Everyone has a personal brand. “Who” you are matters. Everything you do leaves an imprint at your place of work, research, internship, or service. Moreover, you leave an imprint with the people whom you contact; co-workers, colleagues, or the people you serve. Employers, graduate schools, and organizations will look into your brand. So, it is a good idea and practice to develop your personal brand. Think of it as “Me, Inc.” The following provides basic fundamentals and best practices to help get you started.

Fundamentals

Before you cultivate your brand, you need to be able to identify it. Answering the following three questions will help get you started with your personal brand.

What do you value?
Your values are at the core of “why,” “what,” and “how” you do things. For example:

• if you value timeliness, you aim to meet deadlines
• if you value teamwork, you aim to collaborate
• if you value innovation, you consider new ideas

What makes you stand out?
Do you have particular strengths, skills, talents, or experience make you stand out from others at your place of work, research, or internship? Identify what differentiates you from others and capitalize what makes you unique.

What is your reputation?
What do others say about you? What do others have to say about your quality of work? Did you develop relationships or burned bridges at your last internship or place of employment? Your reputation precedes you. Be mindful of your reputation and use it to benefit your career.

Re-Brand yourself: A 7-step starter-guide!

1. Conduct an on-line search of your name. Address content that may negatively impact your personal brand
2. Establish or update a Linked-in account for professional use
3. Use a portrait-quality profile picture in all of your publicly-accessible social media accounts
4. Write a 3-5 sentence personal mission statement to share about yourself
5. Link and brand a similar look and feel to your professional social media
6. Network. Build “bridges” and develop relationships at your places of work or business