

## + Raising your profile

By Daniel Munslow

"Why raise your profile? To attract the work you love; to be head-hunted; to elevate your status; to earn more." This is how the back page of Jenny Handley's new book, *Raise Your Profile*, describes what one can expect inside. The book is a fantastic read, even for the most experienced marketers. It is insightful and quirky, with fantastic anecdotal stories about how people have leveraged their strong points to build a personal and professional brand - 'brand me'.

The book follows a logical sequence, starting off with the idea of personal marketing. It could be argued that one should always ensure that they are positioned correctly in the industry, relative to themselves and where they see themselves going. During tough economic times and due to the soft economy we are experiencing at the moment, this has never been truer. Personal brands do stand out and carry weight: "Personal marketing is all about developing our brand into a recognisable one; defining our style; and standing out in a crowd. We need to have a mark of originality that is memorable." There are many schools of thought that suggest that job-searching is in fact a marketing campaign, where the job-seeker is the product. In most instances, no matter how good the product, they will not succeed without a marketing strategy. Everything begins with a plan. Handley's new book provides the framework for that plan, from assessing your individual brand value through to shaping the platform; product; packaging; place; price; people; promotion; profile; and a host of other P's. Creating a personal brand is not just reserved for when you are looking for a job. It should be the hallmark of who you are as a person – be it in business; in private; or as a company owner.

Handley also dedicates a chapter in her new book to the role of social media – a section titled 'push-button marketing'. She refers extensively to the role digital communications can play in the creation of a brand and raising its profile. The chapter starts off with the basics – creating a meaningful signature in an email, going through to the prioritisation of news that comes through, i.e. are you spending your time going through what's important, or wasting time on rubbish? Later, the complexities of social networking profiles; wikis; viral marketing; and web presence are unpacked, in an easy-to-understand manner. When reading the book, one cannot help but realise that the tools of marketing yourself are valuable as part of ongoing career management. A good self-marketer will ensure that they promote their strengths and talents to enable the achievement of specific goals. *Raise Your Profile* highlights the importance of knowing yourself; knowing who you are projecting 'brand me' to; and establishing a realistic and well-planned campaign for self-development.

Where Handley's book really cooks is in her simple-to-read tone and personal interaction with her readers, through the many first-hand stories and experiences. It is not your average academic slog, with terminology as long as the complete works of William Shakespeare. She also includes brand practice sections, where readers can apply the narrative to their lives. Using marketing strategies that have been useful in business is a good place to start, as the personal marketing plan contains important information about the basic five P's – especially how to position yourself. Evaluating and assessing ones' brand reputation is very similar to the process of measuring the brand presence of a company in the media. To second an analogy from media monitoring, it is critical to look at specific key performance areas in an analysis – these could be leadership; financial; corporate; and CSI, to name a few. This is done through extensive analysis of media presence and perception. Through analysis, this then forms a foundation of broader market research, having established brand value and presence from a media perspective. Similarly, one's own brand is looked at from the feedback and successes one can achieve in their professional career on a different set of matrices.

It is also credible to analogise a person to a business or product. Similar

to a Product Life Cycle, there is a Personal Life Cycle that highlights different points in one's career and where their brand is positioned at any point in time. *Raise Your Profile* is also useful if one wishes to take stock of where one is at and conduct a situational analysis. The book provides for all the basics, and forms the foundation upon which something like this could be done. As with any business plan, an important component is the follow up and periodic review. Reviewing your personal brand on a regular basis will ensure that you keep an eye on whether it's working for you or not. As with business, your options should be kept open to alternative strategies for achieving the set objectives. Again, this correlates to trends in media evaluation, where more and more measurement plans are being based on setting out goals and objectives and measuring the planned outcome through regular output. This is done through trended analysis and regular evaluation of campaign progress.

### About Jenny Handley

Jenny headed up the marketing and public relations department of Cavendish Square for over six years. In 1994, Jenny Handley Promotions was launched, and has since secured long-standing accounts through the reputation of always going the extra mile. In 2006, Jenny Handley co-authored the business book, *Raise your Game*, with Gavin Cowley. She regularly writes columns on self-development and business skills in *The Career Times* and *RISK SA* magazine. She has earned the reputation of brand strategist, and provides meaningful strategy consultations for those wanting to improve the way they do business; change direction in their career; or elevate their status within their industry.

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