

PERSONAL BRANDING AS A NUTRITIONIST

- HOW TO AUTHENTICALLY PRESENT YOURSELF AS A TRUSTED EXPERT

This handout is all about you which is something us nutrition and health professionals are not used to as we're usually thinking about our clients! However, personal branding can be a great help to your working life. The aim of personal branding is to be able to communicate to prospective clients why you are the right choice for them. This handout should give you numerous ways on how to achieve this.

BRAND AND PERSONAL BRANDING - AN INTRODUCTION

There are certain products which are synonymous with their brands, from fizzy drinks to creams in blue metal tins. Brands are created to appeal to a target audience and create trust through a consistent look and communication style. Put simply, brands communicate to their customers why they are right for them.



Like brands, there are also people that are known for one thing. This is thanks to personal branding. An authentic personal brand conveys everything about a person, such as their expertise, experiences and competence, in a consistent way, just like brands do.

“For me personal branding is about showing what you stand for in a way that makes you feel comfortable!”

Verena Franke

HERE ARE SOME OF THE BENEFITS PERSONAL BRANDING CAN BRING TO NUTRITION AND HEALTH PROFESSIONALS:

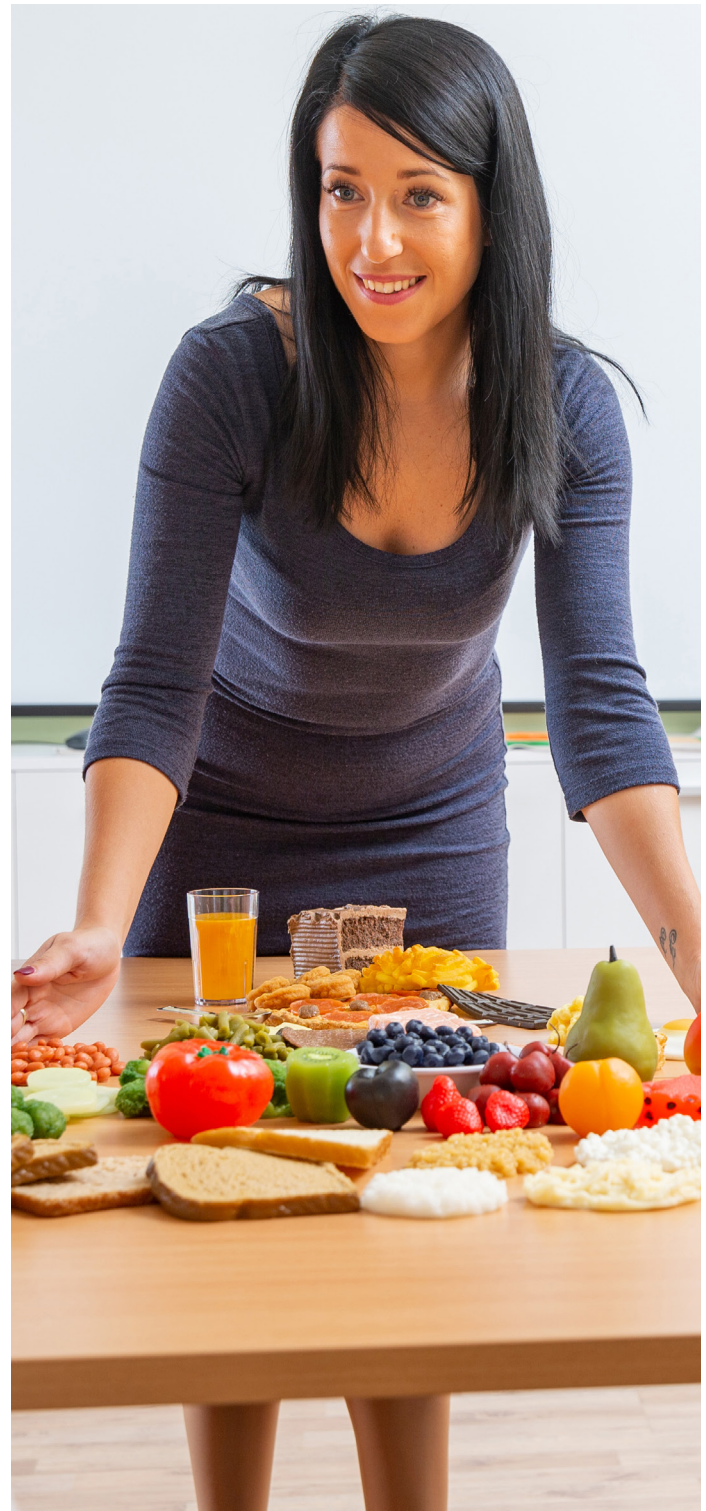
- Allows you to showcase what you stand for and your expertise
- Can create trust between you and your clients
- The ability to target a specific audience
- Control over how potential clients see you
- Can help you feel more confident
- Can help you stand out
- Can help you build a network
- Higher referral rates
- Can help you negotiate a better fee

HOW YOU CAN USE PERSONAL BRANDING TO HELP YOUR CLIENTS

When you are using personal branding, you are not only helping to advance your career, you are also helping your client make informed choices. With personal branding you are showcasing who you are as a health professional to help your potential clients understand whether you are the right fit for them.

With personal branding you are giving your potential client:

- The ability to navigate the nutrition world and recognise who are the qualified experts to give health and nutrition advice
- The ability to distinguish what they need and how to get (evidence-based) counsel from credentialed health professionals
- Trust (especially in the world of fake health news/false 'experts')
- Reassurance in the long term that you were the right choice for them



HOW TO OVERCOME MENTAL HURDLES

Many nutrition and health professionals find it difficult to shout about themselves - whether on social media, their own website or at events. Mental hurdles and false beliefs often get in the way.

Perhaps one or two sentences from your inner dialogue will sound familiar to you:

- So many people are already doing this!
- I still need to learn XXX
- “Selling” is not for me!
- What would other people think if I start to promote myself now?

Tip: In order to overcome this self-doubt, it can help to create a list of your competencies, experiences, training and credentials. Once you’ve written this list, give yourself credit for everything in it. If you still need help, look at feedback from clients and always keep in mind who you could be helping by making yourself more known.

Insight: It’s likely that everyone has, at some time or another, compared themselves to someone else in the industry. Everyone suddenly seems more successful and smarter and your self-confidence begins to dwindle. When you get caught in a spiral like this, distancing yourself is best. Avoid social media or checking your colleague’s websites for a few days.

VALUES PROVIDE A STRONG FOUNDATION

Knowing your personal values is an important part of personal branding as they sum up what is important to you. Incorporating these into your public image can help establish authenticity.



You can find help on identifying your values here: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/reflectors-toolkit/self-awareness/values>

If you’d like to explore your values in more depth, you can try working with a coach.

Tip: Write down what makes you, you. What are your strengths? What drives you? What makes you unique? In the field of health and nutrition, a lot of emphasis is often placed on specialist knowledge. Whilst this is important, it’s only part of who you are. More personal factors such as your experiences, and what you’re like as a person are also an important part of your personal brand and help make you stand out.

TARGET AUDIENCE AND POSITIONING

Many health and nutrition professionals often try and offer everything from weight management to coeliac disease and individual clients to company events. There are usually two reasons why professionals find it hard to choose a specialist subject. Firstly, because they don't want to exclude potential clients and secondly because they have an interest in many different topics. Whilst this is a complex situation, answering the following questions could help you identify your target audience.

- Who can my skills and experience help best?
- Who have I worked well with in the past?
- Which topics am I most interested in?

A target audience isn't just about demographics such as age and gender, it's more about who your target audience are as people. What problems they want to solve, what motivates them, what they like. Perhaps you're imagining a specific type of person when you think about your target audience - this is known as a persona. Personas are your ideal target audience thought of as a single person.

Exercise:

To help create a persona, try and think of your ideal client and work out:

- What does they think about themselves?
- What needs do they have?
- Where are they looking for help?
- What values are important to them?
- What are their problems and how can you solve them? (E.g. if their problem is that they want to start eating healthily but don't know where to start, you can recommend they take small steps and start with nutrient-rich snacks like almonds.)

Ask yourself:

What can you offer this potential client to help them see that you are the right fit for them.



Using references: References are a great tool which health and nutrition professionals rarely use. References are not about those before and after photos you see on diet websites, they are customer testimonials which describe how you have helped them. Customer testimonials are a must-have on your own website and can also be used on social media or other materials such as flyers. They show what makes your services appealing and contribute to your personal branding as they specifically reference your work style. They can also help you stand out from the competition.

THE ANATOMY OF A MEANINGFUL AND CONVINCING REFERENCE:

Starting point: What request did the person come to you with? E.g. not having cravings under control.

Expertise:

How did you help them with this request? E.g. You recommended they eat healthy snacks like almonds.

Result:

What has improved? How is the person feeling now? Facts and emotions should be included here.

Outlook:

Would the person recommend you or come to you again? This is great at the end of a reference.

“Present what you can do, and how it can help a client, on a silver platter.”

Verena Franke



LOGO AND DESIGN

A logo, colour scheme, and design alone do not constitute a personal brand, but they are a must for a consistent brand. Focus on a unique design that makes you stand out. If using a logo make sure it encapsulates your values, personality, specialty and target audience.

IMAGES AND TONALITY

Including images of yourself is essential for health and nutrition professionals as it inspires trust. I often see pictures of muesli, salads and fruit on websites as opposed to portraits which should be changed. Images of food are interchangeable, but your face isn't. Investing in professional images is worth it as they can be used for your entire external profile from websites to social media to print media.



Tip: Make sure that the pictures show you in your everyday working environment. Pictures that are used in the work environment, e.g. in a consulting situation, are best since potential customers can see themselves in the situation. Your brand colours can also be shown in what you're wearing or your background.

Any written language used in your branding should reflect your tone in real life. If you're often easy-going and humorous, don't use too many grandiose technical terms and complicated language. Not only should this match your personal tone but also reflect your target audience.



Practical tip:

Make sure all your materials (flyers, website, social media) use consistent language.

In order to better understand your tone, ask yourself the following:

- Do I like what I read there?
- Do I want to know more?
- Does it really appeal to my target audience?
- Where could I be more specific?

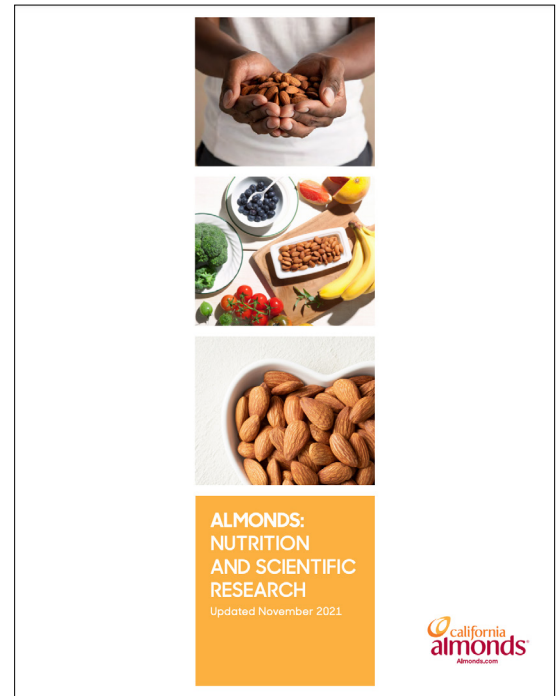
Insight:

Personal branding is a process and a journey. Take the first steps and implement as you go. Remember, personal branding helps you be more visible to the people you can help.

FURTHER READING MATERIALS

NEW STATE OF THE SCIENCE GUIDE

The Almond Board is delighted to share the State of the Science, a comprehensive guide to the latest almond nutrition research. This review was written by registered dietitians to summarise study findings, limitations, and key conclusions of almond research studies from the last 3-4 years. The guide is user friendly and organised by research areas including heart health, the gut microbiome, skin health diabetes and more. Whenever you are asked a question about almond nutrition topics, whether by a patient, a colleague or a journalist, consider the State of the Science as your one-stop-shop for evidence-based answers. All studies cited are open access and the full papers are available to download.



THE POWER OF PLANT-BASED MEALS

There are plenty of reasons to eat more plant-based meals. They tend to be less expensive, lower in calories and saturated fat, and better for the environment! In fact, studies show that following a plant-based diet is associated with lower prevalence of obesity and a decreased risk of cancer and cardiovascular diseases! There are many forms of plant-based diets, which are detailed in the following chart.

NAME	EATS	DOESN'T EAT
Vegan	Fruits, vegetables, grains, legumes, nuts, beans, seeds	Any products from animals, including dairy and eggs
Lacto-ovo vegetarians	Fruits, vegetables, grains, legumes, nuts, beans, seeds, dairy, eggs	Meat, fish, poultry, pork, seafood
Pesco-vegetarian or pescatarian	Fruits, vegetables, grains, legumes, nuts, beans, seeds, dairy, eggs, fish, seafood	Meat, poultry, pork
Semi-vegetarian or flexitarian	Primarily plant-based meals, but also occasionally includes some meat, pork, poultry and seafood	...

PLANT-BASED PROTEINS

Protein is an essential nutrient that acts as a building block for healthy bodies. Protein helps build and preserve muscle, bone, skin and nails, and keeps you full and satisfied! If you're looking to start making the switch to more plant-based meals, it's important to make sure you are still eating protein. Plant-based proteins tend to be higher in fiber than animal-based proteins, with less saturated fat and higher levels of unsaturated fats, making them a heart-smart choice. Nuts, beans, legumes, seeds and whole grains are all sources of plant protein that can be the star of your next meat-free meal.

DID YOU KNOW?

Just one ounce of almonds (about 23 packs) 6 grams of hunger-fighting protein and 4 grams of filling dietary fiber, giving you long-lasting energy you need to power through the day.

GOOD NEWS ABOUT GOOD FATS

Here is the skinny on plant-based fats. The U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommend that the majority of your fat intake be unsaturated. Studies show that by increasing those good fats in our diets, we can reduce our risk of heart disease. The good news is if you are switching to more plant-based meals, you are likely already swapping saturated fats for unsaturated ones! Choose olive oil or vegetable oil instead of solid fats when cooking or baking, or substitute tofu, nuts or legumes as the source of protein for your entrée. It's important not to replace saturated fat with refined carbohydrates, as this may actually raise triglycerides and insulin levels! Instead, focus on choosing high-fiber sources that are low in added sugars like whole grains, vegetables, and fruits and including foods with a source of heart-smart unsaturated fats like nuts, nut butters, avocados and olive oil.

HANDOUT: THE POWER OF PLANT-BASED MEALS

More and more people are leaning towards a plant-based diet. In this handout you will find some tips on how to encourage more plant-based eating in a nutritious way e.g by including more plant-based sources of protein into your clients' diet, i.e. almonds contain 6 g of protein per handful (30 g).