

Quality Education News

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Dear Supporter of Quality Education

Everyone's unique personal brand

Say the word “brand”, and we're inclined to think of a product or service. An example would be the banks found in our city or town. There are brand choices: ABSA, Capitec, FNB, Nedbank and Standard. Each bank has a distinct identity. There might be one bank that you'll gladly go into and another that you'll avoid. The reasons for your decisions are often based on brand identity. You might see one bank as being competent, friendly and reasonable in their service fees; another could be viewed as being incompetent, indifferent and charging exorbitant fees.

Yet it's not only products and services that have brand identities. Every person has a unique brand identity. Think of these prominent people whom we see daily on our TV screens: Thuli Madonsela, Mmusi Maimane, Julius Malema, Mogoeng Mogoeng, Helen Zille and Jacob Zuma. Who of these people have positive brand identities in your own eyes? Who would you trust ... and who wouldn't you trust?

The ways in which others perceive our “brand” is by the values that we show through our behaviour and our interactions with others. Here's a sample of positive values that help describe a person's unique identity (Abib-Pech, page 96):

Analytical	Approachable	Assertive
Caring	Charismatic	Compassionate
Easy-going	Emotional	Even-tempered
Focused	Forgiving	Fun-loving
Independent	Interactive	Intelligent
Lively	Logical	Loving
Optimistic	Organised	Outgoing
Patient	Peaceful	Pensive
Respectful	Responsible	Responsive
Thorough	Thoughtful	Trustworthy

Which of the above attributes would describe you? What other values would define you? You might like to do the Elevator Pitch below to help you describe your own personal brand.

The elevator or lift sales “pitch”

This little exercise challenges you to describe yourself in a very short amount of time – the time it takes to take an elevator or lift to the floor you want. The time would be between 30 seconds and 2 minutes. Your brand statement should be a short summary of who you are and your core ideals. Here's an example from Camilla Hartvig who works in a Spanish business company:

I am honest in everything I do; I have a can-do attitude and I am known to be a good coach who can push people to develop into the best they can do. I want my peers and my bosses to associate who I am with efficiency and execution. So I invest time in ... making sure everything that is thrown at me is treated with the highest quality level possible.

If you were given the Elevator Pitch exercise to describe your personal brand, what would you say or write?

Remember that the way you see yourself is not the way others see you. You might think of yourself as being assertive while a colleague could regard you as being aggressive. When you stand firmly and resolutely by what you think is the right thing to do, others could see your behaviour quite differently. They might even view it as being stubborn! It's therefore sensible to get feedback from people that you trust and respect. They would come from groups such as your peers, team members and senior management. Their honest assessments will help you identify your strengths, areas for improvement and ways to further improve your personal brand.

Anyone who wants to make their personal brand meaningful needs to, “walk the talk”. Otherwise, the brand statement is simply a string of sweet words. Concrete action is needed to reinforce the words. If one describes oneself as being reliable, for example, these would be expected behaviours (Abib-Pech page 101):

- Always on time for meetings
- Not cancelling at the last minute –if you're forced to, reschedule promptly
- Make a point of not missing deadlines
- If you absolutely cannot avoid missing a deadline, give plenty of notice and agree in advance when you *will* deliver.

A personal brand is ever-adjusting, ever-changing and ever-evolving. The teacher who becomes a head of department and later on a school principal would need to tweak the personal brand for the different job roles. Such adjustments make long-term success more likely.

A commentator once observed that a person's good name was their most important possession. A positive personal brand is part of one's good name. Yet no matter how hard we try, accept that others brand us no matter how we would like to see ourselves. Their branding of us might be different. Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon, made the wry comment:

Your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room.

Bezos's words are true but we can do much to ensure that what they have to say when we leave the room is very positive!

Sincerely

Richard Hayward



This newsletter is edited by SAQI and distributed to those schools benefiting from their participation in the MySchool programme. MySchool acts as a conduit which raises and delivers essential funding for education and social development on a sustainable basis. This enables members of the community to participate in the future development of our nation.



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EVERY SWIPE COUNTS

Grow your leadership brand: charisma and gravitas

Maybe you've had the experience. You are in a room where everyone is chatting away to each other. Suddenly someone enters and without any request for silence, everyone stops talking. What's happened? Why the sudden silence? Perhaps the explanation is to be found in two words: "charisma" and "gravitas."

In the teaching profession these two words have a huge impact on how a teacher impacts or has no impact on others. Imagine children in a school hall waiting for the start of an Assembly. One teacher steps on to the stage asking for silence but the children continue talking. Another teacher strides on to the stage and without uttering a word, there's graveyard silence. A teacher who has charisma and gravitas, usually has sound discipline.

What is "charisma"? Abib-Pech (page 109) noted that it is often described as a mixture of charm and grace. A charismatic person is usually able to draw others to him or her without having to rely on using any form of authority. Others are naturally attracted to the warmth in that person. Those people who were ever privileged to personally meet Nelson Mandela spoke of his inimitable charisma. Young or old were instantly attracted to his caring, empathic yet strong personality.

How does one define "gravitas"? A person with gravitas has a certain bearing or aura of authority. There's a sense that the person is serious and mature. Recently in South Africa, the Constitutional Court gave a ruling on the Nkandla saga. When Mogoeng Mogoeng, the Chief Justice, delivered the judgment, he did so in an authoritative voice imbued with sobriety. The issue was grave and he spoke with gravitas.

According to Abib-Pech there are two crucial aspects to a person's level of charisma and gravitas. The two are:

- 1 There's a need to understand the power of, "...physical presence and demeanour – how you carry yourself, how you present yourself and the way you dress – and how to use it."
- 2 The person pays attention to the ways in which one communicates. Much of that communication is through speaking but it also includes knowing when one should rather remain silent. In addition, there's a wide range of written forms of communication.



Physical presence and demeanour

First impressions count. As the saying goes, "You'll never have a second chance to make a first impression." That's why body language and the way one dresses are so important in evaluating one's leadership potential.

Tall people often have an initial advantage. They're quickly noticed by others. Many leaders are tall. Examples would be David Cameron, Barack Obama and Vladimir Putin. Yet height should only be seen as an initial advantage. In 2016 the most powerful leader in Western Europe is Germany's Angela Merkel. In photo-shoots with world leaders, many of them tower over her. Yet when it comes to making important policy decisions, these self-same leaders bow both figuratively and literally to her.

Practical tips to develop one's physical personal brand and thereby sense of leadership in the classroom include:

- Every teacher knows the importance of walking confidently into a classroom at the start of a lesson. This is especially true at the start of establishing rapport with a new class or group. Even when one's not feeling confident, this one-liner comes into play: Fake it until you make it.
- When being introduced to someone, give a firm but not overpowering handshake. The handshake is a reflection of a level of personal confidence.
- Maintain good eye contact when introducing yourself to others. Keep it up during the ongoing discussion. Such eye-contact indicates openness and trustworthiness.
- Sit comfortably but don't slouch. Show that you're attentive. Again, every teacher knows the importance of getting the children to sit properly in their desks. If they're slouching it can definitely negatively impact on the quality of their written work and their verbal input.

- Pay attention to having a neat personal appearance. The teacher is the role model for the children of expected neatness levels. A sloppily-dressed teacher shouldn't be surprised when classwork is of the same poor standard.
- Smile but not inanely like Mr Bean. Be friendly but not fawningly so. Being too willing to be helpful reduces a child's ability to work independently.

Dress appropriately

Understandably teachers can get twitchy when given too-specific advice by school management teams on a suitable dress code. Neil Flanagan (2013:18) gives four suggestions on how to dress properly to grow your personal brand:

1 Expectations of your profession: There are unwritten expectations of how one should dress. The way that a doctor or lawyer is expected to dress is different to that of the supermarket shop assistant or motor mechanic. In teaching, there are the children, colleagues and the community who all have a sense what you should be wearing.

2 The occasion: Different occasions make different demands. The teacher's dress code for a Prize-Giving is different to that of the day-to-day classroom teaching. Wearing the appropriate clothes for the situation indicates social awareness and respect towards others.

3 The geographic location: Take note of the way others around you dress. Teachers in a Johannesburg northern suburb school have a different dress code to those who teach in a country school in the foothills of the Drakensberg Mountains of KwaZulu-Natal. Fit your clothes into the local culture.

4 The message that you want to convey: This is where your distinct personal brand comes to the fore. You decide the image that you wish to portray towards others. If you wish to be seen as artistic, your dress code will be somewhat different to a colleague who regards himself as being conservative. For starters, their choices of colours for their clothes could be strikingly different.

Communication

Effective communication – whether in verbal or written form – is a dimension of our personal brand which directly impacts on our level of charisma and gravitas.

Barack Obama, the American President, is a public speaker of exceptional ability. When he speaks, the world listens. Before becoming president, his advisors and “spin doctors” told him that his speaking style was too academic and almost professorial. A new style was needed if he wanted to communicate meaningfully with people around the world.

If you've seen him speak on television, you'll know that he starts communicating to his audience before opening his mouth. Taking advantage of his height, he is noticed as soon as he enters a room. His impeccable dress sense helps him look presidential as he strides confidently towards the lectern or podium. He exudes charisma and gravitas.

Before speaking, his eyes scan the audience. Often there's a faint

flicker of a smile. He wants to be seen as an approachable and even friendly person. When he speaks, his voice is confident and there's a controlled measured pace at which he talks. The pace is slower than if he were to have a chat with someone. (It's almost as if he were following the BBC in-house rule given to their news readers: say only about three words per second).

There's a simplicity in the words that he uses. Obama is mindful that for millions of his listeners in his own country and across the world, English is not their home language. Even if they are English-speaking, their grasp of the nuances of the language might not be strong. He has a message to convey and he wants to make sure that what he says is, “... specific, straightforward, unambiguous, consistent and complete” (Flanagan: 144).

When Barack Obama spoke to the American people after a massacre of young children at a primary school, he spoke not only with his mouth. He paused during his speech to wipe away tears in his eyes. Obama communicates through body language by using his eyes, hands and his posture.



Good communication includes inviting feedback from your audience. At the end of Obama's speeches, he often invites questions. When he does so, he looks directly at the person asking the question and listens intently. He never turns his head away from the questioner to look around the room. The questioner deserves to be listened to with respect and full attention.

Public speaking can be a nerve-inducing experience. Speech coaches give countless suggestions on how to manage the situation. One of the most frequently mentioned suggestions is simply to rehearse, rehearse and rehearse. When it comes to public speaking, Sean O'Casey wry quip rings true:

“All the world's a stage and most of us are desperately unrehearsed.”

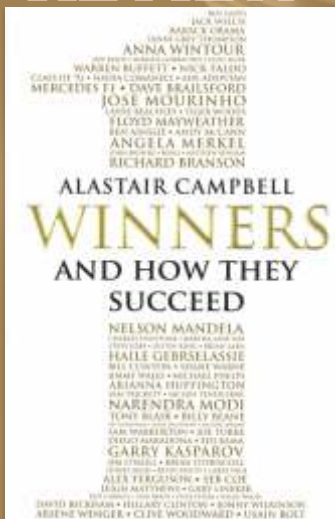
Good communication skills add quality to our personal brand. They deserve our ongoing due attention.

References

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BOOK REVIEW



Alistair Campbell: *Winners and how they succeed*
 London: Hutchinson
 Price: R 292
 ISBN 978 009 195 8862

Books on leadership can be overloaded with theory. This book is refreshingly different. Yes, the theory is there but Alistair Campbell does something quite different. Theories have been put in “sugar-coated” form to make them more digestible for the reader. He shows how leadership theories have been used to good effect by winners. Campbell has looked at winners from many areas of society. There are the business leaders (Warren Buffett, Bill Gates, and Jack Welch), the political leaders (Hillary Clinton, Angela Merkel, and Nelson Mandela), the sports superstars (Usain Bolt, Nadia Comaneci, Sachin Tendulkar) and many more.

Campbell gives an ABC of what winners do. His own alphabet of what makes winners achieve consists of three letters: OST. A winner pays attention to:

- O for Objective - Where do I want to go?
- S for Strategy - What has to be done to get there?
- T for Tactics - How do I carry out my strategies?

Vladimir Putin is cited for his long-term objective – to rebuild Russian power. His core strategy is to assert his and Russian power. The tactics that he uses vary from Olympic Games and World Cups to land grabs, from muzzling the media to rewarding cronies and keeping oligarchs on board. You might not personally like him but Putin is a strategic leader who has –so far– outwitted his many opponents at home and abroad (page 31).

The author's grasp of leadership and management theories are sound yet his explanations are, “light touch”. Campbell's many anecdotes about the winners and his sometimes forthright observations about their not-so-good behaviour, make for an absorbing book. This is a book for anyone wanting to know what winners think and do but want it to be told in an enjoyable and “academic-lite” way.

A royal British winner

In his book, Alistair Campbell admits that he's a lifelong republican. Yet his respect for the Queen as a winner is immense; one chapter of the book is devoted to her. A winner doesn't lose focus no matter how traumatic the situation. For the Queen, the year 1992 was a terrible one. Besides the divorce issues around Prince Charles and the Princess of Wales, Princess Anne divorced her husband and Prince Andrew separated from his wife. It was the year that Windsor Castle caught fire. Questions were being asked more loudly than ever whether a monarchy was relevant in a modern-day democracy.

To Campbell, the Queen excellently epitomises many of the characteristics shown by the most blue-blood of successful winners: boldness, innovation, adaptability, resilience, long-termism, crisis management and turning setbacks into opportunities. In his eyes, the Queen has succeeded as an outstanding winner during her long reign ... and many *Quality Education News* readers in faraway South Africa might agree too!



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If you'd like more details, please contact the presenter, Dr Richard Hayward directly on rpdhayward@yahoo.com or 011 888 3262. Poor schools are sponsored.



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