



Building Your Personal Brand as a Woman Leader

AN ACTIONABLE GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION



Personal branding is becoming increasingly important for women in the modern era, as it allows them to differentiate themselves and stand out in a crowded market. Some inspiring names that come to mind are Falguni Nayar, CEO of Nykaa and Jane Fraser, CEO of Citigroup. In this ebook, we will explore the concept of personal branding for women and provide practical tips on how to create a successful personal brand.

FACTS ABOUT WOMEN IN BUSINESS



Women have made significant strides in the global business landscape in recent years. According to a report by the International Finance Corporation, women-owned businesses account for about 31% of all formal small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) globally, generating approximately \$17 trillion in economic value. Women entrepreneurs have also been found to be more likely to reinvest profits back into their businesses and their communities, helping to drive sustainable economic growth. According to a study by McKinsey, women now hold 28% of leadership positions in the private sector worldwide. Additionally, female entrepreneurship is on the rise, with women starting businesses at a faster rate than men in many countries.

Despite these achievements, however, women still face numerous barriers in accessing finance, markets, and networks, as well as cultural biases and stereotypes. The World Bank estimates that closing the gender gap in entrepreneurship could increase global GDP by up to 2%, making it crucial to continue to support and empower women entrepreneurs around the world.

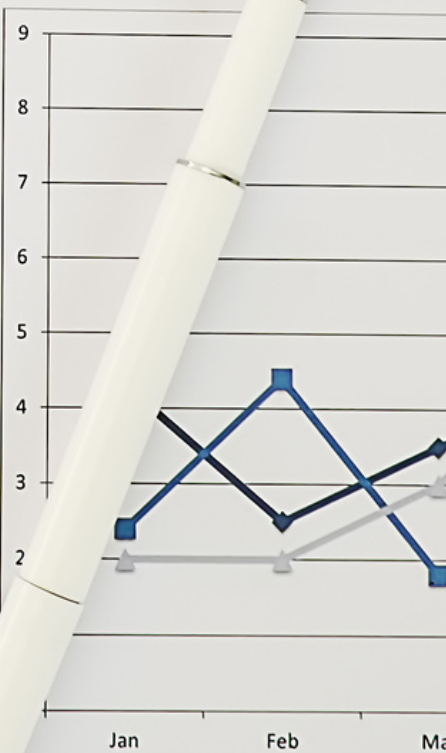
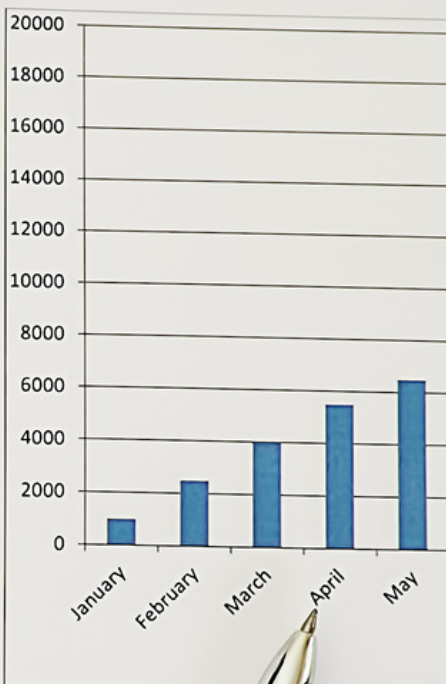
There are still significant gender disparities in the business world, as women are less likely to be in top leadership positions or receive venture capital funding. In fact, a report by the International Finance Corporation found that women-owned businesses only receive 1% of global venture capital funding.



Gender-based discrimination and cultural norms also create barriers for women in business, with many facing harassment, bias, and unequal pay. Despite these challenges, women continue to break barriers and make strides in the global business community. There are undoubtedly numerous statistics that prove how women are great managers, leaders, visionaries and changemakers. But the flip side is that building your brand as a woman can be a challenge- having multiple nuances and obstacles such as stereotypes of being responsible for building and nurturing the family which in itself becomes a full-time job.

At a given stage in her life when a woman needs to put her foot on the career pedal, numerous expectations are loaded on her which limits her progress. No wonder women experience impostor syndrome much more than men. It is a scientific fact that women want to be 95% sure before they launch into something, whereas men need just 60%. This also points out that women are more detailed, but that ends being their own deterrent. On top of this is the fact that business runs on networking- you ask any successful entrepreneur and they will tell you that networking is essential. But due to family commitments and responsibilities beyond work, women are often restricted in their networking. In a recent podcast, Indra Nooyi mentioned that a woman has close to six full time jobs in her life, including caring for the children, elders, looking after the home, job, looking after the husband and others.

WHAT DO NUMBERS SAY?



According to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, women comprise 13.76% of the total entrepreneurs in the country which is a very small contribution. India lies below 20th percentile in female entrepreneurship index, far below US, UK, Brazil, Russia and even Nigeria as quoted by the Global Entrepreneurship and Development Institute (2015).

The statistics reveal a very disheartening story about the role of women in building businesses in India. But this is not due to a lack of skill, but various other challenges.

- Financial dependence
- Balancing professional and personal commitments
- Discrimination against women in male dominated sectors



WHY BUILD A PERSONAL BRAND?

A clear, robust and concrete personal brand can easily help overcome these challenges. Your personal branding will help in ramping up financial independence, put you in decision making roles and leadership responsibilities that are not only driven with logical intelligence but also with emotional intelligence, leading to superior results and a win-win for all. For some women, personal branding will also provide them the power to bring about a transformation by shifting the concentration of power in male dominated sectors, while for others it could be a way to get back to their career goals after a break due to personal commitments.

Whatever your goal may be, creating a brand of your own, nurturing it and building it is challenging, exciting and extremely rewarding. You get to understand your skills & beliefs and create the vision of your brand that stays with you, launching you ultimately towards your dreams.

So how do you go about creating and building your brand?

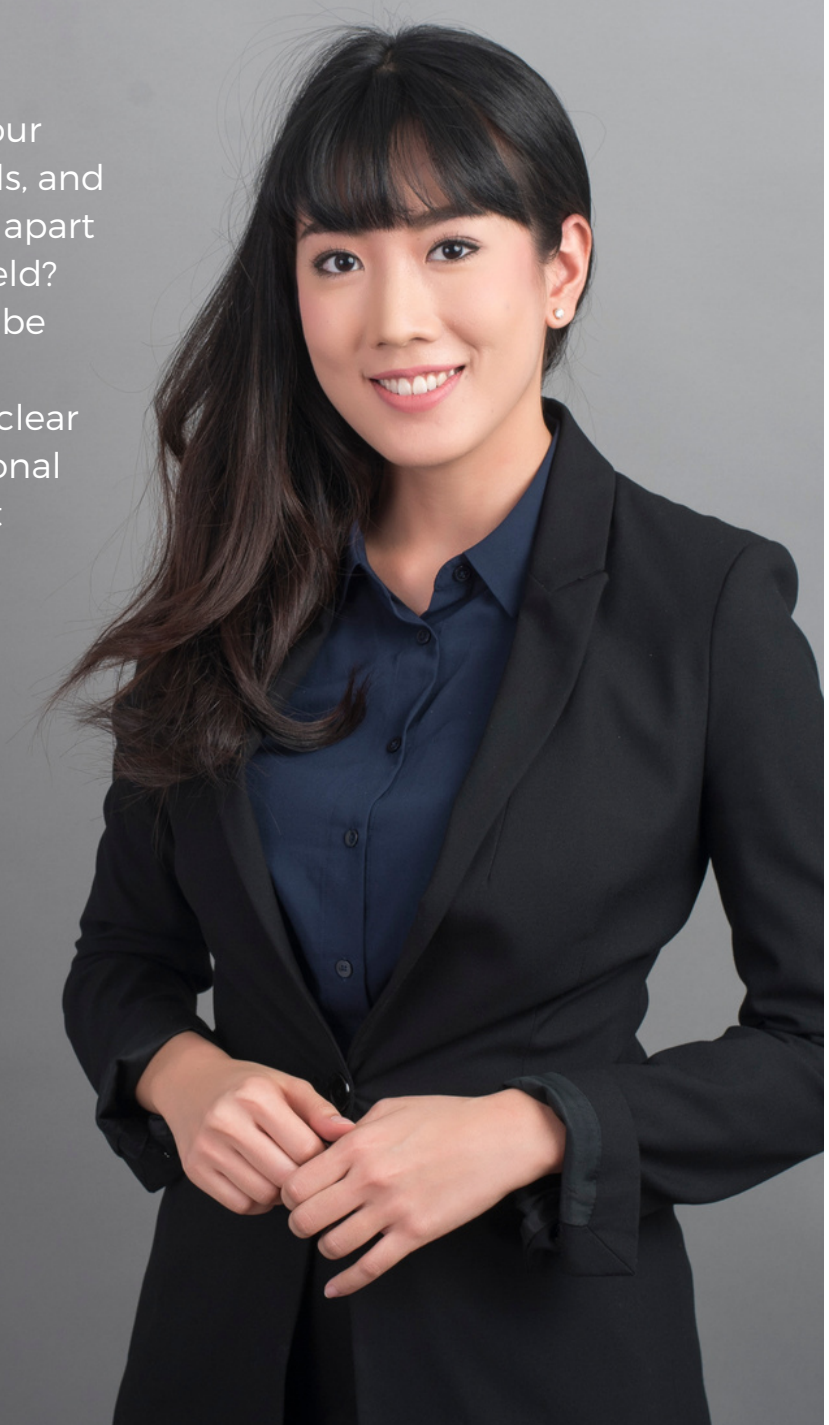
HOW TO BUILD YOUR PERSONAL BRAND?

First and foremost, be yourself, understand yourself and be clear on what you want to reflect in your personal brand. Leave aside all the inhibitions that were imposed on you because of societal and family pressures. Don't blame yourself for putting your professional commitments ahead of your personal responsibilities. Your beliefs and your goals become the magnet to engage people through authenticity, vision and content. Some critical pointers for your personal branding journey are as follows:

- Start at the beginning - define your brand
- Share your journey through your brand
- Don't let your gender restrict your communication
- Networking is key while you multitask
- Innovate your brand promotion
- Stay transparent with your audience
- Make your self development a priority

Start at the beginning - define your brand

Start by identifying your unique strengths, skills, and values. What sets you apart from others in your field? What do you want to be known for? Use these insights to develop a clear and compelling personal brand statement that conveys your value proposition.



Share your journey through your brand

“If you don’t give the market the story to talk about, they’ll define your brand’s story for you”- David Brier.

This is one of the most crucial steps if you want to increase relatability among your targeted audience. Creating a personalized story about your journey or about how your idea came into being can serve as a great source to make your audience understand how it all started.

Your journey may be an inspiration to someone who is in a similar situation and gets encouragement from you who has the power to optimize your strength and do something. Your story of how you are balancing your time between work and family can provide other women with inspiration and get connected with you as a brand. Your story must portray a problem, show a solution and demonstrate how you did it.

Take the example of Sara Blakely, founder of Spanx, a company that makes shapewear and activewear clothing. She founded the company which is a multi million company because Sara got inspiration from her own body. According to Sara, none of her clothes were able to hide her body fat and cellulite so she thought of creating a one- Spanx.

But this was not enough, while it took many years for her to convince other people about her product, it was Oprah Winfrey who named Spanx as her “favorite thing” and her sales skyrocketed. According to Forbes, Sara Blakely is the world’s youngest female self-made billionaire.

Your journey can be an inspiration to many- share it with the world.

Don't let your gender restrict your communication

Communication is integral in any aspect of business. And did you know that studies have proven that women are better communicators? Body language is a tool that women can use to their advantage. This has proven to be a concern as well because most women have been taught and brought up to be shy and reserved- but the moment you communicate in a manner that exudes confidence, your brand will skyrocket.. Don't let any internalized fear overcome your confidence, talent or skill and make you think otherwise!

While there are often gender-specific stereotypes and expectations placed on communication styles, it is important to recognize that these are social constructs and not necessarily reflective of individual communication preferences or abilities. Women, for instance, are often expected to be more passive and deferential, while men are encouraged to be assertive and dominant. However, effective communication is about finding a style that works for you and adapting it to different situations, regardless of gender expectations.

Don't let societal pressures or gender norms hold you back from communicating effectively and authentically. By being aware of these biases and focusing on your strengths, you can communicate in a way that is true to yourself while still achieving your goals.

One example of a powerful woman with a strong personal brand in communication is Michelle Obama. As a former First Lady, lawyer, and author, Michelle Obama has developed a distinct communication style that emphasizes authenticity, empathy, and inclusivity. She often uses storytelling to connect with her audience and share personal experiences, making her relatable and inspiring. Through her speeches, interviews, and social media presence, she consistently communicates her core values and beliefs, such as the importance of education, health, and social justice. She also advocates for women's rights and gender equality, using her platform to empower and uplift women around the world.

Michelle Obama's personal brand in communication is characterized by confidence, sincerity, and a commitment to creating positive change, making her a role model for many women seeking to develop their own powerful personal brand.

Innovate your brand promotion



Build your online presence: In today's digital age, having a strong online presence is crucial for building a personal brand. Create a professional website, establish a social media presence, and use these platforms to share your expertise and engage with your audience. It is estimated that:

- 55% of people get acquainted with brands through social media.
- 397 minutes per day is the average time a user spends on the internet.
- 79.7% of people make purchases after seeing online or social media advertisements.

This is how powerful your online presence can be...

Network strategically: Build relationships with other professionals in your field and attend industry events to expand your network. Seek out collaboration opportunities and look for ways to showcase your expertise and grow your brand. For example, Rachel Comey, a famous fashion designer from the United States of America sells her dresses at about \$600 whereas Target, a chain of stores which has a larger spread across the United States, sells dresses at about \$35-50. The collaboration happened and made Rachel Comey a household name for the masses and increased her brand presence in the country.

Develop a consistent brand image: Your visual identity matters so spend some time developing it. Use consistent colors, fonts, and imagery in all of your marketing materials, including your website, business cards, social media profiles and other brand assets. This will help you create a memorable and recognizable brand.

Stay transparent with your audience



No matter how small or how big your brand becomes, always ensuring that you stick to your commitments regarding your clients is integral. Women already find it very difficult to fund their brands through investors. According to research published in CityAM, companies led by women received 96% less funding as compared to businesses led by men. Funding is crucial but generating trust among your audience can automatically provide you with suitable platforms to garner funding for your business.

When people put trust in your brand because of who you are, implementing the right processes and ensuring that you abide by what you committed to is essential. It is a well known fact that service and commitment go a long way in building your brand value. Do what you say and say what you can do.

“It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you’ll do things differently”
- Warren Buffett

Make your self development a priority



This is one of the most ignored aspects of brand development. Personal branding is about creating a unique and memorable image of oneself that sets one apart from others, and self development is an important aspect of that process.

We become so focussed on the business brand that we overlook our own development that causes our knowledge to stagnate. Besides, we as women have a tendency to invest in ourselves last. In a constantly changing world, it is not preferred but mandatory to keep up with the latest tools, trends and information. Continuous learning and education is essential if you want to create a successful thought leader brand.

Alloting time and resources for self-development can help women build confidence and resilience, which are important qualities for successful personal branding. By investing in oneself and continually striving for improvement, women can become more self-assured, articulate, and poised, which can help them effectively communicate their personal brand to others.

In summary, self-development is a crucial component of building a strong personal brand for women, as it allows them to showcase their unique talents, enhance their credibility, and position themselves for success.



Personal branding can be a powerful tool for women in business, allowing them to showcase their unique talents and differentiate themselves from others in their industry. By focusing on authenticity, consistency, and strategic networking, women can build strong personal brands that help them achieve their professional goals.

Women cannot be left behind in the continuous growth that we are seeing around us. And the opportunities are all out there- what we need to do is step on the pedal and move forward. Work your way through the simple steps above and see your brand achieve massive heights. You have the talent, strength, will and grit to take your brand to the top of the world- don't let anyone's word deter you from opening your wings and fly in the sky of success.

If you are a woman leader and feel that your personal brand has the inherent potential to grow, consider getting in touch with an expert brand strategist and scale your brand to the next level!

“Your personal brand is a reflection of your leadership style, your values, and your vision for the future. It's not just what you say, but how you show up every day” - Carla Harris. As a woman leader, it's not only important to be confident and competent, but to also cultivate a brand that reflects your values and leadership style.

By focusing on authenticity, consistency, and strategic networking, the superpowers of women, you too can build a strong personal brand as a woman leader that help can help you achieve your professional goals and be a stand-out brand. By following the strategies outlined in this ebook, you can establish a strong personal brand that sets you apart from your peers and positions you for success in your career. Remember, building a personal brand is an ongoing process that requires continuous effort and commitment. With the right mindset, professional guidance and the right tools, you can create a powerful and authentic representation of who you are and what you stand for.

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