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The Brand Mapping Strategy

Karen Tiber Leland • Talks at Google © 2018

Marketing / Branding

Take-Aways

- Don't conflate your role with your brand. Roles will end, but you'll bring your brand archetype with you wherever you go.
- There are 12 brand archetypes: the fixer, facilitator, storyteller, synthesizer, mentor, connector, visionary, motivator, maker, advocate, implementer and interpreter.
- Build your brand by saying no to projects that don't suit your strengths, looking for projects that do, tracking your branding online and trusting your contributions.

Recommendation

In the space of six months, Karen Tiber Leland faced an extraordinary number of life changes. First, she got a divorce, then she moved away from California, then, her father and stepfather died. If she wasn't a wife, a Californian and a daughter, who was she? A yearlong research project led her to recognize that it's the energy you bring to a role, not the role itself, that defines you. In this Talk at Google, Leland discusses strategies and experiences that shape your personal brand, the 12 brand archetypes, and steps you can take to build your brand online.

Summary

Don't conflate your role with your brand. Roles will end, but you'll bring your brand archetype with you wherever you go.

You play many roles in your life – you may be a parent, a spouse, someone's child or sibling, and you probably play a specific role at work. The problem with identifying too closely with your current role is that eventually, the role will end. You can lose your job, a parent or spouse or child might die, and then you may find yourself asking, "Who am I?"

"By their nature, all roles eventually end."

You are not your job title or even your specialized knowledge. Your true contribution, or your brand, has more to do with "the weather you bring with you." For example, you may be training for a marathon, but that doesn't necessarily make you a "marathon runner." Instead, it makes you a person who likes to challenge yourself – it's your intrinsic qualities, not what you do, that matter.

Take, for example, the role of being a traffic cop on New York City's busy streets. Most traffic officers do their jobs with knowledge and precision, but once, Leland observed an officer who brought something completely different to the role. This officer was vibrant with happiness, leaping and laughing and interacting with drivers and pedestrians. It was her energy that made a difference, not her role. She'd established a personal brand in a role that's often inconspicuous.

There are 12 brand archetypes: the fixer, facilitator, storyteller, synthesizer, mentor, connector, visionary, motivator, maker, advocate, implementer and interpreter.

No matter the position you take on, it's likely that you'll bring a specific type of energy to your role. This is your brand archetype. Most people can step into a variety of different archetypes when the situation calls for it, but usually one or two of the following archetypes will come most naturally to you. Sometimes you can identify which archetype fits because it's a role you easily played as a child. There are the fixers, who take a special joy in pinpointing and solving problems. There are facilitators, who have a special gift for helping people to get inspired and cooperate to reach a common goal. There are storytellers, who know how to translate a situation into a persuasive narrative that inspires. Synthesizers find a way to take disparate ideas and put them together to make something novel and exciting.

“One of the other things I found in the research was that the best marriages, the best teams, the best departments, the best problem solving groups – all of those groups had people with different contribution styles with different brand energies, that it wasn’t just one.”

Mentors find a way to advise, teach, and guide others, and connectors are good at helping people network and meet others who can help them in their work. Visionaries are the idealists and dreamers who come up with new ideas and concepts, while motivators have a gift for helping people get started, propelling them forward, then cheering them on. Makers are the creators who bring things into existence, whether that’s through painting or writing or coding. Then there are the advocates, who can’t help but campaign about their latest cause, whether at a dinner party or at work. Implementers are the ones who get things done, whether through administration or achieving the goal themselves. Interpreters can communicate an idea in a new way.

It’s best to have a mix of archetypes within a group. A group of visionaries might have great ideas but never get anything done, while a group of implementers might get things done, but they might be working in the wrong direction.

Build your brand by saying no to projects that don’t suit your strengths, looking for projects that do, tracking your branding online and trusting your contributions.

People often say yes to projects because of a fear of missing out. Instead, over the next month, try to cultivate a “joy of missing out” on the wrong projects, and only accept or seek projects that help you along your path of crafting your own brand. You can also create your own projects outside of work – this may take the form of podcasting, blogging, writing articles or participating on panels. Each of these activities can help you create and manage your brand, but before embarking on these outside projects, see if there are any policies at your job that would keep you from doing these things. First and foremost, whatever you do, trust your contribution.

“Really owning the archetype that we are – really owning what our contribution is, and being certain about our contribution – is a big part of people who have strong personal brands.”

When representing yourself online, remember never to share anything that you wouldn’t share on the front page of *The New York Times*. That said, you don’t have to try to look perfect. When you embrace honesty and vulnerability, people will feel more connected to you. Google yourself once a month to see what future clients, co-workers or bosses might see, and strive to make your LinkedIn profile reflect your personal brand. If things go awry, you may be tempted to change your name or your company’s name, but remember that branding goes deeper than your name.

About the Speaker

Karen Tiber Leland is the founder and CEO of the Sterling Marketing Group, and author of *The Brand Mapping Strategy: Design, Build, and Accelerate Your Brand* and many other books.



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