Building Your Professional Persona

A.J. Brush
Microsoft Research

Ming C. Lin

With thanks to Ayanna Howard, Patty Lopez, Mandy Pant, Jaime Teevan, Sami Rollins, Amanda Stent and Ellen Spertus
Takeaways

Make *intentional* choices about how you are represented in person and online.

Any interactions with your professional community have an impact on your persona.

Soft skills are more important than you may realize.
Why?

Job opportunities
Invitations
Award nominations
External evaluation
Media opportunities
Research visibility
Recruiting
Visibility within institution
How do others perceive you?

How might others describe you?
   based your web page
   based on interactions with you
How do others perceive you?

How might others describe you?
  based your web page
  based on interactions with you

Qualities I thought were most important when I was finishing grad school
  Organized, reliable, intelligent, accomplished, hard-working

Qualities I’m always concerned about
  Reserved, negative, critical

Qualities I’ve recently begun to understand are very important
  Cooperative, supportive, thoughtful
What?

“Persona”
Role that one assumes or displays in public or society

“Professional”
Exhibiting a courteous, conscientious, and generally businesslike manner

“Professional Persona”
A persona that is effective in giving others a positive perception of you & your abilities
How?

Develop your personal brand

• Four components:

  **Appearance:**
  Your body language, clothing attire and overall posture

  **Personality:**
  Your behavior, communication skills and attitudes toward people

  **Competencies:**
  Your special skills fulfilling task requirements

  **Differentiation:**
  What separates you from others and leaves a lasting memory in minds of others

*Use your personal brand to differentiate yourself and make a positive impression*
Activity

Turn to your neighbor and discuss your professional persona

What is one thing you want people to remember about you?
So.......

Make full use of your first impression

• In person
• Within group
• Online/networking
In Person

• In just a few seconds, with a brief glance, a person unfamiliar with you will evaluate who you are based upon your appearance and personality

*Strengthen your appearance and personality*
Within Group

• Public image critical when addressing your class or large group
• People retain ~ 4% of content of any presentation, speech/talk, but …… always remember 100% of how they felt about it

Integrate elements to build your unique personal message
Online/Networking

- Online ➔ your public image
- Remember you are not there to interpret what others view/read
- Remember your presence on Internet is archived and will always be available to anyone, employer or social group, who search for it

Clean up your E-persona
Your E-Persona

E-persona

• How many have a web presence?
  • Facebook
  • Twitter
  • Youtube
  • Blogs
  • Linked-In
  • Wikipedia page
  • Webpages
  • Google scholar …
E-persona-Social

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Youtube
- Blogs

Don’t allow your E-personae to tarnish your image
Use WISELY!
E-persona - Technical

- Linked-In
- Google +
- Professional Webpages
- Wikipedia page
- Google scholar

E-resources can be used to advertise your skillset and capabilities
Professional Webpage

- Professional web page
  - Publications
  - Research interests
  - Media coverage
  - Photos
  - Teaching materials
  - Link to CV/bio
  - Personal information???

Professional webpage great for adding details and providing as a pointer
Resumé

• You should have one
• Reasonably up-to-date
• Bring out key skills/experiences
• Link it to your web page
• Ask a friend to review your CV

Resumé critical to providing crisp information about oneself
Activity

Turn to your neighbor and discuss one (or two things) you could do to update/improve your E-Persona

When will you do it?
Additionally…..

• In a work environment (and otherwise)
  • Show willingness and gratitude
  • Have an elevator pitch prepared
  • Be mindful of your company/institution
  • Make yourself available
  • Advocate your ideas in strong terms
  • Respect other people/cultures
  • Grow your technical + soft skills
  • Display (and HAVE) a positive attitude

You can make a POSITIVE difference…

Play to your Strengths!
Soft Skills

Technical skill is important, but it may not win you the job

*Culture fit* aka “plays well with others”
Do you communicate well?
Will you be a team player?
Perceptions

Think about how you want others to perceive you

Follow through by acting the part

Listen carefully to others to understand their motives
Positive Attitude

Be someone who others want to work with

Negative comments won’t be looked on favorably

Listen carefully to others
Effective Communication

Others are always interpreting your persona, so avoid misinterpretation as much as possible.

Think through important conversations before you have them.

Consider how others will interpret what you say.
Play to Your Strengths

You probably have strengths you don’t even realize.

Ask your peers/advisor what they think your strengths are, and pay it forward by telling them what their strengths are!
When?

The right time to get to this is

NOW

Start a checklist and put recurring appointment on your calendar to revisit every quarter (reward yourself for doing it)
In Conclusion

- You own your future and if you want to make an impact ....YOU CAN!!

GO FOR IT!