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Developing Your Brand as a SQL Professional
Beth Goehring & Tyler Boggess

"Branding, by its very Nature, is not optional. If you do not position yourself in people's minds, they will do it for you."

– Peter Drucker

Introduction

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- ➢ Senior Technical Recruiter
- ➢ Focus on placing Database Developers, DBAs and SQL BI Developers
- ➢ Community Involvement: Iowa SQL Server User Group, Drake University Young Alumni Board

Beth Goehring
- ➢ Senior Technical Recruiter
- ➢ Focus on placing Program Managers, Project Managers, and Business Analysts
- ➢ Community Involvement: IIBA

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Agenda

Remember to share your stories, suggestions, and if you've been in a hiring capacity, any traits you'd recommend for someone's brand!

➢ What is Branding?

➢ Why should we care about Branding?

➢ 4 Steps in 'Brand Development'

➢ Admirable Traits to adopt into your 'Brand'

➢ Additional Suggestions

➢ Top Recommendations on Branding

➢ Q&A and Additional Resource/s

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Discussion

1. What does the term "branding" mean to you?

2. Why is putting time and effort into developing a "Professional Brand" important?

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Discussion: What's a 'Brand?'

➢ What is a brand?

  ➢ A brand: describes a unique feature/s, separates you from the competition and reinforces strength/s.

  ➢ Branding is a marketing technique that creates an intentional image and promises an experience.

  ➢ One Branding Expert said *"Your brand operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year. Branding is like perfume; it lingers as you leave the room."*

Many Marketing experts preach that your 'Brand Identity' is the main reason a potential competitor will pick you instead of your competition.

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The Importance of Intentional Branding

Why is it important to put time and effort into determining the brand you want, and taking action to achieve that brand?

1. Your 'Brand' is one of your top differentiators. A strong Brand will make you a desirable candidate to employers.

2. Potential hiring Managers, HR Departments, Recruiters and prospective Clients are researching you

3. Social Media Reports are growing in popularity

4. Having a 'Brand' you're striving to achieve helps guide you in Professional Development & how you conduct yourself

5. Determining, Achieving and Maintaining your 'Desired Brand' is satisfying and rewarding

4 Steps in Developing your Brand

► Step 1: Brand Identification

► Step 2: Brand Determination

► Step 3: Brand Development / Communication

► Step 4: Brand Maintenance

TIP: Always be aware of the Brand you're exhibiting 'in-person' AND 'Online!'

Step 1: Brand Identification

The first step is getting a gauge of what your 'Perceived Brand' is.

▶ Determine what qualities/traits people associate you with, how people perceive you, strengths and/or areas of improvement.

How can you determine your 'Perceived Brand?'

▶ Online:
  • Search Engines (i.e. Google)
  • LinkedIn, Twitter or other Social Media platforms
  • Technical Boards/Communities (i.e. Stack Overflow)
▶ In-Person:
  • Asking peers, friends, and others in your network
  • Conducting a 360 Review
  • Keeping mental notes of feedback you receive
  • Requesting a Performance Review / Feedback

360-degree feedback (multi-rater feedback or multi-source feedback): feedback captured from all members of your work circle (i.e. managers, peers, customers, subordinates, and/or other stakeholders)

Step 2: Brand Determination

► Put some thought into how you want to be perceived. Focus on at least 2-3 major qualities you want to incorporate into your Brand.

► Take time to write down your "Desired Brand." What do you want to be known for? How do you want to be perceived (online and in-person)?

- *EX. 'Desired Brand:' technically competent; solution-oriented; on top of technical trends; resourceful; business savvy; good customer interfacing skills*

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Discussion

► What traits do Hiring Managers value in applicants and employees? What qualities set a candidate (especially SQL Server professionals) apart?

Desired Traits/Qualities

➢ Passion! Technology is more than a job, it's a hobby / interest.

➢ Good client engagement/interfacing

➢ Focused on results/outcomes

➢ On top of technology trends

➢ Clear and concise communication and the ability to "communicate up" within an organization

➢ Not just HOW, but WHY technologies, controls, approaches, etc… are taken or used

Desired Traits/Qualities *(continued)*

➢ Drive / Initiative / Proactive

➢ Professionalism

➢ Team Oriented

➢ Solution Oriented

➢ Community Involvement (primarily technical community)

➢ Concerned with Professional Development (Certifications, Advanced Education, etc...)

Step 3: Brand Development/Communication

Primary ways to communicate your brand:

► During interactions

► Personal Website and/or Blog

► Speaking Opportunities

► Resume and Online Profiles

► Social Media (i.e. Twitter)

► Technical Community Involvement (LinkedIn Groups, MeetUp.com, User Groups, Conferences, etc...)

► Writing Articles and/or contributing to Online Discussion Boards (Stack Overflow, SQL Server Central, MSSQLTips.com, etc...)

► Consistent Action

Question: Are there any additional channels you'd recommend?

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Step 4: Brand Maintenance

➢ Keep a pulse on your 'Online Brand/Reputation' so you know what other people are seeing if they're looking you up online

➢ Take action to ensure your Brand is maintained over time
  - Tweet/Re-tweet regularly
  - Attend training webinars (via mssqltips.com or other channels)
  - Update any online profiles (i.e. LinkedIn) when updating resume
  - Contribute periodically to technical online groups
  - Consistently attend technical meetings / events
  - Speak at a User Group meeting, SQL Saturday event, etc…
  - Capture up-to-date references / recommendations real-time
  - Add skills to LI profile to receive 'Endorsements'

Additional Recommendations

➢ Consider taking measures to increase and positively affect your 'Online/Social Relevancy'

➢ Remember that employers and Recruiters use LinkedIn, Twitter, Google, and other online sites as a Reference Check on prospective candidates

➢ Do some QA on your profiles to ensure you're communicating the Brand you want people to see:

  ► Do I look credible? Am I effectively showing my credibility?

  ► Am I demonstrating my skills, leadership qualities, community involvement, technical competencies, and/or technical interests?

  ► Am I reflecting what I want people to know about me?

  ► Have I built it out enough?

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Summary / Top Recommendations

➢ If you haven't already, put some thought into determining your 'Desired Professional Brand.' You can also use this as your 30 second 'Elevator Pitch.'

➢ Consider your Brand to be a way to distinguish yourself.

➢ For the 2-3+ qualities you want as part of your Brand, think about ways you can achieve, communicate and maintain them, so your 'Desired Brand' becomes your 'Perceived Brand.'

➢ Keep a pulse on your 'Online Brand' and engage in 'Online Reputation Management.'

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Thank You!

- Questions?

- Comments, Reactions or Additional Suggestions

- Add'l Resource:
  - Branding Summary Sheet

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  Feel free to connect with us on LinkedIn!

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