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# Help Your Students Form Complementary Groups By Communicating Their Personal Brand

## What is a Personal Brand?

A brand is a succinct, highly creative way of expressing an identity.

Although often thought of in relation to companies, the features of effective brand building have tremendous value on a personal scale.

Whether you recognize it or not, you are constantly building and refining a personal brand, which is expressed in the way you act, talk and form relationships. Your brand communicates your value and your needs to others. Ensuring it is a clear and accurate reflection of your goals is therefore an essential condition for collaboration.

### VIDEO RESOURCE

Apple's "I'm a Mac" campaign provides an interesting discussion piece regarding the connection between personal and corporate branding:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C5z0la5jDt4>

## Why is it Valuable?

- **It is quickly and easily understood.** This is particularly important for networking events which afford limited time to make an impression on potential collaborators.
- **It builds relationships.** Although the essence of a brand should be quick and easy to understand, its full value comes from a long-term process of establishing a sense of familiarity and trust.
- **It is empathic.** Successful brands are designed to build a rapport with a particular target market. This requires deep understanding of the needs and desires of this group.
- **It increases creative communication.** An effective brand is expressed many different ways - through language, tone, visuals, and activities or events. Building a brand is therefore an excellent way of becoming a dynamic communicator.

## Personal Branding in Your Classroom

### Help students form groups using the branding activity on the back of this page.

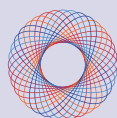
- In this activity, students practice clearly communicating their values and goals and in doing so identify potential collaborators.
- This activity also introduces three personal brands that are common among entrepreneurial teams.

### Have students conduct self-assessment through the lens of personal branding.

- Have your students create their ideal brand at the start of the year, or at the beginning of a new unit.
  - What do they want to be known for?
  - What kind of relationship do they want to build with their peers and their teacher?
  - What behaviours need to be undertaken to build this personal brand?
- Over the course of the year or unit, have the students keep track of the things they do to support and challenge their ideal brand.

### Derive communication lessons from successful corporate brands.

- Get students to bring in examples of brands they enjoy, then ask them the following questions:
  - Who does this brand want to collaborate with? (That is, who are its target customers?) How does it communicate this?
  - What value does this brand give people? How does it communicate this value?
  - What is most and least effective about how this brand's message is communicated?



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# Using Personal Branding to Build Groups

EXTRA RESOURCE: [Click here to download a PowerPoint deck for this activity](#)

Activity Time: 25-35 minutes

## STEP 1: Are you a hacker, hustler or designer?

Highly effective entrepreneurial teams often have a mix of the personal brands described below. Ask your students to select the brand with which they identify most strongly:

### The Hacker

- builds things
- comes up with unexpected solutions to problems
- will bend the rules if it's valuable to do so

### The Hustler

- sells things
- enjoys presentations, debates and public speaking
- excels at coming up with arguments

### The Designer

- designs things
- shows empathy towards customer experience
- is highly resilient and open to other people's ideas

## STEP 2: Effectively communicating your brand

Students now come up with a 60-second explanation of why they would make a good hacker, hustler or designer in a group. This explanation should include:

1. EVIDENCE: What is one thing the student has done in the past to support their assertion that they are an effective hacker, hustler or designer?
2. GOALS: What goals does the student have for this collaboration?

## STEP 3: Networking

Over a period of 10 minutes, students share their 60-second explanation with 5 other people in the class. They should aim to talk with students who have a different brand identity than their own.

## STEP 4: Group formation

Based on what they have learned about the values and goals of their classmates, students form groups of three. Each group should contain a hacker, hustler and designer.

Students may also use this time to further "sell" their personal brand to potential group mates, convincing them of the value of collaborating with them.

## What Success Looks Like

### Students efficiently communicate the unique value they add to the group

- Students demonstrate clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities both during and after group formation.

### Heterogeneous groups are formed

- Groups contain members who have a wide range of skills and interests.
- Members are able to explicitly state how the different skillsets of the group members complement each other.