





Peggy-Sue  
Khumalo



Nelson  
Mandela



Wendy  
Luhabe



David  
Beckham



Victoria  
Beckham



Noleen  
Maholwana-  
Sangqu



Tiger  
Woods



Thebe  
Ikalafeng

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**THE ISSUE** Brands today are “more important and more valuable than ever”, says branding expert, Thebe Ikalafeng. “It’s impossible to live without them. And in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the customer is king.”

**IS IT JUST A COMPANY THING?** Not at all: while brands such as Coca-Cola are legendary, people, too, can become powerful brands. Just think of David and Victoria Beckham, Tiger Woods and Brenda Fassie.

**HOW CAN YOU GET ONE?** Creating your own personal brand starts with an awareness and understanding of what you want to achieve in your life. From that launch pad, it’s simply a case of delivering your message to others.

# BRAND you

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WHEREAS A PRODUCT IS PRODUCED IN A FACTORY, A BRAND IS WHAT CUSTOMERS PURCHASE, SAYS SOUTH AFRICAN BRANDING GURU THEBE IKALAFENG. SO HOW DO YOU CREATE A PERSONAL BRAND THAT PEOPLE BUY INTO?

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WRITTEN BY **THEBE IKALAFENG**

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**I**like the way US author Marty Neumeier describes brands. He says: “A brand is a person’s gut feeling about a product, service or organisation. It isn’t what you say it is. It’s what *they* say it is.”

A brand is a company’s – and, indeed, a country’s – most important weapon in the battle for consumers’ custom. Strong brands are created and nurtured over a long time. There is probably no better example than when *über*-brand Coca-Cola changed the formula that’s been its taste since 1886 and introduced new Coke in the Eighties. It caused an uproar. Not that people consciously test their Coke every time they take a sip, but when the change did take place, the Coca-Cola Company felt the wrath of its customers. In the words of the Chief Marketing Officer at the time, Sergio Zyman: “It infuriated the public, it cost a ton of money and lasted only 77 days before we reintroduced Coca-Cola classic.” Trust was broken. It had to be reinstated immediately, with what consumers had come to know and love.

Strong brands don’t just happen. They are created, consciously. Their distinguishing factor is that they’re built on a foundation of strong insights about their customers, a clear value proposition

(or a brand promise), consistent delivery on that promise, and they own a distinct leadership position in the minds and hearts of their consumers.

As the former Chairman of Unilever, Niall Fitzgerald, observed: “Brands are a storehouse of trust.” And, as Warren Buffet cautioned: “It takes a lifetime to build a reputation – and five minutes to destroy it.”

If more than half of Coke’s value is embedded in its branding, how different – or, even better, how similar – are the benefits for personal branding? Just imagine...

David Beckham, captain of the English national football team from 2000-2006 and the fifth-most capped English player of all time, has been able to leverage his talent when on the football field and his appeal when off it to create a multi-million-dollar personal fortune, culminating with a \$250 million (about R2 billion) contract to play for Galaxy in the US. Galaxy assert they sold 250 000 replicas of Beckham’s No 23 jersey before he even kicked his first ball. In addition, Beckham’s worth through endorsements, and his involvement with other teams in major league, has been estimated at several more millions of dollars. ➤

This is, indeed, the dawn of the age of “personal branding”.

Blame it on Tom Peters. In his seminal 2003 work, *The Brand Called You*, Peters noted: “Regardless of the age, regardless of position, regardless of the business you happen to be in, all of us need to understand the importance of branding. We are CEOs of our own companies: ‘Me, Inc.’”

A personal brand is a specific image and identity that evoke precise, meaningful perceptions and associations about an individual. Personal branding offers an instantly identifiable image and set of attributes, values and general personality. In a nutshell, it embodies perceptions people have of you wherever and whenever they come into contact with you.

– © **Thebe Ikalafeng, Personal Branding: Seven Steps to Building a Distinct Personal Brand Aligned to Your World, Work and Passions** **D**

• WIN one of five copies of Thebe Ikalafeng’s Personal Branding CD – and visit [www.mydestinymag.com](http://www.mydestinymag.com) for the full DESTINY interview with Thebe Ikalafeng

## I’m the Leader of **THE BRAND,** I AM

TWO WOMEN SHARE THEIR PERSONAL BRANDING REVELATIONS WITH DESTINY

WRITTEN BY CARA BOUWER



Nicky Greenwall



Mali Ramara

**NICKY GREENWALL, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: THE SHOWBIZ REPORT/ BEHIND THE NAME**

**How do you think people perceive you and is it true to your brand?**

My friend, comedian and director Bevan Cullinan, once told me: “Whatever you do, don’t believe the hype about yourself.” I can’t control the way people perceive me. What I can control is the image of the brand I represent, which is *The Showbiz Report*. Anything I do publicly becomes an extension of that brand – and since that brand is owned by e.tv, there’s a link there, too. I don’t really think about myself as a brand – but I do try to focus on projecting qualities like professionalism, expedience and humour.

**Media is a powerful platform. How has it helped you promote the image you want for yourself?**

I never use the media to promote myself. I use it to promote the shows I produce.

**Is there any aspect of your brand you’d like to change? And, if so, how?**

I believe an audience should always be left wanting more. I try not to over-expose myself to media attention, as

I feel it dilutes the work that I do. As a writer, I’ve contributed to magazines such as *Glamour*, *The Sunday Times* and *Good Taste*. This is something I’d like to continue to do, as writing for other publications helps enforce the credibility of the writing I do on my TV show. It also allows me to go from being commented on to being the commentator.

**What means do you use to project your brand?**

Generally speaking, I like to keep things simple and to the point. I run my own business and I try to project the most professional persona I can without being flashy or demanding attention. Above all, I try not to take myself too seriously.

**MALI RAMARA, BOPHELO KE MATLA, SPORTS NUTRITIONIST AND PERSONAL TRAINER**

**How do you think people perceive you and is it true to your brand?**

It’s difficult for me to say how people perceive me, because there are different opinions. I would love my brand to say that I’m passionate about helping people take responsibility for achieving

physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. Everything is connected: you are what you eat, think and feel. I hope to pass this message on – or live this brand, if you like – as long as God allows me.

**How has the platform offered by your industry helped you promote your image?**

I believe people make you who you are. I started out teaching at Virgin Active and the support and encouragement I received from its members over the years gave me the confidence to start my own wellness and fitness company. Today I’m a lecturer on personal training and I teach yoga in Tembisa. I’ve conducted workshops for companies and groups of women and I’m opening a fitness school for personal trainers in the township.

**What means do you use to project your brand?**

I practise what I preach: my body is a brand. I’ve produced my own gym and yoga label, as well as a DVD. I’m working on dissecting every angle of my business that I can use to change the lives of other human beings financially, physically, emotionally and spiritually. **D**



# How to Create a DISTINCT YOU

BUILDING A PERSONAL BRAND IS LIKE BUILDING A HOUSE: YOU NEED TO KNOW WHAT YOU WANT AND HAVE YOUR PLANS IN HAND BEFORE YOU LAY THE FOUNDATION AND GET TO WORK ON THE FAÇADE

WRITTEN BY CARA BOUWER

Brand guru Thebe Ikalafeng is emphatic that, whatever personal branding is, it does not involve manipulation. Personal branding is actually about being true to yourself.

Ikalafeng, CEO of Brand Leadership and one of SA's leading branding experts, calls this innate understanding of who you are and what you're about "clarity". And it forms the cornerstone of what he believes are the steps anyone can apply in building their own, unique personal brand.

Before you get to "clarity", however, Ikalafeng, believes that – particularly as women – we need to understand the context in which we live and work. "Don't try to be a man," he cautions, pointing to the Democratic tussle for the White House between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. "She's a one-on-one person, whereas Obama is more of a charismatic type. So when he speaks loudly, the crowd goes with him. When Clinton speaks loudly, the crowd asks: 'Why is she being so loud?' It's incongruent to her brand. Personal branding is about authenticity."

## BE YOURSELF...

Ikalafeng explains the subtle interplay between self-perception and projected image as the crucial dynamic at the base of branding. "Personal branding is not about trying to live up to other people's expectations of you, but it does require having an awareness of their perceptions of you. The way they perceive you isn't necessarily how and who you are, but that's how you're projecting – and asserting – yourself. A brand is a signal, and you

may be sending a signal that does not do justice to your brand."

Ikalafeng points to Wendy Lucas-Bull, Wendy Luhabe and Felicia Mabuza-Suttle as examples of women who display an "uncompromising belief in assertion of self". They have succeeded, he says, in challenging conventions and the expectations of society. They've also armed themselves with the tools needed to adequately project and develop their personal brands with confidence.

He cites former Miss South Africa, Nonhlanhla Peggy-Sue Khumalo as a perfect example of a woman who eventually found the right vehicle to actualise her brand. "People may have thought of beauty pageants as the preserve of air-heads, but she was quite clear about the opportunity and the vehicle for developing her brand which the pageant presents," says Ikalafeng, who first met Khumalo in the early Nineties, when she was working as a waitress.

"PERSONAL BRANDING IS NOT ABOUT TRYING TO LIVE UP TO OTHER PEOPLE'S EXPECTATIONS OF YOU, BUT IT DOES REQUIRE HAVING AN AWARENESS OF THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF YOU."

"She used the Miss SA title as that vehicle, in order to get education – a degree in economics – and, ultimately, a career at Investec. When you see her now, you don't



Thebe Ikalafeng

see a beauty contestant, but a successful executive in a financial services environment dominated by men."

## BUILD YOURSELF...

But, reinforces Ikalafeng, in order to successfully live your brand, you need the

wherewithal to get there – "the skills, the experience, and the opportunities in order to build your competencies".

It all comes back to clarity. All the skills in the world won't help you on your

journey if you don't know where you're going. Like any great brand, you need a blueprint to guide you as you grow your brand, to ensure you are "on mission". ➤

In other words, says Ikafaleng: “Am I doing my thing? Because if you’re not, you’re doing an injustice to your brand.”

#### **STAYING “ON MISSION”**

There are, of course, other areas that can distract you from living your authentic personal brand. As a woman, one area involves trying to live according to others’ expectations, but the second involves a career or job that is simply the wrong fit.

“Wherever you work,” says Ikafaleng, “you must always remember that you’re in a business yourself. But in running your business at any organisation, you should be contributing to their success. A company is a vehicle to demonstrate your brand. The only way you can do that is if the goals and brand proposition (values and personality)

of the organisation’s brand are similar to your brand. The reality is that sometimes you’ll come across people who just don’t fit. There must be an honesty about the relationship.”

In other words, there must be an alignment between the needs of the employee and the employer. If there is not, the employee is forfeiting integrity for expediency – and sooner or later, this will work to her detriment.

#### **THE PACKAGE**

Part of arriving at the right fit and vehicle for your brand involves your packaging – or cover. “People love to say you can’t judge a book by its cover. I ask: ‘How else are you going to judge it?’” says Ikafaleng. “It’s the first thing you see when you walk

through the door. Your expressions, your demeanor, your clothing. Your packaging tells us what to expect from you. Cover is very important, because that’s how you signal your brand.

“As a woman, when you’re building your cover, you need to know what is important to you, what you want to project and whether it’s consistent with who and what you are.” To carry that off, though, adds Ikafaleng, you need *chutzpah*. “*Chutzpah* is confidence and charm. It allows you to assert who you are, and to do it in such a way that people latch onto you.”

Finally, you need to establish a network of like-minded people. “Remember, it’s not who you know... it’s who knows you,” says Ikafaleng. **D**

# Becoming Your OWN BRAND

THINKING OF YOURSELF LIKE COKE OR WHEATIES, SAYS **JUDITH SILLS**, HELPS YOU TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR FUTURE IN A RAPIDLY SHIFTING MARKETPLACE

Nestled just north of your reputation and east of your résumé is yet another man-made mountain to which you might aspire. It’s your brand, the identifying marks of You, Inc. Craft that brand carefully and, with any luck, yours might be as successful, too.

If your reputation is what people say about you, especially behind your back, and your résumé is what you say about yourself, especially on paper, your brand is all that – plus. It’s the professional identity you create in the minds of others.

The concept of brand has been around for some time, although not always labelled as such. The Fifties’ corporate excitement over “image” and the Seventies’ idea of “dress for success” were markers on the road to today’s concept of branding.

Certainly, thinking of yourself as a brand, or actually aspiring to become one, reflects

our deep cultural dedication to consumerism. But it also facilitates personal marketability, an advantage in rapidly shifting business environments.

At its heart, branding addresses a hard professional reality: for a successful long-term career, do not look to your company or industry to take care of you. As in every other arena of life, you must take care of yourself. A well-built brand will be your life raft.

What does it mean to brand yourself? As our untouched selves, we are – alas – merely one of the worker hordes. As a brand, we become distinctive and desirable – whether in-house to managers, outside to clients, or across town to potential employers. A résumé may summarise what we’ve accomplished, but a brand shouts louder: “Pick me off the shelf! I’m special, reliable, trustworthy, high-quality, excel-

lent and expert. Pick me!”

“An employee who brands himself doesn’t let his job title subsume him,” says one CEO. “He might be in accounting now, but I’ve stopped thinking of him as an accountant. I’ve come to think of him as a problem-solver or a strategist. These people are identified more with the company’s goals than with any current slot in the organisation.”

How exactly could you, as Brand X, manage to send the CEO that kind of message? There’s no formula, but there are some tried and true tactics.

You’ll want to participate in visible events. Speaking engagements at professional conferences or in-house presentations establish your expertise; working with groups other than your own to help solve problems in your expert area helps to spread the word about you. You don’t just show up; you make your presence known.

Be consistent. At heart, branding means: “I know I can rely on you for certain things, whether great graphics or ingenious spin.” Understand what you deliver and make sure you deliver it – again and again. **D**

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