

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343933616>

The value of temporal work in the development of top managers' personal brands during their career

Conference Paper · August 2020

CITATIONS

0

READS

111

3 authors:



Stefan Scheidt

University of Twente

6 PUBLICATIONS 33 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



Raymond Loohuis

University of Twente

9 PUBLICATIONS 12 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



Jörg Henseler

University of Twente

174 PUBLICATIONS 36,598 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



Response Strategies in Strategic Alliances [View project](#)



Personal Branding [View project](#)

Authors' contact details:

Authors' names

Stefan Scheidt, Raymond Loohuis, Jörg Henseler

Stefan Scheidt (corresponding author)

PhD Candidate, M.A., EMBA

University of Twente

Chair of Product-Market Relations

Department of Design, Production and Management

Faculty of Engineering Technology

Email: s.scheidt@utwente.nl

Dr. Raymond Loohuis

University of Twente

Senior Lecturer & Researcher at NIKOS, UT's Research Group for Entrepreneurship,
Strategy, Innovation and Marketing

Faculty of Behavioural Management and Social Sciences

E-mail: r.p.a.loohuis@utwente.nl

Prof. Dr. Ir. Jörg Henseler

University of Twente

Chair of Product-Market Relations

Department of Design, Production and Management

Faculty of Engineering Technology

E-mail: j.henseler@utwente.nl

Citation

Scheidt, S., Loohuis, R., & Henseler, J. (2020, February). The value of temporal work and timing in the development of top managers' personal brands during their career. In *36th EGOS Colloquium 2020: Organizing for a Sustainable Future: Responsibility, Renewal & Resistance*.

The value of temporal work in the development of top managers' personal brands during their career

Abstract

Top managers know that time and timing are important aspects of building a personal brand as their careers develop. Although career research acknowledges the importance of time as a construct, so far it has been less explored empirically, particularly given the idea that careers and personal brands are not only developed over time but must also be built in particular time contexts. Therefore, this paper explores the issue of time from the perspective of temporal work on behalf of careerists as a fundamental mechanism to develop a personal brand. In doing so, we studied in depth the career-building trajectories of six top managers and how their personal brands developed over time through making reflexive links across their past, present and future. For each phase in career development, we explored and identified the key mechanisms in terms of actions and decision making to arrive at a generalized model of personal brand development. Theoretical contributions to the career and personal brand literature are made as well as the provision of guidance to practice.

Introduction

The issue of personal brand has increasingly attracted scholarly attention. Personal brands, defined as *“a strategic process of creating, positioning, and maintaining a positive impression of oneself, based in a unique combination of individual characteristics, which signal a certain promise to the target audience through a differentiated narrative and imagery”* (Gorbatov *et al.*, 2018, p. 6), increasingly boost careers and provide benefits not only for the person who “owns” the brand in terms of career opportunity but also for employers.

So far, research has primarily focused on the antecedents (e.g. Hearn, 2008; Lair *et al.*, 2005), the key ingredients (e.g. Arai *et al.*, 2014; Moulard *et al.*, 2015) and the outcomes of personal brands in terms of material profit (e.g. Carlson and Donavan, 2013) and social capital (e.g. Hanusch and Bruns, 2017), and has portrayed personal brands as a static construct. Yet, little is known about how personal brands are actually developed by careerists over time. More specifically, we do not know how time is involved in switching jobs, embarking on new opportunities, dealing with competition of peers, managing visibility, decision-making processes and background of careers, which constrain or enable the development of a personal brand over time.

This paper is devoted to examining how personal brands are developed over time and identifies the key actions underlying the development of a personal brand in successive stages of career development. Such an endeavour can be examined from multiple points of view. Rational choice theory, for instance, would suggest that a personal brand is the outcome of decision-making processes by an individual over time. In general, careerists are certainly determined to shape their own future and personal brand. However, we suggest that building a personal brand is not a mere future-oriented process that relies on rational decision-making, but a contextual- and temporal-dependent one. Therefore, in this paper we examine the development of a personal brand over time through the lens of temporal work (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Kaplan and Orlikowski, 2013), which suggests that decision-making is contextually dependent and somehow involves reflections on the past, present and future on behalf of the careerist.

Consequently, we posed two research questions. We first wanted to understand how interpretations of the past, present and future are incorporated in the efforts of top managers to build their own brand during their career trajectories. Second, we continued with discovering patterns in the actions and decisions that strengthen the development of a personal brand across all cases of the top managers that we studied.

Our sample is based on an in-depth study of the career trajectories of six successful, German top managers who managed to successfully develop their own personal brand. We analysed how each of them dealt with threats and opportunities during their careers which made them reflect on past experiences in the face of a present situation and essentially revise their future as necessary to sustain or improve their personal brand. Through cross-case analysis, we identified key mechanisms that helped these managers develop their personal brand, starting from the beginner phase, becoming a professional, promotion to manager and, finally, reaching the top manager level.

This paper contributes to further advancement of the literature on the role of personal branding in career development. First, we demonstrate how past experiences and present situations shape actions and decision-making in the development of a personal brand. Second, we show how these actions and decision-making are linked together from phase to phase.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. In the next section, we first review the literature on personal branding, particularly the antecedents, key ingredients and outcomes. Then we introduce the theoretical foundations of temporal work, followed by theorizing the concept for the study of personal brands developed from the perspective of contextually situated

managers. In the following section, we describe the methods and analytical approach followed by results, discussion and conclusions in the subsequent sections.

Literature Review

The contemporary phenomenon of personal branding is traced back to three key antecedents from the recent past and their joint impact in societal, economic and technological fields: the development of the new world of work with powerful social norms and pressures that promised stability in uncertain environments but has now become unstable; a new understanding of individualism developed as a countermovement to traditional collectivistic systems and resulting in a self-help movement; and the explosion of the Web 2.0 and social media that offer continuously evolving platforms for an emerging attention economy that self-branding is directly related to (Fillis, 2015; Hearn, 2008; Lair *et al.*, 2005).

Many scholars agree on a small number of elements that personal brands may consist of besides conceptual fragmentation, such as the branded individual's personality (Moulard *et al.*, 2015), stakeholders who contribute to personal brand co-creation (Bendisch *et al.*, 2013), and differentiation to set a personal brand apart from competitors in saturated job markets (Parmentier *et al.*, 2013). Visibility is probably the most frequently mentioned element of personal brands, with the digital footprint that is expected increasingly to be created on social media platforms (Chen, 2013; Gander 2014). Further importance is ascribed to on-field visibility, i.e. visibility in the original field of practice or profession of the branded individual, as distinguished from off-field visibility outside this field to build a mainstream media persona (Parmentier & Fischer, 2012). A transmedia model of storytelling and story-world construction may bundle the different individual visibility activities (Elwell, 2014).

Despite top managers' visibility in public, their consideration as personal brands from an empirical angle reveals a manageable amount of results to date. The endorsement, for instance, between celebrity CEO and corporate brand can be characterized as two-sided, which is particularly supported for the attributes 'international' and 'professional' (Scheidt *et al.*, 2018). A measure scale containing seven dimensions, i.e. work standards, style, leadership, personality, values, character and teamwork, serves as a means for a CEO personal brand measurement (Chen and Chung, 2017). Career background, change leadership, relationship management, and firm brand are found to be the determinants of CEOs' personal brand construction (Erdoğmuş and Esen, 2018). Finally, career transitions of executives from the for-profit sector to the non-profit sector require frequent personal rebranding activities at each

transitional stage, such as creating new networks of contacts and re-positioning their skills, knowledge and values within the context of their new organizations (Schlosser *et al.*, 2017).

Top managers in particular and personal brands in general have been portrayed so far as static constructs, although scholars acknowledge that personal brands have to be managed in context and over time (Gander, 2014; Lunardo *et al.*, 2015) to adapt to changing circumstances (Parmentier, 2010) or for timing in career changes (Philbrick and Cleveland, 2015; Labrecque *et al.*, 2011). Branded athletes, for instance, face the deterioration of their physical ability with age (Hoeymans *et al.*, 1997), resulting in a decrease of their appeal (Lunardo *et al.*, 2015). After all, there are empiric insights first into viable means to extend the life expectancy of a personal brand, as can be seen in artistic careers and the artists' brand building as a series of statuses over time, following individual evolutionary paths which lead to a career trajectory with distinct, different stages, drawing upon the social and cultural context, rather than having a definite positioning (Preece and Kerrigan, 2015).

Despite general agreement that personal branding serves as a support for career development and that longevity has to be considered in personal brand development, and although progressing with the identification of key elements and an examination of top managers, research has been largely cross-sectional and static and disregards the time perspective of the human being when developing a personal brand over time. Therefore, we are not yet able to indicate, explain or even recommend how personal branding processes really work in a career framework in certain stages and over time. Consequently, there is a need to advance our knowledge in order to understand how top managers actually build their personal brand as an "evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time" (Arthur *et al.*, 1989, p. 8), resulting in a "pattern of a career actor's positions and condition within a bounded social and geographic space over their life to date" (Gunz and Mayrhofer, 2018, p. 71).

Theoretical Approach

Organizational and management researchers are interested in process theory and dynamic phenomena, such as organizational learning (Cohen and Sproull, 1991), competitive interaction (Illnitch *et al.*, 1996), innovation and change (Van de Ven and Huber, 1990) and strategic evolution (Barnett and Burgelman, 1996), and they have applied process research to understand how things evolve over time and why they evolve in that way (Berends and Lammers, 2010; Bingham and Kahl, 2013; Gehman *et al.*, 2013; Van de Ven and Huber, 1990; Van Oorschot *et al.*, 2013). Nonetheless, process studies have historically been underrepresented, dramatically so in the case of retrospective process studies (Langley *et al.*,

2013), and particularly in the nascent field of personal branding. Furthermore, process research may deal with the evolution of relationships between people or with the cognitions and emotions of individuals as they interpret and react to events (Isabella, 1990; Langley, 1999; Peterson, 1998). Consequently, we share the conviction of Langley et al. (2013, p. 10) that “there are important opportunities to address management and organizational concerns at the individual level of analysis and would encourage such research that might deal with such temporally evolving issues as careers, work-family balance, identity, work practices, and socialization from a process perspective”.

From an epistemological perspective, process narratives provide different approaches for studying organizational change (Tsoukas, 2005; Van de Ven and Poole, 2005). The ‘weak’ process approach conceptualizes change as a succession of events, stages, cycles or states in the development or growth of an organization. Thus, substance has priority over process. In contrast, the ‘strong’ process approach supposes the world is composed of processes and claims that only research that adopts the processual perspective is suited for their study. Time may be so intimately connected with change and innovation here that it is useful to consider how it might be constructed during the process. Creating a vocabulary and grammar for expressing things in processual terms is expected to produce useful insights, too. Therefore, we deliberately use the term ‘personal branding’ instead of ‘personal brand’ to stay with a verb or process rather than a finished object or noun (Langley *et al.*, 2013; Maguire and Hardy, 2013; Tsoukas, 2005; Weick, 1979) which, according to Van de Ven and Poole (2005), poses a threat to the identity of personal branding studies, the validity of studies in personal brands, and the coherence of studies of personal brands. An additional fundamental dichotomy in how to view realities lies in the objective versus the subjective perspective on time (Adam, 1994; Blyton *et al.*, 1989; Jacques, 1982). The objective view treats time as linear, mechanical and quantitative, aligning this view with a Newtonian assumption of time. The clock has emerged as a primary metaphor in this conceptualization of time that provides a strong limitation as it neglects the active role of people in creating and shaping the temporal conditions of their lives (Orlikowski and Yates, 2002). In contrast, the subjective view determines time as a socially constructed conceptualization "defined by organizational members" (Clark, 1985, p. 36) and the result of the norms, beliefs and customs of individuals and groups.

A practice-based perspective on time that covers both the shaping of people's actions and their being shaped by structural conditions within and outside of their immediate control would focus on a set of practices known as ‘temporal work’ that links the subject’s interpretations of the past, present and future to strategic action (Kaplan and Orlikowski, 2013).

From this perspective the future is not a simple accumulation of outcomes that appear accidentally or that can be forecasted more or less accurately. Rather, it is shaped by the reflective practices of actors anticipating what might be possible. The role of the past is that actors reconstruct histories out of their different prior experiences, and the present directs attention through their multiple assessments of current concerns (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998).

Originally applied to study how situated actors make sense of a breakdown of current strategic accounts (Kaplan and Orlikowski, 2013), we argue that using the concept of temporal work can be fruitful in grasping how managers make reflexive links to the past, present and future in the development of their personal brand. Temporal work happens when top managers are confronted with threats or opportunities during their careers that break down their current perception of their personal brand and force them to re-think the past, present and future, possibly leading to certain actions and decisions. Using this lens potentially reveals the temporal-reflexive dynamics of personal branding also present in Schön's (1983) notion of 'reflection-in-action' (Yanow and Tsoukas, 2009). It sheds light on how temporal work guides activities and affects visibility and social relations when top managers face changing circumstances that challenge their current situation. Finally, a temporal perspective on top managers' personal branding and their career building may advance the knowledge of how different career stages can be characterized in terms of tools to develop a personal brand for a careerist.

Methodology

Setting and research strategy

The setting for our study covers two female and four male top managers (Table 1), selected by theoretical sampling, as the purpose of this research is to contribute to the theory's development (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). In table 1, we summarize the personal background and information of the companies at which the top managers were employed. We anonymized their names for privacy reasons.

The top managers' job responsibilities and positions represented initial criteria for selection (Noor, 2008). For this, we defined 'top managers' as those very senior executives who are responsible for the definition and execution of a company's strategy and who are capable of affecting the company's profits, share price, reputation and market position by their individual activities. This includes chief executive officers (CEOs) and other heads of function (Pepper and Gore, 2015). We selected the top managers on the grounds of their knowledgeable insights and experiences into their own individual branding development process over an

appropriate length of time. This makes its emergence transparently observable (Pettigrew, 1990). The participating top managers were additionally selected on the basis of the researcher's individual judgement, in the sense of having appropriate access to them, and on the grounds that they would provide the necessary information because of their trust in the researcher, who is otherwise involved as their personal business coach. This led to in-depth personal and reflective insights shared in a trusting atmosphere (Noor, 2008).

Personal Information					Company Information		
Name	Age	Gender	Current function	Nationality	Industry	No. of employees (2018)	Financials in 2018 (€)
Ann (pilot)	54	Female	CEO	German	Real estate/ Construction	2,153	10.2 bn total assets
Brad	60	Male	SVP Corporate Communications	Austrian	Utilities	21,775	20.6 bn turnover
Clare	50	Female	CEO	German	Banking	612	2.9 bn total assets
Dean	51	Male	Global Portfolio Director	German	Trade fairs & events	831	294 m turnover
Edwin	44	Male	Global Medical Director	Swiss	Pharmaceutical	38,478	16.8 bn turnover
Frank	46	Male	Managing Director	German	Advertising	813	85 m gross income

Table 1: Top manager personal and company information.

We chose an exploratory and explanatory multiple case study design (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2003) implying a within-case and a cross-case analysis. Complementary combinations of process research strategies, i.e. alternate template, narrative strategy and visual mapping, were applied to reflect the temporal sequence of actions and experiences unfolding over time (Gehman *et al.*, 2013; Langley, 1999; Langley *et al.*, 2013).

Data collection

Following Pettigrew (1990), we first collected archival data from different public and private sources about the six top managers and put all the pieces into a chronological sequence. This first outline was important to map the key events in their career lives. Between May 2018 and November 2018 we conducted individual semi-structured interviews (Appendix 1) with the selected top managers. We used the narrative strategy (Van de Ven and Poole, 2005) to enable them to tell us their own individual stories of personal branding, deeply rooted in their real-life activities and career path. In addition, we ensured that the relevant concepts and ideas assembled from the literature on personal branding were included through an 'alternate template' that contained specific propositions (Langley, 1999). In particular, the proposition 'longevity' is echoed in the methodology of our study as it involves the factor of time in process research. The first interview with a top manager served as a pilot, a format which is being increasingly adopted in qualitative case study research (Yin, 2003). This allowed us to become

familiar with the topic as well as test the interview protocol and verify the specific instruments (alternate template, visual map). In doing so, we became aware that the top manager in the pilot case rarely consciously engaged in a complete personal branding process during her career, an observation that was also confirmed by the other top managers. In focussing on personal branding during the interviews, we deliberately attempted to flesh out certain critical moments in their careers, which somehow affected the development of their personal brand. In other words, we wanted the top managers to reflect on what they were thinking at such moments and how the past, present and future played a role in moving ahead to maintain or develop their personal brand.

Procedurally, we started each interview by asking them to openly describe their individual personal branding process and what a personal brand means for them, including their intent and motivation for pursuing a personal brand. This setting was important to maintain a focus during the interview. Then, equipped with our alternate template in mind, we tried to obtain purposeful information about relevant critical events and triggers during their careers that made them reflect on the past, their current situation and their intended actions for the future in light of their personal brands. Additionally, we verified their stories against the available data from different public and private sources for triangulation purposes. All interviews were audio-recorded with the interviewees' consent and transcribed verbatim. Our data analysis phase extended between December 2018 and March 2019.

Data analysis

In a first step, we mapped out chronologically the stories revealed from archival data and the interviews and fleshed out those parts that could be related to the aspects of the alternate template without discarding peripheral data. This led to the construction of a visual map (Langley, 1999) for each top manager (Appendix 2). Dividing the ordinate of the graph into horizontal bands, one for each proposition of the alternate template (e.g. visibility, relationships, brand personality), we then plotted the events and key activities from our database onto the grid, resulting in individual narratives. Each narrative is far more than just a sequence of events and activities. It is a great part of an individual top manager's life (Van de Ven and Poole, 2005) as it conveys a high degree of authenticity that cannot be achieved economically with large samples (Golden-Biddle and Locke, 1993; Langley, 1999).

Next, the content of the visual maps was transferred into one table for each top manager, providing a clear structure of the career phases and containing key events and triggers, reflexivity processes, key activities, and corresponding illustrative quotes.

We looked for commonalities and differences between the maps and tables to arrive at patterns in a broader picture. Since the visual mapping of our analysis is “not a ‘theory’ but an intermediary step between the raw data and a more abstract conceptualization” (Langley, 1999, p. 702), we conducted a within-case analysis that took place iteratively and in parallel to a cross-case analysis after the pilot case. This resulted in one key table for each of the four career phases of the top managers’ personal branding processes. By this means, we generated converging and diverging patterns that uncovered how the past, present and future are reconstructed along the career trajectories.

Finally, the resulting master tables of each career phase were transformed into an entire model of temporal work in the personal branding of top managers (Figure 2). An investigator triangulation (Eisenhardt, 1989; Thurmond, 2001) that involved the use of multiple observers, interviewers, and data analysts was part of our study for confirmation purposes.

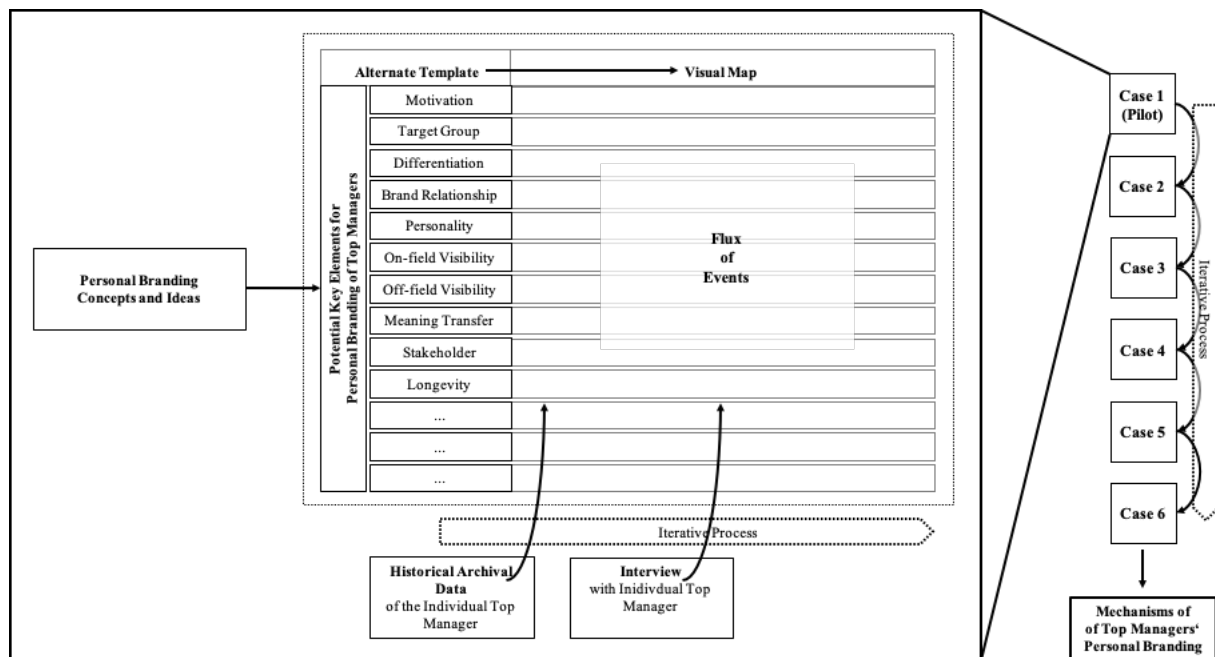


Figure 1: Frame for data collection and analysis

These extensive and continuous steps of iteration (Figure 1) challenged our emerging understanding of the processes involved. Our intention to replicate findings from earlier cases in this multiple case study, eliminate alternative explanations, and elaborate the emergent theory via an iterative process gave more theoretical support for the choice to use a constant group of top managers as participants in this study (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). On the whole, our iterative, mixed inductive-deductive, and interactional process of data collection, simultaneous analysis, and emergent interpretation resulted in a synthesis that enhanced the

robustness of our findings (Creswell, 2007; Eisenhardt, 1989; Goulding, 2005; Strauss and Corbin, 1998), as our longitudinal data built an increasingly rich and detailed picture of patterns.

Main findings

From our study of temporal work in the development of a personal brand, we uncovered the following general dominant patterns based on the six top managers. For the sake of clarity, we discuss these patterns according to their career phases starting from beginner, moving to professional stage, promotion to manager and, finally, reaching the top manager level.

Beginner

In analysing temporal work in this phase, we found that top managers were confronted at some point in time with the fact that they conceived of themselves as similar to their peers and, as such, did not stand out. For instance, Edwin, who started his career as an assistant physician in a hospital, remarked, *“When you have 30 assistant physicians, you first need to make yourself seen among those 30. They’re all there together; they’re all working; they’re all motivated. It’s the same: When you have 20 people employed for the same job: Why pick A1 and not A19?”*

The top managers reflected on the past by considering the many professional tasks they had to perform in order to launch their career but found themselves ending up like everybody else with having gained first visibility at best. For instance, Dean reflected on some positive feedback he received from an external consultant that *“I still remember thinking: What? My boss? The lord on high? He came from [leading company in German Mittelstand] and was the model of corporate communication mastery for me. My boss can be happy to have me? I always saw it the other way around.”* Ann referred to numerous activities in the past based on her professional expertise that supported her first visibility, *“Well, at SMEs, by being active at events. Lots of it in person. There was no internet. You had to be very active, be there at events, give speeches, write articles.”*

To remedy their situation, they started to think of differentiating themselves more in the future by selecting tasks and positions in which they could perform better and stand out from their peers. For instance, Dean remembered a project from the past *“that we simply couldn’t shift in Poland, to get that moving. (...) I took a trolley, I can still see it, went to this DIY place in Munich, with our prospectus in the trolley and went from place to place to sell this expo.”* Dean made the impossible possible, which no one before him had ever achieved in this trade fair project and brought him to the attention of top management, helpful for his next career steps. He continued for the future, *“With that going so very well, even though the expo did not*

draw that many visitors, then it happened that the top management came to me right away and said: Listen, [Dean], we have other projects for you.”

But personal traits from the past, which led to differentiating oneself from others, also have an effect in the present at the career stage of ‘beginner’. Ann, for instance, considered her role as a woman in a male-dominated industry, *“there aren’t that many women in my industry. And at an SME, in the insulation business, you had two women. So people always said: That’s the fierce one, and you’re the nice one (...) In the industry, people were speaking about these two women and that’s why I had this reputation.”* In this regard, Ann does not disagree that gendered traits contribute to her personal branding as she noted, *“But you can use that quite well for yourself.”*

All in all, personal branding at the first career level is characterised by the fact that employing professional competences creates an initial visibility as a person, but this does not differentiate the person from the many other job entrants. In order to stand out from colleagues, it is necessary to deliver an exceptional performance or to make use of other, almost unique, personal qualifications and qualities.

Professional

In order to steer their personal brand in the ‘professional’ career phase in various ways, the top managers in our study relied on their technical competencies developed in the past. For instance, Ann (in charge of the banking industry) remembered that she *“was invited to lots of interviews back in the market magazines to speak about transactions”*, and Brad, in his capacity as communicator in this career stage, stated that, *“Letter writing is a skilled art. It’s a curse and a blessing. I started quite early to write letters for a CEO. Not just any letter, but maybe the ones to ministers, and the CEO noticed: That’s not bad, and he does not need days on end for it. So, they trusted me with that job more and more frequently.”*

In addition, the application of professional skills was complemented by social skills acquired in the past, such as an exceptionally good working method, as Edwin compared himself to colleagues. *“Work speed, that is one thing. I always knew that I need a third of the time other people need, and that was relatively clear for me.”* Edwin generalised this example for himself and is aware of the consequence of this, which is to distinguish himself from his colleagues. *“This uniqueness came from me doing certain things much better than others or believing that I could do many things much better. That’s where the unique thing comes through.”*

Similarly, Ann brought a specific mindset from her childhood, *“And it’s one of these formative events, I would say, from my primary school. Simply to say that you are always a step*

ahead.” This led her to opt for an approach that set her apart from others, even though she had only recently moved to this company. *“I was with the company for six weeks, and my boss said, ‘Here comes the new director.’ He was from another country where they had more centralized structures. ‘We need to speak about what we do here.’ He then asked these specific questions, and we were all sat on that table, and nobody was getting to the point, and it annoyed me so. So I got up, with six weeks of experience on the job. Six weeks of really being with the company, and I said, ‘Let’s do it this way. Let me explain.’”* In this regard, Ann considered her mindset as a vehicle to create a personal brand for future career development as she noted, *“From then on, I was, for him... the director attributed certain traits to me. Or they had a certain image of me, and they expected it from me. So, four weeks later, I had a leadership role.”*

The personal preconditions that the top managers already had in the past and therefore naturally brought with them also influenced their personal branding. Clare, for instance, remembered how she unintentionally became aware of her visibility as a woman when she noted, *“I was always pushed into the limelight by my superiors and top managers, because I had a certain image, as a woman, as a mother, as a successful woman, and they liked to use that.”*

Given these reflections by the top managers, we concluded that in addition to professional skills, the application of social skills resulted in internal visibility and an extended differentiation. Internal visibility means being personally visible to powerful people in the company, such as CEOs and directors. This is closely related to differentiating oneself from colleagues through exceptional skills or in special situations through unique and eye-catching activities and results in career support from these powerful people, which Ann sums up in a nutshell, *“To get visible and to be recognizable. When I have 40,000 employees and I, as a director, am looking for a manager, then I only see a sea of faces. But if I have somebody that gets recognized, that I see certain traits in, some that I might want or need, then I react differently.”*

However, distinguishing oneself from others becomes a threat in the present of the professional career stage as it results in competing with other people. Frank exemplified having a conflict with his superior due to his application of skills from the past. *“I had this boss that I came too close to in a sense – so here we are with the issue of top management attention. How far can you rise without hitting the ceiling? So, he was as well – in a way, I was part of the team, but what I was doing and with my skills and my competences, my visibility with clients and how I was perceived in general, I was somewhere else. And he essentially started picking on me.”* By applying his skills in the past and the resulting personal visibility with customers

and in the company, top management also became attentive to Frank - more attentive than to Frank's boss, which caused the latter to behave in a personally damaging way towards Frank. Looking for a way out, Frank decided to conform in the future. *“And that could only be resolved by me picking a different route at the company, because there was not enough space for the two of us at that place.”* He was aware that the conflict with his boss would continue or even intensify if he continued displaying his internal visibility and the associated differentiation. Therefore, Frank adapted to the given situation and to his boss and chose a different career path.

At the career level of professional, three key activities are important to enable personal branding. First, to differentiate oneself from others in an extended way beyond professional skills by applying non-technical skills. Second, to become visible within the company as an individual personality, which is closely related to the extended differentiation. Finally, conforming to other people and situations as a key activity that complements differentiating oneself from others.

Manager

When considering the career stage of ‘manager’, the top managers in our study explained that they overwhelmingly relied on their ability to adjust to people and situations, especially when general conditions had changed massively or gotten difficult and when powerful people in the company expressed demanding requirements. Ann, for instance, compared one of her employers from the past, *“at an SME, it was all quite easy-going”*, to one in the present, *“The challenges change when you are in a larger company (...) Think globalization... market development. Eastern Europe. South Africa (...) But then your stakeholders change, suddenly they are more academic.”* She attributes challenging changes to a much larger organisation on the one hand and to a higher level of stakeholder education on the other. Consequently, she anticipates for the future that relying on the value of one's own brand from the past will not be enough. Rather, she poses herself the core questions in order to decide for herself what and how she will adapt to continue developing under changed conditions in the future: *“You won't get far with the original: Nice German brand, German engineering. Unless you like German mechanical engineering. But even they have to go with the times (...) You have to adjust in a different way.(...) then you have to see: Does it still fit? Those were the issues I mean. (...) And with all these changes, how do I adjust to them? What do I need to do with my brand for it to work in this context? Or for me to position myself somehow.”*

Clare, in turn, reflected on a crisis situation for the company and derived from it how her CEO expected a specific role from her as a female manager in front of the male colleagues. *“Yes, there was this statement from [name of former CEO at 2nd employer of Clare], (...) when*

we had a really major crisis at [2nd employer of Clare] and the press relations were really tough, and he said, Well, we now need a big press event, and we need one of us to do it who has the competence – we all do – but who also has that sympathy factor. We need the most likeable person out front, and that has to be Ms [name of Clare]. (...) It was evident: he was under fire, and two of my colleagues, who are also very good at what they are doing, were too rough around the edges.” Clare pointed out how her family background and how she was raised caused her to act in certain ways today which had less to do with her gender when she noted, *“maybe that comes from my roots, also from my strict father, because I never wanted any privilege, no privilege because of my gender, my family, my children, my husband. Instead, I am extremely hard working, and I did it consciously, I think, by delivering results.”* Despite her very clear attitude, Clare conformed to her CEO’s demands and the needs in this difficult situation, resulting in *“a give and take”*, which *“did create trust and sponsorship”* in her relation to the CEO in the future, which justified her decision to conform rather than look for something new.

On the other hand, the top managers became aware in the career stage of ‘manager’ that they were running the risk of creating too much differentiation. This occurs primarily as a result of very strong self-interested thinking and acting, too many activities that stand out, and questioning everything from the past. In this case, the top manager will move too far away from everyone else and will no longer be perceived as useful to the organisation. Edwin gave an example from a situation in the past when he was a manager, *“you cannot always question everything”*, resulting in *“the point where it got dysfunctional”* in the present. He referred to the future that *“if I continued like that, I would get the sack, because they see me as a nuisance and not as a change agent. And then I noticed that there is a point when you have to hold back and see: It is what it is, and I need to fit in and understand: Where do I consciously want to stand apart, where do I want to be different. Because people then see you as added value, not as a nuisance. The problem for a change agent is: You can be seen as an innovator or as nuisance. You always have to be careful that you’re seen as the right choice.”* Obviously, Edwin realized that he would cross the Rubicon from change agent useful to the people in the company to troublemaker in the organization if he continued working unilaterally to be considered unique in the organization. Balancing activities for personal differentiation with activities through which he aligns or even adapts to people and conditions is a logical guideline for Edwin's future actions to avoid the threat of being fired and to make further progress in his career.

The three essential activities for personal branding at the 'manager' career level are the extended conforming required due to fundamental changes, building trusting sponsors especially among powerful people in the company, and a situationally conscious balance between the personal differentiation from other people and conforming to them.

Top manager

Regarding their current career stage, the top managers reflected that job activities, promotion, and the coverage by the media from the past led to shining (becoming prominent) in the present. Dean reflected that in the past he had experienced much opposition to his new ideas. *“People were completely critical at first: Oh, [Dean] and his silly ideas, what is that about: [founding of a global initiative by Dean]?”* However, the implementation of his ideas led to Dean shining in public today. *“That is now the most important image campaign for [employer of Dean]. It’s the most important image campaign in the packaging industry, for all associations in it. (...) It is the fastest growing initiative globally on this type of thing. The federal government is on board. We are now getting invited, that’s where my brand comes in. I am getting invited to give speeches. Two weeks ago, I was in New York, at the United Nations.”*

Brad in his role as SVP corporate communication remarked, *“I can say honestly: I spent a long, long time on one thing: My job in the business. Full stop. And not whether I am writing an essay or attending a conference or giving a speech.”* Frank took the same line, *“I, on the other hand, always cared about the objects of my work.”* However, Brad knows that his current reputation is built on his job. *“In communication, you are always very exposed. In the end, you are the guy on the front line, dealing with the full force of society and speaking on behalf of the company.”* From his public visibility as a representative of the company in the front line, Brad realizes for the present *“that it is a very, very exposed and, if you want, very loud position.”* Clare, in turn, considered her media coverage in the past, *“... and suddenly I’m in the Bunte [leading German yellow press journal]. More and more people called me then, which really doesn’t work for me.”* Although she had not actively contributed to this, Clare has made a surprising appearance in the yellow press.

Given the visibility activities of colleagues but also triggered by their own shining in public, the top managers concluded for the future that they have to take specific actions concerning their visibility. Both Brad and Frank have plans for actions aiming at a purposeful visibility of their own person. *“I would, for instance, keep up a much more intensive dialogue and more contacts in my community”* (Brad) – *“You do realize that this issue of self-branding on social media is a thing. There are colleagues, if I think of [name of a colleague]. (...), he is extremely active. I’m not, I admit. I would have to change that (...) I think: I should. But I do*

too little in reality. Maybe more in 2019. It is definitely an issue” (Frank). Clare intends to be equally focused, but much more selective, “I’m not the person who likes to be exposed to the public mainstream. I cherish my privacy, my personality for myself, and I am ready to go public with my professional side. And I’m ready to be a model for other women, to some point also about things like: women, emancipation, professional success, also family, because I think, I’m an important example, but that’s where it stops. I don’t care about seeing my name in there and having other women read about my life at the hairdresser’s.” Clare assigns great importance to appearing in the public eye through her professional appearance and strives to leave her private life out of public visibility. Furthermore, it seems to be important to select the right media channels. In her dealings with media representatives, she claims, “and then we have a first talk that still gives me the opportunity to say: Maybe not this time.”

In contrast to previous career phases, shining appears to be one of the core activities for the personal branding of top managers. This is supplemented by a conscious, targeted and selective visibility in the future, which we labelled as ‘controlled shining’.

Different mechanisms in terms of decisions and actions were identified in the development of a personal brand for top managers at each stage of their career. In figure 2, we graphically display these mechanisms and how they are linked within a phase and between phases. The vertical axis represents the progress of a personal brand over time over four different and consecutive career stages plotted on the x-axis.

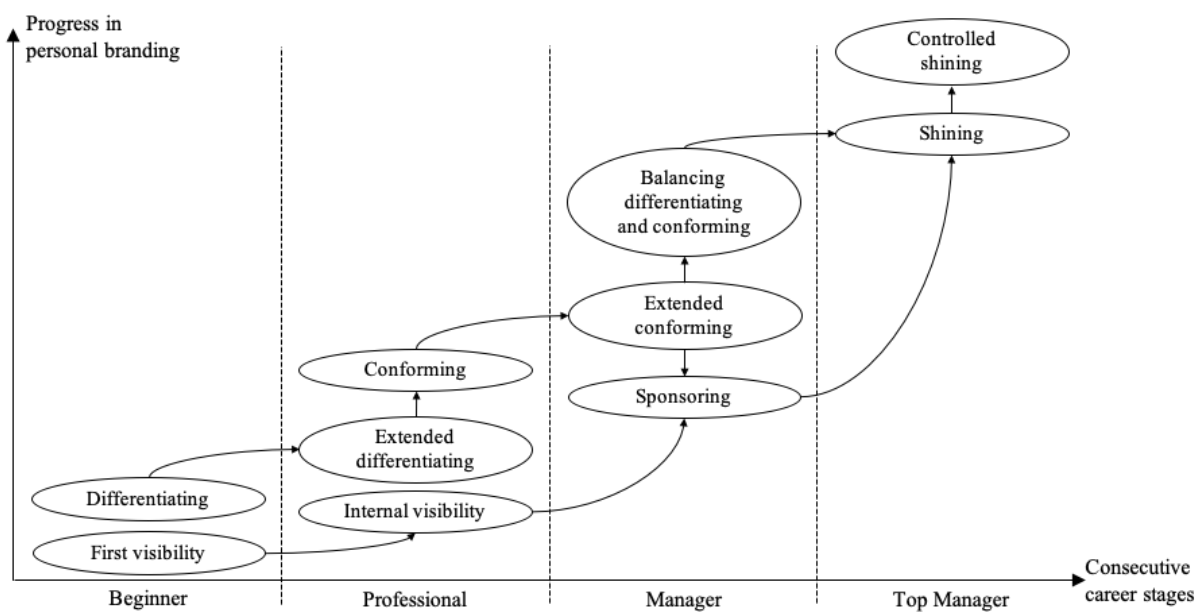


Figure 2: Actions and decisions in personal brand development over phases in career development.

Discussion and implications

This study of six top managers' career trajectories demonstrates how interpretations of the past, present and future are incorporated in their pursuit of building their own brand during their career trajectories. Our analysis of temporal work supplements the few existing empirical studies on longevity in personal brand development (Lindridge and Eagar 2015; Preece and Kerrigan, 2015). To our knowledge, this research is unique in nature as we discovered patterns in the actions and decisions that strengthened the development of a personal brand over time and while reflecting on the past and future in different career phases. We found that a personal brand viewed as a thing with fixed properties cannot be understood as the product of more or less intentional actions without considering the multiple interpretations of present concerns and historical trajectories as well as anticipations of prospective options that help to constitute those personal brands. Thus, temporal work in personal branding corresponds to the practice-based perspective on time that covers both the shaping of people's actions and their being shaped by structural conditions within and outside of their immediate control (Kaplan and Orlikowski, 2013).

In emphasizing temporal work, we appreciate more than just the call for process research in organizational concerns at the individual level (Langley *et al.*, 2013). The importance of temporal work highlighted by our analysis of top managers' personal branding processes also provokes a general consideration of how time is treated in personal branding research and, therefore, in theory advancement. The future in an individual's personal branding process, for instance, will likely not turn out the way it was derived from the simple application of tools, decided due to given general conditions or projected from the one experience. Rather, it depends on the individual's temporal work processes generated by critical events and triggers experienced by the careerist. This approach indicates that personal branding is not a deliberate, predictable and future-oriented process but requires frequent interpretive links across the past, present and future in the various career phases. Also, a personal brand is not fully determined by background or luck for it requires a thoughtful, reflexive process by the careerist, which appears to be consistent in our cross-case study on the basis of six top managers. This amounts to a strong personal brand built on distinct actions and decision-making moments in each phase of career development. In this vein, personal branding serves as a framework within which careerists create a personal brand through temporal work. We emphasise the importance of temporal work in career research when we want to understand why certain actions are taken and decisions made to develop a personal brand during career trajectories.

Our model of temporal work in the personal branding of top managers may help practitioners deal with the challenges of creating careers when confronted with a contemporary world of work that implies the need for continuous development and constant change. In this respect, the group of practitioners is certainly manifold because it covers young careerists as they climb their way to top management, coaches of top managers, and the top managers themselves. We advise young careerists, in particular, who are still in the process of building their personal brand, not to pick out a single core activity of our model that intuitively suits them best in order to set their personal branding in motion. Temporal work is a subjective process and highly dependent on opportunities and threats posed in the successive stages of a career. Each phase offers numerous possible actions and decisions from which young careerists can choose. Therefore, our model offers a well-founded framework with do's and don'ts (Table 2), which enables them to critically question their own personal branding process and align it for the future.

Do's	Personal Branding	Don'ts
	Beginner	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Apply your professional skills to gain first general visibility ▪ Choose challenging tasks and deliver outstanding performance 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accept that you are ending up like all your colleagues ▪ Feel complacent that you got the job
	Professional	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Go beyond your technical skills and find out what you are exceptionally good in ▪ Do things you are much better at than others ▪ Be courageous when confronting top management team members ▪ Recognize when you should adapt to people or situations 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rely on what you learned at school and college ▪ You can count on being discovered somehow ▪ Stay humble and get in line behind those who have been with the company much longer ▪ Carry out your behaviour at all costs
	Manager	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accept changing conditions and adjust to them ▪ Deal constructively with unexpected expectations from powerful people in the company ▪ Apply a wide range of actions flexibly depending on the situation 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accept changing conditions as fate and submit to them ▪ As a matter of principle, be against those positioned higher up in the company ▪ Rely on recipes that have been successful so far
	Top Manager	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accept your shining in public as the result of your long-lasting efforts and developments ▪ Control your shining and the people who make it happen 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Let other people see into your private life, because you are a public figure ▪ Rely on the fact that you will always shine as a top manager

Table 2: Personal branding do's and don'ts

Limitations and further research

Although we are contributing to a more comprehensive and finer grained knowledge on career building over time, we also need to discuss a few limitations of our study and inspirations that arose during our explorative work which open avenues for future research.

Our process data is based on retrospectively collected live stories from interviews with current top managers. We suggest that even stronger patterns can be developed from temporal work by real-life longitudinal research, for instance through auto-ethnographic accounts from managers who are encountering opportunities to become top managers in the mid-term. Furthermore, frequent and issue-centric sessions in which top managers are supported and challenged by the researcher during longitudinal studies may improve the data triangulation by additional real-life temporal work. Longitudinal studies may also offer opportunities to investigate how unforeseen events that affect an entire industry, such as the nuclear power plant accident at Fukushima in 2011 and its impact on utilities, are reflected in the present and lead to anticipation for the future in an individual's career.

The sample group in our study provides cultural homogeneity and gender and industry heterogeneity. Future research is recommended to explore possible distinctions of temporal work in personal branding processes between female and male top managers. Also, specific industry-related aspects, for instance the impact of powerful people and their sponsoring in regulated versus non-regulated industries, cannot be neglected.

References

- Adam, B. (1994). Perceptions of time. In: T. Ingold (ed.), *Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology Humanity Culture, and Social Life*. London, U.K.: Routledge, 503-526.
- Arai, A., Ko, Y. J., & Ross, S. (2014). Branding athletes: exploration and conceptualization of athlete brand image. *Sport Management Review*, 17(2), 97-106.
- Barnett, W. P., & Burgelman, R. A. (1996). Evolutionary perspectives on strategy. *Strategic Management Journal*, 17, 5-20.
- Bendisch, F., Larsen, G., & Trueman, M. (2013). Fame and fortune: a conceptual model of CEO brands. *European Journal of Marketing*, 47(3/4), 596-614.
- Berends, H., & Lammers, I. (2010). Explaining Discontinuity in Organizational Learning: A Process Analysis. *Organization Studies*, 31(8), 1045-1068.
- Bingham, C. B., & Kahl, S. J. (2013). The process of schema emergence: Assimilation, deconstruction, unitization, and the plurality of analogies. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56, 14-34.

- Blyton P., Hassard, J., Hill, S., & Starkey, K. (1989). *Time, Work and Organization*. London, U.K.: Routledge
- Carlson, B. D., & Donovan, D. T. (2013). Human brands in sport: athlete brand personality and identification. *Journal of Sport Management*, 27(3), 193-206.
- Chen, C.-P. (2013). Exploring personal branding on YouTube. *Journal of Internet Commerce*, 12(4), 332-347.
- Chen, H.-M., & Chung, H.-M. (2017). A scale for CEO personal brand measurement. *South African Journal of Business Management*, 48(2), 23-32.
- Clark P. (1985). A review of the theories of time and structure for organizational sociology. *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, 4, 35-79.
- Cohen, M. D., & Sproull, L. S. (1991). Editors' introduction: Special issue on organizational learning: Papers in honor of James G. March. *Organization Science*, 2(1).
- Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 532-550.
- Eisenhardt, K. M., & Graebner, M. E. (2007). Theory building from cases: Opportunities and challenges. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 50(1), 25-32.
- Elwell, J.S. (2014). The transmediated self: Life between the digital and the analog. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 20(2), 233-249.
- Emirbayer, M., & Mische, A. (1998). What is agency?. *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(4), 962-1023.
- Erdoğan, N., & Esen, E. (2018). Constructing the CEO Personal Brand: The Case of Four Pioneering CEOs in Turkey. *Corporate Reputation Review*. 21, 37-49.
- Fillis, I. R. (2015). The production and consumption activities relating to the celebrity artist. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 31(5/6), 646-664.
- Gander, M. (2014). Managing your personal brand. *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 18(3), 99-102.
- Gehman, J., Trevino, L. K., & Garud, R. (2013). Values work: A process study of the emergence and performance of organizational values practices. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56(1), 84-112.
- Golden-Biddle, K., & Locke, K. (1993). Appealing work: An investigation of how ethnographic texts convince. *Organization Science*, 4, 595-616.

- Gorbatov, S., Khapova, S., & Lysova, E. (2018). Personal Branding: Interdisciplinary Systematic Review and Research Agenda. *Frontiers in psychology*, 9, 2238.
- Goulding, C. (2005). Grounded theory, ethnography and phenomenology: A comparative analysis of three qualitative strategies for marketing research. *European Journal of Marketing*, 39(3/4), 294-308.
- Gunz, H., & Mayrhofer, W. (2018). *Rethinking Career Studies. Facilitating Conversation Across Boundaries with the Social Chronology Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hanusch, F., & Bruns, A. (2017). Journalistic branding on Twitter: A representative study of Australian journalists' profile descriptions. *Digital journalism*, 5(1), 26-43.
- Hearn, A. (2008). Meat, Mask, Burden: Probing the contours of the branded self. *Journal of consumer culture*, 8(2), 197-217.
- Hoeymans, N., Feskens, E. J. M., Van Den Bos, G. A. M., & Kromhout, D. (1997). Age, time, and cohort effects on functional status and self-rated health in elderly men. *The American Journal of Public Health*, 87, 1620-1625.
- Ilinitch, A. Y., D'Aveni, R. A., & Lewin, A. Y. (1996). New organizational forms and strategies for managing in hypercompetitive markets. *Organization Science*, 7(3), 211-220.
- Isabella, L. A. (1990). Evolving interpretations as change unfolds: How managers construe key organizational events. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33(1), 7-41.
- Jacques, E. (1982). *The Form of Time*. Heinemann, London, U.K.
- Kaplan, S., & Orlikowski, W. J. (2013). Temporal Work in Strategy Making. *Organization Science*, 24(4), 965-995.
- Labrecque, L. I., Markos, E., & Milne, G. R. (2011). Online Personal Branding: Processes, Challenges, and Implications. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 25(1), 37-50.
- Lair, D. J., Sullivan, K., & Cheney, G. (2005). Marketization and the recasting of the professional self: The rhetoric and ethics of personal branding. *Management communication quarterly*, 18(3), 307-343.
- Langley, A. (1999). Strategies for theorizing from process data. *Academy of Management Review*, 24(4), 691-710.
- Langley, A., Smallman, C., Tsoukas, H., & Van de Ven, A. H. (2013). Process studies of change in organization and management: Unveiling temporality, activity, and flow. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56(1), 1-13.

- Lindridge, A., & Eagar, T. (2015). 'And Ziggy played guitar': Bowie, the market, and the emancipation and resurrection of Ziggy Stardust. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 31(5-6), 546-576.
- Lunardo, R., Gergaud, O., & Livat, F. (2015). Celebrities as human brands: an investigation of the effects of personality and time on celebrities' appeal. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 31(5/6), 685-712.
- Maguire, S., & Hardy, C. (2013). Organizing processes and the construction of risk: A discursive approach. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56, 231-255.
- Moulard, J. G., Garrity, C. P., & Rice, D. H. (2015). What makes a human brand authentic? Identifying the antecedents of celebrity authenticity. *Psychology & Marketing*, 32(2), 173-186.
- Noor, K. B. M. (2008). Case study: A strategic research methodology. *American journal of applied sciences*, 5(11), 1602-1604.
- Orlikowski, W. J., & Yates, J. (2002). It's about time: temporal structuring in organizations. *Organization Science*, 13(6), 684-700.
- Parmentier, M. A. (2010). The pitfalls of fame: Insights from human brands. *ACR North American Advances*.
- Parmentier, M. A., & Fischer, E. (2012). How athletes build their brands. *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, 11(1-2), 106-124.
- Parmentier, M. A., Fischer, E., & Reuber, A. R. (2013). Positioning person brands in established organizational fields. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 41(3), 373-387.
- Pepper, A., & Gore, J. (2015). Behavioral agency theory: New foundations for theorizing about executive compensation. *Journal of management*, 41(4), 1045-1068.
- Peterson, M. F. (1998). Embedded organizational events: The units of process in organizational science. *Organization Science*, 9(1), 16-33.
- Pettigrew, A. (1990). Longitudinal field research on change: Theory and practice. *Organization Science*, 1(3), 267-292.
- Philbrick, J. L. & Cleveland, A. D. (2015). Personal branding: Building your pathway to professional success. *Medical reference services quarterly*, 34(2), 181-189.
- Preece, C., & Kerrigan, F. (2015). Multi-stakeholder brand narratives: An analysis of the construction of artistic brands. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 31(11-12), 1207-1230.

- Scheidt, S., Gelhard, C., Strotzer, J., & Henseler, J. (2018). In for a penny, in for a pound? Exploring mutual endorsement effects between celebrity CEOs and corporate brands. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 27(2), 203-220.
- Schlosser, F., McPhee, D. M., & Forsyth, J. (2017). Chance events and executive career rebranding: implications for career coaches and nonprofit HRM. *Human Resources Management*, 56, 571–591.
- Schön, D. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. New York: Basic Books.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Thurmond, A. V. (2001). The point of triangulation. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 33(3), 253-258.
- Tsoukas, H. (2005). *Complex knowledge: Studies in organizational epistemology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Van de Ven, A. H., & Huber, G. P. (1990). Longitudinal field research methods for studying processes of organizational change. *Organization Science*, 1(3), 213-219.
- Van de Ven, A. H., & Poole, M. S. (2005). Alternative approaches for studying organizational change. *Organization studies*, 26(9), 1377-1404.
- Van Oorschot, K. E., Akkermans, H., Sengupta, K., & van Wassenhove, L. N. (2013). Anatomy of a decision trap in complex new product development projects. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56, 285-307.
- Weick, K. (1979). *The social psychology of organizing*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Yanow, D., & Tsoukas, H. 2009. What is Reflection-In-Action? A Phenomenological Account. *Journal of management studies*, 46(8), 1339-1364.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research design and methods third edition. Applied social research methods series*. 3rd ed., 5, Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview design

Stages	Questions
Warm-up	– Can you please describe your personal branding process from your point of view?
Pre-branding	– How consciously did you plan to build your personal brand? – What were your main motivations to engage in your own personal brand?
Personal branding	– What events have been critical to your personal brand? – Who is the target group for your personal brand? Whom do you want to reach? Has your target group changed over time? If so, why did this happen? – In which field do you compete with your personal brand? Has this field changed over time? If so, why did this happen and how? – Who are the competitors to your personal brand? Have your competitors changed over time? If so, why did this happen? – When did you reach visibility? How? Is there a difference in the emergence of your visibility between your professional field and mainstream media? If so, which? – What brand relationships have been critical/important to you? – Who had an impact on your personal branding process? How did they act? Who sponsored you significantly as a personal brand? How did they act? – Did you benefit or struggle from any endorser in your personal branding process? How? – Did you act as an endorser for other brands through your personal brand? How did this happen? – What are the key characteristics of your personal brand personality? How has your brand personality developed over time?
Closing reflections	– What were the main enablers and obstacles of personal branding? – Would you repeat your personal branding process? If the answer is negative, why not? If the answer is positive, what would you keep and what would you do differently to improve it? – Finally, if you had to provide a short definition of personal branding, what would it be?

Appendix 2: Sample visual map

