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# **PERSONAL BRANDING IN THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY**

**THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CORPORATE  
AND EMPLOYEE BRANDS**

Wioleta Kucharska



ROUTLEDGE



# Personal Branding in the Knowledge Economy

*Personal Branding in the Knowledge Economy: The Interrelationship between Corporate and Employee Brands* aims to contribute to the academic debate about the marketization of individuals' knowledge, creativity, and personal images, alongside a growing interest in the whole area of branding in the networked economy based on knowledge.

Personal branding and personal knowledge are critical assets of knowledge workers and key drivers of their development and innovative performance. Both strongly influence the individual success of knowledge workers in the networked and knowledge-driven economy. Personal brands are dynamically shifting from the sidelines to the center of the modern economy and the authenticity of the brands of personal ingredients for their ability to create value. They are one of the three key pillars of value creation in the social media environment, and therefore significantly contribute to digital business models.

The book will be of interest to researchers, academics, professionals, and students in the fields of organizational branding, marketing, management, and communications.

**Wioleta Kucharska** is an Associate Professor in the Management Department, Faculty of Management and Economics at the Gdańsk University of Technology (Fahrenheit Union of Universities), Gdańsk, Poland. Along with her scientific passion and achievements and 12 years of experience in branding, this book actively refers to personal branding practice on a solid theoretical basis.



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# Personal Branding in the Knowledge Economy

The Interrelationship between  
Corporate and Employee Brands

**Wioleta Kucharska**



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# Glossary

<i>Construct</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Source</i>
Anthropomorphism	Anthropomorphism is the attribution of unique human characteristics and features to nonhuman entities.	Epley et al. (2007)
Authentic employee endorsement (organic employee endorsement)	Organic employee endorsement is an effect of employee brand commitment, and it is an act when an employee promotes employer brand not only at work but generally in their personal networks (professional or social) voluntarily.	Author's own definition
Authentic shared value creation essence – human long-run advantage oriented	The shared value creation essence is finding a shared meaning, and this meaning should be defined in the societal context in a human long-run advantage perspective. Today, it must be done very carefully and responsibly as the earth and human life are in danger because of the earlier irresponsible, short seeing, profit-oriented actions. Values, such as financial, social, environmental, utilitarian, spiritual, etc., can be associated some goodwill effort co-defined at, e.g., supra-values level.	Author's own definition
Authenticity	Authenticity is often refer to characteristics such as genuineness, sincerity, and honesty.	Napoli et al. (2016)
Authenticity in acting (driver, attribute)	Perceived coherence of communication, image, and behaviors in any context (professional and social). It can be constant or circumstantial.	Author's own definition
Authenticity of knowledge worker's personal brand	The knowledge worker's authentic brand is the workmates' perception that the brand owner reflects the unity of deeds, words, external appearance, and behaviors according to their true self in any context (professional and social).	Author's own definition



<i>Construct</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Source</i>
Authenticity of personal brand (existing association in mind)	The authenticity of a personal brand is the lasting perception that the brand owner reflects genuineness, sincerity, and honesty; and the unity of deeds, words, appearance, and behaviors according to their true self in any context (professional and social).	Author's own definition
Authenticity of the celebrity brand (existing association in mind)	The celebrity's authenticity is the perception that a celebrity behaves according to his or her true self.	Moulard et al. (2015, p. 175)
Brand	Brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or combination of them intended to identify goods or services of one seller or group of sellers to differentiate them from competitors.	Kotler and Keller (2006)
Brand authenticity	Brand authenticity must appear non-commercialized.	Beverland (2005)
Brand citizenship behaviors	Brand citizenship behaviors mainly refers to employee behaviors that enhance the delivery of brand promise by including external as well as intra-organizational actions.	Burmann and Zeplin (2005)
Brand equity	Brand equity is a set of consumers impressions, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors associated with the particular brand name, design, symbol, sound, or any other feature that identifies goods or service offered by one seller as distinct from those of other sellers. Brand equity as a set of impressions and beliefs about brand is a very specific company's intangible asset. Namely, it is created and owned by company as protected by law name, term, sign, symbol, design, or combination of them, but stored in consumers' minds as a set of beliefs, attitudes, and impressions resulting from the all brand experiences managed by company.	Author's own definition
Brand image	Brand image is based on the consumer's perceptions about a brand, held in his/her memory as a network of associations, which can be transformed into attributes, benefits, and attitudes.	Keller (1993)



<i>Construct</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Source</i>
Brand knowledge	Consumer brand knowledge can be defined in terms of the personal meaning about a brand stored in consumer memory, that is, all descriptive and evaluative brand-related information.	Keller (2003)
Brand performance	Brand performance is a relative measure of brand success (e.g., market-oriented metrics, e.g. market shares; revenue oriented-metrics, e.g., ROI or consumer-based oriented metrics, e.g., equity).	Doyle (2000), Ehrenberg et al. (2004)
Brand reputation	Reputation is valuable company's asset. Reputation is an aggregate composite of all previous transactions over the life of the entity, a historical notion, and requires consistency of an entity's actions over a prolonged time for its formation.	Milewicz and Herbig (1994)
Brand strategy	It is a long perspective, timely determined brand development plan with the formulated market aims and defined methods, tools, and resources (human, financial, and other) needed for its efficient implementation.	Author's own definition
Brand value	Objective financial representation of brand asset, according to the adopted research method, the essence of creating, owning and investing in the brand equity in order to generate revenue. Brand value is a result of brand strategy. Therefore, it is at the same time the key performance indicator (KPI) of entire brand performance.	Author's own definition
Branding	An act of creating a brand.	Moore and Reid (2008)
Celebrity endorsement	An agreement between an individual who enjoys public recognition (a celebrity) and an entity (e.g., a brand) to use the celebrity for the purpose of promoting the entity.	Bergkvist et al. (2016, p. 644)
Commitment to society	Employee commitment to society reflects the bond with the society as the community of a human value and to others specific for this society values.	Author's own definition
Consumer brand commitment	Brand commitment refers to the enduring desire to maintain a relationship with the brand. It can be defined as a psychological or emotional attachment	Fatma et al. (2021)



<i>Construct</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Source</i>
Consumer personality	toward the brand in which consumers feel enchanted with the brand.	Cheney (1991)
	Corporate personality as a component of corporate identity has been considered instrumental to the success of the organization.	
	Consumer personality as part of consumer attributes influences the consumer's evaluation of brands.	
Corporate brand	Consumers are likely to prefer brands and products in line with their own personality traits.	Govers and Schoormans (2005)
	The conscious decision by senior management to identify and promote the attributes of the organization's identity in the form of a clearly defined branding proposition.	Balmer and Gray (2003)
	Corporate brands are vehicles of meaning that emerge from social interaction between the company and its environment.	Melewar et al. (2012, p. 601)
	A corporate brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or combination of them intended to identify the particular organization and differentiate it from others.	Author's own definition
Corporate brand authenticity	Brand authenticity can be influenced by brand heritage, brand nostalgia, brand commercialization, brand clarity, brand's social commitment, brand legitimacy, actual self-congruence, and employee's passion.	Fritz et al. (2017)
Corporate brand identity	The entire corporate brand philosophy and its culture meaningful informs the organization's thoughts, actions, and behaviors about the corporate brand identity.	Balmer and Podnar (2021)
Corporate brand image	This – as the sum of associations that the firms' constituents have in their memory linked to the company or corporation – is especially important when the corporate brand plays a prominent role in the brand strategy adopted by the firm.	Brexendorf and Keller (2017)
	Corporate brand image shapes a person's attitudes and behavior to a corporate brand.	Abrott and Kleyn (2012)
Corporate brand innovativeness	The key indicator of the corporation market performance.	Author's own definition



<i>Construct</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Source</i>
	Innovativeness can be a key determinant for the corporate differentiation and marketplace success.	Wood and Hoeffler (2013)
Corporate brand performance	Final outcomes delivered by corporate brand to multiple stakeholders.	Kucharska (2019)
Corporate brand reputation	A stakeholder's overall evaluation of an organization over time. A collective representation of corporates brand's past actions and results that describes the brand's ability to deliver valued outcomes to multiple stakeholders.	Gotsi and Wilson (2001) Fombrung and Rindova (1996)
Corporate branding	Effective corporate branding requires consistent messages about a brand's identity and uniform delivery to create a favorable brand reputation across all stakeholder groups. It is therefore essential that managers identify mechanisms for surfacing diverse perceptions to resolve inconsistencies.	Harris and de Chernantony (2001)
Corporate citizenship behavior	Companies participation in society in various forms ranging from indirect participation as pressure groups to direct participation in order to resolve communitarian problems.	Moon et al. (2005)
Corporate marketing	Corporate marketing philosophy focuses on organizations, corporate-level constructs, corporate social responsibility (CSR)/ ethics, omni-temporality and company-customer and key stakeholder relationships.	Balmer (2011)
Corporate social responsibility (CSR)	Actions that appear to further some social good, beyond the interests of the company and that which is required by law. Set of economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic obligations, which firms hold in respect to society.	McWilliams and Siegel (2001, p. 117) Carroll (1999)
Corporation of the future	Corporation is a nexus of trustworthy relationships revolving around purpose.	Davis (2021)
CSR toward employees	Company's actions ensuring the well-being and support of its employees, including career opportunities, organizational justice, family-friendly policies, safety, job security, and union relations.	Turker (2009)
Decent work	The sum of people's "aspirations for opportunity and income; rights, voice and recognition; family stability and	International Labour



<i>Construct</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Source</i>
	personal development; and fairness and gender equality.”	Organization (1999)
	Decent work is the sum of people’s aspirations in their working lives.	Pereira et al. (2019)
	Decent work leads to the satisfaction of three types of human needs: survival, social connection, and self-determination. These in turn predict fulfillment at work and general well-being.	Masdonati et al. (2019)
Decent life	The concept of decent life is an extension of the decent work concept that is then the sum of people’s aspirations in their entire lives – professional, social and environmental. Thanks to shared values, decent life can be also considered at the communal and social levels.	Author’s own definition
Earth citizenship behaviors	Earth citizenship behaviors refer to human behaviors that enhance the responsibility for the earth’s environmental conditions.	Author’s own definition
Earth citizenship identity	Earth citizenship identity is the feeling to be a part of the entire life on the earth, and it is reflected in the solidarity feeling with all earth inhabitants.	Author’s own definition
Employee brand	Employee brand is the image presented to an organization’s customers and other stakeholders through its employees.	Mangold and Miles (2007)
Employee brand commitment	Employee brand commitment is considered as the primary driver which aligns the behavior of employees with approved brand behaviors.	Ravens (2014)
	Employee brand commitment reflects the bond with the organization as a place of work.	Meyer and Herscovitch (2001)
Employee brand performance	Employee brand performance reflects positive external communication about the brand as well as a desire to remain an employee of the brand and exhibit discretionary brand consistent behavior.	King et al. (2012)
Employee-employer co-branding	Employee-employer co-branding essence is if employee personal brand and employer brand endorse one another.	Author’s own definition
Employer branding	Employer branding describes the process of building an identifiable and unique employer identity or, more specifically, ‘the promotion of a unique and attractive	Theurer et al. (2018)



<i>Construct</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Source</i>
	image' as an employer among current employee (internal) and potential employee (external).	
Human/personal brand	A well-known persona who is the subject of marketing communications effort. The warmth and competence perceptions are the universal foundation for all human behavior and relationships. Human brands apply them to all business relationships. A brand called YOU. The personal brand is about recognizing who you are and what you do best, and communicating that to clients.	Thomson (2006, p. 104) Malone and Fiske (2013) Peters (1997) Hines (2004, p. 60)
	A personal brand is an individual, intangible asset defined as a name of a real person (or nickname) combined with all the notions intended to identify and differentiate this person from others thanks to its authenticity.	Author's own definition
Identification	Identification is a social process of influence whereby one individual adopts particular values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors reflected by another individual or group.	Kelman (1961)
Knowledge worker	The knowledge economy's main base are employees engaged in knowledge-intensive tasks in their daily work. Knowledge-intensive tasks require knowledge usage and resist standardization. Knowledge workers perform "non-routine" work demanding complex problems solving that requires a combination of convergent and divergent thinking. "Knowledge worker" status concerns positions where professional knowledge is a tool and results from employee work (input and the output of their working processes). They analyze and apply existing knowledge at work (explicit) as well as create new knowledge (tacit) based on and their personal abilities as, e.g., higher level intelligence, creativity, and smooth social interactions to create value.	Reinhardt et al. (2011) Author's own definition
Network of value	Network of value is a current form and infrastructure for any value co-definition,	Author's own definition



<i>Construct</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Source</i>
Organic endorsement	co-creation, sharing, and co-consumption. Organic endorsement is an effect of brand commitment, and it is an act when a consumer promotes a particular brand in their personal networks (professional or social) voluntarily.	Author's own definition
Persona	Persona is a strong public image that inspires other to follow it.	Author's own definition
Personal brand awareness	Personal brand awareness reflects the fact that we are known – people know we exist.	Author's own definition
Personal brand credibility	Personal brand credibility is a potent personal brand association resulting from professional skills and the entire competencies perception and reflects all the experience gathered by others from professional interactions and relationships with the particular personal brand as well as from cultural stereotypes that shape the credibility perception as, e.g., education level, professional experience, etc. In addition, credibility is reflected by such professional factors as overall capabilities, intelligence, and efficiency.	Author's own definition
Personal brand equity	Attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of others (target and reference groups) toward a particular personal brand. Personal brand equity is a set of impressions, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors tied with the person that make him or her differentiated from others thanks to perceived authenticity. It is a personal intangible asset resulted from all experiences of others with this brand managed by the person.	Author's own definition
Personal brand image	Personal brand image bases on the other individual's perceptions about a particular personal brand, created in their minds thanks to the entire personal brand knowledge gained.	Author's own definition
Personal brand knowledge	Personal brand knowledge is the stored meaning about a particular personal brand in other people memory. It can be compared to the 3D-mind picture composed of such dimensions as: the way other see us (image); the way other experience us (interact with us	Author's own definition





<i>Construct</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Source</i>
	professionally or socially), and the way other feel about us having in regard to all of the above as a source, as well as all conscious and unconscious beliefs and attitudes toward us resulted from emotions, third parties opinions about us and from imaginations and expectations (justified or not).	
Personal brand love	Personal brand love is a passionate and emotional bond that reflects the highest level of commitment that characterizes charismatic leadership.	Author's own definition
Personal brand loyalty	Personal brand loyalty is a form of attachment that may have an attitudinal form as commitment, and advocacy, whereas behavioral loyalty concerns such forms of direct support as, e.g., patronage, mentoring, recommendations, and credentials.	Author's own definition
Personal brand performance	Personal brand performance is a relative measure of personal brand achievements that should be always assessed in the relation to defined personal aims. Personal brand performance strictly depends on the personal context.	Author's own definition
Personal brand position in the professional value network	It is the particular professional network actor's power of influence the value definition, co-creation, sharing, consumption, and monetization. Therefore, the locations in the network (professional and social) tied with the personal brand reputation are the key personal branding assets.	Author's own definition
Personal brand position in the social value network	It is the particular social network actor's power to influence the value definition, co-creation, sharing, and consumption. Therefore, the locations in the network (professional and social) tied with the personal brand reputation are the key personal branding assets.	Author's own definition
Personal brand reputation	Personal brand reputation is a one of the key personal brand assets; it is an effect of the overall evaluation of all previous experiences of others with this personal brand over time. Reputation is simply a lasting effect of the created and gained over time associations coming from the entire brand knowledge. It is a result of a	Author's own definition



<i>Construct</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Source</i>
Personal brand trust	<p>particular person's past actions that describe the personal brand's ability to deliver valued outcomes to multiple stakeholders.</p> <p>Personal brand trust is a direct effect of being perceived as a trustworthy person. It is directly influenced by the key of personal brand associations: authenticity, warmth, and credibility.</p>	Author's own definition
Personal brand value	<p>Since the essence of personal branding is a set of professional and social skills, then its value can be perceived by financial prism (salary) and social, spiritual prism (social bonds) and the position in social networks (real and virtual).</p>	Author's own definition
Personal brand warmth	<p>Personal brand warmth is a very powerful personal brand associations resulted from social skills and the entire personality perception and reflects all the experience gathered by others from social-interactions and relationships with the particular personal brand as well as from cultural stereotypes. Warmth is reflected by such social factors as perceived humaneness, friendliness, cordiality, kindness, goodwill.</p>	Author's own definition
Personal branding	<p>Managing an extended self.</p> <p>Planned process in which people make efforts to market themselves.</p> <p>The deployment of individuals' identity narratives for career and employment purposes.</p> <p>Personal branding is a natural process of labor force marketization focused on a planned process including aims, methods, tools, and resources aimed to combine a name of a real person with all the notions intended to identify and differentiate this person from others, thanks to its authentication.</p>	<p>Belk (2013)</p> <p>Khedher (2014)</p> <p>Brooks and Anumudu (2016)</p> <p>Author's own definition</p>
Personal branding strategy	<p>It is a long-perspective, timely determined personal brand development plan with the formulated professional and social life aims and defined methods, tools, and resources needed for its efficient implementation. Personal brand strategy must be rooted in deep self-awareness to be successful.</p>	Author's own definition



<i>Construct</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Source</i>
Personalized shared value	Personalized shared value is a dedicated value to someone (to receiver) that for being powerful – must be shared with the value giver – it is a value above the standard that brings benefits to both parties – to the giver and to the receiver. Personalized shared value is dedicated value delivered without sacrificing own values. It is an essence of the effective personal branding creation that is about caring about others by caring about ourselves.	Author's own definition
Personalized value	Personalized value is the value dedicated and offered by the giver above the standard, this personalized value added is identified thanks to taking the advantage of the receiver perception of the value as well as from the situational context (situational context may determine the perception of value).	Author's own definition
Personalized value delivery (PVD) technique	Technique of intentional, planned delivery of personalized value from giver to the receiver in aim to gain a specific perception of the own personality and to achieve own, personal aims.	Author's own definition
Professional network of value	Network of value is a current form and infrastructure for professional value co-definition, co-creation, sharing, consumption, and monetization.	Author's definition
Self-authenticity	A moral ideal of modernity adds authenticity that implies that the self is independent and original.	Taylor (1991)
Self-vision	The particular person's vision of self with the included factor of self-development.	Author's own definition
Setting up boundaries (SUB) technique	Technique of own aims security thanks to assertiveness.	Author's own definition
Shared value	Shared value creation is investing into a long-term corporate competitive advantage by achieving social and environmental goals.	Porter and Kramer (2011)
Sharing economy	A system in which assets or services are shared between private individuals, either free or for a fee, typically through the Internet.	Stokes (2017)
Social network of value	Network of value is a current form and infrastructure for social value co-definition, co-creation, sharing, and co-consumption.	Author's own definition



<i>Construct</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Source</i>
Societal corporate branding	Societal corporate branding refers to the humanistic approach of a company to use the corporate brand as an enabler of social discourses and actions through which the company carries out quasi-governmental service in favor of society embedding it in their value proposition.	Biraghi et al. (2017)
Society citizenship behaviors	Society citizenship behaviors refer to communities' members' behaviors that enhance the responsibility for the society.	Author's own definition
Society citizenship identity	Society citizenship identity is the identification with the community and refers to feeling to be a part of the community.	Author's own definition
Strong brand	A strong brand is a brand that enables to create high brand equity.	Kay (2005)
Strong personal brand	Personal brand that has a big social (visible in sociability) or professional impact (visible in employability) or both (superb powerful personal brand).	Author's own definition
The authentic personal branding essence	An authentic personal branding essence is about sharing value and caring about others by caring about ourselves, is not about satisfying all around – it is about being embedded into the proper network of value and taking care about those who are important to us – professionally or socially. Proper network of value for us is always this one, where values we care the most are smoothly shared among all network actors. That is why self-definition is so crucial for personal branding.	Author's own definition





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# Introduction

Personal branding in the new-networked reality became a new in-demand skill for all professionals today. Regarding the idea of “prosumerism” by Alvin Toffler (1981), personal brands are predominantly a tool for the self-presentation in the networked reality. To be well known and be known for the best, personal branding activity helps to achieve success in the networked business environment. Personal branding bases on good personal content and good relationships. Specifically, personal relationships and good reputation in the network economy’s reality combined with unique personality and skills help everyone move up to the professional career ladder and achieve equally important social aims.

Moreover, in the network economy, every person has a personal brand, and, in particular, the user of the company network, professional network, or social network, and any network – virtual or real, regardless of whether he or she wants it or not, and whether he or she is aware of branding processes. Why? Because objectively, whether we want it or not, people around us brand us “somehow.” Sometimes we like it. Sometimes we do not. So, one option is to agree passively with this. The other option is to give “some reasons, inspirations, easy to notice characteristics” to be branded accordingly to how we want to be recognized. For example, knowledge workers undoubtedly want to be branded as wise, intelligent, clever, capable, efficient, effective, creative, innovative, and so on. This image, to be self-evident, should be intensively blended with both professional and social skills desired today to help create relations. These desired social skills are defined by the culture of the national and local societies, the company culture, and subculture of subsidiary, division, and team or group. Simplifying, the typical knowledge worker wants to be perceived as “wise” by the prism of professional skills and “cool” by the prism of social skills. Company is the people – that is why both these skills, professional and social, are equal.

To simplify, the personal branding process essence is that we care about our influence on others and their attitudes toward us. So, we plan our actions with the empathy and imagination regarding its potential influence effects on our professional and social image. Relations are mirrors and



## 2 Introduction

carriers of personal image. “How they see you, that’s how they perceive you” – the old statement says. Since today, in the networked world, the web of ties determines we are seen much more intensively: at work, at home, between friends, workmates, neighbors, family in the reality and in the virtuality – the “life balance” today concerns “reality–virtuality” presence. So, next to “work–life balance,” we have “real–virtual life balance” to keep up. Therefore, we should deliver strong reasons to be branded according to our authentic values, aims, and the entire self-vision, keeping in mind all of our spots of presence.

Moreover, personal branding can be considered much more profound than how people brand us and how it affects us, namely, if we care about others’ opinions only to benefit from them. I can admit, this way of thinking about personal branding can make it seem to be nothing like painstaking manipulation. But, if we consider it much more profound, namely, if we focus more on the fact that we all are embedded in networks (professional, social, and environmental) and that we all depend on one another anyway – socially, professionally, environmentally – then we can start thinking about the personal brand that it is a simple effect of sensitivity and carefulness about others. Also, it remains that we all depend on one another in the networked world, so we should care about how others experience us just to make our daily experiences and the entire life composed of such small daily experiences better. We are not alone – we live in thinly embedded and overlapping networks. This way of thinking about ourselves and others around us brings sense to personal branding efforts. So simplifying, by being, for example, kind, professional, human, and environment-friendly, you contribute to a cooperative, friendly, and safe life. So, authentic and consistent carefulness about others – socially, professionally, and environmentally – is a personal branding fundamental and basic tool today.

Authenticity is a key driver of the networked economy today. In the current era of fake news, illusions, manipulations, and other artificial attributes of virtuality and reality, authenticity is a merit that people highly appreciate – the authenticity of personal brands increases their ability to create value, because only authentic branding has a chance to be self-evident.

This book aims to deliver a piece of scientific evidence that personal branding through authenticity is the most effective way to create a personal brand of knowledge workers that supports the achievement of all their aims concerning professional and social life. At first glance, personal branding through authenticity might seem a bit challenging, but such an approach brings a payoff in the long run, especially if considered in a broader context of society, environment, and interrelationship between corporate and employee brands. Specifically, for this book – knowledge workers brands.



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