Developing and Managing Personal Brands:

Strategies in Marketing, Public Relations, and Entertainment

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By

Julianna Barker

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Introduction

Statement of the Problem

This study focuses on various aspects of personal and celebrity branding and how current strategies in marketing, public relations, and entertainment industry contribute to their growth and management. In recent decades, branding has become an increasingly popular term. "The highest accomplishment of the advertising and marketing business—and its most cherished word—is the brand, a semi-fantasy world that is real enough to engender a type of willing suspension of disbelief (that Starbucks, for instance, isn't merely a fast-food chain)" (Wolff, 2011).

For years, marketing and public relations professionals have used branding as a way to increase visibility of products and individuals allowing them to stand out from a highly competitive market. By using traditional marketing tactics along with new advances in technology, personal and celebrity branding has rapidly developed as a strategic way to achieve various goals.

Background of the Problem

The existing literature regarding celebrity branding is relatively minimal and mainly focuses on the benefits of branding individuals as similar to the effects of branding products, services, and organizations in the past. By using traditional marketing strategies, changes in popular culture, and new technology, personal branding is an up and coming strategy that applies to any individual, celebrity or not, who is interested in achieving a specific goal and gaining visibility through current branding tactics.

Thomson (2006) argues, "From a practical standpoint, advancing the understanding of the relationship between consumers and human brands is important because much of the success of the $190 billion U.S. media and entertainment industry hinges on the successful positioning of one of its key assets, the celebrity" (p. 104).

Since individuals and celebrities are now more than ever before using their own names to capitalize on their brand, it is imperative to conduct research on the current strategies used by professionals in marketing, public relations, and the entertainment industry by collecting expert opinions on the topic of branding.

Purpose of the Study

According to the current trends in the field of branding, the influence of new technology leading to innovative media outlets, and shifts in culture are partially responsible for the increased development of personal and celebrity brands. Many celebrities have created brands that include clothing lines, television shows, magazines, perfumes, and other products that have led to dynamic, successful careers.

One way celebrity brands acquire buzz is by creating an emotional attachment with the public. Now, modern celebrities are able to communicate directly with fans through social networking websites. At the same time, celebrity brands must also continue to use traditional brand management tactics such as keeping their endorsements synonymous with their values. By investigating the current strategies used to develop and manage personal brands it will benefit marketing, public relations, and entertainment industry professionals who consistently develop and manage these brands.

Setting for the Study

This study will be done as part of the data collection for a Senior Project at California Polytechnic State University located in San Luis Obispo, California. Interviews will be conducted with three experts in the following fields: marketing, public relations, and entertainment. The experts will each be asked the same set of questions and probes. The questionnaire is specifically designed to answer the research questions and fill the gaps in previous literature on the topic of personal brand development and management.

Research Questions

The study used following research questions that were designed to answer fundamental gaps in the existing literature on the topic development and management of personal and celebrity brands. Each question was created after investigating the existing information on the topic in order to acquire additional pertinent and necessary data from professionals in the fields of marketing, public relations, and entertainment for the study.

1. How does one gain visibility through the creation of a brand?

2. How does personal or celebrity branding differ from corporate or product branding?

3. How does one develop a personal or celebrity brand from the ground up using strategic planning?

4. How does one manage a celebrity brand using tools and tactics currently being used in the marketing, public relations, and entertainment industries?

5. How and why has the idea of a celebrity changed over time?

6. How can success and widespread knowledge of a personal brand be measured?

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined to clarify several of the terms on the topic and assist the reader and provide context to the remainder of the study.

Attachment Theory: a theory proven to contribute to current marketing strategies based on the quality of attachments between a consumer and a brand by creating trustworthy, loyal relationships with the consumer (Thomson, 2006, p. 105).

Brand: a name, term, sign, symbol, or design or combination of them intended to identify the goods or services and differentiate them from competitors (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 4).

Brand Alliance: the short-or-long term association of both tangible and intangible qualities associated with brand partners in order to increase visibility of one or both brands (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 7).

Brand Equity: the increased profits or benefits of a branded product, corporation or person compared to those with no brand name attached (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 7)

Brand Extension: an additional product or service that is released under a previously established brand name in order to reduce the costs of introducing a new product under a new brand entirely (Raugust, 2010, p. 228).

Brand Image: a single image perceived by the consumer based on consistent associations the consumer has with the brand name (Raugust, 2010, p. 228).

Brand Personality: a set of human characteristics that a brand associates with it (Aaker, 1997, p. 347).

Pioneering Advantage: the benefit of being the first to enter a market and occupy the best position for future competitors (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 6).

Positioning and Transaction Statement (Uniqueness Statement): a phrase or position used in creating a personal brand to explain what differentiates an individual from others (Deckers & Lacy, 2011, p. 120-121).

Schema Congruity Theory: a theory describing the idea that consumers have specific thoughts, memories, or feelings associated with brands, and which are then set off when a celebrity, product, or other brand name is mentioned. (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 165).

Organization of Study

Chapter 1 included the background of the problem, purpose of the study, and a definition of terms. Chapter 2 will identify the trends regarding personal and celebrity brand development and management by reviewing the current literature on the topic. Chapter 3 will present the methodology of the study. In Chapter 4, the findings will be presented and organized based on the original research questions. The data will then be analyzed compared to the current literature on the topic. Lastly, Chapter 5 will include a summary of the study and recommendations for professionals in the marketing, public relations, and entertainment industry to develop and manage a personal branding campaign.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The review of literature focuses on the existing literature on personal and celebrity branding including various trends, methods for assessment, and theoretical frameworks regarding brand development and management and the evolution of celebrity.

Gaining Visibility Through a Brand

According to Deckers and Lacy (2011) the purpose of brand is "an emotional response to the image or name of a particular company, product, or person" (p. 25). Kahle and Kim (2006) view a brand as "a 'name, term, sign, symbol, or design or combination of them which is intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors" (p. 4).

Developing a brand image, or a single image perceived by the consumer based on consistent associations the consumer has with the brand name is often used to gain product value by transforming product experience (Raugust, 2010, p. 228). This creates what is known as "brand equity." Brand equity is the "incremental cash flows which accrue to a branded product over and above the cash flows which would result from the sale of a product with no brand name" (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 7).

The way brands can enter, gain, and hold a place in a market and inhibit market entry from competitors is through pioneering advantage, brand extension, and brand alliance. In terms of pioneering advantage, "many of the strongest brand names (General Electric, Coca Cola, Hallmark) were among the first to be strongly associated with the respective product categories" (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 6). Through brand extension, organizations can launch new products under the same brand "as a way to reduce the

tremendous cost of new product introduction" (p. 7). "A brand alliance may best be described as the short-or-long term association or combination of tangible and intangible attributes associated with brand partners." This is commonly done as a "cobrand partnership" where two brands uniting together to brand one new product (p. 7).

A relatively new angle of branding is marketing people are products. "Whether they are an athlete or an actor or an actress, has intangible assets: a name, a reputation, a credibility and an image. All of those attributes may be combined into something that could be made into a brand" (Towle 2003).

According to Schawbel (2009), "Personal branding is about unearthing what is true and unique about you and letting everyone know about it." (p. 1) "One of its main purposes, they say, is to stand out amid an increasingly crowded field" ("Celebrity branding," 2003). Schawbel adds that the key to personal branding is visibility. "The more people who either know you or have heard of you, the better." (Schawbel, 2009, p. 10)

Personal Brands Versus Corporate Brands

In general, techniques originally used to create and sell a product are now being utilized for the creation of personal and celebrity brands. While the term 'brand' is typically applied to firms, products, and services, Thomson (2006) adds, "celebrities can also be considered brands because they can be professionally managed and because they have additional associations and features of a brand" (p. 105).

According to Brian Dubin, head of WMA's East Coast commercial division, the line between personal and brand has blurred, and celebrities have begun applying techniques from the corporate world to their careers: marketing and protecting a brand identity, trademarking and licensing their names, launching their own product lines and

embracing product endorsements to boost their perceived value to consumers (Towle, 2003).

Thomson (2006) uses an example of political campaigns to demonstrate this idea. "The candidate's message, public appearance, endorsements, and so on, are all controlled by consultants and political parties in the hopes of managing perceived quality and brand image to increase 'market share' at the polls" (p. 105).

Rindova, Pollack, and Hayward (2008) add that individual level celebrity creation is analogous to the marketing process for launching a product. In their view, individuals can deploy the celebrity making enterprise to create a 'celebrity persona' that resonates with the audience. Thus, publicists, photographers, scriptwriters, event planners, and other experts that create desired images and 'sell' them to the media play an important role in the construction of celebrity (p. 61).

Research by Kahle and Kim (2006) suggest that corporate brands, products, and services strengthen their brand image and value by focusing on associations that strengthen their own positioning. Similarly, individuals must choose objects, activities, and people to create positive connections to add brand equity to the brand (p. 166).

Creating a Personal Brand

Michael Levine, Hollywood publicist and author of "A Branded World," suggests the basic underpinning to developing a personal brand. "Start with a mission. What is your unique selling proposition? What does that brand stand for?" (Towle, 2003). Further research by McQueen (2007) suggests the same. "The first step to personal branding is coming up with a 'uniqueness statement'" (p. 20). Deckers and Lacy (2011) call this idea the "positioning and transaction statement."

According to Schawbel (2009), you need to approach your career in terms of *differentiation* (standing out in the crowd) and *marketability* (providing something people want or need) (p. 3). Creating a brand, say those who are doing it, means taking something amorphous and making it tangible. Branding also can mean simply identifying a career goal and implementing a game plan to achieve it (Towle, 2003). Deckers and Lacy (2011) suggest the five universal objectives to creating a personal brand: (1) discovering your passion, (2) being bold, (3) telling your story, (4) creating relationships, and (5) taking action.

In terms of celebrity, the brand is formed by the media's careful selection, prearranged, and often manipulated information about an individual to create a 'persona' that sparks a positive emotional response from the public (Rindova, Pollack, & Hayward, 2008, p. 52). In addition, "the media play a central role in the process of celebrity creation because they control both the technology that disseminates information about [brands] to large audiences and the content of the information disseminated" (Rindova, et al., p. 56).

Research by Thomson (2006) states that in order to form a successful personal brand one must also create attachments with consumers, and the most relevant theory associated with marketing is the attachment theory. "If marketers understand what determines the strength of attachments, they may be in a better position to foster more durable relationships with consumers" (Thomson, 2006, p. 105). Further research from Thomson (2006) describes attachments as what children feel towards their parents that they develop with other 'targets' such as human brands later on (p. 105). "It is clear from the literature that names use the same words to describe their attachments to human brands as they do to describe their strong interpersonal relationships" (Thompson, p. 111).

Further research by Towle (2003) adds that when creating a celebrity brand it can be a challenge, but it is a necessity to develop an entity that allows the central spokesperson room to evolve. Towle (2003) uses Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen as an example. "[They have] grown up in the public eye, and their brand has grown with them…The twins prefer the brand values of 'aspiration and empowerment.'" In addition, "Celebrity branding" (2003) discusses the way Oprah Winfrey used similar techniques to build her brand on the strength of her personality and self-empowerment image. "Usually those who take a long view and grow their brand slowly have the longest shelf life" ("Celebrity branding," 2003).

Managing a Personal Brand

According to Oliver (2007), the most common area of confusion by practitioners is the daily management of a brand image (p. 4). "A strong brand identity can be the source of competitive and financial strength. However, managing brand identity is a complex and difficult management task" (Heding, Knudtzen, & Bjerre, 2009, p. 70).

A study by Hallahan (2000) shows that when presenting public relations messages regarding brands, one must focus on the motivation, ability, and opportunity behind the message. For instance, novel stimuli, or new, unique ideas are more likely to motivate an audience to act. The use of symbols, logos, or slogans increases the potential of the audience to recall the brand. Finally, the use of various outlets and media channels lead to increased exposure and visibility giving more opportunities for the target audience to process them.

"Brand Management 2.0" (2008) describes new media outlets and interactive content that are now being used by to engage consumers. This new technology, sometimes

called Web 2.0, is raising the expectations of the online consumer (Brand Management 2.0, 2008, p. 30-31). Google, You Tube, Facebook, Blogger and others have reshaped our thinking about the brand experience. At the same time, declining effectiveness of traditional advertising and mass media channels have us questioning what really works (Brand Management 2.0, p. 30-31).

Rindova, Pollack, Hayward (2008) suggest that the traditional media already has a powerful effect on public reactions to personal brands. "[Journalists] seek information that highlights change and present that information in dramatic narratives." During this process, the individuals presented as protagonists in their dramatic narratives, become celebrity brands (p. 56).

Furthermore, "celebrities have become astute in managing their own brand images to enhance their brand equity and then attaching it to a saleable product or service for a price" (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 162). "With greater celebrity, individuals attract more rent-generating opportunities, including participation in films, shows, games, and endorsement opportunities" (Rindova, Pollack, Hayward, 2008, p. 53).

Kahle and Kim (2006) suggest that celebrities appearing in advertisements, as endorsers will also create more consumer attention, increase the likelihood of purchase of the products that the celebrity is endorsing, and reinforced the image of the brand. (p. 161). "An endorsement involves the transfer of the cultural meanings of the celebrity into the endorsed brand…Celebrities have been known to exploit this effect by carefully choosing their endorsements so as to enhance their own brand images" (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 164). Celebrity endorsers do not necessarily need to be an exact fit with the brand if there is already a strongly attached target market in existence (Thomson, 2006, p. 117). According

to Pringle (2004), evidence suggests that endorsement campaigns are highly effective in promoting the brands with which they are aligned (p.10).

Kahle & Kim (2006) suggest that overall it is crucial to keep the celebrity's identity aligned with his or her brand. "If the brand image is not congruent with the brand identity of the celebrity, consumers will form a ambiguous image of the celebrity, resulting in depreciation of brand equity of the celebrity and the stage persona" (p. 166). Celebrities are advised to guard themselves from personal miscues that can often be transformed into a public reputation by the media, and potentially change the public's perception of the celebrity brand. "Managers must introduce a human brand to the world carefully and deliberately and choose a positioning that is appealing and sustainable over time" (Thomson, 2006, p. 116). Further research by Kahle and Kim (2006) advises professionals to focus on brand image, personal values, and the integration of promotional tools when managing a brand (p. 279).

Research shows that better understanding of the causal links between the contemporary desire for fame in different market segments would enable marketers and communications specialists to develop more effective communications strategies (Goutas 2007, p. 2920).

Evolution of Celebrity

According to Jackall and Hirota (2000), throughout history political and religious authorities have used images of themselves on coins, statues, and monuments as a form of mass media to create what today would be considered personal brands. "Public relations historically depended on rulers' and officials' perceptions of the importance of public opinion to protect or extend their legitimacy" (p. 11). "Following World War II public

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relations (PR) grew 'from a one-dimensional 'press agentry' function into a sophisticated communications network connecting the most powerful elements of our society.'" (Gamson, 1994, p. 42).

According to Turner (2004), the idea of celebrity is likely found at the beginning of the twentieth century during the start of the American motion picture industry. In addition, Turner adds that the evolution of celebrity is inevitable. "A phenomenon as culturally pervasive as celebrity must have numerous points of origin, numerous points of change" (p. 12). For instance, "The modern celebrity may claim no special achievements other than the attraction of public attention" (p. 3).

According to Gountas (2007, citing Pringle & Binet (2005) "Fame is now a commercial construct, created by commercial interests to serve commercial objectives rather than social goals" (p. 2916). As change from the discovery of star quality to the manufacturing a suitable celebrity for an audience, celebrities became the products and fans became the market. "Terms began to change: the celebrity was becoming 'merchandise,' 'inventory,' 'property,' a 'product,' a 'commodity,' while the fans were becoming 'markets'" (Gamson, 1994, p. 45).

"Celebrity is the potential of capitalism, a celebration of new kinds of values and orders, a debunking of the customary divisions of traditional society, for the celebrity himself or herself is dependent entirely on the new order" (Marshall, 1997, p. 6). Marketing researchers consider celebrities to be the "marriage of entertainment and fame to create and sell highly visible products," where the product is the celebrity. (Rindova, Pollack, & Hayward, 2008, p. 52).

According to Gamson (1994), the trends towards niche markets for advertising and product development have become more manipulated, news began relying more on entertainment industry as sources of "infotainment," and "the technologies for providing a visual image that *imitates the representation* of an activity, event, or person, rather than representing it directly, have become highly developed" (p. 42). In addition, Kahle and Kim (2006) suggest that cultural meanings within celebrity brands come from the association of the individual with various objects, people, and events (p. 164).

"Human-interest journalism made people aware that even millionaires can have unhappy love lives, but it also advanced the tendency to judge the rich less by their power to sway public events than by their lives at home" (Snyder, 2003, p. 441). "Drawing such a close relationship between the celebrity and the inauthenticity of contemporary popular culture interprets celebrity as a symbol of cultural change" (Turner, 2004, p. 5). "The celebrity phenomenon has largely been created by the movies and television, but there is no doubt that other media have played a significant part" (Pringle, 2004, p. 10).

"The pervasiveness of celebrity reflects the growing reach and range of media outlets, including television and the Internet" (Rindova, Pollack, & Hayward, 2008, p. 55). According to Thomson (2006), the focus has now shifted towards direct communication of the celebrity with the consumer due to the development of new technology. "If the human brand had a meaningful presence online through the use of blogs or chat rooms, attached consumers would gather to ask questions or to learn more about the human brand in his or her own words" (p. 116).

Measuring Success of a Personal Brand

According to Deckers and Lacy (2011), ways to measure the success of a personal brand are quality of the individual's network, visibility, and influence. If fans or followers are responding and taking action to the brand, it is an indication of success (p. 135). This usually reflects the visibility of the brand including search engine optimization and number of searches or views each day (p. 136). Influence is another way to measure success of a personal brand. "Influence is the ability to cause desirable and measureable actions and outcomes" (p. 137). For instance, "Celebrity role models are frequently used to influence consumer choices and behaviour; the increased number of paid commercial advertising communications reflects the power of celebrities to influence consumers" (Gountas, 2007, p. 2916).

Kahle and Kim (2006) suggest the connection between brands and the Schema Congruity Theory, "The schematic memory of a brand or celebrity is what the consumer thinks of and feels when the name of the brand or celebrity is mentioned" (p. 165). "A person becomes a brand at the point where he or she appeals to those outside the target audience" ("Celebrity branding," 2003). Additional resaerch by Thomson (2006) suggests the strength of attachments as the most efficient measurement to assess consumer-brand relationships (p. 116). "Although consumers may like many celebrities, they will be strongly attached to only a few and be willing to sacrifice for and invest in these human brands to a greater extent" (Thomson, 2006, p. 117).

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter presents the methods used to collect data for the study including the data sources, collection and presentation of the data, and delimitations.

Data Sources

For this study, one expert from the field of marketing, public relations, and entertainment were interviewed based on a single questionnaire. This questionnaire was specifically developed to answer the original research questions regarding the development and management of personal brands. The marketing expert selected for the interview was

Participants.

Ellen Curtis, creative commander and managing partner of Whizbang Marketing Firm, an award-winning advertising agency in San Luis Obispo, California. The public relations expert selected was Mary Verdin, president of Verdin Marketing Ink, a well-known public relations firm in San Luis Obispo, California. The entertainment industry expert selected was Dan Schawbel. Schawbel has been giving the title of "personal branding guru" by the *New York Times* and has interviewed hundreds of business professionals and celebrities who have had successful branding experiences.

Interview Design.

The following questions and probes were asked each of the experts and served as data sources for the study:

1. How would you, as an expert in your field, describe branding a person, company, or product as a way to increase public visibility? Please give an example of when the creation of a brand led to increased visibility.

2. How would you define personal branding versus corporate branding? Please give an example of each.

3. How would you create a personal brand for a client from the ground up? What are some specific tactics and tools currently being used in your field?

4. How would you then manage that brand strategically using:

   a. New technology (i.e. social media)

   b. Traditional media and endorsements

   c. Reputation or crisis management

5. In your opinion, how and why has the idea of celebrity changed over time? Do these changes hurt or help the reputation of what it means to be a celebrity? Why?

6. How would you measure the success of a personal brand? Please provide examples.

Data Collection

The method of data collection for this study was three individual interviews with each expert. The interviews were conducted during May 2011 and lasted approximately 45 minutes each. "Since intensive fieldwork can be time-consuming, the ethnographic approach can adopt a clinical perspective, where qualitative interviews are the main research instrument" (Heding, Knudtzen, & Bjerre, 2009, p. 67-68). During the interviews, experts were asked questions from a single questionnaire designed to provide answers to the original research questions while gaining insight into current personal and celebrity branding strategies.

Data Presentation

  The data collected during the each interview was documented through audio recordings using a digital voice recorder as well as written verbatim notes during and after the interviews to document any additional information that could potentially clarify the context of the responses. This method of data collection ensures that the data is presented in the most complete and objective way possible.

Delimitations

  There are limitations to this study based on the type of data collected and interview process. The study was conducted to gain insight into current personal branding strategies in the experts' respective fields as well as their own personal opinions on branding. Therefore, some limitations may exist based on the assumption that the responses are qualitative and opinion-based and therefore cannot be generalized.

  Additionally, while interviews with Mary Verdin and Ellen Curtis were face-to-face interviews conducted in San Luis Obispo, California, the interview with Dan Schawbel was conducted by phone. Due to his location in Boston, Massachusetts, the possibility of a face-to-face interview was not feasible for the study. Although the audio from the interview was recorded, there are some potential limitations based on the clarity and informality of the interview.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

Chapter 4 will provide descriptions of the experts interviewed in the study and summarize the respondents' answers to the questionnaire. Since the data was collected through recorded interviews lasting approximately 45 minutes, it will be presented in the form of direct quotations or paraphrased responses. The answers will then be analyzed and compared to the original research questions and the existing literature on personal and celebrity branding as reviewed in Chapter 2.

Description of Participating Experts in Related Fields

Marketing.

Ellen Curtis was the marketing expert for the study. Curtis has served as creative commander and managing partner of Whizbang Marketing Firm with her partner, Frank Scotti for eight years. The award-winning firm is located in San Luis Obispo, California and develops advertising, branding, public relations, design, and other strategic promotional campaigns for clients nationwide. More recently, she and Scotti opened a food and beverage marketing division called Recipe. She has worked in marketing for over 22 years, beginning as a copywriter after graduating Boston University and then promoted to creative director and senior partner at several well-known international advertising agencies.

Public Relations.

The public relations industry expert selected for the study was Mary Verdin, president of Verdin Marketing Ink. Verdin started the business from the ground up over

seven years ago. Since then it has won regional, national, and international awards. Verdin Marketing Ink specializes in public relations and new media strategies. Verdin is a member of Public Relations Society of America and has over 18 years of public relations and communication experience. She has worked for city and country governments as well as private business and nonprofit organizations.

Entertainment.

Dan Schawbel was selected as the entertainment expert for the study. Schawbel has been given the title of "personal branding guru" by the *New York Times* and is currently managing partner of Millennial Branding, LLC, founder of *Personal Branding Magazine* and Personal Branding Blog, and a personal branding columnist for *BusinessWeek*. He has written the #1 international best selling career book *Me 2.0:4 Steps to Building Your Future*. He has also been named in *Inc. Magazine's* 30 under 30 list. His specialty in the entertainment industry stems from his experience interviewing over 370 successful business people and celebrities who have succeeded in creating well-known personal brands. Some of his interviews include Nicole Richie, Tony Hawk, MC Hammer, Kathy Ireland, Jerry Springer, Perez Hilton, Timbaland, George Foreman, and Ivanka Trump.

Personal Branding Questionnaire

Each expert was asked to respond to the following questions and probes regarding personal branding and celebrity status:

1. How would you, as an expert in your field, describe branding a person, company, or product as a way to increase public visibility? Please give an example of when the creation of a brand led to increased visibility.

Question #1 was asked to gain insight in ways professionals would define branding as a positive tool and why is exists in the each field. The question was designed to clarify what branding means in all aspects of the term to make the following questions more easily understood for both the experts and the reader.

- Ellen Curtis: "To differentiate yourself from everyone else and add value to whatever product or service you offer" (Appendix A).

- Mary Verdin: "The way I look at a brand is the whole idea of branding cattle…When you brand cattle, you have a metal tool that you heat up and then you brand the cattle, right? Well the brand is not the metal tool, the brand is the impression that's left behind" (Appendix B).

- Dan Schawbel: "It lowers the risk…Brands charge a premium price, more money, because of all the marketing and the fact that people trust the brand and the brand is consistent" (Appendix C).

2. How would you define personal branding versus corporate branding? Please give an example of each.

Question #2 was designed to investigate the variations between personal or celebrity branding and corporate or product branding. The question was especially important to include due to the recent popularity of personal branding while product branding has been more readily known for a longer time. It serves as a source of comparison between traditional product branding techniques and innovative new ways individuals are promoting themselves as brands.

- Ellen Curtis: "The same processes that we as marketers use to brand a product or service would be the same for an individual brand. I mean, you have to think

about what is that thing that differentiates yourself…Well it's different because what makes you you is different than a product…You're not going to be faster, cheaper, more tasty– although you might be" (Appendix A).

- Mary Verdin: "It's just like you're writing a marketing plan. What's your point of differentiation? If I'm looking at twenty people for one position and they're all Cal Poly graduates, why am I going to pick you over someone else? It's funny because all twenty of those Cal Poly student might have the same skillset and know the same technology just as well as one another, but if one is talking about it and the others aren't, that's when you're going to get it" (Appendix B).

- Dan Schawbel: "Corporate branding exists at a very high level. A corporate brand is Coca-Cola. The product brand is Coke cans, for instance. A personal brand is someone who works at the company. Typically, the larger the personal brand, the higher up their title is" (Appendix C).

3. How would you create a personal brand for a client from the ground up? What are some specific tactics and tools currently being used in your field?

Question #3 was created to get a brief description from each respondent regarding the first steps one should take when developing a personal brand in the marketing, public relations, and entertainment fields. This question was also included to get the experts' insight into any additional tactics professionals are currently using to brand individuals in related professions.

- Ellen Curtis: "The first thing to a brand is you really have to understand what is it about yourself that differentiates yourself, that's going to stand out and resonate with the people that you want to brand yourself to...the same things

that you would do for a product or service. You're going to do a target market

analysis, your internal audiences, your external audiences..." (Appendix A).

- Mary Verdin: "If you're creating a personal brand, I think you would look at,

  what is the image we're trying to project and who are we trying to reach? So

  we'll look at things we believe in here as a company. I want people to know

  that we believe in the community and we give back to the community. I want

  people to think that we have a lot of integrity, and I want people to know we are

  service-oriented. So how do I get there?" (Appendix B).

- Dan Schawbel: "Okay, so it's a four-step process. The first one is discover. It's

  about figuring out who you are, how you want to brand yourself, what you want

  to be known for…Establishing short-term and long-term goals, and creating a

  personal mission or vision for yourself and where you want to go in your

  career" (Appendix C).

4. How would you then manage that brand strategically using:

   a. New technology (i.e. social media)

   b. Traditional media and endorsements

   c. Reputation or crisis management

Question #4 was designed to follow the previous question regarding the creation of

a personal or celebrity brand. It was asked to find relevant ways in which experts and other

professionals in their respective fields manage a personal brand once it has been

established. Several probes following Question #4 narrows management strategies using

new technology, traditional media, and crisis or reputation management.

- Ellen Curtis: "Well the number one thing about branding is you have to go at it all the time and just because you're not having immediate traction– it takes three to five years to build a brand and that's at a very large spend level, right? [You must be] consistently in front of your target audience. So it's sort of a consistency and commitment. Branding's all about you look the same, you talk the same…" (Appendix A).
- Mary Verdin: "The way technology has advanced so rapidly, it's a double-edged sword. It bring us a lot of tools… You lose a little more control, but it's fabulous though. The things you can do to get a message out there quickly…you might have heard this in PR. The rule is mess up, fess up, clean up. If you screw up, you've got to be honest about it, and then you've got to fix it" (Appendix B).
- Dan Schawbel: "Well it really depends where they want to head. What are they looking to do next? Are they going to start another movie or are they not going to be an actor anymore and write a book? It really depends on the situation. When you figure out what you want to do, then you just position yourself accordingly, and then you reach out to the right people in those new fields and you just do the best you can, but you have to be persistent. You can't just stop" (Appendix C).

5. In your opinion, how and why has the idea of celebrity changed over time? Do these changes hurt or help the reputation of what it means to be a celebrity? Why?

Question #5 was designed to get perspectives from each expert on how the ideas of celebrity and fame have evolved with the development of technology and changes in

popular culture. It was asked to gain insight in the changes in celebrities from the beginning of the twentieth century or prior to the modern celebrity of today. Collecting data on the evolution of celebrity was necessary due to the increasing use of personal branding as a tool to gain celebrity status among individuals.

- Ellen Curtis: "So, from the 80s, I mean there was this real idolization of celebrity and all the way through the 90s. And I think as the consumer gets more in the driver's seat, the consumer has always been smart, but is also very savvy to marketing messages. Just the oversaturation of celebrity, I think Britney Spears and Paris Hilton, that whole group, I think everyone was just sort of throwing up in their mouth after awhile… I think the real shift is when the consumer had all the tools to really be in the driving seat. People make people celebrities" (Appendix A).

- Mary Verdin: "T-M-I. We know way too much about everything…I mean, how many times is Donald Trump going to ask for Obama's birth certificate when the hospital's verified it? Do we have to get into everybody's underwear drawer? And maybe there's someplace in between that is the right place to be. I mean, I don't think you should hide stuff from the people…the world has changed. I just think there's way too much information. The paparazzi and pictures of everybody everywhere doing everything" (Appendix B).

- Dan Schawbel: "Well anyone in the world can have their own platform and establish a following on the Internet now...People view themselves as celebrities now. The word 'micro-celebrity' has been passed around for the last four years. People even using Facebook, if you have 50 friends on Facebook, I

guess you're a celebrity to those 50 people, you are known by those people. So the word celebrity has drifted, but still at the high level the celebrity is still the celebrity" (Appendix C).

6. How would you measure the success of a personal brand? Please provide examples.

Question #6 was designed to gain insight into the way experts and professionals in the marketing, public relations, and entertainment field measure the success of a brand. The ambiguous term "success" was used intentionally to gather particularly subjective responses of how one would assess brand achievement and what a successful personal brand means in the corresponding industries.

- Ellen Curtis: "The way we work here, we all have our goals. Every brand has its goals, so when it hits that goal…I branded myself. I got that really great job that started my career, so that to me was my personal branding success. For someone like Donald Trump, maybe his personal goal is to be president of the United States so that's how he measures his branding success" (Appendix A).

- Mary Verdin: "Again, coming from the point of measurement is part of being strategic. So, at the beginning saying what do I want my personal brand to be? I want it to be these three things…and going back to those objectives because why have them if you are not going to measure to those?" (Appendix B).

- Dan Schawbel: "That depends what your version of success is. I would say making money doing what you love. That is my typical definition of success. You could make a million dollars, but hate your life and that's no good" (Appendix C).

Personal Branding Research Questions

For this project, the following six research questions were created for the study to determine what current practices and strategies are being used among marketing, public relations, and entertainment industry professionals and collect expert opinions on the evolution of celebrity and measuring personal branding success.

Research question 1: How does one gain visibility through the creation of a brand?

- "Brand equity is the "incremental cash flows which accrue to a branded product over and above the cash flows which would result from the sale of a product with no brand name" (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 6-7).

Research question 2: How does personal or celebrity branding compare to product or corporate branding?

- "The line between personal and brand has blurred, and celebrities have begun applying techniques from the corporate world to their careers: marketing and protecting a brand identity, trademarking and licensing their names, launching their own product lines and embracing product endorsements to boost their perceived value to consumers" ("Celebrity branding," 2003).

- "In marketing, the term 'brand' is typically applied to firms, products, and services…Celebrities can also be considered brands because they can be professionally managed and because they have additional associations and features of a brand" (Thomson, 2006, p. 105).

Research question 3: How does one develop a personal or celebrity brand from the ground up using strategic planning?

- "The first step to personal branding is coming up with a 'uniqueness statement'" (McQueen, 2007, p. 20).

- "Creating a brand, say those who are doing it, means taking something amorphous and making it tangible. Branding also can mean simply identifying a career goal and implementing a game plan to achieve it" ("Celebrity branding," 2003).

- Research question 4: How does one manage a personal or celebrity brand using tools and tactics currently being used in the marketing, public relations, and entertainment industries?

- "Managers must introduce a human brand to the world carefully and deliberately and choose a positioning that is appealing and sustainable over time" (Thomson, 2006, p. 116).

- Kahle & Kim (2006) suggest that it is crucial to keep the celebrity's identity aligned with his or her brand. "If the brand image is not congruent with the brand identity of the celebrity, consumers will form a ambiguous image of the celebrity, resulting in depreciation of brand equity of the celebrity and the stage persona" (p. 166).

Research question 5: How and why has the idea of a celebrity changed over time?

- According to Gamson (1994), as change from the discovery of star quality to the manufacturing a suitable celebrity for an audience, celebrities became the products and fans became the market. "Terms began to change: the celebrity was becoming 'merchandise,' 'inventory,' 'property,' a 'product,' a 'commodity,' while the fans were becoming 'markets'" (p. 45).

Research question 6: How can success and widespread knowledge of a personal brand be measured?

- Deckers and Lacy (2011) describe ways to measure the success of a personal brand as the quality of the individual's network, visibility, and influence. If fans or followers are responding and taking action to the brand, it is an indication of success (p. 135).

- Additional research by Thomson (2006) states that the strength of attachments is the most efficient measurement to assess consumer-brand relationships. "Although consumers may like many celebrities, they will be strongly attached to only a few and be willing to sacrifice for and invest in these human brands to a greater extent" (Thomson, 2006, p. 117).

Personal Branding Data

For this study, it was important to see what other experts said due to the relatively small amount of pertinent information that currently exists on the topic of personal and celebrity branding. In order to acquire this data Ellen Curtis, a marketing expert, Mary Verdin, a public relations expert, and Dan Schawbel, an entertainment and personal branding expert were interviewed for the study. They were each asked identical questions specifically designed to answer the original research questions in an individual interview setting. The following tables present the respondents' answers in the form of their individual perspectives on the original research questions.

Research question #1: How does one gain visibility through the creation of a brand?

- This research question was studied in response to the current literature that exists on the topic of branding in general. A substantial amount of research discusses the main purpose of branding as a way "to stand out amid an increasingly crowded field" ("Celebrity branding," 2003). For instance, the literature states that the way brands can enter, gain, and hold a place in a market and inhibit market entry from competitors is through pioneering advantage, brand extension, and brand alliance (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 6). According to Towle (2003), a new perspective of brand image is branding people as products.

This question was studied in to gain insight in the way professionals would define or describe branding in general and why is exists in these three fields as a way to promote a wide spectrum of products, services, corporations, and, more recently, people. It is apparent from the literature that there is not widespread public knowledge of what branding means. This question was asked to clarify and define branding in all aspects of the term in order to make the proceeding questions more easily understood for both the experts and the reader.

Table 1 summarizes he answers to this question elicited fairly consistent answers which all tied closely to the literature on the topic. All three of the respondents viewed branding as a way to differentiate a product, person, service, or company from competitors in one way or another. Curtis used Donald Trump as an example of an individual gaining increased visibility through a brand, while Verdin and Schawbel mentioned brand name products or corporations that are well known to the public.

Table 1

Gaining Visibility Through a Brand

Respondent	Professionals use branding because…	Example of increased visibility using a brand
Ellen Curtis	Differentiation from competitors	Donald Trump
Mary Verdin	Leaves an impression on target audience	Tylenol, Advil, McDonalds
Dan Schawbel	Lowers risk, builds trust	McDonalds, Apple, Nike

Research question #2: How does personal or celebrity branding compare to product or corporate branding?

This research question was studied in order to find out what the main differences are between the processes and goals of branding a product or corporation and branding an individual or celebrity. "The line between personal and brand has blurred, and celebrities have begun applying techniques from the corporate world to their careers: marketing and protecting a brand identity, trademarking and licensing their names, launching their own product lines..." (Towle, 2003).

This question was designed to investigate the variations between personal and celebrity branding and corporate or product branding. Since personal branding has become more popular in recent years and corporate the public has known more readily for a longer period of time. A large amount of literature on this topic views the two as essentially the same in both the creating and promotion of the brand.

Table 2

Personal Brands Versus Corporate Brands

Respondent	Difference	Example of corporate brand(s)	Example of personal brand(s)
Ellen Curtis	Same general marketing process for both personal and corporate	Nike, IBM, Apple	Herself
Mary Verdin	Same general marketing process for both personal and corporate	Pretzels	Cal Poly students
Dan Schawbel	Corporate exists at a much higher level; personal brands should connect themselves to a brand that is already well-known	Coca-Cola	CEO of Coca-Cola

In Table 2, both Curtis and Verdin has similar answers that essentially viewed personal branding and corporate branding as the same in terms of strategic marketing tactics. Schawbel said that a personal brand should always be tied to a larger, well-known brand for best results in a campaign.

Research question #3: How does one develop a personal or celebrity brand from the ground up using strategic planning?

This research question was studied to find what strategies professionals are using in the fields of branding, public relations and entertainment to create a personal brand from the ground up. Michael Levine, Hollywood publicist and author of "A Branded World" states the basic underpinning to the development of a personal brand, "First, you have to start with a mission. What is your unique selling proposition? What does that brand stand for?" (Towle, 2003). Further research by McQueen (2007) suggests the same, "The first step to personal branding is coming up with a 'uniqueness statement'" (p. 20). Deckers and Lacy (2011) call this idea the "positioning and transaction statement."

This question was studied to get a brief description from the experts on the first steps professionals use in the branding, public relations, and entertainment industry to develop personal or celebrity brands. After asking the experts to describe branding and then compare and clarify the variations between personal and corporate branding, it was important to then gain insight into each respondent's personal practices for the creation of a personal brand, as well as their knowledge of their respective fields current strategies for practice.

Table 3

Creating a Personal Brand

Respondent	First steps to creating a personal brand	Current tools and tactics used by professionals in pertinent fields
Ellen Curtis	Starts with a planning process. Discover what about the individual stands out and resonates with the public, SWOT analysis, target market analysis, and know internal and external audiences.	Have a purpose, mission, value statement and position.
Mary Verdin	Stick to objectives; find out what image the individual wants to project and who he or she is trying to reach.	Public relations strategies such as volunteering time to nonprofits; remaining consistent with core values of a brand.
Dan Schawbel	Discover the individual's goals, promote the brand through various tools, and communicate through networking.	Creating various materials to sell a personal brand such as a website, résumé, and business card with consistency throughout.

Table 3 shows that all of the respondents viewed the most crucial first steps to creating a personal brand as finding out what the individual wants. What does he or she

want to do, what does he or she want to be known for, and how is that individual going to stand out among his or her target audience?

Research question #4: How does one manage a celebrity brand using tools and tactics currently being used in the marketing, public relations, and entertainment industries?

This question was studied to discover what is currently being done in the respondents' fields to manage a personal brand once it has been created. The literature on managing personal brands provides some information on current strategies being used such as keeping the celebrity's identity aligned with his or her brand and introducing a personal brand slowly and consistently. "If the brand image is not congruent with the brand identity of the celebrity, consumers will form a ambiguous image of the celebrity, resulting in depreciation of brand equity of the celebrity and the stage persona" (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 166). "Managers must introduce a human brand to the world carefully and deliberately and choose a positioning that is appealing and sustainable over time" (Thomson, 2006, p. 116).

This question was designed to follow the previous question regarding the creation of a personal brand. The question was asked to find relevant ways that these experts and other experts in their fields manage a personal brand once it has been established. It was narrowed down to examples involving new technology such as social networking websites, traditional media, and crisis or reputation management.

Table 4

Managing a Personal Brand

Respondent	Managing a personal brand	Social media	Traditional media or endorsements	Crisis or reputation management
Ellen Curtis	Be patient and consistent; it takes between 3-5 years to build a brand.	Commitment to the individual brand values online and offline.	Aligning endorsements to the brand can be effective, but it's not the answer anymore.	Do not rebrand; remain credible so it resonates with the public.
Mary Verdin	Be upfront, accessible, keep track of changes in technology daily.	Build websites; maintain and update Facebook and Twitter pages.	Target press releases to the public rather than media exclusively.	Immediately respond to issues; "Mess up, fess up, clean up."
Dan Schawbel	Hold a strong consistent, positioning statement.	Keep social profiles "flawless," use the same picture everywhere.	Build as many relationships as possible.	Maintain a positive reputation that the online world reflects; be aware.

Table 4 shows this question generated various responses from the experts. While most agreed that the personal brand must remain consistent with the brand's positioning and values, each respondent had specific examples of how they would manage a brand given the management within social media, traditional media, crisis or reputation management, and other strategic tactics or tools.

Research question #5: How and why has the idea of a celebrity changed over time?

This question was studied to understand the evolution of celebrity and its effect on personal branding. According the literature, the idea of celebrity has changed substantially over time, which has led to the parallels between the meaning of personal and celebrity brands. "The pervasiveness of celebrity reflects the growing reach and range of media outlets, including television and the Internet" (Rindova, Pollack, Hayward, 2008, p. 55). "Celebrity is the potential of capitalism, a celebration of new kinds of values and orders, a debunking of the customary divisions of traditional society, for the celebrity himself or herself is dependent entirely on the new order" (Marshall, 1997, p. 6).

This question was studied to gain insight on how experts view the evolution of celebrity now that the meaning, creation, and management of personal brands have been established. It was designed to get perspectives from professionals in the three different fields on how the idea of fame has evolved with the development of new technology and changes in popular culture.

Table 5 shows that all three respondents agreed that the idea of celebrity has significantly changed in recent decades because of new technology and public access to information. Verdin and Curtis both discussed the oversaturation of celebrity while Schawbel mentioned the idea that the Internet now gives everyone a platform to become a celebrity in his or her own way.

Table 5

Evolution of Celebrity

Respondent	How has the idea of celebrity changed?	Why?	Does it help or hurt?
Ellen Curtis	Consumer is in control; oversaturation of celebrity.	Technology; consumer has been given all the tools to be in control.	The challenge is longevity.
Mary Verdin	Too much information, people are craving fame rather than feedback for talent.	Technology; public's constant demand for more information.	It depends on the individual; they have a choice.
Dan Schawbel	Anyone can have a platform and a following now; shifted when individuals went from being successful online to offline; "Microcelebrity."	Technology; Internet gives people unlimited access to the public.	Household celebrity names remain the same with more attention, profit, and opportunities.

Research question #6: How can success and widespread knowledge of a personal brand be measured?

This question was studied to gain insight into the way experts and professionals in the branding, public relations, and entertainment fields assess or measure the success of a brand. The literature on the assessment of a successful personal brand varies. Some experts say "a person becomes a brand at the point where he or she appeals to those outside the target audience" ("Celebrity branding," 2003). While others say if "fans or followers are responding and taking action to the brand, it is an indication of success (Deckers & Lacy, 2011, p. 135).

The ambiguous term "success" was used intentionally as a way to get particularly subjective, qualitative responses to how one would measure success of a personal brand. It also allows flexibility in responses of what success of a personal brand means in the corresponding industries and how each would assess one and easily compared to the varying opinions within the literature that exists on measuring a personal brand.

Table 6

Measuring Success of a Personal Brand

Respondent	Measuring success of a personal brand	Example(s) of successful personal branding
Ellen Curtis	Once the brand hits the original goal, or to be beloved beyond the core audience; impressions, mentions, followers on Twitter.	Branding herself and starting her career. Donald Trump's brand success might be to become president of the United States.
Mary Verdin	Based on strategy. Following the original goals set; anecdotal.	Oprah; brand values of empowerment and love combined with her humble background lead to success.
Dan Schawbel	Depends on each individual's definition of success.	Donald Trump is most well known; various elements of his personal brand: name is on hotels, golf courses, and his name has widespread public interest.

Table 6 shows that all of the respondents agreed that they would measure the success of a personal brand based on the objectives of the individual at the start of a branding campaign. Curtis used an example of herself achieving her ideal career position after college as a successful personal brand. Verdin and Schawbel used examples of large,

well-known celebrity brands to point out which personal brands they see as successful

based on their original goals.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Recommendations

Summary

This study was performed in response to recent fascination with personal branding, or the development and management of branding individuals through a variety of processes. Today, personal branding has become a buzzword among professionals both young and old. With the majority of case studies involving celebrity brands, it was essential to collect data from experts in the marketing, public relations, and entertainment fields regarding their opinions on successful personal branding.

To find more information on current strategies being used by professionals in these fields, one expert in each field was interviewed based on a single questionnaire designed to answer the following research questions for the study:

1. How does one gain visibility through the creation of a brand?

2. How does personal or celebrity branding compare to product or corporate branding?

3. How does one develop a personal or celebrity brand from the ground up using strategic planning?

4. How does one manage a celebrity brand using tools and tactics currently being used in the branding, public relations, and entertainment industries?

5. How and why has the idea of a celebrity changed over time?

6. How can success and widespread knowledge of a personal brand be measured?

Each research question was altered slightly to create applicable questions for interviews with each respondent. The questionnaire elicited a variety of responses that were tied to the literature on personal and celebrity branding strategies.

Discussion

By analyzing the data collected from Chapter 4, connections made between experts' responses provided during the interview process, and the existing literature found in Chapter 2, it is possible to make conclusions regarding the following original research questions.

Research question #1: How does one gain visibility through the creation of a brand?

All three of the experts responded by discussing their perspectives on branding in general. Curtis and Schawbel mentioned that branding is used as a point of differentiation from others, no matter what is being branded. Verdin made the analogy of branding a person or product to branding cattle. The brand is not the heated metal tool, the brand is the impression left behind.

The literature reflects a similar perspective. "A brand is an emotional response to the image or name of a particular company, product, or person" (Deckers & Lacy, 2011, p. 25). Schwabel used the example of choosing Advil or Tylenol over a generic painkiller. This is an example of brand equity, or the added profit value by creating a brand name for a product (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 7).

Overall, it is possible to conclude that one gains visibility through the creation of a brand by a variety of factors including brand equity, a lasting impression on the audience, as well as finding a point of differentiation from competitors.

Research question #2: How does personal or celebrity branding compare to product or corporate branding?

The comparison between personal and product branding generated some varying responses from the experts. Curtis and Verdin compared both processes as essentially analogous to that of a marketing plan for a product or service.

The literature reflects this comparison as well. "The line between personal and brand has blurred, and celebrities have begun applying techniques from the corporate world to their careers…" (Towle, 2003). Schawbel brought up the concept that in order to create a personal brand, it is essential that the individual tie him or herself to an established, well known brand. "The easiest way to become known and build your brand is to partner or associate yourself with a brand that is already well known," Schawbel suggested during the interview.

Overall, there are several similarities and differences between personal branding and product branding. Both require necessary similar marketing strategies, however, as Curtis suggested, "It's different because what makes you *you* is different that a product…You're not going to be faster, cheaper, more tasty." As Schawbel adds, it is important to use the reputation of other brands to improve your own and gain trust among consumers because of that connection.

Research question #3: How does one develop a personal or celebrity brand from the ground up using strategic planning?

When the experts were asked to briefly describe how they would develop a personal brand from the ground up, each answered differently, but elicited similar first steps to creating a brand. All respondents believed it was necessary to start with a planning process in order to discover what is special about the individual that will differentiate them from competitors and who they are trying to reach. From there, each mentioned some

current tactics used in the various fields of marketing, public relations, and entertainment. These include, having a solid position, value statement, volunteering to generate positive buzz around the brand, and creating materials to sell the brand such as a website, business card, and social networking profiles that all remain consistent with the brand.

The literature reflects similar responses to the research question and the experts. "The first step to personal branding is coming up with a 'uniqueness statement'" (McQueen, 2007, p. 20). According to Towle (2003), "Creating a brand…means taking something amorphous and making it tangible. Branding also can mean simply identifying a career goal and implementing a game plan to achieve it."

Overall, the first steps to take to create a personal brand include a strategic planning process including what the individual wants to be known for, the brand values, who the individual should use as a target audience, and promotional materials to sell the brand consistently once the plan has been established.

Research question #4: How does one manage a celebrity brand using tools and tactics currently being used in the branding, public relations, and entertainment industries?

When the experts were asked how they would manage a personal brand once it is created, a wide range of answers were collected due to the probes and subjective nature of the question. Curtis and Schawbel both said that consistency and commitment was key to managing a personal brand with a positive reputation. Verdin added that when she manages a personal brand using public relations, it is important to be accessible, keep track of technology, and during a crisis, "Mess up, fess up, and clean up."

The literature on managing brands is reflected in the experts' answers. "If the brand image is not congruent with the brand identity of the celebrity, consumers will form an

ambiguous image of the celebrity, resulting in depreciation of brand equity…" (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 166).

Overall, personal brands should be managed strategically using consistent social media tactics, staying committed to the brand's values throughout media channels, and brand image to maintain a positive reputation.

Research question #5: How and why has the idea of a celebrity changed over time?

All of the experts answered similarly to the question of how celebrity has changed over time. Each mentioned use of technology as a main reason for the evolution of celebrity. According to Schawbel, anyone has the opportunity to be famous with the Internet. Curtis and Verdin mentioned the shift of control to the consumer, the oversaturation of celebrities in the media, and excessive celebrity information made public.

The literature reflects similar perspectives on the evolution of celebrity. According to Gamson (1994), as change from the discovery of star quality to the manufacturing a suitable celebrity for an audience, celebrities became the products and fans became the market.

Overall, celebrity has changed over time because of the development of new technology, which has created more platforms for a personal or celebrity brand to be seen by the public. Celebrities are now marketed based on the demographics of the target audience. Contrary to the previous years when celebrities have been discovered and then promoted, they are now more likely to be created and manipulated to fit the consumers' wants and needs.

Research question #6: How can success and widespread knowledge of a personal brand be measured?

Each expert agreed that the most accurate way to evaluate a personal brand's success is circumstantial and must be based the individual's original brand goals and the individual's definition of success. Curtis defined success of a personal brand as the point where it hits the original goal or is beloved beyond the core audience. Verdin said that it could be measured anecdotally following the brand values and objectives. Examples of successful personal brands given by the experts were Oprah Winfrey and Donald Trump.

The literature gave similar answers regarding the success of a celebrity brand. "A person becomes a brand at the point where he or she appeals to those outside the target audience" ("Celebrity branding," 2003). Other ways to determine success of a personal brand as stated in the literature is by the quality of an individual's network, visibility, and influence (Deckers & Lacy, 2011, p. 135).

Overall, measuring the success of a personal brand is extremely subjective and ultimately based on what the individual wants to achieve from creating a personal brand. In some cases this is seen in consumers' attachment strength to the brand, amount of influence, and public visibility.

Recommendations for Practice

After completion of the study, substantial data has been collected and analyzed on the topic of personal and celebrity branding development and management. Given the information, it is important to highlight the most eye-opening content and present it for future marketing, public relations, and entertainment industry professionals. Some recommendations for practice include capitalizing on the uniqueness of the individual,

using the Internet and trends in popular culture to communicate with the brand's target audience, and managing the individual so he or she remains consistently aligned with the brand.

Stand out with something new and intriguing.

Every single person has things about him or her that are quirky and unique. When it comes to creating a personal brand, these qualities are the most essential to a branding campaign. The unique aspects of an individual create differentiation from others. "Personal branding is about unearthing what is true and unique about you and letting everyone know about it" (Schawbel, 2009, p. 1). This is crucial in order to stand out and leverage an individual's brand using that distinct persona.

As Kahle and Kim (2006) discussed, pioneering advantage is used strategically to increase brand equity and public interest. Mary Verdin, president of Verdin Marketing Ink, mentioned that although Pretzels have always been fat free, several years ago the brand was the first to promote the snack explicitly on the packaging as fat free. Consumers were drawn to them based on the novelty factor. According to Verdin, "there can be things about you that all your competitors do, but they're not talking about it. Be the first one out there that's talking about it and then no matter who else says it, they're a 'me too.'"

Everyone has celebrity brand potential.

With the rapid development of technology and variations in popular culture over the last century, there have been significant changes in what it means to be famous. These changes have given more opportunities for personal brands to become well-known. The Internet has played a significant role in the evolution of celebrity. It has given consumers

more ways to read about and directly communicate with celebrities in real time and ignited the fascination with social media and online fame.

According to Turner (2004), "drawing such a close relationship between the celebrity and the inauthenticity of contemporary popular culture interprets celebrity as a symbol of cultural change" (p. 5). During the interview, when asked about the shift towards personal branding, Schawbel responded, "[In my opinion] it's really taken off because of people who have gone from being successful on the Internet to being successful offline." Schawbel used Justin Bieber as an example as one of the first successful crossovers, "For the most part, people are building online brands, establishing a following and then monetizing that online and offline. It's a different kind of celebrity."

Consistency works.

The most successful celebrity brands all have the same thing in common: consistency. Donald Trump, Oprah Winfrey, Jennifer Lopez, and Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen are just several examples of consistently visible and popular brands in the last decade. It is not a coincidence that each of these brands acted predominantly consistent with their brand values and original unique qualities throughout their careers.

"Managers must introduce a human brand to the world carefully and deliberately and choose a positioning that is appealing and sustainable over time" (Thomson, 2006, p. 116). In response to strategic tactics for brand management, Ellen Curtis added, "It's only human nature to want to do something different or say it different. But I always use the *Seinfeld* rerun: if you haven't seen it it's new to you. So until your message is so saturated, you have to stay consistent."

Study Conclusion

In conclusion, given the general findings of the study, there should be qualitative research done regularly on the topic of personal branding and celebrity. Routine data collection and interview should be conducted based on the independent nature and fast-paced trends of the subject area. Overall, the study presented the collective opinions of several experts in related fields and a review of literature on the topic. However, personal branding is, by name, individually based. Therefore, the study and overall recommendations for creation and management of personal brands cannot be applied to all individuals and professionals. The study does however serve as an educational tool for marketing, public relations, and entertainment industry professionals who are interested in personal and celebrity branding strategies. It also serves as a guide to young, college-graduates who are looking for ways to sell themselves as 20-something, hirable "microcelwebrities." In fact, anyone interested in the growing popularity and need for personal branding may want to use it for further research in the subject area.

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Appendix A

Interview Transcripts: Ellen Curtis

The following interview was conducted to get expert opinions from a marketing perspective based on a questionnaire about a personal branding and the evolution of celebrity.

Interviewer: Julianna Barker
Respondent: Creative Commander and Managing Partner at Whizbang Marketing Firm
(Ellen Curtis)
Date of Interview: 5/11/2011

Interview Transcription:
Julianna Barker: "How would you, as an expert in your field, describe branding a person, company, or product as a way to increase public visibility? Please give an example of when the creation of a brand led to increased visibility. Why do we brand?"

Ellen Curtis: "To differentiate yourself from everyone else and add value to whatever product or service you offer."

JB: "What's an example of when the creation of a brand led to increased public visibility?"

EC: "Donald Trump. In *AdWeek* they do a whole brand analysis from the 80s until now and how his brand has evolved."

JB: "It's so cool. He pays people to put his name on stuff."

EC: "Right, and usually it's the other way around. Usually companies will ask a celebrity like Jennifer Lopez, 'Hey, can we make a perfume called 'Lopez'?"

JB: "And that was also a huge example that was used in my research was Jennifer Lopez because she was kind of the first one to start with the movies, music, and product lines…or at least in this generation."

EC: "You know, because I'm older; there's always been celebrity brands like Elizabeth Taylor. People older than me might even know personal brand celebrities that have broken out."

JB: "So they started this personal branding?"

EC: "I mean movie stars have always been– and agents have always been branders of celebrities. Celebrities by their nature, how they get into movies have had to have promotion of their brand, right? And how an agent would sell an actor or an actress into a movie property was all based on their brand. So I would say that's a really early precursor, as long as there's been celebrity. "

JB: "And film…"

EC: "I think if we go even before that. I mean you can take branding all the way back through politician, religion…"

JB: "Right. A lot of my research discusses the politician aspect. Presidential campaigns, especially the most recent one. Obama was a huge branding thing."

EC: "I saw Alex Bogusky speak, who was the owner of a big agency that did a ton of work for Burger King – really high profile work of late. And he gave this great thing about branding that even back in Cesar's time, Cesar branded himself because he put his face on a coin, right? There was not any mass media to brand yourself so currency, putting your face on money, was a way to get your brand out there."

JB: "And differentiate yourself. I like that. That's really cool. A lot of the literature that's out there kind of talks about how it started more in the 80s and 90s."

EC: "But it's always been there. I mean, I think celebrity branding…yeah, 80s. You know the dynasty period was really this grotesque display of brands."

JB: "And with new technology I think that's really when the term was invented, but I do think it existed before the term."

EC: "Oh yeah. It became popular, but it's interesting. There's many more channels now to brand yourself. What we see is a new trend is called 'celwebrities.' So it's c-e-l-w-e-b-r-i-t-i-e-s. So these are regular people especially like social media managers who are the face of a company's social media presence. They're becoming their own 'celwebrities.'"

JB: "That's interesting. All right, now how would you define personal branding versus corporate branding or product branding?"

EC: "I mean, the same processes that we as a marketer use to brand a product or service would be the same for an individual brand. I mean, you have to think about what is that thing that differentiates yourself. How are you positioning yourself within your group of skillsets that's going to set you apart from everyone else."

JB: "Right. It's almost like your treating an individual as a product kind of."

EC: "Yeah, it's no diff – well it's different because what makes you *you* is different than a product, you know. I mean you're not going to be faster, cheaper, more tasty – although you might be. Yeah, I mean in personal branding I saw, was it two years ago at Poly? A guy from Apple made a presentation about personal branding and how it's really important for students to personal brand themselves because as the market gets tighter for jobs, how are you going to stand out from everyone else?"

JB: "Right. So could you give an example of personal branding and corporate branding? I know you already said Donald Trump, but what's a successful example of corporate branding? I guess there's thousands."

EC: "Oh gosh. Zillions. I mean, Nike, IBM, Apple. Apple is the most valuable brand today. Microsoft. In the food and beverage category: Campbell's. Um, just think of the big brands that you use all the time. Why do you use Crest instead of Scope? Aquafresh. Why? Those are all brands. Tide versus…"

JB: "Yeah, it's just another way to differentiate yourself as a person…or product I guess. Okay, so how would you create a personal brand for the client for the ground up? What are some tactics and tools currently being used in your field? So just briefly, how do you go about starting a personal brand?"

EC: "Because we are not publicists so we don't really work with individuals, I wouldn't say I have a great case for personal branding. I can only speak to what I did for myself to get into this industry. I personally branded myself as a 'Champion Word Wrestler' because I started business as a copywriter. So my whole thing was I win the battle with words. Anyone who works with words understands that it is a daily struggle of writer versus words. "

JB: "So you kind of pick your skills and your values and kind of run with that?"

EC: "And everything, like my logo had wrestlers on it, had word jumbles and in this business to get a job its highly competitive so you have to do something to make yourself stand out."

JB: "Okay, well what are some specific tactics and tools that you think that other people would use when creating a personal brand? Do you think it would be social networking or what?"

EC: "They first thing to a brand is you really have to understand what is it about yourself that differentiates yourself, that's going to stand out and resonate with the people that you want to brand yourself to. So, first is a planning process so you're doing a SWOT analysis, I mean the same things that you would do for a product or service. You're going to do a target market analysis, your internal audiences, your external audiences. Then, you're going to survey brand personality analysis. What is your brand? What are you? Are you a fun, serious, right? We do some branding exercises like if you were a car what would you be? If you were a detergent what would you be? So you can sort of understand how your brand aligns. And once you have that planning then you can talk about, okay were am I going to brand myself and how am I going to brand myself?"

JB: "Right – to reach that audience."

EC: "Then you get into those strategies and tactics, but you first have to understand how to position yourself as a brand and these are the same approaches huge brands like Nike, you

know you have your purpose, mission, value statement and then your product positioning. How do you differentiate yourself?"

JB: "Okay, and then how would you manage that brand strategically using things like social media, traditional media, reputation management, and crisis management?"

EC: "Well the number one thing about branding is you have to go at it all the time and just because you're not having immediate traction – it takes three to five years to build a brand and that's at a very large spend level, right? That you are consistently in front of your target audience. So it's sort of a consistency and commitment. Branding's all about you look the same, you talk the same – not the same words, but if you came in with pink hair and nose ring I would be like, where's Julianna? You come in everyday, I know what to expect from you. And from a personal brand you have to be really sure that you fit that."

JB: "Right."

EC: "I mean some folks use affectations, like Mari Smith, who is a big social media person. She always wears turquoise – turquoise is her thing. She brands everything in turquoise. She's highly bubbly I've never seen her have a down day. I mean, she's a human so I'm sure she would, but she would never share that because her brand is all about being the social media queen, turquoise, and being effervescent. I've heard her speak a thousand times now and she always leads it off – because she has a Scottish accent – she goes, 'Well, I just want to let you know that my background is I'm Scottish but I live in California.' So this is all part of her personal brand. She's actually a very good one to watch because she's jumped on the scene and developed her brand on Facebook. So consistency and commitment and not giving up."

JB: "And what was her name?"

EC: "Mari Smith. You can get her at marismith.com or Mari Smith on Facebook. She's been toted as the Pied Piper of Facebook. She's done an outstanding job of branding herself. And there's a zillion social media 'experts.' I'm using quotations, but she really is. She walks the walk and talks the talk."

JB: "Yeah, I've read about a ton of experts in my research and it's hard to tell who is legitimate. It's ironic because it's about differentiating yourself, but they are doing the same thing everyone else is doing."

EC: "And then for products and services what I've seen over the course of my career is, as marketers and as brand managers, you're living with this everyday and so your tendency is you have high wear out, right? Because you've been pounding these same messages over and over and differentiating yourself and it's only human nature to want to do something different or say it different. But I always use the *Seinfeld* rerun: if you haven't seen it it's new to you. So until your message is so saturated, you have to stay consistent."

JB: "And a lot of my research said the same thing with consistency especially with people like Oprah."

EC: "Look at Oprah! She's unbelievable. And that's why it's so important to do that upfront work because Oprah's brand has been consistent. Now, she's dimensionalized it a little bit, but she's always been about being your better best, being the best that you can be."

JB: "Empowerment."

EC: "Empowerment. That's been her thing. So usually for personal branding you can pick three words that you can just sort of own. Nike owns 'Just do it,' right? And they have been very consistent. And she hasn't moved off that path. I mean, come on, how often do you think she wanted to do something else? But that's not her deal."

JB: "I know. She's been the same way forever."

EC: "Right, and that's the success of a brand. What we see, especially with small clients there's that, 'I want to change it up' and 'I want to change my logo, I'm bored of my logo.' Well, your target audience isn't, they hardly even know who you are."

JB: "And it's interesting when big corporate companies decide they want to rebrand and change their logo and change their slogan but they want to keep the same values."

EC: "It's very hard and there are tons of case studies of rebranding gone wrong."

JB: "Really?"

EC: "Gap. Gap tried to redo their logo, right? Once you have brand advocates, people who love your brand who are your brand believers, anything you change, like if you came in with the pink hair and everyone loves your blonde hair they'd be like, 'What the hell? I loved that. Don't go changing.' So Gap, new Coke– huge failure, even Pepsi, when they were switching their logos, there was a lot of pushback on that. People are resistant to change, so once you've branded yourself – If Nike came out with a new tagline, right? Does Apple even have a tagline? Apple has the apple and they've always been about being innovative and creative."

JB: "And they had the old apple with the colored stripes, but then they kind of simplified it. It continues to still be the same symbol."

EC: "It's the same. Since 1984, they've always been about creativity innovation and being, not against the man, but being that road. Sarah Palin is another fantastic personal brand. I mean, what? From Alaska to where we have her now."

JB: "Right, the whole hockey mom thing."

EC: "The thing is about a personal brand, and she's an excellent one as a case study for this is, believability and does it resonate? There's a lot of things about her you just don't believe. There's some things about her you absolutely do. And that's what she's such a polarizing figure."

JB: "Right. All right, in your opinion, how has the idea of celebrity changed over time?"

EC: "I think what were seeing today just follows along what's going on with marketing in general. The consumers are in the driver's seat. The consumer is making the decisions. The consumer is telling companies what they want. They have more ways to contact a company. They have more ways to force their opinions upon a company. So, from the 80s, I mean, there was this real idolization of celebrity and all the way through the 90s. And I think as the consumer gets more in the driver's seat, the consumer has always been smart, but is also very savvy to marketing messages.
Just the oversaturation of celebrity, I think Britney Spears and Paris Hilton, that whole group, I think everyone was just sort of throwing up in their mouth after awhile. The Kardashians – People are not going to just be buying a brand because it's attached to these pseudo-celebs. I mean Britney Spears is a real celebrity. She actually has a talent, but now people are more interested in people, not just celebrity. Everybody has their moment of fame. If you went through *People* magazine, which has always been a magazine that celebrates celebrity, right? That's really shifted if you really notice the stories in there. It used to be cover-to-cover celebrity stuff. Here's Hollywood moms, you know? Now it's more real people stories. Real stories of courage, real stories of triumph, real people stories of craziness like Octomom."

JB: "So you think this fascination with celebrities is decreasing?"

EC: "I think we will always be fascinated by celebrities, but we won't buy products because of them."

JB: "Really?"

EC: "I see that there's a pushback now. It's not as easy as, 'Hey, I'm going to go get Gwyneth Paltrow to hold my coach purse.' It's not that easy anymore. That still works, but that's not the answer anymore."

JB: "That's interesting."

EC: "I know it is really interesting. I often wonder where that's going to go. I think it's less and less."

JB: "Right and it is becoming more obsessed with real people, reality, with reality television. Even though that isn't really real, people still like that. So where do you think the real change came about? Was it technology that made the celebrity different?"

EC: "I think the real shift is when the consumer had all the tools to really be in the driving seat. People make people celebrities."

JB: "And I think that maybe the fascination with reality might be from social media because now they have direct contact with their consumers."

EC: "And my cousin is obsessed with *General Hospital*. She lives in Chicago. How would she ever hook up or connect with these people? And she goes on cruises where they'll be and she meets them. How did she do this? Facebook."

JB: "Wow."

EC: "And now she is friends with them. I mean it's incredible the access you can have. I would say she's an ordinary person just living her life, but she has this fantasy of *General Hospital*. She loves them and they're accessible."

JB: "It's weird because it's almost like social media makes them more famous, but it also makes them more human because they can talk to them directly."

EC: "Yep, yep."

JB: "So do you think these changes hurt or help the reputation of what it means to be a celebrity?"

EC: "I think the challenge is longevity."

JB: "So staying consistent and keeping those values?"

EC: "Right, and because the access is there, monitoring your brand and keeping control of your brand I think would probably be really important to a celebrity because it could go all kinds of places. I was watching a Lady Gaga concert on HBO the other night and the parallels between her and Madonna, although she's wildly more talented than Madonna, but when I was in my 20s – Madonna. She reinvented herself, she's an awesome writer and Lady gaga has that same like New York street cred, right? Outlandish outfits, provocative – I think that unfortunately for all celebrities, we all get old. So what do you do? What is Madonna doing now? She's 50. She's not going to be walking out in a meat dress."

JB: "I know and Britney Spears is crossing that line too."

EC: "I know! She's thirty!"

JB: "But again for her consumer audience, that was my generation. She needs to keep consistent, but at the same time she's not going to get more teenage fans really at this point."

EC: "No, her brand was all about pop. So unless she managed her brand accordingly, how is she going to sell more records? You look at artists that have been able to transcend time, but I think any brand that markets to the youth, in a personal brand, you're going to run that risk of them not growing with the audience."

JB: "I know you were talking a little bit about sponsorships earlier and about how a celebrity doesn't necessarily make or break a brand, but do you think a brand could ever help a celebrity's reputation?"

EC: "Absolutely."

JB: "More than they could help the brand in some cases?"

EC: "Especially in cause-related. There are lots of LA firms that link stars to causes."

JB: "So more like the PR side of it?"

EC: "It works both ways. Let's say Britney Spears decides to hook up her persona with St. Jude's. So how would you feel? Suddenly Britney and St. Jude's. You would feel awesome for St. Jude's because Britney Spears is going to bring a lot of things. She's got kids, right? She's always been an advocate, but also it helps Britney Spears because she's not going to look like a crazy person who shaved her head, right? So it works both ways. Angelina Jolie, and I think she does it for real, but if she didn't do all of that humanitarian work she would just be an anorexic freak with a ton of children."

JB: "But if they partner with someone that's not credible with different values then it could backfire I guess."

EC: "Right, and then you get into the idea of cobranding. If your brand has the same core values or meshes with another brand's core values than it works really well. Gwyneth Paltrow has always been a fashionista, right? She has that core value. So, she works really great with Coach. You think of CoverGirl, how does CoverGirl always pick their girls? Queen Latifah was a CoverGirl for a while. It's really interesting because it's so easy to see the branding match of cosmetics with celebrities. Like Andie MacDowell has been doing, I think it is Oil of Olay? Andie MacDowell has got to be getting close to upper 50s and every shot of her is so airbrushed."

JB: "But they want to remain consistent and it's worked for them thus far."

EC: "Right, and Regenerist is targeted to women 40 plus, so it's a good fit. So that's a very easy one. You could just go through *Glamour*…"

JB: "So it almost seems like every big celebrity has some brand that they're attached to at this point. Last question, how would you measure the success of a personal brand?"

EC: "The way we work here, we all have our goals. Every brand has its goals, so when it hits that goal. So for me, when I was first starting out, my personal goal was to get a job at a big advertising agency. So for me that was success. I branded myself, I got that really great job that started my career. So that to me was my personal branding success. For someone like Donald Trump, maybe his personal goal is to be president of the United States so that's how he measures his branding success. A company like Nike will say, I want to sell four billion dollars worth of shoes."

JB: "So it really can't be generalized..."

EC: "No, it's usually very measureable goal for any success. To successfully brand it takes a lot of resources that would be time and money. In a marketing sense, my goal is not only to be beloved within my core audience, but beyond. And then they measure it, right? As far as impressions, as far as mentions, followers on Twitter…I mean, Justin Bieber, little girls love him and older moms love him. He started as a teen crush and now tweenies are already over it."

JB: "I know that's the funniest part. When he first came out my roommate's little sister loved him and now she doesn't like him, and it seems like he's gaining more attention from everyone else."

EC: "Yes, and that's what happens with that group because you move very quickly from being twelve and having a crush to fourteen where it's not cool, right? That's only two years. That's nothing. That's why the boy bands cycled through so fast. And now Boyz II Men are playing at the Chumash, right?"

JB: "And I think it's interesting that Justin Timberlake decided he was going to just do movies now."

EC: "Right and look at Marky Mark. He started out with New Kids on the Block, but then he transitioned his brand into movies. He's not going to go back. He did amazing Calvin Klein ads, but the longevity of that? He's in his late 30s, right? He's already writing and producing. Like, look at Miley Cyrus, that transition from 18 to that. I think Taylor Swift is making that transition with no problem."

JB: "And maybe that has to do with her audience as country fans that will grow with her."

EC: "She has multiple audiences and they're doing a great job of exposing her talent. She's not just a singer with a microphone. She writes."

JB: "She got famous from the Internet too, like Justin Bieber, which is also new."

EC: "I had an interesting thought with American Idol. The guy that won last year, where is he now? No one is managing his personal brand."

JB: "Right, they get the record contract and then that's it. And that's what this project is really about. You know, how do you manage a brand through marketing tactics, PR tactics, entertainment industry, agents. It's hard to do it on your own."

EC: "And it's leveraging. If you get that one big hit, its leveraging that to the next big one."

JB: "Like Justin Bieber got that one big hit, but if he didn't keep going he would have just fallen off."

EC: "That's right. The cycle is 24/7. If Madonna was breaking in today she would have to reinvent herself once a week instead of once a year."

Appendix B

Interview Transcripts: Mary Verdin

The following interview was conducted to get expert opinions from a public relations perspective based on a questionnaire about a personal branding and the evolution of celebrity.

Interviewer: Julianna Barker
Respondent: Verdin Marketing Ink (Mary Verdin)
Date of Interview: 5/12/2011

Interview Transcription:
Julianna Barker: "How would you, as an expert in your field, describe branding a person, company, or product as a way to increase public visibility? So why do we brand?"

Mary Verdin: "I do a lot of speaking to business groups and also Cal Poly classes and I always try to define branding because I think it's one of those terms that gets thrown around all the time. In fact, I used to avoid using it because it was such a buzzword. I thought people didn't really understood what it meant, but then I realized clients want to know that I know how to brand. It's like, okay, we've got to use that word. The way I look at a brand is the whole idea of branding cattle. That's where it came from. When you brand cattle, you have a metal tool that you heat up and then you brand the cattle, right? Well the brand is not the metal tool, the brand is the impression that's left behind. But people want their logo as their brand. Well, it's your brand mark, it's the visual representation of your brand – it's not your brand. The brand is the impression that's left behind in your target audience's head. I kind of look at it as your brand is a promise that is fulfilled because if I go out there as marketing person and say, 'I can increase your sales by one hundred percent in a week.' Well, that might get some attention, but then when people come to me and that doesn't happen, what's my brand going to be? It's going to be she overpromises."

JB: "Right, because then you lose all credibility."

MV: "I always look at your brand as it's kind of the gut feeling that your audience has for you. When I do presentations, I always show the Nike logo, the McDonald's logo, and the Apple logo without any words. Everybody knows what they are, and everybody has a feeling for one of those. I mean, I see something with an apple on it and I'm like, 'Oh, it's going to be cool.' I don't know what it is – even their packaging. I got my new iPhone and I was like, 'This box is so cool. How do they come up with this?' Their brand is all about innovation and fun and excitement about technology. The other thing that I say a lot when I'm talking about branding – what you need to do – is kind of the three steps. The first one is, I recognize you. So you want to be consistent in everything you do. Your look and your feel and the use of your logo, your logo is always the same colors, you don't change the colors. Only Google can get away with that. The second part is, I know what you promise, and that's kind of where advertising comes into play. It's like, I'm Nike and I'm going to promise you that I have this really fabulous new shoe for running. Okay, I know what you

promise. You're informing me. But then, the last part is, I know that you deliver. I bought that shoe, I went running, I still can't do a half marathon and I couldn't before I bought the shoe. Do I believe it? Or, you know what, they were right. It was more comfortable on a longer haul or it did make me feel like I could run faster or jump higher. So those are the three things that I think really create that brand and, again, I don't think a lot of people really understand what it is. They know they're supposed to do it, but then don't really understand how to do it or what it means."

JB: "Now what is the different between corporate branding and personal branding? Are there differences? If so, what are they?"

MV: "Are you participating in PR day next week?"

JB: "Oh, no I didn't know it was next week. I'm never really on campus anymore."

MV: "I was asked to come. They are doing three workshops. One is building relationships and that's the one we're doing. I'm bringing Lisa, who is out sick, but she's our social media coordinator and she and I are going to do it. We're going to talk about different kinds of relationships and building relationships, but part of what we're talking about is personal brand, what is your personal brand? Because the way I look at a personal brand, I think it has been around forever. We just used different words. I think now it's more important than ever because there are so many things that tie back to the impression you are giving off because of technology.
As an employer, we're actually hiring right now, interviewing and looking at resumes. The first thing I do is I look through a resume, I narrow it down to who I'm going to interview, I interview the person, and then I go Google them. Facebook – hopefully people are using privacy settings – but a lot of people don't because it's time consuming. It's the things people don't even think of anymore that are out there. You can be a fabulous interview, but then she's posting pictures like this on her Facebook page? Is this the person I want in this office? Is that going to be the right image for our company? People have the right to do whatever they want in their off time, but it can still affect the image of a company.
So I think that personal branding has probably become something people are more aware of because of that. I think particularly a college student that's close to graduating because they should be paying attention to their Facebook page and having a LinkedIn profile and those kinds of things. I think you're kind of building it at that time because you're branding yourself I think really for that job world. It's like, where do you want to go in life? How far do you want to go? How are you going to get there? Who are you that is going to get there?"

JB: "Right, it seems like the more competitive the job market has gotten the more we hear about personal branding as what you have to do to stand apart."

MV: "It's just like when you write a marketing plan. What's your point of differentiation? If I'm looking at twenty people for one position and they're all Cal Poly graduates, why am I going to pick you over someone else? It's funny because all twenty of those Cal Poly students might have the same skillset and know the same technology just as well as one

another, but if one is talking about it and the other's aren't, that's when you're going to get it.

One example I was going to use, I think it was ten years ago now. All of the sudden, everyone wanted fat free snacks. They didn't care how much sugar was in it, they didn't care how many calories it was, but they didn't want any fat. That was the thing, and Pretzels were the first ones to do it. They never had any fat, ever. Pretzels are just made without fat and on the back really big it said, 'fat free snack.' They're seizing an opportunity. They have always been fat free, they've never blasted it on the bag, but they are trying to differentiate themselves from Goldfish and potato chips and all these other things. So after they did it then you started seeing Gummy Bears, all these different things, fat free, fat free, we are too! But Pretzels were the one that did it first. It's kind of the same thing, we tell clients this all the time. There can be things about you that all your competitors do, but they're not talking about it. Be the first one out there that's talking about it and then no matter else who says it, they're a 'me too' instead of the one that said it first."

JB: "Yeah. One of the terms used in my research was 'pioneering advantage' which talks about if you are the first one to do it whether for a company or person, that can be your brand right there. Did you give a couple examples of both corporate and personal branding? I guess the Pretzels were corporate."

MV: "I don't know why this comes to mind because I don't even watch this show, but the Kardashians – You know what I think it is? Paris Hilton, the Kardashians, Nicole Ritchie – these are people that are famous. I don't know why they are famous. They didn't do anything fabulous. They don't sing. They don't act. Paris Hilton was suddenly on everything and had this book."

JB: "And it's happening more and more."

MV: "That's all about knowing how to brand yourself. There was nothing there. Just pick a person out of the crowd, and say we're going to make you into the next Paris Hilton. Here's what you've got to do and create a persona."

JB: "So, how would you create a personal brand from the ground up, and what are some current tactics and tools currently being used in your field?"

MV: "Well, we're big into strategy at this company. It's great to have some beautiful ad or some really clever copy, but if it doesn't go back to the business objectives, you're wasting your money. It doesn't matter how clever or cool it is, it's not going back to what you want to do as a business. If you're creating a personal brand, I think you would look at, what is the image we're trying to project and who are we trying to reach?

So we'll just look at the things we believe in here as a company. I want people to know that we believe in the community and we give back to the community. I want people to think that we have a lot of integrity, and I want people to know we are service-oriented. So how do I get there? One thing that I do is volunteer our time to create a profile on a different nonprofit every month. We create it for free and we work out a deal with one of

the newspapers that will run it for free as a community service, and it gets out there and if gets out information about that nonprofit and at the bottom it says it's brought to you by us. Now a whole bunch of people are seeing it every month, the nonprofit is telling everybody that we are promoting their organization. That's helping me build the brand that I'm helping the community and I'm supporting the community. The integrity thing is more like a core value. Every time we get into some dilemma with a client, in terms of, we produce this, it's what we said we would produce, they're unhappy with it, they think we didn't hit the mark or whatever. As legitimate as it is to still bill that amount, what falls fair? I'm going to go back to the client and go, let's move on. What's the next project we're going to do? Even though that costs us money, it's worth the relationship. What feels fair to you? What if we bill you for this amount instead? Or, what if we don't bill you for that at all, but turn this into this other project, which is what you really need. We're all about fair. That's part of integrity. We're not just about how much we can bill. The third thing is the service thing. We do some crisis communications. By its name, the nature of crisis communications – by its name is it's a crisis, right? So you get the phone call, can you meet today? So it's like, I have six meetings today. How am I going to meet today?"

JB: "Yeah, what do you do in that situation?"

MV: "You've got to figure out if this is a crisis and this is a client – you've just got to figure out somebody else handles a meeting or I find one that I can move. We meet with that client Friday afternoon, by Monday morning I had a copy for a facts sheet for them, went back and forth on the copy, by Monday afternoon had a laid out really lovely rough, and by the end of the day Monday had it approved for a meeting they had Tuesday morning at nine. They go to the meeting and come back with other things they wanted to add to the facts sheet. We do the whole thing, and give it back to them the next day. So I think, on the service side, it's just about pulling out all the stops. If I want people to look at me that way, you know what, they might not be the least expensive place in town, but when I need something they will pour it on to make sure I get what I want. We have a lot of clients that feel that way. One of the things with customer service is we want our clients to feel like they're our only client. We want them go, 'Oh, you have other clients? How could you possibly have other clients?' We want every client to feel like they are our favorite client."

JB: "So then that's how you would differentiate yourself."

MV: "It's hard when I have to tell me staff, 'Change your priorities today. We've got to get this thing done.' That's stressful and that's hard. You want what? They could call someone else who would do it. We don't want them to call someone else. We want them to do we're here."

JB: "Right. I like that."

MV: "I'm kind of mixing my company brand with my personal brand, but my company is my personal brand."

JB: "Right. And you kind of touched on this, but how would you then manage that brand strategically? I know you talked about crisis communication already for a client, but how has new technology, traditional media, or reputation management…or any other tactics you can think of that are currently being used to manage a personal brand."

MV: "The way technology has advanced so rapidly, it's a double-edged sword. It brings us a lot of tools. We have another client that we're on the tail end of in a very successful communications project with them. When they have a crisis and it's like, 'Let's meet today. We need help right away.' In the old days, okay we'll do a press release, here are your talking points, let's contact the media and try to get an editorial board meeting to tell your story. Let's be very upfront. Let's be very accessible.
Well, in today's world, let's build a website that just talks about this crisis that you keep updated on a daily basis. Let's turn your Facebook page into a reciprocal for this crisis information. Let's change the landing page graphics so now it talks about this. Let's make sure somebody is on there every single morning posting something and that they are monitoring it throughout the day so that anybody that posts any other comments that come in, you're commenting back on those so you are encouraging that. We still do the regular press release, but now when we write a press release – yeah the target's the media – but the target's also now the consumer, because that's going to go out online. It's searchable information. We've got in on the website. Your neighbor could read it, not just the editor of the paper. It does change a little bit in how we craft it. We've got links all over the press release now, so if you want more information as you're reading down, it's just like Wikipedia.
So I think the principles are the same, but some of the tools are enhanced so it enables you to do more. Now, the other side of it – because we did have with this one client – we met with the *Tribune* editorial board, they did a story and it went online. I told the client that I would monitor the online comments. He went on anyway. His feelings are hurt because, you know, the people who tend to respond to those things, they tend to be more negative than positive. They are anonymous. They are passive aggressive. They're mad about something else. They take it out on you. So that makes it hard because you do tend to get more negative comments. How do you respond to those now and what's the appropriate response?"

JB: "So technology can both help and hurt, I guess."

MV: "You lose a little more control, but it's fabulous though. The things you can do to get a message out there quickly. It's never been so easy. I don't know if you heard when the big BP oil spill happened last year, everyone was very critical of BP because they did not respond well. They did not response in a timely manner. There was a famous book that the now former CEO, they were interviewing him and he said something about, 'I just want to get back on with my life.' Okay, what about the eleven people that were killed? What about this whole coastline that's decimated? You know? Are you serious? They handled it really bad. Well somebody was mad that they weren't responding very quickly and communicating with people, and so they started a Twitter feed and they called it BP something, and the first post, it had like millions of hits, 'Hi. We're BP. You might have heard there was just a little incident off the Florida coast, and we don't want to tell you

about it but we might have to so check back here and we might tell you something more.' So it was obviously a parody and criticizing them for not saying anything. Well, some people thought it was real. So they starting getting all these really negative comments being posted, and well then here's BP like, 'We should have been on top of this. How are we going to damage control this?' So then BP started a Twitter feed."

JB: "Wow, that's dangerous. So then it just snowballed?"

MV: "It's crazy you've got to be on it immediately. The whole thing, you might have heard this with PR, the rule. Mess up, fess up, and clean up. If you screw up, you've got to be honest about it, and then you've got to fix it. That's not what they did. It took them too long to do that and it really hurt their brand big time. You know, Lisa our social media person is out sick, but she is so crazed about everything that's going on. Everyday she's like, 'Okay, today in Facebook here's what changed.' You have to have somebody that that's all they do, because there's no way. We keep having clients where we are trying to do something with Facebook and there's no way to do it. So we do a work around, but we figure, they're paying us to do this work around. And a week later you can do it."

JB: "It moves way too fast. You could just read hours on it everyday because it changes so much."

MV: "It just makes me feel tired."

JB: "I know. I've been reading more and more articles on how companies are hiring more social media people. Small business are using them more too because it's free marketing. It's interesting – we kind of talked about this earlier with the Paris Hilton thing, but in your opinion, how has the idea of celebrity changed over time given new technology and everything else? What's the difference between celebrity a few decades ago and now?"

MV: "TMI. We know way too much about everything. This really illustrates how the world has changed, okay? When Franklin Roosevelt was president in the 40s, most of the people did not know he was in a wheelchair. He had a certain brand. He had a certain image he wanted to project. He wanted to be a strong leader of the country and he didn't want anyone to perceive any weakness. So they would wheel him in his wheelchair up to the podium and nobody was allowed to take pictures or anything, and all the reporters respected this. They knew, and they did say a word, never wrote about it. They propped him up. If you look at old videos, you can look at them on YouTube, you can tell he's kind of leaning on the podium and he's giving the speech and doing a great job. That would never happen today.
I mean, how many times is Donald Trump going to ask for Obama's birth certificate when the hospital's verified it? Do we have to get into everybody's underwear drawer? And maybe there's someplace in between that is the right place to be. I mean, I don't think you should hide stuff from the people. The world has certainly changed since the 40s. If anything, use that to your advantage. Look at what you've overcome. Show people it doesn't matter if you're in a wheelchair. It doesn't have anything to do with how smart you

are or how well you can lead. The world has changed. I just think there's way too much information. The paparazzi and pictures of everybody everywhere doing everything."

JB: "Right and with all the reality shows, it just seems like everyone has one now. A lot of stuff I read on the evolution of celebrity talked about how in the past, people would find talent that they would market to the audience, but now it's finding an audience to market a random person to. Now it's all about the different dynamic between celebrity and consumer. We're just catering to the consumer. What is your opinion on that?"

MV: "So you have *American Idol*. Are they crafting someone? Maybe their passion is somewhere else. No, you're going to be a country star because that's what people want, that's what we think your best at, but maybe they really like hard rock. Are we doing that? It's kind of interesting. I don't know if you've ever heard of the show *The Monkeys*?"

JB: "Oh yeah."

MV: "Well they were totally made up. It was because of the Beatles popularity was so huge that some TV executive said, 'Hey, let's put a band together.' They auditioned these guys who didn't even know each other and brought them together and made this TV show like they're old buddies. It was very Beatles-oriented, if you've seen the Beatles movies or anything…"

JB: "Is it four guys too?"

MV: "It's four guys, and there was the young, cute one, and then the goofy one…"

JB: "So they branded them all differently. That's how it always seems to be when there's like a boy band or a group of some sort they all have their personality. The other question off that is, do these changes hurt or help the reputation of what it means to be a celebrity?"

MV: "Certainly if you are Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, no matter how low-key you are trying to be, you're going to be on the cover and people are going to be following you around. But if you look at how they handle it compared to somebody like the Kardashians – whether they are true celebrities or not – I think you have a choice. Be careful what you ask for and what you wish for. I think some of them crave fame. I don't know if somebody like Brad Pitt, who is an amazing actor and is really cute, I don't know that he was craving fame or if he was craving that feedback.
Being an actor is really putting yourself out there and exposing yourself. Are they going to like it or not like it? And feeling successful in your passion happens to be fame, which is really kind of a downside. But then you've these other people who are using all these tools seeking fame that maybe ends up being a downside for them too. I mean, the reality TV people? Think of the balloon boy. He is so craving fame that he made up a story to try to get attention for his reality TV show. How sick is that? So that's all about fame. That has nothing to do with having a passion to be an actor or to sing or whatever and pursuing that."

JB: "Right. So that goes back to how it used to be, people like Brad Pitt. They just want to act. They think they have a real talent doing that. Starting with film, these people actually wanted to act. They weren't seeking fame, but then as time has progressed it seems like everyone now is just seeking fame rather than that feedback for their talent. Okay, last question. How would you measure the success of a personal brand?"

MV: "I think Oprah is a good example of a personal brand. I don't know if you watch Piece Morgan, he kind of took over for Larry King. Pierce Morgan's first interview was Oprah, and you don't see her interviewed so much. You see her everywhere, but not so much being interviewed. And he said, 'Well, what is your brand?' You know, Oprah blesses a book and suddenly it's a best seller. Oprah blesses a movie and suddenly it's winning Academy Awards. Oprah blesses a candidate and he becomes president. But she says her brand is love.
So, again, a brand is what your constituent thinks of you, not what you say you are. Maybe that's what she wants and maybe that's her doing the girls' school in Africa and those things. She's doing that because she came from very humble beginnings and she wants to spread love. So, I don't know if that's what I would say her brand is. I think that's what she wants her brand to be. If you think, she's an African American woman who came from a poor, broken family and was abused."

JB: "So not all of it is choice really. I think people definitely use that when they look up to her. I think a big part of her brand is her background."

MV: "Yeah. I think, again, the true motivation. I don't think she was after fame and fortune. I don't know Oprah, but I would maybe guess that sometimes she looks in the mirror and wonders, 'How did I get here? I was a poor little Black kid from this broken family. How did I get here?' – In her modest mansion. I think she was doing it for the right reasons, and I think people love her because they see that she's doing it for the right reasons. I hate to pick somebody that's so obvious."

JB: "Oh, she was in a ton of my research. A lot of research said that a big part of it has to do with her consistency, how long she's been around, and then the whole empowerment aspect. That she represents to everyone."

MV: "See I like that better than love. I think you should write to Oprah. That's a very positive thing too."

JB: "So then how would you measure the success of a brand? Some articles say it's once people like you outside of your target audience."

MV: "I like that. That's really hard. How do you measure a personal brand? Again, coming from the point of measurement is part of being strategic. So, at the beginning saying what do I want my personal brand to be? I want it to be these three things. So then I guess the measurement would be, okay, I'm marketing professional I want to be known as supporting the community, having great customer service, and integrity. So, part of the way I'm going to measure that is anecdotally.

I met somebody last night at an open house who knew my sister and they're like, 'You do so much for the community. We so appreciate it.' I was at a nonprofit thing so it was that kind of that audience. But this is someone I've never even met and the only reason they know me is not because of anything so fabulous about me, but it's because they have heard my name in conjunction with some nonprofit they care about.

If you want to reach this person and you are going to support the community, support something you believe in that they also believe in because that's going to hit them. So I think anecdotally there are ways to measure that. I think I would look at, on the service side and on the integrity side, well we've been in business for seven and a half years. How many clients have we had for seven and a half years? And there's a lifecycle to clients. I think it's like three or four years industry-wide. Some of them stay forever and some of them do one project – looking at that. Are we bucking the trend of that lifecycle because we're providing better service or our integrity makes them just want to be aligned with us? Probably looking at things like that."

JB: "So it's more case-by-case basis based on your objectives?"

MV: "I think it really would be. And going back to those objectives because why have them if you are not going to measure to those?"

Appendix C

Interview Transcripts: Dan Schawbel

The following interview was conducted to get expert opinions from an entertainment industry perspective based on a questionnaire about a personal branding and the evolution of celebrity.

Interviewer: Julianna Barker
Respondent: Managing Partner of Millennial Branding, LLC (Dan Schawbel)
Date of Interview: 5/11/2011

Interview Transcription:
Julianna Barker: "So I know I emailed you the questionnaire. Do you have it in front of you or is it easier if I ask you?"

Dan Schawbel: "Yeah, you can just ask me."

JB: "Okay. So how would you, as an expert in your field, describe branding a person, company, or product as a way to increase public visibility?"

DS: "It lowers the risk. So basically if you have two products and you are already familiar with one because you've heard about it or someone has recommended it to you, or both, then you are more apt to spend maybe thirty cents more or even if they are the same price you'll buy the brand that you are familiar with because you trust it more than something you're not familiar with. It's like if you go to a CVS pharmacy and you see Tylenol or Advil and then you see a CVS or a no-name brand painkiller, you'll probably spend the extra sixty cents for Tylenol of Advil because it's a more important decision. So brands charge a premium price, more money, because of all the marketing and the fact that people trust the brand and the brand is consistent.
For instance, McDonalds, you get the same burger here as you could in Japan in McDonalds. There are subtle differences, but for the most part the brand is consistent, and when you are consistent, you can build trust. And when you can generate awareness and you have a lot of money behind you and you're on TV and radio and all online people are going to hear about you. People might try it, or people might recommend certain things to you and then you might try it and that might turn into a purchase and then a repurchase and then you keep purchasing it to get trusted. That's really how the cycle goes."

JB: "So it's consistency, which then builds trust, and then it's just another way to differentiate yourself from other competitors out there. How would you define personal branding versus corporate branding? Please give an example of each."

DS: "Corporate branding exists at a very high level. A corporate brand is Coca-Cola. The product brand is Coke cans, for instance. A personal brand is someone who works at the company. Typically, the larger the personal brand the higher up their title is. So, the CEO of Coca-Cola is ultimate personal brand for Coca-Cola. If he's not good communicator or

he doesn't know what he's doing, it's going to make the company look bad. But everyone through social networks is a brand now. So your interns, your managers, your VPs, everyone really matters because they can all have a voice online, and they can help build your brand or hurt your brand. That's why is really important now for companies to get everyone on the same page, get a consistent message, and empower employees to really make a difference and get out there because if they are not getting out there, the competitors are."

JB: "Right. So say it's not an individual that works for a corporation, but it's just a regular individual, like me, versus a person that works for Coca-Cola. How would go about branding just an individual that has no ties to a corporation?"

DS: "You want to tie yourself to a brand. The easiest way to become known and build your brand is to partner or associate yourself with a brand that is already well known. For instance, when I graduated I worked with EMC Corporation. Now in technology, EMC is one of the top technology companies from business to business, so that helps build credibility because people don't know who I am, but they knew who the company is so that gives me credibility through the association with the company. See how that works? Another example is, when I was applying to get a job EMC, I had an internship at Reebok, and Lycos and LoJack and some of those more brand name companies and that's what people cared about in the interviews. They saw the brand names and they didn't even read the job description or my experiences. The brands stood out and it made a difference, even though I had a lot of experience with smaller firms, the brands really carried the most weight. When you attach yourself to a brand it improves your reputation and people really become more familiar and respect you because of it. So align yourself with as many brands as possible. I think that's really important because that's how people become familiar and trust you as a professional."

JB: "So you think the corporate brands are really where the foundation lies?"

DS: "Brands in general. So if you align yourself with a celebrity or you align yourself with a corporate brand– Something that's known. That's going to really help you. And you have to stop and think what do you want to be known for? And who do you want to know you? So you could be known in China, or you could be known to students in Boston. You have to decide who your market is going to be as well."

JB: "Next question, how would you create a personal brand for a client from the ground up? So briefly describe how you would go about starting someone's personal brand? What are the steps you take?"

DS: "Okay, so it's a four-step process. The first one is discover. It's about figuring out who you are, how you want to brand yourself, what you want to be known for. Do you want to be the go-to expert for a specific topic or skill in the workplace or even outside the workplace? Establishing short-term and long-term goals, and creating a personal mission or vision for yourself and where you want to go in your career.

The second one is creating what I call the personal branding tool kit. So it's different materials to help you sell you as a brand. For me it would be a book, magazine, multiple things like that. The average person, a blog possibly, a resume, cover letter, references, documents, an e-portfolio or an online portfolio as well as a business card, a website, everything. It all matters and everything needs to have consistency– Same color, same flavor, same type of information.

The third part is communicate and that's about networking, it's about getting out there, joining associations, and being active online in forums and blogs, and just meeting as many people as you can.

And the last stage is maintaining a positive reputation for the rest of your life. As you grow and establish yourself, the online world has to reflect that. So you have to be careful and be aware of what people are saying about you online so that the negative impression of you doesn't get out there and hurt your chances of building upon your career. So those are the four steps."

JB: "Okay, perfect. That kind of goes right into the next question, which is, how do you then manage that brand strategically using things like social media, traditional media, and crisis management?"

DS: "Well you want to make sure all your profiles are flawless. As in they all look really good, they are all consistent, they all have the same picture. Choose one professional picture you put everywhere. Have a strong position. So when I first started I was personal branding spokesperson for Gen Y. That's what I call a positioning statement or a personal branding statement depicting what you're good at and who you serve. Once you have all that done, then you just manage your brand. Basically it's all about getting your name out there, subscribing to blogs, commenting on blogs, writing for blogs, blogging yourself, tweeting, updating on Facebook, connecting with new people, emailing new people, maybe interviewing new people, doing whatever you can to get your name out there so people see your name, they see your face and they see that you have something valuable to say."

JB: "So say a celebrity brand that is already big and has already been established, how would you then manage that brand? Or what would you recommend a celebrity that is already well known to do to manage their personal brand?"

DS: "Well it really depends where they want to head. What are they looking to do next? Are they going to start another movie or are they not going to be an actor anymore and write a book? It really depends on the situation. When you figure out what you want to do, then you just position yourself accordingly, and then you reach out to the right people in those new fields and you just do the best you can, but you have to be persistent. You can't just stop. It's like, if you send an email to someone at work and you don't send a follow-up it might never get read, and the only way you're going to do a follow-up is if you're interested in something and so that's why people have to build their brand and their careers around what they truly enjoy doing."

JB: "Okay, perfect. And then this kind of goes along with the celebrity thing. In your opinion, how has the idea of celebrity changed in the last century given all the new

technology and all the new social networks out there? Basically how has it changed and why?"

DS: "Well anyone in the world can have their own platform and establish a following on the Internet now. You could do it right now if you wanted to while we're talking. You can build a sustainable brand if you work hard at it over a long period of time."

JB: "So do you think that all of these changes hurt or help the idea of celebrity?"

DS: "People view themselves as celebrities now. The word 'microcelebrity' has been passed around for the last four years. People even using Facebook, if you have fifty friends on Facebook, I guess you're a celebrity to those fifty people. You're known by those people. So the word celebrity has drifted, but still at the high level the celebrity is still the celebrity. You have the people who are household names that everyone knows of. If I say Justin Bieber, my parents who are in their 60s know who that is. My 93-year old grandma knows who Justin Bieber is. So he is a household name. So he commands more attention and therefore, more profit and more opportunities."

JB: "And do you think he was built based on consumer or on talent and then the audience followed him?"

DS: "It's a mix of everything. There are so many elements there. The timing was right, he had the talent, he got lucky because someone found him online and he was from Canada, and then just things happen. It's very, very, very hard to predict what's going to happen. That's why you should put yourself out there because you just never know what could happen. I think that's the exciting thing, but it's gotten a lot harder. There's 150 million blogs now, there's billions of footage on YouTube, and it's really hard to stand out and you just have to work really hard – much harder than you used to at least."

JB: "Okay, and then the last question. How would you measure the success of a personal brand? How do you know that your brand is successful?"

DS: "How do you know? That depends what your version of success is. I would say making money doing what you love. That is my typical definition of success. You could make a million dollars, but hate your life and that's no good."

JB: "So you think it's more case-by-case basis based on your goals?"

DS: "Yeah, based on your personal goals and if you feel like you were successful because you accomplished something that you really wanted to do that's great. I mean, people are going to have different definitions of what they consider success. Donald Trump would be to make billions of dollars, whereas someone else it might be to get one book published throughout the course of their life or someone else would be to marry and have three kids."

JB: "And then I'm just curious because I know you've done a lot of interviews about celebrity brands, in your opinion what is an example of the biggest celebrity brand out there right now?"

DS: "Oh, Donald Trump is the best – or the most well-known. He has so many elements working for him. He has his name everywhere on the different hotels, and he has his name on golf courses, he does Celebrity Apprentice, he's got the platform of supposedly running for president, he's got so much going on branding-wise and there's so much interest in him. Oprah's a big one, Ellen would be another big one. Tiger Woods was one. Ashton Kutcher is a big one because of his online following and offline roles."

JB: "And what do you think was the first celebrity brand in this generation that really made all of this personal branding stuff take off?"

DS: "I don't know. What generation though? I would say the generation in past years would be Justin Bieber by far. That and Lady Gaga."

JB: "Yeah. Well, I know that personal branding, the actual process, has been around for a while, but it really starting becoming a term people used recently with social networking and all of that. I was just wondering where you really saw that shift."

DS: "It was written about first in 1997, and now it's because of social networking that it's taken off."

JB: "So it was probably around boy bands, Britney Spears…"

DS: "I still think it's really taken off because of people who have gone from being successful on the Internet to being successful offline. That really was the homerun."

JB: "That's where it snowballed?"

DS: "Yeah. You know, when you have comedians who are doing things online and they are being booked across the United States for all these different comedy act tours. That's just an example, but for the most part people are building online brands, establishing a following, and then monetizing that online and offline. It's a different kind of celebrity. And then you have the traditional celebrity that's going online. So it's very hard to get a full crossover like Justin Bieber. He's the originator of the major crossover."

JB: "Right because he started out from social media."

DS: "Correct."

JB: "Great. Well that's it. Thank you."