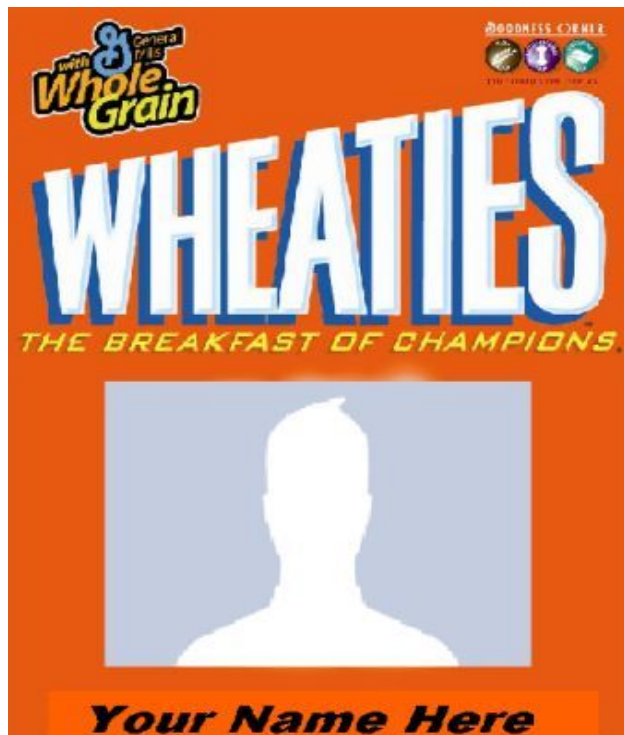


Building Your Brand

Written by

Friday, 05 March 2010 00:00 - Last Updated Friday, 19 March 2010 03:07



It's been almost 13 years since Tom Peters published the article ["The Brand Called You"](#) in Fastweek Magazine. Peters' article acknowledged the importance of personal branding years before most people started buying into the concept. Today, the idea of personal branding is not only alive, it's flourishing. With the emergence of social media, individuals are now able to create and promote their own personal brand to a larger audience and more effectively than was possible in 1997.

In the past, celebrities were the only people with strong personal brands, and to a certain extent their brand was a product of the advertisers that wanted to use them to sell a product, service, or lifestyle. Take for example the Olympic stars of yore. After the medal counts were in, advertisers would consider which athletes had been most successful, the popularity their sport, and which ones were the most likeable before determining who would get their face on the front of the Wheaties box or on the cover of Sports Illustrated. What advertisers were doing was essentially assessing the personal brand of these athletes and determining who they could best use to their advantage. But the system has changed. Athletes no longer have to wait around to be made into a household name; they can do it for themselves. [Social media](#) gives individuals, particularly those that already have a following, the opportunity to proactively create their own brands and promote themselves.

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With the 2010 winter Olympics having recently concluded, it will be interesting to see which athletes take advantage of their recent success and step up to define themselves and their brands. Every athlete won't get the million dollar endorsements, some will get thousand dollar appearances, but that's not too shabby considering the rest of the world doesn't get paid just to show up somewhere. Michael Phelps certainly capitalized on his success in the Beijing summer Olympics and now has 2,892,777 fans on Facebook. Despite the smaller draw of the winter Olympics, athletes like snowboarder Shaun White and speed skater Apolo Ohno have the perfect opportunity to self-promote and make their success bankable.

The importance of personal branding isn't lost on those of us that aren't famous athletes, singers, or actors. There is an infinite amount of information available on the internet. There are how-to video for almost anything you can imagine whether it's how to change a tire or make a toga out of a bed sheet. It's your job to find whatever it is you have to offer and translate your talents, skills, and interests into your personal brand. Make yourself an authority on something. Authoritative sources like Consumer Reports are becoming a bit old school and while the scientific approach is useful, we all know from personal experience that it's much more interesting to hear a consumer's first hand experience on Yelp or other consumer review websites. Make yourself a presence on social networking websites and offer your expertise, experience, and insights is an important part of building your brand. Everyone has something interesting to offer, they just have to learn how to tap into it.

Check out [Tom Peters' blog](#) to read some of his latest insights.