

# BRAND

MANAGE YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

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## LINK & LEARN

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This is Chapter 13



## Like it or not, you have a personal brand.

When you roll out of bed in the morning and choose something to wear, you're branding yourself. Your vocabulary, facial expressions, social media posts, and activities all contribute to that brand over time by communicating who you are and what you value. Since opting out isn't possible, be sure to manage your brand and make it an asset for your future career.

Your college years are key in creating a positive professional brand. Sure, you're busy with classes, a social life, and work, but these five steps will help you effectively present yourself:

1. ONLINE PRESENCE

2. STRATEGIC WORK

3. HIRING LANDSCAPE

4. MENTORS

5. NETWORK

## SECTION ONE

# ONLINE PRESENCE

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The quality of your online presence has become a key factor for many hiring managers. Make sure your digital footprint is an asset and not a liability by following these steps to analyze and improve it.

## GOOGLE YOURSELF

Just searching your name from your own laptop on your favorite browser isn't enough. Your laptop knows you too well and will return targeted results. Use a private or incognito window to make sure your search results are similar to what an employer will see when searching your name. Get a friend or mentor to look over the search results and let you know what makes a good impression and what raises a red flag.



## CLEAN IT UP

Get rid of embarrassing photos your friends tagged you in and scan your posts for tone and content. No one expects you to have been perfectly professional at 15, but everything employers see will inevitably contribute to their impression of you. Once you've got a clean profile, keep it that way. Privacy is largely an illusion on the internet. Your future employer may see anything you post. Avoid references to illegal or socially destructive behavior. According to [Jobvite's Social Recruiting Survey](#), even spelling and grammar mistakes will turn off 66% of recruiters.



Check your social media privacy settings and browser filters a couple of times each year. Use daylight savings time as a trigger.



Do you have an evil twin? If your name is common, you might find some embarrassing search results you can't control. If so, distinguish yourself. Try using a middle initial, name, or title on all your professional correspondence and profiles.

## CROWD OUT THE BAD WITH THE GOOD

If you've got dodgy content floating around out there, your best strategy for pushing it down the page in search returns is to crowd it out with good content over time. A single obsession can also leave a bad impression. If the only thing you ever post about is sports or anime, use the next year to round out your online impression by making regular, interesting, and useful posts on a variety of subjects on key social media platforms. Think of your effort as a one-credit-hour class, and just do the work.

## SIX THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SOCIAL RECRUITING



Referrals still reign supreme



LinkedIn is the top social recruiting tool



Social networks play an important role for recruiters



Social profiles can offer insight about a candidate



Some posts are surefire turnoffs



Social recruiting isn't going away

Source: 6 Things You Should Know About Social Recruiting, Hannah Morgan.

# LINK TO YOUR INDUSTRY

A LinkedIn profile is the functional equivalent of your internet resume and will be the first stop for a hiring manager looking to see how you present yourself. Now is the time to develop a great LinkedIn profile so you'll have a strong presence in the business landscape.

## Required



### MAKE YOUR **LinkedIn** PROFILE WORK FOR YOU

1. Create an all-star profile
2. Research and reflect the best profiles from your industry (LinkedIn examples from Marriott School Alumni)
3. Publish regularly on LinkedIn (Here's a student example)
4. Network it up! (How to Network on LinkedIn)
5. Make connecting easy  
Add a LinkedIn badge to your email signature

## SECTION TWO

# STRATEGIC WORK

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Maybe the late-night cleaning crew at the Burger Barn is a lot of fun. It's comfortable, and it reliably earns you enough to pay tuition. But it's time to start selecting jobs, internships, and commitments that put you on the ladder toward your dream job. **Choose your work strategically.**

Scan job boards like [LinkedIn](#) or [Monster](#) for entry-level opportunities associated with your industry. Ask successful people you know how they got their start. Create your own contract work, internship, or part-time job. Join a professional club and demonstrate leadership. Start a small business and attend an industry-related conference.



The main point is to show movement toward your professional goals. For years you've been working hard to be a great student; now shift your priority from achieving the highest possible GPA to gaining practical experience that's attractive to future employers and leads you toward your goals. After you're employed full time, if you're offered a new position, continue to think strategically about how that position will fit into your overall plan. Feel free to suggest a hybrid role if the one you were offered doesn't meet your aims.

Set a goal to work on your own professional career development each week—10 min, 30 minutes, an hour. Your research and networking investment now will pay off later with big dividends.



## ALUMNI ADVICE

**“By writing, you can become a ‘thought leader’ in your chosen field, which opens up numerous opportunities for growth. I published an article about my experiences with business travel on [Medium.com](#) about six months ago. This article received a surprising amount of traction and was read by over 3,000 people in a week.”**

Read Scott's article about Business Travel [here](#) .



Scott Christensen  
Product Designer at PwC's Emerging Tech Group,  
Strategy, BYU Marriott School of Management Class of 2013



## SECTION THREE

# HIRING LANDSCAPE

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Can you name the top employers in your industry? Do you understand the challenges and opportunities they face right now?

By understanding the industry outlook and hiring landscape you'll soon face, you can position yourself to take advantage of opportunities and avoid threats. (And you'll rock your interviews.) Use resources like those on the following page to get the information you'll need.



# Industry Resources

Explore these industry resources.

[Occupational Outlook Handbook](#)

Government projections for job growth and salary by industry

[Glassdoor.com](#)

Reviews of employers and average salaries (take it with a grain of salt)

[Vault.com](#)

Career intelligence, rankings, ratings, and reviews

[Mergent Online](#)

In-depth information on company management, structure, and outlook

[Morningstar.com](#)

Financial analyst reports

[IBIS World](#)

Overviews of industry segments, players, and trends



Activity 13.1

Using the tools above, explore your industry and write down the answers to these questions:

1. What are the largest and fastest growing companies in this industry?
2. What are the most influential associations in this industry and where do they publish? (Trade journals, websites, LinkedIn groups, association newsletters, etc.)
3. What challenges are companies in this industry currently facing?
4. Is the job market for this industry expanding, staying steady, or decreasing?
5. What are common entry-level jobs and average salaries for the part of the country I'd like to work in?

## SECTION FOUR

# MENTORS

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People generally like to help other people. A mentor is someone further along professionally who is willing to share information with you and give practical advice. To a mentor, you offer a fresh perspective, new contacts, and honest admiration. Your main jobs in the relationship are to take responsibility for communication, follow through to make your mentor look good, and avoid being annoying.

The nice thing about finding mentors while you're still in college is that you aren't immediately asking for something that costs that person social capital (like a recommendation for a high-stakes job). At first, you're just asking for advice, and advice is pretty fun to give. Look for mentors by:

- ▶ Showing up
- ▶ Asking questions
- ▶ Following up



## SHOW UP

Attend club or industry events, openings of new businesses, lectures, and conferences. Participate actively and with a smile on your face. During the event, think of a few good questions that show you've been paying attention, then ask your questions of key people. If someone responds warmly and seems to enjoy answering your questions, ask to schedule a 20-minute visit (sometimes called an **informational interview**) in person or on the phone sometime soon.

Hand them a well-designed business card but don't expect them to get in touch with you. That's your job. Meanwhile, your card serves as a tangible reminder that you are professional, prepared, and interesting.



ALUMNI ADVICE

**“I love taking sketch notes. One night after a business club presentation, I showed the speaker—the CEO of a local tech company—my illustrations of her speech. Our short conversation quickly turned into an internship offer.**

**“Talk to presenters after they speak. Keep the conversation short, get contact information, and follow up soon after.”**



Libby Thomas  
Sr. Brand Messaging Specialist at Lucid,  
Marketing, Marriott School of Management, BYU, Class of 2016

## ASK QUESTIONS

During an informational interview, follow up with industry-specific questions and then briefly ask for advice about career strategy. At this point, be sensitive to whether your potential mentor is enjoying the conversation and seems willing to help. If so, great! You've gained a valuable contact. No need to formally ask, "Will you be my mentor?" That can seem pushy. A mentor is more of an honorific than a formal title. Just remember to express gratitude, give sincere and specific compliments, and be very sensitive about not asking for too much time or effort. Keep your first informational interview short. Make a move to leave after about 15 minutes unless your interviewer invites you to stay longer.

## FOLLOW UP

Going forward, keep in touch every few months by sharing quick updates, reposting something your mentor has written, asking a question, or sending congratulations on a promotion or award. (You should be connected on LinkedIn by now, right?) Offer to help with a small project if you can. What are you good at that might help them? If they introduce you to someone, be sure to write an email telling them about the outcome and saying thanks. Don't take any effort for granted.

When you finally get ready to search for your first professional job, you will already have someone to help you navigate the waters, make introductions, and recommend you. Remember that soon you'll be in a position to be a mentor, so pay it forward!



SECTION FIVE

# NETWORK

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You're establishing your brand, now share it. Learning to network is an essential business skill and decidedly NOT just for job searching. Instead, networking is about forming long-lasting relationships of trust and service.

To some degree, you already network. You have networked with some of your friends for years: helping them out, sharing ideas, making memories. Deliberate professional networking pays big dividends. The vast majority of jobs are secured through networks, and personal networks channel the flow of projects, clients, resources, and contracts worldwide.



## GET OFF THE COUCH

Top networkers are out and about and talking to people. In college, think of attending class as a networking event and try sitting next to the students who make interesting comments. When you are at a social event noshing on refreshments, make a goal of introducing yourself to two new people. Join a club. Get your friends to bring along some new people when you go out for a meal. See who looks interesting and start talking.

## PAY ATTENTION TO PEOPLE AND ASK THEM QUESTIONS

Everyone is an expert at something, and everyone has a story. Find points of connection (and points of difference) to keep the conversation lively. Widen your connections by including people from other fields, and make quality introductions. (“Mike, I’d like to introduce you to Sarah, who is graduating with a degree in accounting this semester. Sarah and I go way back, and I think she’s someone you should get to know.”)

## OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

Ask open-ended questions, such as:

How did you get involved in . . . ?  
(or why did you decide to major in . . . ?)

What do you like to do on the weekend?

What changes are you seeing in this industry?

What do you love most about what you do?

Do you have any travel plans this year?

Before leaving the conversation, ask what author Judy Robinette calls the power connector questions:

What other ideas do you have for me?

Who else do you know that I should talk to?

How can I help you?

# CULTIVATE YOUR CONNECTIONS

When you meet interesting people, offer a handshake and your name. Connect soon afterward on LinkedIn. Keep notes on your contact about where you met, some details you learned, and how you might help each other out in the future.

Then make a habit of reaching out to your connections to keep them growing. Think of your network as a garden. Keep the soil rich with new ideas and experiences, plant new friendships, discourage aggressive weeds, fertilize regularly by staying in touch . . . then enjoy the harvest.

Schedule your networking. Set aside a regular half hour every month to send a quick email or message to people you've been impressed by. Give sincere compliments, ask questions, or find out what they're working on.

**Assistant Power** Seek out the influencers. They're not always in the corner office. Pay attention to people who seem to understand power structures and procedures, those who know decision makers and know how resources are allocated. An executive's assistant may be a more valuable contact than the busy executive.



[Networking for Shy People](#)



[How Not to Be Annoying. The Five Minute Favor](#)





# DEVELOP YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH

An important networking tool is your personal “elevator pitch”, a succinct and persuasive description of yourself you can deliver flawlessly. Don’t procrastinate doing this. When you find yourself riding in an elevator with a great contact, you’ll be glad you can smoothly roll it out.



Prepare a personal “elevator pitch” using these and other resources you find:

Activity 13.2

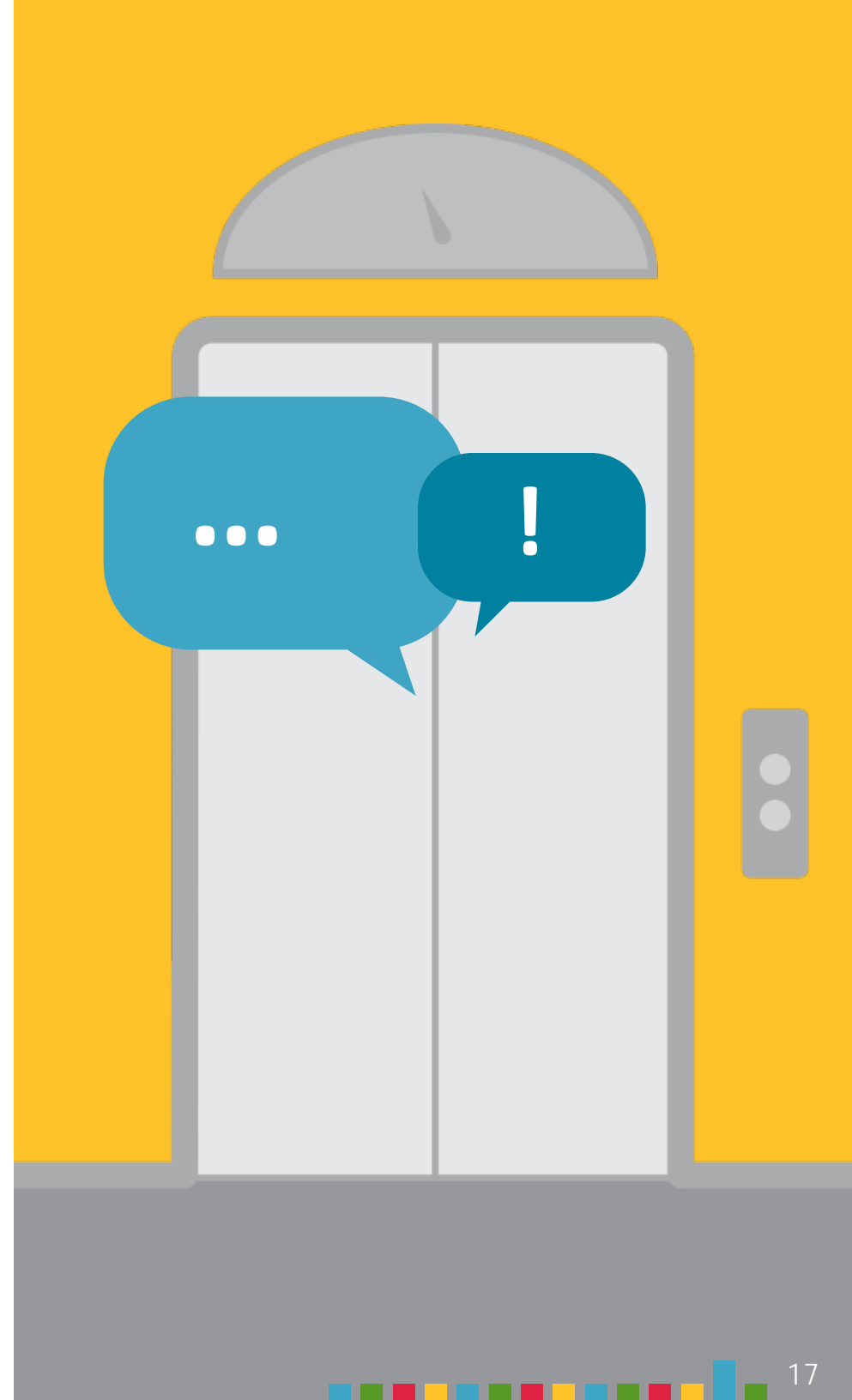
[Crafting an Elevator Pitch](#)

[Examples of Elevator Pitches](#)

Be sure to spend time writing down, structuring, and practicing your pitch, but don’t memorize it word for word. Sounding like a human, not a robot, is essential for the success of your pitch.

Your pitch should:

- ▶ Last 30 seconds or less
- ▶ Include your name
- ▶ Tell what you do well, or what differentiates you
- ▶ Describe what you’d like to do



# IN CONCLUSION

These are prime years to create a positive professional brand. Pay attention to your online presence, look around for fulfilling (and strategic) work, learn more about the hiring landscape you'll be landing in, cultivate mentors, and network at your classes and events.

By doing these things now, you'll avoid a desperate struggle to re-brand yourself after college when you are shopping for your first real job. You may even catch the attention of some great new friends!



# LEARN MORE

Suggestions?  
Click **HERE**



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