

*To excel at networking, entrepreneurship,  
in the classroom, and in the boardroom,  
don't miss Brand Up.*

— **Barbara Corcoran**

ABC's Shark Tank Investor,  
Author & Speaker



# Brandamentals

An excerpt from

# BrandUp

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With Jason Shaffer  
and Alan Katzman



# INTRODUCTION/PROLOGUE

## BRANDAMENTALS

Commit these top takeaways to memory:

- 1** While the term “personal branding” may be relatively new, the concept is age-old. The importance of a sterling reputation to academic and professional success is nothing new.
- 2** The internet makes personal branding imperative. At a time when every photo and comment can live forever in pixels, it’s critical to tend to your brand carefully.
- 3** Personal branding isn’t about boasting. That’s a common misconception. Rather, it’s about showing others how you can help them achieve their goals.
- 4** Personal branding should start early to build momentum for college admissions and job interviews.

# SECTION A — DISCOVERY

## PART I - WHO ARE YOU ANYWAY?

### BRANDAMENTALS

And in the meantime, commit these top takeaways to memory:

- 1 Self-awareness is all that.** Start by defining yourself. The stronger your grasp of your strengths, the stronger your personal brand. Take time to reflect.
- 2 Conduct a self-audit.** Spend time mapping out your skills and your passions. Doing that will help you craft everything from your résumé to your college admission essay.
- 3 Know your target audience.** Personal brands aren't *me-me-me*. They're also about others — the audience you're looking to impress. Determine who that is: College admission officers, recruiters, and so forth.
- 4 Develop your “slogan.”** Crystallize your uniqueness and why someone should choose your application for college admissions or a job opening. Create a concise blurb that highlights your best qualities. This is your “Uniquely Me” statement or elevator pitch — use it often.



# PART II – THE FUTURE YOU

## BRANDAMENTALS

Here are some top takeaways to keep top of mind:

- 1 Take goal-setting seriously.** Setting goals takes practice. Make sure each one you set your mind to is the right balance of ambitious and achievable.
- 2 Prioritize informational interviews.** Discussions with professionals in your intended field can be illuminating—and open the door for future internships and jobs.
- 3 Get in the right mindset.** To succeed, you need a growth mindset—an optimistic, open-minded way of viewing the world.
- 4 Tap into personal learning networks (PLNs).** PLNs can be simple, like a group of like-minded people on Twitter who share ideas. But they can also be incredibly powerful, providing deep knowledge and networking.





## SECTION B: DEVELOPMENT

### PART III – STAYING ON MESSAGE

#### BRANDAMENTALS

Here are some top takeaways to keep top of mind:

**1 Know what makes a key message work.** Before you put pen to paper, make sure you fully understand what makes a powerful key message. Every key message should be concise, relevant, memorable, compelling, and positive.

**2 Make your key messages interlock.** Key messages should complement each other and all point toward a single, overarching theme: Your Uniquely Me statement.

**3 Use your key messages often.** Once your key messages are crafted, deploy them liberally. They should be woven into your college applications, cover letters, emails, and in-person interviews.

**4 Be persistent and polite.** Your audience needs to hear your key messages more than once for them to stick. If you surfaced them in an email correspondence, bring them up again in an in-person interview. If waitlisted, use the key messages to present new achievements in a Letter of Continued Intent (LOCI).

**5 Stay on brand.** Maintain a consistent voice across different channels. Ensure your LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and other profiles are up-to-date and in harmony.



# PART IV — YOUR PERSONAL BRANDING TOOLKIT:

## ASSEMBLING AN IMPRESSIVE ONLINE PORTFOLIO



### BRANDAMENTALS

Here are some takeaways to keep in mind  
as you build your online presence:

- 1 Audit your online presence.** Before you begin the college admissions process, search your name online and take note to see how you show up. Developing a strong online profile and digital footprint is essential.
- 2 Shore up your accounts.** Make sure your social media accounts are reputable — no party photos or inappropriate comment threads. Assume college admissions counselors can and will read each post.
- 3 Invest in the right platforms.** Think beyond which social media platforms are hip. Instead, think about which ones best accentuate your strengths. For example: If you're an artist, it may be wise to open an Instagram account for your artwork.
- 4 Consider all your touch points.** Personal branding is more than just an online profile — it's a holistic picture that can make or break college admissions and career opportunities. Consider every communication mode, including e-mail, cell phones, interviews, etc.

# PART V — BUILDING YOUR DIGITAL PORTFOLIO ON LINKEDIN



## BRANDAMENTALS

Here are some takeaways to deliver the best you have to offer:

- 1 LinkedIn is an essential tool — use it.** The popular platform isn't just for professionals. It's also for ambitious teens who want to stand out.
- 2 LinkedIn is perfect for showcasing your brand.** You can curate your image to a tee by leveraging a unique URL, professional headshot, compelling summary section, and more.
- 3 LinkedIn can kick-start networking.** LinkedIn allows you to build a rich network without leaving your desk. You can connect and correspond with college admissions officers, professionals in your intended field, and like-minded students.

## SECTION C: DELIVERY



# BRANDAMENTALS

Here are some top takeaways to deliver the best you have to offer:

- 1 Don't hide online.** The goal isn't to evade college admissions officers on social media. It's to present your best self.
- 2 Know the rules of social media.** Commit the fundamentals to heart, like that *posts never disappear* and *that people are always listening*.
- 3 Engage with colleges' social media.** Follow your dream college's accounts, like their content, and make yourself seen.
- 4 Post college-centric content.** Show admissions officers you really care by posting about your college tour, the topics you want to study, and more.

# PART VII

## NETWORKING FOR SUCCESS



### BRANDAMENTALS

Commit these top takeaways to memory:

- 1 The core of networking is relationships.** Don't approach networking as simply transactional. It's only as successful as the depth of your relationships.
- 2 Start building social capital now.** Teens shouldn't wait until they need a network to build one. Start early, so it's ready and waiting when the time comes.
- 3 Don't be shy.** Fading into the woodwork and avoiding adults is common for teens. But get over it! Busy adults in high-ranking positions are often receptive to questions from teens interested in their professions.
- 4 Practice makes progress (not perfect).** Networking is an art form that takes practice. Don't get discouraged if you're not hitting home runs during your first at bats.

# PART IX - THE ENTREPRENEUR IN YOU

## BRANDAMENTALS

And in the meantime, commit these top takeaways to memory:

**1** **Teen entrepreneurship is on the rise.** Around the country, more and more teens are launching their own businesses. And some of them grow into corporate powerhouses.

**2** **All entrepreneurs share a few top traits.** There are common characteristics to all entrepreneurs, like grit, passion, and creativity.

**3** **Tap into the diverse set of entrepreneurship programs.** There is no shortage of programs that can give entrepreneurial teens a leg up. There are camps, clubs, membership organizations, and more.

**4** **Don't reinvent the wheel.** You don't need a brand-new idea to be a teenage entrepreneur. Consider a business that leverages your existing skills, like tutoring, babysitting, or website development.



# PART X - DOING GOOD



## BRANDAMENTALS

And in the meantime, commit these top takeaways to memory:

- 1 Empathy should always be a top priority...** The ability to understand and be sensitive to others' feelings and perspectives is key to being successful — and fulfilled — in life.
- 2 ...and is a skill you can develop.** Empathy is not a virtue you either have or don't. By making things like kindness and moral imagination regular habits, you can grow your capacity for empathy.
- 3 Community service is essential.** College admissions officers and hiring managers expect to see volunteering on your résumé. But that's not the only reason to give back: It's also incredibly fulfilling.
- 4 There are countless resources to kick off your volunteer journey.** There is no shortage of nonprofits and causes that need your help. Further, there are organizations specifically designed to match you with volunteer opportunities based on your interests.

***Teens! Brand Up is the one book you need to stand up, stand out, and succeed.***

Brand Up is an essential playbook that equips teens with strategies and tools to succeed and fulfill dreams in high school, college, and beyond. It's packed with practical advice and skill-building that you don't learn in school – but are critical to your personal growth. Whether you're aiming to excel academically, become an entrepreneur, or social media star, you need Brand Up!

**With Brand Up, you'll:**

- Identify your superpower(s) and develop unique traits and skills to stand out
- Learn to manage your online presence and leverage social media to achieve academic and career goals
- Hone real-world skills (networking, interviewing, entrepreneurship, empathy) for building strong interpersonal relationships

The future is extremely bright for young people today.  
Take control of your own life with these incredible tools!

**For more information go to [brandup.com](http://brandup.com)**



***Like it or not, you will be judged.  
This book helps you choose from a  
variety of ways to be sure that you'll  
be seen the way you want to be seen.***

— Seth Godin, Author, *This is Marketing*.