Strategic Personal Marketing:
Science-Based Communications to Advance Your Career

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Overview

• Traditional science communications evolving fast
• Do you have a science-based brand? Who cares?
• Collaborate with your career stakeholders (allies)
• Use your science communications strategically to create a more professional & effective brand
• Increase your “VCR Factor” - Visibility, Credibility, & Relevance by writing (& speaking)
• How to make compelling science-based stories a part of your brand
Old: Science Comms (peer-peer)

- Communicate with specialists in your research or clinical area. *If you can’t understand…too bad.*
- Similar backgrounds assumed - education, knowledge, research/methods analysis, language
- Use of many undefined acronyms for brevity
- Journal-specific reporting format, departmental review, peer-review, rewrites, resubmit and publish cycle of 18 months.
- PCs, internet, globalization, cross-disciplinary research & communications changed the game…
New: Your Personal “Brand”
(peer-peer-stakeholders)

• (Reminder…take out pen & paper )
• **Brand** = what you communicate, produce and are known for. **Your brand promises the value you can deliver.** Thesis: your writing is the foundation of your professional reputation (brand).
• Your creativity, values and energy flow from your natural passion. **Share your brand of passion widely!**
• Try to describe your brand (reputation) in 3 short “bullets” right now…do it in one minute…not a quiz.
• Do your colleagues see you that way? **If not, change that!**
**Surprise! - You’re “Branded”**

- You and your “products” are already online
- Check Google, LinkedIn, Facebook, Slideshare, Google Scholar, web sites, blogs, bios, photos
- Who is assessing you and why? Looking good?
- See “Personal Branding & Web Reputation” (Ref.)
- Your brand develops as you pursue your goals
  - who you care about, opportunities you seek
  - the value you can provide to a collaborator
Your Brand Stakeholders?

• The *stakeholders* in your career development *all have some vested interest* in your success.
  - colleague network (fellow advocates in research)
  - your supervisors/mentors (hey, they taught you)
  - students, patients, professional evaluators (“customers”)
  - grant-makers, funding organizations (funders)
  - business collaborators (investors)
  - your alma mater (your fame & fortune)
Strategic Communications?

• Communicating “strategically” includes clarifying your value to stakeholders in your evolving career path. *Writing well is the simplest & best way.*

• Bioscientists & clinicians must produce and deliver a wide range of written communications. *Make them more memorable, compelling stories!*

• Your key “stakeholders” will read and share them if they are good.
Your Written Communications
(evidence + interpretation = your viewpoint)

• Resumes, bios, emails, blogs, web sites
• Grant proposals, business proposals
• Research & clinical reports and presentations for professional and broad audiences
• Review articles in your field
• Analysis and recommendations reports for projects and professional associations
• Advocacy materials for businesses, congress, foundations, and other stakeholders in your field
Marketing Your Brand

• Work to increase your “VCR” over time…

• **Visibility**: ensure stakeholders know you

• **Credibility**: make your true value known

• **Relevance**: demonstrate to stakeholders how your value can increase theirs

• **Write effectively online** for a strong VCR factor and professional advancement
Goal: “Well & Clearly Written”

- For professionals in biomedical sciences writing for **broad comprehension** is essential to success. Try this process…it works!
  - create an **outline** to clarify and order your concepts
  - write a really **bad first draft** with no rewriting
  - **rewrite**, read out loud, rewrite, read again and rewrite
  - have colleagues **comment** on your draft
  - trust feedback from reviewers and rewrite again
  - let it sit, return for a fresh read out loud, and **finalize**
Learning to Write Better

• Read examples you like and also review your colleague’s draft papers and edit them.
• Take extension course in essay writing: good analysis, clear arguments and exposition, and convincing conclusions.
• Write for broad audiences too - if you can capture them, you can capture professionals
• Read your writing out loud and then edit!
You Are Your Writing

• Your writing is a window to your values, your ideas, your passions, your goals.
• Good writing allows the reader to transcend the content and embrace the story.
• Your writing demonstrates your skills and your weaknesses. Maximize the former.
• Your writing can create new stakeholders in your career path, so use it effectively.
Be a Passionate Tribal Leader?

• Tribes are forming everywhere (see “Tribes: We Need You to Lead Us”, Seth Godin, 2008)
• A “tribe” = an idea + a leader + followers (Godin)
• A biomedically-related tribe = a great idea + your passionate leadership + your stakeholders
• A tribal leader is not a manager and followers are not employees. The tribal leader provides the initial passion that attracts those who value and want to share and spread it.
• Great labs, clinics, and businesses are like tribes.
Useful References

• Montgomery, Scott L. - The Chicago Guide to Communicating Science, 2003. *(a great book…almost all you need, see chapter on “Writing Well”)*

• Barnard, Sephanie, et al, “Writing, Speaking, and Communication Skills for Health Professionals”, Yale Univ Press, 2001. *(similar to Montgomery but with a broad biomedical focus, highly-recommended)*

Useful References (2)


- Delobelle, Vanina, “Personal Branding & Web Reputation”, 2008 *(create a professional web strategy for career development)*
  (http://www.slideshare.net/vaninadelobelle/personal-branding-web-reputation)

Useful References (3)

• LoCicero, Joe, “Business Communication: Deliver Your Message with Clarity & Efficiency”, Streetwise Series, 2007 (comprehensive guide with examples, great complement to Montgomery for biomedical scientists going into business).

• Godin, Seth, “Tribes: We Need You to Lead Us”, Penguin Group, 2008 (quirky, short, right-on-target marketing advice on the importance of individual leaders for creating opportunities and real impact)
Backups

• Examples will be provided for viewing of the following hard-copy/online NASA-related biosciences communications:
  - An Experiment Abstract for All
  - A Research Summary for All
  - A Research Area Advocacy Report for All