

A strong personal brand makes a strong leader

by Thomas Gad

Personal branding can be a fun and systematic way of becoming clearer and more defined as a person, not only in other people's eyes, but also in your own mind. To know "what you stand for" is not just about a philosophy of life and personal ethics, it's a practical decision tool for yourself, a way to promote your career and your potential.

As a leader, the first thing you have to know is yourself. Once you have developed your personal brand you are equipped with more self-knowledge than most leaders. In fact, lacking self-insight is one of the largest problems in the area of leadership. Personal branding is very much about your **mission in life or "having your own important issue"**. A lot of people don't really bother to think about this very much, they just live their lives. Until one day, struck by a life crisis of some kind, the total perspective, the whole reason for living suddenly becomes dramatically important. To create a personal brand is a very good preparation for any crisis in life. It also gives a certain comfort or peace of mind; you get a good feeling of being complete somehow. To "stand for" something is crucial in order to become trusted and defined, and to "stand out" from the crowd is critically important: to get the attention you want, the partner you want, the career you want. In today's value-driven network organizations it has become essential to know yourself in order to get the optimal fit between what the organization stands for and what you stand for yourself. At the same time it's necessary for you to communicate what you can contribute to the team: a good team is in effect a blend of different personal brands. In the book "Managing Brand Me" (Pearson, Momentum, 2002) Gad & Rosencreutz introduce a methodology for developing your personal brand; it includes a four-dimensional way of looking at yourself, and also the Brand Me Code and Motto, which are for your personality what your DNA is for your body. Using the business vocabulary of management, marketing and branding helps you to **enter the right frame of mind for self-management**. In other words it's action oriented, productive and will lead to tangible results. It's less mushy and "soft" than most popular psychological personal development, where the language can be rather off-putting from the outset to many career people. It also proves to be **a good modus operandi for working with personal development**; the step-by-step thinking is ideal for handling very complex and subtle issues.

Thomas is founder of *Brandflight* (www.brandflight.com) with offices in Stockholm and London. His clients include companies like BrainHeart Capital, Stockholm City Council, Kista Science City, Carnegie Mellon University - Software Engineering Institute, Cerealia, Swedish Farmers Association and Johnson & Johnson - Ethicon.

Gad has developed a unique 4-dimensional method of creating, transforming, and maintaining brands and authored the book *4-D Branding*, with foreword by Sir Richard Branson (*Financial Times/ Prentice Hall, London 2001*). He has also co-authored *Managing Brand Me – how to build your personal brand* (Pearson-Momentum, London 2002).