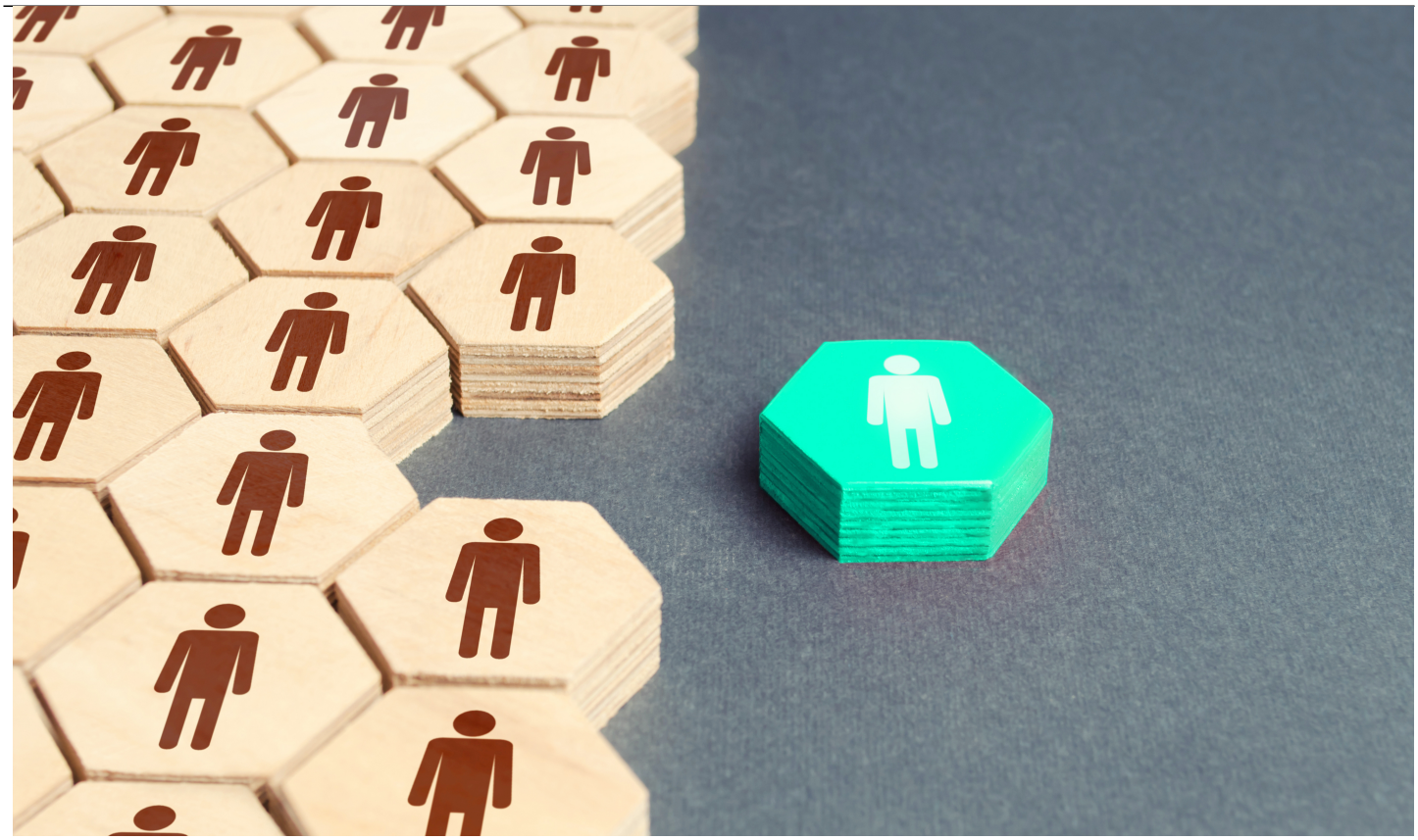
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Personal Branding: Why Should I Build a Profile Outside My Company?

Skills and Professional Development



As I sat down next to the other women, I felt nervous. Why had I agreed to speak in front of so many people? Would my thoughts resonate with them?

A few years ago, I spoke at a Future Women event in Sydney. Although I was nervous before the panel discussion, my jitters were quickly replaced by the adrenaline of talking about things I was passionate about. When I found out the panel discussion was being turned into a podcast on leadership, I was bewildered and exhilarated.

But when the buzz died down, I was left wondering how I could experience this all again.

Feeling like an imposter

When I first started posting content on LinkedIn, I only really had one intention: to talk about how I was feeling through the uncertainty of the pandemic. It was my way of replacing the now-absent watercooler chat at work and dinner parties with friends and family. I hadn't really considered that my content would reach an audience wider than friends, family, coworkers (past and present), and acquaintances from my life.

One day, however, I exchanged messages with a woman I had never met before — a woman who had a sizeable following and who had published a book. She asked me if I would like to connect, and we had soon arranged a time to chat over Zoom.

I felt like an imposter. Why would she want to talk to me? The reality was we had plenty to talk about

— shared passions and ideals and a hope for change and for equality.

That was the first of many conversations I have now had with people I have never met in person.

Why is this relevant to in-house lawyers?

As in-house lawyers, we can become insular in our outlook. After all, our clients work with us. What then is the point of building an external profile? Why does it matter?

1. Speaking and other opportunities

As you build a personal brand, you develop a reputation for being an authority in your area of practice or for exemplifying certain leadership qualities or traits. For me, I have become known for my thoughts on authenticity and vulnerability in leadership. For you, that area could be technology, compliance and ethics, or Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).

Before I started engaging on LinkedIn and building my personal brand, I had only ever spoken at the Future Women event previously mentioned. Over the last six months, however, I have been approached to participate in video interviews and podcasts, write articles (such as this one!), and speak at events.

As you build your personal brand, people will have your name front of mind when they are thinking about these opportunities. Each one of these opportunities further amplifies the brand you are creating and establishes you as a thought leader.

2. Future career opportunities

Change is the new normal. The pace of technological change is requiring businesses to continually adapt and pivot, and the average lifespan of companies has shrunk.

There is no longer any room for complacency when it comes to job stability. Restructures and redundancies are not unusual, and people are changing jobs more often than ever before.

Building a personal brand and an external profile can help position you as a forerunner for potential opportunities that may arise in the future. Recruiters and potential employers may feel that they already know you, including your values and personality, particularly if you are building a personal brand through social media. The “known” is generally far more appealing than the “unknown” when it comes to hiring decisions.

3. Community and connection

One of the aspects of engaging on LinkedIn that I love the most is the community that I have curated through the topics I regularly discuss. Areas such as DEI, both within the legal profession and in general; mental health, including my own pregnancy and miscarriage-related issues; parenting challenges; and empathy and kindness in leadership.

Despite being stuck in lockdown for a large part of 2020, I have never felt such a sense of community and support. People often think of social media as being inauthentic — that people are telling you only what you want to hear.

There is definitely an element of truth to that for some people. However, there are also many who are genuinely looking to learn and grow alongside others who have similar views or who can offer a different perspective.

At the end of 2020, I wrote a post on LinkedIn reflecting on the year and its impact on me. I described the year as one of immense personal growth and learning. I have grown as a person, as a lawyer, as a leader, and as a parent through the interactions I have had with others I have met through LinkedIn.

4. Opportunities to give back

In addition to speaking and writing opportunities, becoming known as an authority or expert in a certain area of practice or leadership can provide you with opportunities to give back to others — both within and outside of the legal profession. These opportunities may include mentoring or becoming actively involved in community groups, NGOs, or charities that work in areas that resonate with and speak to your own personal passions and causes.

These opportunities can be incredibly fulfilling, as they tap into a part of you that may very well have been dormant. Such engagement and personal satisfaction can only enhance the way you show up at work and in life.

5. Enhancing your company's profile

Companies often focus on building their brand, including their own social media pages. Interestingly, on platforms such as LinkedIn, a message distributed through a personal page has far more reach and engagement than one distributed through a corporate page.

When you build your personal brand, your company’s brand indirectly grows with you.

Time to get started

In a world defined by volatility and uncertainty, it’s important to set yourself up for success both within and outside of the company where you work. Social media can be daunting; however, it is the fastest way to effectively build your personal brand and network.

Give yourself the best chance possible by getting started.

Niti Nadarajah



Founder, Coach, and Freelance General Counsel

Coaching by Niti

After serving as the head of the legal team for Philip Morris in Australia and the Pacific Islands and member of the local management team where she advised on a variety of legal issues in a heavily regulated environment, she has transitioned to coaching and acting as a freelance GC.

She is an advocate for a range of issues at work, from mental health to flexibility, gender equity and authentic and inclusive leadership. She has also advocated for other issues such as pregnancy loss,

DEI in all its forms, and changing the old-school culture of the legal profession on LinkedIn and Clubhouse, in the hope that her voice, and her stories, might just make a difference.