



# YALI Network

## Brand Better Workbook

This workbook will walk you through the steps of thinking about your personal brand and positioning yourself for success. You will learn how to tell your brand story in a way that is engaging; how to discover your brand identity; how to stand out from the crowd; how to position yourself for your target audience; and how to better understand your goals and the steps it takes to set your brand up for success.

Branding is essential to communicating your values and goals to your desired audience. The skills you provide, such as digital marketing, will help you to communicate your value to your desired audience. Are you ready to get strategic about how you brand yourself and marketing yourself as a product?

- **UNDERSTANDING BRANDING**
- **KNOW YOUR TARGET MARKET**
- **KNOW YOUR COMPETITORS**
- **TELLING YOUR BRAND STORY**
- **IDENTIFYING YOUR BRAND IDENTITY**

## **UNDERSTANDING BRANDING**

When you're thinking about yourself as a product, you probably know that marketing yourself strategically to gain name recognition is key. Name recognition will differentiate you from competitors and help you stand out. Let's explore what branding means for you.

Branding is the essential process of identifying, creating, and managing your image, and it is what sets you apart from your competitors. Branding is what links all of your efforts

together, and marketing is an essential component in your branding toolbox.

## Brand Identity

- **Brand:** The feel and perception of you that the rest of the world sees.
- **Branding:** The continual process of identifying, creating, and managing your image.
- **Brand identity:**
  - The visual components of your brand.
  - Your brand voice.
  - Your brand values.
  - Your brand personality.
  - Your unique brand positioning.

Understanding your target market, your competitors, and differentiating your company from others through the following exercises will help you to translate your story into a more established brand identity.

## Remember: Your Brand Matters

Your brand is your reputation. It is how you communicate to others what you are, what you do, and what you believe. It can also create a lasting impression. You want to aim to have a unique, authentic, clear, and consistent brand that will leave a positive impression on those who interact with you. It should also lead to more individuals wanting to interact with you, support you, and hire you.

## Brand Positioning

Brand positioning is the process of putting your brand in the mind of your target audience and supporters. Strong brand positioning shows what differentiates you from your competitors in a meaningful way. Brands commonly create strategies for their brands based on such factors as:

- The visual components of your brand.
- Your brand voice.

- Your brand values.
- Your brand personality.
- Your unique brand positioning.

Positioning your brand is a helpful exercise to better develop a clear vision for who you are and maximize your relevance in the market against your competitors. Read more on these strategies here and determine what works best for you and your business.

## **KNOW YOUR TARGET MARKET**

You will have a more authentic experience and loyal supporters if you actively consider your audience and target market.

The individuals who will be engaging with you will be key in propelling your brand forward. They can be a sound board for brainstorming how to navigate the professional market, they can introduce you to others in your industry through their friends or through social media, and they are key to understanding what issues you are trying to solve and can give you clues on how best to resolve them.

How do you get to know your target audience? Complete these three prompts to get a better understanding of who your target audience is.

**1. When you came up with the idea of your brand and your unique value, who did you think it would help?**

**2. What skills do you provide to a company or organization, or what experiences make you unique?**

**3. Describe the characteristics of your desired position or company (gender, education level, annual income, age range, etc.). In as much detail as possible, describe the environment, the hours, your coworkers (if any) and anything else that comes to mind.**

**Now that you have a better understanding of your target market, ask yourself, if you could create one perception about yourself within your primary target market, what would it be? Why? This can help later to better inform your branding strategy.**

## **KNOW YOUR COMPETITORS**

Now that you have identified your target audience, it is a helpful exercise to consider what others are doing that might also make them successful in the same market. Knowing what you can provide that your competitors cannot is also a helpful way to position your brand. Let's take a deeper look into these skills.

Think of your past employment and the skills necessary for achieving different benchmarks. Are these skills necessary for your industry? Now, choose the top three of these skills and list how you might already possess this skill, as well as one to two ways that you could better develop it as well. Consider your strengths and weaknesses, as well as your goals for the future.

**Skill 1 :**

Ways I already possess this skill	How I could better acquire this skill
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**Skill 2 :**

Ways I already possess this skill	How I could better acquire this skill

**Skill 3:**

Ways I already possess this skill	How I could better acquire this skill

Repeat the same exercise above with your own professional profile. What are the

**competitive skills that you have and what skills do you need to acquire?**

Skills I possess	Skill to Acquire

**Now, look at professional profiles of people within your industry.** They can be friends or people you don't know, write down skills that they possess that give them an edge within the industry. Pay particular attention to the way they market themselves and how they communicate their unique value to the industry. Add the skills that they possess to this chart.

1.	5.
2.	6.
3.	7.
4.	8.

**What differentiates you from your competitors?**

**Now state your unique selling proposition — finish this sentence: Hiring managers or clients would hire me because:**

## **TELLING YOUR BRAND STORY**

The first step of a perfect pitch starts well before making a presentation, or even speaking to another person. First you must reflect on your goals, including identifying your brand story and deciding how to tell it. This section will help guide you on how to share your brand story

### **Determine what you have to tell**

Before you can tell your brand story, you have to decide what you want people to know. The prompts below will help you identify the important information for your story. The goal for this exercise is to answer each question as concisely as possible, so take your time and challenge yourself to limit your answers to a few sentences per section.

What makes you a great employee or person to work with?
What is your brand story ?



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When would someone need your services?
How can people find you? (i.e. LinkedIn, instagram)
Why are you unique? What is your unique selling point?
Describe your passion for what you do.
What do you want to be known for?
Think about your personality. How would you describe it to others?

## IDENTIFYING YOUR BRAND IDENTITY

### Fill in the Blanks

Discovering your organization's identity is easier than you might think. This short exercise can help you turn the information you already know into a brand to share with the world. Fill in the spaces below with information about you to get started telling your story today.

1. Your name:
2. Your hometown:
3. An important mentor or role model in your life:
4. A core value of yours:
5. Another important value:
6. A third value:
7. Your current industry:
8. A need you are trying to fill in that industry:
9. What you do, in a few words:
10. An obstacle you've faced (discrimination, financial hardship, etc.):
11. How you give back to the community:
12. Something people can do to support your journey:
13. An accomplishment that you're proud of:

### Now that you've filled out some answers, put them together:

Hello, my name is (1)\_. Years ago, growing up in (3)\_(4)\_ taught me the importance of (5)\_(6)\_(7)\_. I've tried to stick to these values for all of my life, and I know that they are important to (8)\_. The more time I spent doing (8)\_, the more I realized that (9)\_. I've overcome (10)\_, and after talking with other people who experienced the same thing, I realized I could provide (11)\_for the

entire community. The best way to support me is(12),and has led me to accomplishing(13).

For those reasons, I think\_\_\_\_\_!

Here's an example:

1. Your name: **Cherelle**
2. Your hometown: **Durban, South Africa**
3. An important mentor or role model in your life: **My grandfather**
4. A core value of yours: **Hard work**
5. Another important value: **Originality**
6. A third value: **Improving my community**
7. Your current industry: **Digital Marketing**
8. A need you are trying to fill in that industry: **Create more diversity and inclusion in the way that things are marketed to different populations**
9. What you do, in a few words: **A marketing storyteller that considers the backgrounds and cultures of the audiences that we work with.**
10. An obstacle you've faced (discrimination, financial hardship, etc.): **Facing job loss at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.**
11. How you give back to the community: **By helping local business owners to better market themselves on the digital marketplace by holding sessions providing local businesses training on digital marketing skills.**
12. Something people can do to support your journey: **Provide me with referrals to businesses that might need my help!**
13. An accomplishment you're proud of: **After helping multiple local business owners to create websites for their businesses, a few hired me to be their lead marketer and now I have a portfolio of clients.**

Hello, my name is (1) **Cherelle**. Years ago, growing up in (3) **Durban, South Africa**, (4) **my grandfather** taught me the importance of (5) **hard work**, (6) **originality**, and (7) **improving my community**. I've tried to stick to these values for all of my life, and I know that they are important to (8) **Digital Marketing**. The more time I spent doing (8) digital marketing, the more I realized that I am (9)**a marketing storyteller that considers the backgrounds and cultures of the audiences that we work with.**

I've overcome (10) **Facing job loss at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic**, and after talking with other people who experienced the same thing, I realized I could provide (11) **help to local business owners to better market themselves on the digital marketplace by holding sessions providing local businesses training on digital marketing skills** for the entire community. The best way to support me is (12) **providing me with referrals to businesses that might need my help** and has led me to accomplishing (13) **after helping multiple local business owners to create websites for their businesses, a few hired me to be their lead marketer and now I have a portfolio of clients.**

For those reasons, I think I have found a great way for my personal passion to meet my professional passion!

# CONGRATULATIONS!

**You've just completed the  
YALI Brand Better Workbook! You are  
well on your way to creating  
— or strengthening —  
your personal brand!  
Visit [yali.state.gov](http://yali.state.gov) to  
learn more about #YALIProfessionals.**