

# Web branding ups 'saleability'

Branding isn't limited to items. For better opportunities, experts say we need to build our network online, our brand

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Thanks to the Internet, there's a rising need for self-branding as packaging, promoting and presenting oneself is just not good enough in today's cut-throat competitive world. In web marketers' lingo we are no more mere professionals, workers or job titles, each one of us is a brand, the unique, the better.

With the emergence of Internet and Google it is critical to control the information that crops up when your name is searched on search engines by a potential employer, business partner or potential customer. Hence there's a need to weed out the content you don't want others to see.

One can begin by choosing the right network — LinkedIn or ApnaCircle are recommended by branding and job search specialists as these also provide information on job openings, mentoring programs and interesting groups among others.

Some in the industry explain that branding isn't a new phenomenon and people have just begun realising its far-reaching effects. Yogesh Bansal,

CEO of Apna Circle, elucidates, "Branding has always existed, people just didn't focus on it. Earlier there was dearth of platforms. With just a single national TV channel it was difficult to become a celebrity and personal advertising was non-existent. Internet sites and blogs have opened new vistas now."

Earlier just talent and entertainment-based social networking thrived, but the confident current crop of actors, models and singers from even the smaller towns upload material, connect with friends and create bands of people. As a result within no time a whopping 4.5 million people have begun using social networking as a platform to connect. Vivek Bahl, associate vice president of *Ibibo.com*, thinks that self-branding has empowered netizens. He says, "A few decades back

designers, actors, musicians and artists had no avenue to advertise and expand their reach. Today Internet has given us the opportunity to personally interact with target groups and individuals and reach to other forums through



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**Branding to the rescue:** By creating a Web presence, when need arises one can always tap network to land a better, lucrative job

by my network rather than hiring someone from job portals."

Creation of online profile is just the beginning. It is important to be part of a larger group —

myriad avenues like activities and blogs." He calls these "smart marketing techniques" that help an individual collate larger audience and thrive over competition.

Prevalent job trends also explain why personal branding is so important. Both job seekers and employers today have moved a lion's share of their operations to the Web and techies say this translates into two distinct category of users on the Net-active job seekers and the passive ones — those who build their network and credibility for better future opportunities. Yogesh explains from a hirer's perspective, "When hiring I'll certainly prefer someone referred

alumni, former employees from your last place of work, trade groups where you can join and chip in with your ideas. Nikhil Bathla, founder and managing director of YO! Creations, an online marketing and advertising agency, informs, "Branding today has implications far beyond corporate logos, mission statements and theme songs. Each individual is a brand who has to effectively tell his circle of contacts (and beyond) about who they are and how dexterous they are at their profession. In order to succeed, you need to let your own personality, values and expertise shine." Internet has brought branding down to an inter-personal level and to establish credibility one needs to be unique.



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