



# Personal brand: Building your professional identity

Age range: 19+

 **BARCLAYS** | LifeSkills



# Session overview

Time	Key learning outcomes	Resources
60 mins	<p>By the end of the activity young people will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explain what a personal brand is</li><li>• Describe the ways in which a personal brand may be developed</li><li>• Evaluate the ways communication and confidence can affect a personal brand</li><li>• Identify different personality styles and how they interact in the workplace</li><li>• Describe the ways in which some organisations measure personality as part of their recruitment process</li><li>• Describe their personality type with reference to a standard personality test</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Personal brand: Building your professional identity worksheet</li></ul>

Remember that you can refer to the guiding principles for establishing a safe learning environment in the Appendix section of the LifeSkills content guide. This includes suggestions for signposting learners to further support. The content guide can be downloaded [here](#).

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# Activity one

## Building a positive personal brand

### 1. Introducing the concept of personal brand

- Explain to the group that in this session they are going to think about employee personal brand and how this is presented in the workplace
- Start the session by asking the students to rate themselves on a confidence continuum checking on the following points, which will be covered in more detail later in the session: online presence, increasing your profile, taking care about what you share, associating with the right brands (see page 7 for definitions of each)
- Ask students to record their thoughts. Encourage sharing with the class, though less confident students may want to just write their ideas down. This will help to gauge students' starting points and enable them to demonstrate the progress they have made by the end of the lesson. It will also offer an opportunity for teaching to be adapted where necessary.

**Ask the group to write down five words that they think other people might use to describe them. Why do they think this? Do they think this is an accurate description? Let the group know that you will be revisiting this later on in the session**

### 2. What is a personal brand?

- Introduce the concept of a 'personal brand' by asking students what their favourite consumer brands are (e.g. sports, fashion, food, technology). Why have they chosen these, and what is it that makes them stand out from their competitors?
- You could use the example of a clothing brand, considering the following pointers:
  - Has an eco-friendly range
  - Recreates designer looks at affordable prices
  - Clothes are worn by peers as well as those in the public eye
  - Customer focused, with a range of delivery options to fit in with lifestyle
- Explain to the group that branding in business is all around us, but it is becoming increasingly important on a personal level, especially in the workplace
- Ask students to choose or create a 'character' or favourite celebrity (e.g. a sportsperson, blogger...). If they feel comfortable, students can use themselves as the example, though be wary of vulnerable students, in which case distancing techniques may be useful for the whole class. Ask them to think about the attributes they, their character or their chosen personality projects. How might people describe them?
- Explain that their personal brand is the way their skills, values and personality come through when interacting with other people; who they are and what they want to be known for. To be shape the way people think of them, they need a strong idea of the person they want to portray – their personal brand. It also helps them to stand out in a crowd. What's more, with social media people need to manage their reputation both in real life and online

# Activity one

## Building a positive personal brand (cont'd)

### 3. Personal values

- Introduce the concept of personal values. Personal values are a set of beliefs personal to the individual which holds them, and are shaped by perceptions and past experience. They influence and guide both behaviour and attitude in a range of situations. Values can help establish your sense of purpose, and form part of your personal brand. Run through some of the values below and ask students to try to define what they think they mean and how they might fit into their personal brand in a workplace setting, i.e. as an example someone who has a high amount of perseverance would believe in never giving up on completing a work task, even if they failed to begin with – they would stick with it until they succeeded

<b>Integrity</b>	I can identify what is important to me and reflect on how I can bring this into my work. I am willing to challenge things and speak up for what I believe in in a fair and balanced way
<b>Accountability</b>	I hold myself responsible for the quality of my work, but am also prepared to flag mistakes and identify improvements for next time
<b>Respect</b>	I seek different views and opinions, as well as putting forward shared ideas, to look for ways we can all make improvements at work
<b>Excellence</b>	I aim to put quality into everything I do, and understand that to continually get better results I can learn from the great work done by others around me
<b>Legacy</b>	I want to produce work that makes a difference and has a lasting impact, which benefits both my colleagues, the organisation and the wider community
<b>Perseverance</b>	When things aren't going to plan, I look for alternative solutions to an issue and set clear goals, without getting frustrated or giving up
<b>Courage</b>	I speak up for my ideas, and am willing to take on a new challenge. I respond positively and can adapt when things aren't going to plan
<b>Collaboration</b>	I try to look beyond the colleagues in my immediate team and take time to talk to other people in the organisation, as we are working towards a common goal. Share knowledge, experience and ideas will benefit everyone
<b>Curiosity</b>	I like investigating the reasons behind things and what I can do to improve. I keep on top of changing and new innovations and always want to learn more
<b>Empathy</b>	I am able to put my own thoughts to one side and actively listen to colleagues. This means I can understand their needs and support them in a way that suits them. People I work with feel valued and supported

- Explain that organisational, or work, values are shared beliefs held by organisations that underpin their business culture. These aim to promote positive behaviours amongst colleagues and towards customers, as well as to enhance professionalism. Before applying for jobs it's useful to research the values of organisations as you may be asked about these, in addition to your own personal values and personal brand
- Point out, that similar to overall personal brand, there is no 'right or wrong' when it comes to values. People will vary in what values they demonstrate, and therefore bring to the workplace, the most which contributes to the uniqueness of their personal brand

# Activity one

## Building a positive personal brand (cont'd)

- Now students have grasped the concept of personal values, help them to become familiar with the ones companies most frequently look for in their employees.
- Load the [Personal Values Quiz](#) which presents students with ten workplace scenarios demonstrating ten different values (as boxed out above). Ask students to work through the scenarios either in pairs (if multiple tablets/PCs available) or as a class, discussing each one making a decision as to how they feel it would be best to respond

### Extension

- To support students with identifying and developing personal values, why not take a look at our [Social Action Toolkit](#) and inspire young people to get involved in their community and in turn find out more about themselves and their values

## 4. How to start building your personal brand and reputation

- Highlight that a personal brand is something that can be created. To enable the group to think about how they might want to change or improve their personal brand, ask them what they want people to associate with when they think of their name. Encourage them to focus on the following questions:

**Are there general qualities they want linked to their brand?**

**Do they want to be considered as an expert in a particular area?**

**Are they passionate about a certain issue?**

**What will make them stand out from the crowd?**

**What kind of lasting impression do they want to leave?**

### Jess (age: 18)

"I've worked to build up my professional profile through social media, particularly promoting my role as a member of youth parliament. I'm passionate about making change happen and I think many people would see me as someone who would speak up for something they believe in. I take care to keep my social media accounts appropriate and only share things I truly believe in as a lot of people I represent will be visiting my profile on different occasions. As a young person, I feel people would look to me as someone who is outgoing and willing to help. I have shaped this through voicing my opinion from an early age and proactively seeking opportunities to make my voice heard."

# Activity one

## Building a positive personal brand (cont'd)

### 5. Making the most of your personal brand

- Explain to the group that employers or potential employers will check their social media profiles, in fact 70% of employers will check out a potential candidate on social media before deciding who to hire\*. Are they giving the right impression? Do they think their current online presence reflects the personal brand they've decided they want to have?
- Discuss the ways they can control their personal brand online:
  1. **Check your online presence**  
Google themselves to see what comes up. What could they do to change the impression they're giving so that their personal brand is as strong as possible?
  2. **Increase your profile**  
Are there other ways they could promote themselves, for example with a personal website or by writing a blog relevant to the field they want to be in?
  3. **Take care about what you share**  
Think about what they're sharing on social media: does it fit with their personal brand? Will potential employers be impressed with what they see?
  4. **Associate with the right brands**  
Who they connect with reflects strongly on who they are, and can also help them spread awareness of their personal brand.
  5. **Evolve**  
Their personal brand will change over time, so make sure they revisit it often.

**Ask the group whether they can think of ways the elements that you've discussed around making the most of your personal brand might actually harm it?**

**For example, if you followed a brand on social media that had negative reputation or if you tweeted something in anger about a company or colleague**

### Extension

- If the majority of the group has a presence on social media and is happy to do so, ask them to form pairs with someone they are comfortable sharing their profile with, and review each other's accounts
- Following this, again checking they are happy to do so, ask them to discuss with their partner what their social presence says about them. Do they think this is an accurate reflection? Did anything surprise them?
- Encourage the group to think about their 'digital footprint' and how whatever they put online could be there forever. Have a discussion around the importance of making sure your digital footprint shows you in the best possible light

\*Glassdoor, 2020

# Activity one

## Building a positive personal brand (cont'd)

### 6. Making a good impression

- Explain to the group that one of the key ways that informs how people perceive you is the impression you leave. It's generally recognised that it takes just a few seconds to form an opinion about someone
- Ask the group to think about non-verbal communication, e.g. posture, gesture, facial expressions and how this influences your impression of someone. Now ask them to think about verbal communication, how the words they are using and tone of voice can impact on communication
- Ask students to guess how much importance is placed on each. You can explain to the group that renowned psychology professor Albert Mehrabian concludes that when it comes to communication<sup>1</sup>, these three elements are weighted in importance as follows: 7% words, 38% tone of voice, 55% body language

**Does this surprise them at all?**

**Can they think how the words they use, their tone of voice and their body language might change according to the situation they're in?**

**In particular, in a work scenario if they were on a graduate scheme, how might the way they communicate with fellow grads differ to how they speak with their manager/company CEO?**

- Encourage students to think about how communication is an important part of how they present their personal brand and could have an impact on their development and career progression

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### 7. Developing confidence

- Explain to the group that often young people struggle with confidence; a recent report from The Prince's Trust has shown that young people's confidence levels are at its lowest in 13 years\*. However, having confidence is an essential skill for the workplace

**Would any of the group class themselves as confident?**

**What factors make a person appear confident?**

**Do they see themselves as confident?**

**How might confidence affect someone's personal brand?**

<sup>1</sup> British Library

\*The Prince's Trust Youth Index, February 2022 <https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/news-views/princes-trust-natwest-youth-index-2022>

# Activity one

## Building a positive personal brand (cont'd)

### Extension

- Show the group an example inspirational talk from a business leader. Make a list of the things people say and do that the group can start to attribute to that person building their personal brand
- Ask the group to each think of someone in their personal or professional life who inspires them and then ask them to explain what it is that they find so impressive about this person.
- Ask them to build this out into a three minute presentation for the rest of the group – explaining how this person has built their personal brand

### Activity summary

- Ask the group to look back on the words that they think other people would use to describe them now, has their opinion changed at all? What aspects are they going to focus on to build their personal brand?
- To demonstrate the progress they have made in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding, get students sharing ideas, creating a checklist or writing their reflections on a collective 'graffiti wall'

# Activity two

## Looking at individual personality styles

### 1. Understanding individual personality and working styles

- Explain to the group that now that they are familiar with what they need to do to build their personal brand, you're going to look at individual personality styles. Everyone is completely different and people's skills and styles can vary dramatically – but organisations need complementary skills to create the right mix
- Ask the group what they think makes them an effective team member. What kind of attributes might make people in a team difficult to work with? Make the group aware that it's key to understand each other's strengths and development areas as individuals; this will help to improve the working relationship of a team and to support each other. For example, an effective team can consist of a range of roles such as extroverts, introverts, creatives and strategists, who all bring their own unique skills:
  - **Introverts:** reflective, thoughtful
  - **Extroverts:** confident, energetic
  - **Creatives:** think outside of the box, adventurous
  - **Strategists:** analytical, objective



# Activity two

## Looking at individual personality styles (cont'd)

- To gauge students' starting points and enable them to demonstrate their progress later, ask them to record their thoughts in the form of a mind map or graffiti wall. This activity can be revisited at the end of the lesson to demonstrate students' progress

### 2. Introducing different personality styles

- Explain to the group that there are a range of different tests that can be taken to give an indication of your personality type; and some employers use these during the recruitment process as a way to find out more about how potential candidates may fit into their organisation. The main ones are listed below and you may wish to signpost the group to these to try in their own time:

#### Colour personality tests

Colour tests are used to determine people's characters and how they behave. The basic four personality groups go back as far as 340 BC to Plato, who called the groups Choleric (Red) Sanguine (Blue) Phlegmatic (Yellow) and Melancholy (Green).

#### Big Five personality traits

The 'Big Five' traits identified by psychologists are agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness, neuroticism and extraversion and are now commonly measured through tests as a way of understanding personality.

#### Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

MBTI is a self-report questionnaire which tests on four categories: introversion vs extraversion; sensing vs intuition; thinking vs feeling and judgment vs perception; to ascertain your personality type. The below test is based on a similar format developed by Isabel Briggs Myer.

### 3. Assessing their personality style

- If the group have access to tablets or a desktop they can work through the [LifeSkills personality test](#) to assess four areas outlined below. If not, show the test at the front, working through questions to get them familiar with the types of questions they need to think about
- Explain to the group that the test will ask them to complete a questionnaire that will help them to understand their natural style and how they prefer to behave at work. Understanding this will help them to identify jobs more suited to their personality type and they will receive a report at the end which indicates their traits according to the following categories:
  1. **Relationships with people:** indicates how well suited you may be to working collaboratively
  2. **Activity type:** highlights the kinds of work you might prefer, from practical to data focused
  3. **Thinking style:** looks at your approach to tasks, be it creative, traditional or structured
  4. **Resilience:** focuses on your emotions and the kind of working atmosphere you are suited to

# Activity two

## Looking at individual personality styles (cont'd)

### 4. Working with different personalities

- Now that the group are more familiar with their own traits, explain that in any team or work scenario you are likely to encounter different personality types. Show the group the following [film](#) featuring Sophie, a barista dealing with a range of different customers
- Hand out the **Identifying personality types worksheet** which features the scales the group will have encountered in the personality type questionnaire. Having watched the film, ask the group to circle where they think Sophie would be
- Come back together as a group to discuss their thoughts and probe their rationale for selecting some traits over others. For example, does Sophie's personality type lean her towards traits such as being persuasive, sociable, caring, behavioural and structured in her approach?

**Ask the group how they might deal with these different customers? Are there any personality types that might not work well in a group environment and why?**

**Ask the group if they feel they have learnt anything new about themselves in this session?**

**Has it made them think about what kind of working environment they feel they would be most suited to?**

### Activity summary

- Encourage the group to reflect on the qualities they feel they bring to an organisation and how they feel they would work within a team
- To demonstrate the progress they have made in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding, encourage students to revisit the mind map or graffiti wall created at the start of this activity. They can record and show what they've learnt creating a checklist, report or presentation to the rest of the class

# Personal brand: Building your professional identity

## Identifying personality types

Having watched the film featuring Sophie the barista demonstrating her communication skills, circle where you would put her on the following scales.

### Relationships with people

#### Easy Going

A style suited to work that does not require persuading or negotiating with others.



#### Persuasive

A style suited to roles where people have to be actively persuaded and led.

#### Reserved

A style suited to work where distractions from other people are minimal.



#### Sociable

A collaborative, people-oriented style suited to work that is team-based.

#### Task Focused

A style suited to work that is focused more on tasks than on people.



#### Caring

A style suited to working with people in a sensitive and caring way, where the emphasis is on helping others.

### Activity Type

#### Conceptual

A style that is suited to work that is not manual or practical, e.g. work that is more abstract or theoretical.



#### Practical

A style suited to work that is manual, practical or craft-like.

#### Non Data Focused

A style suited to work where the emphasis is not on data and figures, for example where there is more emphasis on opinions or feelings.



#### Data Focused

A style suited to work that is based mainly on analysing facts and figures; including assessing data and understanding it.

#### Non Behavioural

A style suited to work that does not require the evaluation of others' motives and behaviour; where people may be judged 'at face value'.



#### Behavioural

A style suited to work that is directed towards understanding people and their behaviour.

# Personal brand: Building your professional identity

## Identifying personality types (cont'd)

Having watched the film featuring Sophie the barista demonstrating her communication skills, circle where you would put her on the following scales.

### Thinking Style

#### Traditional

A style suited to doing tasks in a well established way.



#### Creative

A style suited to consider things in different ways; to pro-actively come up with fresh ideas and inventive approaches and bring them to life.

#### Flexible

A style suited to fluid and changing activities.



#### Structured

A style suited to work which is orderly, methodical, structured and precise.

### Resilience

#### Relaxed

A style suited to work requiring calmness under pressure and a relaxed approach.



#### Tense

A style suited to work which does not involve too much pressure.

#### Emotionally Open

A style suited to work where feelings and their expression are important.



#### Emotionally Controlled

A style suited to work requiring restraint in showing emotions. Associated with jobs that require an ability to cope with setbacks.

#### Steady

A style suited to work that requires composure, has a steady pace, and lacks excessive demands.



#### Energetic

A style suited to work which is driving, energetic, fast moving, decisive and with stretching goals.