

7 Tips to Showcase the Brand of You

Whether through an active search or in casual conversation, employment opportunities can present themselves at any time. Interviews aren't necessarily reserved for scheduled times and places. Are you ready to take advantage of your moment? Here are seven tips to help you showcase the brand of YOU.

1. Create an elevator pitch

An elevator pitch is a short summary that provides a concise overview of who you are, your unique qualities and the value you can provide to a role or organization. Think of your elevator pitch as a short, pre-scripted speech in which you “sell” yourself to others.

Here are the piece of information your elevator pitch should include:

- Who are you?
- What are you good at (or what do you do)?
- What is your specific value contribution (or proposal)?
- What are you looking for?

2. Practice, practice, practice

You know the feeling you get when you ask a question and you get the sense that someone is giving you a rehearsed, memorized response? Doesn't feel genuine, right? When you deliver your elevator pitch, it should sound like it's part of the natural course of conversation. Best way to ensure that: practice. And lots of it.

3. Use that elevator pitch when networking

We've all heard the saying that sometimes it's not *what* you know, but rather *who* you know that matters. It's a simple fact of life that **networking** is one of the best ways to improve your career. So, when you're given the simple request, “tell me about yourself,” or the casual “what do you do for a living,” that's when that elevator pitch you've created and have been practicing may come in handy.

4. Know where and when to network

Networking opportunities can occur every single day, in both professional and social settings. Any time you have access to other people is an opportunity to network – whether it's at a formal networking event, your kid's sporting activities, where you volunteer, or anywhere else! You never know what kind of opportunities will present themselves when you connect with others.

5. Choose a resume format

Once the networking has paid off, now it's time for the official business meeting. Do you need to dust off your resume? How long has it been? And what type are you using to showcase the brand of YOU?

You have all sorts of options to explain your experience, strengths and accomplishments. Start with the type of resume format that works best for you - the three most popular formats are: chronological, functional and combination. The most frequently used format is chronological since it is easy to read and is most preferred by employers. However, depending on your experience you may benefit more from a different format, so explore all three options prior to selecting one.

Content is key to your resume since its purpose is to communicate the value you can bring to an organization. Knowing that the average person looks at a resume for 30 seconds or less, be strategic about what you include, ensuring that it is relevant and targeted. This isn't your authorized biography and more doesn't always mean better.

6. Make your resume visually appealing

Once you've decided on format and added in some content, consider some universal best practices to make the information easy to follow. Making your resume visually appealing not only lets the potential employer know what you have to offer, it can also say a lot about how you prioritize your skills, how you organize data, and maybe even a little bit about your personality.

For example, the font you choose can be an indication of your professional nature. Script-y with embellishments? Traditional? Modern block? Whatever you choose, make sure you choose the same for your cover letter so your messaging is consistent.

Using bullet points is a great way to clearly and concisely state your skills and accomplishments without overwhelming the reader, while also highlighting your written communication skills. Remember, this isn't your authorized biography, more isn't always better.

And just like you would in a conversation, allow your potential employer to visually take a breath to absorb the information. You can do that by making sure there's enough white space.

7. Know who you are talking to

Your elevator pitch, conversations during networking, and your resume provides a lot of information about you. But the job process is a two-way street – what do you know about your potential employer? Is this a place you would like to work? Why or why not?

Prior to attending an interview, job fair or any other event that will potentially have you interacting with employers, part of your preparation needs to include research due diligence. Trust us; you'll be glad you did.