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## What's Your Meme?

When someone wants to find out information about you, where do they go? That's right, the internet. Do you know what is out there about you and how you are representing yourself? Alternatively, they might ask someone that knows you. Do you know what they would say? Whether you like it or not, you already have a "personal brand" representing you.

Just like a firm goes through a branding process, each employee should look at their own personal brand. Developing a brand takes into consideration how people connect and remember you. If you are looking to define your personal brand, you should really think about taking it a step further and developing a "personal meme".

Wikipedia's definition of a meme is: "an idea, behavior or style that spreads from person to person within a culture." Developing a personal meme takes your personal brand a step further. When your personal brand becomes synonymous with an idea, product, service, or trait within your own industry or culture, and your name is automatically passed on as the go-to person, you have created a personal meme.

*"Regardless of age, regardless of position, regardless of the business we happen to be in, all of us need to understand the importance of branding. We are CEOs of our own companies: Me Inc. To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You."*

***Tom Peters in Fast Company***

A good example of personal branding is Steve Jobs. When you think of his name most people have the following words come to mind: innovative, visionary, savvy entrepreneur, and fearless. If you were to think about his personal meme, he would be the cool, hipster saying "conformity is boring". If you wanted fresh and innovative, he would be your go-to person. What are you the go-to person for? His personal brand also complements the product he represents, Apple. It is important that what you are known for coincide with your firm's overall corporate culture and brand.

To determine your personal brand, start with evaluating yourself. Write down words that describe you. Use the following questions to help you evaluate yourself.

1. What are you passionate about?
2. What are you good at? What are you experienced in?
3. What do you want to be known for?
4. How do you feel you provide value to relationships and experiences?
5. What traits do you feel you possess?

Next ask a couple co-workers to answer the following questions about you. When you have a solid personal brand, people will have a favorable opinion about you so it's important to find out what others think about you. Be sure to also reach out to industry colleagues and clients to gain a full perspective.

1. What do I seem to be passionate about?
2. What am I good at?
3. What do you think of when you think of me?
4. How do I provide value to relationships and experiences?
5. What traits do I possess?

Now compare your answers with what others thought about you. You may find you are able to list out 3 to 5 qualities that seem to reoccur. Your personal brand should represent why people think you are awesome. Remember it's easier to remember one or two qualities than multiple so your personal brand needs to contain one or two traits that stand out.

To develop your personal meme, think about what you want to be the go-to person for and combine that with the overall encompassing traits used to describe you. Make sure your personal meme is simple and memorable.

Lastly, be sure to emphasize these traits and thoughts on your personal LinkedIn profile. You will also want to do the same on other social media and online webpages.