

The Athlete Brand

By Vickie Saunders & Charlotte Woods

Thank you to our wonderful clients for helping us develop this unique content so that more athletes and sports organisations can benefit from our work:

- United States Olympic Committee
- Australian Paralympic Committee
- English Institute of Sport
- Canadian Sports Institute
- Gold Coast Commonwealth Games (GOLDOC)
- Australian Parachute Federation

A note for sports organisations:

We support the brand journeys of athletes of all abilities, in all sports, from junior athletes or those just starting out to athletes competing at an elite or professional level.

We provide an holistic approach for athletes to identify and communicate their own unique brand, in a way that is guided by and helps achieve their personal and professional ambitions as well as their athletic goals.

Our work with sports organisations of all types and sizes, as well as with brands, media and government gives us a unique perspective and deep knowledge of what works, and what athletes truly need to support their time in sport and their transition into the next phase of their life.

We offer great benefit for the sports organisations who provide this education and guidance for their athletes, by taking an approach that aligns with and supports organisational vision and values.

This book is one of the resources from our Elevate athlete pathway education program.



To find out more about our programmes, resources and how we support the athlete brand journey of individual athletes and organisations, please contact: hello@theathletebrandbuilders.com.au

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So....What exactly IS Athlete Brand?

INTRODUCTION TO ATHLETE BRAND

WHAT IS A BRAND?

A brand is the persona of a product or business and is used to communicate information to an audience....you can describe the characteristics of a brand the same as you describe the characteristics of a person!

How they look, what they say, what they do and who they appeal to!

A brand is made up of visual elements (like logos, colour schemes and mascots), as well as the messages they convey and the words they use. It gives a certain feel, style and a unique persona to what would otherwise just be a soulless business or a static product.

Really well designed brands can actually have an emotional impact on us and help create a relationship of sorts between us and the brand (and the products or business it is associated with).

This emotional connection can be good or bad, and it may even mean that we trust, care about or even love the brand!

A brand is really quite powerful and it's such a vital part of marketing for all types of businesses, organisations, charities, celebrities...and athletes!

We often think of brand as only being related to large corporations whose logo and products are instantly recognisable, but individuals have a brand too!

WHAT IS AN ATHLETE BRAND?

An athlete brand is the communication of an athlete's uniqueness: their story, their style, their interests and beliefs, their behaviours and values, and of course, their athletic pursuits and activities!

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW AND TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR BRAND

Whether you're training with your team mates, competing at an event, speaking in front of a group of schoolkids, or being interviewed for a newspaper, you are making an impression.

You are communicating YOUR brand.

Some athletes dream of being famous or winning a gold medal at the Olympics, others just dream of having a great journey in sport. By knowing your brand and making the impressions you want, you will find that you're also able to connect with the opportunities you seek as well as having a smoother, more fulfilling journey in sport and in life!

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About Us & Why We Wrote This Book

ABOUT US

We're part of the team behind The Brand Builders.

From our big government and Olympic Committee clients, to brands and corporate businesses, right through to the individual athletes who are part of our free Facebook groups, our commitment to everyone is to empower, educate and support them every step of the way.

Through this book and on our website www.thebrandbuilders.com.au you will find out more about our proven approach.

We encourage you to find out more about our athlete pathway education, Elevate, which provides the resources, knowledge and guidance to support every aspect of your journey.

A little secret (shhh, please don't tell our big clients)...we actually get such a kick out of working with athletes, and it's the absolute highlight of all the work we do.

In fact, Vickie often gets a little teary when she shares the stories of athletes who've had a real struggle but have then had a breakthrough in their brand or sponsorship journey ...and Charlotte literally does happy dances when an athlete makes a post in our Facebook group about something they learned there and put into practice (and got a great result)! Yep, we truly love this stuff!

Our passion for sponsorship is matched only by our passion for brand, and seeing how athletes (of all levels and abilities, in all types of sport... all around the world!) can create the most amazing things in their lives during and after sport!

So, a little bit more about each of us so that you can know that as you read this book you are in safe hands and we really know our stuff!

ABOUT VICKIE SAUNDERS, FOUNDER AND ATHLETE PATHWAY EDUCATION EXPERT

The serious stuff:

As an expert in athlete pathway education and the author of 2 books on the subject, I've spent the past few years travelling the world working with large sports organisations and businesses, and even government projects.

What's really exciting is seeing the impact of this work for individual athletes, and the organisations and businesses that they're connected to. It's business...but it's personal too, because it changes lives!

I founded my first company, The Sponsorship Consultants back in 2014 having spent a decade working in marketing and bid writing in the corporate world, but also helping my then boyfriend engage his own personal sponsorship to the tune of over \$200,000 (and he has never been a famous or competitive athlete!). I realised there was a real gap in education for athletes seeking sponsorship...and also for companies who sponsor athletes!

So, I created a niche business that has just grown and grown ever since! I'm pretty thrilled to say that we have a super impressive client list including the US Olympic and Paralympic Teams, Sport England, Australian Paralympic Committee, Deloitte Singapore and ASICS Asia just to name a few. We are grateful that these and so many other organisations put their trust in us, and it's something we take very seriously. And in 2019 The Sponsorship Consultants and The Brand Builders merged!

I absolutely love seeing athletes of all levels and in all sports connecting with their true selves and pursuing their ambitions in life. I believe that we are each surrounded by an abundance of opportunities and when we know what we're looking for these opportunities will become apparent.

The Less Serious Stuff:

My favourite things.....

Food – All of it. Burgers, Salads, Acai bowls, fruit, chocolate. There is so much joy to be had in yummy food!

Drink – Coconut milk cappuccino

TV Show – Suits (I want to be like Harvey Specter!!! He is sooo cool!)

Song – Girls Just Wanna Have Fun by Cyndi Lauper (an oldie but a goodie!)

The personal stuff:

When I'm not working I'm usually found at my local Muay Thai gym in downtown Brisbane, Australia. While I might not be an elite athlete, I absolutely love the thrill of immersing myself in sport and seeing what my body and mind are capable of.

Travelling for work also gives me the incredible opportunity to meet people from around the globe, and learn about different cultures and eat delicious and diverse food.

I'm passionate about human rights and since I was a kid I've always been quite vocal about the plight of asylum seekers and refugees, about equality for all and about the fact that we all have a part to play in helping shape the world in a positive way.

ABOUT CHARLOTTE WOODS, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

The Serious Stuff:

As the Communications Manager, I am often the first point of contact for athletes who want to learn about developing their brand and profile. I am passionate about supporting athletes of all levels on their journey.

Curating and managing the online community of athletes who seek information, I offer support, guidance and creative ideas for athletes of all types and abilities around the world.

I have a well-developed understanding of the athlete brand and the ways that athletes are able to portray and communicate their message and ambitions.

The Less Serious Stuff:

My favourite things.....

Food – Pasta, pizza and ice-cream

Drink – Iced latte

TV Show – I really, really, really love inaccurate historical dramas/mini-series....especially *The White Queen* and *The White Princess*!

Song – A Thousand Miles by Vanessa Carlton (or anything and everything by Paramore!)

The Personal Stuff:

While I'm not an athlete (although I do occasionally run slowly around my neighbourhood) I love watching athletes do what they love. I get a real thrill from helping people achieve their dreams. I'm also passionate about creating online communities that allow people to talk about what they love and connect with people who share the same interests as them.

At University I studied English and History and I have a real passion for both. I am a bit of a nerd (and I say that proudly). I love book. I love talking about books, looking at books, I even love smelling them. I'm also obsessed with History!

My friends and family frequently have to tell me to shh because of how long winded my history based conversations can become. But I strongly believe studying history and delving deeper into our past is what's going to help us shape the future.

WHY WE WROTE THIS BOOK

Our first business, The Sponsorship Consultants, was revolutionary and completely changed the way that Athletes, Sports Organisations, Businesses and Sponsors engage and maintain sponsorship relationships. We focused so much on athlete sponsorship and providing their sports organisations and individuals with the knowledge, tools and resources to become self-sufficient in getting great sponsorship for themselves!

But we realised something was missing, and it's the reason we launched The Brand Builders.

What we realised is that most athletes aren't ready to go out and immediately get sponsored....they need to spend time identifying, communicating and getting really confident about their brand (who they are, what they want to do in their life as an athlete and beyond, what they care about and what value they can offer to sponsors).

So many athletes really want to get sponsored but have no confidence in themselves or understanding of how to communicate their brand, their story or their message to potential sponsors.

We also realise that not every athlete even wants to get sponsored, but by having clarity and control over their own brand, there are so many other ways that they can improve their journey through sport.

Whether it's using their brand to guide the decisions they make on and off the field, which team they play for, or which charity they decide to represent.

We believe that when athletes know their brand, amazing things happen!

When athletes know their brand their confidence skyrockets, they spend less time worrying about how to present themselves and they excel in communicating who they are to sponsors, the media, even employers.

***We want all athletes to find this clarity,
be self-confident and really
make the most of it***

For some athletes this means getting sponsored, for others it means landing their dream job or finally conquering their fear of talking in front of a camera.

For all athletes, it offers a deeper level of self-awareness and a sense of confidence and clarity as they pursue their athletic and life ambitions.

Knowing your brand can open up a world of opportunities that can (in many ways) change your life.

Your Athlete Brand Building Journey Begins

YOUR JOURNEY STARTS HERE

It is the companion book to all our Athlete Brand education programs. This book is a great starting point for athletes looking to build their brand! You don't need any prior learning to dive in start reading.

The Athlete Brand is one of the fantastic resources in our Elevate – Athlete Pathway Education program that gives athletes the skills, knowledge and resources to learn everything they need to support and sustain their journey in sport and beyond.

THIS BOOK IS UNLIKE ANY OTHER

Because we are lucky enough to get work with athletes just like you, from all around the world every single day of the week...we really understand what it's like to BE an athlete!

We know that you are always trying to balance your life and find time for the things that are important to you.

We know that you work so hard, you're ambitious, you are committed to your goals...and that you sometimes put a little too much pressure on yourself to achieve everything.

Most books are over 30,000 words long and take hours and hours to read...we have worked super hard behind the scenes to give you a huge amount of useful information in a really condensed and efficient way! Nice huh!

So, this book is going to be a really quick, easy and valuable read for you....and it's something you can use straight away to start building your own athlete brand!

SO SUPER QUICK AND EASY TO READ

Put it in your gym bag, keep it in your car, or place it by your bedside; it's the kind of book that you can pick up and put down, and even if you just read it for a few minutes at a time, you're going to quickly learn so many useful pieces of information!

In fact, if you **DO** want to read the whole book in one go here is how to do it:

1. Block out 1 hour in your busy schedule.
2. Find a comfortable place (where you won't get interrupted!).
3. Grab your favourite drink (Charlotte and I are **BIG** coffee fans here in Australia, but maybe you prefer a smoothie or tea!)
4. Start reading!

INTRODUCING THE STARS OF THIS BOOK

Throughout the book we're featuring four athletes who each have unique and active brands! This means they are aware of their own brand, and in control of how and where they communicate it...as well as the ways in which it benefits them!

You'll see the athletes pop up at different points in the book as we give you examples of how these guys and girls have identified, communicated and leveraged their own brands in different ways!

By learning from other athletes, you will see how easy and simple it is to build your brand and that every athletes brand is different....and that your uniqueness is in fact your value!

Over the next few pages we're going to introduce you to our 4 athletes.... Emma, Kyle, Violet and Jason!



Name: Emma

Age: 33

Location: Sydney, Australia

Sport: Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu

Passion: Children's health and wellbeing

Skills: Networking and public speaking

Emma loves sport! As a child she played soccer and netball and in high school she was a runner and a cheerleader. She found being part of a team and staying active helped her during some tough years at home with her parents. Now, Emma competes in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and is hoping to make it to the Olympics.

She'd also like to start a business based on her passion for children's health and wellbeing (specifically, getting more children into team based sports). She wants to develop her brand around her passion so she can start to build her profile and carry her message.



Name: Kyle

Age: 44

Location: London, UK

Sport: Triathlon

Passion: Human rights

Skills: Teamwork and leadership

Kyle is a Human Rights lawyer who has recently started competing in triathlons. Kyle started training for his first triathlon to raise money for a human rights charity in the UK.

He is now an ambassador for this charity and wants to develop his brand so he can better represent them and himself.

He's also hoping that by identifying his brand he can continue to raise awareness about human rights breaches and maybe start his own charity in the future.

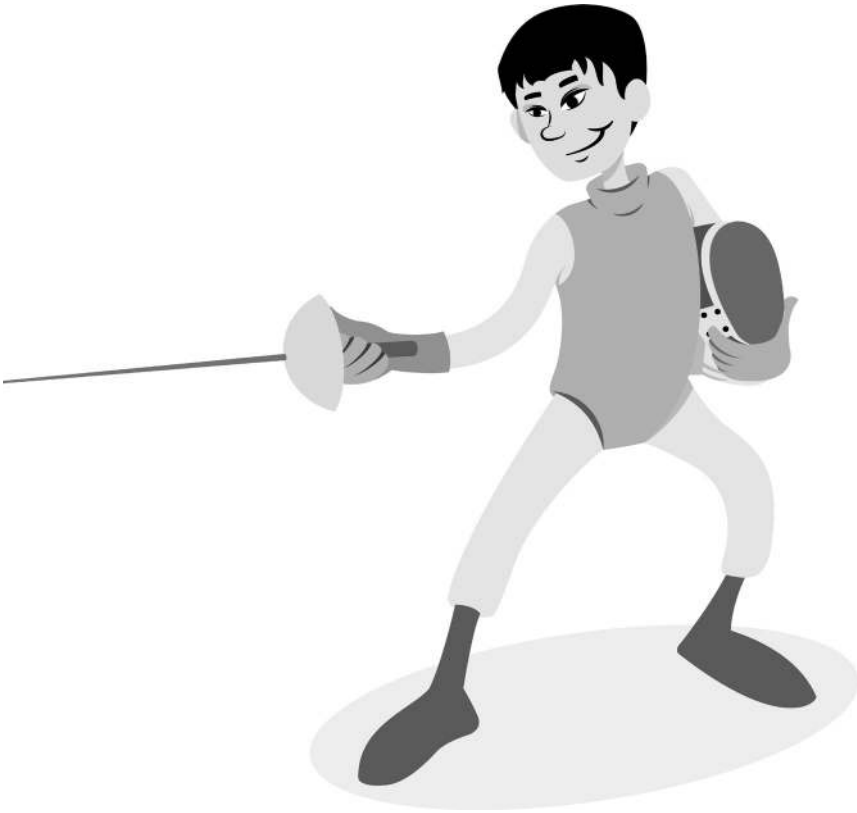


Name: Violet
Age: 17
Location: Iowa, USA
Sport: Paralympic Rower
Passion: Creative writing
Skills: Writing and social media

Violet is a competitive rower and is hoping to make it to the next Paralympics. She also loves reading and creative writing, so she is applying to study English Literature after she finishes high school.

Because Violet is only 18 she isn't sure about what she wants her brand to look like but she knows that she wants to incorporate her love of writing and creativity into her brand.

She's also hoping that identifying her personal brand will give her the confidence to start developing her professional skills, including her knack for social media and creating engaging online content.



Name: Jason

Age: 23

Location: Seoul, South Korea

Sport: Fencing

Passion: Travel and language

Skills: Storytelling and learning new languages

Jason is an Olympic fencer and he hopes that his professional ambitions as an athlete will allow him to see more of the world and continue to develop his passion for language and travel.

He speaks Korean, English, German and he is currently learning Mandarin. He loves visiting new countries and learning about their culture and their people.

The 3 Building Blocks Of Your Brand

THE 3 BUILDING BLOCKS OF YOUR BRAND



You will see this diagram used within this book, *Elevate* and also in the educational material in our programmes! It sums everything up...but don't worry, we're going to explain how it works!

We actually think you are going to be pleasantly surprised by the simplicity of athlete brand. It is a simple concept, and once you understand how it works (and how it can work for you), it's going to make your life a whole lot easier! And...your journey as an athlete so much better...and maybe even more fun!

While 'athlete brand' might sound complex, it really isn't. Just as a business creates a brand to communicate what they are all about...it's the same for you!

Your brand is simply the impression you leave on people...whether they met you, saw you compete in your sport, heard you in a radio interview or checked you out on social media!



As a young athlete, Violet knows that now is a great time to start growing her skills and experience in communicating her brand and has started going to local business and sports events to practise networking skills.

Think about how YOU remember other people: the clothes they wear, their smile, words or phrases they repeat a lot, things they're passionate about, even the way they talk. Strange as it may sound, these are the things that make up your athlete brand.

It has nothing to do with marketability or making you appear the same as a famous athlete who does the same sport as you.

It IS about identifying your unique qualities, and by knowing your brand and sticking to it you'll be making sure people remember you the way you want them to.

So, a question for you now is, do you WANT your own brand? Ok, so that's actually a trick question. Sorry! Hahaha, ok, also not sorry (this is a really important moment for you....so get ready!).

***Whether you know it or not,
you already have an athlete brand.***

Right now it may not be clear to you, and it might not even be representing you the way you'd like to be remembered, but it exists. Everyone you meet (on and offline) has encountered your athlete brand.

Do you think you've made the impression you hoped for?

Do you think people have got a sense of what you're about?

If you're an athlete who is looking towards the future and has ambitions (maybe to make a team, to gain a scholarship, to get sponsored or to transition out of sport into a new career) it's so important that you take some time now to learn about how brand works and how you can build your brand to suit your needs.

In this chapter we'll take you through the three Athlete Brand Building Blocks and start preparing you to begin building your own amazing, unique and powerful brand.

BUILDING BLOCK # 1 - IDENTIFY YOUR BRAND

So, now that you know you already have an athlete brand, the first step of developing your athlete brand is to identify it. It's not about coming up with a whole new version of yourself because your brand isn't a false version of yourself nor is it about trying to become someone else.

***So many athletes think they have to be the
same as an already famous athlete,
and it's just not true***

This stage is about reflecting on what you know about yourself and how you want the world to see you. You will identify what you care about and are interested in, your behaviours and personal values, your visual style and how you want to be seen.

Your brand is made up from all areas of your life, not just those related to your life as an athlete.



Emma cares about children's health and wellbeing and has decided to include this in her athlete brand because it shows a more complete picture of who she is outside of training and competing.

She often shares videos on social media about initiatives that are encouraging children to get active, and shares her hopes of how she'd like to be involved in programmes like this in the future.

BUILDING BLOCK #2 - COMMUNICATE YOUR BRAND

Communicating your brand is really about the different ways you can let the world know about your brand. There are two different parts to this: **HOW** you communicate your brand and **WHERE** you communicate your brand.

HOW TO COMMUNICATE YOUR BRAND

How you communicate your brand comes down to the choices you make about the message you send out to the world! This can be done in so many different ways, from the clothes you wear, to the words you use, and even the sponsors and organisations you align yourself with.

WHERE TO COMMUNICATE YOUR BRAND

Once you know **WHAT** you want to communicate (because you have identified your brand) and **HOW** to communicate it (because you've considered all your different choices of clothes, words, behaviours etc.) then it's a matter of exploring the many different places (online and offline) that you can communicate your brand through!

***Your brand is about how people remember you.
How do you want people to remember YOU?***

BUILDING BLOCK #3 - LEVERAGE YOUR BRAND

While some athletes might choose to never leverage their brand, it's still important to know the different options available. Once you know your brand and you've activated it (by communicating it through social media, at events, through your visual style) you're ready to leverage your brand.

This will look different for every athlete and some of these options might not fit your needs or current situation. You may also choose to leverage your brand in different ways at different stages of your life.

The main ways athletes can leverage their brand are through scholarships and grants, paid speaking opportunities, employment, sponsorship, carrying a message and also through growing your profile (on and offline).

We'll show you how you can leverage your brand in more detail later in the book.



Jason has a passion for learning languages, storytelling and travel and wants to leverage his brand to gain paid public speaking opportunities around the world!

Being multi lingual really benefits him as it means he can speak in non-Korean speaking countries!

Every athlete will leverage their brand differently. This is YOUR journey and you are in charge of what it looks like

5 Things You Absolutely Need To Know About Your Brand

5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR BRAND

There are so many myths, misconceptions and fears holding athletes back....and we don't want you and your awesomeness to be held back by anything!

***So...let's be mythbusters
and smash these myths!***

Most of these myths stem from insecurities athletes have about their brand and the value they have to offer the world. And although your insecurities might feel uniquely yours, trust us, they're not!

Most athletes share the same anxious thoughts about their brand. And then they talk to other athletes about these insecurities, which turns them into myths that stop you from doing what you want to do...which right now is to build your brand.

So, before we look at how to build your brand, we have to dispel some of the most common myths that are stopping awesome athletes from doing awesome things.

***Myths hold us back from making the
most of the opportunities
we're presented with.***

They're like security blankets, they're what we tell ourselves when we want to go after something that's (maybe) a little scary.

Athletes often say to us ‘oh no, I can’t build my brand because I’m too old and I only have a thousand followers on Instagram’.

When instead what they COULD (and should) be saying is ‘part of my brand is that I’m mature and I have an enthusiastic and engaged following on Instagram who I can communicate my brand to.’

If one of your insecurities (or the thing that’s holding you back from building your brand) isn’t listed here and you’re unsure if it’s a myth or not remember the facts.

Every athlete has a brand. There is no reason an athlete can’t have a brand.

Your brand is YOU.

Myths hold us back from making the most of the opportunities we’re presented with.

“All athletes can have a powerful and impactful brand, no matter how small their audience is”

Charlotte Woods

The first myth we are going to bust is that you need to be famous with a million Instagram followers to have your own brand!

YOU DON'T NEED A BIG FOLLOWING TO HAVE A GREAT BRAND

All athletes have an athlete brand. Your brand is not related to the number of followers you have online. Your brand is about how people remember you, it's not about having lots of people remember you.

Even if you only have two followers online (your Mum and your best friend from high school) you still have a brand.

The difference between your brand and a famous athlete's brand is simply the size of your respective audiences. Both can still have impactful, meaningful and strategic brands that give them confidence and clarity on how they communicate with the world regardless of how many people are listening.

The key is to know the three elements of brand and to make sure your brand is always a reflection of you and not a reflection of who you think people want you to be.

If you are communicating your unique brand in an authentic way you will naturally attract people who want to share and support your journey!

“If you’re older you can reflect on your learnings from the past. If you’re younger you can project your dreams for the future”

Vickie Saunders

The second myth we are going to bust is that you are too old or too young to bother identifying and building your brand!!

IT IS NEVER TOO LATE OR TOO EARLY TO START BUILDING YOUR BRAND

Whether you're sixteen or sixty-six, you can start building your brand by identifying it, communicating it and then leveraging it.

For young athletes (and their parents) who are wondering whether they should start identifying their brand now or wait till later in their career our advice is to start now.

Remember, it's alright if your brand changes. And if you're not ready to leverage your brand just yet, that's okay too.

As for older athletes, whether you're approaching retirement or you're thinking it's too late to identify and tweak your brand, keep your eyes peeled for our chapter on how you can leverage your brand.

Identifying you brand can take less than an hour (it really is that simple). So why not try to identify it and take a look at all the awesome ways you can benefit from having a brand.

“Being the best is great,
you’re the number one. Being
unique is greater, you’re the
only one.”

Anonymous

The third myth we are going to bust is that you need to be exactly like another athlete who is famous in your sport.

YOUR UNIQUENESS IS YOUR STRENGTH AND YOUR VALUE

Guess what, your brand is going to look different to other athlete's brands and that's okay...actually, it's fantastic. If every athlete's brand looked the same we'd all be bored. While you might think you need to look and behave a certain way to have a brand, you don't.

Your brand is you and that includes the things that make you unique or different (athletes often call them weaknesses).

The parts of you that you think make your brand unattractive are probably your strength and your value. Work with them, not against them and see where that takes you.

Most of the time, they're only a weakness because you allow them to hold you back from making the most of opportunities.

“Be yourself.
Everyone else is taken.”

Oscar Wilde

And now we are going to bust the myth that you need to create a brand new identity for yourself.

YOU DO NOT NEED TO BECOME SOMEONE ELSE

We're going to mention this a lot throughout the course of the book and there's a very good reason...because it's quite simply the truth.

Your brand shouldn't be a fabrication and you shouldn't be making things up to try and make your brand more attractive.

This is only going to lead to more stress because you'll feel like you're lying or playing a character (which is a lot of pressure to put on yourself).

Knowing and building your brand is about giving you the confidence to be you! Don't make your life harder by saying you care about dogs when really, you're a cat person.

**“You’re not creating a new
identity.
You’re building a brand.”**

Charlotte Woods

The fifth myth we are going to bust is that building your brand is complex and you need a degree in marketing!

**IT'S NOT AT ALL COMPLICATED.....IT'S
ACTUALLY REALLY SIMPLE!**

Building your brand isn't a complicated process. It's simply three steps: Identify, Communicate, Leverage. That's it.

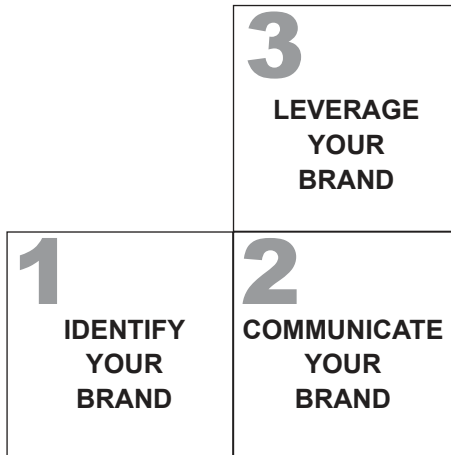
You don't need to do market research or start writing madly on a whiteboard and sticky taping notes to your walls, trying desperately to 'create' a brand.

Remember, we're building upon what you already know about yourself, we're not creating a new and improved version of you.

Building Your Brand

THE SIMPLE PROCESS OF BUILDING YOUR BRAND

Remember the 3 Athlete brand Building Blocks: Identify, Communicate and Leverage?



Well, now we're going to take you through each of them in a way that's going to really help you see how it all works.....and importantly, how it can work for you!

**It isn't about creating a brand from scratch.
You're building upon what you already know
about yourself**

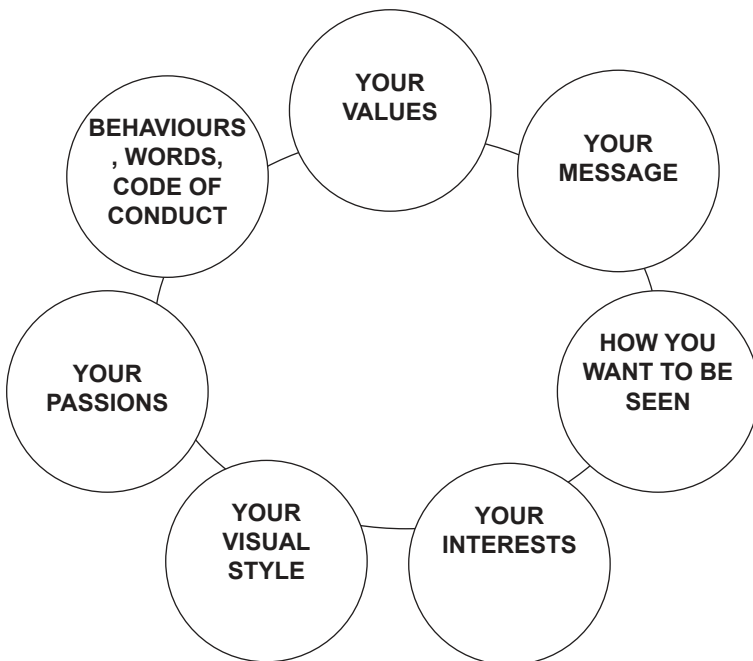
BUILDING BLOCK #1 IDENTIFY YOUR BRAND

As we start the identification process know that this stage is about identifying your brand it's not about creating a brand from scratch.

You already are a brand, so now it's time to find out what that brand is.

Identifying your brand is about creating a brand that is a positive portrait of who you already are...and who you want to be! It's not about becoming someone else, or needing to be a brand that sells or shocks.

There are seven elements that make up your brand:



Here are the 7 elements of YOUR brand in more detail:

1. YOUR VALUES

Your personal values are the qualities, behaviours and characteristics that are the most important to you.

They guide your decisions and actions; guiding you towards the right situations and away from the wrong ones. If you're clear on what your values are, you're more likely to make choices that won't compromise your brand.

By establishing what your personal values are at the beginning of your athlete brand building journey you are laying the solid foundations that will help you navigate and succeed along the way.

2. YOUR PASSIONS

These can be anything you want them to be, there is no right or wrong. We assume you are passionate about your sport...but this is about exploring the other parts of your personality and your life as well!

Think about some other athletes, maybe famous ones, or ones that you follow on social media; isn't it interesting when they share more about their life than just sport?



Violet is really interested in social media and is passionate about creative writing and has started sharing some of her creative writing on her social media platforms.

Your passions could be issues or causes close to your heart like mental health or inclusion and diversity in sport. They could be related to your career (or potential career).

Would you like to initiate change in your sport? One of your passions may even be how you approach your sport or life in general. For example, choosing to remain positive during tough times or believing that you can achieve anything if you work hard. If you're not sure what your passions are just yet, that's okay, this part of your brand develops over time.

Talk to friends and family about what they think your passions might be and get ideas from them. By building your brand you'll actually be able to explore this part of yourself further. Don't put pressure on yourself to get it 'right' straight away.

3. YOUR BEHAVIOURS, WORDS, AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Are you the first to help a teammate when they fall down? Do you always make sure to greet as many people as you can at events? Do you dislike profanity?

These are your behaviours, words and code of conduct and they are a really important part of your brand.

Knowing the behaviours and words you want people to associate you with, can help you navigate everyday situations with ease and confidence. Your code of conduct can also help you avoid situations you feel could compromise your brand.

For example, if not engaging with gossip is in your code of conduct, you know that part of this is not initiating the conversation yourself and choosing to have relationships with people that also try not to gossip.



As a human rights lawyer who speaks at lots of conferences and events. Kyle has spent time looking at his own behaviour in terms of how he interacts with people; he knows that he treats every person with dignity and respect whether they are the hotel staff or CEO of a major bank.

He also finds that training with other triathletes is an opportunity to discuss and raise awareness about human rights even in their local area of London where there is still sadly, a lot of racism and discrimination.

4. YOUR INTERESTS

Your interests are usually hobbies or activities that you like to do outside of sport. Your sport is obviously going to be one of your interests (or, it may fit better under passions). So this part of your brand is about finding what else you love doing.

What do you like to do on the weekend or whenever else you have some free time? Are you a budding photographer? Does creating engaging and beautiful content for social media really excite you? Are there other sports you love watching or playing?

You can also include things you might be interested in but haven't had the chance to explore it yet here.



Jason really wants to show other South Koreans how learning a second language can open up a world of opportunities, both for travel and work.

He is an athlete but knows that he can influence more people than just athletes and he loves sharing his thoughts with friends, family and on social media.

5. YOUR MESSAGE

Your message is often the trickiest of all 7 elements to identify. So don't worry if you can't think of it straight away.

Look back at the other elements and see if your message could be inspired by one of them. E.g. if your passion is inclusion and diversity in sport, your message could be 'I want better access and funding for ALL athletes in ALL sports.'

Your message could also come back to how you approach life and/or your sport. It could also be inspired by quotes or song lyrics you really love.

Once you know what you want your message to be about, try writing down a list of statements or words about your message. From this narrow down these statements or combine some of them, until you have a message that you love..



Emma's big passion is children's health and wellness and her message is 'health and wellness is everything, and is about more than just food and exercise'.

She has found that this is her big, overarching message and that she has several slightly smaller messages that help support this big message. Like 'I want better mental health education for young people' and 'exercise isn't a punishment'.

She uses this in a lot of her social media posts, and even just in conversation with fellow athletes and at networking events she attends.

6. YOUR VISUAL STYLE

Your appearance is one of the first things someone will notice about you. Meaning, you need to make sure your clothes, hair, shoes and make-up (or lack thereof) represent your brand too.

You might have several visual styles: an athletic style for training, a causal style for your everyday life and workshops, daytime events or meetings and a formal style for events and job interviews. And although these are three completely different styles you can tie them together by using similar colours or quirks.

But it's not all about fashion! Your visual style will come in handy as you're developing sponsorship proposals and resumes, social media content, websites and more. If your visual style has a young and funky vibe (e.g. you wear a lot of bright colours and patterns) and you want to create a website, you can use your visual style for inspiration. Each page of the website could have a different pattern as the background, with pop ups in different shapes (rather than just a square or circle).



Kyle has a fashionable and fun style, and will often wear a pin or some funky shoelaces that allow him to inject some of his personality into his clothing style (even when he has to wear a suit and tie).

7. HOW YOU WANT TO BE SEEN

How you want to be seen should incorporate all five other elements of There are a couple of ways you can identify this element of your brand. You can pick just one or incorporate all of them.

What do you want your legacy to be? What type of athlete do you want to be remembered as? E.g. 'I want people to remember me for helping to make a difference about mental health and sport'.

How do you want people to remember you when you leave the room? What impression do you want to have made? E.g. 'they were really funny and made everyone feel seen.'

How would the people that know you best describe you? You can ask them if you're not sure.

This is how you want to be seen. So, if you want people to see you as adventurous and outgoing, but you're not quite there yet, that's okay. This is a great time to look at how people see you right now and set a goal for how you want people to see you in six months time.



Emma knows that her sport can make some people feel uncomfortable... BJJ matches often end when someone 'taps out' or is 'choked out'...so it's important for Emma to manage the way that she is perceived.

She sees it as her responsibility to convey her peaceful nature, that she is not violent or angry, and in fact her sport is a martial art filled with control, respect, rules and technique.

Now, we're going to move on to the second building block:

BUILDING BLOCK #2 - COMMUNICATE YOUR BRAND

Communicating your brand doesn't mean pulling out a megaphone and shouting about your passions and interests to strangers on the street. It's really important that you know where and how you can communicate your brand.

Being strategic and purposeful about how you communicate your brand in the beginning will mean you won't have to think about it too much in the future.

At some point, all of this will become natural but it may take a while.

There are two parts to communicating your brand:

- HOW you communicate your brand
- WHERE you communicate your brand.

**When you communicate your brand you're
telling the world who YOU are and what's
important to you**

HOW YOU COMMUNICATE YOUR BRAND

Here we've listed a few of the ways you can communicate your brand:

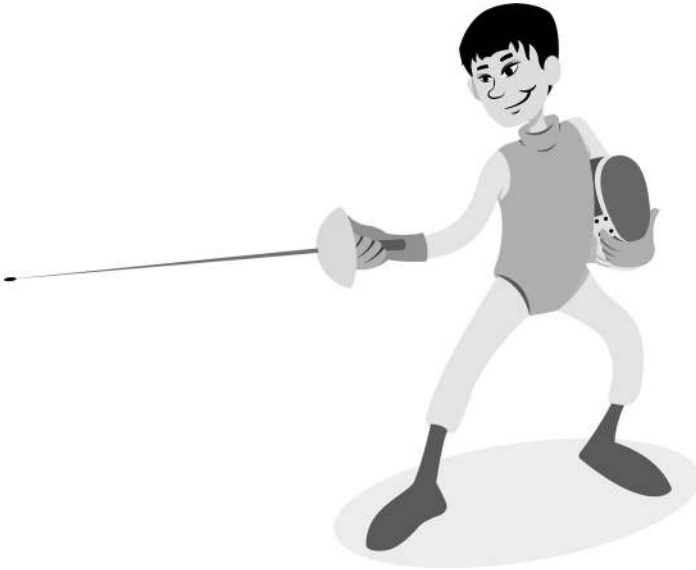


These are just some of the places where you can communicate your brand.

There are hundreds (if not thousands) of places where you can communicate your brand so have fun deciding where you feel most comfortable and confident doing that.

IT CAN BE SIMPLE AS THE CLOTHES THAT YOU WEAR!

Have you thought about how you can communicate your brand through the clothes you wear?



Because Jason is a really positive person, who's friends describe him as 'the smiler' he feels his clothes should reflect his bubbly personality.

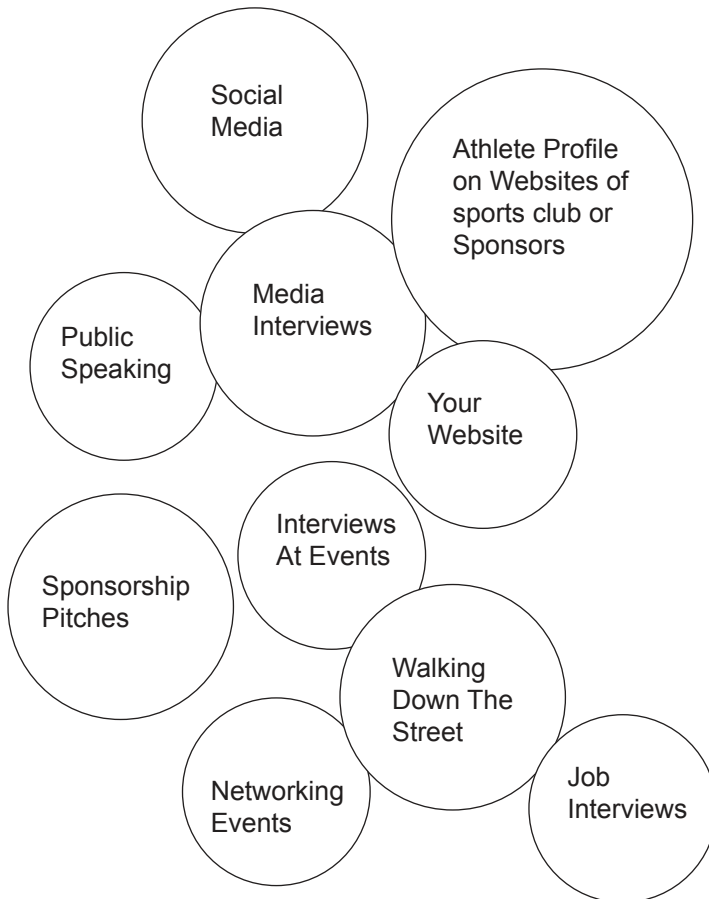
So, whenever he can, he wears bright coloured clothing that reflects his mood. However, he also knows it's important to know where you are communicating your brand.

So at speaking events and job interviews he opts for a slightly pared back professional version of colourful style by choosing brightly coloured ties to go with his dark suit.

WHERE YOU COMMUNICATE YOUR BRAND

Here are just some of the places where you can communicate your brand.

There are hundreds (if not thousands) of places where you can communicate your brand so have fun deciding where you feel most comfortable and confident doing that.





Kyle passively and actively communicates his brand at sports, business and community events and is starting to be a bit more active on social media.

Even when he is attending events as a guest and not a speaker he knows that he can create a positive impact by communicating his brand in the conversations he has with other attendees.

He is careful to never speak badly of any of the presenters or attendees as this goes against his values of respecting others.

KEEPING IT REAL

Because your brand is simply a reflection of who you already are, you shouldn't feel like you're showing people a 'branded' version of yourself.

If you ever feel like you're playing a character or standing in someone else's shoes, using a voice and tone you aren't comfortable with, wearing a costume or conveying someone else's messages, you may want to go back to the identification stage and re-assess.



As an Aboriginal Australian woman, Emma really wants to be a role model for other women who may have experienced discrimination and self-doubt in their lives.

She is an ambassador for 2 charities (which is great as she gets to constantly improve her speaking skills AND carry positive messages at the same time).

It's important for her to only represent organisations who also share her beliefs about empowering women, and it has helped her stay clear of some companies who don't promote women within their business or who represent women in a negative way in their advertising campaigns.

And now we move onto the third and final building block:

BUILDING BLOCK #3 - LEVERAGE YOUR BRAND

So now you know your brand, and other people do too because you've been communicating it.

What's next?

It's time to leverage your brand!

Leverage means making use of it in ways that benefit you!

**There are so many ways you can
leverage your brand!**

On the next few pages are some of the ways you can leverage your brand.

SPONSORSHIP

Brands love sponsoring athletes that know their own athlete brand. Why? It gives them a clear indication of how that athlete aligns with their own brand.

Athletes who know their brand are more confident and are (usually) excellent to work with because they've really taken the time to understand what they value, what they need and what they want their journey to look like.



Violet is working really hard to gain experience in writing and social media as she hopes to get sponsored in the next few years.

She knows that by building her network online and also creating really high quality content that sponsors will be more interested in her.

CARRY A MESSAGE

Got something important to say?

Want to change the world?

Well, you can!

By building a brand you're building a platform which gives you the ability to carry your own messages (the ones we looked at during the identification stage).

You can carry the messages of brands, sponsors, other athletes, or movements that align with your passions and what you care about.



Emma wants to see more kids getting active in sport and while she isn't in a position to deliver any sports activities for kids she believes that by talking about this, sharing information about interesting events that are happening and encouraging her friends and family to get involved that she is already having a positive impact.

EMPLOYMENT

Whether you're going into a job interview, trying to build a business out of some of your work as an athlete or building a profile to gain employment, knowing your brand is going to be really useful.

It lets your employer know who you are, what's important to you and how you fit within the company. Importantly, athletes who know their brand are unlikely to have unfavourable posts on their social media that might jeopardize their employment because they know what does and doesn't reflect who they are and how they want to be remembered.

Did you know that through leveraging your brand you can gain employment or start a business unrelated to your career as an athlete.



Jason is leveraging his brand by using it to help build his profile so he can eventually start a business in South Korea teaching languages to students and young adults who want to travel the world.

GROW YOUR PROFILE

Knowing your brand can help you build your profile (on and offline), which is something many athletes are interested in.

How? Your brand tells the world who they are, and the better you are at doing that, the more people will be intrigued by your brand and they'll be more eager to follow your journey.

It can also help you gain media attention, speaking opportunities, and as much as we don't encourage athletes to trying and chase online fame, it can help you build your follower count.



Kyle knows that the more people who know him and like him means that more people will hear (and hopefully listen) to his messages about human rights.

He makes friends and connections wherever he goes, whether it's at triathlons or business events and while he may not always talk about human rights straight away, at some point these people will see a post on his social media or see him speaking at an event.

He doesn't like to push an agenda on people and is aware that it could actually have a negative effect!

SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS

Anyone who's ever applied for a scholarship or a grant knows it's a lengthy and sometimes painful process of application forms and interviews.

Being able to clearly and confidently communicate your brand during this time will allow you to very quickly assess if a scholarship is right for you.

It will also allow the people approving your application to better assess if you're the right pick.



Violet is working super hard in her sport and wants to set herself up for opportunities such as scholarships and funding from her national sports organisation.

While her results as an athlete are important, she knows that her attitude, personality and behaviours are assessed too! By communicating her brand she knows this will help when college recruiters or team managers are considering her for selection.

PAID SPEAKING OPPORTUNITIES

Now that you've identified your brand you should have a message. How can you communicate that message? Speaking opportunities! Your profile has grown because you've started building your brand? Leverage it! Find paid speaking opportunities!

Why do athletes who know their brand make great public speakers?

- They're confident
- They can carry messages
- They are brilliant storytellers
- Their presentation style is more natural and less of a performance because they have a clear idea of how they want to be seen



Jason loves combining his passion for travel with his language and storytelling skills and actively seeks out paid speaking opportunities around the world.

He is lucky that his sport of fencing takes him overseas quite regularly and he can actually meet face to face with event organisers and potential clients in between training and competition while in other countries.

Next Steps

WHAT DO I DO NOW?

We think you are the best judge of this!

It's your choice...pick this up and run with it, or put it down and maybe miss out on the benefits of building your awesome brand.

And...of course it's going to be awesome because it's all about you and your unique, awesome self!

We know that every athlete has a story...and when you stop comparing yourself to others and start seeing your own uniqueness and value to the world, that amazing things are coming your way!

If you're an individual athlete (who isn't part of one of our sports organisations programmes) then head on over to our online shop and check out our online education platform—Elevate as well as our eBooks and other awesome resources. Go to www.thebrandbuilders.com.au/elevate to find out more.

If you're part of a sports organisation programme, then your next step is going to be a workshop with us (it might be online or in person!).

If you decide to keep learning and building your athlete brand with us you're going to be spoiled for choice by our range of resources and the support that you'll get in our Athlete Brand Builder group on Facebook!

We are so excited to see what you create and to share your Athlete Brand journey!

Xx

Vickie and Charlotte

This book is one of our amazing resources in Elevate, our online learning environment for athlete pathway education: www.thebrandbuilders.com.au/elevate



To find out more about our programmes, resources and how we support the athlete brand journey of individual athletes and organisations, please contact: hello@thebrandbuilders.com.au

PRINTING AND PUBLISHING DETAILS

This book is part of The Brand Builders educational resources and is the companion book to the Athlete Brand Builder programme for athletes and sports organisations.

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