



## The Brand You 50

Fifty Ways to Transform Yourself from an “Employee” into a Brand that Shouts Distinction, Commitment, and Passion!

by Tom Peters

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### Focus

Leadership & Mgt.  
Strategy  
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### Take-Aways

- Globalization will eliminate or change white-collar jobs forever.
- To survive the elimination of white-collar jobs, you need to become a distinctive brand. Incorporate yourself. Think of yourself as John – or Jane – Doe, Inc.
- Renew yourself every day. Learn new skills all the time. Disrupt your complacency.
- Like it or not, you need to sell yourself in the marketplace constantly.
- See your work in terms of projects that you do for clients, even if you have a job.
- Make your projects exciting, powerful “WOW” projects.
- Use the Web to find WOW projects and to advertise your interest in working on WOW projects.
- Don't neglect any details: work on your style and presentation, right down to your business card.
- Live by your network and your address book. Connections are a critical asset.
- "You are what you do." How you spend your time will define you.

### Rating (10 is best)

Overall

9

Applicability

9

Innovation

9

Style

8

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## Relevance

### What You Will Learn

In this Abstract, you will learn: 1) Why you need to become a distinct brand; 2) Fifty specific ways to become “Brand You;” and 3) Fifty actions you should take to make your brand real.

### Recommendation

Tom Peters strikes again with this segment of his trilogy on the changing nature of work. It’s a list and it sounds light until you read it as this seminal expert’s prescription for curing the lack of workplace security in the globalized world. This is required reading if you want to know what you should do – now – about the new precariousness. Amply sprinkling his lists and prose with capitals, italics and cussing, Peters takes you through 50 distinct yet interrelated concepts about work as it exists amid international business, technology and the Internet. He maintains that only the white-collar workers who brand and “Inc.” themselves will survive the changes that he anticipates in the next 15 years. And then he tells you how. As Peters says himself, the revolution has started; it is time to get on board. Given that call to arms, *getAbstract.com* recommends this hands-on book about how to take control of the rest of your career.

## Abstract

### Reinventing Work

Not too long ago, you could work in obscurity, laboring away without poking your head above the top edge of your cubicle. You cannot survive if you do that today. The game is played differently. Since the mid-1980s, the rules of the employment game have changed, forever altered by high technology, “globalization” and the Internet.

In today’s marketplace, you have to stand out to have an enduring career. By the end of this decade, the vast majority of today’s white collar jobs will be radically different, or gone. But this is not necessarily a bad thing. Do you want to live your father’s work life, trudging daily to the office, every day identical?

The key to the future is changing your point of view about work. Instead of envisioning yourself as an employee, recast yourself as an “independent contractor.” Rely on your own abilities to get work and keep it. Take charge of your track record and your achievements. Develop an individual relationship with the marketplace, just like a brand, “Brand You.”

You now live in a “Brand You-world” not an “employee world.” The employee-world has been left behind; it is the world of the last generation. If you are a brand, you have outgrown the world of employees. For instance, employees spend their time doing assigned work. As a personal brand, you spend your time on projects that matter, “WOW projects.” Employees in the old system ask before they act, write memos and avoid accountability to dodge potential blame. “Brand You-world” workers take action and take responsibility.

### Becoming Brand You

Transform yourself from an “employee into a brand that shouts distinction, commitment and passion” by embracing 50 operative concepts. Each one includes actions for you to take:

“When was the last time you asked: What do I want to be?”

“The new, brain-based economy is really the Old Economy. It asks us – Davy Crockett style – to live by our wits. To improvise.”

"About two years ago, I realized I was no longer a person but a brand."  
[– Martha Stewart]

"You are what you do."

"Everyone lives by selling something."  
[– Robert Louis Stevenson]

"Can you 'lead' and 'suck up' at the same time? In a world-class way? Absolutely!"

1. "It is up to you...and you alone" – If you are used to being a white-collar office worker, those days are over. Self-help is today's mantra. Now you get to be what you want to be. Action: Declare your independence and reach for your bootstraps.
2. "Finally: it's the white collar revolution" – Given that the next decade will see white collar jobs evaporate, running in place no longer works. Action: Gather with a group of peers undergoing the same shift and look at the future of work. Write a statement that affirms your independence. Be positive.
3. "Brand yourself" – In big corporations, old time job security had a paternal base. Do your job well and keep it forever. Those times are gone. Job security today belongs to the person with skills and a distinct identity, as expressed by a brand. Your survival is based on your brand. Action: Emphasize your abilities and build your network and your brand.
4. "Start now" – Muster a powerful quartet of tools to evaluate your personal brand. Action: First, assess your individual abilities. Second, create a small advertisement for yourself, as if you were being listed in the phone book's business section. Third, write a short sentence that outlines how you want to be positioned. Fourth, write your selling slogan.

### Stepping Out Independently

5. "Forget job. Forget task" – Having a job is too limiting. Instead, frame your work as projects you do for clients. Action: Become your projects. Make them worthwhile.
6. "Package yourself" – As a brand, you need packaging, but bring out your personality. Action: Think about your specific brand image. Study packaging.
7. "Inc. yourself" – If you are serious about taking control of your life, conceive of yourself as your own corporation. Action: Refer to yourself as Joe Doe – or Josephine Doe – Inc. Now, govern your day like a big shot.
8. "Brand You...Inc. is about what you value" – Spend your time on meaningful work. To get what you want, first identify your goals. Action: Decide on your ethical foundation and your objectives.
9. "Develop a portfolio of attributes and skills" – Do you have all the skills you need? Will you require a graduate degree or extra training? Action: For ideas, read relevant books, such as *Running a One-Person Business* by Claude Whitmyer and Salli Rasberry.

### Make Money and Implement Your Brand

10. "Understand how money is made" – Figure out your economic value in the marketplace, beyond your wages. This is the step where you do the math: costs, contributions, product value. Action: Study the comparables. Gather information. Calculate your potential billings. Identify your "unique economic proposition."
11. "Give the world a clear picture" – Show what your brand can do. How are you distinctive, reliable and "cool?" Action: Study people whose names are brands, like Donald Trump. If you needed a sales flyer, what would be in it? If you want to run something, go volunteer.
12. "Think job title" – Invent a job title that is your catalyst for the future. Action: Be loose and wild. Some samples: "Client Service Maniac," "Rocker of Boats" or "Passion Pilot."
13. "You are what you do" – How you spend your time defines what you accomplish. Focus on your real goal. Action: Be sure the way you use your time truly reflects your priorities.
14. "Embrace the real-world politics of implementation" – Change is uncomfortable. Know how to get it done. Action: Master politics and build your knowledge about power.

"I give seminars.  
All over the world.  
Johannesburg.  
Warsaw. Orlando.  
Auckland. Cincinnati. Snow. Ice.  
Hail. Tornadoes.  
No matter. Gotta  
show up. As  
scheduled....I  
must be...as a  
Brand You...  
absolutely...  
trustworthy."

"You run across  
somebody  
interesting. As a  
matter of course,  
ask her (him)  
what's the best  
thing she/he's  
read in the last 90  
days. Order it."

"Loyalty. New  
loyalty. Not 'logo  
loyalty.' But  
Rolodex loyalty.  
Network loyalty.  
Community  
loyalty. Extended  
family loyalty."

"Nobody gives  
you power. You  
must take it."  
[– Roseanne  
Barr, *American  
comediienne*]

### Seize Every Opportunity

15. "Turn crappy little tasks into gold" – Spot the opportunities that exist even in small jobs. Action: Take jobs no one else wants; make them enviable. Only do "WOW" work.
16. "Master bootstrapping" – Lack of cash is a spur. See everything as a potential resource. Action: Scrounge.
17. Build "a sterling portfolio of WOW! projects" – Your projects and experience make your resume valuable. Do quality projects that add up. Go for high passion. Action: Assess, cherish and rank your projects. Accrue a great portfolio. If it "rocks," you rock.
18. "Focus" – Channel your energy with "demonic" focus. View each project you have as a "WOW" project. Action: Master time-management. Maintain a beady-eyed, pinpointed focus on your brand. Narrow in on the one thing you want to master.

### Become Client and Network Oriented

19. "You are your clients I: Think client" – And, you are your projects. Your work defines you. You don't work for a boss doing a job; you serve clients doing projects. Action: Choose your clients wisely. They are who you are.
20. "You are your clients II: Obsess on clients" – Devour client comments. Be sympathetic, helpful and obsequious while leading the way. Action: Establish a trusting connection.
21. "Be noticeably good at something" – Become an expert with a distinctive, breathtaking piece of know-how you can sell. Action: Be more than superb; be meaningful.
22. "Manage the hell out of your community/network" – Making yourself into a brand takes a lot of people. Reach out and build constantly. Action: Systematize your address book software to carry the maximum data, update it constantly and knit it to your calendar.
23. Depend on "Rolodex loyalty. Network loyalty" – Place your loyalty with your broader professional community (nuclear scientists globally, not just at your university). Search for "cool/freaky/with it dudes" that disturb your complacency. Action: Stay cozy with your peers. To stay fresh, welcome unusual influences. Attend a bizarre seminar.

### Every Signal Is Meaningful: Design Yourself Boldly

24. "Design matters!...You...are a designer" – Control your presentation. Action: List 25 things that are components of your personal designed look. Be design conscious.
25. "Become a line-extension master" – Constantly extend your sales offerings. Keep your presentation new. Action: Build your future by constantly improving your product.
26. "You are your 'big ideas'" – Generate grand original ideas. Action: Be "gasp-worthy."
27. "Dare daily" – If you play it safe, the new economy will devour you. Be bold and daring. Action: Take on a project that frightens you. Do something risky for fun.
28. "Submit to the performance" – You, Inc. is a big show. So, dance. Action: Perform earnestly. This is your art. Make your performance count. Make your work exciting.
29. "Bosses" – If you are a boss, be delighted to have a Brand You employee, a source of independent talent. Action: Egg on your employees to take chances and excel.
30. "Identity" – A distinct, consistent identity is your main product. Action: Study and enhance your unique attributes, from talent to style.

### Always Promote Brand You

31. "A brand is a trust mark" – Your brand must be credible. Action: Emit trustworthiness.
32. "Obsess on your calling cards" – Small cards tell big stories. Action: Invest in a card that conveys your brand. It is your portrait.
33. "Build a Web site that wows" – Be different and intriguing. Show your creativity and sell your brand. Action: Use the Internet daily. Determine your web stratagem.
34. "You are your own PR agency" – Don't neglect any chance to tell your story and sell yourself. Action: "Join Toastmasters." Develop solid public speaking skills.

“Carpenters bend wood. Fletchers bend arrows. Wise men fashion themselves.”  
[– Buddha]

“This is my life. I plan to make it count. I plan to make it memorable. I plan to give my all. I plan to ...make art ... in accounting ... or information systems; in sales ...or customer service.”

35. “How about learned optimism?” – Optimistic enthusiasm works; spreading doom and darkness does not. Action: Grin. Do the “self-help stuff” you need to be upbeat.

### **Constant Curiosity, Constant Rebuilding, Constant Contacts**

36. “Renew! Renew! Renew!” – Never sit back and think you are done. Constant renewal keeps your Brand fresh and marketable. Action: Learn all the time. Grow with others.
37. “Invest in yourself” – The more you invest in personal renewal and growth, the better Brand You will do. Seek new people and places. Action: Plan your investment in renewal.
38. “Whet your appetite” – Success requires constant, passionate curiosity. Even though plateaus will come, get through them by learning and growing. Action: Study a stack of magazines you would not ordinarily consider. Click through odd websites. Dally in a shopping plaza. Invite someone new to lunch. Get provoked. Train yourself. Travel.
39. Develop “a great Board of Directors” – Get cover, wisdom and back up. Action: Assemble a group of advisors you trust. Include “closet renegades.” See each member regularly.
40. Create “a frontline university” – Connect often with people on the front lines to get first hand, unspun information. Action: Listen and learn. Lots.
41. “Never neglect the talent scout mode” – Working with talented people is an asset to your brand. Action: Gather talent. Connect with original people even if you’re not hiring.

### **Be Distinctive and Take Charge**

42. Be “special from the get-go!” – As a Brand, display these characteristics: honesty, openness, self-control, responsibility, warmth, genuineness, fairness, optimism, cooperation and forbearance. Action: Know your mission and aspirations. Don’t be “glib.”
43. “Lead!” – Be a leader, even if no one follows for now. Take charge. Don’t be limited by age or title. Action: Study leadership. Catalogue and emulate leaders’ characteristics.
44. “Become a ‘power freak’” – Accumulate and use power as if it were money. Don’t share. Action: Be politically savvy.
45. “What’s your formal word-of-mouth marketing plan?” – Get people to talk about you and spur your reputation. Action: Promote yourself daily. Define and market your unique product. Plan your buzz.
46. “The one woman/man global powerhouse” is possible – Do you have a message to shout from the rooftops? You can be heard globally if you want. Action: Climb up on the Web.

### **Everybody Has to Sell**

47. “Sell!” – To be Brand You, you must be willing to sell. Action: Take sales seriously. Make your “selling proposition” gripping and punchy.
48. “Ask for the business” – Once you sell, you have to wrap up the deal. Action: Close.
49. “Brand Yous are dis-loyal (to a particular corporate logo)” – Brand You people value flexibility, self-reliance and freedom, not corporate bonds. Action: Forget job security.
50. “Welcome to the Free Agent Nation” – Congratulations. You are your own company. Your purpose is clear. What you do counts.

## **About The Author**

Tom Peters is the co-author of *In Search of Excellence* (with Robert H. Waterman, Jr.) and *A Passion for Excellence* (with Nancy Austin), and is the author of *Thriving on Chaos*, *Liberation Management*, *The Tom Peters Seminar*, *The Pursuit of Wow!*, *The Circle of Innovation*, and the *Reinventing Work* series, of which this is the third book.