



CHAPTER EXCERPT

"Steve Jones knows a thing or two. Listen and take notes." —GENE SIMMONS

START YOU ↑ UP



ROCK STAR SECRETS TO UNLEASH YOUR
PERSONAL BRAND & SET YOUR CAREER ON FIRE

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AVAILABLE WHEREVER BOOKS ARE SOLD

CHAPTER ONE



WHY YOU NEED A ROCK STAR PERSONAL BRAND

Your life is too short to dread 4,420 Monday mornings. That's how many times you'll wake up on a Monday, assuming you live to be eighty-five. The vast majority of us will greet those Monday mornings with loathing, drowning out the pain with copious amounts of coffee and the knowledge that, if we can just survive another four sleeps, Friday will once again grace us with her promise of a weekend of freedom from the shackles of our jobs.

That's no way to wake up 4,420 times. It is a terrible way to spend 1/7 of your life.

Despite Loverboy's early '80s assertion, not everybody is actually working with the weekend as their goal. Most

people are. But become a rock star, and you break out of that cycle and build a life and career where Monday mornings are as exciting as Friday afternoons. The reality is that rock stars don't care what day it is. And of course being a rock star in this case doesn't mean literally playing music on stage. It means being famous for whatever it is you do, no matter how exciting or mundane it may seem. I believe there are rock star salespeople, rock star waitresses, rock star small business owners, and rock star trash collectors. Being a rock star simply means being among the very best at what you do, having an absolute blast doing it, making people very happy with the end result, and hopefully pocketing a handsome reward for your efforts.

Rock stars understand that they aren't just people; they aren't just a name and a face. Rock stars realize that they are real-life brands. Just like Coke, Mercedes-Benz, and Ben & Jerry's, rock stars are famous for something. They represent something special to their fans. When people think of famous musicians—and even the singers and bands that they dislike—they immediately conjure together a clear and very specific image of how that rock star looks and sounds, how the rock star acts, and what the rock star stands for.

Mention Kiss, and nearly everyone identifies their comic book makeup, pyrotechnics, and Gene Simmons's famous tongue.

Ask people about Lady Gaga, and they will almost universally talk about her outrageous costumes and her very public views on gay rights and anti-bullying.

Bob Dylan is a poet and troubadour with a nasal voice, a love-or-hate generational sound of change.

P!nk represents feminine power and positivity, with a look and message that encourages her fans to celebrate their individuality.

The Rolling Stones? The elder[ly] statesmen of rock, famous for Mick Jagger's moves (and lips!) and Keith Richards's legendary ability to survive whatever abuse he could subject his body to.

Adele stands for substance over style, an astonishingly powerful voice combined with a refreshingly everywoman look and attitude that endears her to fans.

Think of any famous rock star and you can instantly hear their music, see them on stage, and even picture how they act offstage, even though you've probably never met them. You often know what they stand for politically and how they feel about important issues. In some cases, just thinking of a famous rock star can often ignite all of your senses! Aside from sight and sound (the obvious ones), think about how would it feel, smell, and taste to crack open an ice-cold Landshark Lager on a hot summer day with Jimmy Buffett at a hole-in-the-wall bar on Duval Street in Key West. That's a personal brand at work, turning on all of your senses at once.

The power of these rock-star personal brands extends beyond mere sensory reactions. Strong personal brands are *emotional* reactions. How would Bono break up a fight instigated by a bully? What would Bruce Springsteen say to the owner of a company who wants to move his American

factory to China? What would Jack Johnson be doing if you met up with him on a beach in Hale'iwa?

That's what personal branding is all about. At the mere mention of a name, a complete image is formed and decisions are subconsciously made about whether you like them or not. It happens when you think of rock stars, and it happens when other people think about you; you are a brand! Your challenge is to understand and build your personal brand in such a way as to open up career opportunities, increase your level of happiness and productivity, make more money, and become famous for what you do.

WHAT IS A BRAND?

When you think of a brand, what comes to mind first?

If you're like most people, you think about visuals and logos. Maybe it is because the concept of "branding" extends back to cattle ranchers marking their herds. Most of us think of a brand as a look, a logo, and a set of colors that identify a company. However, that is just scratching the surface.

To understand what a brand really is, think about some logos. All of them are famous brands. When you consider the logo, make note of how you feel about the brand. See the logo in your mind's eye, and then close your eyes and consider what your brain and your heart are telling you about that company.

Sit back, close your eyes, and visualize the following well-known logos for these famous brands: The Apple™ computer logo, with the famous bite (or is it a byte?) on

the right side; the rugged Harley-Davidson™ shield; British Petroleum—BP™—and its white, yellow, and green sunburst; BMW™, with its clean, black ring, embossed with the company's initials, encircling the four white and blue quadrants; and the interlocked “N” and “Y” of the New York Yankees organization.

When you think about the Apple logo, you might first recall the Apple devices that you use. Now think about why you use those devices. What do you love about your iPhone or iPad? What can you accomplish with them? How does it feel when you use them? Apple makes electronic devices and computers, for sure. But what the brand stands for is innovation, progress, and intuitive technology.

Similarly, Harley-Davidson makes motorcycles, but the essence of the brand goes far deeper. Harley buyers are purchasing more than just a bike; they are purchasing the lifestyle that goes with a Harley. They are buying into the rebel attitude and buying a bike that tells the world that they aren't like everybody else.

BP, or British Petroleum, likely stands for one thing in the minds of most North Americans. Despite the company's efforts to erase the perception, BP still represents the worst environmental disaster in decades, the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill. When you see their logo, there is a very good chance that the oil spill and its impact immediately come to mind.

BMW has built a brand based on performance. While there are safer cars, faster cars, more expensive cars, and tougher cars, BMW is the car people turn to when they want a performance vehicle.

If I let my inner Red Sox fan speak, the New York Yankees represent everything that is wrong with baseball. No doubt that the Yankees logo sparks a reaction in any ball fan, but that emotional reaction varies based on whether you root for the pinstripes or not. Looking at the logo, Yankees fans see the most valuable franchise in baseball, a team that has won more championships than anyone else, and a team that everyone wants to play for. Sox fans and others see a team that has used its deep pockets to buy pennants. It depends which side of the fence you're on.

In every case, the real essence of the brand isn't the logo itself, but rather the emotional reactions that happen when you see the logo or interact with the brand. Rather than the logo, the slogan, or the color scheme, the brand is the emotional reaction that takes place in the heart of the customer—it is how your customer “feels” a product. Likewise, your personal brand is how other people feel about you.

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

The heart really is what all this branding stuff is all about. The heart rules everything! How you feel determines how you act. In fact, I believe that nearly every purchasing decision is made with the heart, not the head. The brain has a role, for sure, but it is a far smaller role than we think. The brain is simply there to back up the heart's decision.

You've probably had the experience before of finding yourself wanting something that you logically know you don't really need. You know you can live without it, but you

buy it anyway. Think about your last vacation and the useless souvenirs you bought that are now stuffed in a closet somewhere. If your brain made the buying decision, it would have said to you, “Those sombreros are useless and you’ll never wear them.” But it didn’t happen that way. Your heart said, “This vacation has been so amazing that I want to take a piece of Cancun home with me, and these sombreros are perfect. I’ll wear them on a patio this summer and drink Corona, and memories of this vacation will come flooding back.” Once your heart made its intentions clear, your head simply justified. “Sounds good to me,” your brain said.

When summer came, the sombreros were collecting dust. You should have listened to your brain, but you didn’t because you couldn’t. Your heart buys . . . your head justifies.

When I was in my early twenties, I desperately wanted a soft-top, four-wheel-drive Jeep. The desire in my heart was so strong that it was able to convince my head that a Jeep was the best purchase for me. It didn’t have the best fuel economy or the best safety rating—in fact it was terrible on both counts. It had two useful seats, because accessing the back seats was torture. There was essentially no cargo space in the back. In the winter, it was freezing cold, with only a thin layer of fabric saving me from the frigid weather. On so many criteria, the Jeep was a terrible idea.

So I bought a Jeep. My heart was able to convince my head. I didn’t drive long distances, so fuel economy didn’t matter. At twenty-two I was invincible, so safety didn’t concern me. With only my wife and me to worry about, who needed back seats? And I could buy an extra heater for the

cold winter days. Most of all, I wanted that Jeep because it was a cool-looking off-road machine that sent a message to the world that I was the kind of person who didn't follow the beaten path. The Jeep spoke to my heart.

The heart buys. The head justifies.

One cold winter day a few months later, shortly after the soft top was sliced open and the heater stolen, my wife and I discovered that we would be having our first child. We were going to need that back seat. And working heat.

We sold the Jeep and bought a minivan.

GETTING PERSONAL

So what does my story about trading in my Jeep for a Dodge Grand Caravan have to do with your career? Well, just like the Jeep represented something in my heart and mind, you represent something in the hearts and minds of those around you. Just like owning a Jeep said something about me, the friendships and relationships people have with you say something about them.

When your name is mentioned or when you walk in a room, people instantly conjure up feelings and images associated with you. Just as they do with products, people decide almost instantaneously if they like you or not and whether they will engage you or not. You are a brand.

Just as the world-famous corporate brands do, you advertise, promote, and market your brand. Every day, the things you do, the way you act, the words you choose, and the people you associate with help to shape, positively or negatively,

how brand “you” is perceived by others. That is the core of your personal brand . . . *how others perceive you*. It might not line up with reality, and it might not be exactly what you want it to be, but it exists in the minds of everyone who meets you or comes into contact with you: in person, online, via stories and rumors, or through work you’ve done.

To put it succinctly, you are what they think you are. Perceptions are realities.

When you are looking for a job, your personal brand can often be the difference between a lucrative, life-changing offer and another résumé tossed in the scrap heap. When you already have a job, a strong personal brand can be your key to fast-track the corporate ladder, gaining more security and financial reward as you go. In interpersonal relationships, your personal brand is essential in establishing trust and determining what kind of friend you are to others. In every aspect of your personal and professional life, your personal brand influences how people treat you.

Like it or not, you are constantly being judged on your looks, words, actions, and intentions. *Everything you do is being judged!* It is a frightening and seriously unfair reality, but it is reality nonetheless. The food you order at a business lunch, the color of your socks, the jokes you tell, your hairstyle, the friends you keep, and the car you drive are just a few of the ways you are being judged every single day. The good news is that you have some degree of control over all of them. The bad news is that once someone makes up their mind about you, changing it is nearly impossible. Indeed, the stakes are very high.

You need a rock-star personal brand. You need to clearly and powerfully represent something to people. You cannot afford to be ambiguous.

What will people feel when they meet you?

“Even if you want to hate me, I’m okay with it. Just fucking feel something.” —Nikki Sixx



The Rock Star Playlist: Five Songs That Mention Actual Brands

1. **“Little Red Corvette” by Prince.** This song sounds like an ode to the classic American sports car, but in reality the “corvette” Prince is singing about is a woman with whom he has just had a one-night stand. In typical Prince fashion, he works in plenty of double-entendre throughout the song. Newlywed Fleetwood Mac singer Stevie Nicks wrote her hit “Stand Back” in her honeymoon suite after hearing “Little Red Corvette” on the radio on her wedding day. Prince is officially listed as a cowriter on the song and made a cameo keyboard appearance in the studio.
2. **“Cadillac Ranch” by Bruce Springsteen.** The song was never a single in America, but it remains one of his fan favorites. Despite sounding fun and innocent, the message, according to music critic Dave Marsh, is really all about the inevitability of death. It was one of the key tracks on Springsteen’s 1980 album *The River*.
3. **“Smells Like Teen Spirit” by Nirvana.** When a friend spray-painted “Kurt smells like teen spirit” on his apartment wall, Kurt Cobain interpreted it as a message about youth

and rebellion. What Kathleen Hanna really meant to do was ridicule him for smelling like the deodorant Teen Spirit, which his then-girlfriend used. Instead, she inspired one of the greatest rock songs ever made. Kurt claims he wasn't aware of the brand association until months after the song was recorded.

4. **“The Jump Off” by Lil’ Kim.** Although not a major pop hit, Lil’ Kim does accomplish quite a feat in this song, mentioning thirteen different brands in the tune, an unofficial record for a song. She mentions, Bacardi, Barbie, Bvlgari, Ferrari, Bentley, Hummer, Mercedes Benz, Escalade, Jaguar, Woolrich, Sprite, Playboy, and Range Rover.
5. **“Take Me Out To The Ball Game.”** Probably one of the first mentions of a brand in a popular song is this 1908 baseball classic written by Jack Norworth and Albert Von Tilzer. Although neither of them had ever been to a baseball game, the song would go on to become the unofficial anthem of the sport. Today, you’ll hear it in nearly every major and minor league ballpark during the seventh inning stretch. The brand mentioned? Cracker Jack, of course. (And by the way, on Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young’s “CSNY2K” tour in 2000, they played this song, complete with a video of legendary sportscaster Harry Caray, during a break in their music.)