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IDENTIFYING YOU! : A PERSONAL BRANDING

ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The following paper looks at exploring the perception towards the model that is utilised to assist in creating an identity for Personal Branding, the Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model, and the importance of determining and creating a Personal Brand Identity in the modern day. The Brand Identity Planning Model was created to help in creating a Brand Identity for a corporation and to give it components that are relatable for the intended target audience. Due to the efficacy of creating identities for organisations it has been used for the purpose of crafting the Brand Identity of an Individual with some components making or determining attributes that have no relation to an individual and their Personal Brand.

Thus, a research paper that was conducted in a constructivist approach looked at determining the opinion and perception surrounding the efficacy of using the Brand Identity Planning Model.

A Mixed Methods approach was taken, throughout 2015, so as to understand the opinions and attitudes towards using the Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model, the importance of Personal Branding and the ways in which a Personal Brand can be created to have efficient results.

This research was gained through personal interviews with branding experts, who had previously dealt with building a Brand Identity, either for a large corporation or an individual, and through semi-structured interviews with students from the Honours and 3rd Year Students from Vega, School of Brand Leadership, Pretoria campus, as they make use of the current model to build and create Brand Identities for corporations and individuals alike.

The key research findings were analysed and interpreted to form recommendations to assist in identifying the opinion and then crafting recommendations on a modified model for Personal Branding. This new best-practise model will result in a more effective and sustainable Personal Brand being communicated.

Chapter 1:

Glossary of Terms:

1. Brand Identity:

Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2009:29) stated that a Brand Identity could be seen and regarded as the vision that a brand creates for how they wish to be perceived by its target audience. The Brand Identity guides and inspires the strategy, and thus can be seen as the heart of the organisation (Aaker et al. 2009:27).

2. Brand Positioning:

The Business Dictionary (2015) states that Brand Positioning is when a brand intends to occupy a distinct positioning, in comparison to their competitors, within the minds of the targeted audience. It is ideal to highlight unique and distinguishing features, to differentiate himself/herself, when discussing Positioning.

3. Personal Branding:

Tom Peters (1997) identified Personal Branding to be the method or way in which individuals would differentiate them to be able to stand out from the general crowd in which they are situated. This way of differentiating oneself helps communicate the unique values to achieve an enhanced identity in comparison to other individuals.

4. Brand Personality:

Investopedia (2015) defines Brand Personality as a brand name having a set of human characteristics that can be related and attributed to it. These characteristics may be an effective way to increase brand equity as consumers may relate to and feel similar to a brand that shares characteristics with them.

5. Brand Archetypes:

As stated within The 12 Archetypes (2007), archetypes in marketing originate from Carl Gustav Jung's theories surrounding archetypes. In marketing, these archetypes are viewed as the unconscious characters that reside within the collection population. There are 12 archetypes that can relate to and symbolize a basic human need, aspiration and/or motivation.

Field of Specialisation:

The area in which the field of study takes place is that of Brand and Brand Building, as well as Brand Leadership.

Proposed Title:

Identifying YOU! : A Personal Branding Analysis.

Introduction:

Personal Branding can be seen as the way in which an individual is able to market him or herself in a specific manner that can be seen as unique and original to any other individual within that industry. Personal Branding helps identify areas in which the individual needs to emphasise on to be able to clearly communicate what they want the audience to view and interpret.

This shows the reasoning behind why it can be considered as highly important to be able to understand and implement Personal Branding correctly.

Whilst completing the Undergraduate Degree in BBA Brand Building and Management at Vega, School of Brand Leadership, the researcher was tasked with representing the idea of a personal brand and brand identity by making use of Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model. This method of determining the Brand Identity is generally utilised to define the Brand Identity of companies and corporations as each area is generalised for corporations and the way in which they do business and make use of business functions. Some of the particular areas of focus within Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model (Aaker et al. 2009: 40) are not focused on the individual and this makes the task difficult when having to relate these areas towards an individual. For example, the area "*Brand as Organisation*" is one of the key areas of focus, although when creating a Brand Identity for an individual, it may be seen as a strenuous task in delivering "*Organisation Attributes*," especially after already stating "*Product Attributes*" within '*Brand as Product*,' and also within "*Brand as Product*," the idea of representing "*Users & Uses*" of an individual could be seen as not feasible. Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model is utilised within the Vega School of Brand Leadership curriculum, because this model can be used to successfully create and develop an identity for a corporate

organisation. The reason Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model is applied at an academic level is due to the success it has when being applied to a corporate brand.

This specific model is utilised to identify the Brand Identity of individuals as no clear concise model has been created to do so. Through research, one is able to establish that there are many existing alternative forms and methods of creating a personal brand, although not communicating the same message. Although Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model has been seen as successful when communicating a Personal Brand, it can be viewed as also giving an unwarranted amount of information that has no effect on shaping the idea of the personal brand, due to the model not being catered to an individual. Once the model has been completed, it is still seen as difficult to relate to a brand essence and core identity, as the information is not specific to the individual.

Due to the combined efforts of the unsuccessful attempts at creating a Personal Brand through Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model, as well as the inconsistency of the available Personal Branding Models, the researcher is thus motivated to conduct research in this topic area to understand if other users of the current model also share the same opinion and if so, determine any alternative inclusions and exclusions for the model, and also to identify similarities between the Personal Branding methods that can be conveyed back and adapted into Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model.

Statement of Purpose:

The aim of this study was to, through analysis, evaluation and comparisons, be able to convey the opinion of the current methodology and model (Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model) to assist in creating a Personal Brand. The purpose is to determine whether individuals who use the model feel as though it is possible to create a Personal Brand more effectively, with a more succinct, specific, and precise outcome.

Audience:

The audience of the proposed journals consists of individuals who are interested in marketing and marketing methods, whether it is for the individual or a corporation, as well as academics wishing to identify a more succinct model to brand an individual.

Objectives and Aims of the study:**Aims:**

- To identify whether the Aaker's Brand Identity Planning model is viewed as effective in creating a Personal Brand Identity, in comparison to existing Personal Branding models and methods.

Objectives:

- Identify the importance of Brand Identity.
- Identify the importance of Personal Branding.
- Identify and compare the similarities between Brand Identity and Personal Branding models and theories.
- Identify the significance in the difference between Personal Branding and Self-Marketing.
- Identify Personal Branding Statements for influential and successful individuals, using the current model and its recommendations.

Research Problem and Secondary Questions:

Research Problem/Question:

When creating a Personal Brand, how effective do users find Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model, and do they believe it can be adapted for the individual?

Secondary Questions:

- What is Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model and why is it seen as important for Brand Identity?
- What is Personal Branding and why is it seen as important for individuals to practice Personal Branding?
- Are there any existing Personal Branding models, and if so, can said models be seen to have a correlation with each other?
- Is it possible to adapt Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model to existing Personal Branding models?
- What is meant by Self-Marketing and how does it differ from Personal Branding?
- What is Brand Positioning and how can it be related to Personal Branding?

Chapter 2:

Literature Review

Keywords: Personal Branding, Brand Identity, Brand Image, Self-Marketing, Brand Positioning, Brand Personality, Brand Differentiation.

Introduction:

The following constructionist research study makes use of a thematic form of analysis to formulate and utilise a personal branding model that adapts the current ideas, models, perceptions and theories that exist to create a distinct, authentic, accurate and valuable personal brand in a simple, non-trivial manner.

The reasoning for the research study is realised through the significance in Personal Branding. Aaker et al (2009: 25) stated that building a strong Brand Identity is completed through developing a strong motivating Brand Identity, therefore Brand Identity and Personal Branding is important and essential for the building the brand of an individual. There is a vast amount of different models and non-definitive 'self-help' models that exist to formulate and/or improve a personal brand that do not create great distinction for the individual. Academically, there can be seen to be a gap in identifying a Personal Branding model that is successful in highlighting the individuals' most important and essential qualities or attributes. The literature within this area is very contradictory and scattered because it is a relatively new study, due to the academic literature spanning back to the late 1990's.

This research study will explore the opportunity of making use of a successful Brand Identity Model (Aaker, D. 2009) and adapting the existing Personal Branding methodologies to formulate a brand identity that is specific to the individual.

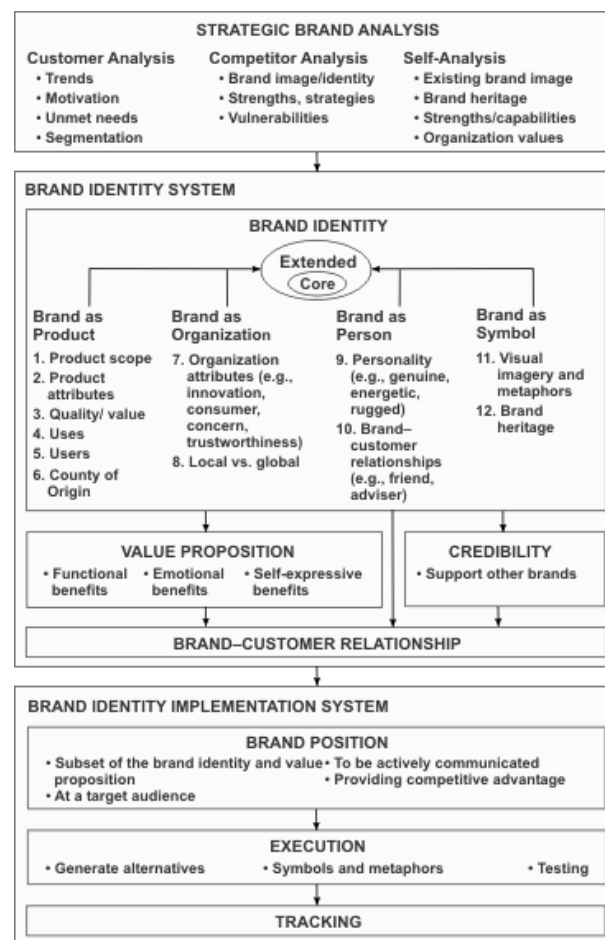
The study was conducted in a general global context, with South Africa in particular used as the main area of research.

Brand Identity:

Brand Identity, as stated by David Aaker, is “the associations a brand strategist seeks to create and/or maintain” (Aaker et al. 2009: 40). Brand Identity is seen as important because it is regarded as the heart and soul of the brand and is what the world associates and relates the brand with. The Brand Identity that a brand puts forward is instrumental in forming strategies, communication methods, and all that the brand does. “It says something about your business or its physical products; for example, what they look like, how they smell or feel. In fact, properly created, a brand identity says everything about what the product wants to be, both from the inside (the DNA) and the outside (design)” as seen in Novagraaf, Intellectual Property (2015). The organization/individual creates the Brand Identity, as this is how they want to be perceived in the mind of the consumer. It is imperative for the brand that a consistent identity is created throughout to ensure an impactful and positive perception of the brand. The way in which the consumers view the brand is known as the ‘Brand Image’ and this image is created through experiences and interactions with the brand (Management Study Guide, 2015). It is imperative that the Brand Identity is created, which shall formulate the Brand Image. Thus, it is understood that if the Brand Identity and the Brand Image do not correlate and are heading in opposing directions the brand is not communicating its’ values and promise correctly, which is misleading the consumers/users of the brand.

There is a strong emphasis on creating and building a convincing and sustainable Brand Identity for an organisation, which shall allow for consumers to formulate a positive Brand Image as the Brand Identity is seen as the aspirational statement, of where the brand intends to be situated in the minds of consumers/users (Aaker et al, 2009: 40). Organisations/Brands can make use of various creative strategies to help build and convey their Brand Identity, which they feel will have a positive effect on their Brand Image. Within the field of Brand Leadership and Brand Building, one can continuously make use of the Brand Identity Planning Model established and created by David Aaker, as it is seen as the most accurate model, to establish the brand identity of organisations, for whom the model was created and also for

individuals to help form a better understanding of the brand as a whole. The Brand Identity Planning Model is meant to be a tool that can be utilised to help understand, develop, and use within the Brand Identity Construct. Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model consists of three layers to the model, each consisting of criteria that help create an identity for the organisation to communicate. The first layer of the Brand Identity Model, the Strategic Brand Analysis, comprises of the Customer Analysis, the Competitor Analysis, and the Self Analysis. The second layer, the Brand Identity System, is made up of Brand as a Product, Brand as an Organisation, Brand as a Person, and Brand as a Symbol, combine with the Value Proposition and are all encompassed by the Brand Essence. The third and final layer of the Model, the Brand Implementation System, consisting of Brand Positioning and Tracking, which reveal an identity created and how the public and/or consumers relate to it (Aaker et al. 2009: 44).



(Figure 1: Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model)

<http://brandnbranding.blogspot.com/2007/10/aakers-brand-identity-planning-model.html>

The Brand Identity Planning Model has been utilised to help identify particular criteria for the Brand Identity of an individual, which may include particular criteria/information that can be acknowledged as superfluous, once related to an individual. The reasoning behind creating a Brand Identity is to highlight and communicate important and essential attributes to the public and consumers. Thus, a Brand Identity that is created and seen to be communicating the Brand as an Organisation for an individual may not be seen as particularly essential and key to improving the Brand Identity, as only key and essential attributes and information is necessary to share with the public.

Brand Personality can be identified as the human characteristics that are related to a brand to give it human qualities that result in it being more relatable to the intended market (Investopedia. 2015). Brand Personality looks at how a brand expresses and represents itself to the public and the intended target market. Graham Staplehurst and Suthapa Charoenwongse (2012) identify the way in which a Brand Personality may vary due to the way the brand was developed and what was intended for delivery to the intended market. Staplehurst and Charoenwongse view different brands excelling within different markets around the world and some having to even alter the established Brand Personality that was created in one particular country to relate to a different market.

The way in which a brand is regarded highly within a particular market is when that brand has defined its personality correctly and positively, ensuring that their key attributes and qualities have been communicated to the intended target market (Staplehurst and Charoenwongse, 2012).

One way in which to help identify a strong and unique Brand Identity that has been differentiated from competitors could be by utilising basic archetypes to help describe the brand to establish a clearly distinctive brand. As stated by Carl Gustav Jung in Michelle Roche (2015), "Archetypes represent fundamental human motifs of our experience as we evolved; consequentially, they evoke deep emotions" (Roche, M. 2015). Archetypes are seen as a pattern of thoughts and ideas that are related to a particular personality trait.

The twelve common archetypes that are related to branding are used to best determine the strongest character and personality traits of that brand, although the brand may be seen as having several archetypes one can generally be seen as the most dominant and most distinctive archetype.



(Figure 2: The Four Cardinal Orientations of the Archetypes)

<http://www.thinkpilgrim.com/what-does-your-archetype-say-about-you-and-your-brand/>

As seen within Figure 2, the four main personality traits that guide the twelve archetypes are seen as 'freedom, social, order, and ego' (Roche, M. 2015). This helps identify that for a brand to be seen as distinctive, one has to establish and develop a personality trait that can be cultivated into a distinguishable archetype, which can be used to ensure a unique and distinctive positioning. Once an archetype has been developed and established with a particular brand that archetype orientation must be made to concur with all other communications of the brand as that is the most dominant style of characterisation and the most dominant way of being viewed within the minds of the intended target market.

Peter Montoya states, “A Personal Brand is an alter ego designed for the purpose of influencing how others perceive you and turning that perception into opportunity” (Montoya, P. 2003), and this shows the correlation that is necessary to be able to create a particular and specific Personal Brand, one has to identify the Brand Identity of the individual.

Personal Branding:

In 1997, Tom Peters mentioned that each and every individual was a CEO to their very own company: *Me Inc.* He continued to state that it basically is that simple and difficult, at the same time, to continuously be the ‘head marketer for the brand called YOU’ (Peters, T. 1997). The idea of Personal Branding is still seen as a relatively new area of study and expertise.

The purpose of Personal Branding is to help the individual be able to market themselves differently to any other within their industry while adhering to the promises stipulated. Your personal brand then will let people know what you offer above what your CV says – after all many people have degrees and skills training, but you need that *je ne sais quoi* that will differentiate you. You need a strategy to effectively manage your personal brand because this is about how people perceive you and how you can influence that perception (Gander, M, *Managing your Personal Brand*. 2012). The three key areas to look at when determining a personal brand are: marketability, differentiation, and value proposition and because this idea is still in the beginning phases, many methods and models are used to help identify the identity of the brand for the individual. Such models include: David Aaker’s Brand Identity Planning Model (2000), The Authentic Personal Branding Model, by Hubert Rampersad (2008), Personal Brand Dimensions, by McNally and Speak (2003), The Personal Brand Statement, by Peter Montoya (2002), and Reinventing Your Personal Brand, by Dorie Clark (2011).

As there is no particular method/model made specifically to identify all three areas of the personal brand it can be seen as trivial to identify a personal brand for the individual. As Hubert Rampersad states; “Personal Branding is

essential to career development and an effective career tool because it helps define who you are, what do you stand for, what makes you unique, special, and different, how you are great, and why you should be sought out” (Rampersad, H.2009). This relates to the idea of personal branding have a direct correlation to the Brand Identity.

Dorie Clark stated in 2011, that any individual can find it difficult to rebrand oneself, but to have a successful rebrand one must look to identify and understand each of the following: “Define Your Destination, Leverage Your Points of Difference, Develop a Narrative, Reintroduce Yourself, and Prove Your Worth” (Clark, D. 2011). This looks at how one must determine their identity and in what sense they shall market their identity to whom and how they plan to market themselves.

David McNally and Karl Speak (2009) discuss Personal Branding and the way in which individuals need to communicate themselves so as to be effective in Personal Branding. As with other existing and known Personal Branding theories, McNally and Speak discuss the idea of a strong Personal Brand being “Distinctive, Relevant, and Consistent.” A sense of standing for something and committing to those beliefs, and being unique in doing so, while ensuring that said beliefs connect to what others believe to be important and finally ensuring that this process is always followed.

Personal Brand Dimensions



Figure 3: Personal Brand Dimensions Model

(<http://innovatelearning.com/coachingforleaders/making-authentic-connections/attachment/personal-brand-new/>)

As with the above model, the three sectors look at the Roles, the Standard, and the Style of an individual. The above Personal Brand Dimensions Model can be distinctively relatable to the theory discussed by McNally and Speak; 'Distinctive, Relevance and Consistency' (2009:13) This is because the Roles show how an individual creates a distinctive ideal to be experienced by others, the Style relates to the relevance and how others may relate to the individual, and finally the Standards look at how all of the above is done, which may relate to the consistency of an individuals actions and beliefs.

Arruda (2003) stated, "in this sense, Personal Branding means clearly communicating the unique promise of value that you have to offer your employer or your clients" (Gathered off a website called Reachcc.com). Personal Branding is a method of communicating important areas that have been highlighted as the most essential to help establish a strong relationship through creating and adhering to the unique and differentiating promises established initially. One can state that when done correctly, successful personal branding is authentic as that means "your values, passions, and strengths to distinguish yourself from others so you can get the resources you need to advance in your career. Just like with strong corporate brands,

successful personal brands are not created; they are uncovered, strengthened, and nurtured” (Gathered off a website called Reachcc.com).

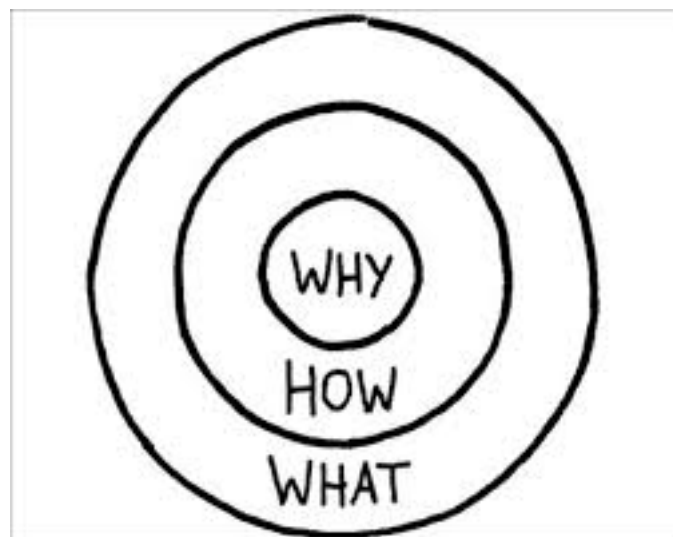
One has to ensure that when identifying and formulating a Personal Brand to not mistake a Personal Brand with Self-Promotion or Self-Marketing. Personal Branding is seen as the area in which value and unique promises are communicated and a vision is created, which can result in forming way for a sustainable strategy. Whereas, Shepherd (2005) stated that “self marketing consists of those varied activities undertaken by individuals to make themselves known in the marketplace, usually (though not exclusively) for the purpose of obtaining gainful employment” (Gathered off a website called Eprints.com). Self-Marketing has been utilized for decades within many different fields, from politics, to sports, to movie stars, etc. to help deliver an idea for an individual that has been promoted extensively. Loayza (2010) regards the main identifiable difference is that Personal Branding communicates a sense of value and validates the idea of the public benefitting from the information communicated (Gathered off a website called Brandyourself.com)

Brand Positioning:

Brand Positioning refers to the way in which consumers who are targeted have reason to purchase one particular brand over another. It is the way in which a particular brand is positioned that results in it being preferred to another. A clear Brand Positioning results in a guided and directed strategy for the brand and must ensure that the following are discussed and communicated clearly: distinctiveness over competitors, significance to it's market, the unique value and promises, and sustainability across contact points (Management Study Guide. 2013).

A clear and effective Brand Positioning looks at identifying the key areas, attributes and qualities of a brand and then communicating these to the targeted market. According to Trout and Ries (1981), the brand should be positioned in relation to the position of competitors within the mind of the

target market. Although this is so, the brand must ensure that a 'sustainable competitive advantage' is communicated to ensure that this brand is seen as unique and different to the others within that field. Trout and Ries discuss that for a Brand Positioning to be regarded as effective, one must be able to distinguish the functional positioning, the symbolic positioning, as well as the experiential positioning. Trout and Ries (2014) state this reveals that a brand positioning must be able to identify the benefits provided, how it may solve problems, the manner in which the self-image may be enhanced that shows belongingness, and finally the stimulation that may come as a result (Value Based Management, 2014).



(Figure 4: The Golden Circle by Simon Sinek, 2009:41)

Simon Sinek (2009:41) developed the 'Golden Circle' diagram that identifies the 'Start with Why' ideal of thinking, that looks at a new way of positioning the brand relative to why the brand is in business and to determine and communicate why they are doing what they are doing. The reasoning behind starting with why is to determine what is the purpose of the business and utilise that as the key differentiator in communicating to the intended target market. The reason for this is that value is highlighted at an initial stage and through early communication of this value the brand can be seen as inspiring and looking to build an inspired loyal relationship through positioning itself. A sense of emotion is communicated and seen to be engaging when received by the consumer, and this relationship may not be simulated by others as the

‘Why’ is distinctive and unique to that particular brand. This emotion is evoked through the brand identifying its’ position as one that is shared with the intended target market’s same values and beliefs, forming a sense of belonging and an idea of being able to relate to the brand. This form of communication is seen as the communication from the inside-out and looks to directly guide information to the decision-making area of the brain. This form of communication is evident when a brand has positioned itself in a manner that looks to ‘win hearts and minds’ of the intended target market (Sinek, S. 2014:41-44).

Conclusion:

The purpose of the following exploratory research study is to identify that while using The Brand Identity Planning Model proposed by David Aaker, an individual is able to adapt the above model to patterns that are identified within existing personal branding and positioning models and methods to create and develop a brand identity that is specific to personal branding.

Through research available and gathered, one can view that there is a variety of methods available to assist in creating and developing a Brand Identity and Personal Brand. One can state that many of the different models available and examples gathered are very similar in origin, just discussed differently, resulting in somewhat similar outcomes. Patterns that have arisen, whether creating an identity for corporations or the individual, are evident due to the authors originating from the same 'school of thought'. The idea that a strong Brand Identity is only created ensuring that the brand communicates distinctiveness, establishes relevance to the intended target market, and ensures consistency in all actions are heavily apparent through research, and should be distinctive within a model for Personal Branding. Communicating ones' unique promise and values are essential in establishing a strong Brand Identity and this needs to be the initial step within the process.

Thus, the following research question helped guide, support and assist all research:

When creating a Personal Brand, how effective do users find Aakers Brand Identity Planning Model, and do they believe it can be adapted for the individual?

Chapter 3:

Research Methodology:

Methodology:

Research Methodology can be defined as the making of business decisions through a collection of information and data, through interviews, surveys, questionnaires, and other research techniques, which can be found through primary (present) research and secondary (historical) research and information (Business Dictionary. 2015).

The manner in which the research for the following study was conducted was within a constructivist approach, which utilises the mixed method (qualitative and quantitative combined) form of research approach. "... Qualitative studies may be combined with quantitative ones to increase the perceived quality of the research..." (Cooper and Schindler, 2008:185). The way in which there is a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods of research is due to the questionnaires/surveys completed, while quantitative research is conducted through interviews to receive a more precise and descriptive indication. The questionnaires/surveys are in the form of semi-structured self-completion interviews that contain a mixture of open and closed questions to ensure that the participant may answer a fixed question, so as to deliver a specific quantity for research, but also be able to answer an open questions that allows the participant to answer flexibly without being constrained to a set statement/s (Bryman, Bell, Hirschsohn, Dos Santos, Du Toit, Masenge, Van Aardt, Wagner. *Research Methodology*: 2014:199).

The constructivist approach views ideas and mentions of social phenomena as being a resultant of social interaction. The reason that a mixed methods form of research approach was utilised is because the opinion of individuals (quantitative research) and the importance of Personal Branding, on a rating scale (quantitative research), was utilised to form theory that can be developed and adapted with existing theories to form a new model. "One of the reasons for this is "triangulation" where different methods of data

collection and analysis will both enrich and confirm the picture you collect of a situation” (Greener, 2008:36).

The Exploratory Research Design, which is seen as an exploration of collecting existing information that helps formulate/investigate/refine research and create and improve future designs through the identification of particular patterns, shall follow the Grounded Theory and Triangulation forms of design. Grounded Theory may look to analyse and understand theory, through investigative purposes, and understand what exists within that category and then take results and allow for development or change within that theory (Greener, 2008:35).

This was used to ensure that the different, already existing, Brand Identity Models and Personal Branding Models are compared and contrasted. Both the Grounded Theory and Triangulation forms of research design relate to theory that has been defined as a result of research and analysis of the data collected. The concepts, categories of concepts, prospects and aspects of categories, hypothesis, and the eventual theory are all derived and produced through the development of information gained through data collection and analysis (Bryman et al. 2014:45 & 345).

The Data Collection Methodology consisted of 3 interviews with individuals who have previously worked within the industry and/or have represented an individual/group/organisation and have facilitated the development of a Brand Identity (Branding/Personal Branding experts), semi-structured interviews in the form of self-completed questionnaires within the general public (i.e. Vega, School of Brand Leadership students who look to create personal brands and are seen as future potential brand leaders using SurveyMonkey), and secondary research in the form of case studies, journal articles, and published books analysis.

The interview candidates (the Brand Experts), chosen through purposive sampling, as this method of sampling consists of gaining information through asking individuals who were identified as they would understand and can relate to the information and questions, were initially approached electronically and the final interview was completed either personally (face-to-

face) or via E-mail (Bryman et al. 2014:186). The reason that the Brand Experts were approached was to establish an experienced opinion on the current methods and theories surrounding Brand Identity and Personal Branding. These individuals are considered as a sample of the population of Branding Experts within South Africa, and globally, as they are a representation of those within their industry. Therefore the interview was conducted in such a manner so as to create an open space for the individual to openly communicate their opinion for Brand Identity and Personal Branding, which could be seen as qualitative research.

The Semi-structured interviews in the form of a Self-Completion Questionnaire/Survey were posted online on the survey page, SurveyMonkey, and the group consisted of individuals within a branding area/background (Vega School of Brand Leadership students), with a sample size of 10 individuals found within the Honours in Strategic Branding and the Final Years for Brand Building Management and Creative Brand Communications. A combination of purposive and representative sampling method was chosen, as this would ensure that the sample would be able to relate to the research questions/problems as these individuals were selected within that area to create significant results for the Strategic Branding field. These individuals were chosen because they are viewed a representative of the population that would make use of the Brand Identity and/or Personal Branding Models (Investopedia. 2015). The Self-Completion Questionnaire allowed the sample to complete the survey on their own and the research showed actual opinions and established a numerical value to the questions surrounding Personal Branding. The Questionnaire resulted in a combination of qualitative and quantitative being evident, as individuals expressed opinion of a Likert Scale, as well as identifying opinions in a semi-open ended structure. The reasoning for the semi-open ended structure of questions is to allow for a degree of patterns to be established in the opinions of individual who are asked to utilise Brand Identity and Personal Branding models and theories.

All secondary research was collected and analysed and evaluated to show better understanding of the relationship between Personal Branding, Self-Marketing, Brand Positioning, and Brand Identity and to identify key themes

used in each to form a new/adapted model. The secondary research was gained through journal inclusions, articles, campaigns, case studies, blog articles, academic papers and the World Wide Web. All secondary research was finally analysed, so as to establish any particular themes and patterns that are evident in the different available models. "Data analysis usually involves reducing accumulated data to a manageable size, developing summaries, looking for patterns, and applying statistical techniques...researchers must interpret these findings on light of the client's research question or determine if the results are consistent with their hypotheses and theories" (Cooper et al. 2008:93). The Brand Identity Model and Personal Branding Models that are researched and evaluated were utilised on 3 individuals, two of global success and recognition and one within the South African entrepreneurial field in particular to divulge the way in which these are successful and informative at delivering and establishing a distinct and unique Personal Brand.

All research, Primary and Secondary Research, was collected and evaluated by making use of Open-coding, so as to identify any particular patterns or themes that are present amongst research findings and analysis. The reasoning for making use of Open-coding is that it allows the researcher to describe phenomena that is found in the text due to the recognition of themes and patterns (Borgatti, S. 2013)

Due to a Pilot Study being conducted, to identify if the measure of the research was valid, face validity was achieved, as the sample of peers were able to complete the questionnaire without any complications and were able to identify what was being asked of them. The Pilot Study was conducted so as to reveal the success rate at which the individuals completed the Self-Completion Questionnaire. The sample revealed that questions functioned well to determine what was being investigated. Regarding questions that were seen as 'open-ended', it was identified how such questions could be rectified and improved to make more sense and not leaving too much open for interpretation.

The Data Analysis method was completed within an Inductive approach, which shows the theory as the outcome of the research. In contrast to a deductive approach, which looks at creating a hypothesis from theories and then testing said theories, the inductive approach aims to investigate the focus of research and through thorough investigation, develop theory and conclusions as a result (Greener. 2008:16). The outcome is concluded due to a culmination of facts and/or pieces of evidence that, when pieced together, make logical sense. Like the Grounded Theory and Triangulation, an Inductive approach views theory being produced through creating findings and analysis from observations. As seen in Bryman et al, “*observations/findings & theory*” (Bryman et al, 2014:11).

Delimitation and Assumptions of the study:

The following study was conducted in a constructivist framework, situated within a Post-Modern South African context.

As Brand Identity, Brand Positioning, Brand Personality and Personal Branding are the key areas of study, it needs to be stated that the following areas are not to be discussed within the following study:

- Brand Equity
- Brand Value

The scope of the study included researching brand identity, personal branding and brand personality.

Due to the limited time, there is a constraint on the amount of primary research that is possible to research. This is the reasoning in the amount of findings from secondary research being the predominant structure of the study. The primary research collected was included as vital and informative, but cannot be seen as the majority of the study. The primary research that was conducted to show the opinion of the branding experts towards Personal Branding shall be taken into consideration and used to compare and contrast what is collected from the secondary research.

It can be assumed through research and analysis, that there will be attributes that can be viewed as similar within Personal Branding Models. It is assumed

that these attributes can be modified and adapted, so that one may be able to utilise them within Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model.

Hypothesis:

As a result of the research and analysis, a correlation between the different Personal Branding Models can be drawn, combined with the opinion of the research participants, to understand the efficacy of Aakers Brand Identity Planning Model in creating a personal brand. This insight gained will ensure an understanding is gained of what is necessary to highlight when adapting and modifying the current model.

Ethical Issues:

Due to the nature of the study, there could be ethical issues surrounding the quantitative information that is collected that may relate to the personal identity of the individuals. Although, all issues can be avoided by ensuring that:

- There will be no harm to the participants.
- All identities shall remain anonymous.
- All forms of communication shall contain informed consent forms.
- There is no invasion of privacy.
- All reasoning for the study and purpose of the interview/survey shall be discussed prior to the study, as well as any moment after it has concluded.
- No minors shall be consulted within the timeframe of the study.
- All secondary research shall be cited and referenced where necessary.
- Individuals shall be selected from within the branding industry and the branding field of study.
- All information shall be kept private and stored on a device that is stored within a safe and secure environment.
- All individuals who partake in the study will have until the end of the study to remove themselves, if they no longer wish to be involved.

Conclusion:

The following research paper was conducted using the exploratory research design, and the constructivist approach of attempting to create new ideals and theories through the research gained (the social phenomena). A mixed methods approach was utilised so as to find qualitative research that surrounded the opinion of personal branding and to determine how the users of the current model felt it could be modified, and also quantitative research to quantify the effectiveness related to the current model.

Thus, through the evaluation and analysis of data that was collected in primary and secondary research, the similarities will arise in the alternative models that are available and how the branding experts and the future potential brand leaders view the effectiveness of Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model.

Chapter 4:

Primary Research Findings and Analysis:

The following research data has been assembled and gathered from the survey, in the form of semi-structured interviews, that was completed by current Vega students on SurveyMonkey and personal interviews to branding experts, either electronically or in a personal (face-to face manner). The following research is the respondent's answers to the questions that were delivered, and each point is the respondent's own response to that particular question.

The semi-structured interview with the students was conducted so as to achieve an understanding of the individuals who make use of the Aaker's Brand Identity Planning model for a Personal Brand and for a corporation. The reasoning for determining the opinion of future potential brand leaders is to understand their perceived efficacy of the current model to help create a Personal Brand.

The reasoning that experts within the branding field were approached was to achieve and gain an understanding of the opinion surrounding Personal Branding from an individual who has worked with developing an identity, either one for personal use or for a corporation. These individuals understand what is necessary to achieve effective communications of a brand to create positive and sustainable relationships.

Student Semi-Structured Interviews

QUESTION 1: What do you believe a personal brand to be? (Please be specific).

Respondent 1. A personal brand is an identity that individuals seek to create for themselves, which they will establish through their personality, conduct, relationships, affiliations and their own personal objectives and goals.

Respondent 2. A brand that someone creates for himself or herself that incorporates his or her own views and ideas along with a specific look and feel.

Respondent 3. I believe it to be the identity of an individual/person. Things the person believes in, does and looks like.

Respondent 4. A personal brand is a way for individuals to 'market' themselves compared to other individuals within the same field. This provides the chance to represent your skills, personality, values and abilities to future employers. It is somewhat of a CV but just represented differently with visuals and some added personality, as a black and white piece of paper can only tell you the technical necessities but not you as a person. It can be used as a differentiator, whether or not you will fit within a specific company or not.

Respondent 5. This is the perception and feeling you want to create in association to yourself through all of the aspects of your personality and mannerisms.

Respondent 6. A brand that an individual relates to/can connect with easily and confidently.

Respondent 7. How people market and brand themselves.

Respondent 8. The way you portray yourself.

Respondent 9. Creating an identity and/or reputation for yourself or your brand.

Respondent 10. The identity and ways of viewing a person, and how that person portrays themselves to the world. Their brand reflects their identity. It is creating associations and perceptions to an individual.

QUESTION 2: In your opinion, how important is it for an individual to establish a personal brand? Please rate on the scale below.

Not important at all:	0
Fairly Important:	1
Neutral:	1
Important to an extent:	5
Highly important and necessary:	3

Respondent 1:	Important to an extent.
Respondent 2:	Fairly Important.
Respondent 3:	Important to an extent.
Respondent 4:	Important to an extent.
Respondent 5:	Highly important and necessary.
Respondent 6:	Highly important and necessary.
Respondent 7:	Neutral.
Respondent 8:	Highly Important and necessary.
Respondent 9:	Important to an extent.
Respondent 10:	Important to an extent.

QUESTION 3: In relation to the question above (question 2), please give reasoning for your choice?

Respondent 1. Its necessary for individuals to know who they are and what they stand for in their own opinion, if you don't stand for anything, you will fall for everything.

Respondent 2. A personal brand is important for entrepreneurs or free lancers who are not attached to another brand in their work.

Respondent 3. It helps with establishing a strong presence and that helps in many facets of life.

Respondent 4. It can be seen as important depending on the field of work, as some would just require basic qualifications and references, and not necessarily an entire personal brand. However, it can be beneficial as it can be a differentiator and a method of persuasion.

Respondent 5. I believe that through the use of a personal brand it becomes easier for individuals and businesses to associate themselves with an individuals whose values and beliefs mirror their own.

Respondent 6. It seems like it would be unhealthy not being able to trust at least one brand that you interact with.

Respondent 7. It's fairly important, to market/brand yourself, to attract job opportunities.

Respondent 8. Without a personal brand, you don't have an established identity. Without an established identity you can have direction. Without direction you have no purpose or goals.

Respondent 9. To optimise your future success and image/reputation, others need to see you as an organisation with values, drive and goals that may benefit not only you but others as well.

Respondent 10. It is important in some industries e.g. business and marketing, where clients and other people are constantly looking for individuals to do business with. Therefore, one needs a personal brand to stand out, to be different and importantly, to be remembered. I don't believe it is highly important and necessary because I believe skills; actions and behaviour speak louder than "marketing."

QUESTION 4: In which fields (sectors of work) do you think it is most important to have a personal brand, and why do you say this?

Respondent 1. Sports, and probably the entertainment industry. This is because people build personal relationships in their minds with you as a person according to the brand you created for yourself. If they don't like your brand, they most probably won't like you.

Respondent 2. Freelancing, Music, Art and Design. These fields have the most individuals working independently.

Respondent 3. I think in all sectors because if you are considered to be a unique individual with strong characteristics people will respect you.

Respondent 4. Creative Fields as well as those who open up their own offices (medical, law, finance, culinary etcetera.), as their personal brand can be linked with the company brand. Personal branding within creative fields (art, advertising, graphics, design etcetera.) is important as it shows a different skill from the employee, representing themselves.

Respondent 5. Mostly the business field, as it is a highly competitive industry it becomes necessary to differentiate oneself from the rest in order to gain more leverage.

Respondent 6. Finances - Businesses handling your finances need to be credible and trustworthy and Health - Dealing with an actual person probably needs a touch of personal communication and trust.

Respondent 7. Sales- As salesmen/women are the first point of contact between the brand/company to the consumer.

Respondent 8. All. A personal brand should not be limited to a specific field but is cardinal to operate within any industry.

Respondent 9. In the entertainment or sport sector. People who can be associated as parts of a single team can be promoted and idolised far easier than that of an individual in a massive company. Also, if the individual gains damage to their reputation, it would be easier for them to redeem themselves than the ethics of a larger faceless organisation.

Respondent 10. Business, marketing, advertising, entertainment. Because people and businesses are constantly looking for individuals to work with or hire, therefore one needs to use a personal brand to stand out and to remember by.

QUESTION 5: Each participant was asked to states which tool was the most effective and important when dealing with Personal Branding, and from that state why it is that?

Respondent 1. As an individual, the identity you have created for yourself in your mind is the most important determining factor when it comes to what you can achieve, so therefor your vision for your personal brand sets the tone for everything else that comes afterwards, sort of like a baseline.

Respondent 2. People remember icons and symbols the most.

Respondent 3. Values are considered as something you live your life by and results in tangible actions.

Respondent 4. Brand as a product presents the specifics of a brand. These are the basic requirements that are needed, like a foundation, before creating the 'sales pitch'. You need to know what to communicate before you can produce other factors (the basic CV information).

Respondent 5. Values are what defines you as a person, thus it is necessary to first know who you are and what you believe in before you can communicate it to the public.

Respondent 6. They're all important. They're how the brand communicates itself, how we see the brand, what we see that essentially lures us in and convinces us to trust them.

Respondent 7. It's import to have stick to your values and beliefs.

Respondent 8. Your values establish your character and serves as the truest reflection of a brands identity. Values are established when no one is watching, the other traits are specific ally aimed at operating under the spotlight.

Respondent 9. It is important not only for the brand, but others also, to know what the personal brand stands for and how they are positioned and what they strive to constantly accomplish.

Respondent 10. Positioning Statement. It allows for an individual to state who they work for (who they target), what they promise and what makes them different. It is the most concise way to sum up who you are, what you stand for and what you deliver.

QUESTION 6: Who (any successful or well known individual) do you believe has the most powerful/successful personal brand? And why do you say that?

Respondent 1. Mandela, everybody loves Mandela. If it has to be someone who is still alive today, I'd say Oprah...

Respondent 2. Lady Gaga because she is unique and unlike any other artist who appeals to a specific audience.

Respondent 3. I don't necessarily believe Barrack Obama is in charge of an honest organization. But he has an awesome personal brand because he is super confident and up to date with current trends in the world.

Respondent 4. Richard Branson. He knows exactly whom he is, what he wants to do and how he wants to do it. He displays his personal brand not only at Virgin, but through other interactions as well. This has led to financial success as well as a reputation linked to his name.

Respondent 5. Richard Branson. He expanded his personal brand onto an actual brand that communicates efficiently what he stands for.

Respondent 6. Disgustingly cliché, but Barack Obama. Presidents are influential and have nations behind them. Obama is a president that is recognised and followed globally.

Respondent 7. Richard Branson.

Respondent 8. Mandela, Oprah, Tiger Woods (not healthy but very successful).

Respondent 9. Richard Branson. He has become a highly influential individual and has never striven to be anything but himself- and that has made him successful.

Respondent 10. Richard Branson: his identity, ethics, promise and personality reflect the brand he owns' identity. Virgin and Branson are one in the same, which is difficult to achieve, therefore he has created and maintained his personal brand image successfully. Also, he is known around the world as being a nice and inspiring person so his ethics and personality are brought through more so than his economical and business side.

QUESTION 7: When creating a personal brand, how effective is Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model in doing so? Please rate on the scale below.

Highly Ineffective and not recommended:	1
Fairly Ineffective:	0
Ineffective:	0
Neutral:	0
Effective:	1
Fairly Effective:	4
Highly Effective and recommended:	4

Respondent 1:	Fairly Effective.
Respondent 2:	Highly Effective and recommended.
Respondent 3:	Highly Effective and recommended.
Respondent 4:	Effective.
Respondent 5:	Fairly Effective.
Respondent 6:	Highly Effective and recommended.
Respondent 7:	Highly Ineffective and not recommended.
Respondent 8:	Fairly Effective.
Respondent 9:	Highly Effective and recommended.
Respondent 10:	Fairly Effective.

QUESTION 8: **Do you believe that the Brand Identity Planning Model may be modified to communicate a personal brand more effectively, and please give reasoning for this?**

Respondent 1. YES, Please modify it!!! Right now the Brand Identity Planning Model is basically out-dated, it doesn't look at things such as tone of communications and other factors that make us human, such as profiles for the kind of people you want to partner with, locations/areas where the brand would like to been and which areas people with individual brands should avoid...

Respondent 2. Yes, possibly by adding a person's personality traits.

Respondent 3. I think it is good the way it is, but more can be done by oneself in defining and identifying the brand as a person category.

Respondent 4. Yes, there is always a possibility for a model to improve or to be modified. Maybe the other sections of the brand identity model such as the strategic brand analysis (customer, competitor, self) and the brand identity implementation system should also have as much focus as the brand identity system. Another viewpoint is to rearrange some parts in order to create a simplified version for personal branding, as it does not require all of the details.

Respondent 5. No. I believe that this model was designed to be applied to various situations effectively.

Respondent 6. I think it's fine as is.

Respondent 7. Yes, although it is still about and used for brands and companies. I think a completely new model would need to be made for personal branding.

Respondent 8. Yes. If it can be used to define a business, why not a person. A person is a brand, thus it should work if directed more at a person's attributes.

Respondent 9. Yes. The Brand Identity Planning Model can be more effective in portraying what a personal brand stands for, who they are and what benefit they can provide to the consumers. If a brand (internal) knows all this- it can effectively relay this brand promise/message to the consumers (external).

Respondent 10. Yes, it can focus on aspects of a person more and can do away with organisational attributes, brand metaphors, self expressive benefits, uses, quality, tracking and execution as these points are not focused around a person.

QUESTION 9: In your opinion, what is the difference between personal branding and self-marketing? (Please be specific in your reasoning).

Respondent 1. Personal branding determines who you are as a brand, what you stand for, and what kind of relationship you have with other brands/people. Self Marketing is a little more focused on how you sell yourself to other people and focuses less on the quality of the relationship you have with those people.

Respondent 2. Self-marketing refers to promoting ones self in any form whereas personal branding refers to creating an identity for an individual.

Respondent 3. I believe that self-marketing consists of somewhat nagging people when asking them to support you. Personal branding is more of a natural process that allows like-minded people to follow and believe in you.

Respondent 4. Self-marketing is a 'sales' method to communicate your abilities, skills and qualifications. (Presenting what you can do and offer) Whereas personal branding takes one step further to create an individual brand to showcase not only what they can do but also other factors such as personality and soft skills in a coordinated manner (who you are not just what you can do).

Respondent 5. Personal branding creates a whole perception about the person where marketing mostly and usually just communicates about the functional benefit of a brand.

Respondent 6. Personal branding is how you will be perceived, what you do, how you do it. Self-marketing is how you will carry those perceptions, and how often you reassure it.

Respondent 7. Nothing, same thing.

Respondent 8. Identity. Branding focuses on a future goal, marketing focuses on representing a current identity.

Respondent 9. Personal branding- creating an identity and/or reputation for yourself or your brand. Self-marketing is promoting and/or advertising your individual image to improve your career or ensure you stand out from other employees.

Respondent 10. Personal branding is the act of making credible associations about yourself, known and expressed to the world. It is focusing on understanding how to show the world your ""promise on delivery."" Self-Marketing is not brand focused. It is not focused, centred or holistic. It is purely ""shouting"" my skills or attributes to anyone who wants to hear it. Personal branding is carefully targeting my client or intended audience and pitching myself as well as my promise and reason to believe.

Semi-Structured Interview Research Analysis:

Question 1:

The majority of individuals classify Personal Branding as the identity that an individual creates for himself or herself to express to the world or their specific target audience. The respondents describe the identity of the brand that has been created as relating to the persons' own views, ideas, their personality, beliefs, objectives and goals, their values, their skillset, and the perceptions and associations that they want the world or their target audience to understand about them. The Personal Brand that is created is also identified and acknowledged as the differentiator for that individual and can be seen to be the tool to create positive perceptions and associations for the intended target audience.

Question 2 & 3:

The majority of respondents consider creating a Personal Brand as important to an extent for individuals, as 50% of the respondents perceive it as important to an extent for an individual to create a Personal Brand for their specific industry to help portray himself or herself in a more positive and better light. The reason an individual must create and identify a Personal Brand is to communicate that individuals benefits for their intended audience, as well as the way in which that individual can be differentiated. The respondents believe that to be considered effective, the Personal Brand must stand out to be remembered, as they may work personally with teams and groups within the industry they are situated in.

30% of the respondents believe that it is highly important and necessary for an individual to create a Personal Brand. The reasoning for this is that respondents believe that an individual who does not have a Personal Brand to not have a distinguishable identity that can be relatable to others. Once a

Personal Brand has been identified and created, an individual may then be seen as easily relatable as the associations with the individuals' values and beliefs, goals and objectives are openly communicated and visible for the intended audience, to assist in their future ventures.

Question 4:

The general consensus when looking at different industries that are required for individuals to practise creating and updating Personal Brands are within the entertainment industry, the sports industry, art industry, medical and health industry, art and creative industries, and broader business industry like the advertising, finance, marketing, law, and design fields.

This shows that from the respondent's answers, one can recognise and understand that an identity that is created through the use of Personal Brands can be used within all fields as it is seen as an assistance in representing and communicating that individuals' most important benefits and the most key differentiators.

In some cases it can be identified that if any damage is done towards an individuals identity then it can be handled far easier because it can be determined where the issue is situated and a solution can be determined far easier relative to an individual who has no 'Personal Brand.' A clear identity helps determine the skillset and values of that particular individual, and once that identity has been crafted it can be routinely updated for their intended audience.

Question 5:

From the respondents, 10% stated that all facets of the current model (Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model) are important and help determine an effective Personal Brand. The respondent stated that all areas of the brand

work together to communicate the identity and that they are all just as important as the next as they work in tandem.

40% of the respondents stated that the most important factor when beginning the Personal Branding process is beginning with the values of the individual. The values and beliefs are seen as the foundation of the brand and can be seen as the guidance into what needs to be completed and achieved. The respondents state that the values are created and crafted without the audience in mind and are thus the truest characteristics and attributes of one's identity. The respondents identify the values and beliefs of the individual as the characteristics that define and direct the individuals' strategy.

The way in which the brand positions itself within the positioning statement is seen as fairly important as 20% of the respondents identified it as important. The respondents state the positioning of the brand is most important as it determines who you as the brand are, and who you are targeting which the intended target audience. The positioning statement determines many ideas of the brand, ideally in what/who the brand is, who they are intending to target, and finally how they determine to do so in what they are offering. The positioning statement is seen as the tool that helps differentiate the brand from its competitors.

The vision, icons and symbols, and the actual offering of the brand are all believed to be equally important, each being viewed as the most important by 10% of the respondents, respectively. This is due to the fact that the vision of the brand is seen as the baseline of the brand as it sets the tone of the rest of the tools in creating an identity. The icons and symbols that are created for the identity are seen as important because the respondents state that this is what the intended target audience most relates to and can remember the easiest. Finally, the brand as a product (the actual product/brand offering) is seen as important as it is what the brand is offering to the intended target audience. The actual offering is what you are communicating to the target audience and are thus seen as important because without it then there is no offering to the audience.

Question 6:

When asked which individual was viewed as the strongest and most successful Personal Brand, Richard Branson was viewed as the most successful with a unanimous 50% of the respondents identifying with his Personal Brand. The reasoning for this is through his communication of his Personal Brand. The respondent's state that he knew exactly whom he was/is and that are seen through all that he does, whether it is with his individual ventures or with the company Virgin. All of his individual characteristics are seen to be identified within his companies, which is a difficult task to achieve, as a corporation has many different individuals and characters within it, although these individuals are seen to relate and personify all that Richard Branson has continuously built up and updated.

Barrack Obama is seen as one of the most influential and successful Personal Brands, with 20% of the respondents identifying his Personal Brand as the most influential and successful worldwide. The respondents view his brand as so successful because he is so easily recognised worldwide due to his influence and the confidence in which he carries himself and the organisations related to him. He is also viewed as a successful Personal Brand due to the way in which he constantly keeps up-to-date with certain trends and he continuously updates his brand and is not seen as stagnant.

Following with a respective 20% each, Mandela and Oprah are seen as the next two most influential and successful Personal Brands around the world. The respondents state that this is so because these two individuals are known worldwide and are easily recognised. Finally is Lady Gaga, with 10% of respondents identifying and relating to her Personal Brand as the most successful worldwide. This is because she is so easily recognised worldwide, and she continues to update and communicate her brand differently in an ever-changing world for her different intended audiences.

Question 7:

The respondents, when asked, relate to Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model as fairly and highly effective, as each respectively received 40% of the respondents vote. The respondents even recommend it to be used when creating a Personal Brand (40%), although this could be due to the fact that these particular individuals have not been interactive or come into contact with other Personal Branding models.

10% of the respondents state that the current model is fairly effective when creating a Personal Branding model, whereas another 10% view it as highly ineffective and even state that they would not recommend it to be utilised when creating a Personal Brand.

Question 8:

A majority of the respondents, 70%, state that if possible it would be preferred if the Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model could be modified, although one of those respondents also stated that a entirely new model would be served as a better method in creating a Personal Brand.

The respondents state that it is necessary to modify and adapt the current model as some even view it as out-dated in what it looks to achieve as results through the process of utilising the model. Some respondents state that it needs to be adapted by looking to add more characteristics once dropping ineffective and unnecessary components of the current model for a successful new modified Personal Branding Model. The respondents state that once ineffective components are removed, a more simplified and effective model shall be created. This modified model must look to focus and centre the concentration solely on the personal attributes of the individual and their brand, where it is they and their intended audience are located, and this will help determine a tone of communications for that specific and intended target audience. These respondents view the Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model is not relative to creating a positive and effective Personal Brand.

30% of the respondents view the Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model as an effective and satisfactory model to assist in creating a Personal Brand. These respondents state that due to the idea of a corporation and an individual both having brands that it would be possible to utilise the same model or process to assist when creating an identity for that brand. These respondents understand the Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model to be effective to be used throughout different situations and for different brand identities.

Question 9:

So as to determine the respondents' views and opinions on Personal Branding when compared to Self-Marketing, the participants were asked to identify what the difference in the two was, if any. Only 10% of respondents view Personal Branding and Self-Marketing as the same ideas of marketing and branding. A majority, of 90%, identify and view the two as different entities, where Personal Branding was generally seen in a more positive and sustainable light when compared to Self-Marketing.

The 90% of the respondents who view the two as different entities highlighted on the fact that Self-Marketing was more of a 'sales pitch' that was focusing on the 'now' and not looking to be sustainable.

Personal Branding is viewed as a more sustainable idea as it looks to create positive relationships for the future with that intended audience, and this can be done through using credible associations. The respondents view Personal Branding as a more targeted approach to the intended target audience, whereas Self-Marketing is looking at a mass market sales, where it is even described as 'shouting' ones' offerings and their characteristics. The idea that Personal Branding is sustainable is that it looks at a 'future goal' for the individual, instead of just looking at the current situation.

Branding Experts Personal Interviews

Branding Expert #1

QUESTION 1: What do you understand Personal Branding to be?

Personal Branding is all about creating a brand identity for a person and doing brand building for that person.

QUESTION 2: Why is it seen as important for individuals to establish a personal brand nowadays?

Persons of influence need to establish, maintain, and improve their personal brands in order to differentiate themselves.

These individuals need to clearly communicate why it is that they are influential and they must ensure that they project the correct and appropriate messaging when relating to the image of their personal brand.

QUESTION 3: What are the key components when identifying a personal brand, and where should an individual look to begin? (E.g. Vales, vision, foundation stage, etc.) And why?

Core Values should be the foundation stage, followed by the personality aspects or elements of the individual. The mantra should be established early on as it looks at and deals with what you want to stand for, and then with this one should be able to enforce and communicate their credibility of their personal brand. Once this all is established, one can look to identify and

ensure their differentiating factor/s are always visible and communicated to their intended audience. With this, it is then possible to identify the core essence of the brand and ensure that is always felt throughout all brand strategy and communications.

QUESTION 4: How often should an individual look to update/change their personal brands?

Without ever skewing and/or moving away from the core values that were initially established and being maintained always through all strategy, one must look to update their personal brand identity and image regularly. What they are communicating must always be the most recent.

QUESTION 5: Who do you believe to be the strongest personal brands globally, and what helps them establish this successful and strong brand?

Donald Trump.

Firstly, he is a very public and influential individual who is so well known and with this he is very public about his opinions and ideas. His television show has grown his following tremendously and he is well known for his public speaking skills. In a combination to all of this he has links and has established many foundations to help others.

Mayor Rudy Giuliani.

The former Mayor of New York made use of Design Thinking methods with a humanistic approach to help achieve a positive change within New York. His

methods are very popular, as can be seen within his book and all the journal articles and business ideas he has established.

Nelson Mandela.

The former South African President is famous for his strong core values that he never shifted away from. His identity was one for the people in general and this was always visible in his very humanistic approach to all his ventures. His brand and identity was built through his public appearances and speeches where he continued to be the same strong character with relatable values.

QUESTION 6: As with large corporations, who are seen to have great value due to their brand equity, can personal brands look to have such strong/high brand equity?

Yes, this is possible.

This is because individuals are paid in high monetary value for the speaking opportunities, as they are seen to be highly influential and knowledgeable within a particular industry or field. As a result it can be said that they have high brand equity.

QUESTION 7: In your opinion, what is the difference between personal branding and self-marketing?

Self-marketing looks at campaigns only, almost like they are 'marketing' or campaigning oneself to gain a following.

Whereas, personal branding, like branding, looks at establishing a holistic brand identity and living through that specific identity in all forms of communication and strategy.

QUESTION 8: Do you believe that the Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model can be modified or adapted to help establish a best practice model that will help formulate a personal brand? If yes, please areas to look into modifying.

Yes, it is very possible to do so.

In my opinion the areas that can be eliminated from the structure of the Brand Identity Planning Model are the Self Analysis component, the Brand as an Organisation component, the Country of Origin component, and the Functional Benefits component. These components are not entirely necessary for a brand identity of an individual for their personal brand.

One can look at modifying the current model by adding more information about the core values, as this is what the audience can relate to. When dealing with the area of habitat of the individual, one can look at replacing 'country of origin' with relevance of countries that the individual is looking to target (for example, Bruce Lee would be everywhere).

Branding Expert #2

QUESTION 1: What do you understand Personal Branding to be?

Personal branding is building an identity for a target audience, who has a particular need. This identity must be original and authentic but must also include and come from a strong value system throughout. This value system must be experience in every possible moment. The identity for the personal brand will help you determine what it is you want to do, your goals, and emphasise your belief system and values. Only once this is complete can you link to your intended target audience because you know that what you are offering is something that they desire and are looking for.

QUESTION 2: Why is it seen as important for individuals to establish a personal brand nowadays?

It is only important if you want to achieve something, and it comes as a result of what you stand for and what you look to achieve.

A personal brand helps the individual to stand and be an original entity when compared to others within the same field. With personal branding you should be so well differentiated that you are in your own field.

QUESTION 3: What are the key components when identifying a personal brand, and where should an individual look to begin? (E.g. Vales, vision, foundation stage, etc.) And why?

It is not really possible to determine the key components when creating a personal brand identity. One must obviously begin with their core values and their belief system and how this ties in with what it is they are trying to achieve. After doing this, it is always imperative to know and understand who your intended target audience is and what it is that you are offering them and how to communicate that.

It is very important to also understand, that to be authentic and to stand out, one must also communicate the different things that they are not able to do and able to offer their intended target audience, because this creates that sense of transparency and openness with the audience.

QUESTION 4: How often should an individual look to update/change their personal brands?

An individual must look to always be updating and adding or taking away from the personal brand. You need to constantly look after and manage your personal brand to ensure a strong brand, as it is the most honest and up-to-date for the audience. An individual must look to always look into new ventures and add new skills and attributes to their personal brand; so as to strengthen it's standing with the mind of the target audience.

QUESTION 5: Who do you believe to be the strongest personal brands globally, and what helps them establish this successful and strong brand?

Richard Branson.

I would rate him as a strong personal brand as he is known globally and is a strong celebrity brand, although I don't know how his 'personal' brand is, due to the fact that I have never interacted or worked with him on a personal, or any level at all.

Personal brands are generally built through interactions and experiences with an individual, and with more positive experiences and interactions the relationship can strengthen.

QUESTION 6: As with large corporations, who are seen to have great value due to their brand equity, can personal brands look to have such strong/high brand equity?

Yes, I do believe it is already this way. It is this way already, as I believe people do business with other people, not corporations or business, and their experiences with certain people within that corporation result in whether a consumer/the audience will return for a future use. This shows that one's experiences with a personal brand from a corporation result/and can affect the 'life' of the brand. Corporations try and inspire a certain way for their employees to live their brand, but if that employee has a personal brand that is against or not relative to the brand then the audience will not feel an honest and open relationship.

QUESTION 7: In your opinion, what is the difference between personal branding and self-marketing?

Self-marketing is almost like you are pushing something that is no longer authentic and has lost that original feel. It is similar to mass marketing and hoping for some return.

Personal Branding is more of niche marketing and you are looking at a specific audience and communicating something that they need and desire, and how you look at delivering that.

QUESTION 8: Do you believe that the Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model can be modified or adapted to help establish a best practice model that will help formulate a personal brand? If yes, please areas to look into modifying.

Yes, it is always possible to adapt and modify something in this day and age. It is more of updating something to be relative to the times. If something does not fit any longer then that needs to be removed and new components that are more relative and complimentary to what you are trying to get across need to be identified and highlighted.

Branding Expert #3

QUESTION 1: What do you understand Personal Branding to be?

Personal branding is the creation of an identity in the mind of your target market, which provides the parameters for interaction to achieve your ideals and vision.

QUESTION 2: Why is it seen as important for individuals to establish a personal brand nowadays?

A personal brand exists in the mind of the consumer whether it is created by default or design. The discipline of personal branding in the current era seeks to mitigate the risk of the ambiguity, miss representation, self-actualisation and financial gain.

QUESTION 3: What are the key components when identifying a personal brand, and where should an individual look to begin? (E.g. Vales, vision, foundation stage, etc.) And why?

Components of a personal brand should be designed with the end in mind and building blocks such as the reason d'être must be compelling and well anchored so as to support the journey off being the identity.

Consider starting with "Why" do this, then answer "What" is this, followed by "How" to do this. Being specific at the foundational stage (with who, by when, success measures etc.) is fundamental to success in the long run.

QUESTION 4: How often should an individual look to update/change their personal brands?

When contemplating an update/Change of ones personal brand, relevance and appropriateness are paramount in leading the way to this decision.

QUESTION 5: Who do you believe to be the strongest personal brands globally, and what helps them establish this successful and strong brand?

Given by definition of personal branding, I make the argument that the strongest personal brands may not be the most commercialised/ brands. Belief (ego strength, commitment, integration, awareness) is the component that sets the individual apart from others in successfully achieving their personal brand aspirations.

QUESTION 6: As with large corporations, who are seen to have great value due to their brand equity, can personal brands look to have such strong/high brand equity?

Yes.

QUESTION 7: In your opinion, what is the difference between personal branding and self-marketing?

Self-marketing is an activity to build relationship with their target market. Self-marketing may be futile in the absence of personal brand as the product/service and its appeal would be held by the personal brand.

QUESTION 8: Do you believe that the Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model can be modified or adapted to help establish a best practice model that will help formulate a personal brand? If yes, please areas to look into modifying.

Yes.

The richness of the human being (its history, aspirations, fears, dreams, relationships, DNA, etc.) provides the resources for an extraordinary experience of branding. In my opinion, I would consider all parts of the human being and how they relate to the best practice model when creating the amendments for the model.

Branding Expert Personal Interviews Research Analysis

Question 1:

It is clear that the branding experts view personal branding as the creation and building of a brand identity for an individual. The personal brand must include one's vision, ideals, and values, and it is imperative to determine these from the foundation stages to ensure that they are communicated to their intended target audience. The personal brand that is created determines the way in which the individual will communicate their brand to the specific target audience.

Question 2:

A personal brand is seen to be imperative for an individual when they look to communicate their brand to the intended target audience, as they must ensure that what they are communicating highlights the components that makes them influential and the components that are seen to be their key differentiating factors. A personal brand is necessary to ensure that an individual is not misrepresented and the fact that they are an original and authentic brand is communicated clearly in the correct messaging to their intended target audience.

Question 3:

The branding experts identify that it is essential to begin with identifying the core values of the personal brand. The core values are seen as crucial components in brand building as they identify who or what the brand is, and what it stands for. After identifying the brand and its' values, it is then ideal to clearly identify and define the intended target audience. The analysis proves that it can be compared to Sinek's concept of starting with 'Why' and determining what it is that the target audience desires and how you look to create an offering as a solution. In this, one identifies the differentiating factors of the individual to ensure that the individuals' strongest traits are highlighted to the intended target audience.

Question 4:

To be seen as relevant and appropriate to their specific target audience, the branding experts agree that an individual must regularly update their personal brand. This will ensure that they are communicating the most recent and applicable form of their personal brand to their intended target audience. To ensure that the individual is not misrepresented, one must look to always relate to the core values that have helped build the personal brand, as long as they are still relevant and fitting to the individual.

Question 5:

Within identifying a strong personal brand, the brand experts had somewhat conflicting opinions, in that a majority viewed that the most powerful and strongest brands were not those that were seen as the most recognised or commercialised. These experts view the strong personal brands being identified through experiences and interaction with them. Once this interaction has been experienced, it is possible to then identify if the individual has a strong personal brand. The other opinion of the experts views the strong personal brands as those that are commercialised and largely recognised around the world. They state the strong personal brands are those that are regarded highly influential and have a large following due to the way in which they may have 'affected' the world and those around them.

Question 6:

The branding experts believe that personal brands can have, or do already have, as strong a brand equity as large organisations. This is due to an individual's opinion and skills being regarded as so influential that they are paid in monetary value for said skills. This sense of appreciation for their skills results in a return for future use.

Question 7:

The branding experts view personal branding as the identity that is created for an individual, and what the brand looks to offer for their intended target audience. Whereas self-marketing is identified as an individual almost

pushing him/herself on their specific target market to gain a following as a result.

Question 8:

The branding experts state that it is definitely possible to modify the current model to be more relevant to the expected and desired resultant. The model must look to be relative to the times and only look to identify components that are the most appropriate and suitable to what is expected. The model can be modified by eliminating and removing certain components that do not relate to the individual and a personal brand – for example Brand as an Organisation, Country of Origin, and the Functional benefits – and adding new components that are more relatable when looking to create the brand identity for a personal brand – for example more personal and humanistic characteristics can be included, namely aspirations, country of relevance, and in particular what the individual may not be able to achieve to create an honest approach in communications.

Chapter 5

Conclusion:

Due to the research gained and analysed, one can establish the way in which Personal Branding is considered as highly essential and significant when looking to create an identity that is to be communicated for an individual. The Personal Branding field within South Africa is a growing field, as can be seen within the methods and models available to create and craft a highly sustainable Brand Identity for a Personal Brand. Personal Branding is considered essential for the individual as it creates strong and lasting relationships that are continuously kept up-to-date and communicated with and through new interactive and capturing ways. This adds more emphasis on the importance of the way, in which a Personal Brand Identity is created efficiently, as to not be related to or even recognised as Self-Marketing.

One needs to look at the way in which a Personal Brand is created to ensure that, specifically for the intended target audience, the correct attributes and characteristics are being communicated and portrayed.

The semi-structured interviews helped determine, through surveys, that respondents are inclined to the adaptation of the Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model so as to achieve a more precise and 'attractive' identity for the Personal Brand. These respondents viewed that there were components of the current model that had no relation to what was looking to be achieved in creating a Personal Brand. Such statements included the higher focus on personal attributes, skills and values, while others looked at removing certain components from the current model, including organisational attributes, brand metaphors, self expressive benefits, uses, quality, tracking and execution, in that a more simplified and concise model would be created to assist in creating a more precise and sustainable Personal Brand.

The branding experts who were consulted identified it as imperative to firstly identify and then communicate the core values of the individual, and then how they looked to create/offer a solution to the problem of their intended target

audience. They view personal branding as the brand identity creation of an individual, and a person should be certain not to confuse it with Self-marketing, as there are clear differences in either. The branding experts view it as necessary and essential to constantly update and modify ones personal brand without eve faltering away from their core values, unless they are no longer relevant or seen as applicable. They also stated that it is possible and necessary to adapt and modify the current model used to help create a personal brand that was more relevant to the intended target audience and for what the individual is trying to communicate.

There is a clear correlation between data that was analysed from the primary and secondary research gained. The personal branding models that were analysed from the World Wide Web were seen to have similar traits of the core values, distinctiveness and differentiating factors, and consistency in all messaging being the points that one must highlight within the initial stages and to ensure that they are constant throughout. This relates to the primary research that was found to show that the core values and what the individual stands for need to be determined in the initial stages of creating the brand identity to ensure that they are communicated to the target audience. Identifying and then communicating what it is that the individual is offering to the target audience and how it is they are considered different and distinctive in their own original and authentic manner. Once the personal brand has been created, it has been acknowledged that the messaging for the personal brand must always be consistent to what the brand stands for and consistent to all other forms of communication.

The research paper has, through research and data gained, analysed, and interpreted, looked at the predetermined research objectives and crafted an understanding the meets the research objectives. An understanding of what the users of the Aakers Brand Identity Planning Model was gained and understood, through majority of respondents, to be possible and necessary to be adapted for the use of creating personal brands.

Patterns that have arisen, whether creating an identity for corporations or the individual, are evident due to the authors originating from the same 'school of thought'. The idea that a strong Brand Identity is only created ensuring that the brand communicates distinctiveness, establishes relevance to the intended target market, and ensures consistency in all actions are heavily apparent through research, and should be distinctive within a model for Personal Branding. Communicating ones' unique promise and values are essential in establishing a strong Brand Identity and this needs to be the initial step within the process.

Thus, it can be identified that due to the research gained, from the opinion of the respondents that were approached, that the current model utilised, Aakers Brand Identity Planning Model, can be adapted and modified in some particular way to ensure that it is more suitable and relevant to an individual and what they may stand for and look to deliver in offerings to their intended target audience. A future study may be conducted to ensure that the insights gained help craft and modify the current model to ensure a more precise and succinct personal brand is created, that is more relevant and applicable to what is expected when wanting to determine a brand identity for an individual.

Recommendations:

It can be understood that a future study may be conducted to create/modify the Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model, to ensure that the resultant identity is relevant and applicable to that individual and to what is expected when looking to determine the brand identity. To assist in further studies, it is ideal that recommendations are offered to ensure that the insight gained from the study is communicated. The following are the recommendations that can be given due to the data that was analysed and interpreted:

- The core values are essential to crafting a personal brand, and thus should be given a large focus at the beginning stages of creating a personal brand. This will ensure that the most honest and applicable attributes of that individual are highlighted from the beginning.
- A key finding from the branding experts interview identified that it is just as important to identify what it is that an individual 'is not' when communicating their brand. The point in doing this is that your intended target audience gains an understanding of what it is you are offering, but also an honest representation of what you are not offering.
- With altering the Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model, one can look to change the 'Country of Origin' term/factor and look to make use of a 'Country/area of Relevance' as this will identify where that individual may look to have the most focus.
- The branding experts state that a personal brand can be recognised and determined to be 'strong and successful' only after interactions and experiences with the individual. Thus under the credibility, former interactions with different target audience members (clients) can be highlighted to show relevance to the next member of the target audience.
- To assist in creating a more concise and effective personal branding model, one may look to remove the following from the current model - organisational attributes, brand metaphors, self expressive benefits, uses, quality, tracking and execution

Limitations:

As with research papers there are factors that are occasionally not possible to be predetermined, and these factors can be seen to limit what was expected for the research paper. The factors, also known as limitations, can result in the research finding differing somewhat for what was anticipated for the result of the research paper.

The limitations that have been identified, that could have effected the result of the research paper in any way can be identified as:

- The time constraints, of completing the research paper while completing regular studies may have deterred the final amount of research obtained and interpreted.
- The lack of support in gaining primary research within the industry.
- The lack of South African case studies and examples, as Personal Branding is still a 'new' field of expertise.
- The lack of time in gaining primary qualitative research, to ensure a stronger argument was put across.

Activation Proposal:

Brand activation looks at making the intended target audience understand the idea that is being communicated through a seamless interaction with the messaging. An activations look at highlighting the insights that were gained and the communicating them in such a manner that the target audience has a creative and positive interaction to the messaging (Gathered off a website called Brandbase.com. 2015).

Brand activation is necessary to showcase the research insights that were established within the research stages. It is imperative to initiate this process, as a correctly staged activation can create strong bonds with the audience. The brand activation looks to involve the audience and to stimulate their interest that may result in a more involved and sustainable relationship, which can be seen as loyalty. Brand activation is fundamentally about creating and forming a trust relationship between the audience and the 'brand', and an activation that is expressing the research insights correctly can be seen as building strong loyalty with the audience.

Insights are gained through analysing and interpreting research findings, and identifying a set of themes and patterns. An insight is thus identified and is seen as knowledge and information that is deducted through an understanding of one or more particular key research findings.

Through analysing research findings, one is able to identify themes that relate to:

- Establish an identity that is to be communicated at an initial stage
- Ensure key attributes, benefits, differentiators, and value proposition are communicated
- Ensure that the above are delivered upon and communicated and visible throughout any contact with the audience
- Ensure consistency when identifying and communicating the above

Thus, an insight can be communicated that suggests that a Personal Brand is essentially about the way in which the individual has an opportunity to help mould the way in which the audience identifies and views the 'Brand' of an individual. This is due to the fact that the Personal Brand is essentially about communicating how the individual looks to satisfy the 'need' of the audience in the most unique way possible, that is relatable to the audience and the 'brand.'

The insight shows that for an individuals' personal brand to break through the clutter, one must clearly state their values and benefits to the target audience to ensure that the consumer understand the benefits and differentiators at an initial stage. This is the only opportunity an individual gets to assist in the shaping of the brand within the audiences mind. Thus the individual must look to communicate these promises from the earliest of stages and ensure that they are delivered through all forms of communication throughout the client-brand relationship.

The following brand activation looks to target individuals who have to create and build brand identities for personal brands, as these individuals are tasked with making use of models and methods to help establish a Personal Brand through their years as a student. This Personal Brand forms part of the foundation they use to establish a relationship with future employees and clients. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that these individuals are able to identify the correct details when creating a Personal Brand that is to be communicated to their specific audience.

The message that the activation looks to convey can be seen as showing the identified audience how important it is to clearly state the most important of information relating to oneself when expressing ones' value proposition, benefits to the consumers, and their differentiators to help distinguish themselves. Thus, the ultimate idea behind the message is to assist and educate the audience on what is important to communicate about oneself.

The concept behind the brand activation is called “Identify You.” The reasoning that this concept is being used is to determine whether the intended target audience of branding students, who have experience and knowledge in creating and building personal brand, will be able to identify who the personal brand statement belongs to. So as to make the task a bit more challenging, two different individuals were pictured and the audience was tasked with identifying whom the personal brand statement belonged to from the pictures below.

When looking through a personal branding statement, it is essential to ensure that the reader/target audience does not confuse whoever is being communicated in the statement. If this occurs, then it shows that the statement was not created using the correct values and differentiating factors of the personal brand.

The most informative and relevant components of the individual are to be represented and highlighted to be distinctive in the personal branding statement, as these ensure that the components that the intended audience view are the ones they would expect when an interaction occurs between them and the personal brand.

The brand activation was conducted so as to identify if the future potential brand leaders were able to identify whom the individual was that was being communicated and represented in the personal brand statement. The personal brand statements were placed for the students to analyse and attempt to determine who was being represented. The four personal brand statements that were crafted for the students to determine were answered correctly by the students, recognising that when the core values and differentiating components of the individual are highlighted correctly a personal brand statement can easily communicate the intended individual to their target audience.

Personal Brand Statement #1

To the free, open-minded citizens of the world,

I am a liberal and social philanthropist and President of the United States of
America

That looks to create a better world for all

Through open communications, strengthening relationships, and keeping up-to-date with the world around you and I so that a worldly goal can be reached.



Personal Brand Statement #2

To the pro-active, aspirational go-getter's who are looking to enrich their lives
and those around them,

I am the globally conscious media queen, entrepreneur and your best friend

That improves you and your family's well being

Because only I care and am involved in your self improvement journey, to give
you trustworthy advice from myself and my professional friends.



Personal Brand Statement #3

To the inspired, hard-working, and resilient South African,

I am the universally recognised freedom fighter and man of and for the people

That brings hope and optimism to a whole nation

Because I showed that through unity and diversity, all hardships can be
overcome.



Personal Brand Statement #4

To the innovative, inspired and out-of-the-box thinker,

I am a branding entrepreneur, successful businessman, and an enthused public speaker

That creates opportunities for underdogs who challenge the status quo

Because I believe passion, hard work, and dedication are the only ways to really get your hands dirty and succeed in life.



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