What is your message to the world?

Personal Branding as a communication strategy for young professionals

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Executive summary

Personal branding is a huge trend in the United States. Young professionals use personal branding to obtain a stronger position on the labour market. In the Netherlands this trend is just in the beginning phases. Most people are unaware of the meaning, importance, influence and advantages. The central question of this research is: *How can young professionals best use personal branding as a communication strategy to enter the labour and entrepreneur market?*

The first chapter explains the essence of personal branding and several relevant elements of this trend. A trend pyramid illustrates the development of personal branding in the United States. The thesis focusses on a specific target audience namely young professionals in other words generation Y. This generation will enter the labour market for the first time, a strong personal brand could be beneficial.

Personal branding comes from branding and can be considered as a communication strategy. The second chapter illustrates a number of similarities between branding and personal branding. Methods which are used when branding products could also be used for personal branding such as the SOSTAC and SMART method and a SWOT-analysis. A good start when creating a personal brand is doing a brand assessment. Here the match between someone's identity and image will be found.

The third chapter gives a description of personal branding in the Netherlands. There are some differences in the approach on the labour market between the Netherlands and the United States. The reason can be found in the cross-cultural communication differences.

The questionnaires reveal interesting facts in the fourth chapter. The main conclusions are that young professionals are unaware of the trend personal branding however, 25% believes that personal branding could work in their advantage. The results also indicate that the target audience is familiar with certain communication tools but they do not know how to use these tools in an effective way to make their personal brand visible.

The entire research concludes that personal branding is an effective communication strategy for young professionals when entering the labour market. Therefore, a personal branding guide for Dutch young professionals, which gives a step-by-step plan to establish a personal brand, is created.

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''Regardless of age, regardless of position, regardless of the business we happen to be in, all of us need to understand the importance of branding. We are CEOs of our own companies: Me inc. To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You!''

Tom Peters

Preface

Dear reader,

in front of you lies my final paper about personal branding. With this thesis I would like to make young professionals aware of the concept of personal branding. In the end I hope they will be enthusiastic about the subject and that they will realise the importance of creating a personal brand. The co-operation of certain people made this report more interesting and complete.

First of all, I would like to thank Tom Scholte, a personal branding expert in the Netherlands. He provided me with very useful and interesting information. In addition, I could share ideas and thoughts about the subject and he was willing to give feedback on my text. Tom Scholte had a very valuable contribution to my research by introducing me in the world of personal branding.

Secondly, I would like to thank Rob Evers from the Personal Branding Academy and Marieke Hensel founder of the Branding Personality Company, who were willing to share their opinions with me.

Additionally, my special thanks goes to all young professionals and potential employers who filled in my questionnaires. The results were vital for drawing some interesting conclusions, recommendations and for answering the central question.

I would also like to thank my family who support me especially my brother-in-law Gerhard den Hollander who gave me useful advise and with whom I could also share my ideas.

Finally, I would like to thank Ms. Hernández for guiding me during the whole process. I liked working with all those people who are interested in the emerging trend personal branding.

I hope you will enjoy reading this report and I am curious about your message to this world!

Maaike Baartman

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Introduction

This final paper is about the emerging trend personal branding, as a communication strategy for young professionals. In this context young professionals are people who are (almost) entering the labour market for the first time. In the United States personal branding is already a huge trend. However, in the Netherlands people are less familiar with the concept. Therefore, the main objective of this thesis is to inform young professionals, how they can present themselves and their personal brand in an effective way, especially on the labour and entrepreneur market.

The central question of this paper is: *How can young professionals best use personal branding as a communication strategy to enter the labour and entrepreneur market?* Some relevant sub questions are: What is personal branding and why is it important? What is the relation between branding and personal branding? Is personal branding acknowledged in the Netherlands? Which trends on the labour market are in relation to personal branding and the target audience? Are young professionals aware of the emerging trend personal branding? And, to what extent are potential employers using personal branding when hiring young professionals?

The first chapter consists of an explanation of the trend personal branding. In addition, a description of the important target group is given. Personal branding comes from branding, in the second chapter a relation between those two interesting communication strategies is drawn by using some significant communication methods. A description of the situation of personal branding in the Netherlands can be found in the third chapter, as well as examples of the cross-cultural communication differences between the Netherlands and the United States. The fourth chapter consists of the results and analysis of the questionnaires. Finally, the main conclusions and recommendations can be found in the fifth chapter.

Several research methods were used to find an answer to the sub questions. First of all, I made use of qualitative research, to focus on identifying themes and patterns as well as opinions, feelings, motives and behaviour. Another important method was quantitative research which means analysis through diagrams and statistics. Moreover, an interview with personal branding expert Tom Scholte provided me with very useful information. Since personal branding is not that popular in the Netherlands yet it was quite difficult to find information. The interview was therefore very valuable and interesting.

In addition, two surveys were conducted. One among young professionals and the other among potential employers. Finding potential employers who could fill out the questionnaire was difficult. Tom Scholte was willing to write a blog regarding my research. As a result, more respondents filled in the survey. The most important method was desk research. Information is widely available on the internet. Finally, books on the subject as well as marketing and communication books were used. All the results were essential to answer the sub questions and additionally the central question.

''It's this simple: You are a brand.
You are in charge of your brand.
There is no single path to success.
And there is no one right way to
create the brand called You. Except
this: Start today.''
Tom Peters

I   The trend personal branding

In this first chapter the importance of personal branding will be explained, based on the opinion of contemporary experts. In addition, the relevant elements, the main challenges and the classification of this emerging trend will be discussed. At the end of this chapter, a short description of an important target group effected by the trend will be given. It is essential that people and especially students (young professionals) become aware of personal branding. They should become conscious of the fact that they can influence their personal brand and their image. This is relevant because of the social media world these days. Applying for a job means standing out from the crowd, and get noticed. It is necessary for young professionals to distinguish themselves from other applicants. Personal branding is an important tool in this matter.

1.1   Trend description

Literally, personal branding can be expressed as ''the process whereby people and their careers are marked as brands'' (''Personal branding'', 2005, ''definition'', para. 1). Additionally, it is the way people market themselves to the world. It can also be seen as someone's personality. The way people are as individuals. Finally, personal branding can be considered as the way people are perceived and understood by others.

In this matter, two types of brands can be distinguished. Firstly, the external brand, how people project themselves to the world (their image). Secondly the internal brand, what people think of themselves (their identity) (Pavlina, 2008, ''Personal branding'' section 3, para. 1). According to Steve Pavlina, an expert in personal development, personal branding can teach people a great deal. It is a rich place to explore (Pavlina, 2008, ''Personal branding'' section 5, para. 5). Most people are probably unaware of the fact that they are constantly branding themselves. Pavlina gives the following examples: "People are branding themselves, when they write an email, when they have a conversation with a friend or family member. Even the way they dress, the way they talk and what they eat contribute to their brand" (Pavlina, 2008, ''Personal branding'' section 1, para. 3).

For this reason, it can be said that there is still much to learn about this trend. People are in control of their own image. They can choose what to say or to write. Furthermore, it is interesting to know how people see each other. Finding the match between the external and the internal brand is essential. In the end it is important to stay honest, the truth will always come out.

Phil Cooke, a leading expert on media and cultural issues says the following; ''Do not try to make yourself a brand you are not, being different is everything'' (Cooke, 2007, ''Personal branding'' YouTube video).

1.2   Relevant elements of personal branding

''Building a personal brand is always a journey and not just a destination'' says Rajesh Setty, entrepreneur and author (Setty, 2006, ''Personal branding for technology professionals'' p. 16). Branding takes time, people need to make an effort. When building a personal brand it is important to focus on longer time horizons. The problem is that only a few people are willing to invest in themselves and in their personal brand. The reason for this is that they see several obstacles which are preventing them from creating a personal brand. According to Setty these obstacles should be seen as challenges. It is important to become aware of these challenges because they will assist people distinguish themselves (Setty, 2006, ''Personal branding for technology professionals'' p. 9). The twelve challenges can be divided into two groups. There are two cultural and organisational challenges and ten individual ones. A few examples, firstly an organisational challenge: the employer has a strong brand. It is important that people do not hide behind the company they work for. Even if the company is well-known, people have to create their own brand within the organisation. Employers should be pleased to have someone in their team who stands out from the crowd and adds something to the organisation.

An individual challenge is for instance that people do not know where to start when building a personal brand. Schools could start providing their students with lectures and workshops regarding this topic. Moreover, there is a sufficient amount of material available to assist people with the first phases of the process for example books, blogs, podcasts and articles on the Internet. Another challenge is that people feel they first need to have a good resume before starting their personal brand. Nevertheless, people can start working on their personal brand at any time. This thesis focusses on students (young professionals) who are ready to enter the labour market. This is a good moment to think about creating a personal brand. Even in the first years of their study, students could already start with the developing process. The final example is that people are unwilling to pay the price. However, everyone has a chance to stand out. As mentioned before, branding takes time and energy. It is a life work planning process which means that people have to invest in it considerably.

The perfect example when people have to stand out is when they apply for a job. This is when people have to distinguish themselves from other applicants.

In this matter, it is important to have a certain personal visibility campaign. People have to determine their best qualities and make them visible. This is an important tool to differentiate.

According to Setty, there are three other elements which are important when building a personal brand (Setty, 2006, ''Personal branding for technology professionals'' p. 15). First of all, experience: what did someone become through their years of experience? For instance, working or studying abroad, this adds something to someone's personality as well as to someone's image. Another important factor is thought leadership. Creative and innovative people could bring original ideas and knowledge to their job or company. Finally, a required element of personal branding is passion. People need to love their job and what they are doing. The perfect job gives energy, a chance to shine and evidently people will project a stronger image.

There are also several risks when creating a personal brand. It is difficult to measure someone's value and people can have negative associations with someone's personal brand. However, these threats can be seen as opportunities. People can emphasise on their strengths to overcome their weaknesses.

1.3   Classification of the trend

The classification of the trend shows the development of personal branding in the United States throughout the years. For this the trend pyramid is used (Hernández, 2008, ''Cross-cultural trends'' lectures, week 1).

Micro trend	→	0 – 1 year	Product
Midi trend	→	1 – 5 years	Market
Maxi trend	→	5 – 10 years	Consumer
Mega trend	→	10 – 30 years	Social

Figure 1.1 trend pyramid
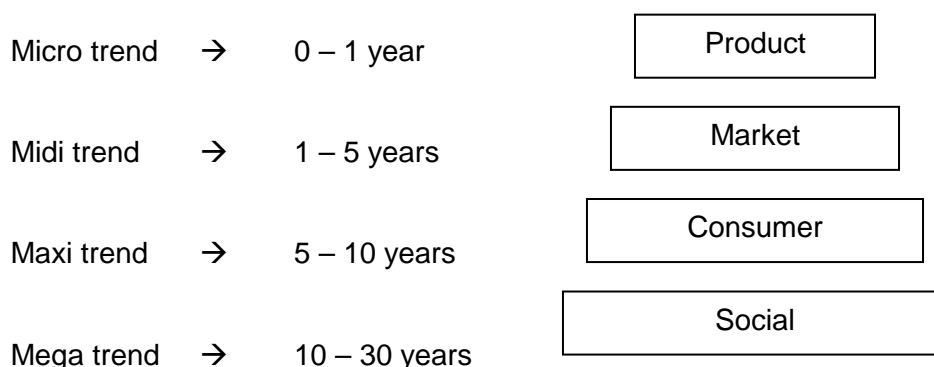
In the first place, personal branding focusses on people, in other words consumers, who market themselves to the world. For that reason, it could be said that personal branding is a maxi trend. However, this emerging trend is still developing. It does not only effect consumers but the whole society. Therefore, personal branding can be classified as a mega trend in the United States.

As mentioned before, branding takes time. It is not possible to create a personal brand in a few months. It is a life work planning process which takes years. In this society, personal branding is an important phenomenon. It affects everyone, though it remains an individual choice what to do with it.

On the next page figure 1.2 shows a timetable, which illustrates important developments within the (first) ten years of personal branding. In the first years books were written for example, 'The personal branding phenomenon' and 'The brand called you', by Peter Montoya (Schawbel, 2007, ''The origins of Personal Branding: 10th Anniversary Timeline'' para. 1). This product is popular among the American population. Therefore, books relating to personal branding can be seen as a micro trend. For this level, a period of one year is given. However, there are still books written about the subject and this will continue because there are always different perspectives and new items and situations to write about it.

Since 1997, the beginning of the acknowledgement of personal branding, the market has changed. Personal branding has been influenced by new trends. In 2006, the first personal branding blog was published by Dan Schawbel, who is a leading expert on personal branding for the generation Y audience (Schawbel, 2007, ''The origins of Personal Branding: 10th Anniversary Timeline'' para. 1). Now this, and also using the Internet in general, can be seen as essential elements when people are creating a personal brand. Market trends are important for personal branding.

The first personal branding award was given out in May 2007. Consumers became aware of the importance of personal branding. These days, people have desires and needs to know even more about this trend and to gain knowledge about how to start creating an own brand. People are buying books written by experts. They are reading blogs, magazines and Internet articles, they listen to podcasts and videos on YouTube. Personal branding is a huge trend in the United States. The third chapter will discuss the trend in the Netherlands to observe how much Dutch people and especially young Dutch professionals know about it.

1.3.1   12 years of personal branding

The awareness of personal branding started with the article 'The Brand Called You' by Tom Peters in 1997. In this article Peters explains how people can become their own brand and the importance of developing an own brand (Peters, 1997, ''The Brand Called You'' para. 1). In his blog, 'The origins of Personal Branding: 10th Anniversary Timeline', Schawbel illustrates the important dates within the first ten years (Schawbel, 2007, ''The origins of Personal Branding: 10th Anniversary Timeline'' para. 1).

Figure 1.2 Important dates of personal branding made by Dan Schawbel

In the first ten years, personal branding has already gone through different stages. In the next two paragraphs, experts of the trend draw several predictions for the future

1.3.2   Further development of the trend in the United States

According to Schawbel, certain predictions about the trend personal branding can be made (Schawbel, 2008, ''The current state of personal branding worldwide'' para. 1). First of all, there will be more Internet branding, also known as ebranding, due to the rise of technology. More and more people have their own website. Weblinks will be published on digital resumes. With this new technique it is easier for young professionals to provide detailed information of themselves to potential employers.

Another aspect will be the use of social networks. People from a particular organisation will share information or updates with their colleagues through for instance Facebook. This will also benefit the individual personal brands of the employees who are applying this new way of communicating. As already mentioned, the online world is an important factor for personal branding. Recruiters will make use of social networks to find the right candidates. The screening and interview process will be driven by social networks says Schawbel (Schawbel, 2008, ''2008 personal branding predictions'' YouTube video).

Another point is that people will make videos about themselves, to illustrate their image and as a result their personal brand. This can also be seen as a new and modern way for creating a resume. Finally, students could become aware of the trend personal branding through lectures and workshops at school. In the future, more universities will invest in teaching their pupils about this interesting trend.

1.4   Welcome to the world of generation Y

Personal branding is important for everyone however, this thesis focusses on a specific generation, namely generation Y. This generation is also known as the generation of the millennium, the net generation, the igeneration, the millennials, the second baby boomers, the Einstein generation, the Google generation, the cynical generation, generation why and generation me.

Generation Y's, are people born between 1980 and 1995. According to other sources generation Y's are people born between 1978 and 1994 and again others say they are born between 1977 and 2002. For this thesis the first two groups are important. People from this part of the generation (young professionals) are almost graduating and ready to enter the labour market for the first time. Therefore, it is essential for this generation to gain knowledge of personal branding, to know how they can position themselves on the labour market and to achieve their goals.

According to several employers, generation Y is known as demanding, impatient and bad at communicating (Casben, 2007, ''Generation Y disappoints employers'' para. 1). Obviously, these are not the right qualities to approach an employer or the labour market. On the other hand, generation Y workers are energetic, they are enthusiastic, motivated, passionate, ambitious because of the high-speed, digital world these days and creative. These characteristics are vital. Motivated people can reach higher achievements. A reason for the demanding approach of generation Y can maybe be found in technical developments. Due to technical developments it could be possible that generation Y workers expect high tech gadgets to perform their work (Balderrama, 2007, ''Generation Y: Too demanding at work?'' para. 7). They see it as a challenge to keep up with technological changes according to some generation Y students from the university of Manchester (2007, ''Ask generation Y'' YouTube video). This generation has more to choose due to new media in addition, there are more possibilities. Generation Y is a very diverse generation. They accept thoughts from other cultures due to global thinking and better understanding. This will lead to new and fresh ideas created by themselves.

Generation Y's are confident, goal-oriented and success driven. These characteristics could make them money-hungry. It is important for them to realise that everyone starts at the beginning and that they have to work hard to achieve their goals and to reach a higher position. However, through personal branding this process could go faster.

According to a research done by NAS Recruitment Communications, there are some elements on the workplace which are important for generation Y (NAS, 2006, ''generation Y: the Millennials. Ready or not, here they come'' page 11). First of all a good relationship with boss and colleagues. The way people present themselves and the way they act and work are essential in this matter. Other important aspects according to generation Y are: income, an opportunity for growth, an opportunity to show off skills and receiving recognition of a job well done, challenging daily work, flexible schedules for social and personal time and finally a casual dress environment. The fourth chapter will reveal if young professionals indeed characterise themselves as illustrated above. Also potential employers will give their opinion about this generation.

This chapter illustrated the essence and main features of personal branding. In the United States, this trend is developing rapidly. Young professionals are becoming aware of the usage and benefits of personal branding. They discover how to approach the labour market and how they can achieve their goals in an effective way. It is a challenge for the Netherlands to achieve the same level of understanding.

II   Personal branding as a communication strategy

This chapter explains the meaning of branding by using some significant communication methods. In addition, the relation between branding and personal branding will be discussed. Communication is important when creating a personal brand. The way people communicate to the world will effect their brand. Seth Godin, an author and marketing expert says the following as cited by Gill Corkindale, an executive coach and writer, "Many of us are taught to do our best and then let the world decide how to judge us. I think it is better to do your best and decide how you want to be judged. And act that way." (Corkindale, 2008, ''The Return of the Personal Brand'' para. 5).

2.1   Branding

According to Huub van Zwieten, an author (2005), ''branding can be defined as a way to create distinctive capacity and to communicate this in a recognisable and consistent way'' (p. 39). Additionally, Entrepreneur.com gives the following definition, ''branding is the marketing practice of creating a name, symbol or design that identifies and differentiates a product from other products'' (Branding definition). The first chapter described personal branding as the process whereby people and their careers are marked as brands. Here, being consistent and recognisable is essential. Moreover, within personal branding people also need to distinguish themselves from the competition. This chapter will illustrate more similarities between branding and personal branding.

Branding is part of the marketing strategy. In addition, it is part of products, services and organisations. In this matter a brand is fundamental. A brand can be defined as ''a collection of perceptions in the mind of the consumer'' (Marketing definitions). In other words, a personal brand is what the consumer (friends, relatives, (potential) colleagues) links with what that specific brand offers and where it stands for. At the same time, branding creates an image. People are interested in strong brands because evidently they see the value and power of a strong brand. However, when it comes to branding themselves they suddenly have a sceptical opinion (Van Zwieten, 2005, p. 38). A strong brand influences the behaviour of consumers (p. 28). A strong and authentic personal brand could influence recruiters and potential employers.

According to Lane Baldwin, it does not matter which business people are in. However, branding can, and should be, an integral part of the success of young professionals (Baldwin, 2003, ''The Importance of Branding'' para. 9).

2.1.1   Brand terms

There a several terms in relation to branding and brands which are significant in the branding process. A few definitions according to the 'Branding and Concepting reader 2006' (Hanssen, 2006, ''Reader: branding and concepting'' p. 17). A brand name is any word or illustration that clearly distinguishes one sellers goods from another. A trade name is the legal name of an organisation, which may or not relate directly to the branding of its products. A trade mark is a brand name, symbol or logo, which is registered and protected for the owners sole use. And finally a brand mark, which is specifically the element of the visual brand identity that does not consist of words but of designs and symbols.

These terms are usually related to products however, looking at personal branding is it realistic to think that people should also have their own logo. Using a special and original typography of their name. Looking at the world of celebrities certain brand names can be found for instance, Elton John a famous artist in England. However, Elton John is just a brand name, his real name is Reginald Dwight. Numerous artists have a brand name such as Pink whose real name is Alecia Moore. Enrique Morales better known as Ricky Martin and Tina Turner whose real name is Anna Bullock. They all use 'brand names' to become more popular and better known. Most people only know these artists by their brand name, thus it is an effective strategy.

2.1.2   Going back in time

An interesting branding strategy website (Brand Strategy Insider) gives insight into the history of branding (Daye, 2006, ''History of branding'' para. 1). According to Derrick Daye, branding became more important for companies, universities, non-profit and profit organisations but also for individuals in the late 1990s and the early 2000s (Daye, 2006, ''History of branding'' para. 1). In 1950 modern branding truly began due to modern media such as television. (Long, ''Brief history of branding'' sheet 8). However, going back 5000 years will show the first elements of this trend. It can be said that one of the first signs of branding was in 1300 BC in China, Greece and India. Here potter marks were used on pottery and porcelain. In the early 1800s the branding process began for companies who were selling medicines and tobacco and in the mid-to-late 1800s other consumer product companies started branding their products. Currently, brands are used by people to establish and reflect their status.

2.2   Branding and personal branding as communication strategies

A communication strategy is the for the organisation essential decision which messages should be transmitted to which target group and in which way to accomplish the marketing and promotional objectives (Verhage, 2004, p. 913). In addition, ''defining a communication strategy shows attention to planning, an understanding of the situation, an ability to carry out the work, and clear identification of the goal'' (''Developing a communication strategy'' para. 1). When branding products, several communication strategies could be used. Personal branding is a part of branding but it can also be seen as a strategy on its own. A number of components are relevant for a communication strategy such as positioning, competition, distinctive capacity, values, a certain goal, communication and determining a target audience. A few of the above mentioned examples will be illustrated.

2.2.1   Brand positioning

Brand positioning is important to determine where the brand or product stands in the market. It gives insight into where marketers would like to go with a certain brand. For this the **SOS**TAC method can be used (Smith and Taylor, 2004, p. 315). SOSTAC is a method which assists marketers to create, write and develop their marketing plan. Smith and Taylor explain that SOSTAC can be used for any kind of plan from corporate communication or marketing communication to a personal plan (p. 32). Especially, the first three elements of the method are relevant for a personal branding plan. Almost the same questions need to be asked for a marketing plan as well as for a personal plan as demonstrated in table 2.1 on the next page. More detailed information concerning the first two steps of the SOSTAC method will be given.

In the first step of the model (situation) an internal and external analysis through desk en field research will be drawn. Desk research is secondary information gathered through the Internet, books, magazines as well as news papers. Field research (primary information) requires other research techniques for example a survey, an interview or a focus group. When marketers want to introduce a new product on the market they need to know everything about the market and the product itself. The internal analysis focusses primarily on the strengths of the products and the distinguishing factors. Secondly, it concentrates on the competition. The external analysis looks at the environment in which the product will be launched for instance which trends could influence customer behaviour.

SOSTAC	Marketing plan	Personal plan
Situation	Where are we now?	Where am I in my career?
Objectives	Where do we want to go?	Where do I want to go in my career?
Strategy	How will we get there?	How will I get there? (which qualities/characteristics could be used?)
Tactics	Details of the strategy	Details of the strategy
Action	Putting the plan to work	Putting the plan to work
Control	Measurement, monitoring, reviewing and modifying	Measurement, monitoring, reviewing and modifying

Table 2.1 SOSTAC

For personal branding it is advisable to use a brand assessment (see chapter three) in this first phase. Here the match between someone's identity and image will be found. The internal analysis will be done by the participant, he or she will look at the identity. Secondly, friends, family members, colleagues, managers and project members will look at the participants image. For branding this would be the external analysis. The brand assessment can therefore also be seen as the positioning of someone. More details concerning the assessment can be found in the next chapter.

The next step in the SOSTAC method is defining the objectives. Usually the objectives consist of knowledge, attitude and behaviour. This will make the control phase easier because the results will be measurable. In addition, the SMART model can be used, because the objectives need to be SMART. Specific (concrete, detailed, well defined), Measurable (numbers, quantity, comparison), Actionable (achievable, practicable), Realistic (considering resources) and Time specific (a defined time line). The book ´Het merk ik´ (The brand me) by Huub van Zwieten and Mark van de Grift, also explains that someone's personal objectives need to be SMART (p.135). They use the following questions, **S**: What does someone want to achieve? **M**: How does someone know that he accomplished his goal? Instead of action the characteristic ambition is used. **A**: Are the personal objectives challenging? **R**: Is it possible to achieve the goals? **T**: When does someone want to achieve the determined objectives?

A few examples will be given to illustrate this model. The objectives should be specific and measurable. When introducing a new product a promotion campaign is important. Marketers would like to create awareness among the target audience of this new product (knowledge). Also within personal branding, participant X wishes to create awareness of his brand. After defining percentages of the amount of people who should become aware of the product/brand, one looks at the effectiveness of the campaign. Are more people aware of the product or the brand?

In order to achieve the communication objectives for the product campaign certain tools can be used such as, brochures, billboards, TV commercials, advertisement, Internet and workshops (action part). Participant X can also use communication tools to make his personal campaign successful by for instance creating a website and personalised business cards, becoming a member of social network sites such as LinkedIn, writing blogs and making podcasts.

Objectives should be realistic. It is important to look at the resources. For a product campaign it is essential to look at the budget and the equipment to realise the goals. Participant X could look at his skills. Does he have the skills to achieve the objectives?

2.2.2   Personal SWOT-analysis

For the branding process it is necessary to make a SWOT-analysis after the internal and external analysis. This model is also a part of marketing communication and is used by all kinds of companies to observe where they stand in relation to their competitors. The SWOT-analysis stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. When creating a personal brand it is also interesting to make a SWOT-analysis according to Schawbel (Schawbel, 2008, '' Your Personal Marketing Plan - Part 2 of 5'' para. 4). The following elements are important in the personal SWOT-analysis.

Strengths	Weaknesses
SKILLS Personal strengths are someone's skills for example networking skills, communication skills, manager skills and stickiness of the personal brand to attract others	**IMPROVEMENT** Everyone has skills which need improvement. Analysing weaknesses is a part of the development plan. Overcoming them is important for personal growth
Opportunities	Threats
PROGRESS IN CAREER The labour market offers a great deal of chances. It is important to reach out to them to develop (for instance, meeting new people, gather new skills and experiences)	**COMPETITION** There are always threats in the labour market, competition, an environmental factor that may hinder the chance to succeed. Choosing the right opportunities helps to overcome some threats

Table 2.2 Personal SWOT-analysis

2.2.3   Brand life cycle

A new product (brand) usually goes through four stages as illustrated in graph 2.1. According to Schawbel, a personal brand goes through the same phases. The cycle demonstrates where someone is at different points in his or her career and in life (Schawbel, 2008, ''Introducing the Personal Marketing Plan - Part 1 of 5'' para. 5). The four stages will be explained in more detail below supported by the information of 'Grondslagen van de Marketing', a Dutch marketing book.

Introduction phase

For a product the introduction phase is to build product awareness and to develop a market for the product. For personal branding, this is the phase where people develop their personal brand (Schawbel, 2008, ''Introducing the Personal Marketing Plan - Part 1 of 5'' para. 5). It is important for young professionals to get their name out, to create awareness and trust among others. The first phase is very important, a good marketing plan and enough publicity are essential.

Growth phase

In the second stage a business is looking for ways to build brand preference and to increase market share (Gorchels, 2007, ''The Product Life Cycle'' para. 3). More people will buy a certain product in this phase which results in an increase in market share. In the growth phase, a personal brand is starting to receive recognition. Schawbel explains that it is extremely important to gain trust due to the fact that people will face more competition in this stage (Schawbel, 2008, ''Introducing the Personal Marketing Plan - Part 1 of 5'' para. 5).

Maturity phase

In the third phase the product is well-known. Market share is stabilising therefore, is it important for people to keep working on the goals they defined. For products it is crucial to create trust among the consumers. The price of a product will decrease due to more competition and promotion activities will be renewed. Additionally, products need constant improvement and refreshing elements.
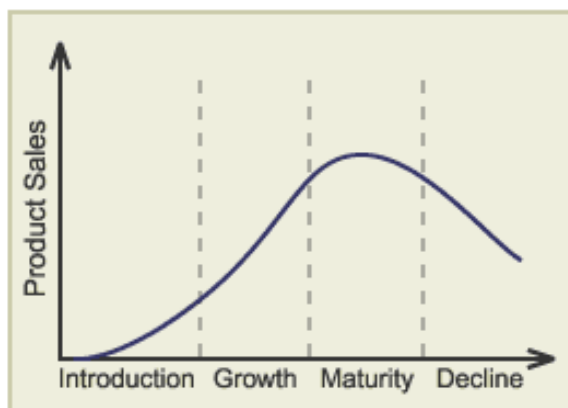
Graph 2.1 Product life cycle by Quick MBA

For personal branding it is essential to be honest and authentic. Therefore, the same ideas for products need to be applied for people. Websites, social networks and blogs need to be updated.

Decline phase

Also in the last phase it is essential to keep working on the determined goals. Marketers are trying to get as much profit as possible out of their product. In the end, products are usually recalled. For personal branding this phase is less intense because it is more a life work planning project. Here the third and last phase are overlapping.

2.2.4   Brand template

In their book, Van Zwieten and Van de Grift give insight into talent branding. This phenomenon gives people their own strong brand personality based on the principals of brands (Van Zwieten and Van de Grift, 2005, p. 59). To illustrate this the following brand template is used (figure 2.1). Van Zwieten (2005) explains, that brand identity can be divided in a set of values: functional values, emotional values and expressive values (p. 60). This model can therefore be used for brands as well as for personal brands because both consist of a certain identity.
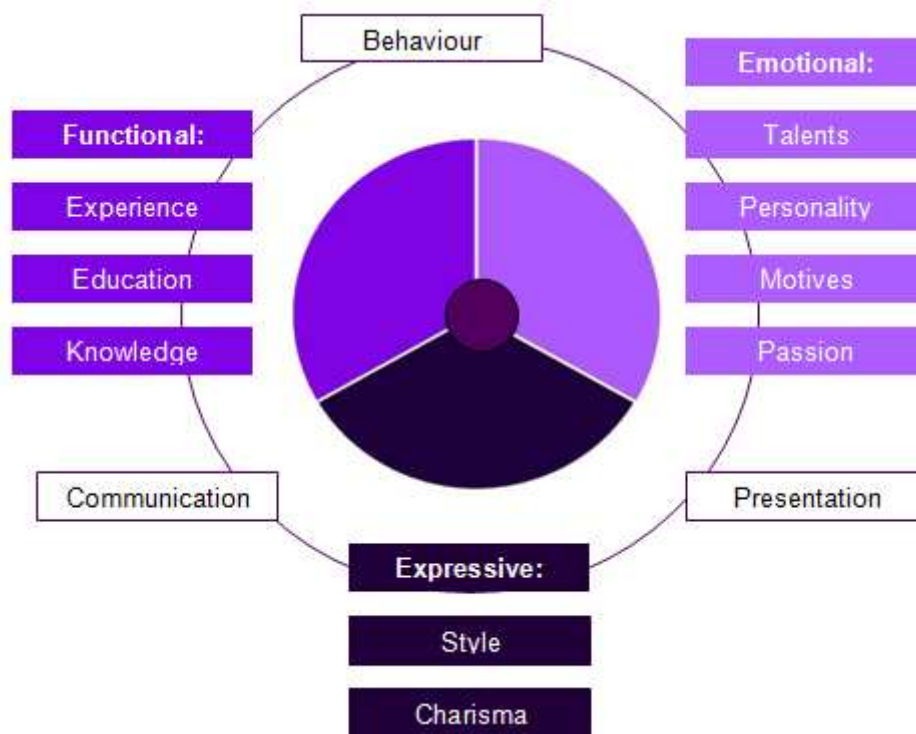
Figure 2.1 Brand template by Van Zwieten and Van de Grift

A short explanation of the template will be given based on the information of Van Zwieten and Van de Grift. The first step in creating a brand template is defining the functional values. These are a combination of someone's experience, education and knowledge. It is not common for people to distinguish themselves only by using these values for that reason people also need their emotional values. These characteristics are very personal and therefore not measurable (Van Zwieten, 2005, p. 62). Obviously, emotions reveal certain feelings around the brand. For people this can be energetic, confident, creative, driven, sensible, sweet, friendly, happy, convincing and a good sense of humour (personality). This part can be seen as the way people perceive each other as well as the way people are as individuals. Emotional values make people more valuable.

In the third part of the brand template the expressive values are determined. These values communicate something about the user. It is the statement people make with their brand (Van Zwieten, 2005, p. 64). Style can be seen as an external factor, the way people dress, walk, talk, think or the way people present themselves to the world. These values reinforce the functional and emotional ones. In the middle of the figure the brand essence can be found. Van Zwieten (2005), describes this as a single thought that captures the soul of the brand (p. 51).

Apple: Think different   *Oprah: Care for people*   *Coca Cola: The real thing*

Obviously, the functional part should be qualitatively good. Nevertheless, people need all three sets of values to become a recognisable brand. It is a combination of values which makes a strong authentic brand.

2.2.5   *Criteria for brand values*

Values add something to the brand identity. These values offer something extra to differentiate one brand from competitors. When defining the brand values certain criteria are important according to Van Zwieten and Van de Grift (Van Zwieten and Van de Grift, 2005, p. 46). The following criteria will be discussed: relevance, differentiation, authenticity, reliability, consistency and mission and vision.

Relevance: refers to the emotional values of the brand. The Royal Dutch airlines say they are reliable which fits the brand. It would be illogical if they would say that they are fashionable. However, for Diesel this is a logic emotional value whereas reliable does not fit. To put it another way, a value should logically fit the brand.

Differentiation: these days there are so many brands that differentiation is essential. As mentioned in the first chapter, young professionals have to differentiate themselves to stand out from the crowd and to get noticed when applying for a job. Therefore, differentiation is a very important criterion. It makes brands and people unique.

Authenticity, reliability and consistency: it is important that the emotional values are authentic as said by Van Zwieten (Van Zwieten, 2005, p. 47). Authenticity is the key to reliability. Brands should be aware of the message they are communicating which is in relation to the fifth criterion consistency. Coca Cola has been a famous brand since ages due to the consistency, reliability and authenticity. They are genuinely 'the real thing'. The shape of the bottle never changed which makes the brand recognisable. In the first appendix some examples of famous personal brands will be given. Here, those three criteria also play a vital role.

Mission and vision: these elements are not only related to brands but also to personal brands explains Schawbel. Like brands, people could make their mission and vision statements. This is a part of the situation analysis described above. In the mission statement people determine what they want to do, in other words their call to action (Schawbel, 2008, ''Introducing the Personal Marketing Plan - Part 1 of 5'' para. 3). According to Schawbel, this statement contains people's value statement and their reason for being. With this statement people can compete on their price, value, quality, trust, years of experience, specialty skills and their network (Schawbel, 2008, ''Introducing the Personal Marketing Plan - Part 1 of 5'' para. 3). Here the other criteria play an important role due to the fact that the mission statement should be authentic, realistic and memorable. In addition, people create a vision statement which clarifies where they want to be in ten years (Schawbel, 2008, ''Introducing the Personal Marketing Plan - Part 1 of 5'' para. 4).

This chapter illustrated a number of comparisons between branding and personal branding. The SOSTAC module, SWOT-analysis, product life cycle, brand template and the criteria for brand values all play a significant role in the branding process. Branding is important, it can increase the qualities of a company therefore, it definitely can make a difference! This chapter also concluded that the name of a particular company should be unique and different. Here there is a similarity with personal branding. Everyone is unique and different, people should make use of this power. The last important fact is that branding can increase a companies profit by between 10 to 20 percent (Fuchs, 2005, ''The Importance of Branding - Can It Really Make a Difference?'' para. 4). Using personal branding should be seen as a benefit for young professionals. They should believe in their brand as well as they should believe in themselves!

III   Personal branding in the Netherlands

This chapter describes the situation of personal branding in the Netherlands based on, among others, a personal interview with Tom Scholte who is a personal branding coach. Scholte is almost the only one who is working full-time with the concept of personal branding in the Netherlands. He is also almost the only one who is using the English term: personal branding. Scholte gives workshops and lectures about the subject and is now building his own company. In this chapter, a few examples of the cross-cultural communication between the United States and the Netherlands will be given. Additionally, the question: how could personal branding be more established in the Netherlands, will be discussed. Finally, some other trends in relation to personal branding and generation Y are described.

3.1   The acknowledgment of personal branding in the Netherlands

Personal branding is not as popular in the Netherlands as in the United States but the trend is getting more acknowledged, ''it is coming and it is going to break through'' (T. Scholte, personal interview, September 18, 2008). According to Scholte, only a few people in the Netherlands are aware of the concept of personal branding. Some people are specialised in talent branding which is in relation to personal branding. Others are occupied with image consulting, they assist people with how they can dress themselves to make a better impression, in other words the expressive part of the brand template (see figure 2.1). These days young professionals (generation Y) are using some communication tools, which could also be used for personal branding, unconsciously as explained by Scholte. He gives the example of social networks. People use the Internet and social networks such as Hyves. With these networks, people show a great deal of themselves. However, are they aware of this? Are they intentionally using social networks to 'promote' who they are? According to Scholte, people should use these sites more intentionally, because the result will be more profitable. Young professionals should think of what they want people to know about them as well as what people can read about them on their sites. In addition, Scholte explains that potential employers make use of such networks to obtain background information and a general impression of the applicant.

A recent investigation done by Heliview Research among 800 employers confirms that 6% of the companies made use of one or two online networks in the last twelve months (2008, ''Sociale online netwerken spelen steeds grotere rol binnen recruitment'' para.1).

Most importantly, more than 10% of the companies declared that they will use social networks in the coming six months to search for employees (2008, ''Sociale online netwerken spelen steeds grotere rol binnen recruitment'' para.1). Personal research will reveal that there is indeed a certain increase in the use of these sites (see chapter four). In the Netherlands, Hyves is a well-known and therefore popular site to use. Employers are less familiar with LinkedIn however, this social network is already used by 20% of the companies.

Obviously, the increase of these developments could also have a negative effect on someone's image. Pictures and blogs can give additional information of an applicant. However, this information can be interpreted in a negative way and it can even reduce the chance on the labour market as researched by Viadeo. They give an example of a potential employer who found out that a candidate was wanted by the police. (2007, ''Profielsites spelen steeds grotere rol bij sollicitatie'' para. 2). Other companies discovered alcohol abuse and other unethical matters, all through searching social network sites.

Therefore, young professionals could publish more information concerning their work, reports, final papers but also information regarding their ambitions, values and passions according to Scholte. With this they could already make a good impression with the potential employers. It is also interesting to become member of a business related social network such as LinkedIn. In the end, it is essential for everyone to keep their social network up to date and provided with relevant information.

Like other contemporary experts Scholte believes it is important to be consistent, to be authentic and to be distinctive. Young professionals could make a resume which fits who they are as well as the company they are applying for. Also on the resume young professionals could write about their ambitions and passions. Evidently, a resume can be seen as an important communication tool for people to promote themselves. Schawbel illustrates in one of his blog posts what a well-personalised resume should look like (Schawbel, 2008, ''Personal Branding Toolkit - Part 3: Resumes'' para. 1). An example of a resume is added in appendix two.

3.1.1   The brand assessment
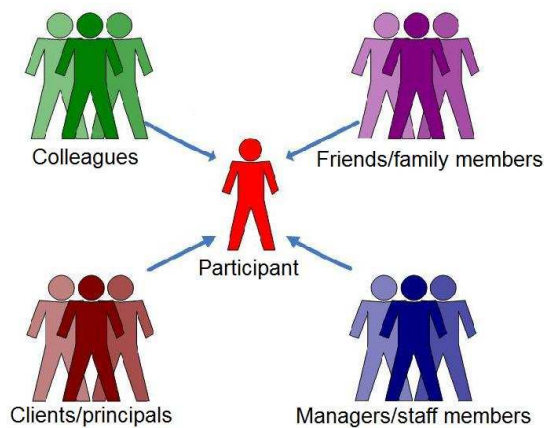
Figure 3.1 Brand assessment

When building a personal brand it is advisable to start with a brand assessment. In this assessment the match between someone's identity and image will be found. A Dutch example of the brand assessment can be found in appendix three. The assessment consists of six parts. The first four questions are related to strong and weak characteristics and skills. Question five and six are projection questions from which can be concluded how someone is observed.

People will first fill in the self assessment which will show their identity. In addition, family members, friends, colleagues of that person will fill in the same assessment. In the end some of the following questions could be answered. What is someone's added value for his or her employer, colleagues, friends and family? Which qualities can be reinforced and how clear is the image people have of that particular person (Scholte, 2008, ''Personal brand assessment'' para. 2)? An analysis will be drawn from which the participant can conclude if the **image** people have correspond to the **identity**. With the results the participant can determine his or her emotional and distinguishing values. This assessment gives people and young professionals a chance to work on their personal development and can be seen as the positioning of someone. When people are aware of their image they can start working on their personal brand.

Within branding one also looks at the identity and image of a product, the figures below illustrate the process. Figure 3.2 is used to show a certain gap between those two features. When there is no gap identity and image are overlapping as illustrated in figure 3.3.
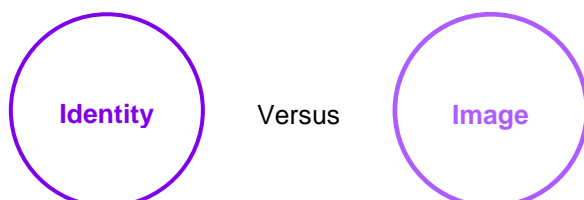
Figure 3.2 Identity and image gap
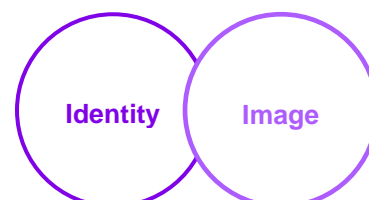
Figure 3.3 Identity and image are overlapping

For personal branding almost the same figure can be made (figure 3.4). The arrow indicates the way people perceive the specific person. Because those perceptions are not completely similar to the identity of the participant a gap is the result. When the participant finds the match between his or her identity and image, those two will automatically overlap as shown in figure 3.3.
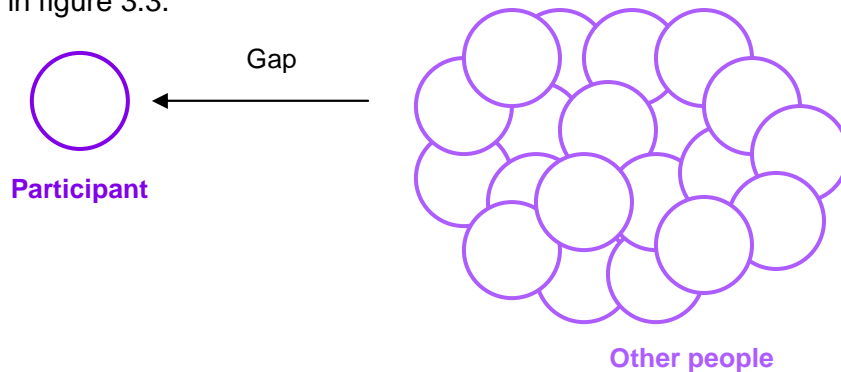
Figure 3.4 Personal gap between identity and image

The following Johari window (figure 3.5) is used to indicate the relation between how people see themselves and how others perceive that specific person. The first quadrant illustrates the 'open space', which stands for items the participant knows about himself as well as what people know about him. Secondly, the 'blind quadrant' represents items about the participant which are familiar with others but not with himself. The assessment makes people conscious of their 'blind spots'. The third element, the 'hidden quadrant', corresponds to items the participant knows about himself however, these characteristics are unfamiliar with others. These characteristics can be seen as hidden qualities which could be more expressed. Finally, the 'unknown quadrant', represents items which are neither known to the participant nor to others.
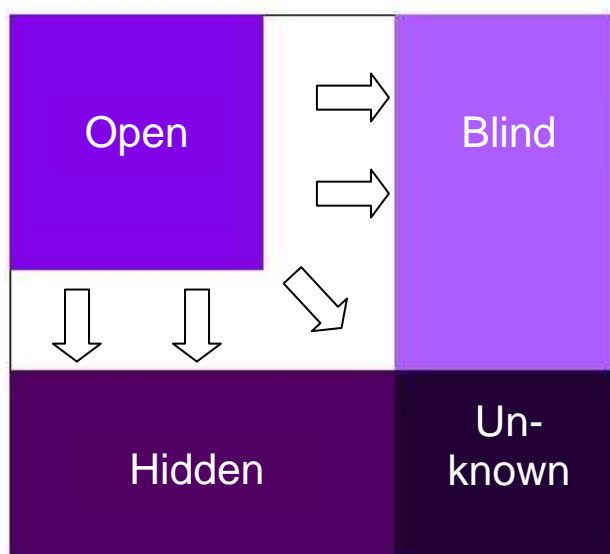
Figure 3.5 Johari window by Tom Scholte

The assessment consists of a number of characteristics as mentioned before. This could make it difficult for people to make a decision. For instance, some people consider participant X as reliable and honest. In the self assessment participant X did not fill in these qualities as most important although he knows he is reliable and quite honest. Therefore, it can be said that most people usually do not find a big gap between their identity and image. They are already aware of their 'blind spots'. However, the realisation of the 'blind spots' as well as the 'hidden qualities' could lead to a better presentation hence to a better personal brand positioning.

Since January 2008, 250 individuals did the assessment, 7000 people were asked to give feedback and the response ratio is between 50 and 60% (Scholte, November 27, 2008). From this it can be concluded that there is a growing awareness of personal branding in the Netherlands.

3.1.2   Organisations which use personal branding

Scholte says that currently mostly governmental organisations and knowledge based organisations are interested in his workshops and lectures. Those organisations invest more in the self-development of their employees rather than in secondary working conditions. The economic life is reserved and unknown with the concept nevertheless, the awareness of personal branding is also increasing in these branches.

3.1.3   Personal branding companies in the Netherlands

 In July 2008, Hubert Rampersad established the Personal Branding Academy in Amsterdam. Here individuals, directions and management teams can work on their personal brand. Rampersad introduced a new term, authentic personal branding. This stands for the creation of a reliable image of someone which is in harmony with their real values, dreams and talents (2008, ''Personal branding academy'' para.4). More information regarding the Academy can be found at http://www.personalbrandingacademy.nl/

 Marieke Hensel is founder of the Branding Personality Company which is located in the Netherlands as well as in the United States. This company focuses on online branding. With this she wants to show people that they can attract other people and businesses by who they are (Hensel, 2007, ''About branding personality'' para. 5). More information regarding the Branding Personality Company can be found at http://www.brandingpersonality.com/

3.2   Cross-cultural communication between the Netherlands and the U.S.

Cross-cultural communication research is an investigation in which one examines if and in which respect cultures differ from each other in communication habits (Cleas and Gerritsen, 2002, p.40). In this part examples of cross-cultural communication between the Netherlands and the United States will be given.

3.2.1   Social networks

First of all, the confusion around the perception of social networks. Social networks are important for personal branding. In the United States, the first that comes to mind when thinking of social networks are those which are web based for instance Hyves, Facebook, My Space and LinkedIn. In the Netherlands, people consider their social relations, friends, classmates or family members as their social network. Therefore, the term social network service or site is used in the Netherlands. ''A social network service or site focusses on building online communities of people who share interests and activities or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others'' (''Social network service'', ''definition'', para.1). This paper will mainly use the term social networks since almost all sources use this word to indicate social network sites as Hyves, Facebook, My Space and LinkedIn.

3.2.2   Masculine versus feminine

Another difference is that in the United States it is more difficult to give an opinion concerning certain subjects. In the Netherlands it is normal for people to talk about their religion, political preference or their sexual orientation at work and they even write about it on their social network site. In the United States this is not done because people will judge each other sooner when giving an opinion. From an intercultural perspective it can be said that Dutch people are opener than Americans.

In the United States one talks about material success, salary and career achievements. There is more competition and people are much more assertive to achieve their goals. In other words, the business culture in the United States is opener than in the Netherlands. American students easily receive a scholarship when they are good football or basketball players. It is more common for Americans to show what they achieved in life, how great their career is and what they are going to do in the future. Dutch people are more modest, they are afraid to brag too much when profiling themselves. The reason for this can be found in one of the five dimensions namely femininity versus masculinity of Geert Hofstede. The Netherlands is a feminine country, people work to live.

For them work is important but other matters are also relevant for instance a social life and free time (Cleas and Gerritsen, 2002, p.66). Additionally, important work-related values are a good relationship with boss and colleagues, cooperation within a team and the accent lies on equality. On the other hand, the United States is a masculine country, here people live to work. They constantly want to improve themselves. Cleas and Gerritsen (2002) explain that Americans want to reach a certain goal principally personal success, a well-paid job, a beautiful house and a nice car (p. 66). Here work-related values are salary, recognition, promotion and competition. It can be said that people are still living the American Dream, an opportunity to become successful and to receive recognition. The difference between femininity and masculinity explains this cross-cultural communication difference between the Netherlands and the United States concerning competition and material success.

3.3   The establishment of personal branding in the Netherlands

It is essential to increase awareness of personal branding among the Dutch population and especially among Dutch young professionals. Since the trend is still in the begin phases in the Netherlands an important tool in this matter are books. Rampersad, recently published his book 'Personal branding, leiderschap vanuit authenticiteit' (2008). In addition, more Dutch books about the subject are written these days.

Micro trend   →   0 – 1 year
        (The Netherlands)

Midi trend   →   1 – 5 years

Maxi trend   →   5 – 10 years

Mega trend   →   10 – 30 years
        (United States)

Chart 3.1 trend pyramid
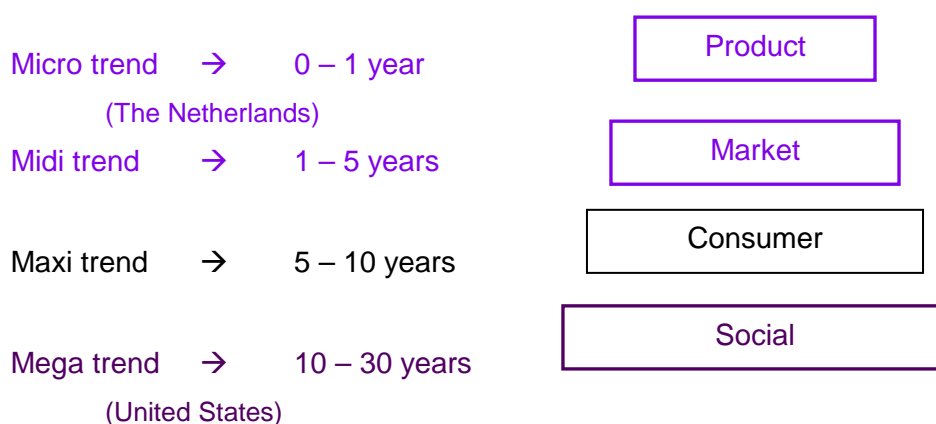
| Product |
| Market |
| Consumer |
| Social |

After the product has gained more awareness it is important to focus on the market and the consumers. Therefore, the Netherlands can be found in the top of the pyramid between the micro and midi trends. All levels of the pyramid can already be found however, some need to be more established. More products need to be produced to create awareness among the Dutch population about this trend. In America schools and universities are planning to invest in tutoring their students about personal branding. In their first years of college, students will work on their personal brand. After each year of experiences they will become conscious of what they want in the future.

The part of the cross-cultural communication differences already showed that there are some differences in culture between the Netherlands and the United States. For this reason, it is essential to look at an approach which fits the Dutch students.

However, according to Rob Evers, manager from the Personal Branding Academy, it is also valuable for Dutch students to start creating their personal brand in the first years of their study, like in the United States. The Academy even has special programs for high school students. It is useful for students to start working on their professional network which could help them find a job after studying. Evers stresses that authenticity is very important (R. Evers, online interview, October 23, 2008). ''Personal branding tells who someone truly is, otherwise it is not working''. Additionally, he explains that students mainly have career and money dreams, these days. Nevertheless, there is an increasing group who is less money-centric and who are focusing more on being authentic and different. Those ambitions could automatically lead to an interesting career and a good salary. Personal branding plays a significant role in this matter but is still in its infancy in the Netherlands.

Another interesting known fact is that first year students of 'The Hague School of European Studies (HEBO)' have the possibility to write blogs about their study experiences. Writing a blog is an important tool in the personal branding process. Students will automatically work on their brand by getting their name out there. Also here the content of the blog is important. Partying and drinking could be considered as student activities but showing pictures or writing about this is not beneficial for someone's personal brand. Therefore, students should be informed about personal branding and how to use it in a positive and effective way.

3.4   Trends in the Dutch labour and entrepreneur market

In the last part of this chapter some trends which are in relation to personal branding and generation Y will be discussed. A trend can be defined as a long or mid-term development which is expected to have broad public support. In addition, a trend can affect organisations, consumer behaviour and developments in the broader environment (Hernández, 2008, ''Cross-cultural trends'' lectures, week 1). An illustration is used to indicate the main trends which influence personal branding and therefore young professionals.
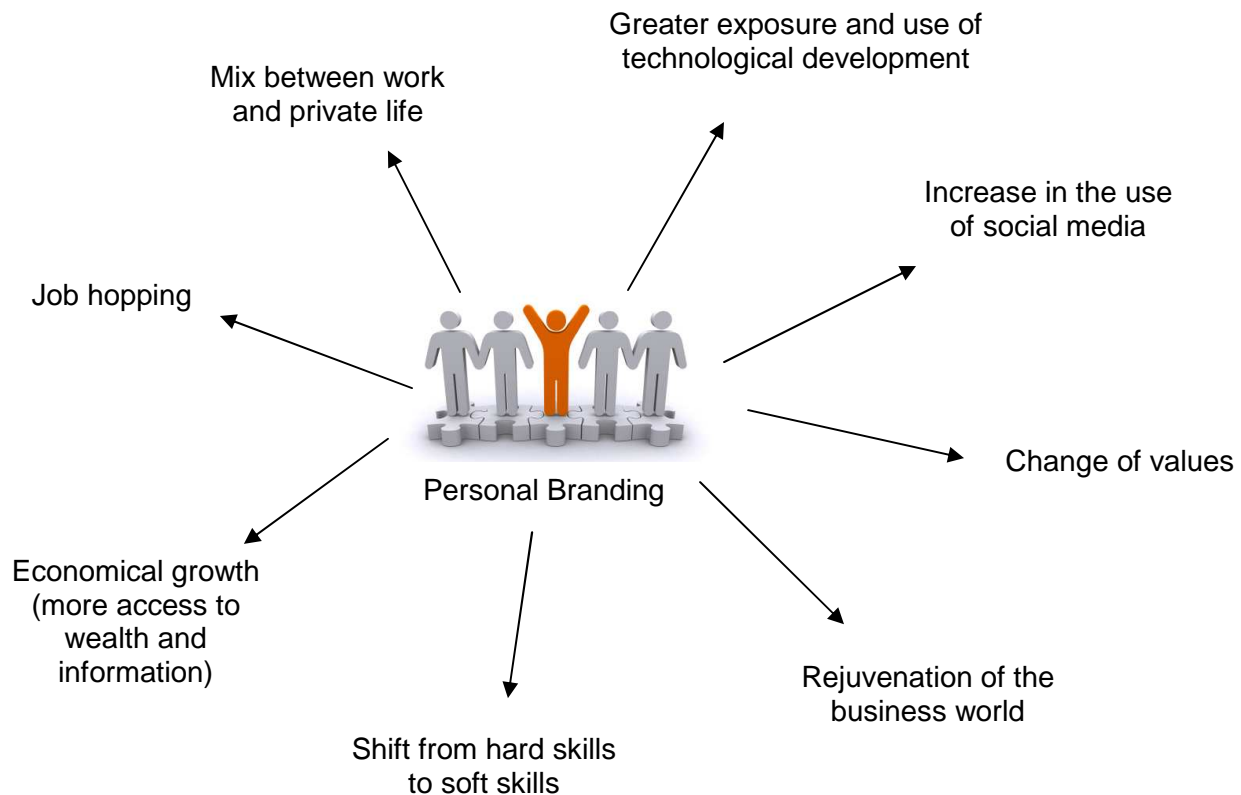
Figure 3.6 Trends in relation to personal branding and young professionals

Economical growth is a trend related to personal branding. These days, people have more money to spend. This means they can buy more luxury goods such as computers, laptops, ipods and mobile phones. Especially for generation Y, these products are important to represent their image. They have a certain value generation Y is attached to. The most important trend which influences personal branding is technological development. As already mentioned, these days people live in an online, digital world. Everything goes faster. Due to economical growth almost everyone has access to the Internet, not only for work but also to maintain social contacts. This technology trend is influencing the whole society. Technological development creates new possibilities. Because there are so many options, creative ideas can be developed more rapidly. This trend is of great importance for personal branding. Schawbel declared, that one of the predictions for personal branding is ebranding (Schawbel, 2008, ''The current state of personal branding worldwide'' para. 1). Online recruitment is becoming popular. Young professionals can use the Internet as a tool to distinguish themselves, using blogs, videos on YouTube, online resumes, podcasts and social networks.

Social media are also becoming popular. Generation Y members are using this technology to socialise as well as job searching.

All companies should offer the possibility for online recruitment (Meertens, 2008, ''Nooit meer sollicitatiebrief kwijt''). Robert Adema who works at MrTed's, a company which helps other companies and organisations to create online recruitment possibilities, says that the younger generations, generation Y in particular, are used to do everything through the Internet. Employers should take this into consideration when hiring new staff members. Moreover, through online recruitment the whole application process will be more structured for the employer as well as for the applicant. Further advantages are that online recruitment is not only more structured it is also easier, it saves costs and it is faster. Through online recruitment it is possible for people to show who they are. Resumes can be made personal by adding weblinks. This way young professionals can decide, what kind of information potential employers read about them. The next chapter will reveal whether young professionals also believe that online recruitment is more effective.

Another important feature is the rejuvenation of the business world. Research in Europe and the United States has shown that the average age of a CEO has decreased from 52 to age 49 (2007, ''Topmanager van de toekomst'' page 6). According to Boudijn Driesen, director of Boer & Croon Young Executives BV, it is a combination of courage and a good realistic image that people have of themselves which will lead to this higher achievements (Boudijn, 2007, ''Topmanager van de toekomst'' page 6). The younger generation wants to achieve higher positions; a strong personal brand could influence the whole process. In a few years, the average age of a CEO will probably decrease even more.

The next trend which could be observed in the labour market is the shift from hard skills to soft skills. Before, managers where more task-oriented but now the relation with the employees is becoming important. Managers are dynamic, there is more communication within the organisation and managers will ask for feedback to see if their approach towards their employees is sufficient. Therefore, the word leadership is used rather than the word manager these days (2007, ''Topmanager van de toekomst'' page 7).

According to Scholte, an interesting trend is that work and private life are more mixed. When people are working they also send private emails. In addition, they will not wait to be back in the office to answer a business call. This is caused by Internet and mobile developments. These days it is difficult for people to switch between work and private life. They would like to be themselves all the time. With personal branding this is possible, because it is important for people to be who they are and to develop their own personality.

Finally, young professionals do not want to stay at one place for a long time, they like 'job hopping' (Armour, 2005, '' Generation Y: They've arrived at work with a new attitude'' section 4, para. 1). This generation is adventurous, they want challenges and new experiences. Therefore, they go from one job to another. According to Scholte, this has also to do with the fact that functions change rapidly in this society. For people who are already working, the function they have was probably not there ten years ago. It is a necessity for people to keep developing and innovating themselves to obtain a strong position ''because their current job will not be there in ten years from now either'' (Scholte, November 27, 2008).

It is interesting to know which trends are related to personal branding and to observe that young professionals are attached to different values these days. For employers it is important to identify factors which are relevant for generation Y. When they are familiar with these elements, it will be easier to work with this generation.

For employees, knowing about these trends could assist them in creating a personal brand, because people will be aware of all features which could influence their personal brand.

This chapter showed that in the Netherlands people are generally unaware of personal branding. However, young professionals as well as potential employers are already using some significant personal branding instruments such as social networks. The next chapter will expose if the questionnaires can conclude the same findings. Secondly, an example is given of personal brand positioning; the brand assessment. The classification of the trend in the Netherlands illustrated that all levels can already be found. However, they need to be further explored to increase the awareness of personal branding among the Dutch population.

IV   Survey results and analysis

For this research two questionnaires were conducted (October 2008), one among young professionals the other among potential employers. An important objective of the surveys was to find out if the target audience and potential employers are aware of the concept of personal branding. Additionally, it is interesting to find out whether young professionals are conscious of the influence of the Internet and other communication tools on their image (and their personal brand). The results also reveal the important elements of the application process according to potential employers and whether there is a similarity of how young professionals see themselves and how potential employers perceive them. Only the most relevant information will be revealed based on research done in the previous three chapters. Supplementary information and statistics can be found in appendix five and seven.

4.1   Personal information of the respondents

The total number of people who filled in the questionnaires is 178. It can be said that the questionnaires were mainly filled in by Dutch people. 161 young professionals (41 men and 119 women) and 17 potential employers (11 men and six women). Most young professionals who completed the survey are between 20 and 24 years old. The age difference of the potential employers lies between 26 and 63 years. The majority of young professionals is still studying, 67% is doing higher education (HBO). Finally, the computer and Internet use is quite high among both groups. 52% of the young professionals is spending between one and five hours every day on the Internet and 65% of the potential employers is spending even more than five hours every day behind the computer and on the Internet.

4.2   Communication tools

An important aspect of the questionnaire is to find out to what extent young professionals use certain communication tools. The following results illustrate that young professionals know almost all instruments however, they are unaware of the importance and influence of these tools. For that reason some tools are not used effectively and some are not used at all.

4.2.1   Own website

Do you have your own website?

No	#135	73%
Yes	#26 14%	

Table 4.1

From the young professionals only 26 have or had their own website (14%). Most of them were using a website as online diary for the time they spent abroad. Only 3% uses a website to build a professional network. This indicates that most young professionals are probably unaware of the importance of creating a professional network. In addition, they are also unaware, that a website could be used as a visual tool to illustrate their (professional) activities, ambitions and passions.

4.2.2   Social networks

Numerous young professionals use social networks. 75% is member of Hyves, the most popular social network site in the Netherlands. 53% of the people who completed the questionnaire have a Facebook account. LinkedIn is not that popular yet. Only five people declared to be member of this social network. The previous paragraph already indicated that young professionals are not building a professional network. These facts support this. Most respondents have a social network site to socialise, to stay in contact with old and international friends, for fun, to play online games and to create a social network. Only one person explained to have a social network to present himself. 33% of the young professionals think that being a member of a social network site could influence their image.

4.2.3   Influences social network sites

92% of the young professionals is aware of the fact that potential employers can look at their social network site. 61% take this into account when writing about themselves and 31% do not take this into account. Moreover, they would not change anything. 43% of the potential employers who completed the questionnaire say they use the Internet to look for background information of the applicants. Most used websites are Google, LinkedIn, Hyves and wieowie.nl ('who o who', an online search engine to look for people). Items potential employers look for are: official publications, job-related work experiences, general experiences, interests, past career and recommendations by other people. Some potential employers check the correctness of the information on the resume and someone even says: ''I look at those sites to judge if the applicant is 'clean' ''. The third chapter explained that there would be an increase in the use of social network sites to search for employees. These numbers illustrate that those predictions are accurate.

4.2.4   Blogs and podcasts

Did you ever write a blog?

Yes	#62	39%
No	#98	61%

Table 4.2

Did you ever make a podcast?

Yes	#3	2%
No	#153	97%

Table 4.3

Table 4.2 illustrates that 61% of the young professionals never wrote a blog. Nevertheless, 34% is convinced that writing a blog could influence someone's image. 97% never made a podcast. Most of the young professionals do not know what a podcast is (see appendix for definition). Therefore, most of them also do not think a podcast could influence someone's image (30%). From these figures, it can be said that young professionals are unaware of all the tools which could influence their image. Young professionals declare that they pay attention when writing about themselves. They may think there is nothing shocking on their sites which could be bad for their image. However, are they truly aware of the fact that a picture or a text could already by interpreted in a wrong or negative way by the potential employers?

4.2.5   Business card

Do you have your own business card?

Yes	#14	9%
No	#146	91%

Table 4.4

91% of the young professionals say they do not have a business card. The 9% who do have one make their card special, attractive and original by writing down their functions and by using colours. One respondent revealed that he makes his card attractive in a way which reflects who he is. A business card is also an instrument which could be used within personal branding.

4.3   Young professionals and the labour market

This final paper is written for young professionals who are (almost) entering the labour market for the first time. Therefore, in the questionnaire, several questions were asked to see how young professionals deal with the application process and to observe which elements at the workplace are important for them. In addition, it is interesting to see that desk and field research overlap concerning the characteristics of this generation.

4.3.1   Generation Y

Characteristics young professionals
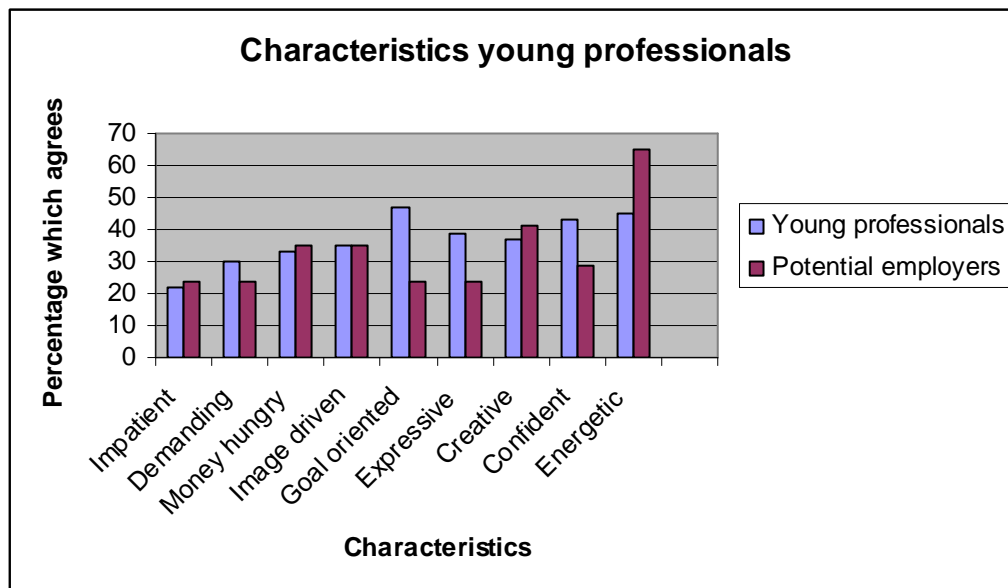
Graph 4.1

In the first chapter generation Y is described as impatient, demanding, money hungry, image driven, goal-oriented, expressive, creative, confident and energetic. These findings are confirmed by the results of the surveys. Young professionals recognise themselves in these characteristics. They especially find themselves goal-oriented. Potential employers are less strong in their opinion concerning this characteristic. According to them, young professionals are unconfident at work. Additionally, a number of young professionals still do not know what they want with their life and career after graduating. Because during their study they do not have to think about it. There are not enough courses in which students have to determine what they see as their ambitions, talents, passions and dreams. The fact that they do not exactly know what they want could be a reason why potential employers do not find young professionals goal-oriented. On the other hand, they do see young professionals as energetic and creative.

4.3.2   Generation Y and jobs

Another question was to find out which career characteristics are vital for young professionals. Money is considered as important as said by 45% of the respondents. Ambition (48%) and receiving recognition (45%) are even more essential. Success is mentioned as one of the most important characteristics. 54% of the young professionals would like to be successful in their future job.

4.3.3   Online recruitment

Young professionals

Yes, I think online recruitment is more efficient	**#66**	**21%**
No, I don't think online recruitment is more efficient	**#79**	**25%**

Table 4.5

Potential employers

Yes, I think online recruitment is more efficient	**#11**	**30%**
No, I don't think online recruitment is more efficient	**#4**	**11%**

Table 4.6

Technical development is a significant element in the lives of young professionals. 58% of them says they look and apply for jobs through the Internet. However, the opinions among young professionals are divided concerning the question if applying through the Internet is more effective as shown in table 4.5. They believe that personal contact with the potential employers is crucial. Nevertheless, they agree that the application process could go faster with this new technique. In addition, 76% of the potential employers confirmed that online recruitment is possible in their company. 30% also believes that online recruitment is more effective due to the fact that numerous young professionals look for jobs online and that it is faster. However, potential employers think that personal contact with the applicants is essential before hiring them. Through online recruitment it is easier for employers to look for the right candidates. However, this does not mean that applicants will not be invited for a job interview like some people might think according to the given answers. These results also indicate that young professionals are unaware of all the advantages and possibilities of online recruitment. At the moment they only see it as a tool which will make the first phases of the application process go faster and not as a chance to distinguish themselves by sending additional self-presentation material.

4.3.4 Job interview

A job interview is clearly the most important phase in the application process. During this interview a number of elements could be essential.

Elements during job interview
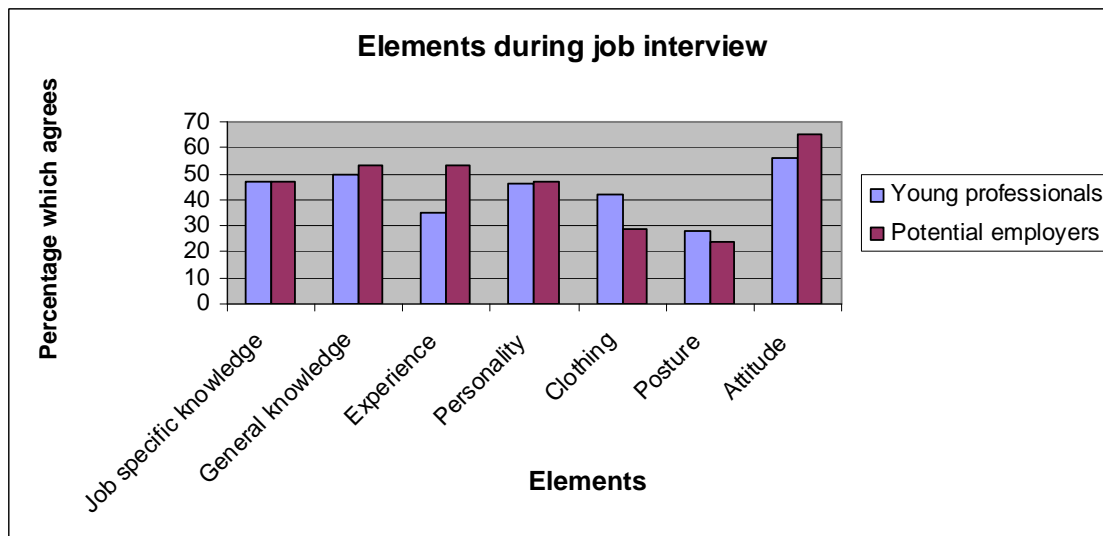
Graph 4.2

According to both groups, attitude is a primary element. This because attitude is somehow related to personality. It shows who someone is and how he is expressing himself. In addition, it is a significant value for employers. They want hard working motivated people. The attitude of an applicant can reveal if someone has those characteristics. Within personal branding, someone's personality is fundamental. If the awareness of this trend would increase, probably more potential employers would consider personality as an important characteristic. And then it could maybe become as important as someone's attitude.

4.3.5 Resume related questions

The results of the questionnaire illustrate that young professionals usually do not send more attachments besides their resume and application letter, when applying for a job. Only 14% sends supplementary items for instance, a portfolio, diplomas, copies of certificates, final thesis, references, overview of the followed courses and some papers or personal publications if related to the job description. Only one person writes who he is and where he stands for on his resume. As already mentioned, employers principally pay attention to the experiences young professionals have. 71% of the potential employers checks references. These results point out that young professionals are unaware of the fact that sending other interesting material besides a resume and application letter could help distinguish themselves.

4.3.6 Not work-related information on resume

34% of the young professionals adds non work-related information to their resume. Another 34% do not do this. Items which are added are personal interests, hobbies, experiences like studies or internships abroad, voluntary work, sports activities, language skills, prizes won, skills that are indirectly related to the particular job, projects someone did and someone mentions his strengths. The questionnaire distributed among potential employers illustrates that they do not pay that much attention to non work-related information on the resume. Only two out of 17 employers pay attention to this. However, giving the right information in relation to the job could also be seen as a way to make a resume more personal and differentiated.

4.3.7 Weblinks on resume

Do you add weblinks on your resume?

No	#149	94%
Yes, I add	#4 3%	

Table 4.7

As mentioned before, young professionals spend hours behind the computer and on the Internet. In addition, almost everyone is a member of at least one social network. Nevertheless, only 3% adds weblinks to their resume. Links which are added are from LinkedIn, online portfolios and from personal websites. Adding weblinks could be seen as an opportunity for young professionals to give additional information regarding themselves. Due to technical developments and online job searching it is easier for young professionals to add an interesting weblink to their resume.

4.3.8 Video presentations as a modern application tool

In the United States several people use video presentations of themselves when applying for a job. The following tables illustrate the opinions of young professionals and potential employers about using video presentations as a modern tool next to or instead of the resume.

Young professionals

Yes, it is an effective tool	#58	19%
No, it is not an effective tool	#92	30%

Table 4.8

Potential employers

Yes, it is an effective tool	**#6**	**15%**
No, it is not an effective tool	**#10**	**26%**

Table 4.9

The majority of both groups do not believe that a video presentation is an effective tool. Alternatively, 19% of the young professionals think this could be interesting because it is a visual tool which truly shows someone's personality. Others think that it is not very spontaneous and real because a video can be practised and prepared in advance. Potential employers say they have no time to watch videos. Others think it could be a way to have a good first impression of the applicants.

4.3.9 Description of a good resume

Young professionals were asked the following question: *What is the description of a good resume, to make it look more attractive and remarkable between all those others?* The respondents believe that it is a good idea to give a personal touch to the resume. The use of colours (not too much) could show something regarding someone's personality. Furthermore, it is essential to make the resume clear, not too long and readable without any grammar mistakes. An additional question was whether the respondents had any idea of a new modern tool to present themselves instead of the normal resume. Some interesting ideas were mentioned such as a mood board, an online resume, a PowerPoint presentation and a website. At the same time some of the respondents believe that the resume is a qualitatively good tool and should therefore not be replaced. Desk research revealed that it is important to be visible and to stand out from the crowd. The ideas given by young professionals are therefore quite interesting.

Potential employers were asked to answer the question: *What type of resume immediately attracts your attention?* Most answers were related to grammar, use of words, relevant interests and a well-organised, readable layout.

4.3.10 Criteria on the resume

Finally, the questionnaire for potential employers shows that they principally pay attention to work-related information (59%) and grammar mistakes (53%) when reading a resume. 47% say that they find the relevance of the information essential. 35% specifically pay attention to the experiences of young professionals and 35% pay attention to personal interests. Criteria which are considered to be insignificant are the picture of the applicant and office skills.

88% of the potential employers say that a resume is decisive for inviting applicants for a job interview. This indicates that young professionals could seriously work on their resume to make it more attractive and recognisable. To the question: *What was the decisive reason for hiring the last applicant?* Most potential employers answer: the attitude of the applicant, the right experience, willingness to work, motivation and job skills.

4.4   Awareness of personal branding

From the findings above one can conclude what could already be expected, that young professionals and potential employers are <u>unaware</u> of the chances, possibilities and influence of personal branding, on realising their short and long term goals. Therefore, young professionals are also unaware of the communication tools which could be used to create awareness for their personal brand.

4.4.1   Personal branding

Are you familiar with the concept of personal branding?

Yes	**#56**	**37%**
No	**#96**	**63%**

Table 4.10

63% of the young professionals who completed the questionnaire (table 4.10) and 59% of the potential employers are unfamiliar with the concept of personal branding. In spite of this, 25% of the young professionals and 30% of the potential employers believe personal branding could work in their advantage, due to the fact that people will emphasise their strengths. By doing this young professionals believe it will be easier to achieve their life goals. They see personal branding as a good way to present themselves. 14% of the respondents are less enthusiastic about the concept of personal branding. They dislike the idea of considering people as brands. The results illustrate that the ones who disfavour the concept of personal branding, feel that people become more like products and objects instead of human beings. Like Van Zwieten (2005) also said in the second chapter of this paper, people are interested in strong product brands. However, when it comes to branding themselves, they are suddenly sceptical (p.28). It could be possible that people are scared to start marketing themselves. However, they are uninformed of the real concept and the advantages it has. It is important for them to realise that people will not change through personal branding. They will emphasise their strengths and let others know who they are.

A positive aspect is that most young professionals realise that they need self-promotion when looking for a job. Like Setty and many others say, ''whether people like it or not they have a personal brand'' (Setty, 2006, ''Personal branding for technology professionals'' p. 4).

4.4.2   Young professionals think about their image

It can be said that almost all the respondents already think about their image in certain situations. Most of all when they are applying for a job, during presentations, when they meet people for the first time and even when partying. When young professionals present themselves, they believe it is important to be visible (48%), consistent (40%) and focussed (45%). 38% think that people should live their dreams. Being competitive and going digital are seen as less important. However, going digital is crucial due to the digital world these days. Young professionals could use the Internet more efficient to get their name out there. The results show that they are not completely aware of this because they do not write blogs, they do not make podcasts, they do not have a website, they do not build a professional network through for instance LinkedIn and they do not add weblinks to their resumes.

4.4.3   Statements concerning personal branding

A few statements about personal branding were given. Young professionals agree the most with the statement: *"Personal branding can help you distinguish yourself".* As mentioned before, most young professionals believe personal branding could be beneficial and useful for them. When applying for a job it is essential to be noticed. Therefore, young professionals realise that they have to market themselves. They need to build a brand around their skills, ambitions and passions which will give them a unique and authentic identity to distinguish themselves from the competition. Potential employers on the other hand agree the most with the statement: *"Personal branding can help you enter the labour market in a more efficient way".* When young professionals build on their strengths they will automatically overcome their weaknesses which will give them a stronger position. A good marketing plan is important for product brands. A good personal branding plan is valuable to enter the labour market.

4.5   Main conclusions

The main objective of the surveys was to find out whether young professionals and potential employers are aware of the concept of personal branding. Firstly, the results of the questions indicated that young professionals are aware of certain communication tools but they are unknown of the usage of these tools in an effective way. Secondly, young professionals understand that when they are applying for a job they have to write an application letter and make a reliable resume. However, they are unaware of other items they could use to distinguish themselves and to become more interesting for potential employers. From this it can be concluded that young professionals in the Netherlands are unfamiliar with the concept of personal branding and all the interesting elements of this communication strategy. The potential can be found in the fact that 25% of the young professionals believe that personal branding could help them positively. In addition, they already think about their image in a certain way. For this reason it is important to inform them more about personal branding and how to use their image in an efficient way. It is also important to report to young professionals that it is not strange to work on their image. On the contrary, young professionals could benefit when they work on their personal brand. It is an interesting and profitable process. The positive perspectives young professionals have on the concept of personal branding could be seen as a good start.

V   Conclusions and recommendations

In the last chapter of this paper the main conclusions will be illustrated. Secondly, several interesting recommendations will be given.

5.1   Conclusions

The most important conclusions can be drawn from the previous chapter. However, also the other three chapters show some interesting findings. The first chapter explained the essence and importance of personal branding. The trend is interesting for everyone however, this thesis focusses on young professionals who will enter the labour market for the first time. In this case, being different is essential to stand out from the crowd. People need to distinguish themselves from the other applicants.

Personal branding does not mean that young professionals need to change their personality as many people may think. Authenticity is a fundamental criterion. The second chapter illustrated that everyone has certain values. Nevertheless, people do not show all of their values. Figure 5.1 illustrates these findings. On top of the mountain someone's personal brand can be found. This is the part everyone can see. Under the line one can find values which cannot be seen by others for the moment (these values come from the brand template see figure 2.1). People and young professionals in particular are uninformed and unaware of the importance of showing their values.
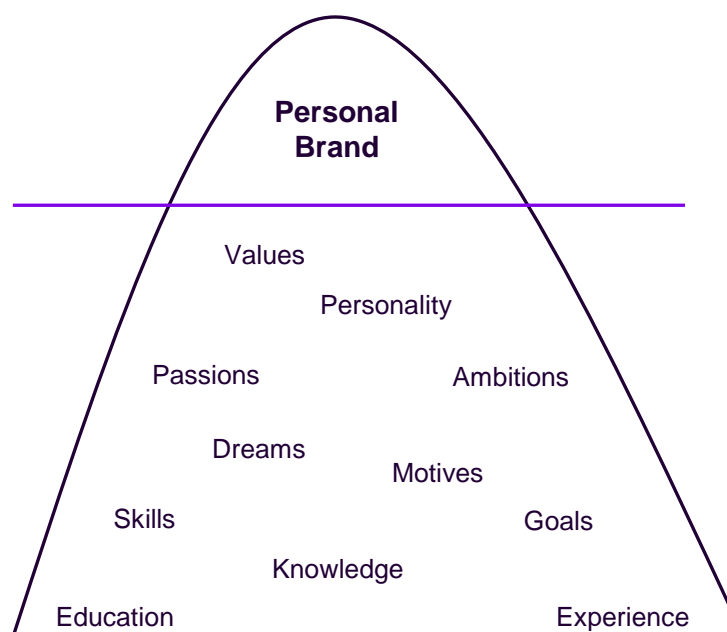
Figure 5.1 Mountain of personal brand values

The second chapter also concluded that when creating a personal brand some significant communication strategies and methods can be used such as the SOSTAC method and the SWOT-analysis. Some people are sceptical about being considered as a brand. However, they are already using personal branding unconsciously in their lives as explained by Pavlina.

The third chapter described the awareness of personal branding in the Netherlands. Desk research concluded that only a few people are actually working with this trend. Field research among young professionals and potential employers drew the most interesting conclusions. It became clear that one in <u>unfamiliar</u> with the concept of personal branding. However, 25% of the young professionals and 30% of the potential employers believe personal branding could work in their advantage. A remarkable result is that young professionals already know about certain communication tools but they do not know how to use these tools efficiently. This means that there is a certain potential. Now, it is important to create awareness among young professionals of how to create a personal brand and how to use communication tools to make their personal brand visible.

The central question of this final thesis is: *How can young professionals best use personal branding as a communication strategy to enter the labour and entrepreneur market?* All findings conclude that personal branding is a very effective communication strategy. The first chapter described the importance of the trend. In addition, the second chapter explained that some existing communication methods could be applied for personal branding. Finally, the third and fourth chapter illustrated that there is not enough awareness of personal branding in the Netherlands especially among young professionals. The research showed that in the United States personal branding is a huge trend. It is a challenge for the Netherlands to create the same level of understanding and appreciation.

There is still much to learn regarding personal branding therefore, the next part of this chapter will give some recommendations based on the research and the results of the previous chapters.

5.2   Recommendations

The conclusions indicate that personal branding is an effective communication strategy for young professionals however, they are unaware of this. This part will inform young professionals about the important aspects when creating a personal brand. Additionally, a guide will explain some of the steps which could be taken by young professionals of how to establish and best use their brand.

5.2.1   Personal brand points and criteria

In the questionnaire for young professionals the following question was asked: *How important do you classify the following aspects when presenting yourself?* The possible answers came from the seven brand points made by Hajj Flemings who is an author and trainer. The respondents already believe that some of these points are important when presenting themselves in other words, when branding themselves. First of all, one needs to be consistent, 40% of the young professionals agree with this statement. In addition, 48% of the respondents agree that one should be visible. According to Flemings, it is important for people to develop their online presence by making a website or writing blogs. However, also in daily life it is essential to get noticed; people could use business cards. He says, ''it is always good to put a name with a face'' (Flemings, 2008, ''The seven brand points'' para.1). The third brand point, being competitive, is considered as unimportant by the respondents. Nevertheless, when applying for a job it is essential for young professionals to have a certain promotional campaign. In this sense, being competitive is not negative. People need to be focused when branding themselves. In addition, an interesting result was that only 16% of the young professionals think that going digital is contributing to their personal presentation. Research on the other hand concluded that this is a fundamental part. The sixth brand point says that people need to live their dreams. Desk research also revealed that it gives people energy when they do what they love to do. Passion is an important value in this matter. Finally, Flemings stresses that people need to think differently.

The second chapter also described that there are some criteria for brand values. The most important criteria, next to the ones mentioned above, are: a personal brand should be trustworthy, authentic, reliable, recognisable and relevant. For all these brand points and brand criteria it can be said that people will not change. Young professionals need to create a personal brand which fits their personality. When establishing a personal brand it is important to keep these criteria in mind.

5.2.2   Universities could invest in personal branding

The third chapter described the establishment of personal branding in the Netherlands. From this one could conclude that universities could invest more in tutoring their students about this trend. People can brand themselves in a way they would like to be seen. It is an interesting perspective for students to perceive themselves as young professionals. Their environment and people around them will see them in a different way. The Hague School of European Studies offers a Personal Leadership course. Here students work on identifying their ambitions and dreams. Students explain that they like this course.

It supports them in thinking about their future. Therefore, it could be interesting if universities would also give lectures, workshops and courses about personal branding. Young professionals are positive about the concept of personal branding . Working with this trend at school would create more awareness.

5.2.3 How to create a personal brand?

As mentioned in the other chapters, branding takes time. There is a wide variety of information available on the Internet as well as in books about how to build a personal brand. In the last part of this thesis, a personal branding guide will point out some steps which could be taken by young professionals to create and best use their personal brand. The information is based on the whole research of this paper.

Personal branding guide for young professionals

STEP 1   Brand positioning

An important first step when creating a personal brand is to determine who someone is and how he or she is perceived by others. The brand assessment is a good tool to use. The Internet offers people the possibility to do free or paid self-assessments. It is important to look at the quality of the brand assessment. The brand assessment of Tom Scholte is a qualitatively good assessment. In his book, Van Zwieten (2005), gives more examples and ideas of tools which could be used in the first phases of the process (p. 98).

TIP 1 On the Internet a variety of information can be found regarding personal branding. It is interesting to read articles and blogs about the trend to obtain knowledge and understanding. In the Netherlands more books are written these days. Especially the book by Van Zwieten and Van de Grift 'Het merk ik' is interesting!

After creating a clear idea of someone's identity and image it is possible to make a mission and vision statement by using the SOSTAC method. Here one answers several questions. Most importantly: where am I in my career and where do I want to go in my career? Obviously, the following questions from the SMART model can also be used:

S: What do I want to achieve?

M: How do I know that I accomplished my goal?

A: Are my personal objectives challenging?

R: Is it possible to achieve my goals?

T: When do I want to achieve my determined objectives?

> *TIP 2* *Brand values are significant when creating a personal brand. Young professionals should think about the following questions: What are my dreams? What are my passions? What is my ambition? Richard Bolles says the following; ''The clearer your vision about what you seek, the closer you are in finding it'' (Van Zwieten, 2005, p. 101).*

STEP 2   SWOT-analysis

After the above described internal and external analysis it is advisable to create a personal SWOT-analysis. The SWOT-analysis can be seen as a summary of all the points. Here someone determines his strengths and weaknesses. In addition, one looks at what he wants to achieve and what kind of opportunities or threats could influence these perspectives. It is important to answer the following questions:

S: How to maximize my strengths?
W: How to overcome my weaknesses?
O: How to take advantage of my opportunities?
T: How to prevent threats?

STEP 3   Personal brand template

After the first two steps young professionals could put everything together in the personal brand template (see figure 5.2). The brand template can be seen as the personal brand identity. It is quite difficult to make a brand template. Therefore, Van Zwieten and Van de Grift give in their book, several exercises which will assist people fill in their own template (Van Zwieten, 2005, p. 102).
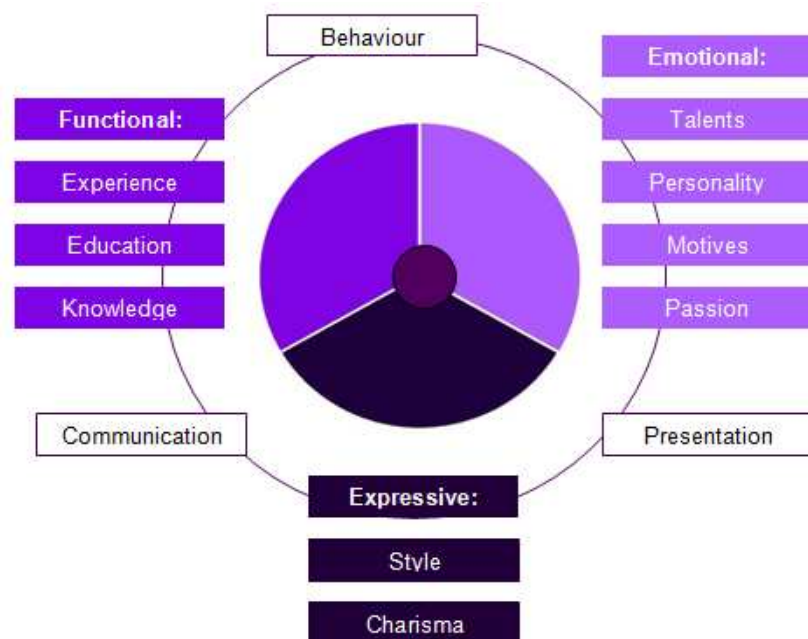
Figure 5.2 Brand template by Van Zwieten and Van de Grift

> *TIP 3 Making a moodboard or a visualised resume is a nice and fun exercise. Everything can be used when making a moodboard such as newspapers, magazines and even personal pictures. It is a <u>visual tool</u> to see someone's identity, what someone likes and where he or she stands for. The results of the questionnaire show that some respondents mention a moodboard as a tool to give additional information to the potential employer. This tool can be used in different ways!*

STEP 4   Personal visibility campaign

After the previous steps, young professionals will have a clearer view of who they are, how other people see them and what they want with their future. Of course it will not be perfect right away but this is also not necessary. Personal branding is a life work planning process. The ideas and objectives could change and be reformulated. The most important thing is that young professionals are working on it and that they invest time in themselves and in their careers.

The next step is to use certain communication tools in an effective way to visualise and to introduce their brand to gain recognition. Not all the tools have to be used, one can make a selection. With a personal visibility campaign young professionals make themselves visible on the labour market.

Social and professional network sites

Linked in

Being a member of a social network site could be profitable for a personal brand. However, it is important to realise what to write or to say on these pages. As already explained, a picture could quickly be interpreted in a negative way by a potential employer. Next to social networks as Hyves and Facebook it is interesting for young professionals to become a member of a professional network such as LinkedIn. Creating a professional network is useful when looking for a job. Young professionals could, by becoming a member of LinkedIn, already work on their professional network in the first years of college.

> *TIP 4 LinkedIn is the worlds largest professional network site with over 28 million members and growing rapidly (LinkedIn 2008). This site is not only designed to create a professional network but it can also be seen as an online resume as well as an online application letter!*

Personal experience

From my own experience it can be said that creating a professional network is indeed interesting and useful. It is important for young professionals to get their name out there. They need to use public relations and networking. During the process of writing this paper several people became interested in the subject. Through networking, someone asked for information to write an article about this research. Someone else used some of the results of the questionnaire to write an essay about personal branding. In addition, a Dutch blogger is willing to put this final thesis online! All these developments contribute to getting someone's name out there and to create, among others, an online brand.

Blogs

Blogging is one of the most important tools which could be used when establishing a personal brand according to Schawbel (Schawbel, 2008, ''The Number one personal branding tool is..'' You Tube video). He gives, in the video 'The number one personal branding tool is..', several explanations why writing a blog is profitable for young professionals. First of all, when writing a blog, young professionals can show their knowledge, experiences, skills, dreams, ambitions and passions. In addition, they can write about what they find interesting. A blog can be seen as their own profile. It can also be used for networking because people can respond on blogs which could result in interesting connections. The most important reason why blogging is important is because young professionals will build an online presence. This is definitely a tool to get someone's name out there!

Podcasts

Jim Stolze, a strategy director, explains in an interesting video why podcasting could influence someone's personal brand. ''A podcast is a series of audio or video digital-media files which is distributed over the Internet'' (Podcast definition). A podcast confirms someone's authority. It can be seen as an audio blog. In the Netherlands people rarely make podcasts although, it could be an interesting tool.

Own website

LinkedIn can be seen as a first step to a personal website. However, young professionals could create their own website. A website could be seen as a visual tool to illustrate someone's experiences, passions, ambitions and (professional) activities. Potential employers mostly pay attention to someone's experiences when reading a resume. Young professionals who just graduated do not have that much professional experience.

Therefore, it could be interesting to publish some reports, PowerPoint presentations and abroad experiences on their own website to show their skills. This information could also be published on the social network sites of young professionals!

Business card

A business card is also a visual tool which could be used within personal branding. When meeting new people it is useful to give them a personalised business card. Young professionals could put a nice picture or a personal logo as well as a weblink or email address. Finally, young professionals could write down their mission statement. Putting an image on the business card as well as additional information means that people will have the full picture with the name, which will be hard to forget.

STEP 5   Visibility when entering the labour market

The thesis focused on young professionals who will enter the labour market. Therefore, the last step of this guide will give some tips for the application process.

Online recruitment

Online recruitment offers young professionals more structure in the application process. They can send their application letter and resume through the Internet which is faster. In addition, looking for jobs is easier. The Internet offers young professionals the opportunity to put their resume online. They can distinguish themselves by sending additional information or by adding weblinks to their online resume which makes it easier for potential employers to learn more about the applicants. On the other hand, online recruitment is also an advantage for potential employers because they can look for the right candidates in an efficient way.

Resume

A resume can be seen as an important tool in the application process. Therefore, it is essential that young professionals can distinguish themselves with their resume. Appendix two gives a few tips of how to make a personalised resume. One can divide the resume into two parts. First of all, a personal profile. In this part young professionals write, besides the normal given information, who they are and what they consider as their ambitions. Additionally, the second part reveals information related to work experience and education.

The results from the questionnaire illustrate that young professionals usually do not send additional material with their resume and application letter. It depends the job one is applying for but it could be interesting to show some of the accomplishments one did, such as a final paper, reports, writing articles and a portfolio.

In addition, only 3% of the young professionals puts a weblink to their resume. As mentioned before, adding a weblink could be interesting for young professionals to show additional information about themselves.

Emphasise on the strengths

Potential employers see several strengths of young professionals. They are energetic, ambitious, motivated, enthusiastic and creative. Building a personal brand could make young professionals more confident about themselves. They could show more of their skills and strengths by using some of the above described communication tools.

STEP 6   Conclusion

To conclude everything it can be said that someone's personal branding plan (personal marketing strategy) is composed of the personal marketing mix, four P's (Schawbel, 2008, '*''Your Personal Marketing Plan - Part 4 of 5''* para. 2). First of all Person, which will be a young professional ready to enter the labour market with a strong authentic brand. Secondly Place, someone's desired workplace. For this young professionals need to stand out from the crowd during the application process. They need a good resume and application letter which will lead to the jobs, occupations and activities they love to do. Additionally, the third P will be Price, which stands for the brand values someone has. Here one looks at the mission and vision statement, the SWOT-analysis and the personal brand template. And finally, the last P stands for Promotion. When applying for a job on the labour market young professionals need a promotion or visibility campaign. The strategies and communication tools mentioned above could be used.

Maaike Baartman
February 2009

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Appendix I: Famous personal brands

This appendix will illustrate some examples of famous brands. Firstly, one of the most famous personal brands of all time is Martin Luther King. According to Flemings, he is one of the most recognised personal brands in the history of the United States of America (Flemings, 2008, ''Martin Luther the king of personal brands'', para. 1). Everyone knows his famous speech 'I have a dream' from August 28, 1963. With this he created a remarkable personal brand. One of the strengths of his personal brand was consistency (Flemings, 2008, ''Martin Luther the king of personal brands'', para. 1). This is an important element within personal branding. Martin Luther King communicated in a consistent and effective way to the people. Therefore, everyone still remembers him.

Oprah Winfrey is not only America's most famous talk show hostess she is also the queen of personal branding. People see her as an example, an ambitious woman with a warm personality. Oprah Winfrey is considered to be real and authentic. When there was a crisis with her private boarding school for girls in Africa, she stayed honest and told her story. Moreover, she was available for commentary (Cooke, 2007, ''What Oprah Does Right'', para. 5). Oprah dares to be different, she obviously cares for people which makes her brand essence realistic and authentic. In addition, Oprah has a consistent way of communicating. All her books, magazines, TV shows (which are broadcasted in more than 100 countries) and organisations are related to Oprah herself. Cooke explains in his blog that people want to feel a certain relation with a person and not only with his or her organisation (Cooke, 2007, '' Branding Personality Driven Organisations'', para. 1). The fact is that personality driven branding really connects with the audience.

An upcoming brand is Michelle Obama. As wife of the newly elected American president, she has to be representative. An article in New Statesman describes Michelle Obama as authentic, unique and memorable (Groskop, 2008, ''Brand me'', para 1). The positive thing is that she presents a clear and clean image moreover, she has a recognisable appearance. She is even using a pay-off for her family (team) which is 'fresh, open, fearless and bold' (Groskop, 2008, ''Brand me'', para 1).

Finally, Madonna is one of the most famous brands in the pop industry and beyond. One of her strengths is always coming back with something new and refreshing. Madonna changes with incredible consistency says William Arruda. Each time starting a new trend (Arruda, 2001 '' The Three C's of Personal Branding'', para. 3). She is celebrated by many generations. Madonna looks forever young, she is in for new ideas and very energetic. She is not only a singer but also a movie star, playing an amazing role in the musical Evita. In addition, she has her own clothing line 'M by Madonna' and she is an author of children's books.

Appendix II: Resume

Dutch version

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*1 CURRICULUM VITAE

M.J. Baartman

</div>

PERSOONLIJKE GEGEVENS

Naam: Maaike Joanna Baartman
Adres: Distelvink 23
       2991 MC Barendrecht
Telefoon: 0180-
Mobiele nummer: 06-
Email: m.j.baartman@live.nl
Geboortedatum: 05-12-1986
Nationaliteit: Nederlandse

Mijn naam is Maaike Baartman en ik ben bijna afgestudeerd. Tijdens mijn HEBO-studie heb ik vijf maanden stage gelopen in Brussel. Daarnaast heb ik vier maanden in Frankrijk gestudeerd, twee prachtige ervaringen! Momenteel heb ik net mijn scriptie afgerond over Personal Branding. In deze scriptie wil ik 'young professionals' informeren en enthousiasmeren over deze opkomende trend. Na mijn studie zou ik graag willen werken in een internationaal of nationale omgeving. Mijn ambitie is om praktijkervaring op te doen op het gebied van communicatie en marketing. ***2**

WERKERVARING ***3**

Sep 2007 – Feb 2008   Animatie Centrum voor Talen in Brussel

- Stage activiteiten: Herschrijven website
                        Schrijven artikelen voor magazine actuapress
                        Organiseren communicatie campagne
                        PR tijdens beurzen
                        Organiseren communicatie activiteiten

OPLEIDING

Sep 2004 – Jan 2009   Hogere Europese Beroepen Opleiding (HEBO)

- Variant: Communicatiemanagement

- ▪ Relevante vakken: Interne Communicatie
                      Branding and Concepting
                      Media Contacts (PR)
                      Marketing Communication
                      International Corporate Communication Management
                      Cross-cultural Trends

- ▪ Projecten o.a.:   Aanpassen emancipatiebeleid van de stad Den Haag
                      Ontwikkelen nieuw merkconcept voor de gemeente Den Haag
                      Onderzoeken interne communicatie Novib
                      Ontwikkelen nieuw imagoplan voor China *4

- ▪ Scriptie onderwerp: Personal Branding:
                      As a communication strategy for young professionals

Sep 2006 – Jan 2007   Universiteit Besançon in Frankrijk
                        Uitwisselingsproject

Sep 1999 – Juni 2004   Christelijke Scholengemeenschap Johannes Calvijn,
                        Rotterdam, HAVO
                        Vakkenpakket: CM, Cultuur en Maatschappij

PRAKTISCHE ACTIVITEITEN

Vreemde talen:

Engels goed in woord en schrift
Frans redelijk in woord en schrift
Duits redelijk in woord en schrift

ICT-vaardigheden: Officepakket

Vrije tijd: winkelen, oppassen, lezen, muziek, reizen *5

Weblink: http://www.linkedin.com/in/maaikebaartman *6

OVERIG

Sep 2006 – Sep 2007   Opleidingscommissie HEBO

Juni 2005 – Aug 2006   Pannenkoekenhuis 'De Oude Maas'
                        Horecamedewerkster, serveerster

Sep 1993 – Juni 2004   Viool gespeeld

English version

<div align="right">

*1 CURRICULUM VITAE
M.J. Baartman

</div>

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: Maaike Joanna Baartman
Address: Distelvink 23
          2991 MC Barendrecht
Telephone number: 0180-
Mobile number: 06-
Email: m.j.baartman@live.nl
Date of birth: 05-12-1986
Nationality: Dutch

*My name is Maaike Baartman and I am almost graduated at The Hague School of European Studies. During my study I did an internship in Brussels for five months. I also studied for four months at the university of Besançon, France, two wonderful experiences. At the moment I just finished my final thesis about Personal Branding. With this paper I would like to inform young professionals about this emerging trend. And also how they can present themselves and their personal brand in an effective way when entering the labour and entrepreneur market. After my study I would like to work in an international or national environment. My ambition is to gain experience in the field of communication and marketing. *2*

WORK EXPERIENCE *3

Sep 2007 – Feb 2008	Animation Center for foreign languages (Centre d'Animation en Langues)

    ▪   Internship activities: Re-writing website
                                   Writing articles for magazine actuapress
                                   Organise communication campaign
                                   PR at trade shows
                                   Organise communication activities

EDUCATION

Sep 2004 – Jan 2009	The Hague School of European Studies (HEBO)

    ▪   Specialisation: Communication Management

- Relevant courses: Internal Communication
                        Branding and Concepting
                        Media Contacts (PR)
                        Marketing Communication
                        International Corporate Communication Management
                        Cross-cultural Trends

- Projects: Adjust emancipation policy of the city The Hague.
                        Develop new brand concept for The Hague
                        Research internal communication Novib
                        Develop new image plan for China *4

- Final paper: Personal Branding:
                        As a communication strategy for young professionals

Sep 2006 – Jan 2007   University Besançon, France
                        Exchange project

Sep 1999 – June 2004   'Christelijke Scholengemeenschap Johannes Calvijn'
                        Rotterdam, HAVO
                        Field of study: Culture and Society

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

Foreign languages:

English: good
French: sufficient
German: sufficient

Computer skills: Office package

Interests: shopping, babysitting, reading, music, traveling *5

Weblink: http://www.linkedin.com/in/maaikebaartman *6

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Sep 2006 – Sep 2007   Education Commission; The Hague School of European
                        Studies

June 2005 – Aug 2006   Pancake restaurant 'De Oude Maas'
                        Waitress

Sep 1993 – June 2004   Playing the violin

Additional information

1 *In the left corner a picture or personal logo could be published. Obviously, there are numerous possibilities for the layout. Young professionals should look at a layout which fits their personal brand. In this example the layout remained simple.*

2 *Here it is possible for young professionals to write about their achievements. For instance about a final paper, reports made, experiences abroad and internships. In additions, young professional could write down their ambitions, talents, strengths and passions. The results from the survey illustrate that 88% of the potential employers say that a resume is decisive for inviting applicants for a job interview. This additional information regarding young professionals could be interesting for potential employers if they only read the resume.*

3 *The results from the questionnaire reveal that potential employers pay mostly attention to experience. Young professionals who just graduated do not have that much experience yet. Therefore, it is interesting for them to write down what kind of activities they did during their internship. Dan Schawbel gives the advise to put work experience on top of the resume.*

4 *For potential employers it could be interesting to see what kind of courses and projects someone did during their years of education. This could be seen as experience on a certain field.*

5 *Potential employers do not pay that much attention to non work-related information. However, young professionals could write down some interesting subjects. If someone would like a job with an international perspective, it could be interesting to add as extra information the fact that one likes to travel.*

6 *It is very interesting to add a weblink. Potential employers can look for additional information regarding the applicant. When putting a weblink, the applicant decides what kind of extra information the potential employer reads about him.*

Appendix III: Brand assessment

This is a Dutch example of the personal brand assessment made by Tom Scholte.

Introductie

De manier waarop anderen ons waarnemen is van invloed op ons succes en de dingen die we willen bereiken. Daarom is het belangrijk om regelmatig feedback te vragen aan de mensen in onze omgeving. Hierbij vraagt persoon X jou om feedback te geven over zijn of haar eigenschappen en vaardigheden. Het invullen van onderstaande vragen zal niet meer dan 10 minuten in beslag nemen. Alvast bedankt voor je feedback!

Wat is je relatie tot persoon X?

- Vriend / familie
- Collega
- (Project) manager
- (Project) medewerker
- Klant / opdrachtgever

Eigenschappen

Bekijk de lijst van onderstaande eigenschappen. Selecteer maximaal 8 eigenschappen waarvan jij vindt dat die het best aansluiten bij persoon X. Plaats een 'vinkje' in de vakjes voor deze eigenschappen. Probeer die eigenschappen te selecteren waarvan jij vindt dat die het sterkst bij persoon X aanwezig zijn.

▪ Aardig	▪ Accuraat	▪ Actief	▪ Ambitieus
▪ Assertief	▪ Authentiek	▪ Avontuurlijk	▪ Beargumenterend
▪ Betrouwbaar	▪ Charmant	▪ Coöperatief	▪ Communicatief
▪ Competitief	▪ Creatief	▪ Diplomatiek	▪ Doelgericht
▪ Dramatiserend	▪ Durf	▪ Dynamisch	▪ Echt
▪ Eerlijk	▪ Efficiënt	▪ Eigenwijs	▪ Empathisch
▪ Energiek	▪ Enthousiast	▪ Ervaren	▪ Ethisch
▪ Extrovert	▪ Filantropisch	▪ Flexibel	▪ Gedreven
▪ Geloofwaardig	▪ Geordend	▪ Georganiseerd	▪ Gepassioneerd
▪ Gevoelig	▪ Grappig	▪ Grote persoonlijkheid	▪ Gul

▪ Helder	▪ Hoffelijk	▪ Hulpvaardig	▪ Humor
▪ Informeel	▪ Inspirerend	▪ Intelligent	▪ Internationaal
▪ Introvert	▪ Inventief	▪ Kalm	▪ Kleurrijk
▪ Krachtig	▪ Leidend	▪ Leuk	▪ Liefdevol
▪ Loyaal	▪ Materialistisch	▪ Melodramatisch	▪ Menselijk
▪ Methodisch	▪ Mysterieus	▪ Nuchter	▪ Onafhankelijk
▪ Onderhoudend	▪ Ondernemend	▪ Ondersteunend	▪ Ongeduldig
▪ Onrustig	▪ Open	▪ Oprecht	▪ Optimistisch
▪ Overtuigend	▪ Praktisch	▪ Precies	▪ Productief
▪ Relaxed	▪ Samenwerkend	▪ Slim	▪ Snel denkend
▪ Spiritueel	▪ Standvastig	▪ Sympathiek	▪ Temperamentvol
▪ Theoretisch	▪ Toegankelijk	▪ Toegewijd	▪ Toekomstgericht
▪ Tolerant	▪ Verlegen	▪ Vindingrijk	▪ Visionair
▪ Vooruitdenkend	▪ Vriendelijk	▪ Vrolijk	▪ Warm
▪ Zelf vertrouwen	▪ Zonder zorgen	▪ Zorgzaam	

Vaardigheden

Bekijk de lijst van onderstaande vaardigheden. Selecteer maximaal 8 vaardigheden waarvan jij vindt dat persoon X die zeer goed beheerst. Plaats een 'vinkje' in de vakjes voor deze vaardigheden.

▪ Aanvoelen	▪ Adviseren	▪ Analyseren
▪ Anderen versterken	▪ Anticiperen	▪ Beïnvloeden
▪ Begroten	▪ Bemiddelen	▪ Beslissingen nemen
▪ Brainstormen	▪ Coördineren	▪ Coachen
▪ Communiceren	▪ Consensus bereiken	▪ Creëren
▪ Crisis managen	▪ De details zien	▪ Delegeren
▪ Discussiëren	▪ Groepen faciliteren	▪ Het geheel overzien
▪ Identificeren van problemen	▪ Initiëren	▪ Innoveren
▪ Inspireren	▪ Internationaal denken	▪ Leiden
▪ Leiding geven	▪ Lesgeven	▪ Luisteren
▪ Managen van projecten	▪ Mensen aansturen	▪ Motiveren
▪ Netwerken	▪ Onderhandelen	▪ Ondernemen
▪ Onderzoeken	▪ Ontwerpen	▪ Ordenen
▪ Organiseren	▪ Plannen	▪ Presenteren
▪ Prioriteiten stellen	▪ Problemen oplossen	▪ Rapporteren
▪ Redeneren	▪ Samenwerken	▪ Schrijven
▪ Signaleren	▪ Spreken in het openbaar	▪ Systematiseren
▪ Teambuilding	▪ Theoretiseren	▪ Time management
▪ Trainen	▪ Uitleggen	▪ Uitvinden
▪ Verkopen	▪ Vertegenwoordigen	▪ Visie ontwikkelen
▪ Waarnemen	▪ Zelfstanding werken	

Sterke punten

Kun je in enkele woorden de sterkste punten van persoon X beschrijven?

Zwakke punten

Wat zijn de zwakste punten van persoon X?

Projectie

Stel dat persoon X een auto zou zijn, welk merk/type auto zou hij/zij zijn en waarom?

Stel dat persoon X een topsporter zou zijn, welke sport zou hij/zij bedrijven en waarom?

Teamrol

Welke rol neemt persoon X meestal aan als hij/zij met anderen samenwerkt?

- Doener - pakt een gedeelte van het project en voert dit uit
- Facilitator - faciliteert de teamleden bij het bereiken van het doel
- Leider - neemt de verantwoordelijkheid en verdeelt de taken
- Motivator - inspireert de andere teamleden om een succesvolle bijdrage te leveren
- Planner - zorgt er voor dat alle activiteiten op tijd worden afgerond
- Schepper - komt met creatieve ideeën voor wat er gedaan moet worden en hoe dit te doen
- Verzorger - zorgt ervoor dat alle leden van het team blij en tevreden zijn

Opmerkingen

Heb je verder nog feedback die voor persoon X waardevol zou kunnen zijn?

More information concerning the assessment or about Tom Scholte can be found at:

Tom Scholte Personal Branding *or* info@personalbrandassessment.nl

Appendix IV: Survey young professionals

This survey is made with the online program 'Thesis Tools' however, for this appendix a normal format is used.

Introduction

What is your message to the world? (Personal Branding)

This questionnaire is an important research method for my final thesis about personal branding! Therefore, I hope to receive numerous responses. The survey consists of 37 questions, related to several aspects of the subject, which are easily to fill in. When everything is finished I hope to have created more awareness of personal branding among the target audience in this case young professionals, in other words YOU!

Good luck!

Personal questions

1. What is your age? (16 – 30)
2. What is your sex?
   a. Masculine
   b. Feminine

3. What is your nationality?
4. What is your highest educational degree?
   a. MBO
   b. HBO
   c. University
   d. Other, please specify

5. What is your <u>main activity</u> at the moment?
   a. I'm studying
   b. I almost finished my study
   c. I'm a part-time worker
   d. I'm a full-time worker
   e. Something else namely;

Internet related questions

6. How much time do you spend behind the computer and the Internet?

    a. More than 5 hours every day

    b. Less than 5 hours every day

    c. One hour every day

    d. Four or five times a week

    e. Two or three times a week

    f. Once a week

7. Do you have your own website? If yes, for which reasons do you use your website?

8. Are you a member of a social network site for instance Hyves, My Space or Facebook? (more answers possible)

    a. I'm a member of Hyves

    b. I'm a member of My Space

    c. I'm a member of Facebook

    d. I'm not a member of any social network (go to question 11)

    e. I'm also a member of;

9. For which reasons do you use these sites?

10. Are you aware of the fact that employers can look at your page?

    a. Yes, I take this into account when writing about myself

    b. Yes, but I don't mind. I will not change anything

    c. No, I was unaware of this

11. Do you think, being a member of a social network site could influence your image, please specify?

12. Did you ever write a blog? (yes or no)

13. Do you think writing a blog could influence your image, please specify?

14. Did you ever make a podcast? (yes or no)

15. Do you think a podcast could influence your image, please specify?

Generational related questions

16. Your age group is generally characterized as generation Y. The following questions are related to some characteristics of this generation. Can you identify, in what extent you find yourself in the following characteristics? (scale: 1 not at all – 5 very much)

a.	Impatient	1	2	3	4	5
b.	Demanding	1	2	3	4	5
c.	Money hungry	1	2	3	4	5
d.	Image driven	1	2	3	4	5
e.	Goal-oriented	1	2	3	4	5
f.	Expressive	1	2	3	4	5
g.	Creative	1	2	3	4	5
h.	Confident	1	2	3	4	5

17. How important are the following life goals for you?

    (scale: 1 not important at all – 5 very important)

a.	To have a career	1	2	3	4	5
b.	To become rich and famous	1	2	3	4	5
c.	To become a manager	1	2	3	4	5
d.	To become a CEO	1	2	3	4	5
e.	To help other people (volunteer work)	1	2	3	4	5
f.	To marry	1	2	3	4	5
g.	To have children	1	2	3	4	5

18. Do you have another important goal in life?

Job related questions

19. How important are the following career characteristics for you?

    (scale: 1 not important at all – 5 very important)

a.	Money	1	2	3	4	5
b.	Ambition	1	2	3	4	5
c.	Career	1	2	3	4	5
d.	Success	1	2	3	4	5
e.	Receiving recognition	1	2	3	4	5

20. Did you ever apply for a job through the Internet? (yes or no)

21. Do you think applying for a job through the Internet is more efficient, please specify?

22. How important do you consider the following items during a job interview? (scale: 1 not important at all – 5 very important)

a.	Your specific knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
b.	Your general knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
c.	Your experience	1	2	3	4	5
d.	Your personality	1	2	3	4	5
e.	Your clothing	1	2	3	4	5
f.	Your posture	1	2	3	4	5
g.	Your attitude	1	2	3	4	5

23. Do you have your own business card? (If no, go to question 25)

24. What do you do to make your business card visible?

25. How important are the following elements in a job for you?
    (scale 1 not important at all – 5 very important)
    a. Good relationship with boss and colleagues
    b. Income
    c. Opportunity for growth
    d. Opportunity to show off skills and challenging daily work
    e. Flexible schedules for social and personal time
    f. A casual dress environment

26. Do you want to add an element which is also important for you in a job, please specify?

Resume (CV) related questions

27. When you apply for a job do you send more information besides your resume and application letter? (thinking of a portfolio or something else), if yes what?

28. Do you add not work-related information on your resume, if yes what kind of information?

29. Do you add weblinks on your resume, if yes why? (If you have a website for example or a Hyves or Facebook link)

30. In the United States some people use video presentations of themselves when applying for a job. Do you think this is an effective way to present yourself to a company or organisation, please specify?

31. What is your description of a good resume, to make it look more attractive and remarkable between all those others?

32. If you could create a new modern tool to present yourself (so a modern version of the resume for example), what would it be?

Questions related to personal branding

Personal branding is the process whereby people and their careers are marked as <u>brands</u>.

33. Are you familiar with the concept of personal branding? (yes or no)
34. Do you think personal branding could be something positive or negative, why?
35. In which situations do you intentionally think about your image? (your image is the way people see you)
36. How important do you classify the following aspects when presenting yourself?
    (scale: 1 not important at al – 5 very important)

a.	You have to be consistent	1	2	3	4	5
b.	You have to be visible	1	2	3	4	5
c.	You have to be competitive	1	2	3	4	5
d.	You have to be focused	1	2	3	4	5
e.	You should go digital (online)	1	2	3	4	5
f.	You have to live your dreams	1	2	3	4	5
g.	You should think different	1	2	3	4	5

37. Do you agree with the following statements about personal branding?
    (scale: 1 strongly disagree – 5 strongly agree)
    a. "Personal branding can help you achieve your life goals"
    b. "Personal branding can help you enter the labour market in a more efficient way"
    c. "Whether you like it or not, you have a personal brand"
    d. "To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You"
    e. "Personal branding can help you distinguish yourself"
    f. "A brand is a promise of what you bring to this world"
    g. "Personal branding leads to better, more interesting jobs and assignments"

Thank you very much for filling in this survey, it will be very useful for me!

Appendix V: Results survey young professionals

In this appendix more statistics can be found of the questionnaire for young professionals. Graphs will illustrate the responses given by the target audience (only the graphs which are not already in the fourth chapter will be showed is this appendix). 161 people completed the questionnaire.

What is your age?

Age	Count	Percentage
16	#2	1%
17	#4	2%
18	#11	7%
19	#10	6%
20	#27	17%
21	#34	21%
22	#21	13%
23	#23	14%
24	#16	10%
25	#8	5%
26	#2	1%
27	#0, 0%	
28	#1	1%
29	#2	1%

Table 1

What is your sex?

Sex	Count	Percentage
Masculine	#41	25%
Feminine	#119	74%

Table 2

What is your nationality?

Dutch: 140 respondents   Romanian: 2 respondents   Hungarian: 1 respondent

French: 8 respondents   Spanish: 2 respondents   Italian: 1 respondent

Turkish: 3 respondents   Belgian: 2 respondents   Israeli: 1 respondent

Yugoslavian: 1 respondent

What is your highest educational degree?

MBO	**#13**	**7%**
HBO	**#119**	**67%**
University	**#10**	**6%**
Other	**#16**	**9%**

Table 3

Additionally, 14 respondents filled in as highest degree HAVO and two VWO.

What is your <u>main activity</u> at the moment?

I'm studying	**#103**	**53%**
I almost finished my study	**#34**	**18%**
I'm a part-time worker	**#19**	**10%**
I'm a full-time worker	**#20**	**10%**
Something else	**#8**	**4%**

Table 4

How much time do you spend behind the computer and the Internet?

More than 5 hours every day	**#44**	**27%**
Less than 5 hours every day	**#85**	**52%**
One hour every day	**#22**	**13%**
Four or five times a week	**#9**	**5%**
Two or three times a week	**#4**	**2%**
Once a week	**#0, 0%**	

Table 5

Are you a member of a social network site for instance Hyves, My Space or Facebook? (more answers possible)

I'm a member of Hyves	**#120**	**75%**
I'm a member of My Space	**#12**	**7%**
I'm a member of Facebook	**#86**	**53%**
I'm not a member of any social network sit...	**#14**	**8%**
I'm also a member of	**#15**	**9%**

Table 6

In addition, only five of the respondents have a LinkedIn account.

Are you aware of the fact that potential employers can look at your page?

Yes, I take this into account when writing about myself	**#99**	**61%**
Yes, but I don't mind. I will not change anything	**#50**	**31%**
No, I was unaware of this	**#12**	**7%**

Table 7

Do you think being a member of a social network site could influence your image?

Yes	**#103**	**33%**
No	**#53**	**17%**
other:	**#32**	**10%**

Table 8

Do you think writing a blog could influence your image?

Yes	**#102**	**34%**
No	**#49**	**17%**
other:	**#27**	**9%**

Table 9

Do you think a podcast could influence your image?

Yes	**#41**	**16%**
No	**#77**	**30%**
other:	**#43**	**17%**

Table 10

From the research can be concluded that young professionals do not know what a podcast is. Therefore, they are also unaware of the effects. ''A podcast is a series of audio or video digital-media files which is distributed over the Internet'' (Podcast definition). When there is a podcast about an interesting subject, people can put this on their ipod and listen to it in the train when going to their work.

How important are the following life goals for you?
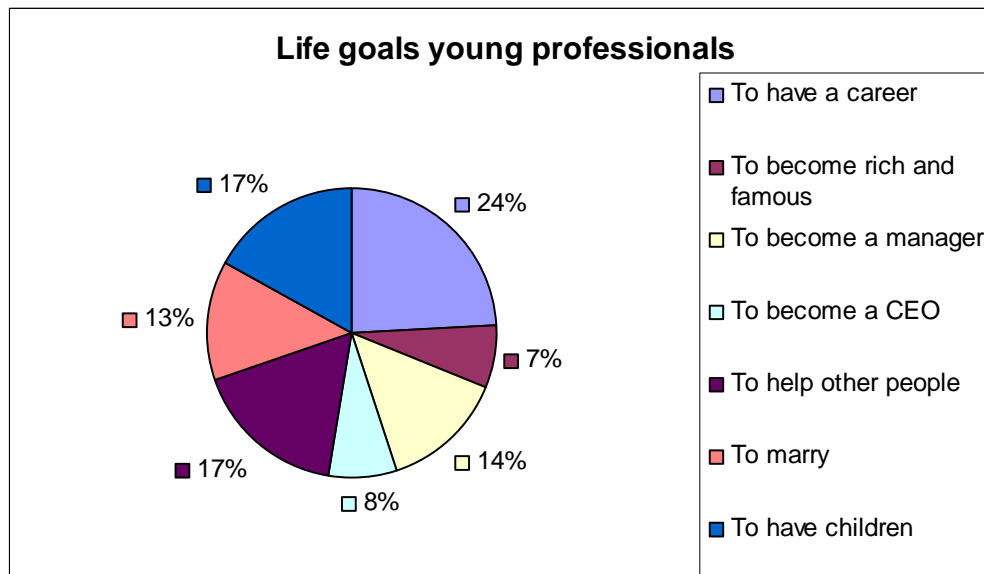
Graph 1

In the questionnaire young professionals were asked to determine their life goals based on importance. The survey concluded that the most important goal is having a career. Also voluntary work and having children are considered important. The most important other goals for this generation are: to be happy and to make other people happy, to stay healthy, to have fun at work and to be successful. Having a career is mentioned as the most important life goal, even though young professionals mostly do not know what kind of career they want as mentioned before.

How important are the following career characteristics for you?
Money

	Not important at all
1	#5 3%
2	#18 11%
3	#44 27%
4	#73 45%
5	#18 11%
	Very important

Table 11

Ambition

	Not important at all
1	#1 1%
2	#5 3%
3	#25 16%
4	#77 48%
5	#49 30%
	Very important

Table 12

Career

	Not important at all
1	#2 1%
2	#6 4%
3	#38 24%
4	#74 46%
5	#38 24%
	Very important

Table 13

Success		
	Not important at all	
1	**#2** **1%**	
2	**#5** **3%**	
3	**#26**	**16%**
4	**#87**	**54%**
5	**#37**	**23%**
	Very important	

Table 14

Receiving recognition		
	Not important at all	
1	**#2** **1%**	
2	**#7** **4%**	
3	**#29**	**18%**
4	**#72**	**45%**
5	**#48**	**30%**
	Very important	

Table 15

How important are the following elements in a job for you?

The first chapter described elements on the workplace which are important to generation Y.

The results of the questionnaire show that they agree with most of these elements.
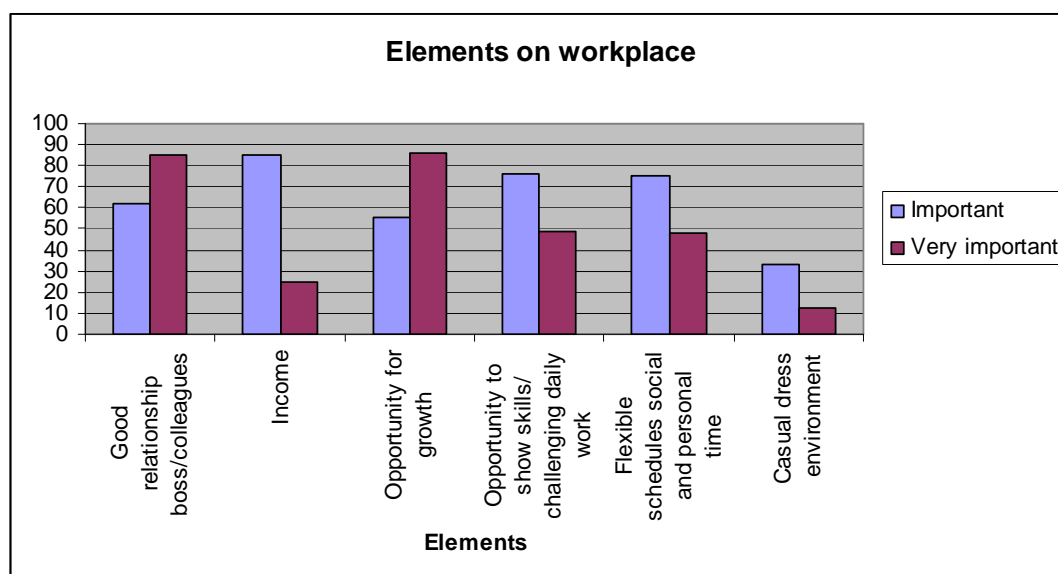
Graph 2

53% of the respondents find a good relationship with boss and colleagues crucial (85 respondents). Another 53% says that income is important. Furthermore, an opportunity for growth is considered very important by again 53% of the respondents. Fourthly, the opportunity to show of skills, challenging daily work and flexible schedules for social and personal time is important for 47% of the young professionals. On the other hand, the opinions were quite divided concerning the element of a casual dress environment. 16% of the young professionals find this inessential as shown in graph 4.4.

Did you ever apply for a job through the Internet?

Yes	#93	58%
No	#67	42%

Table 16

Do you want to add an element which is also important for you in a job?

No	#118	67%
Yes	#29	16%

Table 17

When you apply for a job do you send more information besides your resume and application letter? (thinking of a portfolio or something else)

No	#127	72%
Yes	#24	14%

Table 18

Do you add not work related information on your resume?

No	#77	34%
Yes	#77	34%

Table 19

Do you think personal branding could be something positive or negative?

Positive	#62	25%
Negative	#35	14%
other:	#49	20%

Table 20

How important do you classify the following aspects when presenting yourself? **You have to be consistent**		
	Not important at all	
1	#1	1%
2	#8	5%
3	#41	25%
4	#65	40%
5	#29	18%
	Very important	

Table 21

You have to be visible		
	Not important at all	
1	#1	1%
2	#7	4%
3	#34	21%
4	#77	48%
5	#25	16%
	Very important	

Table 22

You have to be competitive		
	Not important at all	
1	#4	2%
2	#22	14%
3	#59	37%
4	#46	29%
5	#13	8%
	Very important	

Table 23

You have to be focused	
	Not important at all
1	**#0, 0%**
2	**#4 2%**
3	**#26 16%**
4	**#73 45%**
5	**#41 25%**
	Very important

Table 24

You should go digital (online)	
	Not important at all
1	**#10 6%**
2	**#45 28%**
3	**#58 36%**
4	**#26 16%**
5	**#5 3%**
	Very important

Table 25

You have to live your dreams	
	Not important at all
1	**#0, 0%**
2	**#4 2%**
3	**#37 23%**
4	**#61 38%**
5	**#43 27%**
	Very important

Table 26

You should think different	
	Not important at all
1	#3 2%
2	#27 17%
3	#57 35%
4	#38 24%
5	#19 12%
	Very important

Table 27

Do you agree with the following statements about personal branding? "Personal branding can help you achieve your life goals"	
	Strongly disagree
1	#5 3%
2	#20 12%
3	#73 45%
4	#31 19%
5	#7 4%
	Strongly agree

Table 28

"Personal branding can help you enter the labour market in a more efficient way"	
	Strongly disagree
1	#3 2%
2	#6 4%
3	#73 45%
4	#46 29%
5	#6 4%
	Strongly agree

Table 29

"Whether you like it or not, you have a personal brand"	
	Strongly disagree
1	**#4** **2%**
2	**#10** **6%**
3	**#55** **34%**
4	**#47** **29%**
5	**#19** **12%**
	Strongly agree

Table 30

"To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You"	
	Strongly disagree
1	**#7** **4%**
2	**#21** **13%**
3	**#68** **42%**
4	**#28** **17%**
5	**#9** **6%**
	Strongly agree

Table 31

"Personal branding can help you distinguish yourself"	
	Strongly disagree
1	**#3** **2%**
2	**#12** **7%**
3	**#52** **32%**
4	**#50** **31%**
5	**#17** **11%**
	Strongly agree

Table 32

"A brand is a promise of what you bring to this world"	
	Strongly disagree
1	**#11** 7%
2	**#30** 19%
3	**#68** 42%
4	**#23** 14%
5	**#3** 2%
	Strongly agree

Table 33

"Personal branding leads to better, more interesting jobs and assignments"	
	Strongly disagree
1	**#9** 6%
2	**#22** 14%
3	**#69** 43%
4	**#29** 18%
5	**#6** 4%
	Strongly agree

Table 34

Appendix VI: Survey potential employers

This survey is made with the online program 'Thesis Tools' however, for this appendix a normal format is used.

Introduction
Personal Branding

This questionnaire is an important research method for my final thesis about personal branding! The main goal is to see if you use personal branding intentionally or unintentionally when hiring young professionals. In this context young professionals are people who are (almost) entering the labour market for the first time. The survey consists of 26 questions, related to several aspects of the subject, which are easily to fill in.

Good luck!

Personal questions
1. What is your age?
2. What is your sex?
   a. Masculine
   b. Feminine

3. In what kind of company do you work?
4. What is your function?
5. How many people do you hire per year?
6. How much time do you spend behind the computer and the Internet?
   a. More than 5 hours every day
   b. Less than 5 hours every day
   c. One hour every day
   d. Four or five times a week
   e. Two or three times a week
   f. Once a week

Questions concerning applying at your company
7. Is it possible to apply for a job in your company through the Internet (online recruitment)? (yes or no)

8. Do you think online recruitment is more efficient, please specify?

9. Do you ever use the Internet to look for background information of the applicant? (Google, social networks as Hyves, Facebook)

    a. No (go to question 11)

    b. Yes, I make use of;

10. What kind of background information are you looking for?

11. What type of resume immediately attracts your attention?

12. How much attention do you pay to the following criteria, when reading a resume? (scale: 1 I don't pay attention to this at all – 5 I pay a lot of attention to this)

a.	Work-related information	1	2	3	4	5
b.	Not work-related information	1	2	3	4	5
c.	Education	1	2	3	4	5
d.	Experiences	1	2	3	4	5
e.	Language skills	1	2	3	4	5
f.	Office skills (Word, PowerPoint, excel)	1	2	3	4	5
g.	Personal interests	1	2	3	4	5
h.	References	1	2	3	4	5
i.	The way it looks in general	1	2	3	4	5
j.	Grammar mistakes	1	2	3	4	5
k.	Relevance of the information	1	2	3	4	5
l.	Picture of the applicant	1	2	3	4	5

13. At your company, is a resume decisive for inviting applicants for a job interview?

14. Do you check references? (yes or no)

15. What is your description of a good resume, to make it look more attractive and remarkable between all those others?

16. In the United States people use video presentations of themselves when applying for a job. Do you think this is an effective way to present yourself to a company or organisation, why?

Question concerning a job interview

17. How important do you consider the following characteristics of the applicant, during a job interview? (scale: 1 not important at all – 5 very important)

a.	Job specific knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
b.	General knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
c.	Experience	1	2	3	4	5
d.	Personality	1	2	3	4	5
e.	Clothing	1	2	3	4	5
f.	Posture	1	2	3	4	5
g.	Attitude	1	2	3	4	5

18. What was the decisive reason for the last applicant you hired?

19. In what extent do you look at job skills, experience and personality during a job interview?

   a. For me job skills are more important than experience and personality
   b. For me experience is more important than job skills and personality
   c. For me personality is more important than job skills and experience
   d. Job skills, experience and personality are all equal and a combination of these skills is essential

Questions related to young professionals

20. What is the most important thing that you expect from an employee?

21. Young professionals are known for certain characteristics. Do you agree with the following statements. (scale 1 disagree a lot – 5 agree a lot)

a.	Young professionals are impatient	1	2	3	4	5
b.	Young professionals are demanding	1	2	3	4	5
c.	Young professionals are money hungry	1	2	3	4	5
d.	Young professionals are image driven	1	2	3	4	5
e.	Young professionals are goal-oriented	1	2	3	4	5
f.	Young professionals are expressive	1	2	3	4	5
g.	Young professionals are creative	1	2	3	4	5
h.	Young professionals are confident	1	2	3	4	5
i.	Young professionals are energetic	1	2	3	4	5

22. What are the main advantages of hiring young professionals?

23. Which difficulties did you have when hiring young professionals?

Questions related to personal branding

Personal branding is the process whereby people and their careers are marked as <u>brands</u>.

24. Are you familiar with the concept of personal branding? (yes or no)
25. Do you think personal branding could be something positive or negative, why?
26. Do you agree with the following statements about personal branding?
    (scale: 1 strongly disagree – 5 strongly agree)
    a. "Personal branding can help you achieve your life goals"
    b. "Personal branding can help you enter the labour market in a more efficient way"
    c. "Whether you like it or not, you have a personal brand"
    d. "To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You"
    e. "Personal branding can help you distinguish yourself"
    f. "A brand is a promise of what you bring to this world"
    g. "Personal branding leads to better, more interesting jobs and assignments"

Thank you very much for filling in this survey, it will be very useful for me!

Appendix VII: Results survey potential employers

In this appendix more statistics can be found of the questionnaire for potential employers. Graphs will illustrate the responses (only the graphs which are not already in the fourth chapter will be showed is this appendix). 17 people completed the questionnaire. Like mentioned in the fourth chapter the age difference of the potential employers lies between 26 and 63 years. This survey is mostly filled in by men as illustrated below.

What is your sex?

Masculine	#11	65%
Feminine	#6	35%

Table 1

In what kind of company do you work?

Given answers were; an international company, a scientific company, a software industry, an animation company for foreign languages, healthcare, high school, a water company, a consultancy firm and university, local government, pharmacy, a non-profit organisation, logistic and HR advise. To the question; **What is your function?** Most respondents answered manager. Others answered, marketing director, medical doctor, executive, principal, senior researcher, advisor and corporate recruiter.

How many people do you hire per year?

Most potential employers hire between the 5 and 10 employees per year. Two respondents hire 23 employees per year, one hires 45 people and another respondent hires 100 employees per year.

How much time do you spend behind the computer and the Internet?

More than 5 hours every day	#11	65%
Less than 5 hours every day	#5	29%
One hour every day	#1	6%
Four or five times a week	#0, 0%	
Two or three times a week	#0, 0%	
Once a week	#0, 0%	

Table 2

Is it possible to apply for a job in your company through the Internet (online recruitment)?

Yes	#13	76%
No	#4	24%

Table 3

Do you ever use the Internet to look for background information of the applicant? (Google, social network sites as Hyves, Facebook)

No	#5	18%
Yes	#12	43%

Table 4

How much attention do you pay to the following criteria, when reading a resume? **Work related information**	
	I don't pay attention to this at all
1	#0, 0%
2	#1 6%
3	#0, 0%
4	#6 35%
5	#10 59%
	I pay a lot of attention to this

Table 5

Not work related information	
	I don't pay attention to this at all
1	#0, 0%
2	#6 35%
3	#5 29%
4	#4 24%
5	#2 12%
	I pay a lot of attention to this

Table 6

Education

	I don't pay attention to this at all
1	#0, 0%
2	#1 6%
3	#5 29%
4	#5 29%
5	#6 35%
	I pay a lot of attention to this

Table 7

Experiences

	I don't pay attention to this at all
1	#0, 0%
2	#0, 0%
3	#2 12%
4	#9 53%
5	#6 35%
	I pay a lot of attention to this

Table 8

Language skills

	I don't pay attention to this at all
1	#0, 0%
2	#5 29%
3	#4 24%
4	#4 24%
5	#4 24%
	I pay a lot of attention to this

Table 9

Office skills (word, PowerPoint, excel)	
	I don't pay attention to this at all
1	**#1** 6%
2	**#8** 47%
3	**#3** 18%
4	**#3** 18%
5	**#2** 12%
	I pay a lot of attention to this

Table 10

Personal interests	
	I don't pay attention to this at all
1	**#1** 6%
2	**#3** 18%
3	**#6** 35%
4	**#6** 35%
5	**#1** 6%
	I pay a lot of attention to this

Table 11

References	
	I don't pay attention to this at all
1	**#2** 12%
2	**#4** 24%
3	**#6** 35%
4	**#4** 24%
5	**#1** 6%
	I pay a lot of attention to this

Table 12

The way it looks in general	
	I don't pay attention to this at all
1	**#0, 0%**
2	**#2** **12%**
3	**#2** **12%**
4	**#8** **47%**
5	**#5** **29%**
	I pay a lot of attention to this

Table 13

Grammar mistakes	
	I don't pay attention to this at all
1	**#0, 0%**
2	**#1** **6%**
3	**#4** **24%**
4	**#3** **18%**
5	**#9** **53%**
	I pay a lot of attention to this

Table 14

Relevance of the information	
	I don't pay attention to this at all
1	**#0, 0%**
2	**#0, 0%**
3	**#5** **29%**
4	**#8** **47%**
5	**#4** **24%**
	I pay a lot of attention to this

Table 15

Picture of the applicant

	I don't pay attention to this at all
1	**#6** 35%
2	**#3** 18%
3	**#3** 18%
4	**#3** 18%
5	**#2** 12%
	I pay a lot of attention to this

Table 16

At your company, is a resume decisive for inviting applicants for a job interview?

Yes	**#15** 88%
No	**#2** 12%

Table 17

Do you check references?

Yes	**#12** 71%
No	**#5** 29%

Table 18

In what extent do you look at job skills, experience and personality during a job interview?

For me job skills are more important than ...	**#2** 13%
For me experience is more important than j...	**#0, 0%**
For me personality is more important than ...	**#8** 50%
Job skills, experience and personality are...	**#6** 38%

Table 19

What does an employer expect from an employee?

Potential employers were asked to determine what they expect from an employee. Different answers were given such as willingness to get things done, ability to do what they have to do, well-balanced personality, loyalty, motivation, commitment, honesty and young professionals should be dynamic. Potential employers consider the following matters as advantages of young professionals.

First of all, their willingness to learn and they do not have family obligations yet that could conflict with required travel. Additionally, they are fearless to use new methods and techniques which makes them energetic, enthusiastic and creative. One can teach them a great deal and of course they are less expensive.

Some negative remarks regarding young professionals, according to potential employers, are that sometimes they are too confident about themselves. They feel they already know everything. Young professionals will leave the company when they find something better 'job hopping'. Another point is that young professionals are inexperienced. Finally, they expect a high salary. Young professionals could emphasise more on their strengths because according to potential employers there are various positive qualities. On the other hand, they should realise that one always starts at the beginning and that people need to work to achieve their goals. Personal branding could help with this.

Are you familiar with the concept of personal branding?

Yes	#7	41%
No	#10	59%

Table 20

Do you think personal branding could be something positive or negative, why?

Positive	#10	30%
Negative	#2	6%
other:	#6	18%

Table 21

Do you agree with the following statements about personal branding?
"Personal branding can help you achieve your life goals"

		Strongly disagree
1	#0, 0%	
2	#2	12%
3	#6	35%
4	#4	24%
5	#3	18%
		Strongly agree

Table 22

"Personal branding can help you enter the labour market in a more efficient way"	
	Strongly disagree
1	**#0, 0%**
2	**#2** **12%**
3	**#2** **12%**
4	**#9** **53%**
5	**#2** **12%**
	Strongly agree

Table 23

"Whether you like it or not, you have a personal brand"	
	Strongly disagree
1	**#1** **6%**
2	**#2** **12%**
3	**#3** **18%**
4	**#5** **29%**
5	**#4** **24%**
	Strongly agree

Table 24

"To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You"	
	Strongly disagree
1	**#1** **6%**
2	**#5** **29%**
3	**#2** **12%**
4	**#5** **29%**
5	**#2** **12%**
	Strongly agree

Table 25

"Personal branding can help you distinguish yourself"	
	Strongly disagree
1	**#1** **6%**
2	**#2** **12%**
3	**#1** **6%**
4	**#8** **47%**
5	**#3** **18%**
	Strongly agree

Table 26

"A brand is a promise of what you bring to this world"	
	Strongly disagree
1	**#1** **6%**
2	**#4** **24%**
3	**#7** **41%**
4	**#2** **12%**
5	**#1** **6%**
	Strongly agree

Table 27

"Personal branding leads to better, more interesting jobs and assignments"	
	Strongly disagree
1	**#1** **6%**
2	**#3** **18%**
3	**#7** **41%**
4	**#3** **18%**
5	**#1** **6%**
	Strongly agree

Table 28