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# Unlock your star power by building a personal brand

KEITH CARMAN  
METRO CANADA  
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**Y**ou're the new hotshot on the corporate block but nobody's heard of you? Maybe it's time to look at your promotional strategy.

Formulating a branding plan is the first rule of virtually every notable personality — from U.S. President Barack Obama to Ellen DeGeneres.

"The common thread of success among (celebrities) is the fame formula," notes Maggie Jessup, co-author of *Fame 101*, a book dedicated to professional success secrets. "They packaged their expertise into compelling personal brands, used Hollywood-level publicity to get visible and then promoted their brands to celebrity-hungry target communities."

Maggie and partner Jay Jessup know how celebrities become popular, rich and happy due to their experience in their own publicity/branding boutique, Platform Strategy. Everyone from start-up gurus and scientists to actors, authors, lawyers and royalty have utilized their services with great success.

Taking that experience to study the career models of 75 celebrities, the Jessups have boiled down branding's rudimentary aspects into *Fame 101*.

"People who promote and publicize their personal brand enjoy three strong benefits: Greater visibility, enhanced credibility and increased income," notes Jay, reiterating that victory relies on creating a familiar,

**“Personal branding done well delivers increased credibility and that in turn gives you an edge in any professional activity”**

friendly visage.

You can maintain publicity by being snappy and entertaining, write a book — "A successful book will change anyone's professional life overnight" — and speak publicly whenever possible in order to connect with large groups fast.

"Look around at the next big event you attend," he adds. "The big brands are onstage delivering a 20-minute talk. It could easily be you. Very visible people are simply more successful. Personal branding done well delivers increased credibility and that in turn gives you an edge in any professional activity. Great personal brands attract clients, win career opportunities and enjoy substantial financial rewards."

However, the Jessups declare that you need something to offer in the first place. Personal branding is about maximizing that potential. While success can be expedient, continued prosperity takes time and continued work, even after one begins to reap rewards. However, once you find your niche, you don't have to be the next Oprah Winfrey, Maggie points out, anyone can make personal branding

profitable.

"A coffee shop waitress can become an immensely successful national brand using the fame formula; Suze Orman did. A recently divorced mother, barely getting by as a bank teller can quickly change her fortunes and join society's elite; Paula Deen did."

Fame 101 authors highlight five favourite, brilliantly executed personal brands

- John Travolta:  
Went from B-list player to million-dollar movie superstar, "by harnessing the power of publicity and continuously evolving his personal brand."

- Rachael Ray:  
From grocery-store aisle pitch girl to cooking superstar with television shows, a magazine and book deals, "She's adept at personal branding and publicity but stays on top by remaining nice despite becoming one of the era's most powerful brands."

- President Obama and Sarah Palin:  
"Politics aside, each has captured and maintained a niche with the most powerful branding, publicity and promotion of the millennium."

- Ellen De Generes:  
"We don't even need to say her last name, her brand is that powerful. Ellen is a great example of the lifetime value of consistently working on your personal brand while staying visible."