

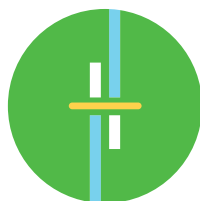
90-DAY PERSONAL BRAND BUILDING ROAD MAP

THE JOURNEY FROM EVERYDAY ASSOCIATE
TO ESSENTIAL ASSOCIATE

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Step Up, Stand Out, and Rise to the Top
as a Young Lawyer*

Client-Focused Clarity.



HARRINGTON

Introduction



Your personal brand is your calling card to the world. It speaks for you, when you're not there to speak for yourself. It's your story and your promise of value. It is the amalgam of qualities, characteristics and traits that are the essence of who you are, both professionally and personally.

The purpose of this Road Map is to equip you with a deeper understanding of how to assess your unique strengths, develop a compelling personal brand, and ensure that others—both inside and outside of your firm—recognize the powerful contribution you can make. Over the long-term, this will help you not only to develop more business, but more profitable business.

Remember, one does not have a choice of having or not having a personal brand. So the question is: Is your personal brand powerful and effective?

HOW TO USE THIS ROAD MAP

This Road Map is meant help you identify weaknesses and showcase strengths so that you can effectively communicate your personal brand to the marketplace.

It builds on the lessons taught in *The Essential Associate: Step Up, Stand Out, and Rise to the Top as a Young Lawyer*, and empowers you to put what you learn into action.

The 90-day timeframe of this Road Map is not to suggest that building a personal brand takes 90 days. The truth is you never stop building a brand. The goal is to get you moving, and racking up small wins, so that you have momentum to keep moving forward.

The activities and worksheets are organized over a 12-week period. You should carve out time each week to complete each activity, as the work you will do builds on itself as you progress through the weeks.

For example, during the first 6 weeks you'll be focusing on assessing your strengths and weaknesses and determining the contours of your personal brand. During weeks 7-12, you'll be putting your ideas into action by developing a personal brand statement, updating your online profiles, building a powerful network, and putting your thought leadership out into the world.

Use this Road Map to take charge of your personal brand. This is your chance to put your best foot forward.

WEEK 1

Assessing Strengths



Lawyers with compelling brands have a clear sense of their strengths. Consider the following question, but don't rush your answer. Give it careful, deliberate thought.

My three biggest strengths as a lawyer are?:

1.

2.

3.

There's only one rule to this exercise—avoid adjectives such as Honest, Trustworthy, Experienced, Loyal, etc. These are the words that almost all lawyers, at every firm, use to describe themselves. This means that they are somewhat meaningless. Remember that the purpose of crafting a personal brand is to be authentic, but also bold and unique.

Here are a few prompts that may help you complete this exercise:

When facing a challenge, what are the strengths and skills that I draw upon to overcome it?

What things come easy to me that others struggle with?

What problems do others seek me out to solve?

What type of work do other lawyers refer to me?

WEEK 2

Validate (or Re-Assess)
Your Strengths

Once you've developed your list of strengths from Week 1, conduct this exercise with a broader group, including friends, colleagues, and clients over the coming week. **Ask them what *they perceive to be your three biggest strengths***. You may think you know the answer, but the only way to know for sure is to ask.

By compiling a bigger data set, you'll begin to see patterns in people's responses. You may view certain traits, such as your strong communication skills or creativity, as being nice to have but nonessential. At the same time, others may view these things as defining characteristics of you, and believe them to be much more important than you do. That's because we often undervalue the talents that come most naturally to us. By getting feedback from others, you'll gain a better understanding of your own blind spots, and of the strengths you can start building your brand around.

These insights may lead you to re-evaluate which aspects of yourself you'd like to highlight. Once you've done the work during Weeks 1 and 2, you'll begin to understand your biggest strengths that you'll be emphasizing as you build your brand.

Write down responses you receive from others here:

WEEK 2

Validate (or Re-Assess) Your Strengths



After reviewing the data—your responses and those of others—identify your final list of three biggest strengths. Use your judgment and instinct to distill your answers from the data you gathered. The input of others is important, but at the end of the day you need to be comfortable with each element of your brand.

After assessing the data I've gathered, my three biggest strengths as a lawyer are:

1.

2.

3.

WEEK 3

Consider Your Purpose



Author Simon Sinek has popularized the concept of identifying your “Why.” Your Why is the cause or belief that inspires you to get out of bed and get to work. In this sense, your Why is a reflection of your values and purpose.

This week, your job is to answer a simple question full of complexity: Why? When it comes to building your brand, you need to be able to explain to people not just what you do, but why you do it.

Here are some prompts to get you started:

1. What excites you about your job and profession? What are you passionate about?
2. What are core values that you won't compromise?
3. Why did you become a lawyer in the first place?
4. What are the values you see in other lawyers you respect?

Now answer this—Why do you do what you do?:

Are you struggling with this a bit? That's okay, it's not meant to be easy. Very few people understand their Why. I've listed my Why below so that you can see what a Why statement looks like:

My Why is: To catalyze personal and professional growth in other lawyers so that they can build better careers for themselves, and in turn a better world around them.

WEEK 4

Identify Your Weaknesses



We all have weaknesses. Those with the strongest personal brands don't hide from this fact. They acknowledge them, and work on them, and even turn them into strengths in some instances.

For example, Warren Buffett is renowned as a brilliant public speaker. But that was not always the case. At the age of 21, Buffett started his career as a stockbroker. He was terrified of public speaking. Knowing that this fear would hold him back, he enrolled in a Dale Carnegie course on public speaking. "You have to do it. And the sooner you do it, the better. It's so much easier to learn the right habits when you're young. If you have a fear of associating with people, you have to go out there and do it, and it's painful," Buffett said.

This week's lesson involves answering this question: *What are the fears, beliefs, and/or weaknesses that are limiting my potential as a professional?*

1.

2.

3.

WEEK 4

Identify Your Weaknesses



For many people, their biggest weaknesses include things like disorganization, public speaking, writing clearly and simply, and networking with confidence.

The key, however, is not just to recognize weaknesses, but to practice overcoming them.

Get some practice:

Schedule an activity (e.g., a public speaking opportunity or a networking event) that forces you to confront a fear or weakness. Remember, if a personal brand building activity gives you discomfort, it's probably something you should lean into, not away from.

Dive Deeper

Think about, and record below, what gives you anxiety about a particular activity. By recognizing our fears it makes them easier to overcome.

WEEK 5

Focus on a Niche



To build a powerful personal brand, and to succeed in today’s competitive environment, it’s important to offer the marketplace something different in the form of narrow, specialized expertise.

It’s not that being a well-rounded lawyer is a bad thing. A lawyer with depth and breadth of knowledge is obviously a valuable asset to a client. It’s just that positioning oneself as providing “full service” or possessing “general knowledge” is often ineffective from a personal branding standpoint.

Just as someone with a serious medical issue seeks out the medical specialist rather than the general practitioner, a prospective client is looking for the right lawyer to help solve a particular problem or take advantage of a particular opportunity. If you want to stand out, you can’t try to be all things to all people. Plus, by picking a particular type of expertise to focus on, it will be much easier to build a marketing and business development plan for your chosen, narrow market, than it would be to market more broadly.

For most lawyers potential areas of expertise to pursue and promote while crafting a personal brand can be identified at the intersection of interests, experience and market opportunities.

So ask yourself three questions:

What type of work do I like to do?

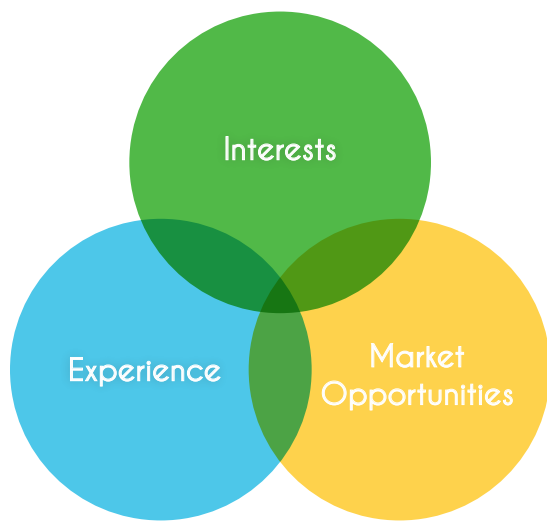
What type of work am I good at?

WEEK 5

Focus on a Niche



What opportunities exist in the marketplace? In other words, are people buying what I'd like to sell?



If you can determine what you like to do, what you're good at and where market opportunities exist, and then find some commonality among them, you'll be in good shape when it comes to carving out a niche and unique personal brand. For some associates who are very early in their careers, carving out a niche might involve focusing on some issue of internal importance, such as knowing the local court rules and practices inside and out, while maintaining a longer-term focus on building a practice or industry niche.

WEEK 6

Your Personal Brand Statement



It's time to pull together what you've been working on over the last five weeks and create your Personal Brand Statement. This is a short, succinct statement of your unique value proposition, including who you are as a person, what you do, why you do it, and who you serve, all in an interesting and compelling fashion. It's the story you get to tell to others, and it will serve as the foundation of how your brand is perceived—both online and offline.

Creating your Personal Brand Statement will also allow you to be more discerning with your most finite asset—your time. By defining who you are, what you do, and who you serve, you'll have criteria to use to determine what to say “yes” to and what to say “no” to as opportunities come your way.

THE CLARITY PARADOX

Speaking of time, as you build your brand and become more successful, take care not to fall victim to the “clarity paradox.”

In his excellent book, *Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less*, Greg McKeown discusses the dangers of the clarity paradox, which he explains has four phases:

Phase 1: When we really have clarity of purpose, it leads to success.

Phase 2: When we have success, it leads to more options and opportunities.

Phase 3: When we have increased options and opportunities, it leads to diffused efforts.

Phase 4: Diffused efforts undermine the very clarity that led to our success in the first place.

McKeown has summed up his point as follows: “Curiously, and overstating the point in order to make it, success is a catalyst for failure.” In other words, lawyers must stay vigilant so as not to fall victim to their own success.

WEEK 6

Your Personal Brand Statement



Note that your Personal Brand Statement is not your bio. You won't be discussing all of your practice area specialties or schools you attended. This Statement is meant to be short (around 5-6 sentences) and highlight the essence of who you are.

When you sit down to write your Statement, revisit the work you did over the last several weeks assessing your strengths, determining your "Why" and focusing on a niche. Drill down on what makes you different and try to keep the tone conversational. Avoid legal jargon.

As you are drafting your Personal Brand Statement, remember that powerful personal brands are:

AUTHENTIC • BOLD • UNIQUE

A powerful brand is one that is authentic in the sense that it truly reflects who you are and what you care about at this point in your career, but also aspirational in the sense that it also should reflect where you want to go in the future.

Draft your Personal Brand Statement in no more than 5-6 sentences:

WEEK 7

Deploy Your Personal Brand



The Personal Brand Statement you developed last week is not something you will share with the world verbatim. Rather, it should inform and guide your personal brand outward-facing assets, such as your website bio, social media profiles, and elevator pitch.

This week's task is to deploy your personal brand by updating your website bio (as appropriate), social media profiles, and elevator pitch to better reflect your Personal Brand Statement.

Make sure that the essence of your personal brand, as reflected in your Personal Brand Statement, is reflected in each of these assets. Also keep in mind that an effective elevator speech shouldn't be a "speech." It should be a short statement that is results-oriented and invites further inquiry.

Update all of the places, both online and off-line, where your personal brand is featured, including:

- Firm website bio
- LinkedIn and other social media profiles
- Author bio you use when writing a blog post or article
- Elevator speech
- Pitch decks
- Public speaking intros
- Bios featured for boards you are a member of or committees you're involved in

WEEK 8

Focus on Your Network and Identify Your 5



It's said that each person is the average of the five people he or she spends the most time with. That's as true in business relationships as it is in personal ones. Your personal brand is impacted—positively or negatively—by the company you keep.

The challenge that we face when networking and relationship building is that it's tempting to cast a really wide net. It's good to have a big network, but to truly leverage that network it's best to take a more surgical approach. After all, just one relationship can make all the difference in the world.

Your task this week is to identify the five highest value, and highest impact connections you have. This is the 80/20 rule of relationship building, where 20 percent of your contacts (if not less), typically account for 80 percent of the value (if not more).

Go through your contacts, your social media connections, the groups and organizations you belong to, and your former classmates, and identify five high value, high impact contacts. These may include a company CEO or general counsel; a prominent financial advisor or consultant; a reporter at a publication that is read by your target audience; or even another lawyer in your firm.

The point is not to have a network focused on only five people. Rather, the point of this exercise is to narrow your focus in order to better understand how cultivating deeper relationships with a smaller group is more effective than trying to keep up with a big network of loose relationships.

My "five" are:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

WEEK 9

Initiate Contact



Now that you've identified your "five," begin the process of reaching out to them. Ideally you will customize your approach with each person. That's because the nature of your existing relationship with each person will be different. Some, like a former classmate or current colleague, you may already know well. Others, like a reporter or general counsel, may simply be a connection on LinkedIn.

Tailor your approach. Think about it in these terms: If someone in a similar position was trying to reach out and establish rapport with you, what methods or approaches would resonate with you?

Here's the most important thing to keep in mind: Start with the sole objective of adding value to these people's lives and livelihoods. Before you can ask something of them, you need to give of yourself. That's the key to building an authentic relationship.

Here's my approach to reaching out to my "five":

1.

2.

3.

WEEK 9

Initiate Contact



4.

5.

Here are a few ideas to help you get started in the right direction:

- Send them a book or helpful article
- Invite them to lunch and focus the conversation on them
- Connect them with someone who may be able to help them
- Offer to co-write an article with them
- Send them referrals
- Share their content with your network

You get the idea. Over time the connection will grow into a relationship. Your personal brand will be elevated in their minds. When the time is right, the relationship will become reciprocal.

WEEK 10

Find Your Platforms



This week it's time to start thinking about building your personal brand as a thought leader in your niche to a broader audience. Through your writing you'll be able demonstrate expertise to those who are buying what you're selling. When the time comes, and someone in your audience is facing an opportunity or challenge of the type you've written about, you'll be in a position to transition the relationship from one of writer/reader to that of attorney/client.

This week's task is to identify your writing platforms. First, identify two outside publications that are read by your industry niche (one that you aspire to serve). Review their websites and reach out and initiate contact with their editors to find out if they work with outside contributors. Remember, almost all trade publications are starved for high quality content and welcome outside contributions. Consider co-authoring an article with a partner, which serves the purpose of making the article more attractive to the outside publication, and also will build brand equity for you with the partner.

Second, find an internal platform to publish on, such as a blog or newsletter.

My two outside publication targets are:1.

2.

My internal publishing platform is:1.

Of course, the work doesn't end here. Once you identify your platforms, the key is to start generating ideas and producing content. More about that in the next couple of weeks.

WEEK 11

Generate Ideas for Content



The best content is produced at the intersection of your expertise and your clients' interests. Once you go through the process of defining your personal brand, you'll have an understanding of what you want to write about. But the more difficult question is determining what your audience cares about. Many attorneys assume that they know, but really don't.

Your task this week is to work on generating ideas for content. Begin journaling and writing down content ideas in one dedicated space (either online or offline).

The best way to generate ideas is to pay attention to the issues and challenges being discussed by clients. Also research issues highlighted at relevant industry conferences, and in various forms of media. Look for opportunities where the challenges being faced by potential clients can be addressed and positively impacted by legal solutions.

Once you do some journaling and conduct some research, record five content ideas below:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

WEEK 12

Execute



This week's task is simple, but not simplistic. Outline and pitch an idea for one thoughtful article. Your pitch may be to a potential co-author partner, those responsible for an internal publication, or the editors of an outside publication.

The best pitches include:

1. An explanation of who your topic will be of interest and relevance to.
2. An attention-grabbing proposed headline.
3. A short summary of the problem or issue your piece will address.
4. A short summary of the solution or analysis that you plan to provide related to the problem or issue.

Write Down Your Pitch Below:

Conclusion



Congratulations on completing this Personal Branding Road Map! You should be proud of the work you put in and, hopefully, your newly polished brand is already starting to pay some dividends.

However, this is just the beginning, not the end of your personal brand journey. Your personal brand is constantly evolving, just as you are. That means that you must continually check-in with yourself to make sure that your personal brand reflects your current skills, expertise, purpose and passions.

And you must schedule time with yourself and block time on your calendar to create space to sharpen and spread awareness of your brand. Remember, if you're not setting your own priorities, you'll end up working on someone else's.

By staying on top of your brand, and projecting your best self to the marketplace, you'll complete the transition of transforming from an everyday associate to an Essential Associate!

NEVER STOP LEARNING

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Lawyers who succeed over the long-term are lifelong learners. They read, they study, they remain curious, and they put what they learn into action.

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