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## The Desired Outcome

### **This Month: Your Personal Brand – Don't leave it to chance!**

#### **In this issue:**

- Your Business: Effectiveness AND Visibility »  
Your People: Does your team know what you stand for? »  
Your Visibility: Behaviors speak louder than words, Behave On Purpose »  
Your Life: Work/Life Balance Doesn't Work. Be Better at Both »



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## Don't leave it to chance!

You have a Personal Brand whether you know it or not. All you need to do is ask people what they think of you. The answer is your Brand. Good or bad.

And if you are not known for anything in particular, you won't stand out or be recognized as a strong leader.

Personal Brand is one thing I wish I had learned about much earlier in my career. There is a lot of benefit to be gained by defining your Brand and behaving on purpose to support it.

#### YOUR BUSINESS

## Effectiveness AND Visibility

Branding is one of the most misunderstood concepts in business.

#### **Common Branding misunderstandings:**

1. Brand = logo
2. A good brand = a logo you see a lot and recognize (and spend a multi-million dollar media campaign to promote)
3. Branding is about how you look and what you say
4. Brand strategy is "marketing fluff" compared to Corporate Strategy

The two biggest points I want to make about branding are:

1. Your brand is granted to you based on your audience's experience with you – it's behaviors that sell the brand, not words, or colors.
2. Brand is about execution and effectiveness, not just marketing.

This is true at both the corporate and personal level.

Quick example: Disney has a strong brand that includes being "the Happiest Place on Earth".

**It's not just because they SAY that. This brand value dictates their investments, their operational plan and the behavior of their employees.**

They have processes and procedures to make sure that lines are not too long, that lost children are re-united with families quickly, and that all Disney employees or “performers”, as they call them, are trained to create a positive experience for you.

That’s about strategy and execution! Marketing could not do that on their own. Brand is (or should be) fundamental to any business.

### **Do you think Disney marketing could claim to be the “Happiest Place on Earth” if you got pissed off by their business operations and their employee behaviors?**

A focused Brand is about how you execute your strategy consistently and effectively.

**Your Personal Brand has all the same components. It is created by how you behave.**

If you are clear on what your Brand is, it gives you a roadmap for behaving consistently. It also gives you a framework for increasing your effectiveness in specific ways.

As an example. I always considered myself to be a good listener. I AM a good listener when I sit down and listen to someone. But I did a 360 evaluation once and scored below neutral on being a good listener. Yikes!

What I learned was that I was not seen as someone who created enough listening opportunities. If I wanted listening to be part of my brand, I needed to create some new brand-able behaviors around creating listening opportunities, and commit to do them consistently.

### **Demonstrating consistent behaviors what you want to be known for, is how you manage what you are known for.**

Having a strong Personal Brand is a primary factor in establishing credibility with your team, your boss, and your stakeholders.

**Once you define your Personal Brand you will:**

- ✦ Be consistently clear minded in challenging situations
- ✦ Make quicker and better decisions
- ✦ Communicate more effectively
- ✦ Be a more authentic, impactful and motivating leader
- ✦ Create more positive visibility and support for your work and your team

### **If you don’t define your Personal Brand, it is almost impossible to behave consistently.**

This is what I mean by “don’t leave it to chance”. Define it. Do it consistently. Do it On Purpose.

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[Back to top >>](#)

YOUR PEOPLE

## Does your team know what you stand for?

Your Personal Brand and your Personal Leadership Strategy go hand in hand.

I say that you can’t TELL people what your brand is, you need to Behave your way into your brand.

Of course, you can tell people anything you want -- you just can’t expect them to buy it!

**But it is a powerful thing to do to stand up in front of your team and say. "This is what I stand for. These are my values."**

I follow that with, "I don't expect you to believe me just because I've told you, but I want you to know what you can expect from me. Trust takes time."

Then the trick then is to actually do it ! Consistently. And over time.

There are two main points here.

**1. Consistency**

It is better to be consistently bad than inconsistently good. People respond well to being comfortable, knowing what they can expect.

I read an article once about a shop owner who was known for always being in a bad mood.

His employees took advantage of this consistency (and his sense of humor about it) by creating a "red/orange /yellow" warning regarding his mood each day, and made an actual sign they hung up in the shop. The employees and customers all knew he was going to be in a bad mood, so they made it a joke and built a brand strength around it.

We have all had experiences with businesses and people where we have a great experience a few times which sets up a promise that the same will happen next time. If the next experience is a bad, it is a huge disappointment – much bigger than if the promise was never made in the first place.

**2. Your brand should be your Best Self – not someone else!**

**When I work with people on developing their brand, a question frequently comes up "Should my brand be who I actually am or who I want to be?"**

It is fine to have a brand value that is aspirational. But you need to be honest with yourself about the gap. If you create a gap that you can bridge, this is an excellent example of how defining a brand can actually increase your effectiveness.

But if the gap is too large, you behaviors will not live up to it consistently, and therefore you set yourself up to create disappointment.

One thing you can do if you have an aspirational brand value is not tell people about it until you practice behaving it and are confident that you can consistently support it.

Remember, if you don't behave it consistently, it's not part of your brand no matter what you think, or say.

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[Back to top >>](#)

YOUR VISIBILITY

## Behaviors speak louder than words, Behave On Purpose

Having a strong Personal Brand is also important for creating positive visibility for yourself, your work, and your team.

Having your brand explicitly defined gives you the framework to behave consistently. For example, one of my brand values is "straightforward". When I am faced with a situation about how to present, position or sell

something, I can always fall back on "What would a straightforward person do in this situation?".

Consistent behaviors are your best publicity campaign. I write every month about this topic of visibility at this point in the column. But it's important to note:

**Pursuit of visibility should NEVER be done instead of, or at the expense of, delivering consistently excellent results.**

But it's a bit of a chicken and egg thing as well. Delivering excellent results in consistent manner is part of creating positive visibility, AND positive visibility creates the broad network of support you need to keep delivering excellent results as you advance.

Earlier, I talked about telling people your Brand values. Although you can't expect it to "stick" based on what you SAY, giving the people the words, or labels, is a powerful way to build your brand.

Here's why.

**By telling people your brand values you:**

1. Are clear enough about yourself, so you have a roadmap for consistent behaviors you can do On Purpose.
2. You have given them both a measuring stick and the labels for the behaviors you want them to recognize.

By telling them your values, you create a structure for them to think about and label your good behaviors that is specific. They are more likely to recognize and remember specific things than just observing generally good behavior and forming their own impression.

**"Telling them" about your Brand is your way of reinforcing your consistent behaviors in their mind.**

As an example, a colleague of mine had a brand value of "Wisdom in Action". He was very smart and liked being known for being smart, but wanted to make sure he was known for being a do-er not just a thinker.

His Wisdom in Action, brand behaviors dictated that in any conversation or meeting where he felt himself "acting smart", he made sure to couple that behavior with an action-oriented, behavior as well.

If you are known for one thing and want to be known for another, having an explicit brand value which augments the thing you are known for, will help you be clear minded about demonstrating the new behavior.

**Personal Branding is about setting a target –**

about what you stand for, how you want to behave and how you want others to see you --

**-- and then doing small things every single day, and in every single meeting to reinforce it.**

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[Back to top >>](#)

YOUR LIFE

## Work/Life Balance doesn't work – SO be Better at BOTH

**The way to be better at both work and life is to make more energy.**

Just think about having 25% more energy. What would you do with it?

You can read more about making more energy here in last month's article: [Making Time, Room & Energy](#), and members can download a podcast on this topic here: [www.AzzarelloGroup.com/members](http://www.AzzarelloGroup.com/members)

One of the things that creates a significant amount of energy is giving yourself the permission to be YOU at work.

## **Staying true to your brand helps you be more effective with less time and energy.**

Here are a few thoughts.

1. **Effective leadership is about knowing who you are, REALLY.** Your strengths, your values, your skills, your personality. Then add all that up to really understand your "sweet spot" or your "power alley", and put yourself there as often as possible!

If there is any secret to great leadership, that is it.

2. **Drop any contrived "executive persona" to be more YOU.**

This actually makes you more effective, and builds more trust with your team -- and takes far less energy.

I did this for the first time in my mid thirties when I decided not to keep pretending that I was older and more serious than I was. Being myself actually proved to be much more powerful and required much less energy to maintain!

3. **Step back and take some time to remember what you actually enjoy.**

When you get really busy, it's easy to forget. Take some time to make a list and then do something specific.

You don't have to change your whole life. Just commit a little bit of time to do something you truly enjoy.

## **Reclaiming some time to focus on YOU will actually improve your effectiveness at work, and will make you better at both.**

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[Back to top >>](#)

I hope you have found some useful ideas that will help you do something specific to build value in your career and business and enjoy your life.

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### **About Patty**

Patty Azzarello was the youngest general manager at HP ever at the age of 33. She ran a \$1B software business at the age of 35 and was a CEO for the first time at the age of 38. Patty is known for her personal leadership qualities, her straightforward and practical manner, and her genuine interest in making a real connection with people to help them to advance their career and business, and to find ways to enjoy their life more.

[More About Patty >>](#)

Today Patty Azzarello is the CEO of Azzarello Group, [www.AzzarelloGroup.com](http://www.AzzarelloGroup.com) a unique services organization focused on helping companies develop and motivate their top performers and grow their business.

Azzarello Group delivers practical, experience-based tools, through products and services including, executive coaching, public speaking, leadership workshops, online programs, and consulting with teams on business execution.

[Back to top >>](#)

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