

Personal branding  
for students:

start right now!

Do you have a profile on Facebook? And if so, is it visible to everyone? Can we see pictures of your holiday, a party or your study trip? And how about your profiles on LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, YouTube or Slideshare? Do they contain articles and presentations, and are you linked with your fellow students and the colleagues of the company where you did your internship? Which websites, weblogs and profiles do you use to show yourself? To what extent are you aware of the way others see you in the online world and IRL (in real life)?

Your online identity consists of your activities that are visible on the Internet. This visibility contributes to how people perceive you: your image. Personal branding is a way of thinking and working in which you try to connect the image that others have from you with your identity, in other words, with who you really are. You can do this by selecting things that you do (behaviour) and that you tell (communication).

The Internet provides you with the possibility to increase your visibility and your value for others. In your profile you can say who you are and what you are interested in. You can also share the work you created. An article or essay which you wrote used to get no further than the desk of your teacher or professor. This also applies to the presentations you gave as part of your studies: in the past these were just for single use. Nowadays, though, it is much easier to share them with other people online. In this way, they can be valuable to far more people than you could possibly have imagined.

Of course, lots of articles or presentations don't necessarily need to be made public. There is a chance, however, that - particularly

during your studies - you do, or create, things that you take great pleasure in. These might also be just those things that you are very good at. Especially during your studies you often have extensive possibilities to give a personal interpretation to an assignment. This personal interpretation may help you discover things that you like, that you are good at and that you want to be asked for to do again.

Personal branding is mainly something you do for the people around you as it helps others stereotype you. Perhaps you don't want to be stereotyped as you think that it imposes limitations. The reverse is true, however. If other people can place you and know what you could mean to them and to others, they will start noticing other possibilities for you. Whether you want to have your house painted, are in the hospital or want to have a vacancy filled: people are always looking for security, reliability and expertise. So the trick is for you to radiate this security, reliability and expertise, even though you feel like you are still wet behind the ears. You are not. You do not have to pretend that you have twenty years of work experience, but you have a different perspective at things. Which role do you have when working with fellow students? Are you the one who always does the presentations? Or are you the one who encourages others to, for example, write a good article? How often, in recent years, have you been asked by fellow students to work together with them? And why did they ask you? You already have several years of experience in doing things that you are good at.

**Your challenge now is to put your strong points into the limelight, to let them shine.**



Scholte personal branding is a training and consulting firm that uses the added value of the professional as a starting point. Using personal branding training programs, we increase the distinctive and added value of professionals for their organization.

### 10 Personal branding tips for students:

1. Choose a clear role, activity or responsibility that you would like to be asked or recommended for; later on you can always accentuate or adjust your choice;
2. Make sure everyone understands what you could do for others and why it is important contribute in this way. It will help people pass on your story;
3. Name the organisations, people and problems you would like to dedicate yourself to;
4. Look for the consistency or 'connecting thread' in the things that you say and show about yourself; make sure your CV, your online profile and the things you say are one complete and logical unit;
5. Work on your online identity, because it helps you to think about how you want other people to see you; start with a profile on LinkedIn and Facebook; look for and connect with people who do things that interest you;
6. Choose what to communicate and what not; tell the 'audience' specifically about those things that you would like to do again and which others can contact you about;
7. mMake choices regarding things you do not like to do and dare to say no;
8. Make sure the total image fits: your story and your online identity should correspond with and strengthen each other;
9. Take your time for your personal branding; trust and credibility need time to grow;
10. Start your personal branding now so you don't need to sell yourself later.