

The Brand You 50 : Or : Fifty Ways to Transform Yourself from an 'Employee' into a Brand That Shouts Distinction, Commitment, and Passion!

By Tom Peters

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Michael Goldhaber, writing in *Wired*, said, "If there is nothing very special about your work, no matter how hard you apply yourself you won't get noticed and that increasingly means you won't get paid much either. In times past you could be obscure yet secure -- now that's much harder."

Again: the white collar job as now configured is doomed. Soon. ("Downsizing" in the nineties will look like small change.) So what's the trick? There's only one: distinction. Or as we call it, turning yourself into a brand . . . Brand You.

A brand is nothing more than a sign of distinction. Right? Nike. Starbucks. Martha Stewart. The point (again): that's not the way we've thought about white collar workers--ourselves--over the past century. The "bureaucrat" on the finance staff is de facto faceless, plugging away, passing papers.


But now, in our view, she is born again, transformed from bureaucrat to the new star. She works in a professional service firm and works on projects that she'll be able to brag about years from now.

I call her/him the New American Professional, CEO of Me Inc. (even if Me Inc. is currently on someone's payroll) and, of course, of Brand You.

Step #1 in the model was the organization . . . a department turned into PSF 1.0. Step #2 is the individual . . . reborn as Brand You.

In 50 essential points, Tom Peters shows how to be committed to your craft, choose the right projects, how to improve networking, why you need to think fun is cool, and why it's important to piss some people off. He will enable you to turn yourself into an important and distinctive commodity. In short, he will show you how to turn yourself into . . . Brand You.

*See also the other 50List titles in the Reinventing Work series by Tom Peters -- **The Project50** and **The Professional Service Firm50** -- for additional information on how to make an impact in the professional world.*

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

If Dilbert and Tom Peters ever attended the same party, they'd probably find themselves in opposite corners. The cynical cartoon character would have a hard time in Peters's upbeat, high-energy world of "Cool-Beyond-Belief." *The Brand You50* is Peters's manifesto for today's knowledge workers. It joins his Reinventing Work series, which includes *The Projects50* and *The Professional Service Firm50*.

In *The Brand You50*, Peters sees a new kind of corporate citizen who believes that surviving means not blending in but standing out. He believes that "90+ percent of White Collar Jobs will be totally reinvented/reconceived in the next decade" and that job security means developing marketable skills, making yourself distinct and memorable, and developing your network ability. His list-filled prescriptions cover everything; for example, "You *are* Your Rolodex I: BRAND YOU IS A TEAM" (no. 22), "Consider your 'product line'" (no. 25), "Work on your Optimism" (no. 35), "Sell. SELL. *SELL!!!*" (no. 47). While the book is overwhelming at times--its hyperactive typography pretty much shouts at you--any baby boomer thinking about his or her career will find much to consider. --*Harry C. Edwards*

Review

Technology is changing almost everything. Management guru Tom Peters argues it's also going to change the entire landscape of work. In his set of self-help books for professionals, the Reinventing Work series, he declares that "90-plus percent of white-collar jobs will disappear."

Downsizing ain't over, but Peters claims he can help you through it.

The employment landscape is going to be full of "free agents," he says, and if these newly "freed" individuals want to succeed, they'll need a new approach to their jobs. One way is by approaching work as a set of projects. Find out what's most interesting about each project and thrive on that, Peters advises.

In his latest publishing project, Peters urges readers to forget about loyalty to a particular company and replace it with a self-motivated dedication to the work at hand.

The entire book series has the feel of something transcribed from one of Peters' motivational speeches; his use of bold letters, ellipses, exclamation points and oversize type is perhaps a better fit with the lecture circuit than the publishing world.

Knopf plans five books in the Reinventing Work series, but for now, there are three: *The Brand You*, *The Project* and *The Professional Service Firm*.

Each of the pocket-size hardbacks starts with a description of an unemployed, Dilbert-ized landscape, followed by 50 ways to sidestep such a fate. In *The Brand You*, the list of 50 ideas includes a chapter titled "'Inc.' Yourself." After a comment on the concept, Peters launches into The Nub, his plan for making the affirmations take flight. The idea is to visualize yourself as a company - with departments, goals, bottom

lines, branding. The chapters close with a Thing to Do section. In this case, it's two things: adding an "Inc." to your name, and treating every to-do list like you're preparing for the next quarterly board meeting.

By turning everyday work into interesting and inspiring projects, Peters believes workers will become self-motivated, completed projects will become more innovative and companies will become less stagnant.

Peters constantly reassures readers that they are worthy of independence. Anyone can follow the path to success, he encourages, although he tempers his enthusiasm with comments like, "I'm not living in dreamland. I know not everyone can be a superstar."

The free-agent concept applies particularly well to the online industry, where companies must grow quickly to have more than a slim chance of succeeding. In a free-agent world, workers aren't disappointed when their company tanks, but instead move on to the next project. In fact, the rampant job-hopping in the Internet Economy has been one of the original drivers of the free-agent workforce. Establishing a reputation, networking and positioning one's easily digestible brand: That's perfect for the Net.

If you're looking for rose-colored lenses for your job, Peters has what you need. This self-help series is mostly about making work fun, which isn't a bad idea, after all.

- Laura Rich -- From The Industry Standard

From the Inside Flap

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Carol Smith:

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