Personal Online Advertising Strategy

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1.0 Executive Summery

The digital information age is increasingly demanding on those who enter the work force. One factor, often overlooked, is one's personal online identity. An important component to success, this personal online identity or brand can define a person based on an employer's simple Internet search. The data generated by such a search may result in evidence that a job candidate is or is not suitable for a position. By implementing a strategy that examines my electronic touch points, I can effectively advertise my personal online brand to benefit my career.

2.0 Introduction

The digital information age affords people an overwhelming ability to access personal information as well as advertise a personal online identity or brand. By designing a strategy that develops, maintains and enhances this increasingly important connection to the world, graduates in the digital age can provide potential employers, clients, and colleagues with mutually beneficial electronic touch points that facilitate their success.

To maximize benefits, a strategy to handle my personal online brand (POB) (see Appendix A) needs to be employed. This strategy should address the following: electronic touch points (ETPs), audience, benchmark examples, traffic, objectives and tactics, costs, consistency and selection criteria. This strategy will examine how to effectively advertise myself.

The structure of this paper is divided into five sections to examine in detail my online brand. Each section answers the following questions:

1. Where are we now?
2. Where do we want to be?
3. How might we get there?
4. Which way is best?
5. How do we ensure safe arrival?

Currently, I am a senior student at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) majoring in Advertising & Public Relations. I am 22 years of age and will soon be entering the work force. I have many ETPs on the web. However, many suffer from neglect and some additional ETPs are needed. The following strategy analyzes my current POB and provides a plan to obtain the various objectives defined within this paper.

An important detail to remember is that my brand belongs to those I interact with on and offline (Peters, 1997). It is my intention to observe that my abilities, lifestyle, accomplishments, personality, friends, and interests reflect my brand. ETPs are used to enhance my brand by making it available to a large audience.

3.0 Where are we now?

Currently, my POB is has not been optimized to serve my objectives effectively. In order to maximize my POB I must first identify and analyze my ETPs.

3.1 Electronic Touch Point Analysis (see Appendix B)

Second Life Avatar: This character (Figure 3.1) represents my youthful identity. Five hours a week or less are spent on Second Life. This avatar has potential for making professional connections if time is invested.

Figure 3.1 – Second Life Avatar

Figure 3.2 – Personal Blog

Blog: Though only recently created, I am finding my blog to be very useful in linking myself to the web, expressing my creativity, and sharing with my audience. Current items include profile picture consistent to that of Facebook and five posts open for public comment. None are offensive and only mention some personal thoughts.

3.2 Consumer/Audience

A wide audience can access my POB. They include prospective employers and clients, friends, family, universities, and organizations. The scope of audience in this paper will focus on prospective employers and clients, which may influence the success of my career.

My current ETPs have a small audience reach[1], which needs to be increased. The frequency[2] of visits is important, too. Increasing both will solidify a stronger network as well as enhance my POB.

3.3 Competition

According to the U.S. Department of Labor (2008), advertising and public relations services are very competitive fields as there are fewer jobs than jobseekers. Competition includes those seeking entry-level positions in advertising, marketing, public relations, and communication.

3.4 Relationships & Reputations

Currently, RITJobeZone, rybacorn.blogspot.com, mobile phone and e-mail are the most used ETPs that deal with relationships. Currently, my POB presents content suitable for both friends and employers. The goal is to restrict access to friends only on some ETPs and develop and maintain content suitable for employers on the remaining ETPs.

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[1] **Reach** – Volume of access to an electronic touch point.
[2] **Frequency** – Amount of times an individual access an electronic touch point.

4.0 Where do we want to be?

4.1 Objective – Foster a professional POB before and after graduation

Specific – Develop and maintain a clean and consistent POB via ETPs. Increase traffic by promoting these ETPs.

Measurable – As strategy is implemented monitor various metric devices such as search engines and Google Analytics.

Agreeable – Check content for flaws before posting. Remove content that is inappropriate for professional audiences.

Realistic – Do not expect quick success. Keep content professional in openly accessible ETPs.

Time Related– Expect to invest more than two hours a week to maintain and post content. More time will be required when developing effective ETPs.

4.2 Benchmarks

The following examples include a Facebook account, LinkedIn account, website and blog.

Figure 4.1 is a good example of how social networks can display work experience as well as personal information for all audiences. Religious views and opinions are limited. *Figure 4.2* shows how professional networks can be built to display strong recommendations, experience and external ETPs.

Figure 4.1 – Professional Facebook profile

Figure 4.2 – Professional LinkedIn profile

Figure 4.3 may not be conventional, but the appealing design does contain rich career information, access to products and accomplishments. For graduates, a website displaying professional and personal information might look like this. The links to external content promote a greater POB.

Figure 4.3 – Professional Personal Website

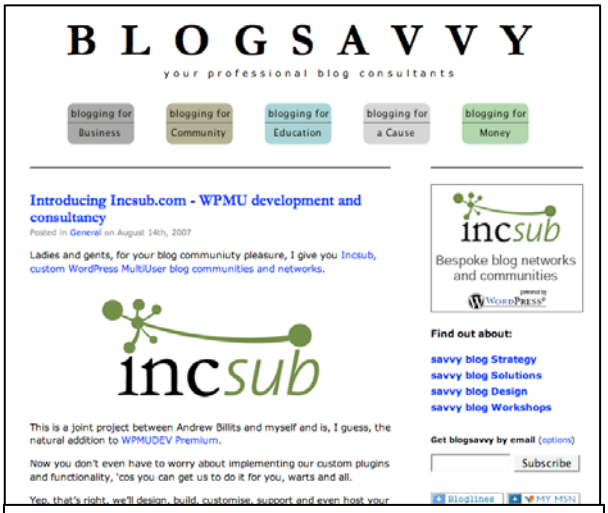

Figure 4.4 – Professional Blog

Figure 4.4 is a professional blog that provides contact, relevant posting and products. This blog uses links to separate different content.

4.3 Increased Traffic

Add relevant content and link ETPs to increase traffic. When enhancing my ETPs and working to increase traffic, Google analytics is a free tool to measure increased traffic to web pages.

4.4 Creative Brief – An Advertising Tactic (see Appendix C)

This document, used by advertisers, provides information to develop an ad campaign. It includes: key fact, advertising problem & objective, target audience, competition, and key consumer benefits.

4.5 Reputation Management

My POB should display the reputation I want to portray. My ETPs should display content that reflects a positive reputation. Maintenance and careful monitoring of my POB can foster this.

5.0 How might we get there?

5.1 Enhancing Electronic Touch Points (see Appendix D)
Each ETP has potential to increase website traffic, blog reviews and employment offers. Internet ETPs provide the most detail and require more attention.

Personal website: Here, content and topics will be appropriate for employers and clients. They can view my professional skills, portfolio, accomplishments and products as they become available. No content will be posted that is threatening or coercive to any audience. The layout will be functional and aesthetically pleasing. Free templates are available and sites such as Google Page Creator can be used to host a professional looking site. Good design and logical subdomains will limit any navigation challenges. Linking this site to other good resources and external posts will increase its credibility, reach and visit frequency. Adding life details that are entertaining and fun allows the audience to experience my POB in an enjoyable manner.

5.2 Tactics
The various tactics for developing, maintaining and promoting my POB include the following: create content that is consistent and appropriate for the audience; perform weekly search on Google, Yahoo and other engines to protect my POB; employ Internet metrics and search engine optimization; remove inconsistencies in ETPs; seek consultation; develop protocol for new ETPs; and establish time each day to perform tasks.

5.3 Consistency
Staying consistent in my message, visuals and content is detrimental. My POB should be consistent across all ETPs. For example, my email signature, social network's picture and website should give similar information. E-mail will lead to other ETPs. My profile picture will be the same on all social network accounts. My website will use the same navigation and have the same aesthetics throughout pages.

5.4 Content Developing & Maintenance
As described in 5.1, content designed for an audience and free of questionable content will enhance my POB. Content already posted should also be reviewed and reworked to reflect changes in my life. Content should also reflect my values and be consistent.

Other tactics include performing a metaphor analysis. Metaphors are what describe my POB. This will help keep messages consistent as well as catch any unintended interpretations. Additionally, I will perform a meta-analysis of content before posting it. This can be done by taking a step back from the central message and observing the content as a whole. This allows me to uncover detail that might be unintended or that could be enhanced.

5.6 Protecting My Reputation

A weekly search on popular search engines will be used to find external posts that may negatively impact my POB. This can also be avoided by making my content the most prominent in a search result.

In the instance a negative impression of myself is rendered online I will recognize it as a threat. Negative feedback can ruin my efforts in creating a positive POB. Reaction time to this is crucial. Here, I will move quickly and not assume it will go away. If all attempts to remove the threat fail and my reputation is in jeopardy, I will seek legal consultation.

5.5 Internet Metrics & Search Engine Optimization

To increase my search engine rank I must enhance my content and use diverse ETPs. Tactics include adding my full name to content (pictures, files) I publish on the Internet, use of html *metatags* in webpages and place links on my ETPs to other ETPs. When my pages are crawled[3], its content is indexed to a search engine and matched to relevant Internet searches. Buying advertisement space can also increase my ratings. Using search engine utilities such as Google Analytics and Google Page Creator will help as well.

5.6 Seek Advice

When my ETPs are to complex, I will seek expert advice from online forums or consultants. For example, blogsavvy.net (2008) is a good place to find help with creating good blogs. Seeking different perspectives will aid me in adding content and judging appropriateness. This can be done be asking friends and colleagues. By leaving blogs, emails, virtual avatars and pictures up for public comment and feedback, different perspectives can be submitted freely. Such feedback will allow me to make any necessary modifications to my ETPs.

5.7 New Electronic Touch Points

When new ETPs become available and have value they should be acquired and utilized. A value criterion should be instated to optimize its use. Some criteria for new ETPs include: usability, does it enhance what is already employed, will it reach a wider audience, what does it do that other ETPs do not, and how will this fit into the monitoring schedule. If a new ETP fulfills an objective not previously fulfilled then it should be employed. If not, I will not overload my schedule.

5.3 Costs

Monetary costs are not the only investment into a POB. This also includes time spent maintaining, monitoring, and refining my POB in various ETPs. A half-hour in the early evening set aside to tend to my ETPs is ample time for weekly maintenance.

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[3] **Crawled –** Term describing Internet software action of harvesting Internet data for search engines

6.0 Which way is best?

6.1 Selection Criteria

Some ETPs perform different tasks better than others. The following diagram shows what ETPs can accomplish depending on *message* and *delivery requirements*. Selecting the appropriate ETP is important when a specific goal is in mind that can be accomplished in these forums.

E T P F u n c t i o n a l i t y

	Low	Medium	High
ETP	e-mail, iChat & AIM, Forums	Second Life Avatar, Portfolio page, Employment sites	Social Networks, Webpages, YouTube, Blogs
Message Requirements	Simple, informal to formal	Simple to detailed, Formal and Informal	Requires more attention and articulation
Delivery Time Requirements	Fast (most common form of access)	Fast to medium (Access based on shared interest)	Fast to slow (depends on access)
Content	Easy to create	Requires some skill	Content varies in difficulty
Audience	Narrow	Narrow to broad	Broad
Costs (Time & $)	Minimal to low	Minimal to low	Minimal to expensive

Compiled by Ryland M. Bacorn

6.2 Justification

Before posting my content, I will determine where in table 6.1 it lies. From there I will use the appropriate ETP to create content. My POB will benefit from this by not using unnecessary ETPs.

7.0 How do we ensure safe arrival?

By implementing this strategy, my content will better reach its target audience, convey the appropriate message, and maintain my reputation. My POB should be welcoming and be presented in a socialable, sensitive and warm manner. Once implemented my ETPs will become a valuable asset.

Spending the appropriate amount of time each week will ensure that each ETP is being used to its fullest. Maintaining those established ETPs is also important in maintaining my POB. Continually reviewing my strategy to incorporate necessary changes will decrease the chances of any flaws in the strategy.

7.0 Conclusion

My personal online advertising strategy maximizes the use of my ETPs and is based on where I stand now and where I want to be. By implementing this strategy and staying focused on the audience, posted content will significantly increase my chances of gaining employment and working on professional projects that I can be proud of. The opportunity to present my work online and make contact with anyone around the globe is exciting. When preparing for graduation, my ability to market myself will benefit significantly from my personal online advertising strategy.

Appendix A – Definitions and Acronyms

POB – Personal Online Brand – This is the brand conveyed to all who view my Internet presence. It is an opportunity to market myself. My POB is the most integral part of my personal online advertising strategy. This brand means more than my job because it influences employment. For employers or clients, my POB must be tailored for them and include work experience, skills, abilities, education, and other résumé material.

ETP – Electronic touch point – Any electronic form of communicating with an audience. Includes electronics such as websites, social networks, mobile phones, and instant messaging applications.

Reach – Volume of access to an electronic touch point.

Frequency – Amount of times an individual access an electronic touch point.

Crawled – Term describing Internet software action of harvesting Internet data for search engines.

Appendix B – Current Electronic Touch Point Analysis

E-mail: Current addresses include rmb3312@rit.edu, rybacorn@gmail.com and darbman69@hotmail.com. The latter is not appropriate for professional contact. The first two are however. The first will expire and rybacorn@gmail.com is the best choice for professional contact. This could change as website content appears to ryland@rylandbacorn.com.

Social Networks: *Facebook*: Currently friend oriented and offers some information on personality, likes and dislikes. Some features work only for friends to protect my POB. Some information may not be suitable for employers such as comments and some pictures.

Social Networks: *MySpace*: This account is limited to friends only. This will not be used for professional use as the MySpace logo suggests “a place for friends.”

Social Networks: *LinkedIn*: Status is incomplete and needs information uploaded. Uses same profile picture as Facebook.

Personal Website: The page rylandbacorn.com is currently blank but is reserved for strategic implementation.

Blog: Though only recently created, I am finding my blog to be very useful in linking myself to the web, expressing my creativity, and sharing with my audience. Current items include profile picture consistent Facebook and five

posts open for public comment. None are offensive and only mention some personal thoughts.

iChat & AIM: Current screen name is inappropriate and is used only for friends. Current icon image is a picture of myself grinning. This could use some changes.

Second Life Avatar: This character represents my youthful identity. Less than five hours a week are spent on Second Life. This avatar has potential for making professional connections if time is invested.

Bacornguitars.com: As a Webmaster, I have the ability to showcase my website design abilities. Though limited, the site is useful for my POB and résumé.

RIT JobZone, monsterTRAK.com, careerbuilder.com: Employment sites currently used to apply for internship positions. The latter has produced some opportunities without searching, but some positions are questionable and do not relate to my area of expertise.

Mobile Phone: Main phone line shared only with family, friends, and employers. Voicemail is professional sounding and verifies my full name.

YouTube: Current account lacks information except the very basics. No activity yet.

TercelOnline.com: Uses an appropriate user name. Forum for posting about my vehicle as well as posts from other users that have done vehicle modifications on my vehicle model.

Search Ranking: When “ryland bacorn” is searched on most engines the results are limited to news posted by RIT, personal vehicle page, and personal blog. Variations in name include “ry bacorn,” “bacorn,” “ryland" and “ryland m. bacorn,” which reveal some additional content that isn’t always related.

Appendix C – Creative Brief, an Advertising Tactic

Key Fact: Ryland Bacorn seeks full-time employment in the related fields of Advertising & Public Relations.

Advertising Problem: Currently used ETPs are not maximizing Ryland's POB. Some content is not appropriate for prospective employers and clients.

Advertising Objective: Generate more prospective employer and client traffic to Ryland's ETPs. Create content to promote Ryland's skills, portfolio and experience.

Target Audience: Includes prospective employers and clients, which may influence the success of your career.

Competition: Competition includes people seeking entry-level positions in advertising.

Key Consumer Benefits: Prospective employers and clients will have access to Ryland's career information, professional content and his POB.

Appendix D – Enhancing Electronic Touch Point

E-mail: A signature line is appropriate and should include current career, and additional contacts such as websites, alternate emails and office number, if applicable.

Personal website: Here, content and topics will be appropriate for employers and clients. They can view my professional skills, portfolio, accomplishments and products as they become available. No content will be posted that is threatening or coercive to any audience. The layout will be functional and aesthetically pleasing. Free templates are available and sites such as Google Page Creator can be used to host a professional looking site. Good design and logical subdomains will limit any navigation challenges. Linking this site to other good resources and external posts will increase its credibility, reach and visit frequency. Adding life details that are entertaining and fun allows the audience to experience my POB in an enjoyable manner.

Blog: These can be enhanced for promoting my POB as well as draw revenue. Revenue can come from contextual and text link advertisements. Opportunities such as publishing, consulting and employment opportunity can result of this as well. When creating blogs it is important to understand the message and audience receiving it. By allowing access to my POB, I make use of the Internet's inherent traits of connectivity. By linking my blog to other ones, my blog

promotes connectivity. By monitoring traffic you can also create more precise messages as well as monitor the success of your promotional efforts.

Second Life Avatar: Using this avatar to connect with professionals and like-minded people, this ETP can have a valuable reach across the globe. When connections are made and more time is spent in Second Life, more money can be invested in avatar appearance, virtual products and land.

Social Networks: Only appropriate pictures will be accessible to employers and clients. This area can be used to show off special talents and fun events I have attended. Some networks, such as Facebook and LinkedIn can be used for professional information. Others, such as MySpace, will remain restricted to friends only.

References

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