

The business end



MARKETING

ONE-MAN BRAND

Self-promotion is just the start when an individual and their expertise are packaged up into a personal brand.

Report: Leo D'Angelo Fisher

● Retail consultant Brian Walker has neither a medical degree nor a PhD, but to his clients, he is the Retail Doctor.

Since launching his business three years ago, Walker's "personal brand" has been inextricably linked with the name of his business: The Retail Doctor. "The personal brand has been a very deliberate strategy from day one: it explains who I am and encapsulates what my business is about," Walker says.

Walker became a consultant after a successful career as a senior manager in the retail and franchising sectors, including with The Athlete's Foot, Hutchison Telecommunications, Angus & Coote, and Whitcoulls in New Zealand.

As a former retail executive, Walker understands the power of branding. "I'm a great believer in the concept of the personal brand," he says. "The brand

has to be one that people can easily understand, is memorable and instantly conveys the attributes and values that I represent, and as the business grows, that the business represents."

Starting out on his own, Walker used the catchy Retail Doctor moniker to promote himself as a consultant, speaker and contributor to the retail trade media. Today, his Sydney business employs five staff, has annual turnover of \$1.5 million, and a client portfolio that includes National Australia Bank, fashion retailer Herringbone and Gloria Jean's Coffees.

The challenge now, Walker says, is to ensure that the personal brand does not

overshadow the corporate brand. "For the first period of growth, it's been very much Brian Walker the Retail Doctor, but as we expand the business it will become Brian Walker of the Retail Doctor Group," he says. "We want the business to be expandable and replicable [so] the focus needs to be on the business and the opportunities it can create for others."

Personal branding – popularised by United States management author Tom Peters more than a decade ago – is about individuals building a reputation in their field, differentiating themselves from their peers and enhancing their value in the eyes of clients and employers.

The personal is professional

PERSONALITY

Work out your personality characteristics. Take a personal audit to determine your values and vision, your goals, strengths and weaknesses.

PERCEPTIONS

What do people say about you? How do they perceive you? Do these descriptions align with your values and what you stand for?

PEOPLE

Take a look at outside factors, such as the company you work for or the company you keep, that influence your personal brand.

PRESENCE

Personal manner and attitude play an important part in how others will perceive you and your personal brand.

PACKAGE

Your dress and appearance combine to play an important role in how others see and respond to you.

Source: Sue Currie, Shine Communications Consultancy