

Just Me

The Business Woman's
Personal Branding Guide



Great Lessons for Women Who Want
to Lead and Own Businesses

EDITED AND INTRODUCED BY

J. Todd Rhoad

Just Me
The Business Woman's
Personal Branding Guide

Insights from some of the
greatest female minds
and
J. Todd Rhoad

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Common Purpose Branding

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Our personal brand, whether an individual or an organization, is a reflection of who we are. It is a definition of an ideal that binds like-minded people in a relationship of common purpose. Branding advice often focuses on differentiation to lure its audience into the purchase consideration set. But is a focus on differentiation the best approach? Is it possible to develop and grow a customer base much faster and stronger by illuminating the commonalities rather than the differences? The UK's Carrie Green, founder of the Female Entrepreneur's Association and editor-in-chief of one of the fastest growing magazines for female entrepreneurs, "This Girl Means Business," has developed an interesting model for branding that focuses on commonality and consistency. Carrie found her success by matching her purpose in life with the purpose of her audience. If you're struggling to understand how to reach your audience and stay connected, Carrie has a great solution. Her recipe is simple but extremely powerful and is captured beautifully in her story.

THE CARRIE GREEN STORY

It all started when she was but a child, raised by an entrepreneurial father with a passion for personal

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development. Her father, an avid reader of all the experts, heavily impressed upon her their concepts to becoming a better person. “When I was nine or ten years old, he would send me and my sisters and brothers on courses for the weekend to learn about things like positive thinking and visualization. Then, as a teenager, he would buy me books like *Think and Grow Rich* and all books by Jim Rohn. He used to make me watch all of Jim Rohn’s videos,” Carrie explains. She studied Stephen Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People*, and his son, Sean Covey, who wrote *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*. At such a young age, Carrie absorbed as many of the concepts as she could but felt that most of it went right over her head. It wasn’t until years later that her father’s lessons would prove useful. In 2004, Carrie enrolled at the University of Birmingham to study Law. After her first year, she ran out of money and didn’t know what she was going to do. Luckily, she was offered an opportunity to start an online mobile phone unlocking business as a reseller. And she did.

Finding herself neck deep in unfamiliar territory, Carrie soon felt all the things her dad taught her flooding every cell in her mind. It was time to begin investing a lot of effort to learn how to run a business and master a new mindset. She went back to reading books, watching videos, meeting new people and asking a lot of questions. When she wasn’t studying for her law degree, she was learning something new that she could apply to her business. When she was in third year, she enrolled in a night class to learn about web development. Then, she would quickly apply this learning to advertisements and landing pages. “It was

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all trial and error – I was constantly tweaking and testing.” By the time Carrie graduated in 2009 with her law degree, she had developed a really successful business. Unfortunately, that success placed her in a rather precarious situation: to further the path of a lawyer or continue to grow her business. After a lot of thought, she decided that she had to grow her business and, most importantly, take it global.

This decision took Carrie back to Business 101, where her time was spent learning and researching on how to be global, how to get into international markets and how to get new suppliers abroad. By 2009, she had reached an audience of about 100,000 people with thousands placing orders every single month. Carrie then came up with the idea to ask customers to provide a video testimonial. Little did she know how valuable this idea would become. Upon receiving videos, she posted them on YouTube along with a promotional code that provided a 20% discount. The videos were viewed by over 500,000 people and served as a sign that she was tapping into the power of the Internet. However, it got to the point that she was running the business all by herself. Carrie converted one of her bedrooms into an office, which turned out to be her source of isolation. “A lot of my friends were in jobs and were meeting like-minded people all of the time. I just sat by myself all the time, not meeting anyone just like me and eventually I started to feel myself spiral downward, feeling more and more lonely,” she explained.

Eventually, the solitary confinement brought Carrie to a breaking point. She packed her bags and moved to Australia in hopes of having an epiphany. After three

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months, Carrie still didn't have a solution to her problem. She was forced to go back to what she knew so well; that is, learning. When she returned to the UK, she dove head first into the book "The E-Myth" by Michael Gerber. In this book, Gerber suggests at one point to imagine walking in a room where your friends and family are sitting in chairs. As you get to the front of room you see a box. Suddenly you realize that you are in the box. It's your funeral. Gerber asks you to consider what you want your family and friends to be able to say about you, the life you lived and the kind of person you were. From this exercise, Carrie realized that she enjoyed building businesses, not the phone business. She wasn't passionate about mobile phones and the loneliness made her feel "off track." Actually, she was never really on track. "I never really thought about what I wanted to do with my life. At this point, it was all about the information my dad had shared with me as it all came flooding back to me, such as only having one life to live and do all the things you want to do. I really loved building businesses and personal development." Again, Carrie reverted back to what she knew and what she loved. She knew how to build a business. She knew about personal development. She knew about women. Combining these components of her being, she found her calling, which was to inspire and empower women to turn their ideas into reality.

In 2011, her next adventure started with a simple website and reaching out to women within her own network. Carrie started by asking them if they would share their story to help inspire other women and help them overcome their challenges. This is how it all started. Carrie began to share compelling and inspiring

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content that would help others want to share their story. The goal was to help others get out there, get on the right track, feel amazing and reach their potential. Carrie had developed a self-sustaining model for business branded by a few things that truly defined her.

Carrie finally had her mission and she felt she had to be really clear on what it was about and who she was trying to reach. This is the moment Carrie revealed the most important aspect of her brand.

“I had always stayed aligned to that. In business, it is so easy to go off track because you get opportunities thrown at you from left, right and center. You meet someone who says “hey, let’s do this” and you think WOW that could be amazing. Then, you start thinking about all the things that could come off the back of that idea. But you have to take a step back and ask yourself is this really helping me on my mission and is it really aligned with what I’m trying to achieve. Sometimes it’s really hard to say NO to these opportunities, but I think this has been crucial for me. It has helped me keep moving and stay aligned with what I’m doing. By doing the same thing, over time, people get to know you, trust you and understand what you are about. The people that resonate with you will stick with you because they always resonate with you in the same way, staying always on the same wavelength. This is where the brand and personal connection really come into play. People know what you’re about. They know what you stand for and they stand for the same things too. This helps them be a part of something and want to be part of this association.”

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Carrie's business experience had taught her three things about branding and, more importantly, building relationships with her audience. These three branding truths are:

1. Your brand is the who, what and why. Who are you, what are you doing and why are you doing it.
2. Your brand is all about your audience. Know who they are. Never forget that.
3. Your brand lives through consistency. Always deliver a consistent message that echoes the first two truths.

To use Carrie's three truths of branding, you first need a clear understanding of who you are. What is at the heart of what you're doing? What's the mission? You also have to be very clear about why you are doing it. Why are you putting that service or product out there on the market? If it's all about the money, it will be too easy to go off track. You need something that will help remain focused on your path and true to your purpose. For Carrie, it's always about inspiring and empowering women and helping them build successful businesses. This clear purpose helps the people in her audience understand what the Female Entrepreneurs Association is about. A clear and constant purpose helps her audience determine if "that's me and I want to be a part of it" or if it isn't for them. It also provides clarity on who your audience is, such as who they are, what they like, and how to connect with them. Once you understand your audience, you can optimize your brand's look and feel, as well as ensure every communication and email resonates with them. This is

everything. It's how people resonate with one another. Your audience will begin to "get" one another and connect entirely. Once you have your clarity on who you are, what you are doing, and why you are doing it, and you're clear on who your audience is, you can then start to pull these two definitions together and generate incredible communications. Then, you do it consistently, day in and day out in a way that resonates over and over with your audience. It will make them love you more and more and realize that they belong to your brand. Lastly, you must be consistent in putting your message out there; that is, consistently adding value and written from your audience's perspective, not your own. You're always thinking about how they will respond to each communication and what they will get out of it.

So, there you have it. A simple but effective method for building your brand and developing a following that will reverberate with deep, full dedication to your purpose, as it will be their purpose too.

About the Author

J. Todd Rhoad is the managing director of BT Consulting, an Atlanta-based career consulting firm, who focuses on helping high achievers reach greater levels of success. He's the creator of MBAWriters, an international group of writers who focus on sharing their expertise on career topics for audiences around the globe. Todd is also the mastermind behind the development of the HENRY Series of ebooks for MBAs, a series covering numerous career related topics such as mentoring, branding, career strategy and more. An avid learner, he holds a Master of Science in Electrical Engineering and an MBA.