

Eason Communications LLC

425 Market St 2200 San Francisco CA 94105 415-242-5244

www.easoncom.com

Making Others Care About Your “Personal Brand” or Business Personality

By Henry Eason

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Default Introduction Mode

- How do executives **present themselves to the world around them?** In a networking setting, most execs go into a **default introductory mode**.
- When introducing himself the typical executive will **recite a long list** of very important jobs he’s had at organizations you have probably never heard of ...where he performed many different functions that he tells you were vital to his organization.
- He does this whether you like it or not and makes you listen to the entire list until the marrow of your bones is aching with boredom. You already hate him before even considering doing any business with him.
- *Then...* he tells you **what he wants you to do for him...**and why humanity will thank you if you do...even though *you’re* not going to get anything out of it.
- This is the way most executives introduce themselves...especially people with egos big enough to have actually run large groups or organizations.

What’s wrong?

This type of introduction **breaks the rules** of effective communications.

- The executive usually leads off with his **often-forgettable name** that means nothing to you and you are expected to remember it throughout his boring monologue.
- Its “me-me-me” with **no “you-you-you” feature**. Even while talking about yourself, you must keep others’ needs in mind.
- He makes you work hard to **memorize all of the trivia** of his career...and you have to sit still and not throw things at him while he **boasts and boasts** about himself into your face about his trumped-up accomplishments that you could care less about.
- Then, finally, when he has really, really annoyed you he asks you to spend some of your valuable time helping him get a job or a contract and subjecting him to **your valued business associates** who are going to think you played a bad practical joke on them and will not be amused.

If that’s not the right way to present yourself, how do you do so in a way that people will respond to, care about and take some useful action?

A gargoye-like newspaper editor of mine had a desk plaque on display for anyone who had guts enough to walk into his office to talk to him. **Who Cares?** It read. Usually, after your pitch, he

would just point to the sign and wheel around, giving you his back. A very efficient communicator.

Get to know yourself better

Let's take a step back so you can **get to know yourself** a little better...and figure out **why anyone would care** who you are.

- **You may not know yourself** as well as you think you do...so perhaps a little honest introduction to yourself is necessary.
- Don't wince at the **sadly overworked concept of "brand."** But for purposes of this discussion, let's say that you have what some have been calling a "personal brand." Or for those not addicted to buzzwords and *buzz thoughts*, we can call it your **"business personality."**
- You can begin getting to know yourself by finding out what are the **three adjectives that best describe** you? And would other people actually agree with these adjectives? You'll only know if you write down a half dozen or so and ask them to tell you what are your top three? Or maybe list some not on your list...like overbearing...arrogant...delusional ...and maybe even inspiring...amusing...or essential.
- What are **your three**? You'll need some time to work on that and you may not like the results of this process. That's OK. You can actually **change** your adjectives and have people agree with those that you choose.
- You can have **better adjectives** ascribed to you. All you have to do is be more conscious of how you're coming across to people. You can **shape yourself** a bit. Write down your three preferred adjectives and look at them every day. Just consulting them will help you move toward being them.
- So now we're back to how you present yourself to people. You want to **shape your elevator speech with your three** adjectives in mind. Does what you say to people strongly convey your adjectives? Edit your comments so that they do. You only get a couple of minutes to make an impression.

Useful Communications Principles

- **Less is more.** It's actually a kind of physics principle...less being more. With **less you create a vacuum** in which you literally draw people into your story.
- Communications is a two-way street: you and your audience of one or many or—through the media—**your audiences of hundreds of thousands.**
- What impact are you making on others? The other person must **get some benefit** from what you are saying. It's not all about you. To continue the analogy above, you must make some sort of **brand promise** to them. It's about you **and** about them.
- So always **learn about others** before you sound off about yourself...so you can tailor your message to them. What about your comments could **be beneficial** to listeners? You have to craft that message.
- Communications scholars know that **we retain very, very little** of what we read...and much less of what we hear. When is the last time you sat through a luncheon speech and could remember more than one thing the speaker said a week later?

- **One or two** impressions—but which ones? You can control that by condensing and limiting your message. Be brief. Exert some control over *what people think of you*.

Then give people your business card...**drive them to your web site** for all the details they need. That's why we have web sites, so you don't have to be a walking, talking web site, boring everyone with details they can select from later.

OK...let me try to make my own points by introducing myself in a way that I hope will reflect my business personality. What are the adjectives that I want to convey?

Knowledgeable ...

Experienced ...

Useful.

My own elevator speech:

I'm in the business of helping you tell stories that will get customers to buy what you're selling... I've done this for the world's largest business federation...and for more than 150 companies and organizations. And I know how to do this because before getting into PR, I was a journalist in Washington with more than 40 million readers worldwide... so I know how to shape stories that editors like. My name is Henry Eason.

...And there are details on my web site: www.easoncom.com