.

Ask yourself what idea or image is connected to your brand? Do you have a way of inspiring people around you? Are you often referred to as the expert at your job? Do you always come up with creative and innovative ideas? It's important to know your best qualities and be sure to represent them consistently as part of your professional image—aka your personal brand. Recruiters go through thousands of resumes to find potential candidates. Does your resume reflect your unique qualities or does it look like everyone else's? Make sure that you stand apart from the rest. Remember, you are your own brand.

If you're not sure what your brand is or want to work on developing it, check out how the [360°Reach](#) survey can help you.

Secret #2: Have a Brand Strategy

The preparation before sending your resume out and walking through the doors of your ideal company is where the magic happens. You'd be surprised how evaluating your brand and having a brand strategy can go a long way.

A brand strategy is the who, what, where, and how of your action plan. Consider it your blueprint.

Who do you want to reach?

What are you trying to say?

Where can you find your target audience?

How are you going to reach your goals?

Sometimes it seems easier to just get started instead of formally outlining your approach. But what you'll find is that you end up having to backtrack just to get things right. Why even take that approach if you could get it right the first time? When considering your brand strategy, ask yourself the following: *Do I have a clear picture of my personal brand? Am I sure that I'm really marketing my skills in the best way? Do I know how to find my target audience? Can my target audience find me?* If you can confidently answer "yes" to these questions, then you're on the right track. If you can't confidently answer "yes" to these questions—but want to—you're on the right track too.

Having a brand strategy means that you answer key questions about your approach and create a plan based on your answers. **It doesn't really matter where you start as far as evaluating your**

brand—just start! Personal branding is not about focusing on the negative, it's about building on your strengths and branding with purpose.

Secret #3: Master Your Brand Message

The term “*elevator speech*” or “*elevator pitch*” refers to being able to clearly market your skills and experience in a short period of time. If you have the opportunity to talk about your skills, you should be able to describe your career and brand using a few sentences. Imagine a casual encounter in which you have about 10-30 seconds to summarize your career and brand (aka the not so shameless plug). What would you say?

An example of an elevator speech would be: *“I’m a business analyst with over five years of experience in documenting and testing systems. I’m known to uncover critical issues before system deployments and have a proven track record of being an integral part of successful releases.”*

Think about your career and write down a couple of key points that you would include in your elevator speech. Having an elevator speech shows that you’re a professional who can clearly and confidently articulate your brand—even in a casual conversation.

You never know who you may be talking to and if your skills are a match for an existing or future opportunity. Consider your elevator speech like a verbal business card. Make sure you always have it with you.

Secret #4: Think About Your Ideal Company and Role

Once you have a clear picture of your brand, you can start focusing on how it relates to your ideal job role. At this point, you should nail down the type of position you want and your ideal company. Do you want to work for a large private company or a start-up company? Is a non-profit organization a better fit for you or would you like to work for the government? Do you want to stay within your current field or do you want to transition into something new? It seems like a lot of questions, but it's always good to be clear on what you're looking for.

Another thing to take into consideration is your personality. For example, the outgoing creative project manager may not enjoy working in an accounting department. And the analytical numbers crunching accountant may not thrive working in a marketing department. It's not to say there's a right or wrong to either, but your work environment should match your personality. Otherwise, it won't be a good long-term match (translation; you'll eventually end up hating it).

If you're currently working and hate your job, it may seem easy to take the *anywhere but here* approach. Many of us have been there at some point, but the quick escape isn't always the best solution (although very tempting). **In order to land your dream job you have to approach your job search strategically.** Take the time to first think about what's important, so that your next move is the best move.

Secret #5: Know Your Worth

It can't be stressed enough how important it is to know your worth. At first glance, *worth* could be seen as how much compensation you deserve, which trust me is important. However, in taking a deeper look, **worth is also the value that you bring to the table**. Don't take for granted your keen eye for details or ability to get information from others, where some may struggle. Whatever your *thing* is, be confident in your skills.

In a competitive market, some companies are able to get away with demanding more job responsibilities than they are willing to fairly compensate for. Meaning, for the sake of landing a job, you may be doing a lot more work for a lot less pay. And that, my friend, is a huge no-no.

If you're good at what you do, remember to always wear your worth on your sleeves. **The right company will not only appreciate your skills, but will also reward you with a competitive salary or other employee benefits**. So be open to opportunities on a case by case basis. When evaluating a potential job, make sure it matches your worth.

Secret #6: Treat Your Job Search Like A Job

Once you've identified what you're looking for it's time to roll up your sleeves and start the job hunt. Key qualities for any job include being efficient, effective, and consistent. You should use these same skills for your job search and dedicate at least 15 hours a week to the cause. As you start finding potential jobs, **it's important to act quickly**.

The longer you wait to apply for a job, the greater the chance that there's a bunch of resumes already in the recruiter's inbox before yours. Ideally, you should apply for a job within 24-48 hours of it being posted. To access jobs *hot off the press*, sign up to receive daily email alerts for new job postings. Save time by taking advantage of [Indeed](#) and [SimplyHired](#), which both list job postings across multiple job boards. Then be prepared to have your updated resume and targeted cover letters handy so they can be easily emailed, attached, or copied and pasted—depending on the instructions to apply for the job.

Work efficiently by also creating online profiles on multiple job boards such as [Monster](#), [Careerbuilder](#), and individual recruiting agencies. Posting your resume online will make your job search more effective as many recruiters start their search by scrubbing resumes posted on job boards using keywords. **Let your resume talk for you without even hitting a button.** Don't forget to be consistent. If you make any updates to your resume or cover letter be sure to update your online profiles too.

Secret #7: Develop Your Online Identity

Have you been introduced to social media? Well if not, you should. **Allow me to introduce you to your best networking partner in your job search.** Social media may seem like an unlikely way to find a job, but believe it or not it can be an integral part of your job search. After all, more recruiters are using social media to find prospective candidates.

Make sure you have an online presence so that recruiters and hiring managers can find you. And use sites such as [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#) to follow recruiting agencies and companies so that you can get instant access to current job opportunities.

Long gone are the days of making copies of your resume and mailing it to companies hoping to get a phone call. And even the email approach isn't always enough. Wonder why you're not getting calls? It's because thousands of other job-seekers are *doing the same exact thing*. Go against the grain and creatively market your skills and professional contributions online.

Be unique and let the companies find you.

There are online presentation platforms like [Slideshare](#) and [Prezi](#) that are creative ways to display your brand outside your resume. You can use [online presentations](#) to show your expertise in a specific area or highlight your work experience in a unique way that shows you're able to think outside the box. The key is to organize the information in a way that reflects your personal brand, while having a clear message.

There are plenty of benefits to using social media to network and execute your job search, but there are some things to take into consideration as well. Be mindful of your online identity as it will be a very public reflection of you that can be accessed by a wide audience—friends, family, colleagues, and potential employers. Make sure your online identity doesn't have anything that may prevent you from getting a job since recruiters or potential

employers may Google you as a way of checking your background (yes, “Google” is now a verb).

Negative images and comments that come up may work against you. So be sure to monitor your brand online. Google yourself to see what comes up when someone searches for you. In fact, you can create [Google Alerts](#) for your name and enter your alert criteria. Manage your privacy settings for websites you don’t want to be public and try to clean up anything that negatively reflects your brand.

Secret #8: Dress For The Job You Want

People will view you as you view yourself. Even if you’re not working in your ideal job, dress the part. Always carry yourself in a way that will accurately and positively reflect your brand. It’s not to say you have to walk around in a suit or dress 24/7, but carry yourself in a manner that shows you put time into your appearance.

As a well-dressed professional, you will build confidence and credibility, especially when networking.

When interviewing, it’s even more important to dress professionally. If you’re not sure what to wear, go online and look for examples of wardrobe dos and don’ts. Gather a couple of potential choices and ask a friend or family member for their opinion. Even if the company you’re interviewing with has a casual culture, it’s always better to err on the side of being

overdressed than underdressed. Here's a tip to keep in mind: **If there's doubt, don't wear it out.**

Secret #9: Approach Your Interview as the Interviewer

Aside from getting a job offer, when you're looking for a job there's no better feeling than getting a call back or email response. You feel like it's Oscar time and you're just happy to be nominated. Enjoy the feeling and the fact that your resume didn't end up in the Bermuda triangle of resumes. No doubt it feels good to be called for an interview, especially if it seems like you've been looking for a job since *forever*. But once you get that out the way, it's time to get into *interviewer* mode. Yes, you read that right. You should be prepared to interview your potential employer and evaluate the opportunity based on the answers to your questions.

Remember the list of questions about your ideal company you thought about (Secret #4)? Keep those answers in mind. It's so easy to get in "I'm just glad to have an interview" mode that you miss key warning signs as bright as flashing Vegas lights. Did the hiring manager cut you off during the interview or make more eye contact with the clock than you? Did the company have you waiting and not respect your time? Did the other workers pass you by and whisper, "*Run Forest, run!*"? These may be signs that are worth paying attention to.

The interview process is just as much about you figuring out if this role and company is right for you. Make sure you ask the questions that are important to making an informed decision if you were offered the job. Also, always follow your gut. Your next

opportunity should be just as good a fit for you as you would be for them.

Secret #10: Play The Communication Game

Communication can be an art or sometimes a game of tennis. For example, with art, there are many different styles and preferences. With tennis, there is a back and forth pattern set by the other player. Similarly, when you're communicating with other professionals, it's important to take note of their style and pace, especially during interviews.

If your interviewer is direct and to the point, you may not want to answer the *"Tell me about yourself"* question by starting with your childhood. Try to mirror your interviewer's communication style and look for any telling body language to direct the interview. If he or she starts to tap their fingers or foot, it may be a sign to wrap it up. If they pause often or look confused, it may be a sign to offer clarification—or maybe they just had a bad lunch.

Body language can make up to at least 50% of communication.

Make sure you're communicating the right message as well. A strong handshake and good eye contact are signs of confidence and professionalism. Even if you're nervous or tired, clear those thoughts from your head. You always want to represent your personal brand so do your best to shine through the challenges. Don't let any insecurities or a tough interviewer prevent you from clearly communicating your brand. Remember the unique rockstar that you are and let your words and body language do the rest.

Secret #11: Build A Strong Support System

No man, or woman, is an island. It's so important to rely on the positive people around you to be your support system throughout your career. Surround yourself with people who are ambitious, supportive, and can offer constructive criticism. The job search process can sometimes be discouraging when the phone isn't ringing or the email responses aren't coming quick enough.

Your support system will get you through the hard days and celebrate with you on the good ones. If you think you don't want to bother anyone or feel like you're getting a job through a *hook-up*, get over it. There's nothing wrong with asking for help. If you know someone who is in the same field as you or can give you advice, ask!

Be an empty cup and be open to receive any help that you can get. It can come in the form of a job lead, career advice, or even an introduction to an ideal business connection. Use the resources around you to your advantage. There'll be a time when you'll be able to help them as well.

A good support system will always have your best interest in mind and not ask for anything in return. You'd be surprised how many people are willing to help and share information. *The thing is, if you don't ask, they won't know.* Surround yourself with people that are able to offer good professional advice. Most importantly, be sure to listen.

Secret #12: Don't Be Afraid to Reinvent Yourself

The key to being marketable and getting recruiters to bang on your door—or at least call you—is to be able to change with the times. **You must be able to reinvent yourself in order to stay relevant in your industry or enter into a new industry.**

Yes, consistency is definitely important when it comes to branding and marketing yourself as a professional, but as the saying goes, *“the only constant is change.”* Don't worry though, your brand doesn't change. You just may need to adjust your approach. It's ok to reevaluate your career from time to time to make sure that you're moving with the times.

Your job search will be a good indication of industry trends based on common job titles and requirements that are in high demand. If you see that your field is moving in a new direction, follow it. If there's a new field you'd like to transition to, go for it. Either way, you should be up to date with what's going on in your industry, whether it's through certifications, online courses, or just reading. **Invest in yourself if your current job doesn't.** Make sure you're on the right track so you don't get left behind. If you're not afraid of change then you'll always land on your feet.

Again, your personal brand should guide you through your job search. At the end of the day, it's about embracing the rockstar that you are and finding the opportunity that will compliment your personal brand. Once you align those two stars, you'll find the job of your dreams.

Now What?



I hope you're fired up and ready to shine. These are just some of the secrets you need to know to Brandazzle your job search. Is the process easy? No. Can it be done? Absolutely! The job search game has changed, but at the end of the day, your unique brand will speak for itself.

Do you know what your personal brand says?

If you'd like to learn more about developing your brand, [contact me](#) for a free 30-minute consultation.

Also, check out my website [maribrandsforyou.com](http://www.maribrandsforyou.com) to learn more about my personal branding and online presentation packages. I dare you to reach your goals by evaluating, expanding, and executing your personal brand!

Creatively,

Marietta E. Gentles

Find Me!

Website: <http://www.maribrandsforyou.com>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/maribrandsforyou

Twitter: www.twitter.com/maribrands4you

Email: marietta@maribrandsforyou.com