

The Recession Resilience Roadmap

Strategies to successfully mitigate career disruptions and navigate career challenges associated with an economic recession.

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UNDERSTANDING YOUR VALUE

Define Your Personal Brand

Who are you professionally?

What values determine your attitude, choices, and actions?

How are you different from others with a similar job title or background?

What is your unique promise of value to your employer?

Does your marketing message resonate with your target audience?

→ *Get clear on exactly what you bring to the table as a professional.*

→ *Craft compelling brand messaging.*

→ *Ensure you are memorable to decision-makers even when not engaged with them.*

Milestones: Personal Brand Development ■ Unique Value Proposition ■ Identification of Competitive Differentiators

COMMUNICATING YOUR VALUE

Strengthen Your Positioning Build Credibility

How 'loudly' does your professional brand speak?

Are you articulating your value consistently at every opportunity?

Are you telling your story with the right tools, to the right people, at the right time?

Don't be the best-kept secret.

→ *Ensure your boss/company are crystal clear on your value.*

→ *Be focused, consistent, genuine, and authentic in your messaging.*

→ *Effectively and effortlessly network to build relationships.*

→ *Connect in a notable way with like-minded decision-makers.*

Milestones: 50 Strategies to begin implementing today! Including incorporating your value into your Performance Review ■ Resume, Cover Letter ■ LinkedIn Profile ■ Interview Responses ■ Career Portfolio

LEVERAGING YOUR VALUE

Gain an Advantage

Are opportunities coming to you? Are you attracting options?

Do you have name recognition in your department, company, or industry?

Are you aligned with a professional "tribe" of like-minded professionals?

Is your energy focused on what TO do with equal clarity on what NOT to do?

→ *Attract opportunities & offers.*

→ *Align yourself with future partners through your professional legacy.*

→ *Think differently, leveraging the value-add of your perspective*

→ *Attract professionals that will challenge, educate, inspire, and raise the bar for you.*

Milestones: 22 Strategies to begin implementing today! Including guidance on Internal & external professional growth opportunities ■ Networking ■ Strategic Career Planning

Can you show professional growth with each passing quarter?

Are you pursuing skills, education, roles, or opportunities that allow you to affect change?

Do you have a Strategic Career Plan that considers future trends that will impact your role, organization, or industry?

→ *Become whom you aspire to be.*

→ *Progress from creating awareness to creating meaning.*

→ *Maintain professional relevancy by evolving fluidly to keep pace with an ever-accelerating world*

Recession Resilience Career Planning

The 2023 economic outlook is not optimistic but definitely not fatalistic.

Don't let a recession catch you off guard.

As a career coach, I have been getting a lot of questions from clients about what the potential looming recession means for their careers. Most are seeking guidance on what they can do to prepare for it, how to mitigate as much risk as possible, and how they should navigate their employment situation should it come to fruition. The following questions are the most common:

“How do I recession-proof my career?”

“How do I make confident career decisions during a recession?”

This eBook provides multiple strategies for making your career more resilient to a recession. Depending on your situation, you may be considering hunkering down to ride out this period of uncertainty, starting a proactive voluntary job search, or beginning a mandatory job search after a job loss. The strategies outlined in this guide can function as a blueprint to help you proactively manage your career in the coming months.

Will there be a recession?

Nobody knows what the future holds, but it seems clear that we are amid an economic downturn. Most companies are analyzing how to shore up their bottom lines because leading economic indicators are casting a shadow over corporate earnings expectations for 2023. *The Conference Board Leading Economic Index® (LEI) for the United States* has long been heralded as a reliable leading indicator of recessions. Recent data suggest this index is signaling an approaching recession anticipated to begin around the end of 2022 or early 2023.

“While the consensus is that a global recession is likely sometime in 2023, it’s impossible to predict how severe it will be or how long it will last. Not every recession is as painful as the 2007-09 Great Recession, but every recession is, of course, painful.” Allison Morrow, CNN Business, 5 signs the world is headed for a recession | CNN Business.

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/02/business/global-recession-fears-explained/index.html>

Should I be worried?

In challenging economic times, even the most stoic employees ask, “I have a history of strong performance reviews, and my boss likes me. Should I be worried?”

Your employer’s loyalty is to the company and its shareholders.

Few people have proper job security. You are not alone in your uncertainty. Still dealing with PTSD from the pandemic and faced with the media’s comprehensive coverage of recent extensive tech

industry layoffs and the looming recession, most Americans worry about losing their jobs, with good reason. Everyone knows someone who's been laid off or has been laid off themselves.

It may sound harsh, but your employer's loyalty lies with what is best for the company, not what is best for you. Their responsibility is to protect the bottom line. You are the captain of your ship with sole accountability for your personal and professional development. Do not hesitate to make a practice of taking the initiative in your career trajectory, especially if you suspect you are at risk of a layoff. If you sit back in a holding pattern, waiting to see what will unfold, you have given away your power. Decide if you want to go all in and do everything you can to keep your job or if you want to start looking for something else now. It is not wise to wait for word from your employer— it is often not to their benefit to give you any warning.

Hope for the best and prepare for the worst

These are unfamiliar economic times for all of us. It's nearly impossible to predict the next year – let alone the next couple of months. It's wise to stay calm and collected. This may be a tough ask given the current business climate. But professionals that take the necessary steps to stay cool under pressure are most likely to weather the storm.

Smart professionals prepare for the worst, but the strategic one finds the opportunities to become one of the few that leverage this time to boost their brand to build recession resilience and come out stronger on the other side.

Despite your best efforts, you may still get caught up in a wave of layoffs that typically accompanies an economic downturn. But if you take steps to prepare for a potential layoff well in advance, it will be easier to hit the ground running for a job search to secure a new job with a minimum amount of disruption.

How do I maintain control over my career when things are so uncertain?

It is crucial that you adopt a proactive approach to managing your career.

Whether you live paycheck to paycheck, are the sole bread winner for your family, or have a nice nest egg for emergencies, not knowing where your next paycheck will come from can be paralyzing. Laying the groundwork and positioning yourself for a potential job search while you are still earning a paycheck is crucial. It's best to do the work while still employed to minimize the potential for fear-based decision-making.

Minimize fear-based decision making

Fear-based decision-making is based on preventing a potential outcome. (i.e., taking the first job offer you receive, regardless of fit, for fear it is the only one you will receive.) Fear-based decisions tend to compound into an impossible cycle of trying to plug all the holes before the dam breaks. The career resilience work you are about to embark on focuses on shoring up the dam, stronger and better than

ever, to avoid job loss vulnerability. In a period of economic uncertainty, everyone should be engaged in preparation regardless of imminent job loss or not.

In this climate, terms such as layoffs, restructuring, or “reduction in force” are likely to enter the career outlook of many, with such measures taking a very human toll. While no industry can guarantee job security, you can protect yourself by becoming resilient.

You Don't Need Special Skills to Survive the Recession - You Need Resilience

Career resilience encompasses the value you bring to an employer and your ability to tap into a well of inner strength and adapt in the face of adversity. It is easy to feel overwhelmed with frustration or fear during challenging economic situations, so use the strategies outlined in this e-book to focus on the areas of your career that you can control.

Own Your Success

Are you actively managing your career, or have you, over time, slipped into a more passive role? I work with clients daily who have relied on a company or employer to define and drive their professional success. They have functioned as a chess piece on a company's chess board, with their employer moving them or not moving them at will. Now is the time to commit to taking ownership of your career and personal brand like never before. Charting a personal career path (in good times or bad) gives you enormous power to set impactful goals and achieve them, regardless of the economic climate.

Adapt

Accepting change is a part of life and can challenge even the most adaptable individuals when it is constant. The best time to start recession-proofing your career is before an economic downturn hits. However, if you have discovered this guide after a recession has arrived, you can still take steps to mitigate your vulnerability, protect your job, and keep your career moving forward.

Unfavorable economic trends can wreak havoc on jobs and career trajectories, making mapping out next steps more challenging and less certain. To succeed in creating a custom roadmap to guide your actions, simplify your process: 1. name potential issues, 2. identify the impact of those issues, 3. brainstorm healthy responses, and 4. assess your responsibility to be a part of the solutions.

By intentionally adopting a daily attitude of, “What is a piece of a problem that I can tackle right now,” or “What is one thing I can accomplish today that will help me towards my goal,” allow individuals to set aside the weight and frustration of the unknown and put their energy and attention into productive and reaffirming areas of their career.

How do I make career decisions during a recession?

What makes some individuals successful in times of economic distress where others fail?
They ensure that their value to their current organization and potential employers is compelling and clearly communicated.

The framework for this guide covers the following:

- ⊕ "Understanding your value"
- ⊕ "Communicating your value" - both internally (at your current company) & externally
- ⊕ "Leveraging your value" both internally & externally

Before you decide what moves to make (or not make) in your career, it's essential to return to the basics. Before you can ask, "What should I do?" you need to get clear on "Who am I?"

When you reconnect to whom you are by discovering/clarifying your gifts, passions, values, and purpose, you can more easily take ownership of what you're good at, what you love, and what matters to you, communicate it and leverage it. It's a huge confidence boost and creates the inner clarity necessary to navigate any economic climate.

Strengthen your positioning

It doesn't matter whether we are in an economic boom or bust; the building blocks of a meaningful and successful career are always your gifts, passions, values, and purpose. We begin with a **DIY Defining Your Professional Brand** exercise, which turns your focus inside to reconnect to what you're good at, what you love, and what matters to you.

Every professional has a unique skill matrix comprised of the following:

- **technical skills** (skills learned in school or on the job, such as computer coding or financial analysis)
- **'soft' skills** (personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people, such as teamwork or adaptability)
- **and characteristics of professionalism** (patterns of behavior aligned with their values, such as being confident, not cocky, or abiding by a strict code of ethics.)

No two skill matrixes are identical. Understanding your skill matrix is essential to educating others on your competitive differentiators and helping them appreciate 100% of the value you contribute as an employee.



Your unique skill matrix forms the foundation of your brand.

Becoming recession-resilient starts with defining your professional brand and engaging with a proactive mindset. Strengthen your resilience by getting incredibly clear on your professional brand so you can clearly articulate the value you bring to an employer.

This guide provides strategies for communicating your brand within your organization to strengthen your current positioning and externally to professionals you network with or approach for employment. These strategies include how to pre-emptively lay the groundwork for a job search, even if the chances are remote that you will have to initiate one. They explore utilizing a consistent brand message across all career messaging and marketing materials, including your performance review (for your current employer), elevator pitch, LinkedIn profile, cover letter, resume, portfolio, and interview responses.

Let's begin this journey to career recession resilience with Stage 1 - Defining Your Personal Brand, presented in File #2.

Note: This is a DIY guide. If you would like to work in collaboration with me in a 1:1 capacity, please utilize the following links to my 1:1 client services:

Need help defining your professional brand?

[Defining Your Professional Brand](#) Some clients can identify their gifts, passions, values, and purpose but need help connecting all the dots to a cohesive and compelling brand message. If you find yourself in this situation, I would be happy to help you craft your one-breath branding statement after reviewing your completed 'Defining Your Professional Brand' exercise. If interested, please use this link to schedule a [60-Minute Career Coaching Session](#).

Are you contemplating a career change?

If you are contemplating a [career change or pivot](#), check out my [career pathfinder series, 'Career Exploration - Connecting to Your Inner GPS'](#). A coach in your corner can be a game-changer when considering a career transition. I guide clients to identify their optimal career direction and explore it from various angles to ensure a smooth transition into the next phase of their professional life.

Are you interested in exploring entrepreneurship or vetting a potential business idea?

If you are contemplating starting a business, check out my [1:1 coaching series for Entrepreneurial startups](#). Vetting a business idea or launching a new venture is hard, and you don't have to do it alone.)

Do your New Year resolutions include resolving ongoing issues or taking your career to the next level?

If you are looking to partner with a coach to navigate any and all issues that arise in the coming months and position yourself to 'level up' your career - check out my [2023 Performance Coaching series](#).)

Recession Resilience Career Planning

Stage 1 - Understanding Your Value

Hiring typically slows down in most sectors as a result of recession rumors. When companies are slower to hire, job seekers will face stiffer competition for the best available jobs. Your brand strategy can ensure that you stand out from the crowd. Because employers have the upper hand when more candidates compete for fewer slots, job candidates should focus on honing their professional brand for **solid differentiation**. If your organization understands your value, it will make educated decisions about whom to retain during layoffs. Likewise, if potential employers understand the value you add, then their determination of who is the 'candidate of choice' during their hiring process should be evident.

Revisit your current branding. Is it robust enough?

To begin, revisit how you're branding yourself to your current and potential employers. Ensure all your communications are consistent and educate the recipient on your gifts, passions, values, and purpose. You want to connect the dots for your current and potential employers; otherwise, they may overlook you. It's essential that they understand why they should choose you—especially if your technical skills and current/past job titles are identical to those of many other co-workers or job seekers.

Your professional brand is your calling card and illustrates your value. It is an amalgamation of your technical skills, soft skills, professional characteristics, values, passion, and purpose. When properly incorporated, the whole of these aspects (your brand) is greater than the sum of the parts. It is the entirety of your distinctive skill matrix which drives the uniqueness and strength of your contribution and the magnitude of your impact.

Most resumes receive a 30-second initial review. Make it count!

Hiring managers are scouring résumés in unique ways. Instead of skimming the surface and checking all the boxes, resumes have become illustrative roadmaps showing a candidate's history and potential value. Your resume, cover letter, and professional portfolio must be well-branded to ensure your value is communicated, even if the reader only has time for a 30-second review. *(Note: if you need a well-branded resume, cover letter, LinkedIn profile, or online career portfolio, [click here](#). I would love to assist you.)*

You build recession resilience by differentiating yourself.

You build recession resilience by differentiating yourself based on the value you add and the impact you generate. **But it's not enough that you understand it; you must also ensure all key stakeholders understand it.** Additionally, communicating your value (i.e., sharing your brand) should be a career-long endeavor (not just a recession resilience strategy) because highlighting your value strengthens your position within a company which will open up a world of opportunities for professional growth when organizational decision-makers keep you top of mind. This strategy encompasses fully understanding your value and ensuring your boss, company, and future employers understand it as well.

Let's review the four stages of career recession resilience. Understand your value, communicate your value, leverage your value, and increase your value.

The 3 Stages of Building Recession Resilience

Stage 1 - Understand your value

- ✓ Defining Your Personal Brand

Stage 2 - Communicate your value

- ✓ Performance Review
- ✓ Resume, cover letter, and portfolio (if you use one)
- ✓ LinkedIn Profile
- ✓ Interview Prep
- ✓ Career portfolio

Stage 3 - Leverage your value

- ✓ Networking
- ✓ Strategic Career Planning

Stage 1 - Understanding Your Value

Personal Branding is how you communicate and present your value to the world.

The branding exercise that follows is a **DIY Defining Your Personal Brand** exercise. This exercise will remind you of all aspects of your "genius." With this clarity, you can then utilize your brand to

- ⊕ provide feedback for your **Performance Review**

- ⊕ craft your 60-second **Elevator Pitch**
- ⊕ create value-boosting elements on your **resume, cover letter, portfolio, and LinkedIn profile**
- ⊕ clearly articulate your professional “impact” when **Networking**
- ⊕ construct your answers during an **Interview**
- ⊕ function as a starting point for developing a **Strategic Career Plan** in 2023

Note: Strategies for each bolded element are included in this guide.

Let's begin.

Defining Your Personal Brand

Official Definition of Personal Brand:

“A personal brand is a widely recognized and largely uniform perception or impression of an individual based on their experience, expertise, competencies, actions, and/or achievements within a community, industry, or marketplace. It is used to create and influence public perception of an individual by positioning them as an authority in their area of specialization, elevating their credibility, and differentiating themselves from the competition to advance their career, increase their circle of influence, and have a more significant impact.”

Source: **Definition - What is a Personal Brand? | PersonalBrand.com.** <https://personalbrand.com/definition/>

To put it simply:

Personal branding is the effort to communicate and present your value to the world.

What is Your Personal Brand?

Your personal brand is a self-promotion tool and encompasses the unique combination of skills, experience, and personality you offer the world.

Use your personal branding to differentiate yourself from the competition.

Professionally, your personal brand is formed by real-life impressions and the image represented by the information available online about you, such as your LinkedIn and other social media profiles, and via your job search marketing materials, such as your resume and cover letter.

If you ignore your personal brand, it will develop organically, possibly chaotically, and beyond your control. Thus, it's advantageous to formulate your brand.

Your business card highlighted your personal brand in the pre-internet days. Only high-profile people were featured in the media. You would be unfamiliar to most 'ordinary' people. In today's highly public world, anonymity is rare. Every action is discussed at length on social media, so you are far less anonymous. Refrain from letting others write your narrative. Be the architect of your personal brand.

Defining Your Personal Brand

- What do you stand for?
- What makes you different?
- What do you want your legacy to be? (what people say about you when you're not there?)

Personal branding boils down to reputation management and ensuring you work on the interesting things that foster happiness. Gaining clarity on your 'about' helps you pinpoint your unique selling point(s) and desired legacy amongst your wider professional community.

Evaluating your personal brand is worth it whether you're starting your career or midway through and reviewing your role. After completing the included Defining Your Personal Brand activities, you can convert your workbook inputs into value-boosting elements within your tangible career marketing tools, such as your résumé, professional bio, and online profiles (LinkedIn, etc.)

Why Would You Want a Personal Brand?

Your personal brand is vital to you professionally. It represents the value you add as an employee and how you present yourself to current and potential employers. It allows you to ensure that people understand what you bring to the table as a professional and that they see you as you desire versus in some arbitrary, detrimental way.

Your brand allows you to highlight your strengths and your passions. This, in turn, **helps people believe they know you and the value you bring. People naturally have higher trust in those they feel they know**, even people they have never met personally.

>>> I love the following description of personal branding:

Your brand is your reputation - the combination of personal attributes, values, drivers, strengths, and passions you draw from that differentiate your unique promise of value to your target employers. Source: "The Brand Called You ." <https://www.revolutioncareers.com.au/the-brand-called-you>

It's up to you to identify those qualities and characteristics within you, integrate your value proposition in everything you do, and communicate a crystal clear, consistent message- designed to resonate with your target audience.

One of the great things about personal branding is that it helps to spotlight your "softer" skills and professional characteristics. Employers look for candidates who will best fit **their organization** and its culture, so they need to understand the kind of person you are. People hire people they like, and your brand helps them assess your fit.

Personal branding is THE way to stand out above your competition in a job search.

Your personal brand communicates **your value** to the world. It is an essential component of personal development, career advancement, and recession resilience. Expressing who you are, what you do, and why you do it helps position you for success and opens doors of opportunity.

You must get to the heart of what makes you "you," which is something many of us haven't contemplated before. It's helpful and necessary to stand out when applying for a job or starting your own company.

While we are independent, free, and unique within the working world, we operate in a very noisy, competitive environment. Standing out from the crowd is challenging. Help hiring managers and executives remember **you with a compelling brand.**

The Define Your Personal Brand exercises assist you in building your personal brand so you can integrate it into all the recession resilience strategies that follow, including finding a (better) job and living a happier, more fulfilling life. Your perception of yourself is irrelevant if others don't see you the same way. Your brand ensures consistency between the two.

Remember, defining your personal brand isn't about "selling" yourself. Instead, it takes an educational approach. You are educating decision-makers on what you bring to the table professionally. If they love it, great!! You can then anticipate that they will make a choice that is favorable to you. If they fail to understand or appreciate you, then don't despair. There is a better fit somewhere else, and you are perfectly positioned to find it.

Your personal brand will allow you to:

- Use your understanding of your value as a tool in your recession resilience strategy execution
- Find a job with a great "fit" where you are well compensated for your skills etc

- Grow your professional network, connect with like-minded individuals, and open up more professional opportunities
- Lay the foundation for what you define professional success looks like

Your personal brand is a delineating factor from everyone else in the world.

Compelling branding is rooted in authenticity.

Begin your brand-building efforts by engaging in introspection and self-reflection. You'll waste time and effort if you start expressing your brand through your marketing materials before you are clear about your unique promise of value and who needs to hear your message.

Get clear on your brand focus with some intentional, quiet introspection and the solicitation of uncensored external feedback. The process will only be effective if you center your research around the core elements of your brand. Use the accompanying workbook to guide your journey and get clarity on the authentic traits of your brand.

You should also create your unique brand vision. This is how you want yourself to be perceived by others and how you want to live your professional and personal life. Your vision may include expertise in areas you need/want to pursue for professional growth. While your brand's core messaging will remain static over time, as you evolve and grow as a professional, challenging yourself to raise the bar on your performance, your brand messaging will evolve with you.

A well-crafted personal brand makes you understandable and memorable. It enhances your ability to stand out from the thousands of other people with a similar technical skill set, education, or title.

If you are interested in defining your personal brand, [click here](#) to purchase my DIY Defining Your Personal Brand instructional guide and workbooks.

These files comprise the DIY Personal Brand Development table of contents, instructional guide, and workbook

This comprehensive branding exercise has multiple sections and can be broken into several sittings. You may also find it helpful to complete the first pass of all the sections, then set aside your work for a short time (1-14 days) and then revisit your answers to see if you can expound upon your initial answers or perhaps refine your answers as you become more introspective and self-reflective.

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Recession Resilience Career Planning

Welcome Back!

Congratulations on completing your Personal Branding exercise.

If you have taken the time to complete a [Personal Branding exercise](#), then you have taken a proactive role in your career direction and can begin to capitalize on everything you offer as a professional. The Personal Brand Development process provides the opportunity to define your best authentic self. As you evolve and grow as a professional, make an ongoing, conscientious effort to revisit the process to refine your conclusions and honor your growth. While much of the information will remain the same, your professional development will support the acquisition of new strengths, behaviors, and characteristics that enhance your professional impact. Enjoy the process.

Boost Your Career Resiliency with Your Personal Brand

Stage 2 - Communicating Your Value

Implementing the communication strategies outlined in this guide to educate your professional community members on your brand identity will enhance your experience in the following ways:

Granting Permission to be Yourself

Personal branding is about celebrating your individuality and expressing your authentic self. I cannot stress enough the importance and beauty of your unique skill matrix. Professional satisfaction is about carving out your place in the world based on discovering your true genius!

Everyone has their unique value and a personalized way of delivering that value. The personal branding process assures you that it's okay to be your authentic self. The more you attempt to fit into a pre-defined socially constructed mold, the more “watered-down” your brand becomes. Own your individuality. Remember, it's impossible to please everyone; you will never be everyone's favorite flavor of ice cream. Just focus on being the absolute best Rocky Road, Butter Pecan, or Mint Chocolate Chip you can be! There is a company and a hiring manager somewhere that will greatly appreciate your exact flavor. Your odds of finding these like-minded individuals exponentially increase when you consistently use your Personal Brand strategies to refine your job search materials, online professional presence, and interview dialog to reflect your unique value.

Gaining Confidence

Developing your personal brand is one of the best confidence boosters of my clients' experience. The increased confidence comes from acknowledging the totality of your strengths, recognizing 100% of all the positive qualities you bring to professional challenges, and then sharing these gifts with the people you work with.

As you assemble the building blocks of your brand, you naturally focus on the positive aspects of your personality and how the sum of all the building blocks determines your unique value.

Your self-esteem soars when you know you have value to offer and are comfortable articulating that in a professional environment. If you align your actions with your brand identity, you will stand firmly in your truth.

Strategy #1: Identify a professional experience you previously felt was out of reach. Make having that experience a part of your 2023 Strategic Career Plan. [\[For help creating a Strategic Career Plan, click here.\]](#)

Building Credibility

You build credibility through your actions. Your target audience (your ideal clients, co-workers, or employers) want to know that you can do what you say you will do.

If you live your brand, keep your brand promise, and take actions that align with your brand, you build trust, and trust builds relationships. As you build a track record of credibility with your target audience, their words - in the form of testimonials and references- can become additional tools for supporting your credibility.

Strategy #2: Implement 100% of the strategies outlined in this document in the next six months. At the end of 12 months, solicit feedback from professional contacts regarding elements of your brand identity to verify their interpretation of your professional identity.

Showcasing Your Specialty

Having a personal brand is owning the business of you. Is there a dominant aspect of your brand? Begin to create a niche by choosing a specific area you want to excel and claim it. While having a broader business perspective has its advantages, no one can specialize in "everything."

Start to develop a specialty with what you know and what interests you. What types of problems are you particularly good at solving? What can you do that few others know how to do? Who is drawn to you? What segment of the population or the professional sector do you understand best?



Your unique work experience, life experience, and personality determine your niche. Personal branding allows you to cultivate yourself as a subject matter expert within your chosen niche.

Strategy #3: Identify a new way to use your specialty in a professional capacity outside your current list of direct responsibilities (i.e., collaborate cross-functionally on a project). Add this goal to your 2023 Strategic Career Plan. . [\[For help creating a Strategic Career Plan, click here.\]](#)

Connecting You with Your Target Audience

Successful personal branding requires communicating your message to the right people in a way that enables an emotional connection. Aligning your performance with your brand identity helps you interact with your target audience clearly and consistently, and that consistency builds trust, allowing emotional connections to form.

Strategy #4: Identify five people you admire and respect professionally. Set a goal to network with them for career inspiration and feedback and add it to your 2023 Strategic Career Plan. . [\[For help creating a Strategic Career Plan, click here.\]](#)

Having a Lasting Effect

Branding includes leaving your mark, establishing a legacy, or becoming known for something. Identify your best characteristics and build upon them.

Your brand is your legacy. People will remember you through your actions, expertise, and emotional connections with others, allowing you to shine and leave your mark on the world.

Strategy #5: After implementing the strategies in this guide, request feedback from your closest professional friends, asking what they believe your workplace legacy is.

Distinguishing Yourself from the Competition

Humans are built to notice what is different. We see the person who wears red in a sea of black clothing; we notice the outliers who stand out from the crowd.

Differentiation is a crucial part of the branding process. Without it, your employer cannot discern anything special about you, which weakens your position to be retained in a downsizing scenario.

Recognizing and developing your unique talents can distinguish you from the competition.

Aim to build a tribe of people who support you and share your goals and values. Members of your tribe become your promoters who will tout your value to others and challenge you to raise the bar on your performance if you are capable of more.

Strategy #6: Identify your biggest competition and evaluate the aspects of your brand that clearly differentiate you. Set a goal to strengthen that aspect so it cannot be easily copied.

Attract the 'right' opportunities and offers

When you are clear about your brand promise and align your actions with it, your brand becomes familiar to your target audience. Consistency builds trust and makes you memorable. When you are top of mind with your target audience, you begin attracting the people and opportunities you need to achieve your goals. Professional growth isn't only about adding new skills but also new experiences.

Utilizing your voice and curating your public image is beneficial because it helps your messaging resonate with your audience and professional community. Seek to broaden your reach, build connections, and remain open to sharing your career journey.

What matters most is ensuring you define how you show up. Stay true to yourself and embrace the process.

Strategy #7: Say yes to opportunities presented to you by people other than your boss(es). Often, we decline to engage in new opportunities that fall outside a role's job description, thinking we already have enough to do! However, these opportunities are invitations to share how adaptable your skills are and to build brand identity credibility outside your immediate work circle.

Focusing Your Energy

Focus your energy on activities and experiences aligned with your brand identity. When you clearly understand who you are, what you do best, whom you want to work with, and how to use your talents, you can focus on where you can have the most significant impact and fun!

It's important to know what to focus on, but equally important to know what NOT to do. Using your brand like a filter allows you to say yes more quickly to the right opportunities and no to the wrong ones. You can quickly determine what is "on-brand" and "off-brand" for you.

Strategy #8: Say yes to opportunities presented to you by people other than your boss(es). Often, we decline to engage in new opportunities that fall outside a role's job description, thinking we already have enough to do! However, these opportunities are invitations to share how adaptable your skills are and to build brand identity credibility outside your immediate work circle.

Increase Your Energy

Inauthenticity is exhausting. It's genuinely tiring to play a role every day. The power of implementing personal branding communication strategies is that you are never playing a role. Instead, you are delivering on your brand promise in a way that's unique to you. That's invigorating!

Strategy #9: Identify the top two influential people in your professional circle that previously you have only been comfortable presenting a more generally accepted corporate persona and focus on introducing them to your authentic self in your new communications.

Become the Best Version of You

A personal brand makes reinvention a thing of the past. After identifying your expertise, focus on its use so that you reap maximum benefits from it.

After you craft a personal branding statement (a concise expression of who you are and what you offer), you can use it for all methods of communication.

The art of personal branding is that while it is never static (you will always be learning and growing), it thrives on consistency. Consistency requires you to repeatedly use critical pieces of your branding puzzle, even as your brand evolves.

Strategy #10: Repeat your branding exercise at the end of 12 months to observe and honor your growth! How has it changed? How have you changed?

Minimize Imposter Syndrome

Branding is about uncovering your unique, genuine brand and living it proudly. It's about authenticity and being yourself - your Best Self. Do not assimilate away from who you are naturally to be more of what others believe you should be. Most people never define or truly live their brand. They look for shortcuts, thus making it impossible to make their message clear because they cannot feel comfortable just being themselves. When you are willing to be yourself and live your brand fully, you will find true satisfaction in delivering your best work and will not be deterred by dissenters. Fake it to you make it becomes a thing of the past.

Strategy #11: Identify two growth objectives you have previously danced around pursuing because they were outside your comfort zone. Incorporate these objectives into your 2023 Strategic Career Plan. . [\[For help creating a Strategic Career Plan, click here.\]](#)

Grant yourself permission to be the best you that you can be.

I work extensively with clients wanting to make a career change or pivot. The first step is understanding how they got to where they are today. They are often stuck in a role or career that they have little interest in continuing. Sometimes they have 10+ years of experience in a field they have merely tolerated since day one.

Most of these clients have spent years trying to conform to others' expectations in corporate culture. They consistently sought favor and acceptance based on parameters they had no part in defining or establishing. When individuals attempt to fit their square peg into a round hole fashioned by someone else's definition of "appropriate," they can appear disingenuous, uncertain, and lacking in confidence.

Conversely, when clients hone their understanding of the unique value they bring to the workplace, they start to exude an assuredness of what they know. They push their energy out versus succumbing to lower energy exuded by others. They can contribute to their employer, the organization, and the professional community, and their career trajectory changes immensely.

Lead With Your Brand Through a Recession

We are rolling into a period of slow or stalled economic growth. Tough decisions will be made in every company across all industries, increasing stress in the workplace. Your confidence can dive when stress goes up. If you've been feeling directionless or powerless, building your brand and having a strategy to communicate your value can make you feel more in control. Not only will sharing your brand identity help build your confidence to navigate an unstable hiring market, but it can also help you communicate your strengths to potential employers.

It doesn't matter whether we are in an economic boom or bust; the building blocks of a meaningful and successful career are always your gifts, passions, values, and purpose.

In Stage 1 of this **process**, you **work** to develop your Personal Brand, **which summarizes your personal and professional qualities clearly and convincingly and clarifies your unique professional value**. Your brand identity is a powerful communication tool. It can raise your profile and help you to stand out in a challenging economic environment defined by change and uncertainty.

Interest in personal branding is at an all-time high in the workplace as people struggle to define their brand identity and live it in ways that come naturally to them. **When you understand yourself and your natural tendencies as a professional and a leader**, it's much easier to communicate **your personal brand** because you can speak from the heart.

Being out of touch with who you are and what you represent makes you vulnerable and more susceptible to your brand being defined by others. When my clients feel stuck between how they see themselves and what others want them to be, they fall into the trap of allowing others to represent their brand. This makes it more difficult for people to communicate their authentic personal brand because they first must overcome the inauthentic image (created by others) that currently exists.

Naturally cultivated from a place of authenticity, your brand identity fosters engagement with others, attracts like-minded people with the same values and goals, and allows you to differentiate yourself competitively in the minds of employers and internal and external customers. Creating a personal brand that stands for something is an asset to both you and your company and can work to connect you with teams, clients, and colleagues to accomplish amazing things.

Lean into your brand and communicate it consistently to foster deep employer and co-worker relationships that allow you to stay on course during a recession.

While implementing the strategies for communicating outlined in this section, abide by the following rules to live by regarding communicating brand identity\value proposition.

Brand Communication “Rules of Engagement” Strategies #12 - #17

Strategy #12: Clarity of Message

Is there enough simplicity in your brand message to make it relatable and easily digestible for others? Does it pique their interest? Will it help to influence your target audience's choices and decisions? Avoid over-complicated or intimidating communication of your brand.

To have an impactful personal brand, you must know how to seamlessly get people to gravitate to your most authentic ideas and ideals. Ensure your brand is understandable and resonates with others.

This does not mean you should redefine your brand to make it easier for others to understand. Instead, it implies you need to work harder to refine your brand message and identify themes people can relate to and apply to your work/impact.

Personal branding is a never-ending journey of self-discovery, learning how to refine your messaging so you can communicate your value proposition in a way that honors those unique, defining elements that give your brand distinction. The distinction is based on your innate behaviors and influenced by your core values. Remember, the value is derived from the uniqueness of your value proposition. No two people offer the exact same thing, so make sure your message is clear on how you are special.

Simplify how you communicate your personal brand to observe people beginning to gravitate toward you.

Strategy #13: Use the Power of Consistency.

You cannot be everything to everyone, so what is your focus? Most people start with a "wider," more general brand messaging and refine it over time as they understand their value more and more. The more focused your brand is, the easier it will be for people to remember who you are.

Consistency is the key to building trust. A consistent personal brand creates a robust and recognizable image in your employers' minds, building awareness and loyalty. Everyone recognizes McDonald's golden arches - it is the same concept.

Consistency is one of those things that can seem obvious when you look back on it after you've done it (or not) but requires continuous work to maintain over time. When times are tough, people will watch to see how you respond.

Be consistent with your online and offline messaging across all platforms. Your communications enable people to explore your messaging and understand how it applies to their circumstances. This gives people the confidence and willingness to apply your ideas and ideals to their lives and careers. Be conscious and deliberate about your messaging and consistent in your words and actions.

Strategy #14: Don't Be the Best-Kept Secret

Be intentionally visible with your brand. You must communicate who you are as loudly as possible because there's no point in being the best-kept secret in the marketplace.

The worst thing you can do in times of uncertainty is going radio silent. Your employer relies on your service, but how much value do they place on it? You should be communicating your value and sharing/building your brand identity with every conversation, social post, and interaction with others. It is being built brick by brick each time you communicate. Use your brand identity as the foundation of your communication, whether in print, in person, or online. Your story plays a vital role in boosting your career.

You will be doing yourself a huge disservice if you don't intentionally communicate your value proposition. You may not be a natural self-promoter, so instead of classifying sharing your brand identity as "selling yourself," think of it in terms of educating the listener. Seek to help the other person understand you and your value better but disconnect from what they do with the information. You have zero control over what they do with it; it's not a productive place to spend your energy. Don't try and sell yourself because you cannot be authentic and everything to everyone simultaneously. Get comfortable educating people on your brand/value without worrying about their perception, whether they feel it's excellent or nothing, or somewhere in between.

When you reframe your perception of self-promotion as storytelling, it puts things into an entirely different perspective. Storytelling and its associated familiarity enable you to narrate your success story from a different vantage point, creating a comfortable distance when talking about your achievements. It also allows you to use creativity to engage your audience's imagination. Once their imagination is engaged, your audience can't help but connect with the story you're telling.

Strategy #15: Collaborate - Don't Compete

Everyone has a unique skill matrix and a target audience that will resonate with it. Other professionals may be doing similar things to you, but no one will be able to do it the same way as you. Honor the diversity and see these value-aligned people as a resource for new ideas, introductions, and inspiration. It is not a competition; there is no scarcity surrounding brilliant performance. Be generous with them and expect they will be the same with you. Remember that your brand is your secret sauce. If everyone were the same, this world would be dull.

Never compare your brand to others because everyone's brand is unique. People aren't the same; we just share common experiences that bring us together.

Strategy #16: Create a Positive Impact, Protect Your Brand

Always keep in mind the impact you leave on others. Focus on growing a positive, like-minded, skill-diverse community around your brand. A positive attitude combined with helping others will significantly help grow your brand in the long run. For example, even leaving a negative comment on someone else's LinkedIn post can be detrimental to your brand. Everyone is in a different place on their journey of introspection and self-reflection. And everyone's value proposition will be unique. Honor their diversity and journey and be a role model for those still in discovery. Never burn bridges.

Once you've built your brand, you want to protect it. One lousy post or comment at a work event can quickly destroy your brand. Benjamin Franklin wisely said, "It takes many good deeds to build a good reputation and only one bad one to lose it ." Always admit to mistakes, take responsibility, and think before you act.

Strategy #17: Be Genuine and Authentic

#1 - Believe in yourself! Reach out to others in your life if you're unsure what your strengths, wins, and achievements are. A letter of recommendation from a respected boss or colleague can boost your confidence and ensure you are communicating your value authentically.

Strategies to strengthen your positioning by communicating your value

Your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room. What do you want people to be saying about you from this point on, and equally important, what are you doing to influence it? Consistently leading with your brand in a very authentic way can make you feel more in control.

Communicating your brand is a LT Strategy,
treat your personal brand as an asset to invest in.

Influential personal brands marry strategy and communication to present a unified identity to everyone who experiences it—customers, prospects, employees, and stakeholders—your brand as a long-term strategy and an investment that extends beyond the service you offer.

Implementing the following strategies will put you in control of your narrative.

Manage your brand as if it were a trademark, an asset you must protect. Discover (through trial and error) the most efficient method of communication to articulate your brand distinction. Do you excel at delivering your brand message in meetings? Or a blog? Youtube video? What is your preferred method of communication?

Strategy #18: Perform a clean sweep

In today's world of hyper-connectedness, you are always 'on,' so it is imperative that you understand that every interaction you have will either enhance or devalue your brand. Whether it is a recruiter, customer, or hiring executive, they will search across all your brand tools (resume, social media accounts, word of mouth, etc.) to check consistency in how you are positioning yourself, personally and professionally.

People are geared toward noticing exceptions. Make sure there aren't any, and you will never have to worry if there is only one version of the truth out in the world. Consistency is crucial; to ensure this, I recommend a reputation clean sweep.

Manage your online presence. Scrub down your social media platforms, perform a cursory search on your friends' platforms, and remove any linked photos, videos, or comments that don't align with your personal brand. Update your online business profiles, resume, professional bio, and career portfolio.

Google yourself to see what comes up, and then delete any pictures, tweets, or posts that don't promote your professional brand or could get in the way of your candidacy for a new position.

Suppose you don't want to dive deep into your social media accounts. In that case, it's a good idea to camouflage your non-business profiles so that they won't turn up on a casual Google search of your name — especially if said profiles contain anything you wouldn't want your current or future boss to know about. One way to make your personal accounts more discrete is to use your first and middle names for that profile instead of including your last name.

Consider replacing the email address you've had since college with something more in keeping with your current and future brand. I once had a client with the email sico_dork@xxxx.com. While I am sure it had its purpose at one time, it was clearly time to move on.

Establish a truthful narrative across all your brand assets, tools, and verbal and non-verbal communications.

Strategy #19: Differentiate, differentiate, differentiate

Vanilla is a universally safe flavor profile. Can you really go wrong with vanilla?

But you don't want to be "vanilla ."The key to this process is that your brand should not look like everyone else's. The more common your brand identity is, the less perceived value it has. For instance, if you adopt a generic brand identity such as: "I help people succeed," Succeed at what? What people? How? Why you?

If you present yourself as a differentiated brand (i.e., vanilla bean ice cream) with a respected reputation (i.e., Haagen-Dazs Slow-Churned Vanilla Bean), you appear more sought after, reliable and sustainable, making your boss and the organization trust and want to keep your services because they view it as a worthy investment.

If your boss or organization can't tell you apart from your co-workers, as if you were all interchangeable widgets with a similar skill set, you have no reliable competitive advantage.

Strategy #20: Be a great storyteller

One of my mantras when preparing clients for interviews is, "don't just list the actions you took; tell me a story!". Communicating through stories is like playing a movie in the other person's mind. The level of detail required to make a story interesting naturally makes your messaging more memorable than if you provided a list of associated tasks and responsibilities like reading a textbook.

Stories help to organize our experiences for ourselves and others. With storytelling, the other person can better put themselves in your shoes in their mind. Storytelling adds coherence and meaning. The human mind wanders by nature; pin it down by telling great stories.

To stand out and capture wandering minds like a great movie night, create great stories to explain who you are, what you do, what you believe, how you do it, and most importantly, why. You can offer a list of characteristics (as evidence of your brand identity), but a compelling story is always more memorable when told simply and with passion, believability, and authenticity.

Create a story around your brand that others can relate to and engage with via written content or video. Posting a video sharing your knowledge and expertise allows you to develop personal connections with your network. Just be sure to make the content and "vibe" unique to you.

Strategy #21: Choose your communication channels and commit

There are many ways to get your message out, with more popping up daily. Whether it's a weekly blog, using LinkedIn, or creating a speaker series for a group of colleagues - building a personal brand does take commitment.

Choose one or two ways to commit to getting your message out to the world in the next six months, and make sure you inject energy into them regularly. There's nothing worse than a LinkedIn profile that hasn't been updated in months or a weekly article that doesn't get delivered.

Strategy #22: Raise your profile

Your brand identity is an excellent tool for helping you to make an impact, whether in person, in print, or online. Do you want to do more of what you love and excel at? Commit to living your brand identity. Your brand identity, when used consistently, gives you the potential to be distinctive and memorable in a situation where your message is new and unfamiliar to potential employers and members of your professional community.

- ✓ **Mentor junior staff members.**
- ✓ **Use social media to promote corporate messages and achievements.**
- ✓ **Get involved in a cause you care about.**
i.e., Women in Leadership, ESG initiatives, etc.
- ✓ **Create meaningful relationships with people in positions of power.**
Join a committee headed by an influential that is of interest to you, or take advantage of your organization's open-door policy. Good branding is a strategic investment in your career. Branding is about building meaningful relationships, and the associated trust from these relationships can pay off when times get tough.
- ✓ **Physically talk to people instead of sending yet another email.**
An email can quickly be forgotten. In today's fast-paced environment, your message must be intentional and intriguing to overcome all obstacles to getting your message heard.
- ✓ **Use a respected social media site for business, like LinkedIn.**
To reach industry thought leaders, you'll want to build your social presence and engage with others via networking events/conferences.

- ✓ **Speak Up - resolve to make your voice heard at work.**
Resolve to speak up as soon as possible in every meeting you attend. Read the agenda in advance and prepare your thoughts. Then say what you want to communicate with confidence.
- ✓ **Be a savvy networker.**
Choose your events to make multiple contacts in a few hours. Ideally, choose events with some senior managers whom you can dazzle with your knowledge.)
- ✓ **Volunteer for something outside of your area.**
Not only will you add to your knowledge and experience, but you'll meet a new group of people.
- ✓ **Find a mentor/coach/supporter.**
Find one within your organization and one external to your organization. There is tremendous benefit from receiving feedback from different perspectives.

Strategy #23: Embody your brand

Your brand's ultimate impact, value, and sustainability result from how well you deliver its value proposition. The personal brands of the most influential leaders have a long-lasting impact and facilitate the immediate application of the lessons learned.

Remember, everyone has a choice of whom to follow. Make it worth their time and earn their respect by living the brand that best defines you. When you efficiently deliver your value proposition, you inspire those around you.

Branding is about communicating what makes you unique. A memorable brand identity leaves no doubt in others' minds about your unique position in the professional arena. Focus and align every communication with how your brand identity aligns with what the decision-makers believe adds the most value. With the economy in flux, employers are evaluating their people for stability, a sense of accountability, and reassurance that they can rely on their team members to continue to perform at the highest levels. Communication aligned with your brand identity ensures your boss and the rest of management recognize and understand how you are different and better.

Strategies #24-#27: Educate your boss, organizational decision-makers, and stakeholders

During periods of recession, businesses make cuts to everything that isn't considered mission-critical. Make sure your brand/value is well known in your current organization to build recession resilience. Employment decisions that are made during a recession typically involve several layers of management. Your personal brand will be presented to different people at different levels and at different times, so the clarity of your messaging makes a huge difference in how it is perceived and received.

Your boss will use whatever info is in their hands or readily available to make decisions. Make sure they get the right information - leave nothing to chance. People buy into your brand when they feel they can trust you. Consequential decisions are based on what your boss associates with your brand, how they think about it, and what they believe it stands for. You cannot leave your brand to chance.

If you haven't done much brand work before this recession, all is not lost.

Start today.

In good times and bad, personal branding is essential for any professional that wants to succeed in today's ever-changing world. In times of turbulence, how do you navigate through all the uncertainty?

How exactly do you influence your boss and other decision-makers? Let's explore that in greater length.

Strategy #24: Leaning into conversations, asking questions, and actively listening

Managers are stressed and want to know whom to count on. Identify what those decision-makers and other organizational stakeholders need and want through targeted discussion and solicit feedback on how you can better support them. Encourage them to utilize you in a similar way moving forward. Your brand identity provides your boss with the assurance of the reliability of your performance.

When done right, personal branding can be the tipping point for job security — especially during an economic downturn when employees are more closely scrutinized as the organization makes decisions around cost reductions, role redundancies, and layoffs.

Strategy #25: Put your values front and center

What is most important to you? What kind of person do you want to be? Identify your core values and keep them at the heart of everything you do as you grow your brand during a crisis.

Not sure what your values are? Revisit your branding exercise, or better yet, take the time to sit down and brainstorm again. Then compare your most recent session with your Personal Branding workbook. Values are innately personal, so ensure that whatever you land on feels right.

Fine-tuning your brand is a great way to refine your brand perception to resonate with your internal and external stakeholders—whom all play a part in navigating this economic climate.

Lead with authenticity. When organizations are contemplating layoffs to maintain the bottom line, they're more likely to retain the employees they trust to perform when faced with disruption to business as usual.

If a professional wants to remain unscathed in this economy, they need a strong reputation as a trustworthy employee and business partner with values and skills that employers can count on.

Strategy #26: Flexibility is key

As many organizations make difficult decisions regarding budgets, staffing, and business priorities, a brand strategy that incorporates flexibility and adaptability remains a sound investment to help you become recession resilient. Resilience isn't about being tough; it's about being elastic, and flexibility is critical for brands looking to survive recessions.

Recessions require a flexible approach to operations, but also communications and branding. The answer is not to just lay low and ride out the storm; it's to adapt and add value in new ways. Understanding trends can help you adjust to new business models or transition into new roles with potential.

Strategy #27: Always go back to the customer.

Resiliency in a recession requires a closer look at management's behavior and needs. It's about understanding the role your services/brand plays in the larger organization. In a recession, budgets are tightened, and positions are re-evaluated. Priorities will have changed, and some positions can be quickly thrown into the "non-essential pile. Your brand positioning should be employer centric. Don't get left behind.

Identify and address your boss's/senior management's/organizational pain points, fears, and hopes, to garner loyalty that shields you from competition for years to come—even during periods of economic uncertainty. Focus on your existing relationships with the organization's stakeholders. Provide them with the exact reasoning to keep you when they must make tough choices by aligning your actions to alleviate their pain points and provide extra support. Branding has the power to convince someone who already values what you have to offer that you and your services are "essential."

Strategy #28: Reframe your branding

Reframing your brand strategy or reconfiguring your positioning can build your career resilience. Evaluate your value proposition in the changing economy. Take a closer look at why your work, communications, and contributions are essential to the company's survival.

It's not just what you say, it's how you say it. Optimize your communications by closely following the recipients' reactions. There is never a worse time to accidentally be tone-deaf or off the mark with your communications than when your boss is stressed.

With uncertain times all brands could benefit from revisiting their brand strategies. Brand strategy is a living creature that evolves day to day, not a manuscript frozen in time.

- Reassess you're positioning to ensure you're playing in the right market with the right product/service and targeting the right people.
- Tighten your messaging to create stricter criteria for storytelling, ensuring your marketing only delivers the most compelling stories that convert.
- Realign your content strategy to maximize your impact.

Each of these actions can pay off tenfold in downstream professional improvements. Remember: A strong brand gives you clarity and direction, letting you spend the rest of your energy strategizing the most effective ways to increase your impact.

Strategy #29: Performance review

Performance reviews: though most dread the appraisal process, it can be a great way to access and educate others on your brand. You'll want to ask yourself - What value does my personal brand bring to this company, and how does my personal brand transcend into the company's goals?

Incorporate your brand identity into your performance review feedback:

Give your performance review the time it deserves. Remember, you are your own best advocate, and taking the time to excel at this will make it easy for your manager to recognize your accomplishments.

Audit Your Work. Your brand is partly comprised of your "work story" or reputation within the company. Talk about the projects you worked on and the results you contributed, so your employer will understand what you bring to the company.

Rattle Off Active Goals. Over your career, you'll want to extend the scope of your personal brand, which is possible through attaining goals. Be ready to share and demonstrate progress toward your goals, as well as discuss three to six short-term (less than 45 days) or long-term (up to several months) goals you want to achieve.

Collect feedback independently. To understand how you and your brand identity are perceived within the organization from a broader perspective than just your manager's, seek out feedback independently from your fellow team members, peers, or clients.

Collecting commentary and feedback from other sources can go a long way toward showing what you're doing outside your required role description and how you're representing yourself and your team across the company. Share your feedback with your boss.

Have a plan. If you want to set yourself apart, instead of just looking back on the year when providing feedback for your performance review, create a strategy for the upcoming year as well. [\[For help creating a Strategic Career Plan, click here.\]](#) For example, create a document or slide deck outlining what you're planning for the year ahead based on your brand identity and where you can really add value. This shows organizational leaders that you are proactively thinking about the business and how you can contribute.

Clarify your goals (annual and beyond). This is your time to dream! What do you want out of your career? What do you want your future in the workforce to look like? Are you happy with the path you're on now? Or do you think you might want to pivot into a new role / department / career track altogether? [\[For assistance in exploring alternate career paths, click here.\]](#)

Think beyond the following year, too. What might your whole life in the workforce look like? It can be helpful to think of a handful of possible futures that appeal to you, then do some reflecting (and probably some Googling) to map back the major steps between those futures and where you are now. [\[For help creating a Strategic Career Plan, click here.\]](#) Also, keep in mind that career goals change all the time, so this doesn't need to be an exhaustive list; you can expect to amend your long-term goals as time passes.

Having some clarity on what you want (and how it's been achieved by others) can help you come up with a list of skills you want to learn, responsibilities you wish to

explore, experiences you want to have, and other goals you might want to set for the future as you head into your performance review.

At the end of the year, a performance review can be a great chance to shine and remind your manager why they hired you in the first place. It's a process custom designed to clearly identify the value you add and subsequently build recession resilience.

Externally Communicating Your Value

No matter how secure your job is, it's time to brush off your resume. (Coaches note: You should always have a current resume ready to go). Update your resume to highlight your current role, new skills, most recent accomplishments, and responsibilities. Evaluate how well it educates people unfamiliar with your work on your brand.

What exactly is a personal brand? In addition to defining who you are and what you do, a personal brand determines how others—including future employers—will look at you. It's a chance to put out your message so that when people hear your name or see your photo, your brand is the first thing that pops into their minds.

Even if you don't plan on looking for a new job, you never know when an opportunity will come knocking, or a layoff will rear its ugly head. Keep your resume updated, so you are prepared to send it out at a moment's notice.

Strategy #30: Update Your Resume

If you haven't already, dig up your resume and update it. Make sure it includes your most recent employment and up-to-date contact information, significant accomplishments, and new skills you've developed since the last time you looked for a job.

Yes, all of this takes time. Use the fruit of your branding work to develop your resume (and biography and other career documents) around it. Your branding identity should form the foundation for all your personal marketing materials, online and offline.

Benefits of a Well-Branded Resume

- Energizes you by differentiating your value proposition to your target employers.
- It helps you articulate to your network how they can help you achieve your career goals.

- It prepares you to speak confidently and knowledgeably about the value you offer.
- Provides a wealth of on-brand information to re-purpose for your online profiles and any web pages and/or portfolio you create.

It prepares you to network and interview well by providing the basis for your job search narrative.

A well-branded resume allows you to stand out in an oversaturated marketplace by exposing new audiences to your vision, skillset, and personality in a way that is strategically aligned with your career goals. People are drawn to that level of authenticity.

Strategy #31: Use dynamic content to connect with people

We live in a world where the average person's attention span is incredibly short. Studies show your resume receives approximately a 30-second review of a hiring manager's time on their initial pass through a stack of submitted resumes.

A strong brand is a considerable advantage in a cluttered online space because it allows you to reveal more of who you are and connect with your audience.

If done well, you become more than a piece of paper - you're now a living, breathing human being who, beyond possessing a particular skillset-has interests, passions, and other talents. Now that's worth paying attention to. The more captivating your brand is illustrated via your resume and LinkedIn profile; the more people will be drawn to it: which translates to more influence and impact.

By creating a dynamic and well-branded resume, you can highlight how you will get the job done while cultivating a more profound sense of connection and affinity before meeting a prospective employer.

Strategy #32: Actions speak louder than words

You need to show people your expertise, not just tell them about it.

Leverage multiple channels such as LinkedIn, where you can highlight your professional expertise, Facebook, where you can participate in different groups (networking, collaborating, sharing advice); and Instagram, where you can emphasize how your core values are embodied in your lifestyle.

Keep it simple. All the content you create should fall under one vision. Invest the time and energy upfront on your brand to maintain message cohesion across

all avenues of communication.

Show (don't tell) your audience while staying true and aligned with your brand identity.

Strategy #33: Communicating a clear vision attracts the right opportunities

The most powerful connections are borne out of a shared vision. A well-branded resume describes the impact you wish to generate through your work. The people that resonate with your brand are the people you want to work with.

While many people may have a similar resume, your personal brand cuts through the noise and sets you apart from the other candidates. In a hiring manager's mind, you move the needle from "I think he/she can do the work" to "I think I want to work with someone like him/her ."Once you get clear on your vision and why you can do what you do better than anyone else, share it!

Your competitive edge will no longer be just your skillset, achievements, and past work experience but rather who you are as a person.

Strategy #34: Update Your LinkedIn

Guide to Personal Branding with LinkedIn

Do you want to build your personal brand, accelerate your job search, and land a perfect job faster?

Why LinkedIn Is Important for Your Personal Brand

Today, LinkedIn is the most important social network for making that brand clear:

- If they don't find you on LinkedIn, you may be virtually invisible to them.
- If you have a minimal, mediocre presence on LinkedIn, they will wonder whether you know how to navigate the new world of work, including being social media savvy.
- If you have a solid and active presence on LinkedIn, and your personal brand is evident, you've upped your chances of being a candidate of interest.

Update the details of your LinkedIn profile

Make sure the details on your LinkedIn profile are up to date.

Over 191 million United States professionals are using this platform: it's a great way to be visible in your company, profession, and industry.

As a priority, ensure your photo is a professional head and shoulders shot of you. Next, update your professional headline underneath your name to reflect the search terms under which you

would like to be found. And finally, write a 200-word summary of your brand, experience, skills, and personal interests and post it under the background section.

Get busy on LinkedIn.

Recruiters and hiring decision-makers at your target companies rely heavily on LinkedIn when sourcing and assessing job candidates.

A *clearly* presented personal brand visible on LinkedIn will be easily found by employers and recruiters looking for someone like you.

How to Make LinkedIn Work for Your Job Search

LinkedIn is a robust site offering *many* ways to get your personal brand and job search in sync.

1. Choose Your Target

Step one in a job search is targeting and researching specific employers that are a good fit for you. Targeting and research are also critical for defining and communicating your brand.

LinkedIn is an excellent place to start researching your target employers:

- Identify companies for your target list by doing a LinkedIn search of keywords related to the kind of job you want and seeing which companies that leads you to.
- Look at the LinkedIn company profiles for each company on your target list.
- Then, look at the LinkedIn profiles of employees of each company. See if you know them or have something in common, and connect with them.
- Employees you don't know may also be ones to invite to connect with you.
- Check LinkedIn Jobs to see if your target companies are looking for people like you. Note the qualifications needed and the terminology used to describe those qualifications (keywords for resume update too).

Leverage all that LinkedIn has to offer - *both passively and proactively* - to promote the unique value you offer your target employers.

2. Build the Foundation of Your LinkedIn Personal Brand

Then, build a robust LinkedIn profile that will lead people to you:

- Create an SEO-friendly Professional Headline.
- Add a professional photo. Profiles with photos get many more views.
- Write a dazzling About/Summary section. Tell your personal brand story. Generate chemistry!
- Focus on including the right keywords for your brand.
- Add the maximum 50 skills in the Skills & Endorsements section.
- Beyond the About/Summary, Experience, and Education sections, *fully populate* every other applicable profile section, including the little-used sections - Languages, Volunteering Experience, Organizations, Honors & Awards, Courses, Patents, Publications, Projects, Certifications.

A robust, fully fleshed-out Profile containing content that supports your personal brand, with each applicable section completed, will build your personal brand visibility and boost traffic to your LinkedIn Profile.

Why is plenty of LinkedIn Profile content so important?

You need to be highly visible and findable on LinkedIn. Recruiters and employers search LinkedIn to identify and assess candidates using relevant keywords and phrases. These keywords usually represent your “hard” skills or areas of expertise.

More content = More relevant keywords = Better personal SEO (Search Engine Optimization) or visibility

Most people know enough to put some information in the About (formerly the Summary), Experience, and Education sections. But look at all the other sections available to you and use each one you can.

To make it easier to add the right amount of content, first create it in a Word document, then do a count and spell check before copying and pasting it into your Profile:

As time passes and your job changes, update your LinkedIn Profile to reflect your new accomplishments and keep your terminology (keywords) up-to-date and relevant to your career. Update your Profile every quarter, at a minimum. Then, carefully include contact information on your Profile so that people can contact you while you retain your privacy.

3. Keep Your Personal Brand Visible and Relevant on LinkedIn

Log into your account frequently to promote your brand, demonstrate your subject matter expertise, and express your thought leadership.

Build and engage your LinkedIn network:

- Build your connections to at least 500 to boost your LinkedIn search ranking.
- Develop a strategy and emails to connect with people you don't know who will be essential to network with.
- Connect with executive recruiters in your field and hiring decision-makers at your target companies.
- Use LinkedIn's "Find Alumni" feature to find and connect with school alumni.
- Connect with former co-workers by typing a former employer's name (like "IBM" or "McDonald's") in a People search and selecting the "Past Companies" search filter.
- Include a link to your LinkedIn profile on your resume, in your email signature, and website (if you have one).

Make LinkedIn Work for Your Career

If you're still employed and job-hunting undercover, as so many jobseekers are, LinkedIn is still for you. Write the content in your profile so that it supports your brand identity for your target companies while supporting your current company without saying outright that you are looking for a job.

LinkedIn is also an accepted comprehensive career management tool when you are not job hunting. New members of your network, potential clients or customers, suppliers, and even people who might consider dating you will check out your LinkedIn Profile and activities.

Strategy #35 Create a Professional Portfolio

Building a website is one of the best ways to demonstrate your expertise and show your professional and personal accomplishments. Selecting a domain name with your first and last name included is a great way to ensure this populates on the first page of Google. Think about an associated blog to regularly generate branded content for your website. Try to write one blog article monthly and promote it on your social media profiles.

Focus on content

Your blog or website is the first place prospective clients, customers, and employers will go when they want to learn more about you. Therefore, ensure it's up-to-date and as good as possible.

Add to your portfolio, update your "About Me" page, and create plenty of fresh, relevant content regularly. An amazing website makes you more findable by improving your SEO and shows off who you are and what you can do.

Build a website

Once you have your brand story, you'll need to create a place to share it with the world. That's where having a website comes in. A website is important because it's your home base for your brand message.

When creating a more in-depth site, there are four essentials to include:

- An "About Me" page (which can also be your homepage) should highlight who you are, what you do, and anything else that shows off your personality and brand.
- An experience/work page: Here's where you can go into more detail about your previous work experience or services, but it should not be a duplication of your resume. You are providing an overview of the role rather than the task-level detail.
- A contact page with your email address and links to social media handles. You can also create a form for people to get in touch with you, an option on many DIY website build platforms.
- Professional photography: Why create a beautiful website, and rely on a poorly cropped photo of yourself for your headshot? You can invest in a shoot or take advantage of portrait mode on your (or a borrowed) mobile phone.

If you want assistance creating a professional portfolio, please [click here to schedule a 30-minute consultation](#).

Strategies #36-#50 Showcase Your Personal Brand in A Job Interview

A strong personal brand can help you in the job search process. If you have completed Stage 1 and Stage 2 exercises and strategies, you have done the work of unearthing your unique talents and communicating them, through various mediums, to the right audience. Everyone has a personal brand, from celebrities to authors to entrepreneurs, employees to students. We all live in a brand-driven world; everyone has a personal brand. Some brands may have developed organically, been defined with intention, or been created by outsiders if left unattended. If you don't have a strong position, you will go unnoticed or, worst-case scenario - be purposely overlooked.

Each interaction you have with others enables you to make a mark on those around you. When you're consistent in delivering those experiences, you build a solid personal brand that's authentic, differentiated, and memorable.

The best way to secure a new job is to build a powerful, appealing brand that attracts new opportunities.

Perhaps the most significant benefit to personal branding as a job seeker is self-awareness of your unique skills and talents and recognition of what you're passionate about and what differentiates you from others. This provides a huge advantage when trying to stand out in a competitive job market and find a job that's an excellent fit for you. Going through the personal branding process takes some time upfront and requires thoughtful reflection, but it's a worthwhile investment since it can help you focus on where you want to go in the long run.

As a job seeker, it's essential that you can connect intellectually and emotionally to the people you interview with. Just being qualified for a position isn't enough these days. You must be perceived as the right candidate, and you can better align yourself to the position and the company you're interviewing with through branding. Many candidates will have a similar education, technical skill set, experience, or prior job title(s). Those things indicate to a hiring manager that "you can do the job." You want the hiring manager to move beyond your ability to perform and think, "I really want to work with someone like him/her."

A job interview may be the first--and most lasting--impression a potential employer has of you and how well you may fit into their organization. You can best represent your brand by being yourself and clear on what that means.

You need to go into an interview with extreme clarity on who you are, what you're passionate about, and what you want to be known for. You also need to articulate and exude the authentic you with your words and demeanor.

Here are several strategies to guide your Interview dialogue:

Strategy #36 Share your brand heart

If you want to connect with people personally, share stories about bringing your brand values to life in everyday business and your interactions.

Strategy #37 Use empathy

Put yourself in your hiring manager's shoes and share information that is relevant to them. Empathy is a fabulous storytelling tool because the listener is vested in the outcome, whether it solves a problem, gives them a fresh perspective, or helps them do something more efficiently.

Strategy #38 Share stories of your customers' success (without stealing the spotlight)

Use testimonials, customer feedback, and even performance review commentary to explore how your brand has added value to real work scenarios and the resulting impact on those you serve. Make sure you position the successful outcome in terms of how it benefited the company, not you.

Strategy #39 Don't sell when you should be educating.

Storytelling is not selling. It educates the interviewer about what you do best, what you enjoy most, how you contribute, and what impact you generate. Speak truthfully and let the hiring manager decide if they think you, are a good fit. If they conclude, you are not a good fit for the role, then be grateful - because there was probably something about the position or the culture that wasn't in alignment with you and what you need a role to deliver value. While getting a "yes" to a second interview or a job offer is a confidence booster, a no can be a gift in disguise. It's just as important to know where you shouldn't be working (due to lack of fit or appreciation for what you bring to the table) as it is to determine where a perfect fit might be.

Strategy #40 Be radically transparent

To connect with your interviewer, you need to be open and honest. If you are asked to tell them about a time you screwed up, don't patronize the interviewer by giving a "gift-wrapped" answer crafted to avoid showing any weakness. That is disrespectful to the interviewer because it is not what they asked. Instead, be radically transparent in explaining your mistake but show your professionalism by incorporating what you learned from the experience and what behaviors you put in place to ensure the same issue would never be a problem in the future. That gives the interviewer a glimpse behind the curtain, precisely the type of information they are looking for to assess if you are a good fit.

Strategy #41 A great story draws you in with details

Remember that telling a great story is almost like playing a movie in the interviewer's mind.

For example, you could say, "I orchestrated a market optimization study for senior leaders that resulted in a significant increase in sales." Impressive, yes. Memorable? Perhaps.

You will only be asked so many questions, so make the most of each answer. Make sure you have stories that demonstrate what makes you exceptional. Those stories should also show the true you memorably and authentically. Refrain from regurgitating facts that are on your resume. Use the power of personal stories to convey the essence of who you are and what's important to you. It's easier to be enthusiastic when you're telling a story versus just restating facts.

Instead of the above example, try - "While working for McDonald's International, I coordinated a Korean market optimization study taking 75 top US executives in the areas of Real Estate, Marketing, Operations, and Finance to South Korea to meet with the Korean joint venture partners, study the market and strategize on growth opportunities. I sent cross-functional teams of 4-6 executives in minibusses into the field to visit one local Korean McDonald's and its three closest fast-food competitors. Each team repeated this process 4x each day for two consecutive days. These executives ranked the stores in several categories, recording their findings in real-time via a custom app I developed in collaboration with IT. I could pull this data each evening, analyze it by city, region, and country and provide those insights the next day in an all-inclusive Strategic Planning workshop. The strategies identified during that trip were implemented in the following four months and generated a 23% increase in store sales. Additionally, the trip also resulted in 15 Korean executives visiting the US for the first time over the next 12 months to continue building on the relationships started during that trip.

Could you picture these executives riding around in the minibusses, visiting stores, and recording their info on their phones? Did you understand the level of planning and coordination that went into having a successful trip? Did you understand the impact of the work on the company's results? Add a humorous anecdote associated with the accomplishment to make it even better. Humor is a universal way to connect and is also memorable [If you struggle with compelling storytelling, please click here](#); I would gladly assist you with Interview Preparation.

Strategy #42 Be consistent.

If you want people to remember your brand, you must show up the same way each time. Your resume narrative should flow seamlessly into your LinkedIn Profile. Both of those professional assets should mirror the messaging in all your other job marketing materials (cover letter, portfolio, etc.) and what you are communicating during the interview.

Strategy #43 Peel back the curtain

Give your audience a behind-the-scenes look at what makes you *you*. Share your people, your professional interests, your professional role models, your personal interests, your jokes, and more.

Strategy #44 Come to the interview with a personal branding toolkit

This toolkit should include a business card, cover letter, resume, and portfolio of work. Each part of your toolkit should have a link to your website and LinkedIn profile. Establish yourself as prepared, thoughtful, and interested in educating the interviewer on your value.

Strategy #45 First impressions matter

Your interview starts when you walk in the door or connect over zoom. Don't let little things like attire, body language, or a distracting background sink your ship before you even open your mouth.

Strategy #46 Ask questions

Be bold and ask questions. Most job seekers believe they are the only ones being interviewed, which is the wrong way to look at it. You need to interview them by asking questions about the job and the work environment. Find out what they like about their career and more about where the group or organization is going long term. You will need to decide based on fit as well. A professional that understands their value will ensure the interview is a two-way conversation.

We talked a bit about using “storytelling” when communicating your value in Stage 2 - Communicating Your Value.

Strategy #47 Display your unique personality

Don't hold back who you are during the job interview because that's how you can connect with the hiring manager. You want to use everything to your advantage, and you'll feel much better about yourself and the job if there's a natural connection between you and the interviewer.

Strategy #48 Talk about your unique skills and talents

Your competitive differentiators separate you from all the other candidates. If you're an expert at a particular skill, play that up as much as possible during the interview. While job seekers brand themselves as generalists, companies want to hire specialists. You can stand out by pushing your top skill as it applies to the job."

Strategy #49 Follow up

After the interview, personalize a thank you that makes you stand out and makes a human connection, build your virtual network by sustaining connections via LinkedIn, and make good notes on what you felt went well and what you could improve on while you're in the moment.

Approach your interview differently than others by defining who you are and what you're the best at and communicating that to the people interviewing you. Do something different, take a risk, and be yourself."

Strategy #50 Hire a coach

No matter how much time you spend preparing for an interview, if your story isn't authentic or resonating with your audience, you need to reassess your core brand and build a compelling storytelling strategy to support it. Of course, doing this deep work takes brainpower and perspective you don't always have on tap. [If you struggle with compelling storytelling, please click here](#); I would be glad to assist you with Interview Preparation.

Recessions are inevitable - career disruption isn't

Many business owners will focus on where to cut spending/bodies based on strategies to minimize the damage. In doing so, they adopt a survival mindset.

But I believe there's a better way for professionals to approach an upcoming recession. Focus your time and attention on what you need to protect and maintain to make it through the recession stronger. It's a subtle shift in mindset from loss avoidance to resilience and improvement. In my experience, branding is a critical element in building reliance.

Personal branding is empowering; it's about embracing what makes you unique and makes us diverse. It is an iterative process that will continue to evolve throughout your career. Who you are and what makes you unique today will change as your career advances based on your experiences, skills, and passions you develop along the way. It's important to always think about how you represent yourself in each interaction.

Start today, but have patience

Individuals most negatively affected will be those who wait for confirmation that their positions are in jeopardy before putting the wheels in motion.

To survive the impending recession, you must take matters into your own hands and be prepared for the unexpected.

When building your brand, it's important to remember that it will evolve organically. "It's like a pointillism painting—you don't just do it overnight," Howell says. "It takes these little, tiny impressions that add up over time."

Still, need more guidance? Click here for [click here to schedule a 30-minute consultation](#) for help exploring how you want to be seen by the world step by step, from figuring out your core strengths and weaknesses, and defining your career passions and purpose, to translating it all into your resume, LinkedIn profile, and more.

The more you build your brand, the more you elevate yourself above your peers, and the less you must work to convince people that you are the solution to their problems.

In high-performing organizations, many employees are exceptional. You need more than an excellent reputation to differentiate your value and what you bring to the table. You need an outstanding personal brand. Changing your decisions and behaviors to influence how others see you and help them connect emotionally and intellectually to the opportunities you want makes you more likely to secure them.

Your brand explains the "why" you do what you do - in other words, what drives and motivates you. This makes people more comfortable working with you. Your intentions are genuine and transparent. People feel more comfortable when they think they can predict what you will do. People who understand your career energy feel better about putting you in charge of their needs. An authentic brand deeply rooted in your search for meaning will attract similar-minded people with similar values and goals. Employers will better understand why you do what you do, not just what you do.

Position yourself to secure work that revolves around your deepest priorities and utilizes your talents in a way that brings you joy.

Proper brand positioning is essential because it sets you apart from the competition in the hiring managers' minds. It is the secret to moving the needle in the hiring manager's mind from "I think [name] can do the job" to "I want to work with someone like [name]."

So, with a recession looming, now is the perfect time to take a good hard look in the mirror. Double down on what's working, taper off things that don't produce results and shore up what needs to improve. This starts with taking a critical look at your brand—something that influences so much more than you're marketing alone.

With solid positioning, employers and job seekers understand precisely who you are and what you can do for them. When they know your brand well, it's much more likely you'll be top of mind with consumers when they choose with which companies to continue to spend (or entrust their career).

It's Time to Stand Out

Even through tough times, such as a recession, don't shy away from your professional branding efforts. It's essential to stay in front of your audience; it shows that your brand is strong, even during a lull in the economy. Take the initiative and put your brand out there!

The silver lining of a recession is that leadership's mindset often shifts to "what changes can we make to survive this?" Reframe this time as an excellent opportunity to become your ideal brand.

Recession Resilience Career Planning

Boost Your Career Resiliency with Your Personal Brand

Stage 3 - Leveraging Your Value

'Stage 1 of this process focused on Understanding Your Value and Defining Your Personal Brand. Stage 2 explored developing a narrative around your value/brand identity and explored strategies to Communicate Your Value.

Stage 3 - Leveraging Your Value provides insight into how to "package" yourself to be viewed as ready to deliver value at the next level. The strategies here move from focusing on being seen and understood to using your value and evolving brand identity to grow professionally, increase your contribution, and enhance your professional impact.

Strategy #51 Cultivate the Right Mindset

In times of career uncertainty, feelings of frustration or anger are perfectly understandable; however, do whatever you can to maintain a positive attitude because, bottom line, opportunity is opportunity.

John F. Kennedy once said, "The Chinese use two brush strokes to write the word 'crisis.' One brush stroke stands for danger, the other for opportunity. In a crisis, be aware of the danger - but recognize the opportunity."

When rapid change takes place, by being savvy, you can ride it to a better place and benefit from the change you would not be able to do in a more stable environment.

This may sound overwhelming, but it is crucial that you do not let uncertainty consume your thoughts. You have a choice whether you do or do not to dwell on things that are out of your control. You must act with a survivor mentality. A survivor mindset helps you focus on everything you can take action upon and, in turn, stay positive.

Strategy #52 Act Like a Survivor

During a recession, embrace survivor mode to minimize downside.

Survivors act confident and cheerful. Research shows that being fun to be around really matters. Work by Tiziana Casciaro and Miguel Sousa Lobo, published in a June 2005 HBR article, "Competent Jerks, Lovable Fools, and the Formation of Social Networks," shows that while everyone prefers working with a personable superstar to an incompetent jerk when people need help getting a job done, they'll choose a congenial colleague over one who is more capable but less lovable. [Source: How to Protect Your Job in a Recession - Harvard Business Review. https://hbr.org/2008/09/how-to-protect-your-job-in-a-recession](https://hbr.org/2008/09/how-to-protect-your-job-in-a-recession)

Always remain professional. No one is asking you to be the office entertainment committee of one. Being congenial is about not getting dragged down by bad moods and reminding colleagues how vulnerable everyone is.

Remaining outwardly positive can be psychologically exhausting when rumors of downsizing are circling. Change stirs up fears of the unknown. Will you land another job? How will you pay the mortgage? Can you find affordable health insurance? Those are valid concerns, but you'll have more influence on how things play out if you stay positive.

Survivors are forward-looking. This is a powerful tactic. Look forward and stay focused on your internal and external customers, for without them, no one will have a job. Your number one priority is anticipating the needs of your customers. Your value to the firm will be confirmed by showing your relevance to the work which may have shifted as the economy softened. If your contribution is deemed indispensable

by customers, your job is more likely to be deemed essential.

Reorganizations and consolidations involve notable change, so survivors of change must be adaptable and flexible. Brainstorm how you can support your company by leveraging your experience and display your capabilities. Layoffs typically occur across all organizational levels which can create vacuums above and below you.

Survivors play for the team. If you find yourself taking on a role and a half or working under someone you feel is less qualified than you, you have a choice. Choose to use your influence positively to support the changes made by senior management. Throw yourself into the new +1/2 role or behind the colleague. Demonstrate your commitment to the company.



Demonstrate Humanity

One of my favorite quotes is, "Be the change you wish to see in the world ."Take the time in this period of uncertainty to demonstrate humanity through the generosity in which you add value. In a recession, companies do not want to spend as much money, so they need to experience a more considerable value for the money they do spend. Amping up your activities to align with how you add value can set you apart when the company seeks to do more with less.

Strategy #53 Give Your Leaders Hope

It's essential to recognize that times of uncertainty are also challenging for leaders. They don't enjoy laying off their people; most find that task agonizing. It can be stressful and time-consuming to enact the various change mandates they've been given. Turn your focus outward and try to help the leader defend your department. Offer realistic solutions if your boss asks for ideas. Accept change and if possible, energize your colleagues around it.

Scientific studies support the idea that it is beneficial to show empathy for people more powerful than you. A strong, healthy relationship with your manager, may keep you off chopping block, all things being equal. Your ability to empathize can demonstrate a professional maturity that is invaluable to the company because it models good behavior for others.

Meet company leaders where they are. This approach allows you to transform from a reactive engagement strategy to an empathetic, proactive form of engagement.

Strategy #54 Become a Corporate Citizen

It's important to show up, especially in an economic downturn. Start attending all voluntary and informal meetings. Be visible. Take a moment to walk the floor to see how co-workers are doing. Take part in company outings. Leaders look for enthusiastic participants

who are quick to get on board. If you resist change, you may find yourself without a chair when the music stops.

While much is beyond your control in a recession, if you put your energy toward developing a strategy, you increase your chances of weathering the storm. Competence, a positive attitude, and a willingness to help the boss get the job done can have a significant impact on whether you are selected to remain with the company. The economy will eventually bounce back; your job is to ensure you do, too.



It's time to shine

In a recession, job layoffs and hiring freezes are routine as inflation rises as budgets vanish.

Employers prioritize keeping high-performing employees with track records of considerable achievements, especially those with prior history of high performance in challenging times. This leaves lower-performing or newer candidates as the first representatives to go.

Although many of these circumstances are outside of your control and can depend greatly on luck and politics, there are still a few things that you can do to best prepare and position yourself for the upcoming downturn.

Employers will be shifting their focus to employees they deem essential and highly valuable.

Strategy #55 Stand Out (in a good way)

Show your boss you are the most indispensable employee in the department by exceeding expectations and proving your reliability. Get your work done early, come in under budget, volunteer for additional tasks, proactively suggesting ways to cut costs or increase revenues, resolve problems within the department, and so on, to send two not-so-subtle messages to your boss. 1. Your boss does not have to spend any energy worrying about you and your work (i.e., you are easy to manage). 2. You can be relied upon to show when needed (i.e., you have your boss's back).

Be flexible – graciously accept changes to your job , work well with co-workers, build relationships with customers and others in other parts of the company, and more.

Strategy #56: Be Relevant

How you fit into an employer's strategy before an economic crisis is not the same if the economy worsens. What value do you offer beyond the technical skills listed in your job description? Focus on the needs and wants of your core target, your loyal internal and external buyers, and the people aligned with your brand's mission, to increase the probability of weathering the storm unscathed. Pay attention and follow how their needs change. Refocus on how your brand uniquely meets your target's needs as the business landscape shifts.

Strategy #57: Offer as Much Value as You Can



Forget business as usual. Employers are looking for individuals that go above and beyond. Offering as much value as possible is the best way to keep thriving in difficult times. Therefore, always ask yourself what you can do to add more value for your internal and external clients, customers, and employer. Challenge the status quo.

Utilizing your uniqueness to add value that no one else can. In other words, why should people choose to work with you over others? Stretch the confines of your job description to focus on contributing in a unique way and having the greatest impact possible.

Strategy #58: Be Indispensable

Can you reposition your offerings as essentials? Evaluate the benefits your services provide that will be more relevant as budgets tighten. Consider shifting from discussing your top-of-the-line performance to discussing dependability or long-lasting attributes.

Invest in yourself

Strategy #59 Build Up Your Skillset

The fear of a recession can motivate you to learn and improve your skills or take on new projects. Regardless of your industry, growth opportunities are endless if you look for them. Explore new skills, new tools, innovative approaches to stay ahead of the curve.

Building your skills will make you more valuable to employers and more marketable in case of job loss with the skills and knowledge that will be in high demand.

Fortunately, there are many ways to learn new skills, even on a tight budget. Many online courses and webinars are available for free. If you're currently employed, you may find opportunities to hone your skills within your current role and showing interest in skill development will reflect favorably should a round of layoffs arrive.

Don't forget about working on your soft skills and highlighting them on your resume. From communication to time management, you want to be able to reference these skills during a job search. Make sure you list the soft skills you excel in and any solid examples of when these skills proved helpful.

Lastly, focus on transferable skills, especially if you are contemplating a career shift. Increase your career resilience during a job search by strengthening a core set of transferable skills – applicable in most industries or positions.

Strategy #60 Expand Your Knowledge

Adopt a lifelong learner approach to professional growth. This can come in many forms. Take on new tasks or projects within your current role to gain new skills or hone existing ones. You can seek professional development courses, webinars, and training outside the workplace. Fortunately, several courses can be found online for free!

Strategy #61 Play Offense

Leveraging your brand is an opportunity to position yourself as an ally during these challenging times. Strained economic times mean a higher level of stress across all levels of the organization.

It's not the time to hunker down. When your boss is contemplating or implementing changes, the last thing they want to encounter is defensiveness. Instead, use the time to reevaluate your goals and position yourself to be in the best possible place as layoffs come around. Pay attention to any potential pivots or opportunities that can increase your value to your boss or clients. Seek out ways to create more value for your business or personal brand. While others are hoping to keep their job, you're setting the goal to become irreplaceable and valuable as possible.

Strategy #62 Capitalize on your company's lack of succession planning

If your boss left and all his responsibilities have been given to you, update your resume to list yourself as Interim or Acting Director or Manager of your department. Suppose you don't feel comfortable using that as a title. In that case, you can list it in the body of your résumé in a bullet, such as "After the previous manager left, served as interim department director leading team planning efforts and representing the department at the senior leadership meetings."

View this additional workload as an opportunity and make the most of it. Make the time to keep track of all your accomplishments. If you have new access to senior leaders in the organization due to your additional responsibilities, take the opportunity to introduce yourself. If you have access to people from other areas of the company, use this time to build relationships.

This is called leveraging your opportunities for future gain. It may be through exposure to these new co-workers that you discover new opportunities (that may come with additional pay), and you're placing yourself in a position where others can begin to see your potential.

In addition to looking at positions within your own company, look outside. If your current company doesn't pay you for your additional contributions, see if other companies may be interested in talking with you. You may find that other companies value your skills and experience more than your current company. If you need help strategizing or brushing up on interview skills, hire a coach to help you.

Think Like an Entrepreneur

Professionals are responsible for charting their path and building their brand, so leading with an entrepreneurial mindset means knowing that a career is yours alone to manage.

Instead of relying on a company or employer for personal and professional success, managing one's career path like a business gives the power to the individual to set and achieve the goals they set out for themselves.

Strategy #63-68 Develop a marketing strategy that gets your message in front of the right people

Your personal brand's position will determine the types of opportunities that come your way. You need a marketing strategy that gets your message in front of the right people. Strategically positioning yourself allows you to attract opportunities aligned with your goals and foster relationships built on trust and respect. Relationships are crucial to business success, but not all relationships are created equal. It's essential to foster relationships with people who share your values. By doing so, you'll be able to develop partnerships to help you achieve your goals and grow your business.

Strategy #63 Focus on Your Unique Value

The best way to emphasize your value is often to get hyper-focused on your core competencies. The more specialized your offerings, the harder you are to replace. Suppose your brand is associated with experience in a niche industry or incorporates niche services. In that case, you are better suited to withstand a recession because your employer will struggle to find replacement candidates with your same specialty. Sometimes your unique value can be in combining two or more skills. For instance, if you have hard-core IT programming skills BUT also are an extroverted employee motivator - the combination of those two skills may be unique.

Strategy #64 Leverage Your Points of Difference

What's your unique selling proposition? Your competitive differentiators are what people will remember. Use them to your advantage.

For instance, if you are making a career pivot, your background will look different from most other candidates that have been on that particular career track for several years. When branding your resume or interviewing, offer the value-added of having a unique perspective.

Different is only bad if you fail to correctly position the exception in the listener's mind.

Strategy #65 Prove Your Worth

There is a trend in the business world to add a portfolio as an addendum to your resume. Most professionals in creative fields have a portfolio to show their work. Professionals in non-creative fields can use a portfolio in a comparable way, presenting valuable information not suited for a resume that more thoroughly explores your brand identity.

That's where blogs, podcasts, videos, and other forms of social media come in. The first step is securing your internet domain name and producing unique intellectual property. The second, is producing material that offers real value. Quickly prove your expertise by helping people solve a problem or do something better.

Sharing the content you've created allows potential employers to test-drive your approach before making a significant commitment.

After you've demonstrated your ability, solidify your brand by making a focused effort to publish in respected journals, speak at industry events, or take on a leadership role in a professional association or board of directors. The resulting visibility, connections, and credibility can pay major dividends.

Finally, the key is sustained, consistent effort. Be strategic about identifying how you wish to be perceived, developing a compelling story around your evolution, and spreading that message. The more connections you make and the more value and content you regularly add create, the more likely it is your new brand will be known, recognized, and sought out by recruiters, employers, and even independent clients.

Strategy #66 Set up social media profiles

Nearly all job seekers are plastering job boards with resumes and praying they receive responses. Intelligent job seekers will create a compelling online presence and optimize it, so recruiters will not only find you but also want to interview you.

Your own social media profiles can be a tremendous asset when it comes to personal branding. Especially LinkedIn and Pinterest have a strong likelihood of appearing in a prominent position on Google's search results for your name. Follow the old adage and don't put all your eggs in one basket. I recommend a multi-channel strategy for your social media channels. Set up your social media profiles and start posting at least two times a week.

Strategy #67 Be a thought leader

Contribute articles to online magazines. Leverage publishing as much as possible to position yourself as a thought leader or at least as a thought contributor. You can grow your personal brand with specific insights from your niche. Online Magazines often have a good reach, and their domains are listed on a good rank on Google's result pages. The magazine URL will also appear whenever someone searches for your name.

Take it further. Log into LinkedIn regularly to proactively build your brand, express your opinions, influence people, and stay top-of-mind with your network:

- Share branded updates at least once a week.
- Refresh the content in your profile regularly to align with your current job search/career focus and to upgrade with current relevant keywords.
- Join and regularly participate in LinkedIn Groups.
- Write articles for LinkedIn's blog, a long-form publishing platform; this allows you to reap many of the benefits of blogging . . . without the hassles of maintaining one of your own.

When you're employed and not looking for a new job, stay busy on LinkedIn:

- Keep yourself top-of-mind with your business network.
- Expand your business network with fresh faces.
- Build profile content around the value you and your company offer.
- Support your current company with your LinkedIn activities - updates, Groups, publishing articles, etc.

Whether you are job hunting or not, proactively promote yourself as an employee of your current company while promoting your personal brand, subject matter expertise, and thought leadership.

Strategy #68 Up Your Networking Game

Once you've built your brand, you must commit to networking regularly and effectively with peers and industry thought leaders to grow your professional circle, elevate your brand, and increase professional recognition. Since 85% of jobs are filled through networking, regularly engaging with others will allow opportunities to find you and advance your career.

Now is the time to crank up your networking efforts. Finding a new job through internal referrals is much easier than navigating the application process. Touch base with contacts you haven't spoken to recently and actively work on developing new ones – particularly in companies you would like to target for future employment.

If you already have a strong network, invest the time it takes to nurture it. Engage with the people, groups, and businesses you follow on LinkedIn. Join a virtual networking group (many groups that used to meet in person have moved online during the pandemic). Say yes to that request to catch up over coffee. Drop people in your network a line – not to sell them anything, but to check in and stay connected.

Effective networking has far-reaching benefits. A strong network builds trust in your brand, establishes your credibility as an expert in your niche, and keeps your value proposition in front of more people.

Therefore, if you have yet to invest much time in networking, this is a great time to start. Networking is more than collecting contact information. It's knowing where to network and with whom to network, confidently and effectively. Stay active within your current network and actively pursue expanding it. If unfortunate circumstances arise, you can engage with your network to explore new opportunities. Opportunities, teams, and people you want to be involved with will emerge. Your brand will evolve as you grow your network online and in person.

Introduce Yourself to a New Audience

Strategy #69 - Explore Alternate Career Options

Consider engaging in a Career Exploration process to identify alternate career options. [Click here to read more about my Career Exploration Series.](#)

Some jobs are more recession-proof than others, including those within industries or companies that tend to thrive during economic downturns. But if your current job is not one of those careers, now might be the time to proactively move to a more protected one.

Industries typically more recession-proof include education, law enforcement, medicine, and public utility services. This means that those professionals who are teachers, police officers, pharmacists, and trash collectors will more than likely remain essential during an economic downturn.

If you don't work in one of those fields and don't want to switch, you might instead focus on employers that are likely to make it through a tough economic downturn relatively intact. These include companies that are leaders in their industries and companies belonging to economic sectors that do well in tough times. For example, companies that make consumer staples, like toilet paper and toothpaste, generally continue to do well during recessions because people need to keep buying those things regardless of the state of the economy.

Strategy #70: Define Your Destination



Following a career exploration process, start by determining where you want to invest your energy. Check out relevant industry trade journals, do informational interviews, and even try internships. (They're not just for college students anymore; there are many apprenticeship programs to explore via the internet that, for instance, enable people to apprentice with professionals, ranging from schooner captains to alpaca ranchers.)

If you're looking to advance or shift laterally within your company, see if a shadow program or a sabbatical is available—and seek a mentor who can guide you.

Strategy #71: Strategic Career Planning

Employees that embrace a proactive approach to Strategic Career Planning are most resilient in times of recession.

Strategic Career Planning is creating a roadmap that gets from Point A (where you are today in your career) to Point B (where you want to go).

If you want to earn a promotion and/or raise, you need to get clear on management's expectations to make that happen and then deliver. Once you've implemented your plan and met the conditions that were communicated, make your boss aware of it and ask her to follow through on the commitment she made.

If you want to move into a new role, make sure your strategic career plan includes building the skills necessary to easily transition to your new path. If you've been a corporate accountant in a traditional industry for the past decade, you may understand US GAAP better than anyone else in the company. But if you are targeting a move to a cryptocurrency startup, traditional accounting savvy isn't enough; ask yourself what else you need to know, (such as blockchain and new tax laws around cryptocurrency transactions)—and how to learn it. Learning the new skills will give you the confidence and the credibility required to move forward successfully.

Strategic Career Planning has many facets and desires much more space than can be provided in this context. Explore this momentum-generating career coaching series at [Strategic Career Planning | Unlimited Potential \(upwithjr.com\)](https://upwithjr.com).

Strategy #72 Volunteer Your Time

Volunteering turns your focus outward which can help alleviate some of the fear and anxiety experienced during periods of uncertainty. Being generous with your time is a wonderful way to gain experience employers want and communicate the story of who you are and what you believe in, which helps your job search.

Helping others can prevent professionals from focusing too much on personal circumstances. Additionally, volunteering can help professionals gain the experience that many employers want. For example, nonprofits frequently need help with accounting, marketing, event planning, etc.

It allows workers to try out newly developed skills in a professional setting and can be a terrific way to test out a job before making a permanent career change.

Conclusion

Recessions bring changes to the employment landscape that no one can predict. The professionals that will emerge ready to compete in this new landscape are those that define their personal brand and recognize the unique opportunities to communicate and leverage it during the recession.

You've done the work to build a solid reputation. As you take on a new challenge or shift into more-meaningful work, taking control of your personal brand can help you move from an unfulfilling job to a rewarding career.

Your brand is the ultimate make-it-or-break-it factor determining your career's recession resilience. Use this time to invest in and nurture it. Lean into your brand to foster relationships and stay on course during a recession. Recessions can be scary, but they don't last forever. And the good news is that a period of high economic growth often follows. This is the time to buckle down and invest in your brand—so you can take full advantage of the brighter skies ahead.

Your brand is your insurance policy, and you can make it an extra asset to help you survive regardless of the economy. Even more importantly, if you've been feeling directionless or powerless, building your personal brand can help you re-establish a sense of control.

It's difficult to rally every day when your boss retreats to his office, new projects are put on hold, and your peers are looking for reassurance. Take a deep breath. Although layoff decisions may be beyond your direct control, there's plenty you can do.

Be Resilient

While individuals cannot control economic trends, there are several ways professionals can safeguard themselves to weather what may come. Preparing for a job search and caring for your mental health can lessen the personal and professional impacts.

Use the ideas presented in this guide to form and implement a strategy right away. The more time you prepare for unfavorable economic conditions, the less time you'll spend unemployed should your position be on the chopping block. Remember, there's no such thing as a completely recession-proof job, but by initiating these precautions, you can significantly increase your safety during an economic downturn.

'Career cushioning' is the latest workplace trend, seeing employees create a 'Plan B' ahead of a looming recession and job cuts in case their role(s) are made redundant. The "Career cushioning" trend refers to employees creating a professional "Plan B." Some workers are merely keeping their options open, while others are actively applying for new roles.

When contemplating a career change or career pivot, ask yourself two questions:

1. How can I redesign my current role/job/career to fully utilize my gifts, passions, values, and purpose?
2. What other roles/jobs/careers would better utilize my gifts, passions, values, and purpose?

Suppose you want help rediscovering what you're good at, what you love, what matters to you, and how to redesign your current career or find one that's a better fit. In that case, I can guide you to clarity through my [Career Exploration Series - Connecting to Your Inner GPS](#) or [One-On-One Performance Coaching](#).

Let me end with a few client questions I have been getting quite frequently lately and my advice on moving forward.

1. **I'm unhappy with my current job, but I'm worried about making a change in a possible recession. Should I stay in a position I don't like or try to find a better one?**

It is a safer bet to stay put in a recession, especially if you've been at the company for more than a few years. That said, it's hard to recommend that anyone stay in a miserable job. Let's explore both options: Staying put and making a change. Making a change doesn't happen overnight. So, I advise starting the process now so you have the option of changing moving forward.

If you want to stay in your current job, there may be ways that you can make it more fulfilling.

- How can you redesign your job to better utilize your gifts? For example, you could step up to lead a project and leverage your leadership talent.
- How can you incorporate more of your passions? You could partner with a cross-functional team. Identify the projects and people you are most excited to work with and then pitch them to your manager. Always look for a win-win.

If you've tried to redesign your current job and it hasn't improved, it's probably time to find a better job or start a new career.

Look to your gifts, passions, values, and purpose to identify jobs and careers that are a better fit for you. If you want help translating your gifts, passions, values, and purpose into career ideas, [schedule a free consultation](#). I have numerous strategies, assessments, and educational series, but explaining them here would make this article too long. [www.upwithjr.com] 😊

If you're worried about being more vulnerable to layoffs as a newer employee, look to well-established companies and essential industries that are more likely to weather a recession.

Industries like healthcare, education, government, utilities, food, and other essential sectors tend to be more resilient in a recession. Robust and established companies are more likely to retain their workforce in a recession. Still, it's vital that you have some genuine interest in the industry or company; otherwise, it won't be fulfilling, and you'll be right back where you started. You won't know what's out there until you start looking, and you don't have to leave until or unless you find a more exciting opportunity.

2. Is this a bad time to follow my calling? Should I put my dreams on hold and be more practical?

Finding your calling, discovering your purpose, and following your dreams are always important. It may be wise to balance the extent to which you shoot for the moon during a recession but knowing what you are here to do offers a profound sense of security. Knowing your purpose is even more critical in challenging times because of the confidence and direction that it provides. Start the work now so you can take your time and enjoy the process. Then you will be well-equipped to make changes when the world feels more certain.

Knowing your purpose also helps you stand out and be more successful. According to a LinkedIn & Imperative Workforce Purpose Index, purpose-oriented employees have 64% higher levels of fulfillment in their work, are 50% more likely to be in leadership positions, and are 47% more likely to be promoted than non-purpose-oriented employees. The inner clarity that purpose brings you is the ultimate buffer against external uncertainty.

If you don't have the financial cushion to go all in on your calling right now, start a related side hustle. Many of my clients do this, allowing them to complete the work at their own pace and with great introspection.

If you don't know your calling, use this downtime to discover and build toward it gradually over the next year or two. Getting the additional training and experience you need to make a career change, or pivot can take time. If you start now, you'll be well-positioned and ready to go all in when the economy turns around.

Resources available at www.upwithjr.com

Need help defining your professional brand?

[DIY Defining Your Professional Brand](#) Some clients can identify their gifts, passions, values, and purpose but need help connecting all the dots to a cohesive and compelling brand message. If you find yourself in this situation, I would be happy to help you craft your one-breath branding statement after reviewing your completed 'Defining Your Professional Brand' exercise. If interested, please use this link to schedule a [60-Minute Career Coaching Session](#).

Are you contemplating a career change?

If you are contemplating a career change or pivot, check out my [career pathfinder series, 'Career Exploration - Connecting to Your Inner GPS'](#). A coach in your corner can be a game-changer when considering a career transition. I guide clients to identify their optimal career direction and explore it from various angles to ensure a smooth transition into the next phase of their professional life.

Are you interested in exploring entrepreneurship or vetting a potential business idea?

If you are contemplating starting a business, check out my [1:1 coaching series for Entrepreneurial startups](#). Vetting a business idea or launching a new venture is hard, and you don't have to do it alone.)

Do your New Year resolutions include resolving ongoing issues or taking your career to the next level?

If you want to partner with a coach to navigate career issues in the coming months and position yourself to 'level up' your career - check out my [2023 Performance Coaching](#) series.)

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