

LEADERSHIP

Why Build Your Personal Brand?

A strong individual online presence can mean good things for your distribution company.

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Nary a day goes by in this pandemic era where the concept of putting on your own oxygen mask before helping others is not brought up. With regularity, it is pitched as a key tool in the quest to find that elusive work/life balance. It's become such a cliché that it's pretty much lost meaning to me. However, in participating in [ISA's delightful Women in Industry](#) virtual conference this week, one presentation got me thinking about that tired airplane analogy in a fresh and meaningful way.

On the topic of personal branding in the digital age, Amy Vandaveer Novak, a senior professor of practice in the marketing department at the University of Houston, talked about the importance of developing and maintaining a strong personal brand online. Vandaveer Novak shared many reasons why doing so makes sense for us as individuals, but it really piqued my interest when she explained how individual employees with strong personal brands will make the company brand stronger.

Work on yourself and your professional presentation and you will be a better employee and company representative because of it.

More Than a Selfie Fest

Particularly in this digital era, people can get the wrong idea about personal branding, Vandaveer Novak said, because they are just picturing self-obsessed social media posts. But it's much more than that.

She paraphrased subject matter expert William Arruda in saying, "Personal branding is not about you. It's about putting your stamp on the value you deliver to others."

What distributor doesn't love to market itself on a strong value proposition? Imagine if that company-level strength was magnified and reinforced by each individual employee being confident in their personal brand and what it brings to the business.

"If you're not clear on the value that you're offering, others aren't clear on what you bring

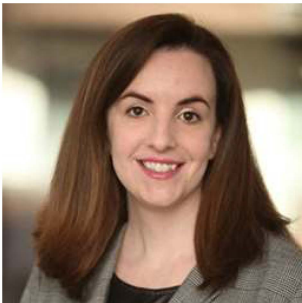
to the table, either,” Vandaveer Novak said. “It’s not personal promotion, it’s about providing value.”

People who use digital selling online tactics (yes, this means social media) will help create visible brand recognition for your organization, she added. Some statistics shared by Vandaveer Novak:

- Nearly 9 in 10 (88%) of U.S. consumers engage in online research before making a purchase.
 - More than three-quarters (78%) of salespeople who are using social selling tactics are outselling peers.
 - Buyers are 57% through the buying process before they ever reach out to an organization to buy.
 - 75% of business-to-business buyers now use social media in order to connect with their vendors.
 - 90% don’t ever respond to people that they don’t know or are connected with online.
- “Because in the digital age,” Vandaveer Novak said, “if you’re not visible, you do not exist.”

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About the Author



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Elizabeth Galentine is editor in chief of Modern Distribution Management. Prior to joining MDM in 2018 as Editor, Elizabeth Galentine ran her own content services agency and led the editorial team for a national employee benefits media company for nearly 10 years.