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Your Personal Brand Workbook

What people say about you when you are not in the room.

Four questions that define a professional reputation,
and the exercises to answer them honestly.

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You already have one

Personal brand sounds like a marketing term, and that framing puts a lot of people off it. Here is the plainer version: **you already have a reputation.** People already have a short answer to “what is she good at?” or “what does he bring to a team?” The only question is whether that answer is the one you would have chosen.

This workbook is not about inventing a persona. It is about noticing what you are actually good at, saying it out loud in a way people remember, and then being consistent enough that the reputation sticks.

The test that matters

If a decision about you were being made in a meeting you were not invited to — a promotion, a project assignment, a referral — what would the person advocating for you say? If you cannot answer that in one sentence, neither can they. That sentence is your brand.

The four questions

A professional reputation is built from four things. Weakness in any one of them limits the others.

Dimension	The question it answers	What it looks like when it is missing
Differentiation	How are you different from your peers?	Competent but interchangeable — nobody can say why you specifically
Relevance	Does what you are good at actually matter here?	A real strength that nobody in this room needs
Esteem	Do people rate your work?	Known, but not trusted with anything important
Knowledge	Do people know what you can do?	Genuinely excellent and completely invisible

Most early-career people are strongest on Esteem and weakest on Knowledge. They do good work and assume it speaks for itself. It does not — someone has to know about it.

Exercise 1: The evidence audit

Before you can describe your strengths you need evidence for them. List the last five things you did that you were genuinely proud of. For each, answer three questions.

What I did	What skill it proves	Who saw it

Read down the middle column

If the same skill shows up three or more times, that is your differentiator — not what you wish you were known for, but what you demonstrably keep doing. Now read the right-hand column. Blank cells are the reason good work does not turn into reputation.

Exercise 2: The three words

Ask five people who have worked with you: *"If you had to describe how I work in three words, what would they be?"* Ask over text so they can think. Write the answers down without arguing with them.

- ☐ Person 1: _____
- ☐ Person 2: _____
- ☐ Person 3: _____
- ☐ Person 4: _____
- ☐ Person 5: _____

Now compare the words that repeat against the three words you *want* associated with you. The gap between those two lists is the entire work.

Exercise 3: Write the sentence

Fill this in. It will feel awkward. Do it anyway, because the awkwardness is what you are trying to get past before someone asks you in a room that matters.

I am the person who **[what you reliably do]** for **[who benefits]**, especially when **[the hard condition where you shine]**.

Weak: *"I'm a hard worker who's passionate about technology."* That describes several million people.

Strong: *"I'm the person who untangles the messy half-finished project everyone else has given up on, especially when nobody has written anything down."* That is specific, it is testable, and someone will remember it a week later.

Exercise 4: Close the visibility gap

Knowledge is the dimension you can improve fastest, because it is mostly mechanical. Pick two of these and do them this month:

- Send your manager a short monthly note listing what you shipped. Not bragging — a record. It becomes their promotion case for you.
- When you solve something non-obvious, write it up where others can find it. A doc, a thread, a wiki page.
- Answer questions publicly rather than in DMs, so the help is visible.
- Volunteer for the demo. The person who presents the work gets associated with the work.
- Update your LinkedIn or portfolio with outcomes, not duties. "Cut deploy time from 40 to 6 minutes" beats "responsible for CI."
- Tell one person in your network what you are working on this quarter. Referrals come from people who know what you do *now*.

On consistency

A brand is a pattern, not an announcement. Being reliably one thing for two years beats describing yourself five different ways in five different rooms. Pick the version of yourself that is both true and useful, and then be boringly consistent about it.

Pair this with **Build Your Personal Board of Directors** — a reputation only travels as far as the people who can vouch for it.