

You're a brand. Get over it.

 By [Jessica Edgson](#)

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Every person is a brand and you're your own PR executive. If the idea of marketing yourself makes you uncomfortable, you're not alone. But you need to overcome that discomfort because it's 2016 and your personal brand matters.



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We live in a digital world. And if you don't think that's true, take a step back and look at the screen you're reading this on. The days of people judging you on your mannerisms and bright conversation in person are over. Well, maybe not over, but the emphasis on personal interaction is fading a little. At least when it comes to people vetting you before they even get to know you.

Here are some things to consider when thinking about your personal brand. Hint: it has a lot to do with the internet.

Be wary of what you share

Whether it's Twitter or Facebook, be careful what you retweet or share. Firstly, make sure it's from a credible source. There are few things more embarrassing than sharing an article only to later find out it's from a satirical publication. Secondly, check your facts. For example, there was recently a Donald Trump post circulating social media where he's quoted as calling Republicans dumb. It took two minutes to check the facts on Snopes.com and find out it was [false](#).

What you share shows your interests, your opinions and your sense of humour. So, think twice before sending content to all your followers or friends.

Make sure you're using the right platform

Don't use LinkedIn to talk about your holiday (unless, of course, you're a professional traveller). And avoid using Twitter for personal conversations (unless you're using direct messages) because everyone, and I mean *everyone*, can see this.

Know who can see what

Twitter and Instagram are platforms mostly used to communicate with the world. Meaning, unless your account is set to private, anyone – from your boss to your daughter – can see what you post. Many people forget this while they upload their

hilarious drunken night out pics. A good thing to ask yourself is: Would you say or show this to a complete stranger?

And, when it comes to Facebook, remember who you're "friends" with. Some people don't post, they simply lurk. You may not notice them scanning your account but they're there, always watching. Want to complain about something someone said? Make sure their brother isn't going to see it. Also, don't be the person who complains about people on Facebook. It's just not cool.

And, lastly, Google yourself regularly

Looking for a job? Just started dating someone new? Approaching a new client? You will be Googled. And people will judge you for what comes up on the first page. Articles you've written, events you've attended, and courses you've graduated from may appear there. You can move to a new city, get a new job and reinvent your life but Google never forgets.

Your personal brand matters. That's just the way it is. So, go through your social media and give your name a quick search. You want to be prepared if something negative comes up.

ABOUT JESSICA EDGSON

Jes Edgson is a freelance writer and editor with roots in the marketing industry. Originally from Cape Town, she's spent the past few months enjoying the fresh air in the tiny town of Darling. She's always up for a cup of coffee, a chat and a laugh. Opinions shared here are her own.

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