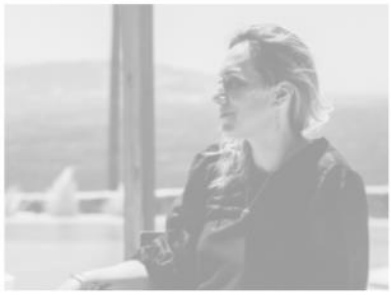
HOTELSCHOOL THE HAGUE
Hospitality Business School

An exploration of personal branding influencing females self-esteem associated with gender roles



PERSONAL BRANDING

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Preface

The final course of Hotelschool The Hague, Launch Your Career (LYCar), consists of an management placement, research proposal and a final company project report. Following Track 2 of LYCar, research was first conducted for my commissioner Dr. Brannon, before starting my internship at Design Hotels GmbH in Berlin.

Conducting my research in the field of personal branding and self-esteem is a topic close to my heart. After graduation I am planning on starting my career with great enthusiasm. I recognize that the world of work has changed significantly and evolved into a very competitive one. As a young woman, my chances to assert myself in the outside world should not be any less promising. Therefore, I am grateful that I was able to research a topic that focuses on the empowerment of women, resulting in the following *Company Project Report on Personal Branding.*

Herby, I would like to take the opportunity to share my acknowledgement and to thank various people for their support and guidance throughout my LYCar Journey.

Firstly, I would like to thank the person that supported me most in this process, Dr. Brannon. I am deeply thankful for your advice, your patience, your faith, and constant support.

Secondly, I would like to thank my LYCar coach, Ms. Verschoor- de Leeuw for her patience and guidance in my final phase of Hotelschool The Hague

Thirdly, I would like to thank my mother and my father for giving me the opportunity to study at Hotelschool the Hague, for always believing in me and for being my greatest supporters.

Lastly, through my LYCar journey I have learned the importance of self-appreciation and self-belief. Therefore, I would like to thank myself for not giving up when times have been rough and for delivering the best that I can.

I am proud to present this final report and I hope you will enjoy reviewing my work!

Best regards,

Chiara

Executive Summary

Over the last decade we were able to witness a positive change towards gender equality on the workplace. Nonetheless, despite the considerable progress that has been achieved, women are still outnumbered and unfairly underrepresented in managerial positions (United Nations, 2020). One obstacle in women's career path are gender roles that constantly influence the way women are portrayed and thus placing them into a less favourable position when it comes to leadership positions. Additionally, gender roles and gendered expectations do not only shape how women are perceived by society but also has a personal effect on women's self-esteem. Women portray lower levels of self-esteem than men which prevents them to engage in promotion opportunities and thus hinders them to get ahead in their career. It can be said that, females lack in self-esteem represents the invisible force behind the underrepresentation of women in management positions (Bleidorn et al., 2016). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to research a tool aiming to empower and support female professionals. Personal branding allows individuals to control their image and reputation and thus actively rebuild self-esteem. Based on the problem definition, the following research question emerged:

"How Personal Branding can compensate for females Self-Esteem associated with Gender Roles"?

In order analyse and validate the problem a literature review was conducted and shed light on the main research question. The concept of Personal Branding suggest that people apply marketing principles to themselves in order to advance their career (Khedher, 2014; Pagis and Ailon, 2017). Furthermore, personal branding allows individuals to change the perception that others have on them, allowing women to be perceived in the way they want (Labrecque, Markos and Milne 2011). The literature revealed that a personal brand is depended on the creation of personal brand identity, the communication through personal brand positioning and the evaluation of the personal brand image. Informed by that the main research question was then funnelled into three propositions based on personal brand identity, personal brand positioning and personal brand image linked with self-esteem and gender roles.

To explore the causes and the elements further, qualitative research was chosen. The population represented female professionals and in total 10 semi structured interviews with female managers were conducted. Then, data was analysed using a deductive approach. Throughout the interviews, it was discovered that gender roles and gendered expectations are still persistent in today's society and influence women's perception, self-esteem and thus their career ambitions.

Moreover, research revealed that most participants are not familiar with personal branding and are therefore not aware about their personal brand and their image. During the interviews it appeared that creating a personal brand identity is the most important step to take for women. Furthermore, most of the interviewed women are using relationship building to promote their personal brand. However, they are not placing too much effort into their online presentation. Finally, the interviews revealed that personal branding has the potential to support women in evolving themselves, to unlock career opportunities and to positively contribute to female's self-esteem.

The analysis of the findings then led to the designed solution. A workshop on personal branding for the researcher's placement company, Design Hotels GmbH in Berlin was designed. Based on the findings, the designed solution should communicate the need and the importance of a strong personal brand and provide its participants with practical tools to gain greater self-awareness and achieve a strong self-presentation online as well as offline. Achieving self-awareness and thus developing a strong believe in themselves, seems to be critically important for women and should therefore be especially highlighted in the suggested workshop. According to Kaputa (2010), "a personal brand is you,", as it is based on a person's values, skills and experiences. Hence, a personal brand should constantly be evolving. Based on that, it is advised to implement the designed solution into the onboarding procedure of Design Hotels by following a change plan. By incorporating personal branding into the onboarding procedure, women have constantly the opportunity to reflect, evaluate and work on their personal brand.

Writing this report allowed the author, to gain a deeper understanding in the different elements of this research and to realise the great importance of personal branding, self-belief and confidence. This research is beneficial to any organisation that wants to support its employees and female professionals that want to flourish in their careers. Therefore, the knowledge gained through this study has been disseminated to two organisations with the purpose to empower women to engage in personal branding and thus to create a strong pipeline of female leaders. And consequently, coming one step closer in achieving gender equality in managerial positions.

Glossary

Gender Roles: *Gender roles refer to the different expectations that individuals, groups, and societies have on a person based on their sex (Blackstone, 2003: p.2).*

Personal Branding: *Personal branding refers to the creation and management of a personal brand, where people adapt marketing concepts and strategies to themselves for promotional purposes (Khedher, 2014; Pagis and Ailon, 2017).*

Personal Brand Identity: *Personal brand identity focuses on how the individual wants to be perceived by an audience (Labrecque, Markos and Milne 2011: p.20)*

Personal Brand Positioning: *Brand positioning is defined as the active marketing communication efforts of a person's brand identity to a specific target market (Khedher, 2014: p.34).*

Personal Brand Image: *Personal brand image refers to how an individual's personal brand is actually perceived by an audience (Cederberg, 2017: p.17)*

Self-esteem: *Self-esteem as a feeling of general worth and self-confidence (Rosenberg, 2015: p.3).*

Self-confidence: *Self-confidence is defined as a belief in one´s own ability and competencies to perform and be successful at a certain task (Bandura, 1982: p.9).*

List of Acronyms

HTH – Hotelschool The Hague

EU – European Union

HR – Human Resources

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1 Problem Definition

"I am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights", was the theme of the international women's day 2020 and calls for a change on the persistent barriers on gender equality (United Nations, 2020). The international women's day aims to celebrate acts of achievements of women around the world, reflect on progress that has been made and highlights the work that still needs to be done in order to achieve gender equality (United Nations, 2020). Fortunately, the importance of females as a source of talent in managerial position is becoming apparent around the globe. Hence various training, leadership programmes and even quotas have been introduced in the recent years striving to empower female employees and to develop a strong pipeline of female talents (Surawicz, 2016; Rhode, 2017). However, despite considerable progress towards gender equality and gains for women in leadership in recent decades, no country has achieved total gender equality (United Nations, 2020), and there is still a considerable gap to close (Global Gender Gap Report, 2020).

Multiple sources report that female representation in managerial positions has a positive effect on corporate innovation, financial performance and leads to a better corporate social responsibility (Hyun et al., 2016; Gallén and Peraita, 2017; Han et al., 2019). The reason for this can be ascribed to females leadership behaviour, which is more engaging compared to males, and the resulting gender diversity leading to increased innovation (Zaal, 2017). Nevertheless, females holding senior management positions globally remains by 29% in 2019 and 2020 (Thorton, 2020). This occurs even though women account for half of the world population. Furthermore, in the European Union (EU), women comprise for almost 50% of the labour force and yet they remain dramatically underrepresented in leadership positions as just one out of three managers in the EU is a woman (Catalyst, 2020). The outlook for senior management positions is even more discouraging. Across the EU, in the largest publicly listed companies in 2020, women only represent 19% of executives and hold less than 8% of CEO positions (Catalyst, 2020). According to multiple sources, the challenge is that women lose ground to the first step up to manager, thus less women are available to be promoted to senior management positions (Huang et al., 2019).

There are numerous reasons why women are at disadvantage concerning success at the workplace. Institutional and cultural barriers better known as the glass ceiling effect are recognized as ubiquitous factors of resistance for women to reach top ranks of management (Kay and Shipman, 2014).

Nonetheless, some argue that the reason for this disparity is a difference in self-confidence and self-esteem between men and women that explains why women are less likely to engage and apply in promotion opportunities (Exley and Kessler, 2019). Rosenberg (2015), has defined *"self-esteem as a feeling of general worth and self-confidence (p3)"*. A person's self-confidence within an organisation is influenced by the perception of others and the extent to which a person sees herself capable and promotable (Guillén, Mayo and Karelaia 2016). In recent years, we have been able to witness that the criteria for management positions has slowly shifted from solely competence to the demonstration of self-confidence (Kay and Shipman, 2014).

Nowadays, self-confidence and self-esteem are not only considered as an essential formula for success but also function as the main underlying criteria when it comes to promotion decisions (Guillén, Mayo and Karelaia 2016). According to several studies, men report higher levels of self-esteem and are more comfortable in self-promoting than women (Bleidorn et al., 2016) (Cahn, 2020). Besides differences in self-esteem and self-promotion, women also tend to downgrade themselves and their capabilities (Exley and Kessler, 2019). When it comes to past accomplishments and future potential women provide less favourable comments than men even though their qualifications and experience were equal (Exley and Kessler, 2019).

This implies that career development opportunities and management positions are distributed based on the level of self-esteem rather than the abilities and competencies of the candidate. Therefore, women's lack of self-esteem hinders them from promoting themselves for managerial positions and thus acts as an invisible force behind women's underrepresentation. Hence it can be concluded that a positive self-image and self-esteem, is considered as a driving force for promotion and success (Kammeyer-Mueller, Judge and Piccolo 2008). As women have a lower level of self-esteem and thus a more critical self-perception, it is even more important for female talents to actively take steps and rebuild their self-esteem.

One way of self-promotion and actively rebuilding self-esteem is personal branding (Chen, Gully and Eden 2004). The concept of personal branding is a relatively new and rapidly growing phenomenon as a route towards more effective career behaviours (Gorbatov, Khapova and Lysova 2019). The term of personal branding was first introduced by Tom Peters (1997), who claims that everyone has their own brand that needs to be managed in order to advance their career (Rangarajan, Gelb and Vandaveer 2017). Nowadays, personal branding refers to the creation and management of a personal brand, where people adapt marketing concepts and strategies to themselves for promotional purposes (Khedher, 2014; Pagis and Ailon, 2017). Especially in the digital age, personal branding has become increasingly important. Due to the rise of social media, individuals automatically and often unconsciously market themselves on various platforms, making it both virtually impossible to avoid creating a personal brand and increasing the need for a strong personal brand (Labrecque, Markos and Milne 2011).

By applying personal branding, female talents might be able to enhance their visibility, influence the perception of others, gain career advancements and thus increase their self-esteem (Gorbatov, Khapova and Lysova 2019). Furthermore, as part of the 17 SDG, achieving gender equality - SDG 5, is aiming for equality and empowerment of women and girls around the globe (United Nations, 2020), which can be facilitated by using personal branding.

In conclusion, this research provides a practical contribution and a clear reason for research into the topic of self-esteem and personal branding among female talents. The ultimate goal of this research is to identify how the concept of personal branding can compensate for women's self-esteem associated with gender roles in order to create a strong pipeline of female talents in managerial positions.

"How Personal Branding can compensate for females Self-esteem associated with Gender Roles"

2 Analysis and Diagnosis

2.1 Literature Review

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is one of the mostly researched concepts in social psychology as it is an essential part of the self-concept (Baumeister, 2013). Self-esteem refers to an individual´s subjective evaluation of his or her worth as a person (Donnellan, Trzesniewski and Robins 2013). More importantly self-esteem is not necessarily based on a person's competences, skills and talents, it is rather seen as the feeling of general worth and self-confidence (Rosenberg, 2015).

High self-esteem is associated with various positive outcomes for the individual and the society (Baumeister, 2013). It is generally acknowledged that high self-esteem is related to a better social network, mental health and increased personal well-being (Mann, Hosman, Schaalma and De Vries 2004). Additionally, people with higher self-esteem are feeling good about themselves and are generally happier as a result that the people around them value and respect them (Branden, 1995). On the other hand, low self-esteem is related to a negative sense of self (Fennell, 2005). People with low self-esteem tend to be more sensitive, more concerned about how others perceive them, underestimate their abilities and at worst, suffer from depression and anxiety (Sowislo and Orth, 2013).

A significant component of self-esteem is self-confidence (Branden, 2011). According to Bandura (1982), self-confidence can be defined as a belief in one´s own ability to perform and be successful at a certain task. Within an organisation self-confidence is influenced by the perception of others and the extent to which a person sees herself capable and promotable (Guillén, Mayo and Karelaia 2016).

With regards to gender, it is well documented that men report a higher level of self-esteem and self-confidence than women (Bleidorn et al., 2016). According to research, significant differences occur between men and women when it comes to the connection between one's abilities and self-confidence (Hospido, Laeven and Lamo 2019). While women base their self-confidence on their level of ability and even underestimate themselves at times men tend to be over-confident (Efe and Hallegraeff, 2020). Research has shown that this confidence and self-esteem gap among female talents even occurs when females hold the same qualifications and experiences as their male counterpart (Hospido, Laeven and Lamo 2019).

Within an organisation a lack of self-confidence among females can have far reaching consequences and might damage their career advancement (Dickerson and Taylor, 2000). If women believe they lack the ability and the skills to master certain tasks they may avoid these or turn to less challenging ones (Bandura, Freeman and Lightsey 1999). By turning tasks down women may not experience the feeling of success after completing a challenging tasks which could raise their level of confidence (Dickerson and Taylor, 2000). As a result, it can be argued that women tend to avoid leadership roles and do not consider themselves worthy for promotions. This shows that a low self-esteem and self-confidence leads to a self-limiting behaviour in women, which in turn damages females' career opportunities (Bandura, Freeman and Lightsey 1999). This disparity in self-esteem is reflected in women's salary negotiations and self-promotion (Segovia-Pérez et al., 2019).

Gender Roles

The confidence gap between women and men can originate from a variety of inequalities such as unequal representation, biases, self-imposed barriers and differences in education of boys and girls (Kay and Shipman, 2014). An explanation for the differences in self-esteem of men and women may be the different gender roles attributed to them (Helgeson, 2015). *Gender roles refer to the different expectations that individuals, groups, and societies have on a person based on their sex* (Blackstone, 2003: p.2). According to Boone (2013), gender roles affect self-esteem, career ambitions and individual's perceptions of their own competencies. Although traditional gender roles have become less prevalent, widely held societal beliefs about women's ability to perform certain tasks still exist and continue to have a negative impact on women´s career progress (Wynn and Correll, 2018). Research demonstrates that women tend to have a more negative attitude towards their gender role than men (Rudman and Phelan, 2010).

Gender roles are often based on stereotyped gendered traits. Gender stereotypes are culturally shaped expectations and refer to the generalizations about the attributes that are assigned to men and women (Burgess and Borgida, 1999). In our society men are generally viewed to have better leadership qualities such as self-confidence, assertiveness and competitiveness (Kiser, 2015). Whereas women are expected to fulfil feminine gender norms and are believed to be kind, helpful, unselfish, sociable and emotional, which are seen as less suitable for managerial positions (Sakallı, Türkoğlu and Kuzlak 2018). These gendered stereotypes do not only limit career opportunities but also influence how people judge the abilities of women's performance (Ellemers, 2018). Although, this generalisation of women are often inaccurate, it negatively affects women self-ability, confidence and self-perception (Boone et al., 2013).

Gender stereotypes do not only designate how men and women are but also communicate how men and women are expected to behave (Prentice and Carranza, 2002). It is acknowledged that to advance one's career, individuals need to promote themselves. However, women engaging in self-promotion are often perceived as contradictory to feminine gender roles, as self-promotion is not considered a feminine characteristic (Guadagno and Cialdini, 2007). Hence, women may avoid self-promotion as they believe it is not in line with their gender identity (Heilman, 2012). Trying to accommodate these gendered expectations, is placing women in a self-limiting and defeating behaviour (Ellemers, 2018). Consequently, women may be misled to underperform and to lose their self-confidence as well as their self-esteem (Derks and Ellemers, 2007).

Personal Branding

The concept of personal branding was first introduced in an article by Tom Peters in 1997 in which he states that everyone has a personal brand that needs to be managed in order to advance their career (Rangarajan, Gelb and Vandaveer 2017). Since then, a growing body of literature discusses the importance of personal branding and how it can lead to success in the business world (Scheidt, Gelhard and Henseler 2020) . Personal branding refers to the creation and management of personal brands, where people adapt marketing principles and strategies to themselves for promotional purposes (Khedher, 2014; Pagis and Ailon, 2017). According to Kaputa (2010), individuals need to manage and market their own brand, otherwise it will be managed for them. She states: *"you are giving the power to other people to brand you if you do not do it yourself" (Shepherd, 2005: p.2)*. It can be argued that this is often the case with regards to women in managerial positions and how others perceive them.

Personal branding is considered a person-centric activity where the individual manages others' impressions of their skills, abilities and experiences in order to influence how others perceive them (Gorbatov, Khapova and Lysova 2018; Johnson, 2017). By engaging in personal branding women will have the chance to control how others perceive them and influence their perception in a positive way. Thus, a positive perception will lead to improved abilities, grater self-awareness and self-confidence (Zinko and Rubin, 2015; Scheidt and Henseler, 2018). Due to this positive created self-image women may feel encouraged to engage in self-promotion activities, achieve visibility in the organisation and advance their own career (Thompson-Whiteside, Turnbull and Howe-Walsh 2018). Consequently, women may increase their self-esteem.

The process of personal branding is similar to product branding which involves three phases (Labrecque, Markos and Milne 2011). It begins by establishing an authentic personal brand identity, developing an effective communication of the brand identity through brand positioning and finally maintaining and controlling the impact of a personal brand image (Khedher, 2014)

Personal Brand Identity

As product branding, personal branding begins with defining a brand identity (Labrecque, Markos and Milne 2011). According to traditional branding practices, identity is the core of the brand and sets how the marketer wants the brand to be perceived (Manai and Holmlund, 2015). Personal branding, suggest that a personal brand identity focuses on how the individual wants to be perceived by an audience (Labrecque, Markos and Milne 2011).

According to Waller (2020), creating a personal brand identity allows individuals to analyse and define themselves in order to construct an idealized self. Nonetheless, a personal brand identity should be authentic and reflect the true nature of the branded person (Waller, 2020). Hence, the first step in the personal branding process is self-discovery (Philbrick and Cleveland, 2015). A personal brand identity should be based on a person's life mission, values, personalities, associations, and character traits (Zabojnik, 2018). Parmentier (2013), suggests that people creating a personal brand identity should focus on their unique character traits that distinguish them and make them stand out from a crowd. Traditional gender roles and stereotyping expect women to fulfil gendered expectations and assigns certain attributes and character traits to them (Sakallı, Türkoğlu and Kuzlak 2018). Sometimes gendered expectations trigger a self-fulling behaviour in women, lowering their self-assessment, sense of competences and preventing them from fulfilling their full potential (Ertl, Luttenberger and Paechter 2017).

By creating their personal brand, women can take charge of their own reputation by establishing their personal brand identity (Lair, Sullivan and Cheney 2005). By focusing on unique character traits, talents and skills, women will achieve a greater self-awareness, reminding them of who they are and who they want to be (Scheidt and Henseler, 2018). Thus, it can be argued that increased self-awareness may lead to a boost in women's self-esteem. Therefore:

"We propose that creating a personal brand identity compensates for female's self-esteem associated with gender roles"

Personal Brand Positioning

In the second step of the personal branding process, individuals need to actively communicate the created brand identity to an audience (Labrecque, Markos and Milne 2011). Hence, brand positioning can be defined as the active marketing communication efforts of a person's brand identity to a specific target market (Khedher, 2014). Similar to product branding, personal branding aims to create awareness while focusing on integrity, authenticity and consistency (Ward and Yates, 2013). The purpose of personal brand positioning is to generate a desired personal brand image that reflects the personal brand identity (Shaker and Hafiz, 2014). Therefore, individuals use brand positioning to highlight those values and characteristics which are of value to an audience (Khedher, 2014).

One way to position a personal brand is through impression management, which attempts to manage an audience perception about a person (Labrecque, Markos, Milne 2011; Shepherd, 2005). Self-presentation occurs through personal appearance, manners, non-verbal behaviours and verbal tactics with the purpose of creating a desired impression of oneself (Khedher, 2015).

Self-presentation can be achieved through either online or offline strategies. However, due to the growing influence of social media and Web 2.0 technology, a personal brand relies on a strong online presentation (Khedher, 2015). This involves creating and maintaining social media, networking profiles, personal websites and digital storytelling (Jones and Leverenz, 2017) . In particular, social networking is considered important for individuals to improve the personal scope of the branding campaign and to increase the personal brand value (Labrecque Markos and Milne, 2011).

With regards to gender and social networking, research revealed that males tend to gain more social status and image by sharing photos and experience than females, for the reason that women do not disclose themselves as much as males (Mazman and Usluel, 2011). Knowing that receiving affirmation on shared posts and virtual content, positively corresponds with self-esteem, makes it highly important for women to create a strong online presence (Burrow and Rainone, 2017). This suggests that by means of personal brand positioning females can maximize their visibility, establishing their reputation, control their self-presentation and build self-confidence and may promote their self-esteem (Arruda and Dixson, 2007). Therefore:

"We propose that a strong personal brand positioning compensates for female's self-esteem associated with gender roles"

Personal Brand Image

The personal brand image is the third step in the personal branding process and derives from the positioning of the personal brand identity and focuses on the overall perception of the brand by the audience (Labrecque, Markos and Milne 2011). A personal brand depends on two elements which are the desired self and the perceived identity (Roberts, 2005). The desired self refers to the personal brand identity and posits how individuals want to be perceived by an audience (Roberts, 2005). Whereas perceived identity, the so called personal brand image, refers to how an individual's personal brand is actually perceived by an audience (Cederberg, 2017). Hence, the brand image is both the result and the interpretation of the creation of the personal brand identity (Kapferer, 2008).

The overall purpose is to take control of the personal brand image, in order to narrow the gap between the desired self, the and the perceived identity (Wee and Brooks, 2010). Through self-reflection and gaining feedback, the branded individual can assess their personal brand reputation and ensure their brands', relevance, strength and competitiveness (Khedher, 2015). Furthermore, Labrecque (2011) states that especially seeking feedback is essential to close the gap between their desired self and the perceived identity, as feedback leads to a greater self-awareness and helps avoiding a branding failure.

As a result, women may benefit from a greater self-awareness and better self-knowledge, which can be used to better influence the audience and to evolve their personal brand image (Wee and Brooks, 2010). Moreover, through feedback-seeking and self-reflection, women automatically engage in a continuous learning cycle and may gain a higher level of understanding and feel more self-assured (Khedher, 2015). Therefore:

"We propose that evolving a personal brand image compensates for female's self-esteem associated with gender roles"

2.2 Methodology

Research Method

To answer the above-mentioned propositions qualitative research was used as it helps gaining a deep understanding about a specific topic (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009). Qualitative research generates non-numerical data and allows the researcher to understand people's beliefs, experience, interactions and behaviours (Pathak, Jena and Kalra 2013). Hence, qualitative research was used, since it helps to understand and explore the concept of personal branding with regards to self-esteem and gender roles.

Population and Sampling

Considering the scope and goal of this research female mangers are referred to as the population. Interviewing female managers enabled the researcher to gain information on their experiences, gender roles and how it influences their self-esteem and personal brand.

A sample is a subset of a population in order to learn about the entire population (Vehovar, Toepoel and Steinmetz 2016). For this research non-probability sampling was chosen. Unlike probability sampling, were each individual has an equal chance of being selected, non-probability sampling involves a non-random selection of the participants (Acharya, Prakash, Saxena and Nigam 2013). Within non-probability sampling a convenience sampling method was applied, meaning that the sample was selected on the basis of convenience of the researcher (Acharya, Prakash, Saxena and Nigam 2013). The participants have been selected through the researcher's placement company, Design Hotels GmbH.

Data collection

As qualitative research aims to gain a better insight through first-hand experience, 30 to 60 minutes lasting in depth interviews were conducted with female managers from Design Hotels. The qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. An interview guide was used to lead the interviews and covered the main elements of the research (refer to appendix 11.5). Whereby the interview guide was mainly used as an orientation tool. Hence, the researcher had the opportunity to deviate from the guide and give the participants the opportunity to freely share their personal opinions and experiences, encouraging a two-way communication. In total 10 Interviews with female managers from Design Hotels were conducted.

The participants were selected upon talking with the Human Resource (HR) Director of Design Hotels. The request for the interviews were sent by email (refer to appendix 11.3). It is important to consider in which manner the researcher interacts with the interviewees as it is likely to impact the reliability and dependability of the collected data. A potential bias was interviewer bias which may occur due to the attempt of the researcher to impose their own beliefs and opinions through questioning (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009). Hence, the participants were provided upfront the interview with a short presentation which contained information to the research and the concept of personal branding. Hence, the participants had the opportunity to get familiar with the topic and form their own opinion about it.

The interviews were scheduled from the 25th of March until the 21st of April. All interviews were carried out online via Microsoft teams and held in English. Research ethics consists of ethical principles that ensure the safety of the participants as well as professional standards that guide the research to ensure its public accountability (Pietilä et al., 2020). Within this research participants rights to privacy were ensured throughout all stages, this is especially important as participants trusted the researcher with delicate topics such as female self-esteem, gender roles and their personal brand. Therefore, all participants were guaranteed that their identity and their information will remain anonymous and confidentially (refer to appendix 11.4). This also included the safe storage of the collected data. Hence, the data has been uploaded on HTH intranet. Furthermore, the researcher signed a declaration relating the confidentiality concerning the research data to ensure data safety (refer to appendix 11.1). Moreover, before conducting the interviews all respondents were verbally asked about their consent to record the interview.

Data analysis

Qualitative research is based on meanings expressed from words and images, resulting in a large amount of data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009). During the data analysis approach 10 interviews were recorded and transcribed. As data gathered from qualitative results is non-standardised one, the data was reduced through categorization and colour coding (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009).

Regarding the data analysis a deductive approach was applied. Meaning that the elements of the main research question and the theoretical propositions derived from the literature review were used to devise an analytical framework to organise the data analysis (Yin, 2014). The first stage of data analysis was getting familiarized with the data. Herby the researcher transcribed the collected data and made initial notes based on different elements, leading to a still unorganised set of data. Furthermore, the transcribed data was organised by using the colour-coding technique. Based on the deductive approach, the elements were then linked to self-esteem, gender roles, personal branding and to the personal branding process, which included brand identity, positioning and image. This allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understating into the main elements of this research and to explore the branding process thoroughly. Then, the colour coded elements were sorted and summarized in tables. Subsequently, the researcher was able to compare data, identify patterns, synthesise the large amount of data and draw conclusion within the given answers in each table (Bryman, 2016). (Refer to appendix 11.7).

3 Findings

This Chapter demonstrates the findings of the interviews and consequently aims to find an answer to the main research question: *"How Personal Branding can compensate for females Self-esteem associated with Gender Roles".*

3.1 Self-Esteem

Regarding self-esteem, five women argued that due to gendered expectations women have a more critical self-image and lower self-esteem. Four interviewees, believe that women are more plagued with imposter syndrome. According to them, women tend to doubt themselves, are more self-critical and less proud in terms of their abilities and achievements.

> "Women tend to be plagued more with imposter syndrome. And maybe that is why we don't feel like we've earned the respect." – Interviewee 5

> „Women tend to doubt themselves sometimes and again, total generalization, but we do suffer a lot from, sort of being more critical of ourselves and not being as brave, perhaps as some men are in terms of our ability. We have got this imposter syndrome that men get as well, but we're probably more closely connected to it." – Interviewee 8

Interviewee 2 believes that the fact that women need to prove themselves much more in the workforce diminishes female's self-belief and lowers their self-esteem. Interviewee 3 shared that it takes a lot of confidence to start believing in yourself and being proud of one's achievements.

> "We've always kind of listened to our inner voice that even if we've done a lot and we deserve a lot and we've worked hard, we still managed to somehow do diminish our own achievements." – Interviewee 3

> "It does take a lot of work to be able to start to think of yourself as a person that is worthy of time and good pay"– Interviewee 3

According to 40% of the interviewees, building confidence is a constant process, and it increased throughout their careers as they were becoming more confident with themselves. Within this context three interviewees added that this growing confidence helped them to challenge gender roles and gendered biases.

> "I think personally, as women, we have to stop thinking about the workforce of women and men, and we just have to think about leadership and doing the right thing." –Interviewee 10

3.2 Gender Roles

Regarding gendered expectations, nine out of ten women experienced gendered expectations, biases and prejudges in their careers. One participant shared that being vocal about talents and skills as a woman is mostly perceived as arrogant and overly ambitious. Interviewee 7 mentioned that gendered expectations extend to all touch points and influence how women are seen at the workplace. Three women argued that despite the societal evolution of women, gendered expectations are still rooted in peoples mind and the workforce and influence women's reputation.

> "It is not necessarily visible, but it is something that is been a constant in my career" – Interviewee 7

> "That [gendered expectation] extends to all touch points. I think that being a female in our society, I've come up against it the whole time, it's been a very, not necessarily a visible presence, but something I always felt"
> - Interviewee 7

Five women mentioned that they had issues with being taken seriously by their male colleagues. In that context Interviewee 10 shared, that women are kind of forced to adapt their leadership styles and to act more assertive in conversations especially in a male dominated business environment. However, then women are perceived as to bossy and assertive because it does not match the femininity level that is expected. Interviewee 3 further said that these unspoken expectations tent to eat female's self-esteem.

> "There are so many unspoken expectations. Even if you don't believe in those expectations, they're always at the back of your mind and they do tend to eat your self-esteem, especially if you're a woman and you have all of these kinds of external voices always telling you that it's not feminine to behave that way or to think that way." - Interviewee 3

3.3 Personal Branding

60% of the participants were not aware about the concept of personal branding. Two interviewees stated that they are conscious about their personal brand.

All participants agreed on the importance of personal branding. Five interviewees agreed that the need for a strong personal brand mainly comes from the digital transition society is undergoing, forcing people to manage all their personal channels. Furthermore, three interviewees highlighted that increasing competition on the job market creates the urgency for a strong personal brand.

> "It obviously become super important. The fact is that most people are just not aware about personal branding and the influence they can achieve with it." – Interviewee 1

Three interviewees had a negative perception about personal branding, as they believed that it means somehow not being true to yourself. In contrast five other interviewees said that personal branding is about authenticity. They believe that personal branding is about portraying an authentic image to the audience. Interviewee 5 believes that working on their personal branding gives women the opportunity to define themselves and control their reputation, and therefore has the potential to increase women´s self-esteem.

> "I think the beauty of the personal brand is that you get to make it up yourself. So instead of a world where you're constantly being defined or where people are putting you in a box, or assuming they know who you are, this is your opportunity to decide who you want to be and how you want to present yourself.
> - Interviewee 5

> ", I think that has the potential to be a major confidence booster and it could open up those opportunities "– Interviewee 5

3.4 Personal Brand Identity

Proposition 1:

"We propose that a creating a personal brand identity compensates for self-esteem associated with gender roles"

Creating a personal brand identity focuses on how the individual wants to be perceived by an audience. Four interviewees stated that the key to a strong personal brand lies within its authenticity and a person's belief in themselves.

> "Personal branding, in that sense is about just being in in tune with who you are. And I think this is actually the hardest question to answer."
> - Interviewee 6

> "I think that the clearer you are in your own narrative about who you are, what you want and what your talent is, I think the more clearly you will be perceived." – Interviewee 7

Five interviewees stated that in order to be able to increase women's self-presentation, they need to become clear in their own narrative, which according to them includes a person's skills, personality, values and talents. In that context, interviewee 5 highlighted that it is important to find a white space, a person's unique contribution, that sets them apart.

> "To be marketable, these times you have to go out the other direction, and kind of see what the whitespace is in the market." – Interviewee 5

Moreover, interviewee 3 shared that, when defining your personal brand identity, women need to be brave enough to recognize and embrace these personal skills, and that sometimes the most surprising aspects are what makes us stand out.

> "Being brave enough to recognize that sometimes its the strangest and most eccentric and non-conformist element of yourself that makes you exciting. And being brave enough to embrace those elements of yourself and share them and to be proud of them and to don't be embarrassed about any part of you that does not fit into a box."
> - Interviewee 3

Three participants mentioned that in order to be able to communicate their personal brand, women need to engage in self-excavation. Three other participants highlighted that the exercise of creating your personal brand identity, gives individuals the chance to become more self-aware.

Interviewee 9 is using a personal vision to be inspired, motivated and confident. Another interviewee is using an 'about me' page, regarding her skills, ambitions and strengths. One participant believes that sometimes it takes another person to tell women what is special about them, in order to recognize it for themselves. Interviewee 7 stated that working on your personal brand is empowering, as by taking ownership of their own narrative women have the chance to be able to be clear about themselves and the story they want to tell.

> "To see all of yourself all of your skills all of your facets in that sense more visibly more tangibly you maybe connect to them more solidly and then you believe in them more and you can lead more with that confidence" – Interviewee 7

One interviewee mentioned that gender roles limit women, as women might manifest them in their mind. She added that engaging in self-discovery exercises enables women to improve their self-image. Interviewee 9 added that women need to recognize and take success for themselves and their achievements to develop their self-belief. In that notion, interviewee 6 added, that grounded self-confidence lies within yourself.

> "I think that self-confidence translates into a lot of good things in the way we build our careers and the way we're perceived. But that kind of grounded self-confidence, that is grounded on who you are."
> – Interviewee 6

3.5 Personal Brand Positioning

Proposition 2:

"We propose that a strong a personal brand positioning compensates for self-esteem associated with gender roles"

According to four women, a strong brand positioning starts with defining your audience. In that notion, two participants highlighted that depending on the audience the communication style needs to be adapted. Interviewee 8 shared that the way she communicates her brand to the senior board differs from the way she represents herself to her team. However, she mentioned that authenticity is always the golden threat in her personal brand. In that context, interviewee 6, mentioned that a personal brand can be communicated by adding a personal layer to everything that someone does.

> "I think a strong personal brand leads back how you communicate with others. Because through communication people get to know you and know who you are." – Interviewee 4

> "You can proactively communicate that [your personal brand] But you can also communicate that implicitly in everything that you do. And try to add one layer of your personal meaning or your personal contribution to it. Thinking about how can I make this my own? – Interviewee 6

For 80% of the participants, brand positioning is all about communication whether it is spoken or written. For three interviewees this entails verbally telling people about themselves and their experiences. Two interviewees agreed that when women speak openly about their personal skills and ambitions it is often perceived as too arrogant.

> "I felt like in the past if a woman takes that approach and is vocal about her personal branding and her talents and the various things she can do and her potential, it's often received in an arrogant way." – Interviewee 3

> "I've always felt like we're taught not to shout about ourselves too much like the idea of personal branding and promoting yourself in that way" – Interviewee 2

Interviewee 8 mentioned that individuals need to build an authentic presence when communicating their personal brand, then only authenticity will allow women to gain trust and build relationships.

> "Within that [personal brand positioning] it is important to build an authentic presence, meaning being your authentic self. And being authentic will allow women to build these relationships, gain trust and make this connection with other people that might open new doors to new opportunities" – Interviewee 8

During the interview the topic online presentation was discussed. All interviewees have social media and are represented in various channels and platforms such as LinkedIn and Instagram. Six interviewees stated that they are not using the internet to intentionally position themselves and do not follow an online strategy. Three other interviewees highlighted the importance of choosing their channels wisely and distinguish between private and professional online accounts. Two participants use online tools, especially LinkedIn to not only show their working history but to also communicate their interests. Interviewee 7 took COVID-19 into consideration and pointed out that, a strong online presence is becoming ever more important, as professional communication, job seeking, and hiring is mainly processed online. Interviewees 1 and 8 believe that a strong online positioning holds a lot of advantages for women in their careers and allows them to overcome gendered prejudges and biases.

> "It [online strategy] could kind of shine a bit of light on women and their skill set in a way that perhaps they weren't able to do otherwise."
> - Interviewee 1

> "Women have a greater chance to be seen [online].
> By clearly communicate their value to their audience they will be recognized which automatically puts them ahead in their professional life."
> - Interviewee 8

Moreover, seven interviewees believe that self-presentation is achieved through relationship building. Three women experienced support through other women, which helped them to increase their self-presentation. According to 40% of the interviewees, the goal of brand positioning is to build relationships and create a valuable network. Two interviewees shared that a strong network makes them feel empowered and confident.

> "But either way, online or offline, self-presentation is about connecting with people." – Interviewee 9

> "Having strong women around you to help mentor you and guide you. I've had amazing women in my career that are great mentors and great friends that I know, I can go to. And that network is really important."
> -Interviewee 8

Interviewee 9 highlighted that physical presentation such as style are part of her personal brand positioning. According to her, a person's personal brand needs to be reflected in the style.

> "Branding it is like a product. There is what is in the content, and what is in the packaging. And, and for me, what you are, your contents should always be reflected in the packaging, your look basically." – Interviewee 9

3.6 Personal Brand Image

Proposition 3:

"We propose that evolving a personal brand image compensates for self-esteem associated with gender roles"

Regarding the personal brand image, nine out of ten interviewees think about how they are perceived by others. Whereby two interviewees stated that they prefer not to think too much about other people's perception on them. Furthermore, only 20% of the interviewees would say that they are aware about their personal image.

Six interviewees shared that they do regularly ask for feedback, however not in relation to their personal brand. Three interviewees shared that they should seek feedback more often. One interviewee stated that feedback should be gathered from different levels as it brings you more self-awareness. Interviewee 9 engaged in a 360° Feedback. Her personal scores were completely different compared to her colleagues scores. She described it as eye-opening moment and she realized that she had a completely different image of herself compared to her colleagues. Moreover, interviewee 8 mentioned that self-reflection and seeking feedback will allow women to see their areas of opportunities which allows them to constantly evolve.

> "It [your brand image] is about self-reflection, it's about asking for feedback, I think that piece is so important, I think it's important that you hear from your friends, from your colleagues, from your mentors, what it is that people appreciate about you what it is that they see as an area of opportunity, so that you're always evolving. And every year, you should be looking at yourself and saying: what do I want to do differently." – Interviewee 8

Four interviewees are linking feedback with a feeling of confidence and self-assurance. Interviewee 2 added that feedback leads to a better self-understanding and a clearer picture on a persons perceived identity. Interviewee 9 mentioned that feedback is crucial to see the difference between self-perception and the perception of others, and thus being able to work on it. Interviewee 7 thinks that reflecting on one's personal brand image increases a person's self-esteem.

> "I think also, feedback is really important to know where you're at, and how you're perceived, because sometimes our self-perception does not match the perception of others. – Interviewee 9

> "Knowing that your image that you have in a company is aligned with you and your vision, that gives you a good feeling about yourself and it automatically contributes to your self-esteem."
>
> "Projecting this image is also helping you on that path and putting you more clearly aligned with your ultimate destiny and your vision for yourself. "
> - Interviewee 7

4 Conclusion

According to Zabojnik, (2018), a brand identity should be based on a person's mission, values and character traits. During the interviews, the participants came to the conclusion that a personal brand should resemble who you are and thus should be a projection of a person's values and skills. Some women considered building a brand identity as the most important element in the branding process. According to Scheidt and Henseler (2018), by creating a personal brand identity woman will achieve greater self-awareness. Also, the interviewees ascribed the main benefit of personal branding to an increased self-awareness and self-acceptance. In addition, three interviewees highlighted that this newly found self-appreciation will positively influence self-esteem. Moreover, the interviewees revealed that personal branding is empowering to women as by taking ownership of their personal brand women have the chance to write their own narrative. Also, according to literature, a personal brand identity allows individuals to define who they want to be and thus increases their self-esteem (Parmentier et al., 2013). Hence, proposition 1*"we propose that a creating a personal brand identity compensates for self-esteem associated with gender roles",* was supported.

Furthermore, through the interviews it became apparent that most women's self-presentation is based on communication and building relationships. According to Khedher (2015), self-presentation occurs through personal appearance, manners, non-verbal behaviours and verbal tactics with the purpose of creating a desired impression of oneself. Regarding online presence, all women are represented in various channels. However, 80% is not using these channels to their advantage as only two women are consciously using these platforms for self-promoting. According to Jones and Levering (2017), creating a strong online reputation involves controlling and maintaining social media channels and networking profiles. During the interviews, it was found that women will have a greater chance to be seen by communicating their value to the audience. Moreover, it was found that a strong self-presentation can support women to articulate their authentic side and to feel confident. Therefore, proposition 2 *"we propose that a strong a personal brand positioning compensates for self-esteem associated with gender roles"* was supported.

Regarding female's personal brand image, the participants give thought to how they are perceived by their colleagues and their environment. Even though, the interviewees seek feedback, this feedback is rather focused on their work and achievements rather than their image within the company. Labrecque (2011) states that seeking feedback is essential to close the gap between the desired self and the perceived identity. Notable was that the participants recognize that feedback is a valuable source to assess their brand image. This self-knowledge then translates into greater self-assurance and confidence (Wee and Brooks, 2010). Also, in the interviews it was found that alignment between one's personal identity and the created image contributes to self-assurance and self-esteem. Thus, proposition 3, *"we propose that evolving a personal brand image compensates for self-esteem associated with gender roles"* was supported.

All in all, the conclusion above leads to an answer to the main research questions *"How Personal Branding can compensate for females Self-esteem associated with Gender Roles,,* Regarding gender roles, 90% of the participants experienced gendered expectations in the course of their career and believe that such are influencing women's career and image. It was also found that women are more plagued with imposter syndrome which results in a more critical self-perception regarding their achievements and abilities. Ellemers (2018) states that gendered expectations are placing women in a self-defeating behavior. In that sense the interviews revealed that personal branding provides women with the tools to find ways to become more self-aware and express their authentic side. Through personal branding women can control their reputation and impact their image (Zinko and Rubin, 2015).) As a result, personal branding when applied correctly has the potential be a source for self-esteem, act upon gender roles and consequently holds the chance for women, to open them the doors their career.

5 Solution Design

The solution will be designed for the researcher's placement company, Design Hotels GmbH in Berlin. Design Hotels is a full-service hospitality consultancy, offering customized services to its member hotels. As a marketing platform, Design Hotels represents a collection of more than 300 member hotels across the world which are independently owned but united branded by Design Hotels™, and are committed to progressive design, architecture and cultural authenticity (Design Hotels™, 2021).

The reviewed literature as well as the findings from the interviewees were shared with the HR Director of Design Hotels to design a feasible solution. As personal branding is a person centric concept, the HR Director and the researcher agreed that an interactive workshop is considered more suitable than a presentation.

Engaging in personal branding is equally important for women and men (Gorbatov et al., 2018). To promote gender inclusivity, the workshop should not be held on men's expenses. Therefore, a gender-neutral workshop on personal branding is required. However, the workshop needs to be mindful that gender roles are sometimes embedded in people's minds (Wood and Eagly, 2009). Hence, men and women might have different needs when defining their personal brand in terms of gender identity.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that the designed workshop should explain in detail the importance and necessity of a personal brand, support participants in defining their desired brand to gain more self-awareness and self-confidence, and finally to show how individuals can communicate their brand by focusing on a stronger online self-presentation.

The purpose is to create a solution that shows the employees of the organization how to achieve greater self-awareness, control their reputation and create career opportunities by managing their personal brand. The workshop will give the participants the opportunity to engage in personal branding exercises and immediately start evolving their personal brand.

Best practices

To create the best possible solution for the organization, best practices were researched. According to Pavelin et al., (2014), a workshop should contain informative as well interactive elements. The dynamic nature of an interactive workshop will encourage creative thoughts and the participation of the employees (Pavelin et al., 2014). The interactivity of the designed workshop will include breakout rooms where employees will complete activities regarding personal branding. Hence, it needs to be taken into consideration that more people will be needed to facilitate and coordinate the activities in the breakout rooms (Pavelin et al., 2014).

Regarding content and structure, the workshop will follow the guidelines from a LinkedIn Learning workshop by Lida Citroen, who is an expert in reputation management and personal branding. Moreover, the book 'BeBranded' presents the elementary concepts and working instruments to build a personal brand and will be used as a guideline to design the interactive exercises within the workshop (Lupșa, 2019). Regarding the concrete design of the workshop slides, a keyword presentation according to Design Hotels design guidelines must be used.

Workshop Design

Introduction

The workshop starts with a concise explanation of the concept personal branding. Based on the findings, most participants are not familiar with the concept of personal branding. Therefore, the designed workshop will provide a clear introduction to the definition on personal branding. To engage participants, a thought-provoking question will be asked on what other people think makes them unique. This will carps the attention of the people involved, which is important to build an engaging environment for the workshop (Guzman, 2016). The process of personal branding will be further explained using the personal branding cycle by Khedher (2014).

I. Personal Branding

The workshop will continue by explaining the need for a personal brand. Herby, the elements that will be included are controlling reputation, attaining positive career outcomes and building influence (Rangarajan et al., 2017). Career achievements aspirations are considered as a great motivator for the participants to engage in personal branding (Gorbatov et al., 2019), and will be used to arouse the interests of the participants. People can better relate to a new concept if it binds familiarities (Bornstein and Craver-Lemley, 2016). To provide participants with a relevant and familiar example of a strong personal brand, the owner, and designers of Design Hotels Boutique Hotels, so called *Originals* will be used.

II. Creating Your Brand

Individuals must first *define their current brand* in order to create their desired brand. To assess their current brand, the participants will be provided with a small set of personalized questions regarding their perception (Lupșa, 2019). The purpose of this exercise is to gain an understanding of what their perception looks like.

After getting an insight into their current brand, the workshop will follow up with *creating the desired brand.* Starting to creating a personal brand is a fundamental element, as it is the first step to take control over a personal brand (Khedher, 2014). Personal branding is often mistaken as manufacturing an image for the outside the world (Zabojnik, 2018). As Design Hotels core value lies within authenticity, it is important that the workshop communicates that a personal brand is a projection of a person's values, skills and talents.

The first step to create a personal brand is to define a purpose for oneself (Scheidt et al., 2020). To provide the participants with relevant tolls, the Japanese IKIGAI Model and the Golden Circle of Simon Sinek will be introduced. IKIGAI is a self-discovery model that helps people to find their individual purpose and thus helps them to create their personal brand (Catarau, 2016). The Golden circle has similar principles and allows people to better align their passions, values and abilities by focusing on their why, how and what (Kinner, 2018).

In order to communicate the created brand effectively, a specific *target audience* needs to be determined (Gorbatov et al., 2018). When defining a target audience for a personal brand functional and emotional needs of the specific target audience need to be taken into account. Accordingly, individuals should focus on their technical skills which are relevant to the target audience but should also create an emotional connection with them.

III. Marketing and Positioning Your Brand

In order to market and position a personal brand, a personal marketing strategy needs to be set up (Vițelar, 2019). According to best practices, this entails networking, managing online reputation and conveying the personal brand authentically (Citroën, 2020).

Before, the workshop will dive deeper into the methods to position one's personal brand, the participants will be informed on *intentional networking*. Intentional networking is a relationship tool, that allows people to strategically communicate their brand and goals (Ilieș, 2018). Based on the interviews, seven women are mainly utilizing networking to promote their brand.

Furthermore, a powerful place to communicate a personal brand is the online environment (Mandagi and Aseng, 2021). Due to the rise of social media, people brand themselves often unconsciously on various platforms (Labrecque et al., 2011). In addition, the findings revealed a lack in a conscious and controlled online self-presentation among the interviewees. Therefore, this part of the workshop will specifically be devoted on *managing and improving online reputation* of the participants. According to Petruca (2016), social media provides its users with a great way to express their personal brand and the values they have to offer.

According to best practices, a strong LinkedIn presence involves, a professional profile photo, a concise and impactful headline, a compelling summary, a developed list of experience, skills and endorsements (Scammells, 2020). Moreover, individuals should show their involvement in selected LinkedIn groups, highlight projects and show personal interests, all of which must be in line with their personal brand to ensure consistency (Scammells, 2020). To provide the participants with an example of a strong online self-presentation, three LinkedIn Profiles were researched and will be reviewed together during the workshop. This will be followed with a short exercise in break out rooms where the participants need to review their own LinkedIn profile. The goal is to provide a range of ideas for a strong profile which can be applied by the participants.

A strong personal brand aims to build credibility and trust (Vițelar, 2019). In order to achieve that, individuals need to *convey their personal brand authentically*. Individuals need to be conscious about their impression, which includes style and nonverbal communication (Khedher, 2015). Based on a LinkedIn Learning webinar on authenticity, body language is a great way to support a person's story and ensure credibility (Afifi, 2007). The purpose is to support the participants in identifying their natural body language which in turn will lead to greater authenticity and more self-confidence (Phutela, 2015). Therefore, a short video is added to the workshop with tips on mastering body language.

IV. Question & Answer

According to Pavelin et al. (2014), a question-and-answer is critically important to effective workshops. This will provide the participants with necessary clarification and the chance to deepen the thoughts on personal branding (for the presentation refer to appendix 11.9).

Economically Viability

With regards to the economically viability of the designed solution, the organization will have multiple benefits by offering a personal branding workshop. The workshop will enable the employees to gain a deeper understanding on their inspirations, ambitions and value propositions which in turn can be used for HR purposes to better support each individual in their personal career path. Furthermore, Design Hotels main services are based on communication with external stakeholders and clients. Hence, enhancing employees' personal brand will not only evolve individuals personal brand image but also contribute to the overall image and reputation of the organization.

Technical Feasibility

Regarding the technically feasibility of the solution, the workshop should be hold in a virtual environment as per the restrictions of Covid-19. The workshop should be carried out via Microsoft Teams, as it is the internal communication tool at Design Hotels. Furthermore, the required breakout rooms for the interactive elements of the workshop are easier to manage via Microsoft Teams.

6 Implementation Plan

A keynote presentation on personal branding was developed for the organization. The purpose of the designed workshop is to introduce the concept of personal branding and raise awareness on its necessity and importance to create a strong personal brand, by providing the participants with relevant tools. However, an effective workshop on personal branding can only be implemented when the organization acknowledges the need for the change first (Elving, 2005). The steps to take at Design Hotels should be a clear intervention plan to ensure the readiness of the participants and to make personal branding to an intrinsic part of the organization.

For a successful intervention it is advisable to utilize a model that helps to guide the intervention (Karambelkar and Bhattacharya, 2017). The ADKAR model is a simple but effective model for individual change and consists of awareness, desire, knowledge, ability and reinforcement (Prosci, 2021), and is advised to be used to successfully implement personal branding as a career tool into the organization. It is acknowledged that personal branding is developing to an indispensable career development tool due to the change of social media and the intensified competitive job market (Rangarajan et al., 2017). Therefore, the planning and execution of the personal branding workshop should fall under the responsibilities of the HR department. This implies, that the HR department needs to be trained first on the principles and practices of personal branding in order to conduct the designed workshop.

Awareness

The first building block for a successful implementation is to create *awareness* of the need for change (Prosci, 2021). To create awareness among the employees, the nature of the change and why the change is needed should be communicated (Elving, 2005). To create a compelling case for the employees, it is recommended that the HR department should send an internal video memo by email. Videos are effective tolls to communicate messages that will stay in the mind of the recipients (Coyne et al., 2018). Additionally, a video is an interactive medium that is considered to be an effective mass communication tool (Finkler and Leon, 2019). Therefore, an internal video memo sent by HR, containing a thought through story on the need and reason for change can be very effective in creating awareness and understanding as why personal branding is utterly important.

Desire

The second building block is to use the created awareness and establish *desire* to participate in the personal branding workshop. To establish desire, the reason and need for personal branding needs to be translated into personal and organizational motivating factors (Berridge, 2018). The steps to take for the HR department should be a sequence of weekly updates on the social intranet focusing on the positive outcomes of personal branding such as increased self-awareness and self-esteem. In addition, career achievements aspirations are considered as a great motivator for individual's and should therefore be used to establish and foster the desire to engage in personal branding (Gorbatov et al., 2019).

Knowledge & Ability

The third and the fourth milestone of the ADKAR consist of *knowledge* and the *ability* to change (Prosci, 2021). The designed workshop on personal branding will provide employees with the knowledge on how to use personal branding but will also provide them with the ability to create their personal brand. As the designed workshop combines informative and interactive elements, the theoretical as well as the practical side of creating and communicating a personal brand will be covered.

The first workshop should be introduced within the organizations Lunch & Learn initiatives. Design Hotels HR department has a Diversity and Inclusion Team, that hosts "Lunch & Learn" workshops once a month, which provides employees with a learning space on their personal development. As a career and development tool, the workshop on personal branding falls within this category and should be held within the "Lunch & Learn" sessions.

Reinforcement

According to the ADKAR Model, it is natural for people to revert back to old practices (Prosci, 2021). To sustain the implemented solution, personal branding should be actively *reinforced*. Therefore, it is recommended to incorporate personal branding into the current onboarding procedure of the organization. By incorporating the workshop into the onboarding phase, employees will be supported in defining their personal brand from the very beginning and are enabled to create an authentic personal brand image within the company. This will give especially women the possibility to create a strong and compelling personal brand within the company. Additionally, to reinforce the implementation, half yearly feedback session organized by the HR department, should be used to maintain, and track the effectiveness of the individual's personal brand and set new personal branding goals for the future.

7 Evaluation of the Solution

The desired aim of the workshop is to educate and support individuals in defining and developing their personal brand. The designed solution educates participants on the principles and meaning of personal branding and delivers an array of tools to define and communicate a personal brand. The solution should lead to a better self-understanding of the individual's, an improved online presentation, and thus an overall personal brand image which is in line with the persons true identity. Consequently, the designed solution aims to increase female's self-esteem and empower them in their individual career path and thus create a strong pipeline of female talents.

The designed solution aims to support individuals in creating and communicating their personal brand leading to personal brand image. The personal brand image demonstrates the gap between the personal identity and the perceived identity. The effectiveness of the brand image can be assessed through a 360° feedback. Individuals will receive a deep analysis of how they perceive themselves compared to how other perceive them (Lepsinger and Lucia, 2009).

Secondly, the workshop provides participants with knowledge regarding their self-presentation and thus enables them to better control and enhance their online reputation. The effectiveness and impact of participants online presentation on LinkedIn should be evaluated by using metrics such as number of connections, profile views and engagement rates. These should be compared before and after engaging in personal branding.

Thirdly, personal branding aims to improve female's self-esteem and should lead to a greater self-appreciation. To measure the effectiveness of personal branding on women's self-esteem, a pre and post examination on self-esteem using Rosenberg's self-esteem scale should be carried out (Martin-Albo et al., 2007). This uni-dimensional method measures both positive and negative feelings about the self on a 10-item scale, and thus the effect of personal branding on self-esteem can be evaluated.

Finally, personal branding ultimately aims to support women in unlocking career opportunities and engaging in promotion activities, resulting in more women in managerial position and thus promoting gender equality within an organization. The effectiveness of personal branding on female's career progression can be measured by comparing gender presentation ratio in managerial position pre and post implementing personal branding in the organization.

8 Academic Reflection

8.1 Discussion

The beginning of this research leads back to one fundamental question*: "Why are women underrepresented in managerial positions*?". Research revealed that there are numerous reasons for the lack of females in management positions. In the eyes of the researcher two recurring concepts were women's self-esteem and gender roles, whereby gender roles are considered as the independent variable influencing women's self-esteem. It is proven, that women demonstrate lower levels of self-esteem compared to men, which can be ascribed as an underlying force behind the underrepresentation of women in management (Bleidorn et al., 2016). Hence, the purpose of this study was to explore how personal branding might compensate for female's lack in self-esteem, by giving them the chance to control their image and thus act upon ever persistent gender roles.

Moreover, according to literature, engaging in personal branding has various benefits for the individual, such as career opportunities, controlling reputation and increasing self-esteem (Rangarajan et al., 2017). However, personal branding has not yet been researched to the extent to which it can influence especially women's self-esteem and the impact on gender roles. This study adds specifically where the potential of personal branding lies for women with the overall goal to achieve female empowerment and gender equality in leadership positions.

Initially, the researcher believed that self-presentation will be the central point of discussion during the interviews. Hence, it was unanticipated at first, that personal brand identity, turned out to occupy the interviewed women the most. Looking at findings concerning self-esteem it was found that women tend to suffer from imposter syndrome, which is also mirrored in literature. Due to lower self-esteem, women tend to downgrade their capabilities, are less confident and overall have a more critical self-image (Efe and Hallegraeff, 2020). Considering this, it was not surprising at all, that the interviewed women felt most intrigued by their personal brand identity, as it is about gaining self-awareness and self-appreciation on one's skills, talents and unique contribution. Therefore, interviewees believe that creating a personal brand identity has the potential to become a major confidence booster for women which is supported by an interesting point made by another interviewee, who shared that *building confidence is grounded in who you are*. Consequently, the fact that self-esteem is profounded on the belief in yourself, has been the greatest eyeopener within this study.

It appears that even though most of the interviews ascribed the increasing importance of personal branding to the role of the internet. Most women mentioned that they are not actively promoting themselves on social platforms as they prefer not to seek validation through likes on social media. However, by neglecting social media women might run the risk of taking themselves out of the game. The online environment has transformed the way individuals build their reputation, and especially for women a strong online brand could increase their visibility, reputation and self-esteem (Vițelar, 2019). This makes, it even more crucial for women to control their online presence, in that notion interviewee 1 mentioned that the online environment *"could shine a light on women and their skill set in a way that perhaps they were not able to do otherwise.*

When investigating into personal branding with regards to gender roles, it appeared that gender roles are not yet a topic of the past and are still continuing to influence women's career opportunities and self-esteem. According to one interviewee, the overall perception towards women is changing, however, she said that *"we still live in a world where you are constantly being defined by others"*. Personal Branding has the power to act on that as it enables the individual to be in charge of their perception by others (Johnson, 2017). One interviewee summarized this by saying *"the beauty of personal branding is that you can design it yourself*".

Moreover, an interesting point of discussion was concerning the interviewees personal brand image. A personal brand image is the gap between an individual's personal identity and perceived identity (Cederberg, 2017). Most of the interviewed women are wondering how they are perceived by others, whereby one interviewee shared *"But I try not to think too much about it"*. According to Sowislo and Orth (2013), people with low self-esteem tend to be more concerned about how they are perceived by others. This finding might be an indication for lower self-esteem of the interviewed women. Consequently, the questions arose, why are women concerned about how they are perceived by others? Because it would not resemble what they would like to be perceived as? However, due to the limitations of this studies a clear answer to this question could not be explored.

Lastly, the findings claim that gender roles are still persistent in today's society as nine women mentioned that in the course of their career, they have always experienced gendered expectations. These external expectations, limit women in their self-presentation and decreases their self-esteem and thus negatively affect women's career progress (Labrecque et al., 2011). According to literature, as well as proven in the findings, personal branding has the potential to increase women's self-esteem and support them in controlling their perception which is often influenced by gender stereotypes. Consequently, leading to an answer to the main research question *"How Personal Branding can compensate for females Self-esteem associated with Gender Roles,,*

In conclusion, this study focuses on how the individual can achieve self-awareness, communicate their authentic side, and thus control their image. However, the researcher believes that if more women were to engage in personal branding, it would lead to a mass effect on women's perception overall. Therefore, personal branding has the potential to initiate the shift on gender roles and the way women are portrayed by society.

8.2 Limitations

Personal branding has developed to an important concept within management literature in recent years (Gorbatov et al., 2018). Nonetheless, while conducting the literature review on personal branding the researcher became aware that as a relatively new concept, personal branding points out a diversity of definitions, conceptual boundaries and no clear theoretical framework has been developed so far. Therefore, the chosen definition on personal branding for this research only represents one angle on how personal branding can be defined.

To understand the relationship between the different elements qualitative research was chosen. The strength of conducting qualitative research lies in extracting meaning and gaining a deep understanding on a specific topic (Anderson, 2010). Even though, transcripts, categorization tables and the color-coding technic were used to analyze the data, a qualitative perspective accounts for several limitations. The data has been collected, analyzed and interpreted solely by the researcher. Therefore the most common limitation within this research is that the results are subject to the researchers interpretation and focus on desired outcomes (Anderson, 2010). In addition, the findings can also not be applied to a wider population with the same degree of credibility as the effect of personal branding on self-esteem has not been statistically tested.

Moreover, while conducting interviews, different cultural backgrounds of the respondents were not taken into account and could have influenced the findings. It is known that social role theory expects gender differences and thus gender roles to appear differently in different cultures (Schmitt et al., 2017). Therefore, the interviewed women could have had different experiences and perception of gender roles, which in turn could lead to a different impact on their self-esteem and thus their personal brand.

Furthermore, the relationship between the researcher and the participants influences the data collection (Råheim et al., 2016). The interviewees were chosen based on convenience sampling from the researcher's placement company. Thus, some of the interviewed women were direct managers of the researcher, which might have influenced the data collection during the interviews, as respondents might have subconsciously been concerned to share private insights. Moreover, also the researchers age and status as an intern in the company might have influenced the extent to which the participants were trusting the researcher with delicate topics such as their personal self-esteem, self-identity and self-image.

During the research it appeared that most interviewees were not familiar with personal branding. In fact, most women had a negative perception towards personal branding in the beginning and believed it means manifesting an image for the outside world. Although the respondents were provided with a presentation on personal branding upfront, knowledge on the topic was sometimes limited. Therefore, the different principles of the personal branding process could not be deeply investigated.

8.3 Recommendations for research

Whilst this research provides various insights there are numerous areas for further research. During the interviewee most women mentioned that their self-esteem increased throughout their career. Literature says that self-esteem rises gradually during a person's lifespan (Bleidorn et al., 2016). However, during adolescence, especially young women display lower levels of self-esteem (Biro et al., 2006). Therefore, further research on the effect of personal branding on self-esteem could be performed with a population of young females.

Furthermore, while conducting this research it became apparent that the online medium plays a critical role when creating and communicating a personal brand. The involvement of technology and social media redefined how individuals interact and present themselves online and thus changed the way they build their personal brand (Vițelar, 2019). This applies especially to younger generations such as generation Z and millennials which are known to be more digital and tech savvy than their predecessors (Mandagi and Aseng, 2021). Therefore, it is advised to conduct further research on how these generations use social media to build their personal brand.

9 Dissemination

Personal branding is the practice of marketing oneself to society and has besides internal advantages such as increased self-awareness and self-esteem also the potential to unlock new career opportunities (Gorbatov et al., 2019) This makes personal branding equally important to men and women in their career and is beneficial to any organization aiming to support their employees in their self-development. However, with regards to self-esteem and the impact of gender roles, personal branding is especially relevant for female professionals.

The knowledge has been disseminated to the researcher's placement company. As the data was collected from its employees and the solution specifically designed for Design Hotels, this research is particularly relevant to them. A keynote presentation on personal branding was designed and shared with Design Hotels and evaluated by the HR Director (refer to appendix 11.11).

Based on the findings it appeared that most women's confidence increased throughout their career as they were becoming more confident with themselves. In that context one interviewee added: *I wished would have had this confidence earlier in her career*. Hence, personal branding is of significant value to young females, that will enter the workforce. Also, studies have shown that female students and adolescents display lower of self-esteem and a more negative perception of their capabilities (Arshad, Zaidi and Mahmood 2015). Moreover, student needs to understand the importance of personal branding and the impact they can achieve with it, as they will represent the future workforce. Therefore, the knowledge gained throughout this research was shared during a personal branding workshop within the Future of Work Minor at Hotelschool the Hague. The research and the workshop have been evaluated by the research commissioner Dr. Brannon (refer to appendix 11.10).

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11 Appendices

11.1 Signed Declaration of Confidentially

Declaration relating to confidentiality concerning research data in Launching Your CAReer (LYCar) programme

The undersigned, Chiara Huber (hereinafter referred to as: the Student), residing in Berlin

Conducting a (research)project for the company Design Hotels AG

(hereinafter referred to as: the Client), residing in:Berlin

Whereas:

- the Student shall, in the context of his or her LYCAR research, gain access to confidential information;
- the Client shall, where appropriate, demand a signed declaration relating to secrecy and confidentiality concerning the information provided in this context;
- this non-disclosure agreement shall, in the event of any discrepancies, take precedence over other contracts or agreements which have been or will be concluded or made between the Student and the Client;

Declares as follows:

1. The Student shall keep confidential any information which the Client or any other party involved in the LYCAR research provides under this contract, and shall not further disclose such information in any way, except insofar as the Student is obliged to disclose it by virtue of any legal requirement or irrevocable decision of a judge.
2. Information, as referred to under 1, refers to all information, including written, verbal, graphic and digital information, or information in any other form, which comes to the knowledge of the Student during the research period and which the Student knows, or can reasonably be expected to know, is of a confidential nature.
3. The Student shall not, without the prior written consent of the Client, disclose any confidential information to third parties or contribute to the publication of confidential information. The Student shall submit the thesis to the supervisor for approval from the Client in respect of confidential information, before making such information available to his examinator(s) at Hotelschool The Hague.
4. This non-disclosure agreement shall be in force for an indefinite period / The Student shall be bound to this obligation of secrecy for five (5) years after signing this declaration.
   CHOOSE IN CONSULATION WITH CLIENT)

Thus declared and signed by:

Name: Chiara Huber Date: 2nd - March - 2021.

Place: Berlin
Student number 781800

Signature:

11.2 Assessment Form LYCar Proposal

LYCar Proposal Grading Rubric

v.1.1 *(Version LYCar 2020; 25 November, 2020)*

Student Name:	Chiara Huber	LYCar Coach:	Ms Deborah Verschoor
Student Number:	781800	Primary PLO:	PLO 8: Reserach
Date Submitted:	8th of February	Secondary PLO(s):	PLO 2: Internship

Note: All boxes with red border to be filled by student

Preconditions (required for assessment)	***Yes***	***No***	***Comments***
Checks content and completeness			
Executive Summary is present, concise, can be read independently, contains information about process and content, focuses on results and outcomes	✔	☐	
LYCar Proposal meets formal reporting criteria (according to e.g., LYCar Reading & Writing Guide)			
LYCar Proposal is written in English and is professional, including common basic components such as Intro, ToC, Conclusion etc.- see Reading & Writing Guide	✔	☐	
LYCar Proposal is max. **5.000 words** (counting after Table of Content, incl. text in tables) **-** visual proof of wordcount is included in Appendices.	✔	☐	
Harvard Referencing Style is used consistently, referencing to primary sources only, List of References is well presented	✔	☐	
Check (technical) formalities and submissions			
Ephorus upload	✔	☐	
LYCar Proposal incl. Appendices are uploaded in Osiris	✔	☐	
Ethics and data management			
Ethical, integrity and data management requirements	✔	☐	
Entitled to assessment? (All yes above required):	✔		

DD1: The student has demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education, and is typically at a level that is supported by advanced textbooks

	Excellent	Pass	No Go
1.1 Use of literature and knowledge of the field	Student uses in-depth literature and knowledge of the field throughout the report. The report contains no mistakes and factual incorrectness.	Student uses in most cases literature and knowledge of the field in the report. The report contains some mistakes and factual incorrectness in a limited part of the report.	No sufficient or correct use of literature and knowledge of the field in the report. The report contains mistakes and factual incorrectness.
1.2 Intellectual depth and abstract thinking	Student takes all significant factors into account and looks from different perspectives, sees patterns, relates situations to concepts in order to solve larger problems. The reports show excellent thinking capacity of the student. New unique insights presented in the topic and depth of understanding displayed. Excellent linking between the elements and the underlying issues within the case situation.	Student takes different perspectives into account. The report shows intellectual depth (taking into account all significant factors and looking from different perspectives) in most parts of the report. Some patterns are clear. Some links have been made.	The report lacks intellectual depth (superficial and merely descriptive) in some parts of the report. Patterns are not sufficiently made clear.

Student Feedback:	Excellent ○ Pass ◉ Not Yet ○	
Assessor Feedback:	Excellent ○ Pass ◉ Not Yet ○	Literature, knowledge and understanding is consitent throughout the report. It shows intellectual depth .

DD2: The student can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and has competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining feedback and solving problems within their field of study

	Excellent	Pass	No Go
2.1 Application of theories/models to situations at hand	Student uses a range of theories/models appropriate to the problems in the case skilfully and able to add their own unique perspective and insight. They own the model(s).	Student mentions a range of theories/models appropriate to the problems in the case and applying some of them in the correct way.	Mentioning models and theories but not using them in a correct way.
2.2 Possible impact and meaning of own work - dissemination of research	Student plans evaluation of impact and meaning of own work in relation to business and industry with sound underpinning. Identification of all stakeholders and acts of dissemination. Plan on how to effectively disseminate knowledge through different channels fitted for a variety of audiences is also presented.	Student formulates criteria for evaluation. Student describes possible impact and meaning of own work. Identification of stakeholders and planning of dissemination through at least one valuable channel with an audience is presented.	Student fails to describe criteria how to evaluate impact. No identification of stakeholders or realistic plan on dissemination of knowledge through at least one valuable channel with an audience.

Student Feedback:	Excellent ○ Pass ◉ Not Yet ○	
Assessor Feedback:	Excellent ○ Pass ◉ Not Yet ○	Theories are applied in a relevant way. Some visuals are created to give an overview / make the reading easier. I think some models could have been used / applied, e.g. model on EQ. I miss the underpinning of presenting your work with a vlog. How does that match the various stakeholders?! Who are your stakeholders and do you need other types of dessimination per stakeholder group? For example, how are you going to share your finding to:

DD3: the student has the ability to devise data gathering events, gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgements that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues

	Excellent	Pass	No Go
3.1 The Design Based Research Process	Student sets the research process up in a systematic and well organised way. Student makes sense of a problem mess, analyses a (complex) problem and formulates feasible solutions by using a design-based research approach. Logical flow from Problem definition to Analysis to Solutions Design/methods are well chosen and motivated,	Student analyses the problem, and formulates possible solutions underpinned by literature using a design-based research approach. Methods motivated and mostly logically chosen	Insufficient problem analysis and methodology, research cycle not used.
3.2 Analysis and evaluation of data	Student plans analysis and evaluation of data/information well using appropriate (digital) tools and makes data-driven decisions. All statements are underpinned with facts and figures and/or referencing. The appropriate tools are used in all steps. Analysis is sufficiently complex with use of information from more than 2 different dimensions (practioners, scientific literature, the organization and stakeholders).	Student plans analysis and evaluation of solutions clearly, with some flaws or unclarities. Some statements are underpinned with facts and figures and/or referencing, some lacking underpinning. Analysis is sufficiently complex using data from at least one dimension and sufficiently backed up with literature.	Plan of analysis and evaluation of solutions is not clear. Statements are mostly not underpinned with facts and figures and/or referencing; some are contradicting. No tools are used. Lacking or no analysis and not backed up with literature.

Student Feedback:	Excellent ○ Pass ○ Not Yet ○	
Assessor Feedback:	Excellent ○ Pass ◉ Not Yet ○	I do miss a clear break down of the MRQ into smaller RQ and sub-questions. When making smaller steps, it is easier to keep focus/structure and to answer your MRQ. You talk about interviewer bias, however I do belive that with doing interviews more types of biases can play a role and thus impact the outcome What are the limitations of your research? Is there, for example, taken into account cultural backgrounds of the ones being

DD4: the student can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences

	Excellent	Pass	No Go
4.1 Communication to audience making use of professional (business) English	Student divides information effectively in paragraphs/chapters. No noticeable errors in English usage and mechanics. Use of language enhances the argument and avoids abbreviations. Sentence structures are well varied, and voice and tone are highly suitable for the specific audience/s. Style and content complement each other into an appealing, high quality story. Highly skilful organisational strategy. The logical sequence of ideas increases the effectiveness of the argument and transitions between paragraphs strengthen the relationship between ideas. Sub-headings are employed effectively and the links between different sections are reinforced through linking expressions. Shows attention to detail in all parts of the report.	Student divides information in paragraphs/chapters. Errors in English usage and mechanics are present, but they rarely impede understanding. Use of language supports the argument. Sentence structures are varied, and voice and tone are generally appropriate for the intended audience/s. Generally, a clear organisational strategy. The sequence of ideas in most cases supports the argument and transitions between paragraphs clarify the relationship between ideas. The report is mainly comprehensively written and lacks some attention to detail in some parts of the report.	Distracting errors in English usage are present and they impede understanding. Use of language is basic, only somewhat clear and does not support the argument. Word choice is general and imprecise. Voice and tone are not always appropriate for the intended audience/s. Basic organisational strategy, with most ideas logically grouped. Transitions between paragraphs sometimes clarify the relationship among ideas. The report is not comprehensively written and lacks attention to detail in most parts of the report.

Student Feedback:	Excellent ○ Pass ○ Not Yet ○	
Assessor Feedback:	Excellent ○ Pass ◉ Not Yet ○	The layout of the report are divided in a clear way to the reader (all audiences), there is logical transitions between the chapters and sub-headings. arguments are well presented in buisness english.

DD5: the student has developed those learning skills necessary to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy

	Excellent	Pass	No Go
5.1 Plan on IQ development in PLO: Reflection on product(s)	Student has clear plans on what will be delivered and uses different relevant theory to underpin own work and reflect on it.	Student has a plan on what will be delivered and uses theory to underpin planned own work and reflect on it.	No clear deliverables mentioned and almost no theory to underpin own work and reflection.
5.2 Plan on AQ & EQ Self development	Student devises excellent ability to critically reflect on own developmental goals and demonstrates real growth mindset for life-long learning. Student proposes a demonstration of being able to self-direct, taking initiative in unpredictable situations. Student shows different metrics that can demonstrate development in terms of their EQ/AQ.	Student shows developmental goals and demonstrates growth mindset. There is a plan on how to reflect on values, attitudes and behaviour. Starting levels and desired end levels are described and measurements are provided.	Developmental goals are not concrete, there is no demonstration of growth mindset. Plan on how to reflect is vague and does not give enough substantiation to show growth.
5.3 Plan on EQ Social development	Student provides a plan on how to construct a multitude of proof that shows development as an Intercultural Hospitality Leader. Excellent ability to contribute to the global society/local community as a responsible citizen. Excellent analysis of diversity of people the student will deal with. Possible effective collaboration with all stakeholders in different cultural settings. Hospitality is key to the project or work the student does.	Student provides a plan on how to prove development as an Intercultural Hospitality Leader. Plan on how to contribute to the global society/local community as a responsible citizen. Proposing ideas on how to collaborate with different stakeholders in different cultural settings. Hospitality is a differentiator in the students' project or work.	No clear plan on development as an Intercultural Hospitality Leader. Plan on how to contribute to global society/local community is missing. Ideas proposed on collaboration or hospitality are not sufficient.

Student Feedback:

- Excellent ○
- Pass ◉
- Not Yet ○

Assessor Feedback:

- Excellent ○
- Pass ○
- Not Yet ○

5.1: I think you can do more in order to improve on your set goals (e.g. IQ goal 2: linked-in learning or best practices, etc). How are you going to reflect on your development?

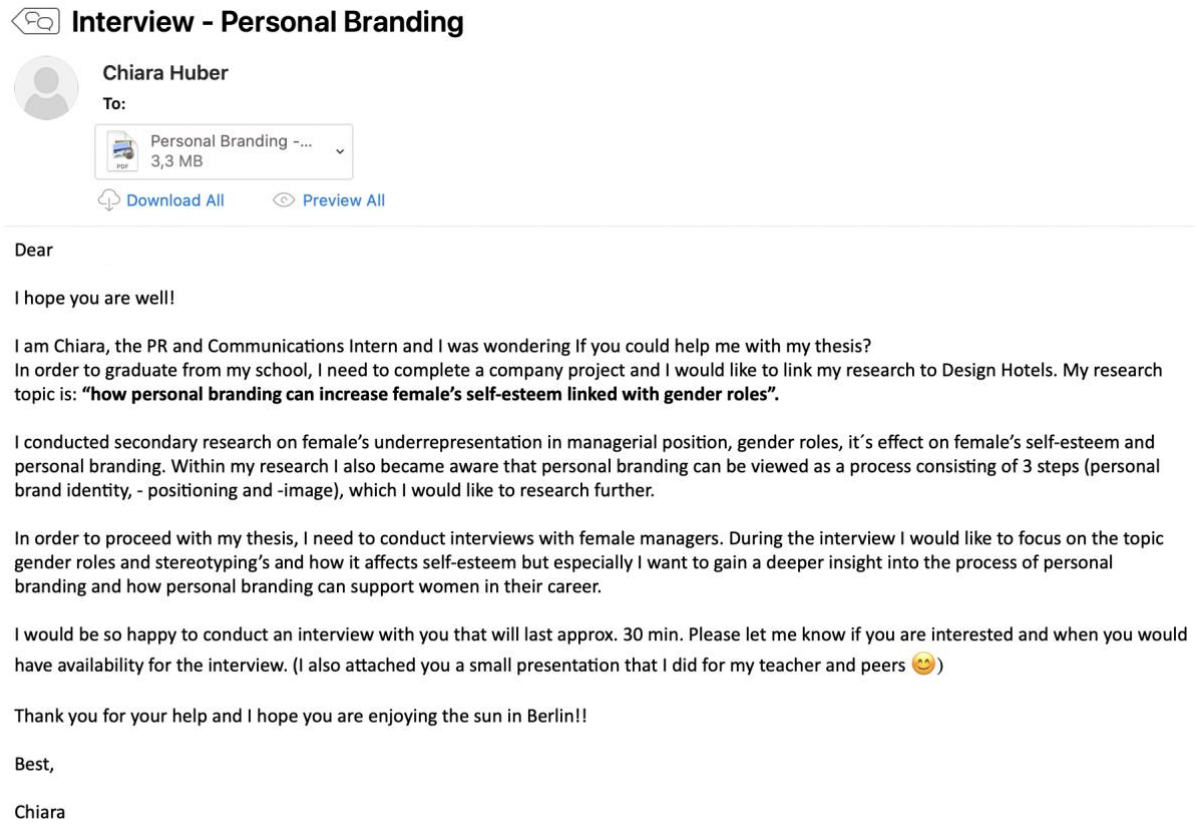
5.2 and 5.3: I do miss some theory / model with regards to EQ and AQ. When looking at EQ: what are you going to do on the "self" part and what are you going to do on the "social" part (the quadrant of EQ)?

Overall Assessor Feedback

LYCar Proposal Outcome

Excellent	○	All qualitative criteria awarded a "Pass" and at least two qualitative criteria awarded a "Excellent"
Pass	◉	All qualitative criteria awarded a "Pass". "P" registered in Osiris. Student can continue with LYCar execution.
No Go	○	One or more qualitative criteria graded as "Not Yet". "F" registered in Osiris. Student re-writes LYCar Proposal with incorporated feedback.
Pre-Condition NY	○	Pre-conditions not met. Student resubmits LYCar Proposal. No grade or feedback provided to the student.

11.3 Invitation E-mail for the interviews



Interview - Personal Branding

Chiara Huber
To:

Personal Branding -...
3,3 MB

Download All Preview All

Dear

I hope you are well!

I am Chiara, the PR and Communications Intern and I was wondering If you could help me with my thesis?
In order to graduate from my school, I need to complete a company project and I would like to link my research to Design Hotels. My research topic is: **"how personal branding can increase female's self-esteem linked with gender roles".**

I conducted secondary research on female's underrepresentation in managerial position, gender roles, it´s effect on female's self-esteem and personal branding. Within my research I also became aware that personal branding can be viewed as a process consisting of 3 steps (personal brand identity, - positioning and -image), which I would like to research further.

In order to proceed with my thesis, I need to conduct interviews with female managers. During the interview I would like to focus on the topic gender roles and stereotyping's and how it affects self-esteem but especially I want to gain a deeper insight into the process of personal branding and how personal branding can support women in their career.

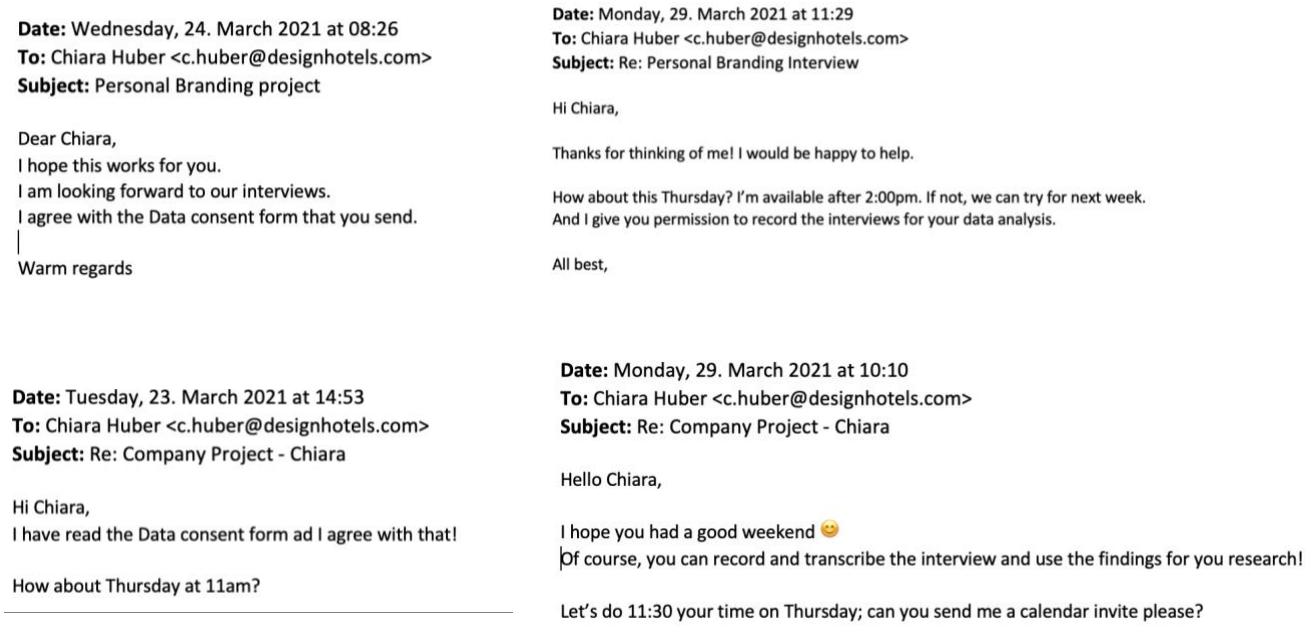
I would be so happy to conduct an interview with you that will last approx. 30 min. Please let me know if you are interested and when you would have availability for the interview. (I also attached you a small presentation that I did for my teacher and peers 😊)

Thank you for your help and I hope you are enjoying the sun in Berlin!!

Best,

Chiara

11.4 E-mail Proof



Date: Wednesday, 24. March 2021 at 08:26
To: Chiara Huber <c.huber@designhotels.com>
Subject: Personal Branding project

Dear Chiara,
I hope this works for you.
I am looking forward to our interviews.
I agree with the Data consent form that you send.

Warm regards

Date: Monday, 29. March 2021 at 11:29
To: Chiara Huber <c.huber@designhotels.com>
Subject: Re: Personal Branding Interview

Hi Chiara,

Thanks for thinking of me! I would be happy to help.

How about this Thursday? I'm available after 2:00pm. If not, we can try for next week.
And I give you permission to record the interviews for your data analysis.

All best,

Date: Tuesday, 23. March 2021 at 14:53
To: Chiara Huber <c.huber@designhotels.com>
Subject: Re: Company Project - Chiara

Hi Chiara,
I have read the Data consent form ad I agree with that!

How about Thursday at 11am?

Date: Monday, 29. March 2021 at 10:10
To: Chiara Huber <c.huber@designhotels.com>
Subject: Re: Company Project - Chiara

Hello Chiara,

I hope you had a good weekend 😊
Of course, you can record and transcribe the interview and use the findings for you research!

Let's do 11:30 your time on Thursday; can you send me a calendar invite please?

Date: Thursday, 25. March 2021 at 14:47
To: Chiara Huber <c.huber@designhotels.com>
Subject: Re: Interview - personal Branding

Hello Chiara,

A really interesting topic, and I would be happy to help! Would you like to do it in person in the office?
I hereby give you permission to record the conversation and I am informed about the document you sent.

Good Morning Chiara,

I hope you are well,

Thank you for your email in regards to scheduling the interview with Jenni, are you available on Thursday 8th April 10-10.30am UK/11-11.30am CEST?

Also can you send the questions ahead of the all for us to review? And you can use the data from the interview for further research!

Kind Regards,

Date: Thursday, 1. April 2021 at 16:39
To: Chiara Huber <c.huber@designhotels.com>
Subject: Re: Interview - Personal Branding

Yes of course, how is week after next if not too late?
I agree with the form that you sent, you can transcribe and record the interview

Date: Wednesday, 31. March 2021 at 10:11
To: Chiara Huber <c.huber@designhotels.com>
Subject: Re: Interview Request

Hi Chiara,

I agree with the Data Ethics.

To keep in on point, do you have some ready questions you can send me upfront? Let me know, and speak soon! 😊

Best,

Date: Friday, 26. March 2021 at 15:30
To: Chiara Huber <c.huber@designhotels.com>
Subject: Re: Company Project - Chiara

Hi Chiara,

You can record the interview for your Thesis, I am fine with that.
Wedneday works. I just realized Friday is a holiday! Pls send an invite :)

11.5 Interview guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE	
GENDER ROLES	• Why are women generally underrepresented in managerial positions? • Have you ever felt forced to act in a certain way because you are a woman? • Do Gender Roles / norms act as self-fulfilling behavior in women?
SELF-ESTEEM	• Why do women portray lower levels of self-esteem than men? • How confident are you in achieving your career success? • What is your source for confidence? • How can women increase their self-esteem / confidence?
PERSONAL BRANDING	• What is your first thought about Personal Branding? • Why is Personal Branding increasingly important nowadays? • Are you aware about your Personal Brand? Elaborate! • What advantages does Personal Branding have for women? • What makes a strong Personal Brand?
PERSONAL BRANDING PROCESS	
BRAND IDENTITY	• Do you think about how you are perceived by others (working colleagues)? • What is important to consider when identifying your personal Brand?
BRAND POSITIONING	• What is self-presentation for you? • What are your efforts regarding self-presentation? (online & offline) • What can women improve with regards to their self-presentation? • How can women increase their visibility in a company? • What are the benefits of a strong self- presentation?
BRAND IMAGE	• Are you aware about your Personal Image in the company? • What do you do to feel more self-assured regarding your personal brand? • Do you seek Feedback or engage in self-reflection? • What are key benefits from effective feedback & Self-reflection?

11.6 Interview transcripts

Interviewee 1

Chiara:

Good Morning, thank you for doing the interview with me. You agree that the conversation can be recorded. I have a few personal questions for you. So, like for how long you have already been working at design hotels

Interviewee 1:

I have been at Design Hotels for just over eight years.

Chiara:

All right, and you already like read my email, and you know a bit about what my research is doing, like the under representation of females and managerial possessions, their lack of self-esteem and personal branding. And I'm really curious about your first impression. And therefore, I want to ask you like, why do you think there are less females in manager position executed CEO positions?

Interviewee 1:

Are we talking about internationally or in Germany?

Chiara:

European based, that would make it a bit easier.

Interviewee 1:

From Personal Experience, I think a lot has got to do with how hard it's been for men over the years. I mean, if you think about when women got the vote I mean, in the UK wasn't really that long ago. And there is a movement for female emancipation, and it has been picking up steam, and it has been giving women the confidence to know that they can, can manage these positions. But **I think that there's a lot of imposter syndrome within with women in the workplace**. And I think that it's, it kind of feels like you're put in a position where you've got to choose between having a family or having a career or have and having a successful career, which for so many people mean being the boss. And I think that there's also that that, that we kind of need to dispel. It's like what is success to you. Is success, having a good steady income? Having a happy family? And if you want, having children and feeling financially comfortable, or his success being the boss, being the CEO, and having as more money than

you need? And then if it is that the second one, then how do you get to that? Well, maybe I can't have intended to leave, because that's going to get in the way, the first few years with young children is really hard. So, it's also that kind of difference between what we what we want, I mean, my sister, I've got three older sisters, and one of them has chosen to go into work into education, because it means that she gets the holidays off when her daughters are off school. But her husband didn't change his career, that wasn't what she's trained in. She's an incredibly successful pa to the financial control of an investment bank before she had kids. But for her within the family, she's the one that gets paid less, therefore, she's the one that has to make the sacrifice with her career and change her career to do something that she might not necessarily want to do. So, it's also I think, I'm not sure if I'm really answering your question, I feel like I'm getting kind of open to it.

Yeah, I think women for us, we feel like, we have to make a choice. Whereas for our male counterparts, they don't necessarily have to make that choice. They're not the one bearing children, their body, and their mind isn't being impacted by giving birth. And having two kids, this is where I'm coming from. In terms of my experience, does that answer your question? It does, absolutely. So, you would say that women are, you know, between the conflict of having a family and having a career. And also, that, you know, they, they do not feel that they can have both at the same time because there is less support for it. And also, it's not just about how we feel, it's also about how our superiors feel about that. And if we have superiors that haven't been properly trained, and, and shown and encouraged to support working mothers, and actually give us the emotional support that we need to get off this imposter syndrome and to know that we can do it. If we don't have the superiors that have that desire, or to have the right training, then how are we ever going to do it, it's going to be a battle and that you have to literally see it as that. Whereas if you're in an encouraging environment where you have superiors that don't have a predisposed opinion about working mothers being negative. And that if they see working mothers as being the most organised people, they're probably going to employ at being exceptional time managers, and actually really being able to focus and quite possibly meeting all their deadlines before they need to, because they've got so many other things going on, if they, if they switched it like that. So, it can't just be about how we feel about ourselves.

Chiara:

Have you experienced such things by yourself?

Interviewee 1:

I've had at design hotels. I've had two senior managers, one male, who always saw my potential, he doesn't have a family and his wife works. And so, for him, here, we saw my potential, in a sense of actually slightly bending the rules for me, when I came back from maternity leave, and making it slightly easier for me to be able to come back to work unofficially, giving me flexible hours. I felt really bad about that, because I knew that my other the other working mothers in the company didn't have that flexibility that I did. So, I was given special treatment, because that boss saw he, he needed to keep me he wanted to keep me. So, it's also that it's like, yeah, I've got a boss that was supportive, but not to everybody in my position. And actually, other working mothers would come and say, Well, you've got it really easy, you've got it really good. And it may feel dreadful. Whereas I've got a boss now, who very rarely asks about my family, and the impact of my work on my family in the situation with Corona. So, kind of like I've got this, like, I've had these two quite extremes. Absolutely. And, and I kind of wished I could find that middle ground with it all, and not just have these two extremes where I had one person that was understanding but for his own selfish purposes, and then have this other person who was just ignored the fact that he had family, just get on with your work and just get the job done. So, it's Yeah, it's a tricky, tricky balance.

Chiara:

Absolutely. And have you also felt like sometimes that you were expected to act in a certain way? Because you're working mother? If you know what I mean, that people expected you to, you know, act in a certain way because your mom.

Interviewee 1:

I have other colleagues that I don't work directly with, yes. Not my superiors, my superiors know, my working self. So well, they would know to never question or assume that of me, because they know that I would come back and say that they will wrong. I've actually had other colleagues and it's so it's like, really silly little things.

Chiara:

So you had this situation when you felt that people expect you to act as a mother or a woman?

Interviewee 1:

Yes actually! At a meeting, we had gotten together. And one of the, they were doing these exercises. And one of the exercises was if you had all the money that you needed to fix

something, to do something with it, what would you do, and you put us all into little breakout rooms and discuss. And there was a senior male in my breakout room, and I joined a bit later as my connection was slow. So, I joined the discussion quite late. So, when I joined the zoom meeting room he said: "Oh, Rosie, there you are. So, I was I will assume that you would say you'd spend more time with your family." And I was like, No crisis. Why would you just assumed that would be what I would like. It really threw me off. I was really quite offended. And this person has children of their own. But I'm sure that you wouldn't have said that to a male to a father joining the call. But it was that immediate? So, it's that there are sometimes those perceptions.

Interviewee 1:

I've also had another male colleague who was also quite senior and again a father. He no longer works at design details. Nice Guy, we have really good working relationship. We used to travel a lot together. And we were travelling to Paris, and he decided to go for the day. And I don't travel like that. I don't think that's a good way to travel workwise bad, I don't like getting up at 5am and catching a flight. And also, environmentally, just travelling to Paris for the day just feels really quite excessive. And I thought, Okay, well, I'll go for the night. He thought it was hilarious. He's like, oh, are you escaping your family? I'm not. But again, it's like, what because I'm a mother. And I'm going to go a day, the day before the meeting. There's like something family related to that. And again, it's kind of like, even before I had kids, being a woman of colour, being the youngest of four daughters, having Indian father who raised me, my parents splitting up when I was very young, I've always had this very outspoken, quite strong will. And actually, that's meant that as a working mother, I've maintained that part of my personality, that's very. And so I'm able to stand up to myself to these people and say, No, you're wrong. That's a ridiculous thing to say. And I think that's why if you were to speak to another colleague that isn't as an extrovert, and kind of outspoken as me, you will get a very different feedback from them.

Chiara:

Yeah, right. Because most women are probably not that, you know outspoken as you are. And if they are confronted with such things, they probably feel, bad about themselves and for, choosing in this case work over having a family weekend. Do you think that being a mom a woman it is more difficult to get a management position? Do you feel that being a mom, being a women that might become a mom acts as this invisible criteria's, or this invisible forces for exactly these positions?

Interviewee 1:

Definitely. After I came back from maternity leave of having my first son. We had, I had another boss, Ellen. Ellen was actually Ellen joined the PR team communications team. And she was actually the Director of Communications overseeing PR as well. Because while I was off having my first son, the other director left. And Ellen, so I came back from maternity leave. And then Ellen announced that she was pregnant. And she hadn't been in the role for very long. So over the next six months, they were then looking for the replacement for Ellen. And I was thinking, Oh, hi, here I am. And then a friend of mine at the time was working in the HR team. And she was asked to put an advert out for this role. And she called me from upstairs and she said, I just want you to know that I've just posted this job. And I felt awful. Because not only did they not tell me that they were advertising, and that this was the route that they were going to take. But they didn't it was like they didn't even consider me because they put, they must be a native German speaker. And I went to Ellen and I talked to her about it. And I said, this really is like a punch in the gut. For me this is really feels like shit. And then I went to Santa who was my kind of senior boss at the time. And he was very good at talking around and he was like, I've got other plans for you. The launch campaigns, you're really doing a great job, you can just kick them off. I really need you to focus in that area. And he was able to convince me that that was the right place for me to stay during and the irony is he actually then gave me a head of title. I was head of large campaigns, but I wasn't head of the team. They got a head of PR who was male, and I knew that It was because I, they expected me to have more children. And that they had to find a solution for Ellen's maternity leave that they'd got a female and that she was having a baby, that this one's just come back because she's had a baby and this one that's just combat, she's probably going to go and have another baby. So however, many years away, that might be, oh, let's just get a man in. And actually, it’s in no way discriminating. But it is also widely known in the company that a lot of the roles when they were looking for gay men, because as far as they were concerned, gay men wouldn't go and have a baby. And I've said to so many of my gay male friends, if you want a child, you do it, and you take that paternity leave, and you take one year that you're entitled to. And you know, just because you're male, and just because of your sexuality does not mean that you do not want to have children. how narrow minded is that of them? But that's what the general consensus. That's what we genuinely thought.

Chiara:

And would you also say that as a result of that you have not been promoted, because you

might have more children, that this influenced or even diminished your self-esteem or your self-confidence and how you feel about yourself?

Interviewee 1:

That's interesting one, because we kind of have to sit back and think about it a little bit, don't you? Um, me personally? No, I don't I it hasn't. And I'm glad to hear from other younger female colleagues that they've seen me as a role model of someone who can have a good career, who can have a family. And in terms of my self-esteem, the tricky thing is when you go and have a baby, you, you do have a little bit of an identity crisis. And you're all of a sudden, you're pulled into so many different directions. And then you if you choose to go back to work, then you're even pulled an even more directions. But for me, I saw my work as the place that I could be me again, I wasn't a mother, I wasn't a wife. I wasn't a sister. I was I was me; I was doing my job; I was doing what I really love. And after I had my son, I kind of threw myself into my work because I wanted to, and part of that was travelling, I travelled quite a lot, I travelled at least once a month, sometimes twice. And my husband was incredibly supportive of that. And there were moments where I felt like, this is having a bad impact on my, on my child or my son, where, when I would come back from the trip, he would throw himself into my arms, and then for the next day, he would be very standoffish with me. And it was hard. And I just had to learn how to deal with it. Because I'd much rather him see that I was going out and I was working, and that he had to respect that because that was not going to check. So, we have to find a way within our family, all of us to, to handle this situation. When a child, even a two-year-old, he had to him had to figure out how his decisions were going to be played out. And I had to be okay with the fact that when I came back from a trip, he was he was annoyed with me for 24 hours. And that was fine. Just, it was just the way it was. But also, the plus sides of it were him and my son and my husband, their relationship got very strong. And they have and still do and incredibly affectionate, loving bond. And it's, um, it was a wonderful opportunity for them to grow together as well.
So, but in terms of my self-esteem… Well, actually its funny. You might ask the team, if they did see a difference in in me, before she went and had her two children because maybe I've worked together this whole time. Even the same with someone like Paul Kristoff know all these people. I've worked with them the whole time that I've been at DH and the whole time I've gone on and tend to leave and come back. And actually, I would like and I'm very happy to say this. Both times I went on maternity leave within two months of returning I got a promotion.

Chiara:

It's amazing that story thanks for sharing! So, in the beginning you were only head of launch campaigns, not head of PR because it was just that you became a mother. But in the end, you turned it around because you said right at work, you see the chance to be just received as you and not a mom and not a sister. And I think that's really nice, because as you know, I'm interested in personal branding. And I think what you do, I don't know if it was conscious or unconscious, but you actually like branded yourself that way, right? Like to be, like not seen as, you know, the working mom choosing between personal and professional but that like that you really like, you know, keeping the party going on going travels etc. …

Interviewee 1:

Yeah, absolutely. I was very conscious about that. That I was going to keep it separate. And I remember not long after coming back from having answer, we had a big party. I think it was ITV. And it was at a member Hotel in Berlin. And I was the last person at the bar with Ruby and Christoph and a couple of other colleagues. And actually, we ended up being asked. And it's funny, because in our industry in hospitality, that seems a good thing. You know, yeah, well done. But also, for me, I was just showing them that I, I still enjoyed this, it wasn't like I can still do it. It was like, I'm still here, because I'm having so much fun. I want to be here. And the hangover, the next day was hard work. But it was a good, it was a good moment to also show my colleagues that I was still the same person, you know, like, people just assume that you go and have children and that you change in a bad way. But for me, I feel like I've kind of grown in many other ways, and lots of them are very positive. And also, it has helped me in my work. I'd say, I'm so organised.

Chiara:

So, what would you say then, like, is important when you think about personal branding? What is important? When it comes to how do you do it? Or what do you think when you think about personal branding?

Interviewee 1:

I've never actually thought about it as a concept until you shared your slides, which I found really interesting. But I think now, if I was going to kind of map that out for myself, it would need to be authentic and honest. Because I would not want to have to pretend, I wouldn't want to be Yeah. No, I don't. I am the same person at home as I am in workplace. It's just I have a different focus in those two places. No. And I have different priorities when I'm in those two places. And so you can't serve this policy of working from home for parents as wonderful as

I'm home every day when my boys come home from Kinder garden but it also means that it's now merging the lines in a way that can sometimes be difficult to kind of unpick because work is now at home. When places you know, I'm in that place. And I am thinking about that thing, and I'm in that place.
But yeah, I think in terms of personal branding, I think it's really important that it's authentic, and it's honest. And it's really, it's bass, it was really who you are, it's not something that you just signed, I'm just going to be is basically you're emphasising one of your, your existing qualities. And that you're not I don't know I don't like this. This feeling like you're someone else at work and you're wearing a mask in. I think there's always that misconception isn't our senior women being bitches. Like, that just is so false to me for so many women I've met because they're not bitches. But it's just like they feel like in this man environment is masculine much and Well, they've got to be a bitch to get ahead and be respected. But yeah, It is obviously become super important. The fact is that most people are just not aware about personal branding and the influence they can achieve with it.

Chiara:
Exactly!

Interviewee 1:
It doesn't have to be that way. And so that's why the authentic and the honest is really important for me that I want to get to where I go because I'm hard working not because I I'm a bossy to everyone else around me, and I'm battling, you know, these negative words, that's just not how I'm, I like to see myself, I see myself because I work really hard. And I always have done math and got very good experience. And that's because I worked really hard to get it. And that's just always been, like London's incredibly competitive place, I was lucky to find my way within that. And that experience that I can bring to Berlin, it sets me quite apart from a lot of other people. And that has always kind of helped me, I think.

Chiara:
Absolutely. And also, like, with regards to, you know, personal branding, like nowadays, now, with the internet and everything, like you have a lot of ways to show who you truly are, like, personally, trying to be someone else, but trying to, you know, get your best traits out and show who you are, like, if it’s being very positive being very organized for example. And what do you think would be advantages that especially women can take from it?
Because to give an example there's so often, you know, people whatever the think women, are not seen in leadership positions, because they're too sensitive, or whatever stereotypes they

are having on us. What do you think, which possibilities can personal branding bring to them? The advantages or benefits also when thinking about social media?

Interviewee 1:

It's a funny one, isn't it? Because you can, you could get someone who was more of an introvert had high career aspirations. And if they were able to influence it in a positive way, their personal branding, and especially kind of offline, I believe it could kind of shine a bit of light on women and their skill set in a way that perhaps they weren't able to do otherwise, and it could really help them with their career. When I was starting out when I was your age, you know, I started out as a receptionist at a PR agency. And actually, I mean, that kind of personal branding side, when I was a junior, it was very much about where did you go the weekends, which I was working at music PR agency, so what DJs do, you know, when go out, where were you on the guest list, and that that is that kind of personal branding, you know, and I was fortunate enough to have a circle of friends that were very much in the music industry, and that had access to the, the best clubs in London. And so, I was being seen at these places. And I then I knew the DJs and I was like there a whole weekend, you know, so that was my personal brand. It was I was kind of using my connections. And, and actually, I did that quite a lot. Because I, I when I was 22, I had a boyfriend who, whose family had a jewellery business in London, and it had been there since the late 60s. And it was this very cool rock and roll jewellery brand, that all of the like, every musician, every rock and roll musician has their jewellery, and I went from the music PR agency into a fashion PR agency. And actually, I was really smart about as and when I would name drop this, this brand. And the fact that I my boyfriend was running the business. And that opens so many doors and it was it was a terrible way to do it. But in London, it really takes you really far. Especially when I was working in fashion PR and so I used that to my advantage for many years. And it worked for both of us for him as well. It was a kind of mutual beneficial, like personal branding. I basically attached myself to that to them. And I mean people do that so much, especially in using social media, right. It's so much about, like, looking at other people's followers to see who they're connecting with or who's following them and it in the travel industry, it really is quite prolific on social media. And I actually choose to kind of step away from it, my profile on Instagram is private. It's not a professional one. And actually, I've got a friend who is a very famous wellness and chef in the UK, she's got a huge social media profile. And she keeps saying to me, you should set up a work one, you should set up a work Instagram account, I'll teach you what you need to do. And you just put all your things on there. And I'm always like, why would I do that? That's not me that's not authentic. And that's

not honest. And that's why I'm not going to do it. Whereas on LinkedIn, I'm a lot more active.
Does that answer your question?

Chiara:

Thank you it does, very insightful! do you sometimes feel like men know better how to self-present themselves?

Interviewee 1:

It's definitely not. Definitely not because I've had male friends, colleagues, boyfriends, that did a really bad job. Because they, they, it's like, they think that's how they should, they should be able to do that. And it's actually quite unfair on them, because especially if they're introverted, especially if they're shy. I'm a man. So, I should be able to do that. It's not fair, I think that there is that there is a much in culture. And then that can, you could say it was more in mine and older generations. Where you do get guys that you can tell they're putting on this kind of show, in a sense, like, they have very much got their work persona, and they kind of come in, and they're not there to make friends. They just think if they treat everyone like they are beneath them, and they are much more genuine, to them that afternoon to help them rise. Because if you treat the one in one way, then they're going to see think you might think they're going to see you as, as the boss is more senior. We did like that. We need quite a frustrated conversation with one of them at the moment, who's refusing to take my professional advice on something. And I keep trying to say to him, this is not going to work. This is my recommendation. And he's literally now one above my head to someone else and ask them and try to convince them and not ask them to speak to me about it, and try and convince me, this is refusing to take my professional recommendation. And I'm not going to back down, I will find a compromise because that is how I work. Stand that he's also in quite a tricky position. But I will put my foot down and say this is my professional opinion. My experience from my experience, this is what I'm saying. And I've had this conversation with this person many times before, so I don't understand why he hasn't learned.

Chiara:

I really like that you said that when you were in London that your personal brand was being well connected, like all these connections that your head were your advantage, branded oyu in that sense. Like, you can also say that in within a company like you know, being well connected can be a strategy of personal branding. Knowing people, being liked by people is kind of important.

Interviewee 1:

Definitely, for me personally, funnily enough, that came up as one of my strengths in my feedback recently. And no one's ever given me that as a positive piece of feedback for that I am. Well, I'm well liked, and well connected within the company. And I have, I've worked really hard, I've worked eight years for that. I, but that's just genuinely because I respect people. And I feel like that goes such a long way. And I treat everybody the way that I would like to be treated myself. And I don't discriminate between if someone is an intern in a company for six months, or if someone's been there for 20 years, I treat them all exactly the same with the same respect. And the thing is in our environment, that's not always the case, which means that I stand out a lot more and my relationship building stands out. A lot more, not because I'm doing anything special, but because everyone else is a shit. And they're not treating people with respect. So, I'm not doing anything special, I'm doing the like, basic, like, nice guy thing. But in an environment where 90% of people, even though we have a flat hierarchy, actually don't see it that way. It looks to everyone else. Like, I've worked really hard to make friends and good connections, but actually, I've just been myself and two people nicely.

Chiara:

And what do you think with regards to Design Hotels in order to change that a bit? Like, what can they do to support women and especially the respect that everyone's treated equally? Like, what can come from their side to improve the current status?

Interviewee 1:

One of the big things that we are doing is the diversity and inclusivity conversations. However, if they're not handled carefully, it could backfire with some people, they might see it in a negative way of like, you know, we were slightly censored with the International Women's Day content, I wasn't allowed to use the word feminist or patriarchy in something. Because it might offend some of our male colleagues.

Chiara:

But if you would have used the word feminist, they would feel offended. Why that?

Interviewee 1:

I was just asked to edit those words out of some text that I was using. Yeah, I know, it's ironic, isn't it, that we're planning all the International Women's Day content, but we still have to be really careful that anything that we were writing wasn't going to offend any of our male

colleagues, because some of them had to express that they were uncomfortable about some things that's between us and knew they would feel uncomfortable about being called a feminist. They think I personally think that they didn't want any of the sessions that we were held holding to become a negative conversation about how people had been treated at design hotels in the past. They didn't want it to be things to be dug up and shared publicly. Which was never the plan for any of it. That's between you and your, your paper? Don't mention that to any of the other colleagues.

Chiara:

No, no, no. All right, no, very interesting. So, I think like also can't conclude anything that I can say that education, like notice diversity and inclusion, initiatives that you're doing is part of, you know, you know, getting women ahead in their careers and supporting them.

Interviewee 1:

And I think more has to be done for returning women from maternity leave. Now, one of the big issues that we've had in the past is massive inconsistency around how people are treated in general. Then if you add if you take that narrow, like lens and put it to mothers, so as I said before, I was given preferential treatment, and I was I was on a 40-hour contract, and I was getting paid in full. But I was told that between us, I was allowed to be more flexible with my hours. And I was allowed to leave earlier to my son from Keita, but it wouldn't impact my hours and my contracts and my salary. Because I was then would then make those hours up later, or earlier the next day. And other people when they tried to do that were told no, you have to reduce your hours and reduce your salary. working from home in the evening is not an option. Making up those hours is not an option. Which was really, really shitty and incredibly unfair. And also, so there's that side of it. So, it's treating people differently based on how you value them. And then there's also when you go on maternity leave how you're treated. When I told the first time when I told them I was pregnant, my boss said I'm happy for you, but I'm really Sad for us. So that put it down on it. The second time I told them my boss literally did this. Oh, you're joking, right? And I was like, so, whereas I've had other colleagues, when they told their boss, they were pregnant, they were like, Oh, well, congratulations. So there's also that it's like, treat people with respect and consistently.

Chiara:

But they felt about you this way because you are the head of department and you cannot go?

Interviewee 1:

the impact I was going to have it was going to have on them personally. So, it's having that consistency. And a nice this one I've shared with more senior people, because this one really, really hurt. They have this little baby grow into it. And it's got made by originals on it. So it's like the parents and the originals made by originals. And some reason for both of my pregnancies. I wasn't sent one of those as a gift. But male colleagues whose wives or female partners that did not work at Design hotels and they had a baby. Yeah, the same goes with being sent a bunch of flowers. My team sent me flowers, but the company never did.

Chiara:

These so unfair, really, really bad! But where do you think should the initiative going from?

Interviewee 1:

I think the more that we share these, this kind of feedback, I can see that there's a problem. And the more that they can realise that there's a lot that needs to be done. So it's being given the platform in turning, to be honest, knowing that there won't be any negative repercussions on what we have to say. So, in that safe space. And therefore, understanding and I have been only last year was I finally given that safe space to share this in a way that I knew wouldn't have negative repercussions on me if I'd said it. Two years ago, when I before I say when I was pregnant with Asher, it wouldn't have gone down very well. And it probably would have been harder for me to come back to work.

Chiara:

So that's one of the things. It is important to share what they did wrong, because they were probably not even super aware of it, like what kind of influence they had on you.

Interviewee 1:

And that's how I explained it. I said, No, when you have a baby, your hormones, and your emotions are all over the place. And you know, I was getting gifts from other people. And I was like, Oh, I wonder if I'll get one. Because I I was going back there you know. And actually when, when you do leave and you have a baby, you. For me, it was really important that I did return to design hotels because it was a safe space. That's how I saw it is a safe space, our family. They were colleagues that I knew it was a job that I knew there were clients that knew they knew me. They knew I was hard working. I didn't have to go and explain myself to anybody. I can see the door and I knew where the toilets were, you know, I knew my journey to and from work. All of that having that in place when you have when you're

returning from intensity is really important. And I think I've given this advice to other female friends where I've said, if you can return back to the same job, and if you've to leave, I recommend you at least return to that safe space that you know. And when you feel strong, emotionally and physically, then leave, and then find a new job. But don't do it when you first return, because it's, it's hard. It's also it's that return, it's kind of like, knowing that you're going to be welcomed, and again, being consistent about that. And, and supportive. And I think, younger women, I think it would be really great to, for them to have mentors, in your female mentors to give them that support. But I also think that young men need that whether it's, I think, with men, perhaps the gender isn't as important. But I think of the mentor. But I think for young women, having a female mentor is really, really helpful. And it would have helped me a lot as well. It has to be that that female mentor is aware of the situation, it can't be a female mentor that tells you to act like a man or to wear high heels when you do a presentation. Because it gives it gives you more confidence.

Chiara:

Well I will not comment on the high heel's advice, this is absolutely inappropriate! But I think also, like, for me having a female mentor or female, or role models that really impacts you! People supporting you with being confident during the day-to-day life at work and that you can be honest and do not need to laugh out of kindness, when someone said an inappropriate joke here.

Interviewee 1:

Absolutely! But yeah, I think in terms of how, how a company or how design hotels, I also think, yeah, there's that like a slight internal audit on the on how things are done, and how they can be improved. And I don't think it has to be a session of bitching or sharing negative stories, I think it can be much more kind of uplifting of like, how I tried to do the parenting session into Women's Day where we all know it's hard. And we all know that there are problems and that these things aren't perfect, but actually, let's all share some ideas of what we can do that can help. And how can we help each other? And I think also it's really educating our colleagues and sharing the right or not the right, there is never a right but sharing more examples and stories and providing people with the right tools and the right words to communicate.

Chiara:

Well, thank you so much for this. They gave me so nice insights. Is there anything else you would like to share with me?

Interviewee 1:

Yes also, there is also one other thing because I feel like I've focused quite a lot on terms of my personal branding and being the mother. But also, for me, that is that side of me, the biracial side, the British side, especially being in Berlin, also very much part of who I am, and how I see myself and how I want other people to see me. I get offended when people make racist jokes about Muslims, because my family Muslim, and I get offended for two reasons. One, because they're being racist, too, because they see me as white. I'm not white. I'm biracial. My father is Indian. And that I like that of my personal branding is also really important.

Chiara:

The cultural part you mean? Your roots also define who you are and make your personal brand you know you?

Interviewee 1:

Exactly! You get any questions from any of the things I said, or you need a little bit more context on any of the examples I've shared. I'm happy to elaborate.

Chiara:

Thank you!

Interviewee 2

Chiara:

Right. Okay, I think it's recording. Thank you for taking your time and allowing me to interview you! I can ensure you that this interview is anonymous and confidentially. So, I have a few, like I prepared a few questions. For how long have you been working at design hotels? And which position Are you in?

Interviewee 2:

I have been working here since July 2017. So that's almost four years. So, like three and a half years. And I am brand manager for many brands management team.

Chiara:

All right, nice. And I already explained you a bit already what my research is about personal branding and how it links to self-esteem and gender roles. And I was curious, to know from you, what do you think why women are usually underrepresented in Executives and CEO positions.

Interviewee 2:

I think it's still something that's left over from an old mentality that is still very dominant. But we're even though we're still a very industry, progressive organization, but the fact that it's still, despite also for us is that it's still from a structure and mindset from many, many years ago. And which had to do with the fact that that women were the ones to maintain the family, and men were the ones to take care of the family from a financial point of view. And this is for me why I think that we have such a delay in that sense, like a finger right now. We're very ready. But also, many women still feel like they're not being taken seriously. So, they won't take that step. And also, women have to be much louder than men to get themselves in that position. So, there are many different factors.

Chiara:

Yeah, absolutely. I agree with you! You believe women sometimes have issues with stepping in and being louder than the first step. Do you agree that women portray lower levels of self-esteem and are usually less confident in promoting themselves, like engage in this promotion?

Interviewee 2:

I think women are less likely to give false promises also, also, historically, because they're generally afraid to, you know, say things that like give skills or say certain things that they cannot really live up to, don't this kind of macho behaviour, you know, you're trying to, sometimes it's still so just fake it till you make it. But men, they follow this much stronger

than women. And I think this also has to do with the fact that we're, we constantly have to prove ourselves much more, we feel like when we do something wrong, the consequences are way harder than when the men did something wrong, you know, so, definitely, self-esteem is lower. Because for us, we feel like there's much more on the line, if we would, you know, make a mistake or something. For example, if a woman gets pregnant, she might feat that she cannot get back to her job after maternity leave. Some things are so much more on the line for women than for me., I mean, obviously also don't want to generalize for men. There are also many men with self-esteem issues. But generally, much more women have lower self-esteem and confidence.

Chiara:

Yeah. Do you sometimes have this feeling that you lack a bit of self confidence in your career ambitions, or, even at the workplace in general? You also think that accounts for you in a way?

Interviewee 2:

Less and less I mean as a young female intern, you're still very curious to learn you don't have any self-esteem because you feel like you don't know anything yet. Definitely, like being able to stand up for myself when I wanted to get a job here after my internship, it was very, very hard for me to actually even like tell anyone about it. I thought that was obvious that I wanted it. I thought I didn't have to voice that. That wish somehow until people said to me, no, but they don't know that you want to stay you know, so you need to tell them and so definitely from a young age, I needed some extra push, because I didn't have the confidence to even talk to my superior, which is Daniel is the metal and bionic man in our team. But then yeah, I think the more that I like, the more time I spent here and also our team in creative, a lot of feminine, very, like, strong, strong minded, creative women who definitely, you know, to keep the brand all intact very much. And Daniel, he's not that I wouldn't say that him as the only men is the dominating all our thoughts. Like he's not the one that's like, you know, he's not the one that's overseeing, or like approving everything from like, I think that he really has a big trust in me, and I think that's also why I feel very empowered in the team.

Chiara:

I also wanted to ask, sometimes you said that women don’t push themselves, we don’t engage in this promotion, because we don't want to make false promises. Because you can argue that being pushy or bold is not a female behaviour. So, have you ever experienced that people were expecting you to behave as a woman because you are a woman?

Interviewee 2:

Not so much. I think my mom was always like, like, from a from a more like feminine perspective. Not because my mother, she was always very working very hard. Working from a young age and very individualistic. She was brought up with three brothers as well, so quiet. Yeah, quite determined herself and just doing what she wants. And so else, I never really felt like my personality, it's hard to say because my personality was generally always against my brothers, I was always the one that was like, sweeter, you know, a little bit softer and like, didn't generally didn't really, like get so agitated also, by other situations, I would never engage in a fight or I would always like be very helpful. And I'm not sure like this to this date. I don't know, like, you know, is that something that I think I should see doing? Or is it just my personality? Definitely. Compared to my brothers, I was very much more like having these, you know, more feminine traits, but I don't think that anyone concretely like expected these things of me, I mean, hotel school like them, at most, I think like there This was where I sometimes felt like why do we need to wear these skirts? Or are these high heels in housekeeping? You know, whereas the men could just wear trousers, trousers and shoes and you could only get pants if you would ask for it as a woman and yet they're there I sometimes I felt like this is sound nuts. Yeah, I mean, even though I never really asked for it because I felt like is fine. You know, I don't feel so strong. Like I can wear both but like it's it should be. Men should even be able to ask for a skirt, you know, but you should ask in the beginning of it. Listen, you say what do you want to have like pants or skirt? You just cross it on? And you don't like that's what I felt a bit like, even though I don't really care, I don't want this to be a given that all women wear?

Chiara:

Absolutely. Yeah, thank you so much for being so open for like until now. And I want to go a bit deeper into personal branding. Because, you know I believe that we can increase self-esteem with it. Personal Branding allows you to change the perception that other people have on you, and that you can influence the audience and promote yourself in a way. So, what is your first thought about Personal Branding? Like, what do you associate with it?

Interviewee 2:

I didn't really know that there's such a concept or concept. Debate through social media and everything. I don't really have a connection to it at all. I mean, of course, a bit but never really gave it too much thought. I don't like the thought to create your own personality and think too much about what you want to be or what you want other people to believe that you are. I mean, I think that we all think about this already way too much. I think a lot what other

people think of me, but I don't want to give it so much power. I'd rather find things that really fit me and develop that part of me where I think I have my strengths and I just do what I want and what feels natural to me.

Chiara:

So, you think you don't have a strong personal brand.

Interviewee 2:

No, I don't think I have a strong personal brand. I've always felt like we're taught not to shout about ourselves too much like the idea of personal branding and promoting yourself in that way.

Chiara

All right, really? But you said that you think about what your strengths are. And what I want to develop further.

Interviewee 2:

Yeah, I guess not so, not to consciously, consciously.

Chiara:

Okay. All right. And why do you think people are now paying attention to personal branding?

Interviewee 2:

Nowadays it is less about your CV and what you have achieved from educational point of view and its more about how you present yourself, also online. But personally, I don't really have my own online strategy in it.

Chiara:

All right. And do you believe that women like can have certain benefits from it by doing it to be more seen in a company?

Interviewee 2:

Yeah, it's a good question. I definitely think that it is all about kind of holistic approach. You don't do anything that's controversial. I think you need to view branding in a sense that you stand for something very strong and that can bring you very much to the top. For example, Ksenia, when I think of her, I want to think of a set of characteristics, she is a very charismatic leader because she is standing for some things and other people maybe not as much, because they're, they're generally a little bit more like not so strongly branded indeed. So, she's, she's great, because she has new ideas and thinks out of the box. Like, that's her

branding! I think in most companies, more competitive ones, I can imagine that your success or career opportunities depend to a certain degree on the strength of your personal brand.

Chiara:

In one sentence what do you think is the most important thing to make a strong brand?

Interviewee 2:

Passion for sure. It can be for a very specific thing, but you need to stand for something for like, strong belief. Also, confrontation with yourself and critical thinking is important. You need to have a clear direction for yourself!

Chiara:

When thinking of women, what can they improve regarding their self-presentation?

Interviewee 2:

I would say just more determination and trusting yourself in whatever it is that you that you do to stand behind it. And even if you then in the end, find yourself not, you know, having to correct yourself from what you did what you thought about before then. So, be its but very often, you know, when someone asked to you say a statement, and someone asks you a few times, like, Are you sure? Are you sure, you know, we tend to at some point be like? Okay, then maybe not if you're asking me so often. Yeah. Stand for something and be and be the ambassador of that. Of that thoughts are that I think this is really important. And this is not so easy.

Chiara:

Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. What do you think, how can women improve that like the determination?

Interviewee 2:

Sure, I think it's important to experience a little bit more and find out what you like. Personally, I really, kind of capitalize on the things that I do know, and I find interesting. And when it comes naturally you actually can embrace these kinds of skills. Women need to get clear on what their want and to accept who they are. You don't need to be good at everything at the same time, just because you're a woman, or you need to stand out and try to make your voice. I think it's even better actually, if you focus on one thing and make that flourish.

Chiara:

Would you say that in turn that gives you more confidence? Like if you do the things, that you're interested in and that you're good at that boost your confidence?

Interviewee 2:

Yes absolutely it makes you more confident because you know what you want and what you are good at. Also. If you are perceived for who you are that definitely makes you more self-secure and yeah confident

Chiara

I also figured out during my research that it is important to have feedback sessions and engage in self-reflection sessions in order look back and see what you can improve on yourself and your personal brand. Do you do that regularly that you take your time and self-reflect or ask for feedback from others?

Interviewee 2:

I would say not enough. But I love feedback, especially when it is coming from a personal perspective. I am very open and very approachable for feedback. But I should definitely ask more for feedback because it is important to talk about and see whether you are doing is actually recognized.

Chiara:

Feedback definitely important. I have my first feedback with Rosie tomorrow, and it might be my perception of my work is completely different than hers. So, what does Feedback is for you? What is the great benefit it in?

Interviewee 2:

I was already thinking about it! I guess it helps you to have a better self-understanding. And, to know what people think about you. And it definitely contributes to self-love and self-esteem if people show admiration and recognition for what you are doing.

Chiara:

What do you believe would people say about you? Like oh, this is this is so nice about Cleo.

Interviewee 2:

ha-ha you are asking about my personal brand! I think it is that I'm like, an open book, in a way, I always say everything, I cannot leave things inside. So, I think that people would say, probably that you can talk to me and that I'm honest, maybe sometimes a bit too straight, you know, Dutch and …

Chiara:

… very direct.

Interviewee 2:

Right, like crass jokes! But I think this also people appreciate to kind of just break the ice, you know? Yeah, I guess.

Chiara:

So these are your two traits, you say “I highlight for myself”.

Interviewee 2:

But also, I think, I think, I think I think it's also a good thing. I am pretty good at it my job in terms of like, management, different many different things, different loose ends, tying it together. That's a more technical point of view.

Chiara:

And last question, what do you think can Design Hotels do for Women or focus on? Or what do you feel is missing?

Interviewee 2:

It’s a good question, find it very, hard, in a way, as we're removing theoretically more towards it, right? Talking about it. That's about it. So, I would rather want to see now that we're walking the talk, you know, that we're not just having these conversations about indeed, like how to deal with like, preference only for women for like mothers, for example. And then indeed, see how that then goes, I want to see like how when, when the first mother comes back from pregnancy leave or whatever, and see how she feels being like, like, integrated into the team if her position is still there. I mean, I had a manager. Like, was there before Daniel, she went on pregnancy leave, and she came back, and Danielle had taken over her position, obviously, because someone has to do it. But it was everything that she was doing was ordered. She wasn't doing the same things anymore, basically. So, I think after not even a year, or maybe, maybe a year or something she left because she felt like her position was made redundant in a way No, it was not because he was the head of brand. And now there was someone else who was also head of and I have to, which is fine, you can share it. But if it's a male, it's very confronting. Yeah, we need to be this is very sensitive topic. And I think many companies need to train. That's a kind of know how to do a bit better with how when women come back from maternity, maternity leave.

Chiara:

Do you think that she could also have done something for herself? Like she could have positioned her in a way?

Interviewee 2:

Usually, maybe yes but for her I don't think so. Like, that's a good question in connection to that. Because she's, she's great. Like, oh, yeah, she was really one of the best managers I've ever had. And she had very strong personal branding. Yeah, I think that she just had to, but what she's doing now is much cooler. For her much better fit team is a better fit. I think she just also like she's not someone who would, apart from the personal branding, she wouldn't try to take that other position away from someone else, you know, like, it's also a certain respect that you have and, and we're all friends here. We're good. Working teams, so it's something that's then also a sense of, Okay, well, maybe then my places here, my place here is just, maybe I don't really fit her anymore. For her, it was fortunately actually something good. That happened because she's in right now in a very good place. But you hear when people were being fired or whatever, you know, which fortunately hasn't happened here. Alright, let's face it, it's very good.

Chiara:

So Personal Branding alone does not bring you to the top. There needs to be some support from the organization as well.

Interviewee 2:

Yeah. Especially if you're working mum. I mean, we're also seeing that generally with people having children now in the pandemic, I also think that with our company these we've had like some we have two mothers in our own team you have also Rosie You know how it is like working super hard. On the side, Rosa is even working 80% of which is great. And alien now is working 100%. But we have, like, Linda was still only working 10 hours or something. And we're having a zoom call or on teams just like chats. Her daughter's always in the background in like, interfering, and everything and yeah, it's like, and to be honest, I don't know. So well, like what the company can do to to give, you know, better, outcomes look for, for parents or mothers in that case, because it's, it's tricky. It also depends on the situation they have as a mother and father, like if they have agreed together that's Sundays, like I do. I don't really know what their situation is. But this is for me, like one of some really, really important things because it's a physical thing. Only we can get pregnant. Right? But women are, you know, physically the only ones who can get pregnant. So, it's not really something that we can change. Yeah, this is that's why this is like the trickiest thing. Yeah. It's also why we sometimes are the less preferred choice.

Chiara:

Yeah, because we might get pregnant, we might get, you know, not be in a job for you. It's important to make sure Yeah, I agree. All right. Yeah. Thank you so much for the interview!

Interviewee 3

Chiara:

Hello, thank you for doing the interview with me! Can you tell me for how long are you already working at this time hotels?

Interviewee 3:

I joined in December 2017. So, it's just over three years now.

Chiara:

All right. Okay. I'm very curious about your first impression of it. So why do you think in general, are women underrepresented in managerial positions?

Interviewee 3:

I think it's a mixture of things. I think it's hard to break into positions that are traditionally dominated by men anyway. And even if you think and know that there's no logical reason for any job to be overrepresented by men, that can still kind of subconsciously hold you back from pursuing positions in that area. So, I guess, if you see, only men and only male role models examples in managerial roles. As much as you know that you can do that job and you're suited for it, and you have the right qualifications. There's always that kind of, I guess, subliminal obstacle or boundary. In your mind. I mean, no one wants to be the only person like them in the room. So, I think that can hold people back as well. Or have a woman back rather, obviously, there's the whole issue of career and family as well. And if women take time off to start a family, then that can sometimes create issues in, in in furthering and advancing into managerial positions. And as much as we are hopefully, living in a progressive world, we still face gender inequality, you know, we can try as women as hard as we want and apply to all the jobs that we want. But there's still that ingrained gender inequality, where, you know, research and studies and surveys have shown that a lot of recruiters will often automatically go for the man rather than women, even if they've got the same qualifications, some, a lot of it is kind of out of our hands. So, I think it's a combination of different factors. And I think it also depends on where you are in the world. And different cultural considerations. You know, some countries have much better records than others, you look at the Scandinavian countries, and they have a much better record. And then even some other countries in in Europe. So, there's, yeah, there's no one simple answer. I think it's a multitude of things.

Chiara:

Due to my research. I also came across multiple factors, but I linked it back to the impact of

gender roles and self-esteem. And also, that this is sometimes also in the mind of women like this gender roles and gender norms and that they feel trapped in a box with that. So, I was curious, have you ever felt that way that you felt forced to act as a woman because you are women that you expected to behave in a certain way?

Interviewee 3:

Umm, not so much. Not so much now, maybe more when I was younger. And I think when maybe like you're in your 20s when I was in my 20s, I felt like people took more of a was looking back in it, I feel like people were much more kind of like maternal and paternal towards me, like looking out for me, like I was a little kid and like, treating me very gently. And I noticed that men the same age as I didn't get that treatment, they could be quite outspoken and, and pushy and forward. And that was welcomed. Whereas I felt like I was kind of treated more like a kid, like, special, gentle, that kind of thing. And I do, I definitely think that was related to me being a woman because as I said, I didn't observe men, my same age being treated that way. In terms of feeling as though I have to act like a woman in a job or demonstrate typical feminine qualities. Yes, I wouldn't, I wouldn't say so much in my career. But definitely in jobs that I've done when I was younger. So, jobs that I've done on the side, I can remember, you know, working in retail and being told by management that I should be wearing high heels, and I should talk in a certain way, and I shouldn't wear trousers, I should wear a skirt and that kind of stuff. But beyond that, I think I've been lucky enough to work in situations where actually most of my managers have been women. And that was never really enforced on me. I've tended, I think, with the exception of maybe one or two jobs, most of my jobs have been in environments where women were quite heavily represented, represented, especially at managerial levels, as well. So, I never really felt that kind of pressure to act or be a certain way.

Chiara:

That's good. Yeah. Do you believe that women sometimes also lack self-esteem on the workplace and in general?

Interviewee 3:

Yeah, 100%. And it goes back also to what I said about if you're the only woman in the room, there's already a bit of a spotlight on you. And sometimes you don't want to be seen, if you're the only woman in the room like you just want to blend in, you don't want that extra attention. So that's in the back of your mind. And that can really damage your self-esteem. I once worked at a hotel where I was mainly working alongside men and I was also doing the PR for their restaurant, and their chefs, which is obviously very male dominated and like kitchens,

professional kitchens and very masculine environments in quite tough and I just felt completely intimidated. Because I didn't talk the way they talk, they didn't communicate the way they communicated. It was all very kind of aggressive. And I'm not like that. And knowing that I couldn't communicate in that way or that I didn't want to communicate in that way, made me so self-conscious that it took me a long time to find my voice and to be able to speak in a way that I would be heard, but I wouldn't have to mimic that masculine behaviour. So that I definitely think self-esteem as is a big thing. **But there are so many kinds of unspoken expectations. Even if you don't believe in those expectations, they're always at the back of your mind and they do tend to eat your self-esteem,** especially if you're a woman when you have all of these kinds of external voices as well telling you that it's not feminine to behave that way or to think that way anyway.
So I would say self-esteem definitely plays a role and that's why it is so important to have gender balance and women in in managerial roles because I feel like if you have women represented and you can see that at least one woman has kind of got far or progressed in in that area without you know having to compromise anything then that kind of makes you feel a bit more relaxed, which makes you feel a bit more like you can be yourself, you don't have to kind of change your behaviour or the way you do things to fit in. But if you don't have that, then it does become a bit of a slippery slope and you start to question yourself a lot.

Chiara:

So you would say a source of self-esteem for you are other women that you can look up to?

Interviewee 3:

It is important to note that obviously, all women aren't the same. And some women do kind of work and communicate in a way that is more associated with the way men work. I mean, I've worked with women who, if you close your eyes and sets, they were a man just find their way of managing and interacting and communicating like you would believe it. So, I don't want to say, you know, just the fact that someone is a woman makes the situation better. That's not necessarily true. But I do think having those examples, and at least knowing that it's possible, and seeing that it's possible, is important. To kind of not just younger woman, but any, any woman

Chiara:

Do you think that women act a bit bossier in a way and take on this role to in order to be respected because they are judged based on their gender?

Interviewee 3:

It depends on the industry, but I think that women act a bit bossier in a way and take on this

"role" in order to be respected. So, the place where I worked at the hotel with the chef's, which is very male dominated, the top person was a woman. And she was very aggressive, very bossy, very assertive. And I think it was her way of reining all the men in and showing them that she was boss. But in the end, it just made her very unlikable. And I believe that she could have done that in a way without like, going overboard or being mean. But now that I look back on it, she was probably thinking, I have all these big kind of male egos in the room that I have to control, and I need their respect, and this is the way to do it. But I have seen women do it without having to resort to that. And without having to kind of go over the top and be really aggressive to prove themselves is possible. But I guess, for most women, that would kind of be like a defence mechanism. It would be kind of like the obvious route to go.

Chiara:

Absolutely. Yeah, like definitely another option is engaging in personal branding. So, I was curious, what's your first thought about personal branding? Like, what do you think it is about?

Interviewee 3:

Personal Branding? Oh, can you elaborate?

Chiara:

ha-ha of course. So, like there are a lot of definitions. And it's really liked an actual and popular topic now. And for me, personal branding is really a tool to promote yourself. It's not branding is not trying to be another person and presenting you in a different way. It's more about looking inside of you and seeing what are my talents, what am I good at? And how can I communicate that. And also, especially for women, we are often reduced based on our gender and seen as not a preferred choice when it comes to these managerial positions. And personal branding, it might give us the opportunity to show who we really and that we are like well, I am a woman, but I can be a manager also without being assertive and a bossy queen be.

Interviewee 3:

Yeah, I immediately thought it is obviously how you present yourself. I've always felt like we're taught not to shout about ourselves too much like the idea of personal branding and promoting yourself in that way. Hopefully, the idea of that being something bad or you know, too much is dying out. But definitely, I felt like in the past if a woman takes that approach and is vocal about her personal branding and her talents and you know, the various things she can do when and her potential, it's often received in like, an arrogant way. And if a man does it, it's not even received as Oh, he's confident it's just normal, like it's normal to do it. Whereas,

if a woman does it, it's almost like, Oh, she's boasting, or she's really aggressive, or she's overly ambitious. But I think it's, it's great, especially now, where I think no one fits in a box, like we all have so many talents that don't even relate to our day-to-day work, that if we shouted about them and talked about them, we could possibly integrate them into our day-to-day work. I think a lot of us have grown up with thinking that personal branding and kind of talking about yourself and being proud to say who you are, what you're about what you're good at, is somehow a bad thing. And that it's a bit arrogant. I'm hoping that's going now and dying out. But definitely growing up, I was made to feel that like, you know, your actions speak louder, you shouldn't have to say it, you shouldn't have to kind of put those labels on yourself, you wait for other people to put those labels on you. You wait for other people to tell you that you're good at x y Zed, you don't tell everyone else that you're good at x y Zed. And that's not the right approach. Like if you don't tell people how will they know?

Chiara:

Exactly, exactly.

Interviewee 3:

And especially nowadays, right? Increasing competition on the job market. You actually need to push yourself in that way. And, you know, women sometimes lacking the self-esteem and not engaging in this promotion, making it even more difficult.

Chiara:

Exactly. So, to conclude from what you said, Are you aware about your personal brand? Or do you actively take care of it?

Interviewee 3:

Um, I think I started to an extent, like I guess about, maybe seven, eight years ago, I thought, okay, so I, I've always done like freelance work on the side. So, copywriting and editorial work and that kind of thing. And even though I did a lot of it, I never really, I took the work seriously. But I never took myself seriously as a copywriter or a journalist, just because I thought, Oh, this is something I'm doing on the side, you know, if I was that great at it, then it would be my full-time job. So, I never really had that belief in myself. And then I think, over a few months, I kind of looked at all the stuff that I'd been doing in addition to my day-to-day job. And I was like, Wow, I've actually been doing a lot. And I've built up quite a portfolio. And a lot of this is from word of mouth, you know, I didn't really advertise myself anywhere, people would just recommend me. And I decided to kind of gather everything and make a website for myself. And it was probably the first time since I was at university where I kind of had to sit and write a paragraph about myself and who I am and what I do, and what I'm good

and strong at and which was an eye opener, because when you see everything you've done on paper, you're like, wow, okay, I'm like, I'm good at this stuff. And I've been keeping it quiet all this time. So since then, I've tried to actively promote myself a bit more. Obviously, it's tough with a full-time job. But I'm more aware of, I guess, my personal brand, as you call it, and what I can contribute, and what how I would like to see myself as opposed to how people see me. And I do think it does take a lot of confidence to start to think that way, and a lot of self-belief, because we've always kind of listened to our inner voice that even if we've done a lot and we deserve a lot and we've worked hard, we still managed to somehow do diminish our own achievements you know we tend to minimise them or compare ourselves to other people so think to get to a place where you can kind of confidently and efficiently summarise what you're about it does it doesn't just tap in like that it's not I don't think you know unless you're supremely confident it does take a lot of work to be able to start to think of yourself as a person that is worthy of time and good pay. All of that does require both confidence self-belief and a level of experience as well because it won't come straight away.

Chiara:

yeah can you think about something that you are doing to self-promote and represent?

Interviewee 3:

Umm so I've my website. Do you mean that kind of like any tools or methods or …?

Chiara:

In general! What are you doing to increase your visibility for job, work purposes?

Interviewee 3:

I have my website since, I started a business with a friend he's a designer and he do social media and stuff like that, and I do all the words of copywriting editorial and some pr and that has been a massive push for me and a massive lesson in kind of self-promotion and putting myself out there because it's not something I would have done so proactively before. So, in that sense with social media etc. But now we've set up Instagram that we're being quite proactive with you set up like pitch deck like a pdf kind of summarising everything we do but mainly word of mouth so um I didn't really think about this but my mother is quite senior and she's worked really hard and now she's kind of like at the top of her of her i guess spear where she works and she said to me you know it's great you've got a website and it's great you've got the Instagram blah blah blah but you should actually like verbally tell people like it's fine to like just say it and tell people what you can do so when I mentioned that Peter Cole was leaving she was like well why don't you say to peter "hey Pete I know you're leaving but if you ever need like copywriting or you need something designed or you need this so that I

have a business now that offers those services and here are my details", and I would have never done that before because I would have thought it was really pushy and kind of I don't know yeah definitely over a certain boundary and yesterday I emailed him just to say farewell and then I just added our pdf in the email and just gave him like a really brief description of what we do and I said if you or anyone you know you know need services like this then feel free to let me know and actually after I sent the emails like that wasn't so bad like I didn't feel like I overstepped among I did it in a very polite and gentle way but I still put myself out there so that's something I'm trying to do more at the moment I guess I'm relying more on like traditional self-promotion so social media websites etc and word of mouth. But I think going forward, I'd like to try to be a bit more like verbally proactive, or at least being more comfortable just presenting myself in that way in conversation and not feeling guilty about it and not feeling like I can't talk about the things I do or my achievements, because it's too much or it's boasting, I think, getting comfortable in doing that is like my next challenge.

Chiara:

Being comfortable in promoting yourself?

Interviewee 3:

Yes, sometimes you think it does not feel comfortable do these things, to self-present you in a way, because I do not want to push people.

Chiara:

If you feel comfortable with it does it increase your self-esteem?

Interviewee 3:

Exactly. Once you are comfortable in promoting yourself you increase your self-esteem. And most people don't respond negatively, but we think that. And, as you grow, and you nurture that self-belief, you come to realize that anyone that does respond negatively, it's not about you, it's about them. Because then if you were if the roles were reversed, and someone kind of self-presented and promoted themselves to you in that way, you wouldn't react badly, you would just be like, Oh, that's interesting. I'll keep that in my mind. And I'll remember that for the future. You wouldn't be like, Oh, my god, she's so pushing.

Chiara:

I understand what you mean! Thinking of women, what do you think can they do to increase their visibility?

Interviewee 3:

I think, I can't speak for all women. But like, I don't know, I, I do feel like we still tend to. I

don't know. It's funny, because when we had our zoom call yesterday, and I looked at most of the people of the cameras off, most of them. I was like, Whoa, show your faces. But then I didn't know, I guess, on one hand, someone said to me the other day, it's interesting when you're in a meeting, and if a woman or the women are quiet, then it's quite soon, that it's because they have nothing to say. And it's never assumed that it's because they're thinking and I know from my personal point of view, I don't love speaking up in meetings or group situations. And that might give the impression that I have nothing to say, but it is generally that I'm thinking, and I would prefer to then go away, think about my ideas, and then present them one on one. And I do think a lot of women have that anxiety of not wanting to I guess speak up in those situations, I don't want to make it like a blanket thing, like all women are this way. But I do think when you have a lot of loud male voices, that can often be quite dismissive to women, you tend to shrink a bit. I think if we speak up a bit in those situations, it will help but I think that is also dependent on male voices giving room as well. It's not just about Okay, women need to speak up to be more visible, I think it's also about men to give women the space to speak and be more visible.

To just make it normal. Like I've just been in so many situations where your kind of like, Hello, hello, like trying to be heard. And you put so much energy into trying to be heard that it I don't know it's draining, it kind of takes away from whatever it is that you're trying to contribute. And that's a battle that I don't think many men have to deal with. For women, it's not only what you say it's how you say it when you say it, who you say it to, it's all these things that you have to think about. And that's even before you've said it and made your presence. Women overthink the situation then.

Chiara:

Yes, maybe it’s just happening in our minds that we think they won’t hear us, but actually they would be listening

Interviewee 3:

Yeah, that and then just going back to what we talked about earlier, just self-promotion, and just being vocal about what you've done, and being proud about what you've done and what you can do. And knowing that most people won't respond negatively to that it's okay to kind of blow your own trumpet and to let people know who you're about what you're about and who you are. Because if you don't, then you know, they can't, they won't guess. And I just think it's a shame that there are so many, like, hidden talents. among women who were just made to feel like, it's not very polite to talk about themselves. And I just think everyone loses

out when that happens. Like stepping in and being the first one to talk like taking this opportunity.

Chiara:

Yes absolutely, do you think about how you're perceived by others then and that way?

Interviewee 3:

I think it's something that comes with experience, because I always think like, okay, five years from now, am I going to be thinking about zoom call or this conversation or this telephone conversation? Probably not. So, the best thing is just to kind of act on things in the here and now. Because five years down the line, you know, it's going to be irrelevant. Hopefully, I won't still be overthinking it. But definitely. I do think about how I'm being perceived, less from a gender perspective but from a professional perspective. But definitely, when I was younger, I did! Sometimes coach tried to put myself in that box that other people have created for me as a young woman and try to align the way I was presenting myself with how I thought other people would expect me to behave. But I would say I kind of got out of that mindset quite quickly, actually. And I, from what I can see, it feels like when I kind of look at younger women. Now in their careers, I feel like that's happening less and less, obviously, also depends on the industry. But I don't think there's so much preoccupation with women thinking, how do I look as like, how am I being perceived as a woman? It's more How am I being perceived as a professional, which I think is much more important.

Chiara:

Do you ask for feedback on how you are perceived?

Interviewee 3:

Um, I think I could be better. I guess. I think that's just a human thing, though. No one wants to open themselves up to possible criticism. It's good to ask for feedback. And it's good to have reassurance when you are doing things right as well as guidance on when you're doing things wrong. We all have our ways of asking for feedback kind of indirectly. We've all got our own kind of language. In seeking kind of guidance and constructive criticism and reassurance and for some people, it might be kind of directly asking for a feedback meeting and other people it might be just saying in an email after they've completed a task. I'm definitely kind of open to feedback. And I do think it's obviously very constructive and crucial.

Chiara:

And now, in general, thinking about design hotels, what do you think can Design Hotels do in order to promote women and to get ahead in their career?

Interviewee 3:

I feel like more could be done. And I do think in the last maybe six months or so it's a conversation that's gathered a bit more steam as we've started the lunch and learns, and the diversity and inclusion initiatives, it's a conversation that is kind of out there now that no one can really hide from. And I think, I mean, when I look at the company, and I think of leaders and female leaders, I think of people like Rosie or Ellen or Ksenia or Claire. And we definitely have women leading here. But I think the thing that is missing is that in many cases, they're not being they don't necessarily have the full credit for what they're doing. Like. The responsibilities don't always match the title, or like the SLT for example. Obviously, when Jenny comes, it will be an extra woman. But at the moment, it's just two women in the whole senior leadership team. Whereas below the senior leadership team, you have more women leading. And that just seems like an imbalance to me. So, I think I definitely think more women in SLT would start. But I just think an honest recognition of the work that women do and making sure that their actual real responsibilities correlate with their job titles. And pay is also very important, because women do have a habit and a history of just taking on things that aren't possibility and not getting credit for it. Yeah. Yeah, doing things that aren't in their remit, and then not having that recognised, and then it becomes a habit. And then it becomes normalised, and they never get the recognition that they're due to get for those things, because we're told not to complain, and just to kind of get on with it. So, I think if we, if it designed hotels, we want that balance, and we want women to get the recognition that we that we deserve. We need to have an honest conversation about what the women in this company contribute, like day to day, hour by hour, and make sure that that properly matches up with what the company gives back to them. And at the moment, I don't think that balance is a honest balance. I think it's a bit crooked.

Chiara:

But is it because these persons are not outspoken enough? Not Visible enough? Or is it more because there is lack of support from the company?

Interviewee 3:

Yeah, it's that clear because they've all proven themselves. And they are all confident, accomplished women who, like, you know, there's no doubt about how excellent they are at their jobs, and there's nothing more than they could do to show that they're good at their jobs.

I just think it's maybe a more to do with the company culture and how things have been done historically. And not about them. Not being vocal enough about what they want or not being vocal enough about what they're actually doing. I think that's like clear for everyone to see.

Chiara:

And last question. Just what in your opinion makes a strong personal brand?

Interviewee 3:

What makes a strong personal brand? Puh good question! I think being brave enough to recognize that sometimes its strangest and most eccentric and non-conformist element of yourself that make you exciting. And being brave enough to embrace those elements of yourself and share them and to be proud of them and to don't be embarrassed about any part of you that does not fit into a box. And yeah, not allowing yourself just to be you and allowing yourself to present the real you to everyone else. I know that was long ha-ha.

Chiara:

No that is perfect! Thank you so much for all the insights and for the interview!

Interviewee 3:

Let me know if there is anything else, I can help you with!

Interviewee 4

Chiara:

Good morning. How are you?

Interviewee 4:

I'm doing fine. Let's give me a second. All right. You can see me, right? Yeah, I can see you. It's really weird for me to use the teams because most of the time I do zoom calls.

Chiara:

I'm more used to teams also with school and yeah. So it's very easy. Thank you for doing that interview with me like for allowing me to interview you in a few questions. Are you in Berlin right now?

Interviewee 4:

Yeah, I am in Berlin. Yeah, I look at your questions. I actually put a few notes because for me, it's sometimes hard to switch because right now, I was just doing analysis working with like, pure numbers, you know, not for me, sometimes it's really hard to switch the topics. So good that I put some notes for myself. And let's see how it goes. Because I'm so in my head with numbers.

Chiara:

Alright. Okay, good. So, we start then if it's fine for you, I'm just going to make a few notes. Um, so for how long are you already working at design hotels?

Interviewee 4:

Yeah, it's actually recently turned two years. Two years. All right. And I am the Assistant Vice President of commercial operations.

Chiara:

Right. Okay, good. So, I am really curious like to know, why do you think that women are underrepresented in CEO positions and executive positions?

Interviewee 4:

I think it's all related to stereotypes and that self-esteem is the boundary here. So, women maybe not being confident and maybe they always feel that they need to kind of prove that somehow in front of their male audience

Chiara:

Do you sometimes had this like feeling that you needed to prove yourself to male dominance?

Interviewee 4:

In my case in my position is slightly different. I don't really see this separation female or male, I'm more seeing as my role because I think my role as an assistant in the company makes this miss understanding. So, I think it's more related to my role that I need to prove that it's not only scheduling your boss calendar, right? So, I'm having a little bit different experience.

Chiara:

All right, and does it diminish your self-esteem in a way if people are seeing you only as, Assistant or refer to you as the Assistant of the Boss?

Interviewee 4:

Yeah, of course.

Chiara:

How confident are you generally in achieving your career ambitions?

Interviewee 4:

I am probably confident enough, because I took some time, you know, I spent some time in learning about the company, the services that we provide the operations we do, how departments work together, because that's also really important for my role in the company. So, in my case, the communication with certain people how to generate knowledge and be recognized among the other department leaders. So currently confident enough, but I also tried to maintain regular feedback, meetings can my boss

Chiara:

Alright, because you want to know how to improve?

Interviewee 4:

Exactly, and to decide the next steps that I can take.

Chiara:

All right. Okay. Because you mentioned your assistant role and I am curios because you mentioned that you sometimes feel not so strong in this position and it's not nice to be seen in that way.

Interviewee 4:

Yes, it’s just that Assistant comes with a negative perception nowadays for women and it automatically puts a bit of a dark cloud on your self-esteem and self-worth.

Chiara:

Do you also ever felt forced to act in a certain way, because you are a woman, like people expect you, for example, to be more sensitive?

Interviewee 4:

You know, what I? Nothing comes to my head; I can't remember if that ever happened. Probably that was nothing, like, serious or right to be concerned about. So, I can't really relate with that. But I know other women that feel like it!

Chiara:

Yes … So what's your first thought about personal branding?

Interviewee 4:

Actually, I'm not familiar with this term, before that I never came across it. So, with the personal branding. So, I think for me was the like, difference was the difference between personal branding and personal development. So, what are the difference with these? So, in the personal branding is really to expose yourself and show the personal interest? what you do and what you stand for, and perhaps nowadays is mainly using, like social platforms.

Chiara:

Exactly. And do you believe it is, it is really important to do that?

Interviewee 4:

I think that because we have all the tools nowadays, and that's what actually everyone does. And that's what happens currently. So, there is a competition among the products in certain markets, So, I guess something very similar happens with personalities nowadays. So, when we talk about personal branding, think about Instagram, where you express yourself, and you build the image in your way. So, LinkedIn is the platform where you brand and promote yourself with all the achievements and skills accomplishments for the job market. But you need to keep in mind what target is. So, I think just to stay in the market, it's important to brand yourself, but when I think about myself, do I do this? Maybe in the past? Yes, just while using the social platforms, right? But not anymore. So again, I'm more focused maybe on personal development, rather like branding.

Chiara:

Well, Okay. Yeah. Personal Branding is actually exactly like product branding that you apply these principles to person to promote yourself. I always think about personal branding in that way: “What is the impression that I want to create, how do I want to be perceived by others and you're right You can do that via all these online tools. And LinkedIn is, yeah, probably

for professional branding, the most important platform. But it's also about how you brand yourself actively on the workplace. How are you coming across? What is it what people think when they think of you and I would like to know, what you think personal branding can do for women specifically How can they benefit from it?

Interviewee 4:

I think it's all in the end, it all comes into like self-confidence, self -esteem. So, I think just to stay true to yourself and believe in yourself is the biggest outcome that should be out of that. Some branding. It's really hard for me to say, as I said, I'm not really sure myself if I use the personal branding. I mean, in the in the big picture, if you say if, like in person when you come in the company, and you say good morning that already kind of shows who you are, right? But I would never think that I already work on my personal branding in that way. It was just my natural behaviour.

Chiara:

Yeah, exactly. But the thing is that you think about your unique character traits or your personality. Like what makes you stand out from the crowd? And then you think about how I can communicate that to your co-workers or to a broader audience and about ways how you do that.

Interviewee 4:

My personal brand is who I am. So, it's my natural behaviours to express myself in certain way. But it is also about putting effort and try to prove to others who you are.

Chiara:

Right, exactly, exactly.

Interviewee 4:

So, it's, yeah, as we have to really think about myself personally, because I just really to define and separate those things when it comes down to personal branding, or it's just so natural identity, who you are. Yeah, I think it's a mixture. I never just really thought about it say, it's, it's, as you said, as a mixture. And probably that's what happens. But it just pops naturally, right?

Chiara:

Yeah, it comes naturally in a way. Like you should not try to be someone else. You know, sometimes we are perceived to be shy, but actually, we are just observant, you know, and it's about these little things, like managing the impressions of others. So, when you think about personal branding, what do you think, makes a strong brand? Like a strong personal brand?

Interviewee 4:

Good question. I don't know. I think a strong personal brand leads back how you communicate with others. Because through communication people get to know you and know who you are. So, I would say that a strong communication makes a strong personal brand. In that sense it is also important to distinguish between online and offline personal branding and communication.

Chiara:

Yeah, absolutely. I agree. so during my research i came also across something which is called the personal branding process and it's really viewing personal branding as a concept which can be divided in three steps and that really helps you to create your personal brand and you start off by identifying your personal brand identity like who are you like a self-analysis basically like what are these are the traits I want to show to the audience?

Interviewee 4:

How I would like that others see me?

Chiara:

Yeah, how do you want to be recognized?

Interviewee 4:

It's hard to say because I think since already two years in the company and marking like you know that understanding my colleagues and the workplace itself I think already really focused so the first focus was on how of course people perceive me so it was all done with the communication going out being on point person helpful showing the interest to others so that was like the first focus when I joined the company rights game the risks gain the knowledge and respect from other people and as soon as I felt that those things were like reach that people easily can approach me for any other like any related station um I think I just continuously maintain this i always show an interest to you know people so I think it's a lot related to maintain good relationships with your colleagues and ..consistency

Chiara:

So for you your personal Brand is about relationship building and consistency.

Interviewee 4:

I would say so!

Chiara:

Ok, and when you think about women like in general what can they improve with their self-presentation sometimes like what tips would you give them?

Interviewee 4:

I think in general women what they lack is self-confidence I think and for me was the same and probably it is in certain cases that like self-confidence so I know cases that applies not only to me but others that for instance when we have calls right now and sometimes in the call our main the male dominated call right so sometimes you know that for other parts of the call which is like a few women in the call it's really hard to get into the call and medica discussion or say your own opinion so and why is just because lack of confidence right that's how i think so yeah i think it's just the worker and self-confidence but i think the self-confidence comes really when you have self-esteem and you are truly now what are you doing when you understand the situation in general.

Chiara:

You mean feeling safe in the situation, like self-assured?

Interviewee 4:

Yeah

Chiara:

And for you this missing self-assuredness and feeling safe is originating from stereotyping?

Interviewee 4:

yeah, it's stereotyping and exactly because women think that in this round of guys it's so hard to say something because they don't think they listen to them you know.

Chiara:

And you think that they are really seeing you as this or is it also some uncertainty in you? Maybe they would be absolutely fine if you would speak up?

Interviewee 4:

So, I think that it could be two things right because you have this mindset stereotype in your head because I'm woman and men would listen and the other thing probably just lack of really confident knowledge on certain stations so and probably you are just afraid to do a mistake You know, or like, receive or make even a discussion or conversation when you are wrong. Let's put this way. Or it's like not wrong, but yeah, yeah, I don't know if you'd like but I said no, I get it please sometimes that we can be also afraid to bring cetacean in like in the bigger picture and make a discussion out of this sometimes for instance myself sometimes I just want to straightforward and be correct. But in case I'm already incorrect and we know that discussion happens around them, I just want to really finish this topic as soon as possible because I already feel uncomfortable because I received other opinions and statements that

are like, maybe sometimes you can see like, attacked, I just wanted to say something that is already, like getting it's too much of the cetacean developments move in the wrong direction.

Chiara:

No, no, not at all. I understand you like for you, it's really about this, you would feel more self-confident if you are right, if you know what you're doing and what you're talking about! But what apart would you think could help you instead of feeling right?

Interviewee 4:

For me it's really constant development and awareness of business. So, for me, it actually works quite well, because I work directly to my boss. So, he gives me all the updates. And if the time I don't understand already something, so I always be happy to approach others and seek for explanation or help, right, and it's completely fine. Everyone is really fast, friendly, and can give you a hand, like anytime and explain things. So, it's also I think, should be in the head, your head to ask for help. explanation is actually a very good thing. And now you won't be judged. It's better to learn and know things than just drag this uncertainty until certain time when you can't. Later or let's say, participates in a topic.

Chiara:

Alright, so this is what you said in the beginning that you were like requesting like feedback and seeking this feedback sessions to know where you are at and what you can improve on. That instance, right now I'm working on the project, which is, as I mentioned at the beginning, that the beginning of the call that it's related, a lot of the numbers, it's a lot of analysis for recasting. And there are some metrics that it's really hard to kind of understand the logic behind. So, I spent a few weeks just asking people for help to explain me, you know, and it's, so for me, it became easy to ask for the hell because once I started to seek for some explanations, more and more, it became easier. So, I don't feel shy or I don't think it's like a vulnerable thing to do. So Yeah. And it's really helped. So, I think there are some boundaries could be some boundaries in your head that stops you from asking for the help explanations. But once you get there, it just really helps you to gain your confidence.

Chiara:

Absolutely. I agree. So, we can agree that as a result of seeking feedback, and asking for help, and knowing where you're at, this really helps you increase your self-confidence, right?

Interviewee 4:

Yeah. But again, for me, it's, I know, you really want to distinguish like women from the rest.

Yeah, but actually, everything what I say it's really best that that's for everyone, right? Is everyone being it the same way.

Chiara:

Not at all the concept of personal branding is equally important for men and women. It's just that in my thesis I am focusing on women and women leadership and how they can use it to you know, be independent and be seen as this strong woman. And I have one last question for you. What do you think can design hotels do in order to support women in their career?

Interviewee 4:

I think that design hotels already doing quite well with giving some leadership of women. I don't know the latest statistics, but I know that it's doing more that balance. Um, I think in general, what we are lacking is the sources, materials, accessible to everyone for development, personal and professional. So, you know, like some educational stuff online, some courses online. Alright. So, like, again, that applies to?

Chiara:

Yeah, that's true. Okay. So, you would say that it's really about some resources, for example, where you can whatever, educate yourself in a few ways. And for both males and females, of course,

Interviewee 4:

Maybe one more thing? Oh, yeah, we're talking, and I was just thinking maybe sometimes at the workplace, it's not only men and females, and the stereotypes around them, but also the titles, because I know, in the company, a few cases where, where you would think that that person, the woman is really skilled and knowledge, but maybe the boundaries sometimes as the title.

Chiara:

Alright, I totally know what you mean. So, you think that a title can sometimes preventing you to be seen in a different way? And this is nothing you can change by yourself?

Interviewee 4:

Yes, I can say personally, but when I think about a few certain, like, cases in the company, I think that applies more. Yeah, of course. So, you will prefer that. I don't know, maybe the senators asked that way, stinks about the title that they're giving to a woman. Like in this position, you know?

Chiara:

Yeah. I agree.

Interviewee 4:

This is also part of your personal branding, in turn, right. Like to be to have a title that also boosts your confidence in a way and impacts the perception from others on you and how they see you! Sometimes those titles can be not even about myself, but they can be misleading. It is misleading in that way that people have a different perception and impression of you because of your title. It is important, especially in countries like Germany where a title is super important for the most. And I think some women just deserve a different title it is simply not fair.

Chiara:

Yeah, it puts you in a box.

Interviewee 4:

Absolutely. It puts you in a box. And at the workplace if you have already gotten the title assistant it is very difficult. I mean how can you change that with your personal brand?

Chiara:

That's a really nice insight, thank you! I did not think about the impact of a title yet! But you are absolutely right!

Interviewee 4:

I think this is great. And you see, as I mentioned, I never came across. Or if I came across this term, like personal branding, I never really, it was never really catchy to me. Right. So, I never was, I didn't really explore this term and what that means, but because we did this interview, you know, it made me think that I actually did more in the past, currently, maybe not so much, because maybe I'm more confident in my environment right now, you know. So, it's just really interesting, because I was always focusing on like, self-development, but this, I think self-development is also part of self-branding. So yeah, just thank you. It's actually it was quite interesting. And, yeah, I learned a few things.

Chiara:

I also learned a few things. And for me, it's also really interesting how people see personal branding, because they sometimes think it's, it's fake. It's like trying to be someone else that you're not, but it's actually just, you know, putting yourself out there and, you know, like, increase your visibility and be seen and recognized for who you are and not what others make of you!

Interviewee 4:

Yeah, definitely. Definitely. That's, yeah, that's obvious. That's actually obvious that we all do

this. I'll probably be done. come across this term on relax. Yeah, it's personal branding. Yeah, that's what happens. Yeah, we all do it a bit unconsciously.

Chiara:

We shouldn’t! All right. Thank you so much. Thank you so much for taking your time and doing this interview with me.

Interviewee 4:

Thanks a lot. When I heard the list of employees, who goanna has interview with you. That are all really strong woman, and you will really benefit from those.

Chiara:

I'm learning also a lot by talking about this, you know, thinking of my own personal brand now as a student is like, and then talking to all these women that really, you know, work hard and are so independent and find their way it's really, really inspiring in a way too.

Interviewee 4:

Thank you Chiara and I wish you all the best

Chiara:

I wish you a good day. Thank you again for your time.

Interviewee 5

Chiara:

So, I have a few questions for you. I don't know if you looked at my interview guide, or if you prefer to answer, you're more spontaneous.

Interviewee 5:

I did look at your guide just a few minutes ago, it's definitely this could be a very long conversation. If you wanted it to be. It's a lot of good stuff in here.

Chiara:

Thank you! How long have you been working at Design Hotels and what is your position?

Interviewee 5:

I am here for about 4 months now and I am Digital Marketing and Content Manager.

Chiara:

And before you had your own company?

Interviewee 5:

Right! I was a freelancer focused on social and digital strategy and I was also doing a lot of content producing for firms etc.

Chiara:

So, my first question is, because I'm researching the under representation of women and women in leadership positions. So why do you think women are underrepresented in these positions?

Interviewee 5:

Yeah, I mean, I've actually been lucky enough to work for companies where women did not feel very underrepresented. And this was in the travel space. And some of my clients were in the beauty industry, which had a lot of female leadership. But then at my, I guess, I, I first started my career working at an investment bank. And there, it was quite clear that women were underrepresented. And, and it seemed to me that a part of the reason was in order to be on the track to reach, you know, like the MD or the partner level, the managing director or partner level, it was kind of like the years where you would be raising children were when you were supposed to be like really hustling. So, it was kind of like putting these women at a disadvantage, who were you know, having families as well, it just like, those are the years you're supposed to really get ahead. And it just like doesn't didn't line up in those companies, if that makes sense.

Chiara:

All right, of course, it does make sense. Okay, with regards to gender roles, and that women have more challenges to face in the working environment. Have you ever felt that way too, that because you are a women people expect you to act in a certain way? Or did you do it?

Interviewee 5:

Yeah, I mean, I'm trying to think like, as I said, I've been lucky enough to work with, with women. So, it's like, working internally, I haven't really encountered as many of these problems but working with clients. And I certainly have, and I think there's a problem. I had some male clients who certainly did not take me seriously. And there was annoying point at which I had some male clients who didn't take me seriously. So, they had to bring in another. I mean, he was the manager just sort of appear who was a man to kind of like loop in be looped into this conversation, so that there would be like a sense of authority for these clients, which was like, you know, really frustrating. So, I think that's a good example. But then I guess, just in terms of like, working internally and navigating a company, I do think that, you know, as women it's important to, I feel like we have to try harder to be pleasant. So yeah, there's always this like, cheeriness that I think is a little tacked on because I try to come across as like pleasant and not bitchy, for example.

Chiara:

I know what you mean. But why do you think women have sometimes this issue with being present?

Interviewee 5:

Yeah. I don't know exactly.

Chiara:

Why do you think they're not taken seriously sometimes?

Interviewee 5:

Hmmm. That's a good question. I think I mean, of course, women tend to be plagued more with imposter syndrome. And maybe that is why we don’t feel like we've earned the respect. But in these situations, like the example I used, where we had to bring in my male colleague, these men totally did not take me seriously. And I think that's also not just being a woman, but also being like young. Yeah. So maybe some of both.

Chiara:

Alright. Um, how would you describe yourself esteem? Like, would you say your confidence? person?

Interviewee 5:

Yeah, I would say it definitely increased throughout my career. And I think that freelancing has helped me to increase my confidence. So, like having, you know, running my own freelancing business definitely made me much more confident in work scenarios, because I was able to understand people, I was much more aware in these situations that when somebody hired me, they were hiring me to be an expert. So, I felt more comfortable coming into the conversation with more authority than I had in the past, especially than I had in the past as part of a larger organisation. I think it's a lot harder to speak up if you're just one of the many people at the table. But if you are the expert that they brought in, and you're the one it's a lot easier, I think, to Yeah, to feel confident.

Chiara:

Right. So, it's knowledge and expertise that is, more or less the source of confidence for you?

Interviewee 5:

Yeah, I also think it's good. It's, yeah, I mean, I think becoming confident is about putting yourself in these situations or being put in a situation where you're caught where you know that you're the expert, you're expected to be the expert. So, like, as I said, it's a lot harder to raise your hand in a crowded room. But if you're speaking on a panel in front of that crowded room, I think it's a lot easier to feel confident in what you're saying. And men are more often put on this panel, whereas women need to fight to speak on a panel.

Chiara:

That makes sense! So, we need to shine in order to be seen and to talk at the panel! It's called personal branding, so what is your first thought of personal branding?

Interviewee 5:

Ha-ha you are right! My first thought hmmm Okay. So, I would define it as the story you are telling about yourself, publicly.

Chiara:

So why do you think it's becoming increasingly important to brand yourself?

Interviewee 5:

Great question. Um, well, I mean, part of it is just the internet. I mean, for me it kind of started when I was creating and writing my bio for my website, and kind of positioning myself in certain ways. It's sort of like, with the search engine in mind, you know, so it's like which language and then it's important that you're really consistent. So now that we have all these different channels we're managing, I think, it is important more than ever before. It feels

that your brand should extend to who you are in your personal life. For example, on my Instagram channel, I wouldn't have done anything that was like very off brand, because it was public. So, if someone were to find me on LinkedIn, or Instagram, I would hope that it seemed felt like the same person. And so, I think it's just like having Yeah, I think it's the internet.

Chiara:

So, are you actively aware about your personal brand and do you actively take care about your personal brand?

Interviewee 5:

Yes, I mean, for sure. as a freelancer, it was really important that I am aware of my brand and that I continually work on it. For example, I wouldn't write for publication. See that felt really off brand because then if a client googled me and I was writing, for some strange publication, I think it would look confusing. So, I would try to know, whenever my name was attached to it, when I would be on the by-line, I would make sure it was something that I would like gladly have potential clients, you know, find. So, yeah, I've thought about it a lot.

Chiara:

And what makes a very strong personal brand for you?

Interviewee 5:

Well, I don't know, if my personal brand is actually that strong? I don't know. But, um, do you mean in other people like in theory?

Chiara:

Yeah, exactly.

Interviewee 5:

Okay. Um, I think it is really important to force it to be quite clear what your values are. And if someone is coming to any page, that they're interacting with you for them to be able to understand and just like less than a minute, kind of what you what you stand for, and a very broad sense, like, what you're doing and what you believe in? Because, yeah, I mean, that's really the secret is or the key that is making it clear. And that's, obviously, we humans are much more complex than that. And sometimes you have to change, you know, kind of like change your approach, like maybe, you know, there's a time at which my personal brand was a digital nomad. As like part of that whole bundle, which, like I no longer am so you need to adapt your brand. So even though that was like, quite prominent before, now, I've had to

come away from that. So, **I think, your personal brand is you and it needs to write, develop and grow with you, of course.**

Chiara:

What do you think like thinking about gender and self-esteem? What can personal branding do for women in your opinion?

Interviewee 5:

Well, I guess what's, um, that's a really good question. I mean, **I think the beauty of the personal brand is that you get to make it up yourself. So instead of a world where you're constantly being defined or where people are putting you in a box, or assuming they know who you are, this is your opportunity to decide who you want to be and how you want to present yourself.** So, I think that that has the potential to be a major confidence booster. And it could open up those opportunities, like the example of being the one sitting on the panel. I mean, if you brand yourself as something that has a very specific niche, then all of a sudden, you could be the expert of, you know, ice cream places in Friedrichshain and maybe that one day becomes your platform, and then you're an expert out of nowhere. **So, I think it does, yeah, it gives you the opportunity to elevate yourself.**

Chiara:

Yeah, exactly. And we already touched a bit upon on that earlier when you said that personal branding is about your values and finding out who you are. So, what is important, within this initial step, when you start thinking about your personal brand?

Interviewee 5:

I mean, it's funny, because ideally, this would be coming from directly who you are and what you believe in and your philosophy on life and kind of like the impact you want to make in the world. Ideally, that's what it is. But I think that, you know in order to be marketable, these times you have to go out the other direction, and kind of see what the whitespace is in the market. And what you already do the experience that you can draw upon to kind of craft that into something. Does that make sense?

Chiara:

Like, instead of going where everyone else goes. It Is important to find that white space, your unique contribution, right? Yeah, I mean, I think that's an interesting approach.

Interviewee 5:

Yeah, yeah. makes you stand out from the crowd.

Chiara:

Yes, I guess so. Like a blue ocean strategy, finding this white spot. Regarding self-presentation, do you have any, anything that you do specifically online or offline, in order to increase your visibility?

Interviewee 5:

Good question. I mean, when I was freelancing, and that was very much something that I would do. If I had an opportunity to be featured on another brand, whether that's on some sort of Instagram story or a newsletter, or being interviewed for an article, I would be really careful about choosing, brands that I felt were like-minded and I want to be associated with. It is important to have the right audience. I wouldn't want to be represented anywhere that was off brand. I guess it's a slightly an interesting question I haven't thought about is how I present myself now for her personal brand.

Chiara:

So, you have not thought about, before joining design hotels about how am I going to be perceived? Or how I want to be perceived by them.

Interviewee 5:

Right. I did!

Chiara:

Okay, as you said, being visible and accompany and increasing your visibility being recognised connecting this with self-esteem, what do you think can self-presentation do for women and their confidence and self-esteem?

Interviewee 5:

I'm not sure. Do you want to try wording in a different way?

Chiara

Yeah, sure! In which way can women benefit from increasing their visibility with regards to their self-esteem? What are the benefits of a strong self-presentation?

Interviewee 5:

Yeah, um, it's a good question. Your kind of stumping me, and I'm trying to answer it intelligently. I mean, what really comes to mind is that I've been lucky to have some really good managers in my life, who have been happy to, like, elevate me, by which I mean, you know, give me the opportunity, if they were given an opportunity to, like, give the presentation to the whole company, to kind of just say, like, do you want to take this? Or just to, like, shout me out in different situations, like things like that, where people have been?

Yeah. Um, and when I think about that, a lot of those awesome managers have been women who have been happy to, you know, get a give me a foot in that door. And I think it's really important for other people to kind of like, I don't know, to build you up, it's a lot easier than having to, like crawl your own way up. So, I don't think I'm really answering your question, but that's kind of what's coming to mind.

Chiara:

I guess I understand you despite all these personal branding efforts that you're doing and trying to, you know, increase your visibility on LinkedIn and be recognised. There's also something that needs to come from, right other people in the organisation that helps you a bit to push yourself like you cannot only be like this, probably.

Interviewee 5:

Exactly

Chiara:

In my research I came across something called the personal branding process, which really says Okay, first step, self-awareness, which what would you set your values, then thinking about? How can I communicate these values to a specific audience in order to be perceived as let's say a strong independent woman that can be a manager and the final step is a self-reflection and I was wondering if you engage in a way in self-reflection or feedback seeking? Like connected to your personal brand.

Interviewee 5:

It's so funny. I'm someone who asked for a lot of feedback. And just in the nature of what I do working with editors, like, my whole job is always getting feedback. But I can't really think of, of moments where I'm like asking how I'm coming across as a person. Um, maybe Germany would be a good place to start doing that, because they love feedback in this country. I'm sure it would be a good time to start. But no, I think that's really interesting. It's funny, I had a conversation not too long ago about how it's interesting that we're never so sure how we come across. And I was talking to men about this. And they were like, why do you care so much about what people think of you? And I was like, it's not a bad. It's like, I genuinely think it's really interesting that, you know, we think of ourselves as a certain way. And the same way, it's hard to watch yourself on a video, you know, you're like, Oh, my gosh, that's what I look like. Um, I think, yeah, I haven't done enough of enough of this, but I think it is wise. I think I would I wish that was more normalised for us to like, if people are also request feedback, and ask, you know, and give feedback in this way, that it's more natural way. But of course, you have to share something first, right, in order to receive that feedback.

Chiara:

Would you say that your brand image is similar, the same as your personal identity? If you know what I mean?

Interviewee 5:

Yes, I got it! Oh, I have no idea. I hope it's the same. But I really, I don't know, I think I think that freelancing. In the past, I was definitely a different person at work and in my life, but with my experience of freelancing where my work was so integrated with who I was as a person, and just like, travelling and writing about the places that I travel, and writing like a first-person newsletter, and all these things, it really kind of coalesced into one. And it feels like that is now what I'm bringing into this new role is kind of just like me, holistically. Um, so I hope that I don't know, I hope it comes across that way. But we'll see.

Chiara:

What benefits does feedback and self-reflecting bring to women? What can they gain from it?

Interviewee 5:

I mean, so much, it's, um, yeah, I mean, I mean, just as we've been saying, it's, it's so hard to know how you come across, and maybe there are little things you could change that would make you feel more confident, or there's like a reason someone's asking you to do something and all these things. I mean, I don't have any, anything specific other than it seems to me supremely important. And most importantly knowing where you are at makes you feel secure, safe because you do not to second guess yourself, so you are also more confident in the end and can continue with your personal development.

Chiara:

With regards to self-presentation you think women can generally improve that a bit more?

Interviewee 5:

Well, it's so funny, because what I want to do is like, not tell you how to be because when Yeah, I mean, like, when I worked at that investment bank, we had a good friend of mine got called to HR because they told her that like, the way she was dressing was like making people think of her a certain way. Like it was too provocative or something and it was so insulting she was wearing like beauty like work clothes, and she just happens to be a beautiful girl. And it's not her fault that people like thought that you know, we're attracted to her whatever. And it was just so frustrating that I don't know I just like I don't want anyone telling women how to present themselves.

Chiara:

I don't mean like be groomed and wear a suite. I mean Self presentation with regards to their attitude or other skills, methods.

Interviewee 5:

I got it! I think that stepping up and asking I mean we're talking about feedback but just like communicating and showing like starting a dialogue that you here´s what I am trying to say to get people on your side to like to get other people invested in your development. I think is kind of the way to start because as I said like in the past when I've had wonderful managers who have really helped me, they helped me like not just out of the goodness of their heart but also because they had an interest in me doing better and me raising my profile at a company because then it reflected better on their team. I think just like letting your managers know what you're what your goals are and starting to have periodical conversations about how you're how you're measuring up and yeah and I think it's also about like if something else is interesting you to feel comfortable reaching out to this person on this other team who's working on this cool project and to raise your hand and just say I think this is really cool could i at least listening to the meetings is there something you could give me because i mean so much of my career because I've worked in so many different spaces has been about like navigating to what exactly what I wanted to do and exactly where my skills lie which then goes into figuring out what your personal brand is. That's all about exploring a lot about and being curious and raising your hand to things that interest you!

Chiara:

All right and last question what do you think can companies do like design hotels, I know that you just recently joined the company, so maybe it's better to say what does a good company need to have to support women in their career?

Interviewee 5:

It's a really good question I think I haven't been a designer to us long enough to speak to that in any way um but I do think that we always are better at things that we're passionate about so I think that for companies and managers to actually take an interest in what we as individuals care about just like opens the door for so much more creativity and for work to be like a more inspiring collaborative place I think making people feel empowered women feel empowered to kind of chart their own course and I think in an ideal world like that's how you get the best out of your employees and make it fun for them and I think that also links to what "your" personal branding does right?

Chiara:

Yes, you are right, personal branding does focus on empowerment and being in charge of your own career! Interesting point! And yes, fun is always good! Thank you for your time.

Interviewee 5:

Thank you for sharing your questions with me. Really, super interesting I wish you good luck with it.

Interviewee 6

Chiara:

So, let's see, I send you my presentation, so you know what my research is about. My first question is why do you think women underrepresented in managerial positions?

Interviewee 6:

Right? It's a big question. And I think the answer is not a simple one, because it's, I think it's probably a combination of, you know, generational influence in terms of both political socio economic, and, and family and personal influences. And definitely has to do with just our heritage politically and socio economically of how historically women have been underrepresented. Although this has shifted a lot. And I have to say, it's changing quite quickly, in the bigger scheme of things, just in my lifetime, things have changed so much from the time when I started working, which is not that long ago, and where we are now, in terms of how women are represented. But I think the main reason is that just things have been, the economy has been very male dominated, ever since, I don't know the boom in the industrial revolution. So, and because it was male dominated, and the main decision makers on a political level on an economic level were men, then they tend to surround themselves or, or make choices that are obviously closer to their demographic. So, I think this is how naturally things escalate in that in that direction. But again, I think these things are changing. And so yeah, these are the external factors. And then at the same time, and I also realized that there's definitely an internal element. So, it's a combination of a lot of factors. And it's our response to both some internal kind of disposition in women, which is in response to everything that we've grown up with. And, and some external factors in society that still aren't changing quickly enough.

Chiara:

Exactly. My research focuses more a bit on these internal factors and gender roles. And sometimes these norms are not really present, but we women still feel forced, because they are acting on us like a self-fulfilling prophecy kina.

Interviewee 6:

Yeah, we make these boundaries ourselves.

Chiara:

So, I would like to know, have you ever felt that way that you were expected to behave in a certain way because you are a woman?

Interviewee 6:

Um, yes, I have to say, I've never felt pressured or forced to behave in a certain way. So, in that sense, I think I've been, I've been lucky in that way. Or simply, I've never ended up in a situation where I felt externally pressured at work, especially in the realm of work. I mean, yes, of course, personally, family wise, there are all kinds of expectations that my parents or surroundings have towards me. But it all comes down to how you respond to these expectations. And I think it's been the same at work. So, I definitely have been, have experienced some bias, and some, I don't know, prejudice and stereotypes. Definitely, in all kinds of situations, but I can't say that I've really felt pressured or forced to respond in a certain way. So, the way the choice of how I respond to these biases and in these situations as a, as a human, not as a woman, and is still kind of my own choice in a way or at least that's how I've always felt it so maybe because I haven't seen myself in a limited position. And I haven't really felt that I was placed in a limited position, because I'm a woman necessarily, right.

Chiara:

Right. I agree. So, when you encounter biases or judgment what is your clear reaction to it?

Interviewee 6:

Yeah, I think the response with confidence or the professional responses, the best response. I mean, it really depends on what kind of situations when it's very obvious, then I just laugh it off. But, but mostly, I'm not a person that tries to educate people on the spot of where or pointing the finger to where I think that wrong, I just think I am generally I think, good approach to it that is that example that we project of who we women, I mean, of who we are, and how we want to be treated. And my experience is that when you're highly professional, or highly respectful towards people, and, and but you also know yourself and are very in tune with who you are and what you do, and how you want to be treated. And when you lead with that confidence, and you project that kind of security, then that usually, people usually respond to that. And then you don't need to point a finger at them and say, Hey, this is what you want from you, or this is how you need to treat me. I have done this more implicitly.

Chiara:

Alright. Okay, so, from what you said, I would say you're pretty confident in achieving what you have set in your mind?

Interviewee 6:

Like in Yeah, that that's been my experience, actually, um, and I think this is entirely as I said, from the beginning, this is entirely an internal monologue that is going on about our

confidence. And how confident are we in ourselves, and I don't think this pertains necessarily to women or men, although there are genuinely differences in the levels of self-esteem. I think that's no secret. But, and I can't say that internally, I'm originally very confident person. But I've trained myself to believe in myself because of that evidence that everything that I've actually set my mind to, once I've been clear on what I want to do, I generally just managed to manifest it, it's always worked out. The problem is that being clear on what I want, and I'm not someone who doesn't change my mind all the time, that's definitely Yeah, being clear and being assertive on what I actually want and what I set my mind to, but once I do, it generally happens. And so, once you have that track record, then you look back and you say, okay, I've always been able to manage difficult situations, I've always been able to achieve something that was really meaningful to me, so why wouldn't I make it?

Chiara:

No, it really sounds really great. And I can totally agree with what you said. It's actually also a bit for me in that way. So, what about Personal Branding. I was also wondering, what's your first thought, or your first impression on personal branding?

Interviewee 6:

And it's funny, because my first thought about personal branding is, oh, I'm not sure if this is relevant, and that I'm the right person to talk about it, because I have absolutely no conscious idea. Or, I mean, obviously, I have an idea. I know what personal branding is. And I know very well, the implications and the interest of it, but it's not something that I've consciously put any effort into myself. And so, um, so I thought, Oh, I'm not sure if this is relevant to me because I'm not good at personal branding.

Chiara:

Alright, so but why do you think it's, it's it is relevant in a certain way. So why do people do that? Like, maybe it's, it's a nice to mention that that point of personal branding is really about influencing this first impression that other people have on you. And it's rather than trying to be someone else, it's more about being your true self and be seen for that and recognized for that.

Interviewee 6:

So, my first thought was that personal branding from the branding perspective of like, this is who I am. And here's my logo and my vision. This is not something that many of us do. I think it's increasingly important. Just to answer your first question, maybe I think it's increasingly important these days, because people are more independent and have more agency in their work life. I think, I don't know. Just a few years ago, we were all kind of

belonging to a certain company or narrative. Everybody was looking to integrate into a certain narrative and then you were an employee of, you're a manager of, and you kind of identify or you hide under the umbrella of a big brand. And then it was all about even when I was studying marketing and branding, it was all about the company that you work for, it was all about the, the philosophy that you choose to abide to. That is some kind of a brand philosophy. And I don't know, you want to work for the creative industries, you want to work for Apple, you want to work for design hotels, and that's the big logo that you kind of identify with. And it was all about brands that we identify with. I mean, I grew up with the generation of the iPhone revolution, right? And this is all about Yeah. Do you have an iPhone? Or do you have like, what do you wear? What do you Who do you work for? And now we're in a much more individualistic and kinder of really self-aware stage where people have to, you know, disconnect a little bit from all of these external identifiers, and look to who they are. And you know, because this is, as you said, this is about how you were treated and what kind of narrative you project out there in the world? And what do you tell the world about yourself? And so, then my second thought was, actually, personal branding, in that sense is about just being in in tune with who you are. And I think this is actually the hardest question to answer. And I think we don't check in, most people don't check in with themselves often enough to shed some old ideas of who you are, because that's constantly in flux.

And that changes a lot. And I myself have to shake things off. Every now and then, and, and realize that I'm not the same person that I was five years ago, and maybe I don't want to work in the same way that I wanted in. And this just constant self-update. And then kind of Yeah, just checking in with, with who you are, what's important to you, and how you want the world to see you. And then lead with that and be very clear, and not proclaiming, you know, this is my personal brand, but just be very subtly aware and consistent. And authentic. I mean, I hate this word authenticity, because it's just so cliche now, but just consistent, I think is a good word of, you know, whatever you do, it has to kind of align with what you what you believe in.

Chiara:

Absolutely. And that also counts for your personal brand. I was just curious now that you said that, like you really tune into and finding out what you're good at and what you really, truly are, and you know, what you need to shake off? Why is tuning in important or do you even have some advice how to do it?

Interviewee 6:

Um, self-awareness? Yeah, just very practically. I mean, there are a million ways and I think

this is very individual works for everyone. Just now I can think about a million things from you know, just journaling, and meditation, all kinds of all kinds of like mindfulness and awareness practices, but it also can be very simply just asking yourself a few questions. Like, who? Who am I? No, no, who am I? But What do I want to convey? What's the message they want to get across at different situations? Or just you know, picking up a couple of questions that that really summaries this about you it's kind of like when you have a website then you have this About Me page is like, who you are, what do you have to offer to the world? Like what is your pitch? Basically, what are you offering and how do you and what do you want in return like a How do you want to be treated be you know, what kind of attention Do you want to get? Uh, what kind of recognition Do you want to get? So yeah, it's basically just in a nutshell, who are you? What do you have to offer and what do you want in return? So, if you keep updating that information and asking yourself these questions over and over i think that that's already a good start probably.

Chiara:

I really like that about me page. That's so great. We already talked a bit about you know, like that you think that you do not have a personal brand. And we also set that for you a strong personal brand is connected with consistency.

Interviewee 6:

Yes, and about truly being you!

Chiara:

Right yeah what do you think and like how can women benefit from it like with regards to to gender norms and their self-esteem.

Interviewee 6:

Um I think it ties back with what we said that a lot of i mean gender roles are a thing of the past and we will carry that baggage for another while I'm sure in terms of how society is structured and how things are still rolling but in terms of the internal factors which is the other aspect of it and your internal disposition because of that self-fulfilling prophecy that that you mentioned that basically if you believe that you were limited in certain ways then you will manifest that in the way you in the way you appear in the world because you will just not go for certain things. So, in that sense being clear on who you are in what you want and that doesn't need to be necessarily you know being somebody else's role it's not it's not about women being exactly the same as men and having the same things as men have because sometimes that's also not necessary it's just about what is our own version of success and what our needs are and i think a big part of having your needs met is to be clear on them just to be

clear what you want and who you are and that in itself when you have set answer these questions for yourself then that gives you a lot of confidence and then you move through the world with just more clarity and an assertiveness three grade.

Chiara:

I would like to dive a bit deeper into this personal branding process! Do you think about how are you perceived by other people?

Interviewee 6:

Yeah um you know I think this is something that is also personality related I'm not someone who is very interested in not it's going to sound stupid but I'm not I'm not someone who compares myself too much to others and just sources the environment all the time. I just recently realized that I don't ask for feedback enough or compare my I don't compare myself to others I think that's a good and a bad thing. But also there's definitely lots of benefits to asking for feedback and receiving constructive feedback but also knowing how to accept and how to deal with that feedback and how to filtering through it because especially when we talk about women in leadership I mean yes feedback is great but at many points and we as women are very receptive to other people's opinions to all kinds of information coming from the environment and I think it's very hard to block some things out filter some things out because at one point you receive a lot of conflicting feedback maybe and it's about knowing what the helpful feedback isn't the constructive one is and so yeah just to sorry to answer your question I personally am not maybe the best in asking for feedback and being constantly curious what people think but i definitely find it helpful when I do receive it and actually through my work at design hotels I've been I've appreciated receiving a lot of positive feedback through the years of all the projects that I've done that I've shared so I'm in the learning curve of sharing more and then when I share and update people about what I'm doing which is my responsibility in the process then they obviously come back to me with more feedback on what I'm doing and that's been really helpful.

Chiara:

Yeah, for you it is a two-way communication right?

Interviewee 6:

Yes you need to share things, personal things so they can give you feedback on it and tell you what you think. And I believe that sometimes we do not share enough and also do not share the truth.

Chiara:

Yes, I have got a few more questions to personal branding from a self-presentation perspective, like what is self-presentation to you in a professional way?

Interviewee 6:

Yeah and you know it's interesting when i again when i studied this I studied marketing sales and branding and huh got what like 15 years ago and it was all about here are the rules and here are the guidelines this. What you say this is what you don't say, there wasn't literally there weren't some frameworks about how to go about a job interview, how to be hired at a company how to pitch, a creative pitch, there were guidelines for everything. And he was believed that there are certain things that you should do that you should say. Certain ways in which you present yourself to be accepted in certain circles. And now I'm realizing This is just such nonsense. Because yes, it does work. And it didn't work for me in a lot of situations. But then it also puts you in a bar, it puts you in places where you don't necessarily want to be because you're following a template. And you're following a model that is just very other oriented. It's all about this is what people want to hear from you. This is what the company wants to hear, but this is not who you are. And this is what they keep hearing from everyone. Because we were all educated that way, from my generation, and now I'm working with, you know, I'm not that old, I'm in my mid 30s. But I'm just by working with 20 something year old's who were educated in different way, I see how flawed that that that model was, and that you need to lead with just your, again, your authentic narrative of who you are. And be try and be as honest as possible, but also honest, not in an arrogant way of this is who I am. And you know, the world needs to respond to me and adapt to me, it's about being very honest, who you are and what you want, and then see where you fit in, and how you can also contribute. It's also about collaboration and how you can fit into a system and contribute to that system from your very own single place. Like what's your unique talents? What's your purpose? umbrella? Like, ultimately, what do you want to do? And how do you want to be helpful to others? Or how do you want to, you know, evolve in your work, and then coming from that place? And also knowing and making an inventory of your own skills? What are you good at? And what have you been good at in the past? What do you want to learn more of, and, and just bringing that and it's a lot of self-knowledge and excavation work. It's hard work, I think it's not just about writing up your CV and then learning a boilerplate for an interview, a job interview, which is what you know, I was taught to do, that's complete nonsense. It's about really digging into your skills, your strengths, your passions, your personality, having all these answers and then bringing that to an interviewer and saying, this is who I am, this is what I'm good at, these are my skills, this is what I've done in the past, this

is what I want to learn more of, and then match these with, on the other hand, what the company needs from you, or what the workplace needs from you. Like, these are your needs, this is what I have to offer, where can we meet?

Chiara:

Alright, so you would say like this, this unique trait, like inventory list. How do you communicate that inventory list to your colleagues, the internet?

Interviewee 6:

Yeah, they would probably I mean, in a conscious workplace, ideally, they would ask you, because they are also interested in a company is interested in what you have to offer. **You can proactively communicate that. But you can also communicate that implicitly in everything that you do. And try to add one layer of your personal meaning or your personal contribution to it. Thinking about how can I make this better? or how can I make this my own? And for this you have to be honest and open!**

Chiara:

Absolutely. Regarding personal branding it also became very famous because of technology and social media and LinkedIn. Are you active on these channels? And if do your personal brand yourself consciously?

Interviewee 6:

Huh? Yeah, that's a good question. Because, no, the short answer is, No, I'm really not. I'm averse to social media as well. And I don't really know why that is. I don't have any personal strong position against it, but it's just not who I am. I'm very interested in personal interaction and one to one. I'm just not very interested in technology and social media that's how it started. That said, though, I think you need to also be smart and work with these platforms not becoming kind of a victim or, or not becoming a victim of them, or kind of not raising them up into like on a pedestal and investing all your energy to that. But also seeing being just like with other channels being savvy on what helps depending on where you want to go. You know, if you want to, I don't know, if you're a craftsman and you want to launch kind of Etsy career that probably will need to be uncertain social channels. And if you are a businessperson and you want to build a network, then you will probably need to be on LinkedIn. So just choosing your channels wisely, I am on LinkedIn, it has helped me keep track of my work contacts. I use Facebook in the same way just as a directory of all my contacts throughout the years and people that I've been in touch with. I only use Instagram for work purposes, when I need to do some research. I don't personally use I have an Instagram account that is literally I just used to log into things. But I don't maintain. Because I don't feel any again be staying true

to yourself, right? I'm not that kind of person who wants to spend time on Instagram and wants to be on social media much. I find it boring. But that's just me and at the same time, where I needed and where it's useful. And I tried to invest just the right amount of time in it. So that I get noticed if I need to be noticed.

Chiara:

Yes, very interesting. What do you think, what effects can a strong self-presentation do for women in terms of communicating their personal brand?

Interviewee 6:

Interesting question. I have to think about it. I think, with regards to women's self-presentation they can enhance their personal image and reputation. As I said by being open and honest about who they are and if they truly tune in with themselves and communicate this kind of personal image to the outside, others will see it too. So, yeah so within a company, and linked with your research that definitely holds a lot of opportunities for women and also gives them the confidence that they need to take on these opportunities.

Chiara:

It makes absolute sense. I have two more small questions for you. Like, looking back at all we have talked like what advice would you give young women like me to get ahead and to increase their visibility in the in the business and work world?

Interviewee 6:

Let's say? Mm hmm. Great question, maybe just summarizing on everything we've talked about. So far. I think I'm a believer in yourself 100%. Because whatever you do, you, you definitely have some unique value to offer. We all do. Everyone has a special talent or contribution to make. And it's just about polishing. And this comes, you know, with time, but just polishing what that value actually is. And then just do all of that self-excavation work of, of knowing what your skills are what you're good at focusing on all the positive things obviously not done, we also have I mean, it's good to be clear also on our shortcomings for sure. But focusing on the on the good things, and then deriving and deriving all the self confidence that you can from there and then expanding that. **Because I think that self-confidence then translates into a lot of good things in the way we build our careers and the way we're perceived. But that kind of grounded self-confidence, that is grounded on who you are. And the value that you have to offer and not just the boilerplate self confidence that is shouting out loud, some kind of Instagram goals and whatever is popular in the moment in terms of affirmations.**

Chiara:

And last question, like thinking about design hotels, what do you think can design hotels do in order to promote women in their careers like to support women?

Interviewee 6:

Yeah, I think a little more listening, and I think we're actually moving in the right direction. Things have changed a lot within the last five years that I've been with this hotel a lot in that department, in terms of just really being more conscious more curious about what each individual working within that company has to offer and where our unique talents lie, because we have all been hired there for a reason. I think people are very, and I'm talking about people here, not necessarily just women. Yeah, I think, in this sense, both women and men, it's more about just receiving more personal attention. Or from the company perspective, being curious and being opened to really listen to the person, see how they evolve and what they're interested in, and where their talent lies. And maybe that it's not necessarily the position or the goals that they started with. Maybe this can evolve, just being open and flexible, to evolve together. And to give them the platform to do that. So basically, having more meaningful conversations, when I started, at design hotels, we had this very standard, very formal, actually only pro forma feedback conversations once a year. And that were following a certain questionnaire and following or not, sometimes it was just it was such a formality that was completely waived off. And that was the only opportunity to actually talk about yourself and what you want to do and how you're doing in the company, and also the only chance to receive any feedback at all. And, and now, we're starting only beginning to have more meaningful conversations, one to one with our superiors or with HR about what are we actually there for and what do we do? And how are we doing? Are we doing well? are we feeling something is missing? And so, I think it's about having these meaningful conversations, the company with the individual and people in between themselves about how things are going, just checking in? And I think that be helpful for women and men equally. And then women representation has definitely evolved within the management. And I think that will also trickle down to just general gender equality within the company, I hope.

Chiara:

Thank you so much for this interview. I got great insights from you and yeah, like, thanks a lot.

Interviewee 6:

It was my pleasure. It was a really nice chat.

Interviewee 7

Chiara:

Hello, thank you for doing this interview with me. My first question is how long have you been working at Design Hotels and what is your position?

Interviewee 7:

I am working at Design hotels for about 8 years now and I am Head of Content and PR Manager for the Markets USA, South America, Benelux and France.

Chiara:

Okay! So, as you know I am interested in female leadership. So, I'm really curious about why do you think females are actually underrepresented in managerial positions?

Interviewee 7:

I think that's a systemic issue. Obviously, when we speak about the female experience in this, there's also many lenses, you know, cultural, socio economic, I think the main issue is, is one that's kind of old fashioned and rooted in childcare and all these topics. And I think that that workforce has not caught up with the societal evolution of women. More simply that way, if you know what I mean, like,

Chiara:

Absolutely, I agree. In my research, like I said, that under representation of women originates from women's lack of self-esteem, that prevents them sometimes to push themselves for these promotions and this opportunity that came up along the way. And this may come from gender roles and gendered expectations. So, I was also curious, did you ever felt that you were expected to behave in a certain way? Because you are a woman?

Interviewee 7:

Absolutely. That extends to all touch points. I think that being a female in our society, I've come up against it the whole time, it's been a very, not necessarily a visible presence, but something I always felt. Oh, he's known in different forms. It's taken different. Yeah, it's taken different forms in different roles and from different people. Yeah, it is not necessarily visible, but it is something that is been a constant in my career.

Chiara:

How does it make you feel like in which way does this limit you work related?

Interviewee 7:

So, there's a, I think, a structural limitation that sometimes can be perceived, I've also used it

to actually challenge the system, like, I've also used it as a motivating force. So, knowing that it's there is your first or my first tactic in, in not only entering the system, but navigating it to my benefit, and to my advantage. So, once you know how it's there, and how it works, there are still the forces of limitation within it, for sure, but I think once you see it more clearly, then you're able to, to kind of break it down a little bit better, and to challenge it.

Chiara:

So, is this your source of confidence?

Interviewee 7:

My source of confidence that's grown over the years, you know, aligned with my career development, my personal growth and everything. It's something I'd wished to have earlier in my career, or when I was younger, entering my career, so I could have been in clearly more defined path by me. Um, I think a certain amount of that kind of confidence has to come with experience. So, there's kind of two sides to that conversation that Mike, my confidence has, has come from me being able to more clearly communicate within this context. So, what my needs are within a certain situation, whether that's a work situation where I need something as required of someone, you know, I think women have in our society have modified their use of language, to, to not be to not shake things up too much, and not in terms of the status quo. So, I think, for me especially being in communications, that's been my tool to use. And to get really clear and focused on my communication has helped me be better equipped for situations where I have to proactively ask for what I need in a given circumstance.

Chiara:

Right. And so, I can conclude from that, that you are actually very confident in achieving your career success?

Interviewee 7:

I'm getting there. I mean, that's always a work in progress. I don't know if age is a factor in your studies. But I would say this came to me in my you know, in my later 30s, and 40s, this sort of equilibrium and balance and Being a better advocate for myself has come the latest stages of my current career. And something that I would have liked to have more tools to access earlier in my career.

Chiara:

All right, so I know we already talked a bit about it before we started recording. But my research is mainly about how personal branding can support women in their career and how

they can get ahead by using this tool, method, concept, whatever you want to call it. So what is your first impression on personal branding?

Interviewee 7:

These days, when I think about personal branding, I'm thinking of all the external ways we're presenting ourselves to the world. So, I think right now, that's a really dynamic lens, or multiple lenses to, to not only be seen through but to, to affect the way you're seeing. So, to me these days, that's, that's your CV, that's your LinkedIn, that's your social media channels. And you know, that's, it's, it's how you text like, there's so many touch points to it now. And I don't know that I've truly ever looked at it as one united personal branding, although that sense does come quite neatly to me. So, I'm quite, let's say image conscious in a way. And I don't mean that in a physical appearance necessarily are not limited to, but I'm quite conscious about communication and the various forms that takes whether that's language spoken written. And this is, as I already said, this is something that I've seen a skill in myself that I've developed over the years, that's been a tool for me, in my personal branding, so a lot we talked about on the professional side tone of voice and being true to brand. And I think that those are absolutely elements that we can pull into ourselves, you know, and how we present ourselves to the world.

Chiara:

Do you consciously take care of your personal brand?

Interviewee 7:

I do. And more consciously now that you turn to it, or you've put this umbrella to it. But I can see now that it's something that I've been quite concerned with. And I can see that it's a powerful tool to use, both personally and professionally.

Chiara:

As you said, it is a powerful tool. So, what do you think it can do for women?

Interviewee 7:

Specifically, for women. Well, I think that the process of really putting thought to this and how you are putting yourself into the world, I think, is a really deliberate conscious mentality to begin with. And then I think, I'm sorry, I just lost my train. My speaker shut up my train of that. Can you ask the question again?

Chiara:

What benefits does Personal Branding have for women benefit from it?

Interviewee 7:

Yeah, I think but even thinking about it in a clear kind of strategical sense**, I think, it is empowering women. To take ownership of them and their personal branding, and I think if you give up that ownership, you're allowing someone else to kind of write that narrative for you. I think you absolutely need to do it in these days, you need to take ownership of that. And I think the more you do, the clearer you get with yourself. So,** I think even that exercise is, is the benefit is in that exercise of really thinking about what it is finding that language, how you speak about yourself, how you speak about your skill set, how you speak about your ambition. You know, this is another thing that women are quite limited in how they use, how they speak about ambition is not entirely accepted, you know, whether I have one friend who's really aggressive in, let's say, in her approach to her career, and she is constantly coming up against men that find her way of communicating too aggressive, and that's a gender thing. You know, she's being perceived as being too, too male in this role, and that's not how people see her. You know, and that doesn't mean you don't push against it. But I think that the clearer you are in your own narrative about who you are, what you want and what your talent is, I think the more clearly you will be perceived.

Chiara:

And that makes a strong personal brand for you?

Interviewee 7:

Yeah, absolutely. **The key to a strong personal brand for me is to be clear about yourself!**

Chiara:

So, do you think a lot about how you are perceived by others? Like, what's the image that you create?

Interviewee 7:

Yeah, more than I would like too. I need to admit that it's something quite important. Especially I think, also, there's how this has changed in the time of COVID. I mean, all we really have now are these external presentations of ourselves, you know, so I don't know what the job hiring landscape looks like right now. But even more virtual, and even more of these indicators are coming from your online presence and how you've basically marketed yourself, you know, so I think, probably there's a shift even occurring as we speak about how that's been perceived across industries, actually.

Chiara:

What can women learn from that, like, especially regarding their online presence and their visibility?

Interviewee 7:

So, I think real life interaction and human connection and emotional intelligence, I think these are valuable skills that will never be replaced by robots, or anything like this. But I think that, that women can use the rest of this image side more partly as a more powerful tool for them. So, an interesting topic I've had with friends, for example, is about whether to include your see your picture on your CV, you know, it was an interesting debate. And I'm, I'm actually quite torn of it. And I think that this is a really crucial decision for women, you know, about if, if they lead with this, and I've tended in the past, not because I don't want this to be the visual to be an element, but I think more and more, you need to consider this whole package of your representation and how to use it. And I think, I don't know a lot of image building that we've done for brands and stuff like this is also like your building image, ultimately aligned where you want to be, you know, it's not necessarily that you're this sophisticated, incredibly savvy businesswoman at this moment in time. Projecting this image is also helping you on that path and putting you more clearly aligned with your ultimate destiny and your vision for yourself. Knowing that your image that you have in a company is aligned with you and your vision, that gives you a good feeling about yourself and it automatically contributes to your self-esteem. I hope it makes sense.

Chiara:

Yes, it does! I know that everything is very much related within personal branding. But there is a personal branding process that is divided into three steps, self-awareness, self-presentation, and self-reflection. And within the first step, like self-awareness, what is it for you and how do you get there?

Interviewee 7:

That is a constant probing of yourself of, of interactions of conversations you've had of it's just, I mean, I think some people are kind of more tapped into this, for better or for worse. I also think that there's really like valuable conversations you can have with people and this is something that I entered into quite early in my career, given the nature of my work, there was a lot of conversations that I was having a lot of my leadership was female coming to my career and there was a lot of conversations around feedback on my work, a lot of it was kind of the editorial nature of it, and it was it was worth getting to this degree of comfort with feedback. And this this also this low level of critique, you know, and obviously in a

constructive way, we're talking about mountain or an abusive way. And I think for myself, I can only speak about how I felt from my education and from my cultural learnings that critique was kind of a negative thing. And once I let go of that and built up again the language to have the quality conversations around critique. I think what also helped my confidence is not been taking everything so personally, I mean, this is another thing whether it's a gender trade or whatever, but um, separating kind of my personal self from the work was also an element of Um, that helped me kind of preserve my personal brand, my personal values and feelings, while also being able to kind of thrive in a in a corporate setting.

Chiara

So you ask people about your personal brand in that way, like, how am I perceived? And you actually use that in order to improve it?

Interviewee 7:

Yeah, exactly. And that's a conversation that can be had in a lot of different places, you know, with people you trust. And that can be in work with some leadership, it can be with colleagues, it can be on different levels, you know, that inviting those conversations into brings yourself awareness level up as well, you know, that's a, that's a muscle that needs to be flexed and built as, as any other one. So, the more you can stay aware, I think it's easy, especially at the moment for all of us to get kind of caught up in our own literal bubbles. You know, and I think that the more that you keep these conversations open, and whether it's in the context of feedback or you know, inviting them, you know, a respected colleague for lunch, and, you know, asking them also, like, how am I perceived in the sense or, or having a quality of conversation that just invites that, you know, that sort of exchange about, you and I think that you can have your own self-identity and your own self value system. But it's also important to also have, you know, feedback from the external world as you hone all your personal development.

Chiara:

Yeah, absolutely. And apart from what you can do for yourself with regards to personal branding, what can design Hotels do in order to support women by, you know, to feel self-assured and confident? Like, what how what can they do to support them.

Interviewee 7:

Representation! They need to have women in the at the sea level suite, they need to have women in leadership, they need to, not only feel those position, but support women in those in those roles, support them with any external, external, and this should be equal, like whether it's parental leave, or whatever that should apply equally to men or women, because also

supporting men and that supports women, you know. And a lot of actually, that's something that's not been I've not really mentioned yet. I think otherwise, we'd speak a lot about women and these issues, we're not often speaking about the education that needs to be done to the men. Because us women can do a lot of this work, but I think a lot of it, this onus also lays on men, and I think the conversation also really needs to be had with them about what they can do to support female leadership within the company. And I'm not sure that they're quite comfortable yet having those conversations. So, this is another direction, I would really implore employers to push their male workforce to be on board with this. And that's that goes with all topics of diversity inclusion, you know it should everyone in that conversation table.

Chiara:

You are saying that despite the efforts that women make with personal branding and changing their impression to for example being seen as an independent, strong woman, if there is no education for the other side, men and the company culture than personal branding has also its limits?

Interviewee 7:

I think, yeah, exactly, can only do so much.

Chiara:

What is really important when identifying your personal brand?

Interviewee 7:

I would be really clear about your values and your skills. And I think in your present, and externally finding a way to bridge those quite organically. You're not just saying, you know, I'm task oriented, but really, how do you speak about being task oriented? You know, like, what kind of learner you are, what do you need to be supported in that for, you know, and these are the questions that women should be asking in the interviews, that really tells their employer proactively, that they're concerned with these things, and then they're expecting their employer to be concerned with these issues as well. You know, so I think that the earlier women can be have those questions, pushing employers to, to be concerned with this. I think this is the new reality we work in now and companies that are going to be outdated aren't going to find the top talent, you know, like, because people want to work for companies that are progressive innovators, you know, idea makers, and ones that aren't showing that they're up to date in this this area are going to be left behind.

Chiara:

Yeah, exactly like companies. Awesome to pay attention to it because we can benefit from

personal branding by getting our careers ahead. But I can also benefit from having a person in their company which has a strong personal brand and knows who they are and knows whether you need talents in that way.

Interviewee 7:

I have a friend who works in Montreal and do work in an interesting space of it's this bridge of HR and coaching position that I think it's called an agility coach or something like this, I think he's retired. And I think it's a really interesting role within the organisation where she's basically just concerned about not specific to just personal branding, but personal development, which I see quite linked. And I think that this is, I don't know, if her what her expertise would be in relation just to women, but I think that there's a specific area of coaching and development that couldn't be done there to further support women as they grow in their field.

Chiara:

Absolutely. What are you doing, to feel to feel self-assured?

Interviewee 7:

Well, that's not every day, let's start there. There is an up and down. In those days where you feel down about your self-esteem or self-worth, you know, don't also realise that this pass and look at your whole body of work and your whole progression, not just a bad day or something like this. So not getting stuck and looking at a bigger trajectory, I think is helpful. So yeah, I am constantly on this, this path, without it being a bit cheesy bit of self-improvement, and that is largely attached to my feelings of self-worth and self-growth. And so that comes in multiple ways, that's not just limited to the growth I do for my work that comes equally on the other side, you know, and that's, that's, through reading that through conversations that through acquiring information, I think education never stops. So, once you leave school, it's not over, you know, you're, I think it's your responsibility as a citizen, to constantly be acquiring more information and more knowledge and finding ways to use that, and not just to your benefit, but also those around you. And that's also for me, an important part of my career, growth has been supporting women at your stage of their careers. And this is kind of a full circle thing. And while you know, at 20, you're only going to know so much, and you'll have certain amount of experience, I think it helps a lot speaking to women in in further and further phases of their career. And I, this is not something I had a lot of access to growing up, and in my education process. And it would have been nice, even, you know, in high school to have I know, catch points with female leaders, you know, and it hadn't really even occurred to me that that was a space to be in, as much as I grew up with the mentality from my family and the

privilege for my family to say you could be anything, you know, we had female prime ministers here and everything, so that I saw that potential, but I didn't have any direct touch points when I was growing up. And even early into my career. It wasn't until a couple just fortuitous bosses and colleagues that really spent extra time with me to develop me. But I think in the, in the formative years of my education and early career, I think having more access, you know, to strong female leadership would have been a benefit. and, yeah, and also across the different spectrum, you know, some that have had done it with their families and without, you know, like, just get this is the other thing when we speak about a gender experience or racial experience. We can't just limit that to one experience, right? There's a multitude of things within that that's always important to have in these conversations. And so, as many as much access to thought leaders of women across all the spectrum and all different positions and industries, I think it's just a better thing. And I think that that's that there's a lack of that connection, still out there that I think could grow quite strong and be a lot of help.

Chiara

Well, thank you, Ruby for your time and answering everything. Do you have any questions for me?

Interviewee 7:

How do you see your own personal branding in the at this stage in your career?

Chiara:

Good question ha-ha. I was always having this attitude that cannot control what other people think of you. And whatever their first impression of me is, I don't care, you know, if they think I'm blonde, and tall, and that's it, right? that's their problem, not mine. But now that I am researching this, I am like you can change the impression that you make, and you can make people see what you want them to see in you! And apart from that I wanted to look for a method and tool that women can do for themselves in order to get ahead, right, like to do not depend on other people, basically. And I need to say, I was totally not aware about my personal brand, and also LinkedIn. I was literally never posting and showing what I did and being proud of my accomplishments. And yeah, this is really something I want to improve on. But I think when what I start doing, consciously when I started at design hotels is that I just maintained a very open and curious conversation with everyone. Like, I was really just sharing my, like, sharing my things! What I am doing, what I like my open opinion on diverse topic. For me it is just being very open so that they know who I am. That they don’t have the chance to make up their own little story in their heads. And it starts by

introducing myself to everyone. I think for me, it's this being well known, connected and having this relationship and this network at the workplace.

Interviewee 7:

I think what you've just isolated is something that I didn't quite say but curious and open, I think in general, come to a situation like that. And then like revealing stuff about yourself is in in, of course, inappropriate for the setting kind of way, is something that I've used to my advantage a lot I can be a kind of a closed-up person, like if you look at just the external, but I actually am quite open. And I think when you start to reveal these sides' view, that builds a relationship and a trust as well. And I think that there's ways to use those.

Chiara:

Exactly. If you open up and you share things, people, people will trust you, right?

Interviewee 7:

And trust is the basis of a lot of things yet.

Chiara:

So, well So this is what I am doing right now: And online, I try to post and share my accomplishments, let me network know what I am doing. I shared on LinkedIn that I joined design, hotels and that I work in the field of PR and communications. And that was the first time that I posted something in and it's incredibly, I got I don't know, like 45 likes on it. And people were commenting on it, sending me private messages like, oh, congrats Chiara, wish you lots of luck in your new position. And I'm like, I don't know, this, this was giving me also self-esteem. This really pushed my self-esteem, knowing that, you know, people are happy for me to get ahead and they are "interested" in what I am doing!

Interviewee 7:

This is another thing that I didn't take enough pride along the way in, in those small things. And that's how a career development is. It's not and I read this somewhere one day, or listen to a podcast, someone says, like, you think all of a sudden, some big success falls on you from the sky, it's little ones that you build on. And sometimes they go back, and then sometimes they jump forward, but also really celebrate those small things and take pride and ownership in them. You know, and internship might seem small, but it's big. And it's great. You know, and I, maybe you don't know that I did want it 35 with design hotels, you know, like, also Don't be so scared to reinvent and to put yourself out there, I think the women have this, this fear of being perceived in some kind of wrong way. And I think, I think we need to let go of that and not be limited by our own self beliefs. You know, put yourself out there.

Chiara:

Exactly.

Interviewee 7:

This is the thing do not limit yourself.

Chiara:

Yeah, right! Be proud of your accomplishments. But I think it's so important to, especially women, because we sometimes struggle with being proud of ourselves. And we are not so proud of the things we accomplished. We are so much more self-critical than men.

Interviewee 7:

You know and this proudness of your accomplishments, that energy is what you take into your interview into your role and that will make it that that guy is going to get the job because he goes in with this. Whether it's a phone confidence or real I don't know. But I see all the time all the time my actually my female friend who's very high in her career is now doing a lot of hiring at a top consultancy firm and she's going through the CVS of these men and she's interviewing them and they're a fraction of the qualifications of hers and they're talking like they know they're way above her like and she's just like oh my god like where they get this confidence from i think this is an interesting study as well.

Chiara:

Within my research I researched self-esteem and the differences between men and women and it's really like there's so many studies out there and it's shocking to see how men tend to be overconfident more or less all the time and how women always downgrade themselves and it's really, it's really true if you pay a bit of attention to it and you watch it and it's really horrible how self-critical we are sometimes in ways and how we put this gender roles and norms on ourselves. This self-limiting behaviour in us that takes away our self-esteem and confidence!

Interviewee 7:

So, and then that when you think when you do an apply and exercise of personal branding to you I think to see all of yourself all of your skills all of your facets in that sense more visibly more tangibly you maybe connect to them more solidly and then you believe in them more and you can lead more with that confidence.

Chiara:

Absolutely like thinking about who you are and what are your unique traits and talents like what is the is the element that makes you lift up from the crowd in a way.

Interviewee 7:

Only thinking about this is like I don't know it just gives you already a lot of self-esteem and a lot of confidence. If you if know who you are and you know your worth and then you communicate that as well and then you actually see a result by whatever people wishing you good luck on LinkedIn and you're like hell yeah that's amazing!

Chiara:

Yeah, that's exactly it! Well thank you so much!!

Interviewee 7:

Thank you! This Research what you are doing is great, it's just great I want to know more once you are finished!

Interviewee 8

Chiara:

Good Morning, thank you for doing this interview with me!

Interviewee 8:

Oh, yeah. Just want to thank you for thinking of me for this project. I'm really honoured that you want to chat about this. And I went through the questions. They're, they're good questions. They're quite deep and complex, but they're very good questions. So yeah.

Chiara:

Yeah, I'm doing my thesis on female leadership. And I was allowed to choose my own topic. And I wanted to look into something that women can do for themselves in order to get ahead. And I really love personal branding, but it's like, really, I don't know, a relatively new term. And yeah, so I was just curious to hear your opinion. Because I think if someone knows how to brand themselves, it might be our senior vice president, right?

Interviewee 8:

Yeah, it's true. It's only become sort of a topic of maybe discussion within education. But it's like we've all done it, right. We've all kind of naturally done it. We just didn't really talk about it in that way. But it is really important, especially when you work in really large organizations that people know who you are, and that you are consistent, and that they can depend on you and that you're authentic. I mean, more than anything, that's the most critical part of whatever your personal brand is.

Chiara:

Yeah, absolutely. I agree. I agree. So, you already went through my questions. So, I was just wondering why you think females are underrepresented in managerial positions generally?

Interviewee 8:

You know, I think it's like a loaded question, and could go back, you know, historically, you know, probably in the 70s, and the 80s. And even before then, you know, women were probably more committed to starting families and staying at home, and, and maybe not, you know, taking a serious career path forward. And that may have set us back a little bit. I don't think that's the only reason. But I do think that, you know, with men, that was never really an issue. And when women started to enter the workforce a bit more seriously, it did take us a little bit more time. And, personally, I just think that men and women are very different in general, but also in the workplace, we can be quite different in our approach. That's a total generalization. But you know, women tend to be higher on the emotional quotient, which I

think was not as important a few decades ago, but in our time today, having a very high EQ is the most important elements of a good leader. And, and I think that becomes more evident as women start to move into leadership roles that it is important that you have the skill set and the soft skills to lead a team and to carry people with you, and whatnot. But I'm really positive about what we're seeing in terms of female leadership. And you know, it will take time. And I think, part of that is that women tend to doubt themselves sometimes and again, total generalization, but we do suffer a lot from, sort of being more critical of ourselves and not being as brave, perhaps as some men are in terms of our ability. We have got this imposter syndrome that men get as well, but we're probably more closely connected to it, and then finally, I think, I think personally, as women, we have to stop thinking about the workforce of women and men, and we just have to think about leadership and, and doing the right thing. And I think if we can break through those sorts of, I don't know, generalizations around what women are like and what men are like, and, you know, I don't think of myself as a woman in the workforce, I think of myself as a leader. And I think the more we can kind of stop making it a crutch and more, make it more, you know, a powerful tool, and we will do more, and we'll go further.

Chiara:

Yeah, this is what I also came across during my research. That these, norms and gender roles that sometimes we put them on ourselves. We sometimes tend to think of ourselves as women, it's not only others that put these gender norms on us. But you have ever felt that you are forced to act in a certain way, because you're a woman.

Interviewee 8:

You know, I wouldn't say I feel like I'm forced to act a certain way, there have been a lot of situations where I'm the only woman in the room, you know, there's a lot of situations, you know, in senior meetings, and it's a very different organization, because there are a lot of senior female leaders in this company. But there have been moments where, you know, you're with ownership, you're with GM, you're with a lot of men, and you're the only woman and you know that your voice is being heard. But I don't feel pressure as a woman to act differently or behave in a certain way. If anything, I know I need to be on my game, you know, and, and that's, that's really it, but it is sometimes I remember, even in my 20s, I was on a business class flight. I don't remember where I was going transatlantic or something. And I was the only woman in business class. And I just thought, this is crazy. It's all executives traveling, you know, but I was the only woman there. And I thought this is so strange. that that's the case. So, I think when you're in a room with other women, you do kind of feel like

you've got a contingency there. And sometimes it feels a little bit unusual when you're the only woman.

Chiara:

All right. And when you are the only woman and you need to raise your voice and speak up, where do you take the confidence than from? What is your source of confidence?

Interviewee 8:

You know, I think it does, I have a lot of moments where I'm not confident. So, the confidence has to come from knowing your stuff. You know, I don't enter a meeting, or presentation, or a big conversation without doing my homework. And without being prepared. I don't ever ad lib. And I think that's really important. Now when you're prepared my father always have had this thing, repeat, repeat, repeated practice, practice, practice, he he really ingrained that in my head at a should really be ready when you get to the table when somebody is going to hear you speak. And I know myself that if I walk into a room, and it's not something I'm prepared for, it's a little bit more difficult for me to feel confident. So, I think that preparation piece is really critical.

Chiara:

Okay. So, for your career, you would have said the source that makes you drive and be confident is knowing things, knowing your stuff?

Interviewee 8:

And being and being prepared for things to go in a different direction. You know, I when I was younger, I took improvisation classes within LA when I wanted to be an actress, and I failed miserably at that, obviously. But it helped me to kind of learn that, you know, you can pivot and when things come your way, you can figure out the best way to be on your toes. And that will happen. You know, I've been in conversations with men before where they shouted at me, you know, I've had an owner shout at me across the table in front of my entire team. And I had to be very, very calm and composed. But also, be clear that that was not acceptable. So, you know, it isn't always, it isn't always a perfect situation. And at that moment, I felt very insecure because I really didn't know why I was being sort of attacked in that situation. It wasn't about me it was about him.

Chiara:

Yeah, I think it's important to keep that in mind. It is funny that you mentioned that you wanted to be an actress. Because I also want to be an actress. I thought about taking some

acting classes. It's definitely not easy, but it's like, I don't know, something that I have in my mind. But okay, good.

Interviewee 8:

You are Creative. That's great.

Chiara:

Right? Yeah, ha-ha true. So, what would you advise? Or what would you say? How can women increase their self-esteem then?

Interviewee 8:

I think, educating yourself. You know, I take that when I have a moment, I try to take some classes at Cornell. Yeah, I do a lot of you do a ton of reading. I am a love trend online. And I follow trends, like, it's like, it's like a drug to me, because I'm really passionate about it. And most of its around luxury and hospitality and travel and design. And if you know your stuff, you know, and you'll have always something interesting to talk about and contribute. I think that does help. I think also, you know, we walk into a room sometimes when we think we're going to fail, and I think it's about changing your mindset. I mean, even going back Acting I remember, one of the things they said is that if you walk into an audition, and you're thinking I'm so nervous, you're going to come across nervous because your body is listening to whatever your mind is telling it. So, when you start to feel nervous about, you know, going into a presentation, you really have to convince yourself, I'm confident, I feel good about this, I know what I'm doing. And I'm prepared. And that that I think really helps a lot as well. And then just having strong women around you to help mentor you and guide you. I've had really amazing women in my career that are great mentors and great friends that I know, I can go to if I have, you know, a career question or you know, is that that network is really important.

Chiara:

I see. I see. Yeah, thank you for sharing that with me. Now to personal branding. So, what is personal branding to you?

Interviewee 8:

Like I said, I think we all we all do it in our life, I think it's actually something very natural. And somebody figured out that it's interesting and put a put a kind of title to it. But for me it is, it's about being your authentic self, I think when we're young, and we're not as confident at work, we kind of have this person that we're at, we are at work and a person we are at home. And I've just found that if I'm just who I am, in every situation, and modify it for the workplace, obviously, but you know, that is much more interesting for people to speak to

somebody who's authentic, and to speak to somebody who's real, and you know, doesn't feel like they need to throw in corporate terminology and all that stuff to seem like there's something they're not even, you know, when it comes to the personal branding piece, it's about being somebody who is dependable somebody who, you know, people can rely on and with my team, they all know, they can come to me, you know, the door's always open, you can talk to me about anything, I care, not only about what you're doing at work, but how your life is. So, I know those two are intertwined. You know, with our senior leaders, they know, if they asked me to get something done, I'll get it done. They know that I will stand up for what I believe in. They know that I do my homework, and I know my stuff. And that I think is really important for them. So, I think that that's part of my personal brand. And then also, you know, how you talk in on social media, I think it's really important to when it comes to personal branding, my profile on Instagram is very different than my profile on LinkedIn. And I keep them very separate. You know, LinkedIn, for me is all about sort of my passion for luxury and design and you know, trends. And, you know, if you saw that you would say, Oh, yeah, that makes sense. My Instagram was about, you know, the travels that I do with my partner, you know, it's very, very different. But they're, they're all parts of who I am. And I think that builds a brand.

Chiara:

Yeah, absolutely. It's important as it is why personal branding is getting increasingly important, right? Because the rise of web technology and social media, and we are branding ourselves actually everywhere without constantly being conscious about. But so from what you said, I think you are conscious about your personal brand, you really know what image you want to create and market into the audience. All right. So maybe it's interesting at this point, like what tips and tricks Do you have when creating your personal brand? What is important to consider?

Interviewee 8:

Well, first of all, know your audience. More than anything, I come from a communications background, I spent, like 15 years and communication, so I was helping other people kind of create their own personal brand. And I was always behind the scenes. And, you know, I think first and foremost is know your audience, but also be authentic in that audience. You know be yourself and be authentic with just tailoring what you're saying to an audience. And I think we all need to know that every different group of people takes you in a different way. So, if I'm speaking to, you know, my team, it's maybe a different voice or tone, or topic, than if I'm speaking to someone who is quite senior in the company or talking to an owner. But if there's

always that sort of authenticity within me, that is like the red thread through all of that, that's what's important.

Chiara:

And how do you become that authentic? Any Tips?

Interviewee 8:

It's like, a lot of years. I'm still working on it. You know, I think it just takes, you know, there's a certain point in your life where you become much more comfortable. with whom you are. And you know, like, when you turn 30, and you turn 35, when you turn 40, when you start 45. And you just get to a point where you're like, this is me, and I need to feel good about who I am and not try to be somebody else, you know. And some people are able to do that much earlier in their lives, and some people take decades to get there. But it is about self-awareness. It's about self-reflection, it's about asking for feedback, I think that piece is so important, I think women probably will ask for feedback more than men. But you know, I think it's important that you hear from your friends, from your colleagues, from your mentors, you know, what it is that, you know, what people appreciate about you what it is that they feel like, is an area of opportunity, so that you're always evolving, you know, and, and every year, you should be looking at yourself and saying, you know, what do I want to do differently to, to be a better person or be a happier person. And when you when you're in touch with yourself, you know, and you know, yourself, and again, that just takes time to build that. It just comes naturally. But it's not something that's easy. It's very few people that are just authentic all the time, you know.

Chiara:

What benefits does Personal Branding hold for women?

Interviewee 8:

That is a good question! A lot of things I would say. The way I see personal branding women have a greater chance to Be seen. By clearly communicate their value to their audience they will be recognized which automatically puts them ahead in their professional life. Within that it is important to build an authentic presence, meaning being your authentic self. And being authentic will allow women to build these relationships, gain trust and make this connection with other people that might open new doors to new opportunities.

Chiara.:

Does that in turn increase your self-esteem?

Interviewee 8:

100%

Chiara:

I'm also like, now researching and reading about all this personal branding, I'm trying to find my own personal brand and how I want to be I want to be perceived, where my talents are. And it's like, at one point is like, quite depressing, because I don't know at all what I'm really good at where my skills lie yet. So, it's really, it's really not, I think you have to give yourself a break to probably hard on yourself, right?

Interviewee 8:

I already see within you You're a very positive person, you seem to be very gregarious, you're very curious, you are obviously doing your homework, you know, you have passions, you know, you should just give yourself the credit for those things that they are important, even if they just seem like they're part of your daily life. And that's what makes you up.

Chiara:

Thank you so much.

Interviewee 8:

Write that down. Side notes ha-ha.

Chiara:

You also said feedback is important. So, you engage in regular feedback sessions and ask people, especially how you're perceived or how your personal brand image I?

Interviewee 8:

Yeah, I probably don't ask about personal branding. It's more about you know, is there anything I can do better? Is there something I'm missing within? You know, if I'm talking to a member of my team, you know, when we catch up? Is there something missing here? Is there something I can do to help you grow? You know, there, you know, a better way to do this, you know, just asking questions that kind of open up the conversation, right? I, I'm my mentor that within the company, I think I'm very open and honest with and I don't have a, I don't have an issue saying I'm not confident in something because I think when you don't address things that you're not confident in, you can't actually get over the hurdle, you know, and then you just doubt yourself internally. And I think that people who can help you sort through that are the people you trust, and people who've been through it. And so, you know, p i talked about Tina, who is our global brand and marketing officer, and I've known her for 18 years. She's one of my bosses and edits adore her. And I know I can be open with her and I can let her

know if I thought helped out and she is probably one of the strongest women I've ever worked with. And she helps kind of gives me the advice and guides me to where I need to go. And likewise, she gives me the credit when you know, she sees something as done well, which I also appreciate it because sometimes you don't get that and that's one thing I've always done is when I hear you know whether it's a man or a woman, when I hear somebody saying something really positive or complimentary about someone, I will tell that person that they you know, have been recognized because I think a lot of times we don't actually talk about that we just let it go in the air. And I think it means a lot to people when they hear this person really valued you or you know, this person respects you and told me that himself or herself.

Chiara:

Yeah, I agree. recognition! With that women are also a lot more self-critical!

With regards to our accomplishments and our self-presentation, what can women generally improve on that or what should they try to change a bit?

Interviewee 8:

It's like, it's a very philosophical question. You know, it takes a lot for a person to be comfortable enough to say, I'm proud of myself, you know, even when you said when I'm trying to think about what my personal branding is, you're not giving yourself the credit for all the things that you are because you're not yet at a point where you're like, that's actually really special. And I feel comfortable saying that. And sometimes it takes people over the course of your career to tell you, this is very special about you, and then you start to recognize it, but we're better at remembering the negative things. And we are the positive things, which is just a reality. So, I think it's know your worth. And you know, that becomes really important when it comes to negotiating your salary for any men. And that is based on do your research. You know, always be on your game, know your stuff and know your worth. And in that case, you will have the confidence that she needs.

Chiara:

I absolutely agree. So, a strong personal brand to summarize it, from what you have already said is like, knowing things and knowing your worth, and be very conscious about yourself, right? It's like a combination of these three that are also influencing each other, right? Like, knowing your worth makes you confident, being confident makes you appreciate yourself more.

Interviewee 8:

Yeah, yeah. And also, that, you know, personal branding isn't one part of your life and

everything put together. Yeah, you may be a mom, you may be, you know, super focused on your career. And that's the most important thing, you know, like me, you may have a puppy that you love so much, you know, it's like, all those little things in your life make up the person that you are. And it's not just one, one of those elements. And I think that's also really important.

Chiara:

Yeah. Yeah. And it's really about bringing this image across, like creating and controlling this impression, right?

Interviewee 8:

You're right. And I think when you're not, you're not authentic, people can kind of come up with anything. But, when you're authentic, there's no way to get around it. Even if people don't like your authenticity, right. That's just as important to keep in mind.

Chiara:

Last question, actually, I was just wondering, what do you think because I also feel that a personal branding is not something you can entirely do by yourself, I did require support from other people. But what do you think can design hotels or a company do in order to support women to get ahead in their career?

Interviewee 8:

Oh, my God, a lot of things. I think training is really important, you know, providing opportunities for women, and this is for men as well. But just to continue growing people within the company, challenging you to think more than just your discipline, you know, we do have a tendency to be in one discipline and not want to move out one way or the other. I was, like I said, I was in communications for many years. And I was challenged by one of my bosses to move into a different role into brands about 10 years ago, and that changed my whole path of my career. And it also gave me the confidence to know that I can kind of do anything, you know, and it wasn't easy to get the job because there were a lot of people who doubted me, because I didn't have that experience. But I think when we take risks, we get more out of it, I think men are more likely, again, huge generalizations, take it, take it for what it is, I think men are more likely to probably leave a company and go to another company to grow to get the title or to get a promotion or a raise, they have that confidence to do that, where women are probably a little bit more loyal within that company, which means you grow probably at a slower pace. And that is just one thing. In general, I would say that women just need to take more risks and, in their career, and it's really important. And then what the company can do is just keep focusing on you know, gender equality, keep focusing

on hiring, you know, being fair about the hiring practices about keeping an eye on you know, the behaviours within the workplace. It's really important and its super right now relevant, you hear this all the time and schools and not just the workplace, just the whole gender equality piece. So, I think that just making sure that we're constantly aware of and we're talking about it, and I think the parity piece on on salary. I feel very passionate about this, because I think we will never be equals if we're still paid less than men. You know, and I and that is, like I said, I don't care if you're a man or a woman, you should be paid for the value that you bring to the company to the organization. And it shouldn't be paid based on your gender. And that's something that I think Marriott does really well, I don't know enough about design that tells in terms of the parity, but something I feel very passionate about.

Chiara:

Yeah, I agree. I agree like equal salary. But this also comes back right at one point to confidence, right, that men are just more confident in negotiation, their salary, and women are just to kind of I liked or feeling like it's not, I don't know. Yeah, I think don't typically; younger women don't typically negotiate. I have always told my own team, you need to push harder, because you're worth more than what you're asking for or what you're accepting, they tend not to go back and negotiate where men are very good at it and will ask for more. And the reality is, if you don't ask for it, you're not going to get it out of the blue. And that's the same with a promotion, if you don't ask for it. Nobody's just going to give it to you. And that that, I think, is something we should all be better at.

Chiara:

Yeah, yeah. Looking forward to when I graduate from school, and I go into my first job.

Interviewee 8:

You How much longer do you have for school?

Chiara:

I'm graduating in June.

Interviewee 8:

Okay, beginning of June, you have a program in three different countries, it sounds like.

Chiara:

So I'm like, I'm studying in Amsterdam, and management and business and finishing in June. Now, during the same time, my managerial internship, which is, you know, part of graduation, basically. And after that, I, I will see what, what I what opportunities I have or what I can do, and I think I also need to make this step and try to, you know, go into the

entertainment industry and at least try for myself in order to not regretted at the end, let's see. Yeah, and yeah. After that, thinking about whatever masters or I don't know, I'm also quite interested in communications and branding. And let's see where it goes. Well, that's exciting. And I'm wishing you all the best and good for you for following your dream. I mean, I'm so glad that when I was young, I did that, you know, I tried it out, it didn't work. And that was totally fine. But I, you know, I ended up failing at acting, but then I was able to go into the entertainment industry. Anyway, I worked for the producer of the Academy Awards for about four and a half years. And I had this like, amazing experience that I am so glad I did that and kind of check that off my list and moved into hospitality after that. So, you're right. I also think it's just important to do it because I always wanted to do it. But then I studied hospitality because I'm also very passionate about that. And but it's still it's still somewhere in my head and I'm like, I think I just need to do it in order to now you know, where are my chances in that field?

Interviewee 8:

And who knows? Well, I wish you all the best of luck.

Chiara:

Thank you so much for doing this interview with me. It has been so insightful. I think it's going to be great for my fees is great. And yeah, for sure.

Interviewee 8:

Thank you for the time today. I really appreciate it. It's really nice to get to know you.

Chiara:

Bye!

Interviewee 9

Chiara:

Good Morning! Thank you for doing this interview with me, I have a few questions for you regarding personal branding, gender roles and self-esteem. I am very curious about your opinion so why do you think females are underrepresented in managerial positions?

Interviewee 9:

I think there's two pillars that we need to look at, from a female's perspective and from a male's perspective, from a female perspective, and this is what I've learned, actually, in my life, and we are not very good at positioning ourselves. And I think, comes a point in our life where women decide to have a family. And then we make a lot of compromises with regards to our career because we obviously have a different role, you know, suddenly coming up with having children. But we are trying, how can I say, to live this new life as a mother alone, women are not necessarily requesting support from their partners, and therefore, we make some compromises on our career. And then when we make compromises on our career, and we kind of step back for a while and take our time job it is very difficult after that to position ourselves again, within an organization but also finding the confidence to that, you know from a female confidence level. It's extremely hard to think, Okay, I have been out for a while, and you know, what, I'm wonderful, and you know, when I should be whatever. So I think that's, that's one path from the Chanel. That's why we are not very well represented in such positions. From the male's perspective, there has been in the past a lot of discrimination in my generation, for women, because we, from their perspective, they knew that a woman at some stage when she comes in the organization, and she's young, and she's going to get married, and maybe she's going to get shared well, then there's a risk for the business that the way that we look at it, there's a risk for the business, because she might be out for a while. Yeah, yeah. And, you know, decision would probably influence, you know, in terms of who should I take between two candidates, you know, if I have a male candidate, and if I have a female candidate, well, I take less risk when I've got a male candidate, because he's not going to go on maternity leave, you know, he's not going to cold seat because the child is seat, you know, all of these and, and therefore, you know, as a natural outcome, then obviously, males are much more represented in the manager positions.

Chiara:

Absolutely. That makes sense. You said that you think from the female perspective, that we have more issues to position ourselves and also with our confidence. Have you ever

experienced that yourself that you felt like I'm a woman and I need to act now in a certain way?

Interviewee 9:

Yes, so I think what I realized in my life, is when I decided, me and my husband when we were in London, I was having it, you know, I was working for Marriott at that time, and I knew, that I was very well positioned. I was working for Marriott. I was very well positioned, and I knew I could have a wonderful future. Okay. But then, you know, my son was born, and then my husband got a job in Zurich, and then we moved to Zurich. Then that was I found myself in situations where I didn't have a job. You know, I followed my husband's career. I was in a country where I was not speaking the language, you know, and we're not even talking about German we're talking about Swiss German, which was obviously you know, next level of complexity. You know, for me, I thought where I am you know, what I nobody told me that they were talking like this. How am I going to be able to survive here, okay? So there was that and then I led I arrived in Zurich thinking that I'm going to find a job, but I was not able to find a job very quickly, I was out of the of the business of the working environment for six years as an outcome for six years. So, it was a constant fight in myself, to think I cannot accept this situation, you know, and I have to change that. So at the beginning, you go through different phases, you know, you are very angry at the whole world, because this is so unfair, right? And you are very angry at your husband, because he's working and you're not working, you know, and he's coming back home, and you've just been doing the cleaning the washing and looking after the kids, you know, and then they ask him, you know, how was your day darling, it's like, you know, how was My day and they don't even while asking you mean, you know, so, so I think when I went back to work, when I finally went back to work, it was extremely difficult for me to be able to position myself as continuing my roles as a mother, as a wife. And then in addition, having a career. And so, when you work, you are playing with all that guilt thing, because you want to be perfect everywhere. So, you don't want to share to your employer that you are a mother, and you have no problem at home, because you want to prove even more than anybody else that you can be successful, you know. And at the same time, as a mother, as a, as a wife, you don't really want to show the impact that has the working on these two roles. You want to justify the fact that you can still have a career.

Chiara:

And where do you take the confidence?

Interviewee 9:

Yes, I am very lucky. I am, very strong. And to be honest I don't know where that comes from. I think it comes from probably my, my childhood and the way that we have been educated in my family. I come from a very traditional background, you know, with the mother networking, the Father, you know, who was running a company, and, and, you know, we messaged her and I, we saw our mother deeply unhappy in the role of being a mother at home is a very intelligent woman. But he was just not allowed in our World. We were meant to work because, you know, that meant that the family didn't have enough money, which is just totally, you know, ridiculous. And so, we always grew up, in a sense that we will never end up like our mothers. Tonight. All right, I got Yeah, I see. That was the benchmark for us, was the vision, you know, we never going to be like her. I understand. I understand that one day.

Chiara:

So, you know, I'm also researching a lot about personal branding. And I'm very curious, what is personal branding to you?

Interviewee 9:

You know, it's a very, I mean, when you send me your first presentation, yeah. It was very new to me. It was very interesting here, because it was at the same time very new to me. But at the same time, this is something that without knowing about it, I always worked on. So, it was kind of a unconscious positioning and personal branding. I think I always wanted to be an inspiring female leader. And branding also comes and maybe you're going to laugh, but I think branding is also a lot about how you present yourself! And for me, your look, is extremely important.

Chiara:

Yeah I see.

Interviewee 9:

Branding it is like a product. There is what is in the content, and what is in the packaging. And, and for me, what you are, your contents should always be reflected in the packaging, which is your look basically. For me, an inspiring person is not just inside it’s also what comes visually across.

Chiara:

Exactly, as you said, your personal brand is defined by you, what is inside of you and the goal is to make it also be visible for others. And you express that by your looks, by the way you dress.

Interviewee 9:

Exactly, I absolutely agree.

Chiara:

So, would you say that you are, like you said that you are not really aware about your personal brand, but you actually constantly worked on it. So why do you think personal branding is now becoming so increasingly important and why people start talking about it?

Interviewee 9:

Okay. When I was a consultant, I was saying to the people that when you sell more, you are increasing your market value, because you're obviously generating revenue. So that means your market value is being increased. And that was always something which was very important to understand. How much do I deliver and that's linked with my market value?. I think the reasons why it's more important, now, and why we talk more and more about it, is because people realize that they have a value on the market, and they have the need to position themselves. And, and, of course, this is linked with your inner values. For myself, my values are love, caring, people, developing people, and this is linked with my brand. I guess when you are on the market and you want to, have a career, then it is important to think about your personal values and they should reflect who you are. That makes it easier to actually position yourself on the market and clarifies with whom you want to work with.

Chiara:

Yeah. Yeah, it's really about knowing who you are and thinking about what my values are, what are my skills. And not trying to fit in somewhere but trying to find the company that fits you! So, thinking about personal branding, what do you think it can do for women in their career?

Interviewee 9:

I think women from a very young age onwards need to work on their personal branding, because that gives them that confidence to know who they are, and how they can position themselves on the market. That is key. I think that's really the initial work that you need to do before anything. It's a way of knowing who you are, what are your values? When we talk about leaders on the International Women's Day, we talked a lot about choose to challenge. For me, that was really a revelation! when you are aligned with your brand, and that means knowing who you are, your worth, I would say that then you have that confidence that gives you the ability to challenge.

Chiara:

Exactly, you cannot challenge something if you don't have the confidence to challenge and that only comes by working on your personal and by knowing who you are. So, you already said it more or less in a nutshell, but concrete, what makes a strong personal brand for you?

Interviewee 9:

That actually is a though question. It is the belief in some very specific values. It's being harnessed about ourselves as well. It's about being confident of who we are. For me that is the key to a strong personal branding.

Chiara:

And thinking about your personal brand. How would you describe your personal brand?

that you have?

Interviewee 9:

It's very interesting. Okay. It is very difficult once you get this question! I would say I am a female leader who believes in love, care, integrity, I am very much about walk the talk. Everything that I say, I walk it. Actually, transparency is very, close to my branding. Transparency about myself. I think transparency is key to my branding.

Chiara:

Yeah, it also has something to do with trust, right? If you're transparent, people trust you, because they know where they're at with you. Do you think about how you are perceived on the workplace?

Interviewee 9:

By others? Oh, yes, all the time! I think a lot about how I am perceived and recognized by others. All the time.

Chiara:

Because?

Interviewee 9:

Because this this is how you can get work done, for yourself. You know, if your perception is totally different from how your colleagues perceive you, then you are not getting ahead in your life. So, for example, I've just joined, you know, designing hotels three months ago. Obviously, my, my personal branding, you know, when I left the Ritz Carlton, for example, then I had to reposition myself at design hotels. Okay. Because it just doesn't happen just like that. Right? So, what I've realized from a very early stage is that they were not seeing me like

that at all. Okay, they were seeing me, as who is this woman from Marriott. So, they were actually looking at a Marriott product rather than me as NAME as the person who I am. So, what I had to do to make sure that they would see what I wanted them to see I needed to position myself. And the eyeopener for me was that you need define who is your market, your audience. You need to find the right words for this audience, so they understand what you are about. That's what you need to do. I can tell that the Ritz Carlton required a different NAME in HR than Design Hotels. Also, that means building trust with my new company by making them aware of who I was.

Chiara:

And what are your efforts regarding yourself presentation like how do you communicate the real you?

Interviewee 9:

So, I think it's all about understanding what they want. When I joined HR at Design Hotels 3 months ago I was coming with my Visions and my ideas and I was kind of too dynamic for them at first and that wasn't the impression I tried to create. So, I realize that it is important to have a person telling you these things. Getting feedback is so valuable when it comes to your self-presentation. Because then I knew that I was not on the right path. So, for now and with regards to myself presentation I'm trying to get better connected with the company, my team, understanding better what they are expecting from me and my position as an HR Director and then trying to fill this gap. So Self-presentation is an individual process, but you should always keep in mind what is the company, my manager my team expecting from me and how can I contribute to that.

Chiara:

Yeah, absolutely. And you shared now your opinion on offline strategy for personal branding. What would you say can women do online for their personal branding? Do you also make use of these tools to communicate your personal brand?

Interviewee 9:

You know, I've got, it's very interesting, actually, I'm not interested in that. Yeah. And I don't know if that's right or wrong. To give you an example, within Marriott, for example, there's a lot of personal branding happening. Some people of the team and some of the HR leaders, when they do something, or when they read something, they share this information with their network like LinkedIn. I do not really do that but maybe that's because of the generation I am from. Old school you know. But I know that especially now it is important to be visible in the

world wide web etc. And that's where I also see that women are not like that we are not showing off in that way and showing our Linked In network what we are doing.

Chiara:

Yeah, no, I see. Why do you think that women are not doing that?

Interviewee 9:

A simple answer! Self-worth. I see that females, especially young females who are not sure about themselves, yet they are usually not so confident in what they are doing and that's why they do not show that so often on these platforms as well. But either way, online or offline self-presentation is about connecting with people. And I think, for me, my personal branding, and the advertising for me is offline and it is through people talking.

Chiara:

You are more a people-oriented person and for you communicating your personal brand is about making these connections with people around you. That is very interesting! I also like now to do more interviews. This also came to the conclusion that this offline branding is actually so much more important than this online branding, which is very interesting. And what do you think can women do in order to like for their self-presentation what they can improve?

Interviewee 9:

As I said, with regards to self-presentation women need to get themselves out there. Be visible and connect with people! So, there's one thing that helped me always. I always had a vision for myself. There is actually one technique, which is called creating your future history. So I always had a vision for myself. And I, when I was imagining myself when I was 30 was how did I look? What kind of job I would have? And it was always inspiring, because you usually always visualized something positive for yourself and that makes you confident. And then when you have this visualization, then you work towards it without even knowing about it. Everything you do is towards this vision.

So, I would think what could help young females is to have that vision. It will help them with their self-presentation. Because when they imagine themselves in a certain way the naturally act in these ways and then their self-presentation improves just like that. I actually do that during interviews with candidates. And one person said that visualization is just hope and it is not a strategy. The strategy is that when you're going to achieve your vision, you need to be very clear on your vision. So, I think women, young female, need to have a vision for themselves.

Chiara:

So, you would say a clear vision and visualizing yourself in the future is really a source of confidence. Right?

Interviewee 9:

Definitely, having this vision for yourself is a source of confidence. It makes you thrive.

Chiara:

That is super interesting. And, yeah, to my last few questions, I also became aware when I researched personal branding and your personal brand image that you're trying to create on the market. It's really important that you also reflect back on it and do like, seek feedback. Are you doing that? Are you taking are asking people like, how am I perceived or engaged in self-reflection that way?

Interviewee 9:

Yes. So, for example, when I had my first SLT meeting at Design Hotels I immediately asked other participants for feedback. I asked the SLT how do you perceive my role, my job, how do I feel that I work with you is there anything that I can do better? But what I find very interesting is that a lot of people find it difficult to articulate feedback, you know, and it's very hard for people also to be very transparent. You know, some people sometimes are scared to, to say, what they really want to say. To be fair, I don't think I'm asking very regularly. I feel I get a lot of very positive feedback. And that is something I didn’t grew up with. I never have been in an environment where people were giving positive feedback. But it feels great. Getting positive feedback and receiving recognition makes feel good about yourself.

Chiara:

What about feedback regarding your personal brand?

Interviewee 9:

I think also, feedback is really important in order to know where you're at, right, and how you're perceived, because sometimes our self-perception does not match the perception of others. It makes you feel secure and self-assured. I have done a 360. feedback. Have you heard about Myers Briggs types?

Chiara:

Yes

Interviewee 9:

So, it's, it's a new version of Myers Briggs types, it's actually much better. It is based on four components on how you actually communicate with people. And, and what are your

preferences. So, yellow is inspiring, red is like tough and making decision. Green is caring. And blue is data information. So first you answer your own questionnaire and them you ask your colleagues, your boss, and your peers to fill out the questionnaire for you. So in the end you get a comparison of how do you see yourself and how people see yourself. The way that I saw myself was totally aligned with theirs. However, when I did my coaching certification, I also did a 360 feedback, which was a little bit different, and it was based on values and how you perceive yourself and how the others perceive yourself. My coach came to me and he said, before I saw the results, he said, we got some amazing feedback. I couldn't believe it. The way I saw myself was much worse than the way the others perceived me. So, there was this huge gap.

Chiara:

You was very self-critical?

Interviewee 9:

Super critical! You know, the most interesting things was when he gave me the results of the 360-degree Feedback and asked me What do you think? The gap was huge between how I rated myself and how the others rated me. At this point I need to say that they gave me amazing feedback and I dramatically downgraded by capabilities and my skills. And when I saw the results I said to him: "I am scared, they have a totally different picture of who I am actually! "And he just said to me, when are you going to learn that it`s you having a problem with your own picture. So, this was really an eye-opening moment!

Chiara:

Wow! From my own experience and my personality, I can say that I am the same. I am so much more critical to myself. And it is a very interesting viewpoint to say sometimes we see ourselves much worse and that we have the problem with our picture. So, what are you doing to feel that more self-assured?

Interviewee 9:

Taking successes! That's what I always say, you need to take successes. Women we don't realize how much successes we have been achieving. Because we concentrate on the thing that we haven't achieved. So, take the time regularly, to think okay, what have I achieved.

Chiara:

Absolutely. And thank you so much for all these insights clear. My last question is what can design hotels do in order to support where Men with their personal branding or in generally to support him to get ahead in their career.

Interviewee 9:

We have a lot of to do for females, that's for sure. I think we had a very good start with the International Women's week that we've done. I think that was a very nice kickoff. And I think that was a very big change already for design hotels. I think as an organization, we need to work more with women, and maybe we need to do some workshop. I was actually thinking about a workshop that can help them working on their branding.

Chiara:

Yeah, it's about giving the people the tools right to be able to work on it!

Interviewee 9:

It's about triggering them about their personal branding. It's, it's really about triggering. For me you have been that trigger. When we started talking about the subject together, that started triggering. There needs to be somebody who questioning them. People just put their product on the market without having any idea, you know, just waiting for people to actually be interested in the product but then the product is not being sold very well. And they start asking themselves and thinking about what my product is and how I can position the product. So, I think, to help women, we need to make sure that their brand matches with their vision. And if they don't have a vision, then we need to work with them on their vision first!

Chiara:

Yeah, absolutely. I agree. Thank you so much for all your insights and for sharing your opinion with me!

Interviewee 9:

Of course! Thank you for bringing up this important topic! Actually, I think what would be great is that once you finish with all of that, it would be wonderful if we could organize, you know, an overview of your research and you know, because I think that could be a very nice trigger for our females within design hotels, you know, to start thinking about it.

Chiara:

For sure!!

Interviewee 9:

I would love that and hopefully I speak to you very soon.

Interviewee 10

Chiara:

Hello, thank you for doing the interview with me! Do you mind if I record the interview for my thesis and use it for Data analysis?

Interviewee 10:

That is fine with me. Can and you remind me of the specific topic again?

Chiara:

Its personal branding. The way I define it in my thesis is that you are able to influence the perception of others, haven't you like a bit of impression management in that way. And there is a process with three different steps, which is brand identity, like thinking about how you want to be perceived, then brand positioning, the way you self-present yourself and your personal brand image, which is then the final reflection on how you are actually perceived by others. It is the difference between your identity and the actual perception by others. And I researched that linked with gender roles and self-esteem. So, I came across that women's self-esteem is diminished. And that's why they don't always go for these leadership positions, right. And this is due to this gender stereotyping and gender roles, which are not actually the case, but sometimes, you know, just happening in our heads, which prevent us from getting there. And then I thought, okay, my personal branding might be the tool for us to, you know, get a bit ahead in our careers. And these are also the topics I'm going to ask you a few questions about and just to hear your opinion.

Interviewee 10:

yeah, don't expect me to be too strategic on the stock. If you're, if you're interested in like, genuine code review, I think I can share some thoughts.

Chiara:

All right, we have, like actually want to start asking you like, why do you think women are underrepresented in managerial positions?

Interviewee 10:

Very good and big question. I actually do think, and I agree with many, many of these. I think connected to the topic, the kind of overall perception towards women and maybe expectations towards women in this society, which has changed a lot in the last few years, but in general is still very much rooted in certain role play, which is quiet fixed in, in many in many societies. And I have actually lived in at least four different cultures. And it's truly not four of them with different degrees of, of stereotyping, but the role play, I think is less than connected to

particular titles or the status, it's a little bit more connected to this topic of femininity versus assertiveness, and how the gender dynamics work between we're in the professional context where women are quite sensitive towards how they're being perceived. And in general, we're thinking think more about that and reflect more about that. And, since there, since a certain perception of a very firm, and the more assertive styles very, very quickly, or shifts to be perceived as aggressive towards women, I think, over a year or less, and I thought they would think that it happens intentionally. It just happens like that, that over the years, you adapt your communication style to fit those role expectations and the gender expectations. At the same time, the business context, when things get more senior at or bigger in terms of the scale, for example, or the level of responsibilities, that kind of business contacts, really requires major clarity in communications, but also service mass and the ability to really fight for your position and your opinion. And that is true to most of the organization's it doesn't even matter. Most of the times what kind of organizational culture is in place. It just tends to happen that way and it's also pretty normal that in many organizations to, to, to, in order to kind of get to a certain scale, you have to be able to communicate not only clearly, but also really convince others. So, there is this conflict between being perceived as aggressive versus needed to be assertive, not necessarily aggressive, but assertive, but the terms are very close to each other when it comes to women's perception. And I think most of us don't like the open conflict within the professional environment, and very often, it's actually a good thing and a constructive thing that leads to your position being a little bit stronger. And, and it just makes it a little bit hard to actually keep that communication style, which is expected of a leader. So that's, that's my view on that.

Chiara:

Yeah, it's like the leadership style does not match the femininity of women?

Interviewee 10:

Yes. And also, just think, because of the whole social construct is working a little bit against that. There also not many tools for women to be able to develop that style, what are those in there, in the male context, it's very often much more common, even within the school environment or university environment where there are more contextual situations for men to actually roleplay that, that kind of competition and that kind of, let's call it professional, constructive fight, right? In the in the female citation, it's very rarely possible within the educational context. And then it kind of continues in their professional circles, in the same direction.

Chiara:

Do you think that because of that women have lower self-esteem? Or do you think that self-esteem also plays in factor in this leadership role and under representation of women?

Interviewee 10:

It won't be not necessarily the cause of that, I think that there, it's a very deep, deep topic, it's kind of very culturally rooted in how things have been developing for centuries, right? So, but what I think does happen now a lot to us, as, as you're progressing, as in your career, and as you, for example, start a little bit, decide for yourself, to what level of firmness or assertiveness you're, you can handle as a character. It's kind of like self-perpetuates a little bit. Because if you're a little bit like hitting the wall, and if you're not prepared to go, this kind of extra mile on being stronger in your communications, and I'm purely talking about style, right, I'm not talking about the characters or in your style, if you're not prepared to speak or know how to play that game, kind of somewhere early in your career, as I think you can have quite a few setbacks and this feeling that that there is a mild dominance in your professional environment. And then as the years kind of pass by, it almost becomes the norm. And you stop challenging that. Of course, it's you know, a little bit different than America's for example, but, but a little bit, still a little bit everywhere, it's a little bit like that the early Korea years affect by Supreme, how you perceive yourself professionally, pretty much for the rest of your career. And in those early years, you're not only been taught to be more clear and stronger in your communications, because it's not really part of education. Neither you are kind of experienced enough to be able to express yourself in a certain way. So, there is a kind of a combination of age and lack of education on there on what's acceptable from a from a communications perspective. So, in the in, in the female context, which I think the combination of the two just make it probably creates a lot of a lot of uncertainty and self-doubt in a very early years of professional development.

Chiara:

And this continues then.

Interviewee 10:

It continues because you start proceeding their context around you as another As opposed to perceive it as something that you might be able to change.

Chiara:

Absolutely. I agree. Super nice insight. Have you heard about personal branding before? Or what is your first thought it?

Interviewee 10:

I come from Branding experience and expertise, right. So, I've spent over 10 years in branding consultancies and in that context, where we typically apply all the same principles towards brands and towards particular brand or communication, challenge or business challenge. But the same principle, the same approach can certainly apply to humans, to personalities. So, I know we talked quite well. I also know that in a way, it's it can be perceived in different ways, because it sets across several different disciplines. So, it can sit classically in PR, but at the same time, it has kind of flags to the creative image or creative direction, in the styling in fashion. So, it's, a much bigger term, depending on kind of which angle you take on.

Chiara:

Yeah. During my research, I also became aware that personal branding is now recently becoming more important, and people start doing it and start taking actually care about their personal brand. Why do you think it is becoming increasingly important?

Interviewee 10:

I think because everyone feels a huge pressure with social media, but also general professional development of expressing ourselves in a much more structured way. And because there are tools, and also because there are all sorts of big, let's be go small, doesn't matter. All sorts of new opportunities connected to that. So are the mediums exploded through social media, all the tools have exploded, but also the pressure towards every one of us. But especially, let's say like, the more senior you get, the higher the pressure is to represent something, someone.

Chiara:

Are you consciously aware about your personal brand? Like, do you consciously take care of it?

Interviewee 10:

So yeah, great question. I think I am aware, for sure, I am not the type who is strategically planning it or strategically or cautiously spending a lot of time thinking about that. And this is, this is because for me, my identity, and especially my professional, also, the entity, for me, personally, is very closely connected to the relationship that I built with direct people I work with. And for me, this is the definition of the professional success. And also, the definition of the main kind of opportunities you have as a person in the professional career is, by it is how you connect to the closest people around you in a professional context. And because this is something that can be influenced, because everything is communication, right? And you think

about it, but it's also something that just requires a very open and genuine dialogue. And since I value that over, the kind of more externally much that for example, seats on either social media or seats in some kind of better, I don't know, General media perception. I pay less attention to the letter, and I invest more time in very close, direct relationship with people around me. So, you probably wouldn't be able to call it personal branding. But, but it's at least the perspective on the personal brand and I agree left which is very dear today. Very, very physical. All very, very people related and always image related to.

Chiara:

I agree self-presentation is a way not only online. It's also within a company and how you like to connect with people and this relationship building? What do you think? What advantages does personal branding? Like, hold for women? Like, how can they benefit from it.

Interviewee 10:

I mean, a good self-presentation is something that in the modern world helps you to stand out. And this is because of our attention span being very short these days. So, for example, if I hire someone I have just making it up, right. But as an example, my day has two minutes to read through the CV. And then I have another 30 minutes to talk to the person and to even talk to the person, I would go through a few very quick screening sorts of exercises. So, let's say it's a league team, let's say some kind of a short summary of who you are, right? So are there, there are many, many tools now that can help you tell the story on one side, and on another side, there is less and less time, let's say the hiring context. And the same goes to partnerships, right? If we look for the partners, it's a little bit of a say more of some sort of a new people around on new stories and new ideas around the time you have for digesting and making the decision has shrunk to a very minimum time, and you have to make a decision very quickly. So, in that context, some sort of a clear, let's say, a clear statement about who you are, which is consistent both visually, and from a narrative perspective, I think helps massively. Whether this is good for the society in general or not, this is a different question, because I think it can also be very, very misleading, from overall identity perspective, because the topic of identity is much bigger than that.

Chiara:

I agree. So, what makes a strong personal brand, if you need to highlight a few things?

Interviewee 10:

I think it's an ability to tell a clear story. Both spatially and from a narrative perspective. So, the narrative has a visual layer, but also there, the language layer in the committed way, right? So, for me, it's much more about if I asked you, what sort of values you live by on a daily

basis? Are you able to answer that question immediately or not? That is, that's kind of, let's say that that would be an amazing idea of a good personal brand, because it's not about the style, it's not about where you like to go on holidays, all of that can be part of your system for shorter, because you make decisions. I'm more interested to hear, oh, some kind of a capture of what you say you feel yourself, what do you think yourself is important about you articulated in a clear way. And that kind of exercise I think is extremely helpful, both for the self-development and career development and communications in general, you know, finding job process, and all like accelerated in your career, right. But it kind of installs deeper questions and help you figure out how to touch on the things that are true to yourself in the, in a clear communication style, which hopefully is more than just a sentence. It's a little bit richer than that. But something like that would be a great way to go about it.

Chiara:

Would you also say that's the initial step when it comes to personal branding, that you think about yourself as a way of summary and think about, you know, how can I communicate in a very short sentence with my unique traits?

Interviewee 10:

I think it's a way or I think it's one of the ways yours sore and I hate to bring the startup metaphor into that but still at the end of the day, it comes down to what's your elevator pitch right. So, or if in the context of startup incubator pH is three minutes where you are with someone in an elevator and you have to explain that idea. And the moment you reach your floor, that person gets the idea and, and accepted and gets excited or leave the elevator and like you'll ever meet him or her again, right. So, in the constant context of the personal brand, it should be similar thing, it's much more complex, because we are talking about identity, but it shouldn't be or a similar helpful aspect of that is, is if at the end of this process, you arrived at a statement, which can be verbal, but it can be anything else, it can be a mood board, it can be a book, it can be an object, right? Like, I think the medium can be very different, that somehow helps you represent yourself to the world, right? So that's the essence of it.

Chiara:

What would you advise females or young women, even what they can do with their self-presentation?

Interviewee 10:

It depends a little bit on the context. Of course, everything is concept contextual. But I think in a near especially new, professional context, maybe let's say we talk about professional contexts in general, to, to seek opportunities where you can talk about what you stand for, or

what you care about, on a slightly deeper level. So, for example, there is a certain experience, professional experience, you went through, for example, some internships, or some education, or travel experience you had, etc. But very often, and it's also how the systems designed at the moment, it's not very easy to again, just to get back to a nice example of an interview process, it's not very easy to actually or find the moment to share that in a way that is not, for example, either not intrusive, or is not kind of come in Come in, and we're coming up in a weird way. So, some kind of a letter of statement, for example, house, which can be verbal, it can be written, it doesn't matter. But finding opportunities within this process, where you are one out of hundreds of people or 1000s of people, where you can talk a little bit deeper about who you are, and why you are interested in certain things and kind of bring it out the question of why more than awesome land once you did, but why you do certain things. Because that kind of process helps you gain also more confidence in with your own decisions. And talk about your experience in a way that's really unique to you. And not in a way that is kind of stereotyped by the society, for example. So, let's say if you have a particular travel experience, that is this has influenced your why have you chosen that experience? And what exactly happened? And why do you feel that it's a significant? It was a significant treat for you? So, answering that question actually will tell me much more about who you are on a much deeper level than looking at your skills, which, you know, might be relevant, but another 200 people will say the same, right, and, and so, yeah, finding those opportunities to actually share those personal stories is not very easy act in the professional. This is also there the problem of the system, and how we currently are kind of operating, for example, in the hiring construct. And I think the personal branding exercise, can kind of help disrupt that a little bit. And can help stand out in a more authentic and genuine way.

Chiara:

Yeah, absolutely. Like it's a very interesting because when I think about my CV, it also has like this skills where I say, whatever well organized or creative, but in the end, right, there are so many other people writing it, how would you know that it's true, but telling you about a personal experience and sharing that with someone that interviews you and giving them insight in you know, how you work a bit and how you see things and what's your perspective, super interesting thought maybe I should do that for my next application.

Interviewee 10:

I mean, if for example, if you say that creative thinking is, was in your skills that and make that CV, feeling creative, right? You can probably be doing things as opposed to saying things or bring it into this context, something that proves that you are retell that story in a in a more

authentic way. That's the notion of branding in general. And the, for any brand, any company or organization, it's the same challenge. But exactly the same applies to, to a person or a group of people.

Chiara:

Very interesting. Do you think about how you are perceived by others? And do you ask about feedback? Like, do you wonder how you are perceived?

Interviewee 10:

Yes, I try to do so, and I have worked in many different professional scenarios, in some, in some content, some environments, it's a very constructive and very transparent process, which is very beautiful, and actually extremely helpful. In other cultures, and other environments. It's less open, and it's a bit more scripted. Let's put it that way. And, and, and hopefully, it will change also over time, I think it is already changing, I think, actually, or a more human relationship at work, becoming, or has become the norm. And there are less structures and less hierarchies and things like that. So where possible, yeah, I will try to get the feedback and, and improve, that connects less to the personal brand in question. It's a bit more about the self-development. And they are there, of course, adjustments, and it's very close to each other questions, but self-development in the sense that, you know, it's only interesting if you kind of moving and keep evolving as a character. So, for me, the feedback helps more from that perspective, as opposed to the perception. Whether II do think a lot of how I am perceived. I do think this is also very female feature in general thinking contextually. So, we do tend to pay attention to the context on a more holistic level. And the perception of others within that context is just kind of one of their one of the ways they're absolutely I do I do, I think I do think, and at least at least pay attention for sure how certain things are being perceived. And I also know there the power of both the language and the style, that that that I guess I choose to apply in certain contexts, I am very aware of what kind of language style and tonality is, is appropriate in what kind of context whether it's directly connected to personal branding, or it's more connected to just communications being, you know, part of my role anyhow, so it's a bit blurred in this case, because I'm actually managing communications right.

Chiara:

Yeah, but it was like personal branding is ready to your personal brand is you and this all goes into it. Right? So, I think it's relevant. And as I'm researching us a lot about you know, the self-esteem of women we're like, what are you doing to feel more self-assured and more confident?

Interviewee 10:

Well, I like I like they took me it took me some years. But I like provoking disordered conflict in the male context, because I'm used to be in the male context professional year, almost constantly. And I, I kind of, I had to build a dialogue with a much more senior colleagues of mine in the past, the dialogue that will be based on website, you know, serious intellectual challenges or soon His business challenges, which we were facing. And that was also lucky enough to actually be in that context very early in my career. So, I think I'm over the exception in that case, because I was, for some, for some, for some reason. So, in the context of very challenging professional cetaceans where you have to react very, very fast. And in order to do that, you have to simulate a very open dialogue, no matter who is around you, and kind of arrive to the decision, and you have to, you have two choices, you can either avoid that dialogue, and the decision was sort of kind of made in a silent glory way, or you have to face it, and you have to really bring it out. And, and they had to do a lot of that to kind of gain their voice in the room. As a man, it just becomes a habit of actually doing that. So, when you're, you might be perceived a little bit over rebel, which, which I like, and I'm very, very, very much okay with that. And I kind of I did a lot because of that, because I wasn't really afraid to be perceived as a little bit crazy, a little bit of a rebel I was to be what helped me in the movies for a lot of the closed systems and a lot of cross cultures as well. But so that's one, that's one kind of tool. But there are many, there are really many, I think you prepare, twice, usually, then your male colleagues. And you actually are, you know, you're very often much more thorough, and much more much, you have to go deeper, and you have to prepare for more different scenarios to be able to react faster, I say, because we can also reflect more. So, when we are, let's say in this situation of I don't know, just some sort of a boardroom doesn't matter where and how, and you have to react fast. It's harder for us to do that, because we think more holistically about the problem. So, the only way to do that is really are you either structure the process so that you are able to take time and then come back. If you're already in a position of power, if you can structure the process, if you're not able to affect the process, then you have to prepare several times more than the rest of the team, because then you're ready to have scenarios planned in your mind. And then you can react as fast as everyone else. Yeah. That's, that's another one.

Chiara:

I agree. It's a lot about like being prepared for different situation, and then not having this time to think about what I'm going to say but being like, you know, stepping in and then being heard. I absolutely agree, I think they will also boost my confidence.

Interviewee 10:

I can't answer that it always works. But I think the special we're in the kind of female context, it really helps to be a little bit faster and deeper. And then what also that kind of creates, in a way you doing more work, but it also creates certain habits and work ethics, but you also learn, right? So, you if you do that constantly, you also learn a lot more and more. So, then kind of with yours, you just bring it back or you bring it into their different context, based on all the whole work that you've done in the past. So initially, it seems like an extra effort compared to maybe other people around you, especially if you're like in a challenging professional context, for example. But then over time, you are you're much more intuitive about certain processes and decisions because you've done more work in the past than some other people around you.

Chiara:

Absolutely. And my actual final question is like, just to summarize what I'm researching, do you believe that personal branding affects self-esteem in a positive way and can act upon gender roles or gender expectations for women?

Interviewee 10:

I do! I think as long as the exercise of arriving to some kind of a definition of your personal brand, is holistic enough, and really are taking into consideration a kind of a more scientific approach to who you are, as opposed to, this is what the world wants me to be, or this is what this job needs me to be, or this is what this company wants to hear, it kind of has to start from you. And it has to start from your own unique yourself and personal branding process should help articulate it, it shouldn't replace it, right, it shouldn't, it shouldn't create some kind of an external layer of perfection, or something else, which happens a lot with social media. And now, for example, where people were really falling into a pretty serious, serious mental issues, because the picture itself is not exactly their selves, and their tool lifestyles are quite far from what's on Instagram. So personal brands, and if you if you decide to take it more, more kind of more serious as a process, I think could really, really help as long as you are able people who help you do that, or tools, exercises that help you do that are able to help articulate their authentic side of you and help you articulate, feel confident and find ways to express those things that are already within you. Not some kind of external things which feel right, but not exactly who you are.

Chiara:

Thank you so much for this interview. And I think you answered everything that I wanted to know and more. It's super interesting that I have the opportunity to talk with, you know, like,

women from working for design hotels, and you know, have to gain insights into personal branding and their personal branding, and you know, how they see it and what he can do. So it's going to be a lot of work putting it all together. But it's really nice, because there's so many different viewpoints on it.

Interviewee 10:

So, it's really interesting, good to hear. And it's a complex topic. but it's exciting.

Chiara:

Really exciting. Do you have any questions for me?

Interviewee 10:

Oh, that's really, I'd love to read this as well. It's writing. And, and just, you know, there, I think the topic is, I think there's a because very timely with, especially their social media, and maybe my only recommendation would be here to, to really, to really find the way how you connect the top the topic of social media to this topic, because it's impossible at the moment to separate the two. And so, I would, I would not avoid the topic of the pressure that's created, but also the opportunities that have been created with social media for women for social media as a layer as a tool, right as a as a main tool of their of the personal branding as well. So that's the touch on that somehow and find your point of view on that.

Chiara:

Yeah, that's true. But it's very funny as well, because so many people are like, Oh, no, I really don't. I really don't like to use social media for career purposes or to get ahead. And like, you know, maybe it's not the generation for it or so many other things. But I absolutely agree. I think it has a lot of opportunities. Because everything I do is when we have a journalist writing something. First thing is I'm googling him trying to find his LinkedIn and saying to Rosie, if it's good or not good or whatever. So yeah, it's so much about his first impression, and that's through media and the internet. Well, so I'm not keeping you occupied them anymore. Thank you for your time.

11.7 Colour coding tables for data reduction

Research Elements	Self-Esteem	
	Gender Roles	
	Personal Branding	
Personal Branding Process	Personal Brand Identity	
	Personal Brand Positioning	
	Personal Brand Image	

Independent Variable - Gender Roles	
Underrepresentation of women	
Interviewee 5: So, it was kind of like putting these women at a disadvantage, who were you know, having families as well, it just like, those are the years you're supposed to really get ahead. And it just like doesn't didn't line up in those companies, if that makes sense. **Interviewee 2:** It's something that's left over from an old mentality that is still very dominant. It's still from a structure and mindset from many, many years ago. And which had to do with the fact that those women were the ones to maintain the family, and men were the ones to take care of the family from a financial point of view. **Interviewee 8:** women were probably more committed to starting families and staying at home, and, and maybe not, you know, taking a serious career path forward. And that may have set us back a little bit. **Interviewee 4:** I think it's all related to stereotypes and that self-esteem is the boundary here. So, women maybe not being confident and maybe they always feel that they need to kind of prove that somehow in front of their male audience **Interviewee 1:** But I think that there's a lot of imposter syndrome within with women in the workplace. And I think that it's, it kind of feels like you're put in a position where you've got to choose between having a family or having a career or have and having a successful career, which for so many people mean being the boss. And I think that there's also that that, that we kind of need to dispel. It's like what is success to you? Is success, having a good steady income? Having a happy family? And if you want, having children and feeling financially comfortable, or his success being the boss,	**Interviewee 9:** From the female's perspective, comes a point in our life where women decide to have a family. And then we make a lot of compromises with regards to our career because we obviously have a different role, you know, suddenly coming up with having children. Women are not necessarily requesting support from their partners, and therefore, we make some compromises on our career From the male's perspective, there has been in the past a lot of discrimination in my generation, for women, because they knew that a woman at some stage where she gets pregnant and then there's a risk for the business. And as a natural outcome, then obviously, males are much more represented in the manager positions. **Interviewee 3:** I think it's a mixture of things. I think it's hard to break into positions that are traditionally dominated by men anyway. And even if you think and know that there's no logical reason for any job to be overrepresented by men, that can still kind of subconsciously hold you back from pursuing positions in that area. So, I guess, if you see, only men and only male role models examples in managerial roles. As much as you know that you can do that job and you're suited for it, and you have the right qualifications. There's always that kind of, I guess, subliminal obstacle or boundary. In your mind. I mean, no one wants to be the only person like them in the room. So, I think that can hold people back as well. There's the whole issue of career and family as well. **Interviewee 7:** I think that's a systemic issue. Obviously, when we speak about the female experience in this, there's also many lenses, you know, cultural, socio economic, I think the main issue is, is one that's kind of old fashioned and rooted in childcare and all these topics.

being the CEO, and having as more money than you need? And then if it is that the second one, then how do you get to that? Yeah, I think women, for us it feels that we have to make a choice. Whereas for our male counterparts, they don't necessarily have to make that choice. They're not the one bearing children, their body, and their mind isn't being impacted by giving birth	And I think that that workforce has not caught up with the societal evolution of women. **Interviewee 6:** The answer is not a simple one, because it's probably a combination of of both political socio economic as well as family and personal influences. **So speaking there are external factors and then at the same time, I also realised that there's definitely an internal element** **Interviewee 10:** I think connected to the topic, the kind of overall perception towards women and maybe expectations towards women in this society, which has changed a lot in the last few years, but in general it is still very much rooted in certain role play, which is, quite fixed in, in many in many societies.
Gendered expectations	
Interviewee 5: Working internally, I haven't really encountered as many of these problems but working with clients, I certainly have, and I think there's a problem. I had some male clients who certainly did not take me seriously. I feel like we *(women)* have to try harder to be pleasant **Interviewee 3:** She was very aggressive, very bossy, very assertive. And I think it was her way of reining all the men in and showing them that she was the boss. But I guess, for most women, that would kind of be like a defense mechanism. It would be kind of like the obvious route to go. It depends on the industry, but I think that women act a bit bossier in a way and take on this “role” in order to be respected. **Interviewee 8:** I wouldn't say I feel like I'm forced to act a certain way,. Personally, I just think that men and women are very different in general, but also in the workplace, we can	**Interviewee 9:** When I went back to work it was extremely difficult for me to be able to position myself and continuing my roles as a mother and as a wife. And then in addition, having a career. You are playing with all that guilt thing, because you want to be perfect everywhere. So, you don't want to share to your employer that you are a mother, and you have no problem at home, because you want to prove even more than anybody else that you can be successful, you know. And at the same time, as a mother you don't really want to show the impact that has the working on these two roles. Because you want to justify the fact that you can still have a career. **Interviewee 3:** **“There are so many unspoken expectations. Even if you don't believe in those expectations, they're always at the back of your mind and they do tend to eat your self-esteem, especially if you're a woman and you have all of these kinds of external voices always well telling you that it's not feminine to behave that way or to think that way.”**

be quite different in our approach. That's a total generalization. But you know, women tend to be more high on the emotional quotient, which I think was not as important a few decades ago, but in our time today, having a very high EQ is the most important elements of a good leader. **Interviewee 1:** There are sometimes those perceptions. **Especially when you are a mother**. There have been so many moments in my life where I was expected to behave, act or do things or actually don't do things because I am a mother. **Interviewee 7:** That that is in the workplace, I mean, that extends to all touch points. I think that being a female in our society currently, in my career, **I've come up against it (gendered expectations) the whole time**, it's been a very, not necessarily a visible presence, but something always felt Oh, he's known in different forms. It's taken different forms in different roles and from different people. **But it's something that's been a constant in my career.**	**Interviewee 4:** I can't remember if that ever happened. Probably that was nothing, like, serious or right to be concerned about. So, I can't really relate with that. But I know know other women that feel like it! I think my role as an assistant in the company makes this miss understanding. It is more related to my role that I need to prove that it's not only scheduling your boss calendar, right? I'm having a little bit different experience. **Interviewee 6:** Yes I have, but it all comes down to how you respond to these expectations. So, I definitely have experienced biases, and prejudice and stereotypes. So, the way the choose to respond to these biases and in these situations is as a human, not as a woman. **Interviewee 10:** it's a little bit more connected to this topic of femininity versus assertiveness, and how the gender dynamics work between we're in the professional context where women are quite sensitive towards how they're being perceived. … in order to kind of get to a certain scale, you have to be able to communicate not only clearly, but also really convince others.
Gender Norms as self-fulfilling behaviour	
Interviewee 5: Women tend to be plagued more with imposter syndrome. And maybe that why we don't feel like we've earned the respect **Interviewee 2:** Many women still feel like they're not being taken seriously. So they won't take that step. And also, women have to be much louder than men to get themselves in that position. **Interviewee 8:** women tend to doubt themselves sometimes and again, total generalization. But we do suffer a lot from, you know, just sort of being more critical of ourselves and not being as brave, perhaps as some men are in terms of our ability. You know, we've got	**Interviewee 3:** I felt like in the past if a woman takes that approach and is vocal about her personal branding and her talents and you know, the various things she can do when and her potential, it's often received in like, an arrogant way. And if a man does it, it's not even received as Oh, he's confident it's just normal, like it's normal to do it. Whereas, if a woman does it, it's almost like, Oh, she's boasting, or she's really aggressive, or she's overly ambitious. **Interviewee 4:** I was just thinking maybe sometimes at the workplace, it's not only men and females, and the stereotypes around them, but also the titles, because I know, in the company, a

this imposter syndrome that men get as well, but we're probably more more closely connected to it. And, and then finally, I think personally, as women, we have to stop thinking about the workforce of women and men, and we just have to think about leadership and, and doing the right thing. **Interviewee 7:** I think, a structural limitation that sometimes can be perceived, I've also used it to actually challenge the system, like, I've also used it as a motivating force. So knowing that it's there is your first or my first tactic in not only entering the system, but navigating it to my benefit, and to my advantage. So once you know how it's there, and how it works, there are still the forces of limitation within it, for sure, but I think once you see it more clearly, then you're able to, to kind of break it down a little bit better, and to challenge it.	few cases where, where you would think that that person, the woman is really skilled and knowledge, but maybe the boundaries sometimes as the **title**. It could be two things because you have this mindset stereotype in your head and the other thing probably is just lack of confidence and knowledge on certain stations and probably you are just afraid to do a mistake **Interviewee 10**: So there is a kind of a combination of age and lack of education on there on what's acceptable from a from a communications perspective. So in the in, in the female context, which I think the combination of the two just make it probably creates a lot of a lot of uncertainty and self doubt in a very early years of professional development.

Self-Esteem	
Participants Confidence	
Interviewee 5: I would say it definitely increased throughout my career. And I think that freelancing has helped me to increase my confidence. So, running my own freelancing business definitely made me much more confident in work scenarios, because I was able to understand people, I was much more aware in these situations that when somebody hired me, they were hiring me to be an expert. **I think it's a lot harder to speak up if you're just one of the many people at the table. But if you are the expert that they brought in, and you're the one it's a lot easier, I think, to Yeah, to feel confident.** **Interviewee 2:** **And I think this also has to do with the fact that we're, we constantly have to prove ourselves much more, we feel like when we do something wrong, the consequences are way harder than when the men did something wrong, you know, so, definitely, self-esteem is lower.** **But generally, much more women have lower self-esteem and confidence.** **Interviewee 8:** I have a lot of moments where I'm not confident. **So, the confidence has to come from knowing your stuff. And being and being prepared for things to go in a different direction** **Justina:** It does diminish my self-esteem in a way if people are only seeing me as the Assistant. **Interviewee 7:** **I'm getting there. I mean, that's always a work in progress**. I don't know if age is a factor in your studies. But I would say this came to me in my you know, in my later 30s, and 40s, this sort of equilibrium and balance and Being a better advocate for myself has come the latest stages of my current career. And something that I would	**Interviewee 9:** Super critical! You know, the most interesting things was when he gave me the results of the 360-degree Feedback and asked me What do you think? The gap was huge between how I rated myself and how the others rated me. At this point I need to say that they gave me amazing feedback and I dramatically downgraded by capabilities and my skills. And when I saw the results I said to him: “I am scared, they have a totally different picture of who I am actually! “And he just said to me, when are you going to learn that it`s you having a problem with your own picture. So, this was really an eye-opening moment! **Interviewee 3:** **And I do think it does take a lot of confidence to start to think that way, and a lot of self belief, because we've always kind of listened to our inner voice that even if we've done a lot and we deserve a lot and we've worked hard, we still managed to somehow do diminish our own achievements you know we tend to minimize them or compare ourselves to other people so think to get to a place where you can kind of confidently and efficiently summaries what you're about it does it doesn't just tap in like that it's not i don't think you know unless you're supremely confident it does take a lot of work to be able to start to think of yourself as a person that is worthy of time and good pay** **ELLA ON MALE DOMINATED INDUSTRIES** **Interviewee 6:** This is entirely an internal monologue that is going on about our confidence and how confident are we in ourselves, and I don't think this pertains necessarily to women or men, although there are genuinely differences in the levels of self-esteem. I think that's no secret. But, and I can't say that internally, I'm originally very confident

have liked to have more tools to access earlier in my career. I think what also helped my confidence is not been taking everything so personally, I mean, this is another thing whether it's a gender trade or whatever, but um, separating kind of my personal self from the work was also an element of Um, that helped me kind of preserve my personal brand, my personal values and feelings, while also being able to kind of thrive in a in a corporate setting.	person. But I've trained myself to believe in myself because of that evidence that everything that I've actually set my mind to, once I've been clear on what I want to do, I generally just managed to manifest it, it's always worked out.
Sources of Confidence	
Interviewee 5: I think becoming confident is about putting yourself in these situations or being put in a situation where you're caught where you know that you're the expert, you're expected to be the expert. So, like, as I said, **it's a lot harder to raise your hand in a crowded room. But if you're speaking on a panel in front of that crowded room, I think it's a lot easier to feel confident in what you're saying.** **Interviewee 2:** I think that he really has a big trust in me, and I think that's also why I feel very empowered in the team. the more time I spent here and also our team in creative, a lot of feminine, very, like, strong, strong minded, creative women who definitely, you know, to keep the brand all intact very much **Interviewee 5:** So, I think that that has the potential to be a major confidence booster. And it could open up those opportunities, like the example of being the one sitting on the panel. And most importantly knowing where you are at makes you feel secure and safe because you do not to second guess yourself, so you are also more confident in the end and you can continue with your personal development. **Interviewee 9:**	**Interviewee 9:** Taking successes! That's what I always say, you need to take successes. Women don't realize how much successes we have been achieving. Because we concentrate on the thing that we haven't achieved. So, take the time regularly, to think okay, what have I achieved. **Interviewee 1:** And I'm glad to hear from other younger female colleagues that they've seen me as a role model of someone who can have a good career, who can have a family. And in terms of my self-esteem, the tricky thing is when you go and have a baby, you, you do have a little bit of an identity crisis. And you're all of a sudden, you're pulled into so many different directions **Interviewee 7:** My source of confidence that's grown over the years, aligned with my career development, my personal growth and everything. It's something I'd wished to have earlier in my career, or when I was younger, entering my career, so I could have been in clearly more defined path by me. A certain amount of that kind of confidence has to come with experience. think women in our society have modified their use of language, to not shake things up too much, and not in terms of the status quo. So, I think, for me especially being in communications, that's been my tool to use. And to get really clear and focused on my communication has helped me be better

Having this vision for yourself is a source of confidence. It makes you thrive. **Interviewee 4:** in my case, the communication with certain people how to generate knowledge and be recognized among the other department leaders.	equipped for situations where I have to proactively ask for what I need in a given circumstance.
Interviewee 3: There are so many kinds of unspoken expectations that you if you are in a male dominated environment. Even if you don't believe in those expectations, they're always at the back of your mind and they do tend to eat your self esteem But I do think when you have a lot of loud male voices, that can often be quite dismissive to women, you tend to shrink a bit. And you put so much energy into trying to be heard that it I don't know it's draining, it kind of takes away from whatever it is that you're trying to contribute. And that's a battle that I don't think many men have to deal with.	**Interviewee 10:** if you're not prepared to speak or know how to play that game, kind of somewhere early in your career, as I think you can have quite a few setbacks and this feeling that that there is a mild dominance in your professional environment. So, there is a kind of a combination of age and lack of education on there on what's acceptable from a from a communications perspective. So, in the in, in the female context, which I think the combination of the two just make it probably creates a lot of a lot of uncertainty and self-doubt in a very early years of professional development.

Personal Branding	
What is Personal Branding	
Interviewee 5: I would define it as the story you are telling about yourself, publicly. Your personal brand is you and it needs to write, develop and grow with you, **Interviewee 2:** I didn't really know that there's such a concept. I don't like the thought to create your own personality and think too much about what you want to be or what you want other people to believe that you are. **Interviewee 8:** We all do it in our life, I think it's actually something very natural. And somebody figured out that it's interesting and put a put a kind of title to it. But for me it is, it's about being your authentic self, I think when we're young, and we're not as confident at work, we kind of have this person that we're at, we are at work and a person we are at home. When it comes to the personal branding piece, it's about being somebody who is dependable somebody who, you know, people can rely on and with my team, they all know, they can come to me, you know, the door's always open, you can talk to me about anything, I care, not only about what you're doing at work, but how your life is. **Interviewee 1:** But for me, I saw my work as the place that I could be Rosina again, I wasn't a mother, I wasn't a wife. I wasn't a sister. I was I was Rosina; I was doing my job, I was doing what I really love. And after I had my son, I kind of threw myself into my work because I wanted to, and part of that was travelling, I travelled quite a lot, I travelled at least once a month, sometimes twice. I've never actually thought about it as as a concept until you shared your your slides, which I found really interesting. But I think now, if I was going to kind of map that out for myself, it would need to be authentic and honest. Because I would not want to have to pretend I wouldn't want to be.	**Interviewee 9:** Branding it is like a product. There is what is in the content, and what is in the packaging. And, and for me, what you are, your contents should always be reflected in the packaging, which is your look basically. For me, an inspiring person is not just inside it's also what comes visually across. I think transparency is key to personal branding. I think branding is also a lot about how you present yourself. For me, your look, is extremely important. For me, an inspiring person is not just inside it's also what comes visually across. **Interviewee 3:** it is how you present yourself. I've always felt like we're taught not to shout about ourselves too much like the idea of personal branding and promoting yourself in that way But I think it's, it's great, especially now, where I think no one fits in a box, like we all have so many talents that don't even relate to our day-to-day work, that if we shouted about them and talked about them, we could possibly integrate them into our day to day work. **Interviewee 4:** I'm not familiar with this term, before that I never came across it. So with the personal branding. So I think for me was the like, difference was the difference between personal branding and personal development. So what are the difference with these? So in the personal branding is really to expose yourself and show the personal interest? what you do and what you stand for, and perhaps nowadays is mainly using, like social platforms. **Interviewee 7:** **These days, when I think about personal branding, I'm thinking of all the external ways we're presenting ourselves to the world. So I think right now, that's a really dynamic lens, or multiple lenses to, to not only be seen through but to, to affect the**

	way you're seeing. So to me these days, that's, that's your CV, that's your LinkedIn, that's your social media channels. **Interviewee 6:** I have an idea. I know what personal branding is. And I know very well, the implications and the interest of it, but it's not something that I've consciously put any effort into myself. So, my first thought was that personal branding from the branding perspective is who I am. And here's my logo and my vision. This is not something that many of us do.
Importance of Personal Branding	
Interviewee 5: I mean, part of it is just is the internet. **So now that we have all these different channels we're managing, I think, it is important more than ever before. It feels that your brand should extend to who you are in your personal life.** **Interviewee 2:** Nowadays it is less about your CV and what you have achieved from educational point of view and its more about how you present yourself, also online. I think in most companies, more competitive ones, I can imagine that your success or career opportunities depend to a certain degree on the strength of your personal brand. **Interviewee 8:** It's only become sort of a topic of maybe discussion within education. But it's like we've all done it, right. We've all kind of naturally done it. We just didn't really talk about it in that way. But it is really important, especially when you work in really large organizations that people know who you are, and that you are consistent, and that they can depend on you and and that you're authentic. I mean, more than anything, that's the most critical part of whatever your personal brand is. **Interviewee 6:**	**Interviewee 9:** I think the reasons why it's more important, now, and why we talk more and more about it, is because people realize that they have a value on the market and there is the need to position themselves. **Interviewee 3:** Increasing competition on the job market. You actually need to push yourself in that way. **Interviewee 4:** So, there is a competition among the products in certain markets, So, I guess something very similar happens with personalities nowadays. So, when we talk about personal branding, think about Instagram, where you express yourself, and you build the image in your way. So, LinkedIn is the platform where you brand and promote yourself with all the achievements and skills accomplishments for the job market. But you need to keep in mind what target is. **Interviewee 1:** It is obviously become super important. The fact is that most people are just not aware about “personal branding” and the influence they can achieve with it. **Interviewee 6:** I think it's increasingly important. Just to answer your first question, maybe I think it's

And now we're in a much more individualistic and kinder of really self-aware stage where people have to, you know, disconnect a little bit from all of these external identifiers, and look to who they are. And you know, because this is, as you said, this is about how you were treated and what kind of narrative you project out there in the world? And what do you tell the world about yourself **Interviewee 10:** I think because everyone feels a huge pressure with social media, but also general professional development of expressing ourselves in a much more structured way. And because there are tools, and also because there are all sorts of big, let's be go small, doesn't matter. All sorts of new opportunities connected to that. So are the mediums exploded through social media, all the tools have exploded, but also the pressure towards every one of us. But especially, let's say like, the more senior you get, the higher the pressure is to represent something, someone.	increasingly important these days, because people are more independent and have more agency in their work life. I think, I don't know. Just a few years ago, we were all kind of belonging to a certain company or narrative. Everybody was looking to integrate into a certain narrative and then you were an employee of, you're a manager of, and you kind of identify or you hide under the umbrella of a big brand
Individuals Personal Brand	
Interviewee 5: For me it kind of started when I was creating and writing my bio for my website, and kind of positioning myself in certain ways. For sure. as a freelancer, it was really important that I am aware of my brand and that I continually work on it. **Interviewee 2:** No, I don't think I have a strong personal brand Debate through social media and everything. I don't really have a connection to it at all. I mean, of course, a bit but never really gave it too much thought. **Interviewee 1:** I've always had this very outspoken, quite strong will. And actually, that's meant that as a working mother, I've maintained that part of my personality, that's very. And so	**Interviewee 9:** It was very interesting here, because it was at the same time very new to me. But at the same time, this is something that without knowing about it, I always worked on. So it was kind of a unconscious positioning and personal branding. I think I always wanted to be an inspiring female leader. **Interviewee 3:** I never really had that belief in myself. But I'm more aware of my personal brand now, as you call it, and what I can contribute, and what how I would like to see myself as opposed to how people see me **Interviewee 4:** I'm more focused on personal development, rather than branding. **Interviewee 7:** I do. And more consciously now that you turn to it, or you've put this umbrella to it.

I'm able to stand up to myself to these people. But also for me, that is that side of me, the biracial side, the British side, especially being in Berlin, also very much part of who I am, and how I see myself and how I want other people to see me. And that I like that of my personal branding is also really important. **Interviewee 10:** I pay less attention to the letter (online branding), and I invest more time in very close, direct relationship with people around me	But I can see now that it's something that I've been quite concerned with. And I can see that it's a powerful tool to use, both personally and professionally. **Interviewee 10:** I am aware, for sure, I am not the type who is strategically planning it or strategically or cautiously spending a lot of time thinking about that. And this is, this is because for me, my identity, and especially my professional, also, the entity, for me, personally, is very closely connected to the relationship that I built with direct people I work with. And for me, this is the definition of the professional success. And also the definition of the main kind of opportunities you have as a person in the professional career is, by it is how you connect to the closest people around you in a professional context. And because this is something that can be influenced, because everything is communication, right? And you think about it, but it's also something that just requires a very open and genuine dialogue.
Strong Personal Brand	
Interviewee 5: The secret is or the key that is making it clear. We humans are much more complex than that. And sometimes you have to change your approach, like maybe, you know, there's a time at which my personal brand was a digital nomad. As like part of that whole bundle, which, like I no longer am so you need to adapt your brand. I think it is really important to force it to be quite clear what your values are **Interviewee 2:** I think you need to view branding in a sense that you stand for something very strong and that can bring you very much to the top. **Interviewee 8:** But it is really important, especially when you work in really large organizations that people know who you are, and that you are consistent, and that they can depend on you and and that you're authentic. I mean, more than anything, that's the most critical part of whatever your personal brand is	**Interviewee 9:** It is the belief in some very specific values. It's being harnessed about ourselves as well. It's about being confident of who we are. For me that is the key to a strong personal branding. **Interviewee 3:** **I think being brave enough to recognize that sometimes its strangest and most eccentric and non-conformist element of yourself that make you exciting. And being brave enough to embrace those elements of yourself and share them and to be proud of them and to don't be embarrassed about any part of you that does not fit into a box.** And yeah not allowing yourself just to be you and allowing yourself to present the real you to everyone else. **Interviewee 4:** I **think a strong personal brand leads back how you communicate with others. Because through communication people get to know you and know who you are.**

Interviewee 7: **The key to a strong personal brand for me is to be clear about yourself! and your personal narrative.**	**So, I would say that a strong communication makes a strong personal brand. In that sense it is also important to distinguish between online and offline personal branding and communication.**
Personal Branding Process	
Interviewee 5: **I think the beauty of the personal brand, is that you get to make it up yourself. So instead of a world where you're constantly being defined or where people are putting you in a box, or assuming they know who you are, this is your opportunity to decide who you want to be and how you want to present yourself.** **Interviewee 2:** So Personal Branding alone does not bring you to the top. There needs to be some support from the organization as well. **Interviewee 8:** That is a good question! A lot of things I would say. **The way I see personal branding women have a greater chance to Be seen. By clearly communicate their value to their audience they will be recognized which automatically puts them ahead in their professional life.** Within that it is important to build an authentic presence, meaning being your authentic self. And **being authentic will allow women to build these relationships, gain trust and make this connection with other people that might open new doors to new opportunities**	**Interviewee 9:** I think women from a very young age onwards need to work on their personal branding, because that gives them that confidence to know who they are, and how they can position themselves on the market. **Interviewee 4:** In the end, it all comes into like self-confidence, self -esteem. So, I think just to stay true to yourself and believe in yourself is the biggest outcome that should be out of that **Interviewee 1:** Educating people like you did! Just showing us what personal branding is and all of a sudden people are more aware about and, and they start thinking about it! And I think more has to be done for returning women from maternity leave. **Interviewee 6:** And that changes a lot. And I myself have to shake things off. Every now and then, and, and realise that I'm not the same person that I was five years ago, and maybe I don't want to work in the same way that I wanted in. And this just constant self update. And then kind of Yeah, just checking in with, with who you are, what's important to you, and how you want the world to see you. And then lead with that and be very clear, and not proclaiming, you know, this is my personal brand, but just be very subtly aware and consistent. And authentic. I mean, I hate this word authenticity, because it's just so cliche now, but just consistent, I think is a good word of, you know, whatever you do, it has to kind of align with what you what you believe in.
General Benefits of Personal Branding	
Interviewee 5:	**Interviewee 3.**

So, I think that that has the potential to be a major confidence booster. And it could open up those opportunities, like the example of being the one sitting on the panel. It gives you the opportunity to elevate yourself **Interviewee 2:** **you need to view branding in a sense that you stand for something very strong and that can bring you very much to the top** **Interviewee 7:** **I think, it is empowering women. To take ownership of them and their personal branding, and I think if you give up that ownership, you're allowing someone else to kind of write that narrative for you. I think you absolutely need to do it** **in these days, you need to take ownership of that. And I think the more you do, the clearer you get with yourself.**	**I think it's, it's great, especially now, where I think no one fits in a box, like we all have so many talents that don't even relate to our day-to-day work, that if we shouted about them and talked about them, we could possibly integrate them into our day to day work.** **Interviewee 1:** Within an incredibly competitive place a strong personal brand can be of a real advantage., I was lucky to find my way within that. And that experience that I can bring to Berlin, it sets me quite apart from a lot of other people. And that has always kind of helped me, I think. **Interviewee 7:** **the benefit is in that exercise of really thinking about what it is finding that language, how you speak about yourself, how you speak about your skill set, how you speak about your ambition.**

Personal Brand Identity	
Interviewee 5: This would be coming from directly who you are and what you believe in and your philosophy on life and kind of like the impact you want to make in the world. Ideally, that's what it is To be marketable, these times have to go out the other direction, and kind of see what the whitespace is in the market. And what you already do the experience that you can draw upon to kind of craft that into something. **It Is important to find that white space, your unique contribution.** **Interviewee 2:** Passion for sure. It can be for a very specific thing, but you need to stand for something for like, strong belief. Also confrontation with yourself and critical thinking is important. You need to have a clear direction for yourself! Stand for something and be and be the ambassador of that. I think it's even better actually, if you focus on one thing and make that flourish. **Interviewee 8:** But for me it is, it's about being your authentic self, I think when we're young, and we're not as confident at work, we kind of have this person that we're at, we are at work and a person we are at home. when it comes to the personal branding piece, it's about being somebody who is dependable somebody who, you know, people can rely on and with my team, they all know, they can come to me, you know, the door's always open, you can talk to me about anything, I care, not only about what you're doing at work, but how your life is. Well, first of all, know your audience. I think first and foremost is know your audience, but also be authentic in that audience. **You know be yourself and be authentic with just tailoring what you're saying to an audience.** But if there's always that sort of authenticity within me, that is like the red thread through all of that, that's what's important. **Interviewee 6:**	**Interviewee 9:** I guess when you are on the market and you want to, have a career, then it is important to think about your personal values and they should reflect who you are. That makes it easier to actually position yourself on the market. I always had a vision for myself. And it was always inspiring, because you usually always visualized something positive for yourself and that makes you confident. And then when you have this visualization, then you work towards it without even knowing about it. Everything you do is towards this vision. So I would think what could help young females is to have that vision. It will help them with their self-presentation. Because when they imagine themselves in a certain way the naturally act in these ways and then their self-presentation improves just like that. I actually do that during interviews with candidates. And one person said that visualization is just hope and it is not a strategy. The strategy is that when you're going to achieve your vision, you need to be very clear on your vision. So I think women, young female, need to have a vision for themselves. **Interviewee 3:** **I kind of had to sit and write a paragraph about myself and who I am and what I do, and what I'm good and strong at and which was an eye opener, because when you see everything you've done on paper, you're like, wow**, okay, I'm like, I'm good at this stuff. **Interviewee 4:** My personal brand is who I am. So, it's my natural behaviours to express myself in certain way. But it is also about putting effort and try to prove to others who you are. **Interviewee 1:** In terms of personal branding, I think it's really important that it's authentic, and it's honest. And it's really, its bass, it was really who you are, it's not something that you just signed, I'm just going to be is basically you're emphasizing one of your, your existing qualities **Interviewee 7:** Specifically, for women. Well, I think that the process of really putting thought to this and how you are putting yourself into the world, I think,

personal branding, in that sense of just being in in tune with who you are. And I think this is actually the hardest question to answer. For example, you have this About Me page is like, who you are, what do you have to offer to the world? Like what is your pitch? Basically, what are you offering and how do you and what do you want in return like a How do you want to be treated be you know, what kind of attention Do you want to get? Uh, what kind of recognition Do you want to get? So yeah, it's basically just in a nutshell, who are you? What do you have to offer and what do you want in return? So if you keep updating that information and asking yourself these questions over and over i think that that's already a good start probably. So far. I think I'm a believer in yourself 100%. Because whatever you do, you, you definitely have some unique value to offer. We all do. **Everyone has a special talent or contribution to make. And it's just about polishing.** And this comes, you know, with time, but just polishing what that value actually is. And then just do all of that self-excavation work of, of knowing what your skills are what you're good at focusing on all the positive things obviously not done, we also have I mean, it's good to be clear also on our shortcomings for sure. But focusing on the on the good things, and then deriving and deriving all the self confidence that you can from there and then expanding that.	is a really deliberate conscious mentality to begin with. **I think that the clearer you are in your own narrative about who you are, what you want and what your talent is, I think the more Clearly you will be received.** That is a constant probing of yourself of, of interactions of conversations you've had of it's just, I mean, I think some people are kind of more tapped into this, for better or for worse. I also think that there's really like valuable conversations you can have with people I would be really clear about your values and your skills. **Interviewee 10:** I think it's an ability to tell a clear story. Both spatially and from a narrative perspective. So, the narrative has a visual layer, but also there, the language layer in the committed way, right? So, for me, it's much more about if I asked you, what sort of values you live by on a daily basis? Are you able to answer that question immediately or not?
Brand Identity & Self-Esteem	
Interviewee 5: **So, I think that that has the potential to be a major confidence booster. And it could open up those opportunities, like the example of being the one sitting on the panel.** And most importantly knowing where you are at makes you feel secure and safe because you do not to second guess yourself, so you are also more confident in the end and you can continue with your personal development. **Interviewee 2:** Yes, absolutely it makes you more confident because you know what you want and what you are good at. **Interviewee 8:** And sometimes it takes people over the course of your career to tell you, this is very special	**Interviewee 9:** It's a way of knowing who you are, what are your values? When we talk about leaders on the International Women's Day, we talked a lot about choose to challenge. For me, that was really a revelation! when you are aligned with your brand, and that means knowing who you are, your worth, I would say that then you have that confidence that gives you the ability to challenge. I always had a vision for myself. And it was always inspiring, because you usually always visualized something positive for yourself and that makes you confident. And then when you have this visualization, then you work towards it without even knowing about it. Everything you do is towards this vision.

about you, and then you start to recognize it, but we're better at remembering the negative things. And we are the positive things, which is just a reality. So I think it's **know your worth**. **And you know, that becomes really important when it comes to negotiating your salary for any men. And that is based on do your research. You know, always be on your game, know your stuff and know your worth. t** **Interviewee 6:** So, in that sense being clear on who you are in what you want and that doesn't need to be necessarily you know being somebody else's role it's not it's not about women being exactly the same as men and having the same things as men have because sometimes that's also not necessary it's just about what is our own version of success and what our needs are and I think a big part of having your needs met is to be clear on them just to be clear what you want and who you are and that in itself when you have set answer these questions for yourself then that gives you a lot of confidence **Because I think that self-confidence then translates into a lot of good things in the way we build our careers and the way we're perceived. But that kind of grounded self-confidence, self-confidence, basically building self-confidence is that is grounded on who you are in who you are. And the value that you have to offer and not just the boilerplate self confidence that is shouting out loud, some kind of Instagram goals and whatever is popular in the moment in terms of affirmations.**	Having this vision for yourself is a source of confidence. It makes you thrive. **Interviewee 1:** Yes also, there is also one other thing because I feel like I've focused quite a lot in terms of my personal branding and being the mother. But also for me, that is that side of me, the biracial side, the British side, especially being in Berlin, also very much part of who I am, and how I see myself and how I want other people to see me. And that I like that of my personal branding is also really important. **Interviewee 7:** **So, and then that when you think when you do an apply and exercise of personal branding to you, I think is a really clear way to see all of yourself all of your skills all of your facets in that sense you know more visibly more tangibly and then maybe you connect to them more solidly and then you believe in them more and you can lead more with that confidence** Only thinking about this is like I don't know it just gives you already a lot of self-esteem and a lot of confidence. If you if know who you are and you know your worth and then you communicate that as well and then you actually see a result by whatever people wishing you good luck on LinkedIn and you're like hell yeah that's amazing!
Brand Identity & Gender Roles	
Interviewee 5: **I think the beauty of the personal brand, is that you get to make it up yourself. So instead of a world where like, you're constantly being, you know, defined, or where people are putting you in a box, or assuming they know who you are, I mean, this is your opportunity to decide who you want to be and how you want to present** **Interviewee 6:** **I mean gender roles are a thing of the past and we will carry that baggage for another while I'm sure in terms of how society is structured and how things are still rolling but in terms of the internal factors which is the other aspect of it and your internal**	**Interviewee 1:** Yeah. No, I don't. I am the same person at home as I am in workplace. It's just I have a different focus in those two places. No. And I have different priorities when I'm in those two places **Interviewee 6:** And my experience is that when you're highly professional, or highly respectful towards people, and, and but you also know yourself and are very in tune with who you are and what you do, and how you want to be treated. **Interviewee 2:** **Women need to get clear on what their want and to accept who they are, then they can also portray that to the outside.**

disposition because of that self-fulfilling prophecy that that you mentioned that basically if you believe that you were limited in certain ways then you will manifest that in the way you in the way you appear in the world because you will just not go for certain things.	

Personal Brand Positioning	
Communication	
Interviewee 5: I think that stepping up and asking and communicating and starting a dialogue in order to get people on your side and to get other people to invest in your development. I think just like letting your managers know what you're what your goals are and starting to have periodical conversations about how you're how you're measuring up It's all about exploring a lot and being curious and raising your hand to things that interest you! **Interviewee 2:** I would say just more determination and trusting yourself in whatever it is that you that you do to stand behind it. Personally, I really, kind of capitalize on the things that I do know, and I find interesting. And when it comes naturally you actually can embrace these kinds of skills. **Interviewee 8:** **Well, first of all, know your audience.** **I think first and foremost is know your audience, but also be authentic in that audience. You know be yourself and be authentic with just tailoring what you're saying to an audience.** And if you know your stuff, you know, and you'll have always something interesting to talk about and contribute. **So, if I'm speaking to, you know, my team, it's maybe a different voice or tone, or topic, than if I'm speaking to someone who is quite senior in the company or talking to an owner.**	**Interviewee 9:** Women make compromises on their career, and we kind of step back for a while and it is very difficult after that to position ourselves again, within an organization but also finding the confidence to do that (positioning) When I went back to work it was extremely difficult for me to be able to position myself and continuing my roles as a mother and as a wife. And then in addition, having a career. **And the eyeopener for me was that you need define who is your market, your audience. You need to find the right words for this audience, so they understand what you are about.** As I said, with regards to self-presentation women need to get themselves out there. Be visible and connect with people! **Interviewee 3:** You should actually verbally tell people what you are doing. Thinking of going forward, I'd like to try to be a bit more like verbally proactive, or at least being more comfortable just presenting myself in that way in conversation and not feeling guilty about it and not feeling like I can't talk about the things I do or my achievements, because it's too much or it's boasting, I think, getting comfortable in doing that is like my next challenge **I think if we speak up a bit in those situations, it will help but I think that is also dependent on male voices giving room as well. It's not just about Okay, women need to speak up to be more**

Interviewee 4:
I don't know. I think a strong personal brand lead back how you communicate with others. Because through communication people get to know you and know who you are. So, I would say that a strong communication makes a strong personal brand. In that sense it is also important to distinguish between online and offline personal branding and communication.

Interviewee 7:
So, I think real life interaction and human connection and emotional intelligence, I think these are valuable skills that will never be replaced. But I think that women can use the rest of this image side more partly as a more powerful tool for them. So, an interesting topic I've had with friends, for example, is about whether to include your see your picture on your CV, you know, it was an interesting debate. And I'm, I'm actually quite torn of it. And I think that this is a really crucial decision for women, you know, about if, if they lead with this, and I've tended in the past, not because I don't want this to be the visual to be an element, but I think more and more, you need to consider this whole package of your representation and how to use it.

And I think in your present, and externally finding a way to bridge those quite organically. You're not just saying, you know, I'm task oriented, but really, how do you speak about being task oriented? You know, like, what kind of learner you are, what do you need to be supported in that for, you know, and these are the questions that women should be asking in the interviews, that really tells their employer proactively, that they're concerned with these things, and then they're expecting their employer to be concerned with these issues as well. You know, so I think that the earlier women can be have those questions, pushing employers to, to be concerned with this. I think this is the new reality we work in now.

Interviewee 10:

visible, I think it's also about men to give women the space to speak and be more visible

Interviewee 7:
It is linked to how you text and there are so many touch points to it now.
I'm quite conscious about communication and the various forms that takes whether that's language spoken written. As I already said, this is something that I've seen a skill in myself that I've developed over the years, that's been a tool for me, in my personal branding, so a lot we talked about on the professional side tone of voice and being true to brand. And I think that those are absolutely elements that we can pull into ourselves, you know, and how we present ourselves to the world.

Interviewee 6:
You can proactively communicate that (personal brand). But you can also communicate that implicitly in everything that you do. And try to add one layer of your personal meaning or your personal contribution to it, how can I make this better? or How can I make this my own? And for this you have to be honest and open!

Interviewee 10:
So, in the constant context of the personal brand, it should be similar thing, it's much more complex, because we are talking about identity, but it shouldn't be or a similar helpful aspect of that is, is if at the end of this process, you arrived to a statement, which can be verbal, but it can be anything else, it can be a mood board, it can be a book, it can be an object,

So, for example, there is a certain experience, professional experience, you went through, for example, some internships, or some education, or travel experience you had, etc. But very often, and it's also how the systems designed at the moment, it's not very easy to again, just to get back to a nice example of an interview

Because that kind of process helps you gain also more confidence in with your own decisions. And talk about your experience in a way that's really unique to you. And not in a way that is kind of stereotyped by the society. I think the personal branding exercise, can kind of help disrupt that a little bit. And can help stand out in a more authentic and genuine way.	process, it's not very easy to actually or find the moment to share that in a way that is not, for example, either not intrusive, or is not kind of come in Come in, and we're coming up in a weird way.
Relationship Building	
Interviewee 5: I mean, what really comes to mind is that I've been lucky to have some really good managers in my life, who have been happy to elevate me, and they gave me the opportunity for example to give the presentation to the whole company, to kind of just say, like hey here I am! When I think about that, a lot of those awesome managers have been women who have been happy to, you know, get a give me a foot in that door. And I think it's really important for other people to build you up, it's a lot easier than having to crawl your own way up. **Interviewee 3:** So I would say self-esteem definitely plays a role and that's why it is so important to have gender balance and women in in managerial roles because I feel like if you have women represented and you can see that at least one woman has kind of got far or progressed in in that area without you know having to compromise anything then that kind of makes you feel a bit more relaxed, which makes you feel a bit more like you can be yourself, you don't have to kind of change your behavior or the way you do things to fit in. But if you don't have that, then it does become a bit of a slippery slope and you start to question yourself a lot. **Interviewee 8:** And then just having strong women around you to help mentor you and guide you. I've had really amazing women in my career that are great mentors and great friends that I know, I can go to if I have, you know, a	**Interviewee 9:** Also, that means building trust with my new company by making them aware of who I was. Regarding myself presentation I'm trying to get better connected with the company, my team, understanding better what they are expecting from me and my position as an HR Director and then trying to fill this gap. So Self-presentation is an individual process, but you should always keep in mind what is the company, my manager my team expecting from me and how can I contribute to that. But either way, online or offline self-presentation is about connecting with people. And I think, for me, my personal branding, and the advertising for me is offline and it is through people talking. **Interviewee 3:** You should actually verbally tell people what you are doing. Thinking of going forward, I'd like to try to be a bit more like verbally proactive, or at least being more comfortable just presenting myself in that way in conversation and not feeling guilty about it and not feeling like I can't talk about the things I do or my achievements, because it's too much or it's boasting, I think, getting comfortable in doing that is like my next challenge. **Justina:** I think it's a lot related to maintain good relationships with your colleagues and consistency.

career question or you know, is that that network is really important. **Interviewee 7:** **Curious and open, I think in general, come to a situation like that. And then like revealing stuff, like interest, skills etc about yourself. And that can be online and offline. And I think when you start to reveal these sides' view, that builds a relationship and a trust as well because people know who you are. And I think that there's ways to use those**	**Interviewee 1:** Well, I'm well liked, and well connected within the company. And I have, I've worked really hard, I've worked eight years for that. I, but that's just genuinely because I respect people. And I feel like that goes such a long way. And I treat everybody the way that I would like to be treated myself. And the thing is in our environment, that's not always the case, which means that I stand out a lot more and my relationship building stands out
Online Presence	
Interviewee 5: It needs to be clear what you want to communicate. On my Instagram channel, I wouldn't have done anything that was like very off brand, because it was public. If someone is coming to your page, that they're interacting with you for them to be able to understand and just like less than a minute, kind of what you what you stand for, and a very broad sense, like, what you're doing and what you believe in. If I had an opportunity to be featured on another brand, whether that's on some sort of Instagram story or a newsletter, or being interviewed for an article, I would be really careful about choosing, brands that I felt were like-minded and I want to be associated with. It is important to have the right audience. I wouldn't want to be represented anywhere that was off brand. **Interviewee 2:** But personally, I don't really have my own online strategy in it. **Interviewee 8:** So, I think that that's part of my personal brand. And then also, you know, how you talk in on social media, I think it's really important to when it comes to personal branding, my profile on Instagram is very different than my profile on LinkedIn. And I keep them very separate. You know, LinkedIn, for me is all about sort of my passion for luxury and design and you	**Interviewee 9:** But I know that especially now it is important to be visible in the world wide web etc. And that's where I also see that women are not like that; we are not showing off in that way and showing our Linked In network what we are doing. **Interviewee 4:** I have my website since, I started a business with a friend he's a designer and he does social media and stuff like that and I do all the words of copywriting editorial and some pr and that has been a massive push for me and a massive lesson in kind of self-promotion and putting myself out there. **Interviewee 1:** people do that (personal branding) so much, especially in using social media. It's so much about, looking at other people's followers to see who they're connecting with or who's following them and in the travel industry, it really is quite prolific on social media. And I actually choose to kind of step away from it, my profile on Instagram is private. It's not a professional one. Whereas on LinkedIn, I'm a lot more active. You need to choose your channels Wiseley and you need to be aware about your audience. **Interviewee 7:** Especially I think, also, there's how this has changed in the time of COVID. I mean, all we really have now are these external presentations of ourselves, you know, so I don't know what the job hiring landscape

know, trends. And, you know, if you saw that you would say, Oh, yeah, that makes sense. My Instagram was about, you know, the travels that I do with my partner, you know, it's very, very different **Interviewee 6:** I'm averse to social media as well. And I don't really know why that is. I don't have any personal strong position against it, but it's just not who I am. I'm very interested in personal interaction and one to one. I'm just not very interested in technology and Social media that's how it started	looks like right now. But even more virtual, and even more of these indicators are coming from your online presence and how you've basically marketed yourself, you know, so I think, probably there's a shift even occurring as we speak about how that's been perceived across industries, actually. I mean online presence is now more important than ever before. **Interviewee 6:** I think you need to also be smart and work with these platforms not becoming kind of a victim or, or not becoming a victim of them, or kind of not raising them up into like on a pedestal and investing all your energy to that. But also seeing being just like with other channels being savvy on what helps depending on where you want to go. So just choosing your channels wisely, I am on LinkedIn, it has helped me keep track of my work contacts. I use Facebook in the same way just as a directory of all my contacts throughout the years and people that I've been in touch with. And I tried to invest just the right amount of time in it. So that I get noticed if I need to be noticed
Style & Look	
Interviewee 9: Branding it is like a product. There is what is in the content, and what is in the packaging. And, and for me, what you are, your contents should always be reflected in the packaging, which is your look basically. For me, an inspiring person is not just inside it's also what comes visually across.	
Brand Positioning & Self-Esteem	
Interviewee 2: And it definitely contributes to self-love and self-esteem if people show admiration and recognition for what you are doing. **Interviewee 8:** I think that does help you become more confident. For example, when we walk into a room sometimes, we think we're going to fail, and I think it's about changing our mindset. If you're thinking I'm so nervous,	**Interviewee 9:** Taking successes! That's what I always say, you need to take successes. Women don't realise how much successes we have been achieving. Because we concentrate on the thing that we haven't achieved. So, take the time regularly, to think okay, what have I achieved. A simple answer! Self-worth. I see that females, especially young females who are

you're going to come across nervous because your body is listening to whatever your mind is telling it. And I believe personal branding and working on your self-presentation can help you with that. So, when you start to feel nervous about, you know, going into a presentation, you really have to convince yourself, I'm confident, I feel good about this, I know what I'm doing. And I'm prepared. And that that I think really helps a lot as well. **Interviewee 1:** I'm very happy to say this. Both times I went on maternity leave within two months of returning I got a promotion, because I put myself out there and showed them what I, a working mother can do. **Interviewee 6:** I think, with regards to women's self-presentation they can enhance their personal image and reputation. As I said by being open and honest about who they are and if they truly tune in with themselves and communicate this kind of personal image to the outside, others will see it too. So, yeah so within a company, and linked with your research that definitely holds a lot of opportunities for women and also gives them the confidence that they need to take on these opportunities.	not sure about themselves, yet they are usually not so confident in what they are doing and that's why they do not show that so often on these platforms as well. **Interviewee 3:** just self-promotion, and just being vocal about what you've done, and being proud about what you've done and what you can do. **Once you are comfortable in promoting yourself you increase your self-esteem. And most people don't respond negatively, but we think that. And, as you grow, and you nurture that self-belief, you come to realize that anyone that does respond negatively, it's not about you, it's about them** **Interviewee 7:** This is the thing do not limit yourself. You know and this proudness of your accomplishments, that energy is what you take into your interview into your role and that will make it that that guy is going to get the job because he goes in with this. **Interviewee 10:** **a good self-presentation is something that in the modern world helps you to stand out. And this is because of our attention span being very short these days.**
Brand Positioning and Gender Roles	
Interviewee 3: I felt like in the past if a woman takes that approach and is vocal about her personal branding and her talents and you know, the various things she can do when and her potential, it's often received in like, an arrogant way. And I just think it's a shame that there are so many, like, hidden talents. among women who were just made to feel like, it's not very polite to talk about themselves. And I just think everyone loses out when that happens. But I think the thing that is missing is that in many cases, they're not being they don't necessarily have the full credit for what	**Interviewee 4:** Sometimes those titles can be misleading. It is misleading in that way that people have a different perception and impression of you because of your title. It is important, especially in countries like Germany where a title is super important for the most. And I think some women just deserve a different title it is simply not fair. **Interviewee 7:** Another thing is that women are quite limited in how they speak about ambition is not entirely accepted, you know, whether I have one friend who's really aggressive in, let's say, in her approach to her career, and

they're doing. Like. The responsibilities don't always match the title,	she is constantly coming up against men that find her way of communicating too aggressive, and that's a gender thing. This is the thing do not limit yourself.

Personal Brand Image	
Interviewee 5: So, if someone were to find me on LinkedIn, or Instagram, I would hope that it seemed felt like the same person. We're never so sure how we come across. **Interviewee 2:** I think a lot what other people think of me, but I don't want to give it so much power **Interviewee 8:** All parts of who I am I think that builds a brand. And I think we all need to know that every different group of people takes you in a different way. **Interviewee 7:** More than I would like too. I need to admit that it's something quite important **Interviewee 6:** I just recently realized that I don't ask for feedback enough or compare myself to others i think that's a good and a bad thing, because I never think about my image in that way.	**Interviewee 9:** I think a lot about how I am perceived and recognized by others. All the time. If your perception is totally different from how your colleagues perceive you, then you are not getting ahead in your life. **Interviewee 4:** I do think about how I'm being perceived, less from a gender perspective but from a professional perspective **Interviewee 4:** Assistant comes with a negative perception nowadays for women and unfortunately it does diminish your self-esteem if you are always judged based on that. To have a title that also boosts your confidence in a way and impacts the perception from others on you and how they see you. **Interviewee 10:** self-development in the sense that, you know, it's only interesting if you kind of moving and keep evolving as a character. So, for me, the feedback helps more from that perspective, as opposed to the perception. Whether II do think a lot of how I am perceived. I do think this is also very female feature in general thinking contextually.
Feedback & Self Reflection	
Interviewee 5: I'm someone who asked for a lot of feedback. And just in the nature of what I do working with editors, like, my whole job is always getting feedback. But I can't really think of, of moments where I'm like asking how I'm coming across as a person. And I was talking to men about this. And they were like, why do you care so much	**Interviewee 9:** But what I find very interesting is that a lot of people find it difficult to articulate feedback, you know, and it's very hard for people also to be very transparent. And I think also, feedback is really important in order to know where you're at, right, and how you're perceived, because sometimes our self-perception does not

about what people think of you? And I was like, it's not a bad. I genuinely think it's really interesting that we think of ourselves as a certain way. And the same way, it's hard to watch yourself on a video and you are like my gosh, that's what I look like.

Interviewee 2:

I would say not enough. But I love feedback, especially when it is coming from a personal perspective. I am very open and very approachable for feedback. But I should definitely ask more for feedback because it is important to talk about and see whether you are doing is actually recognized.

Interviewee 8:

And sometimes it takes people over the course of your career to tell you, this is very special about you, and then you start to recognize it, but we're better at remembering the negative things. And we are the positive things, which is just a reality. So, I think it's "know your worth."

And you know, that becomes really important when it comes to negotiating your salary for any men. And that is based on do your research. You know, always be on your game, know your stuff and know your worth. And in that case, you will have the confidence that she needs.

It's about self-reflection, it's about asking for feedback, I think that piece is so important, I think women probably will ask for feedback more than men. But you know, I think it's important that you hear from your friends, from your colleagues, from your mentors, you know, what it is that, you know, what people appreciate about you what it is that they feel like, is an area of opportunity, so that you're always evolving, you know, and, and every year, you should be looking at yourself and saying, you know, what do I want to do differently to, to be a better person or be a happier person.

I'm my mentor that within the company, I think I'm very open and honest with and I don't have a, I don't have an issue saying I'm not confident in something because I think match the perception of others. It makes you feel secure and self-assured.

Interviewee 3:

. No one wants to open themselves up to possible criticism. It's good to ask for feedback. And it's good to have reassurance when you are doing things right as well as guidance on when you're doing things wrong.

'm definitely kind of open to feedback. And I do think it's obviously very constructive and crucial.

Interviewee 7:

And that's a conversation that can be held in a lot of different places, you know, with people you trust. And that can be in work with some leadership, it can be with colleagues, it can be on different levels, that inviting those conversations into brings yourself awareness level up as well, you know, that's a, that's a muscle that needs to be flexed and built as, as any other one, especially at the moment for all of us to get kind of caught up in our own literal bubbles. You know, and I think that the more that you keep these conversations open, and whether it's in the context of feedback or you know, inviting a respected colleague for lunch and asking them how I am **perceived in the sense or, or having a quality of conversation that just invites that sort of exchange, and I think that you can have your own self-identity and your own self value system.**

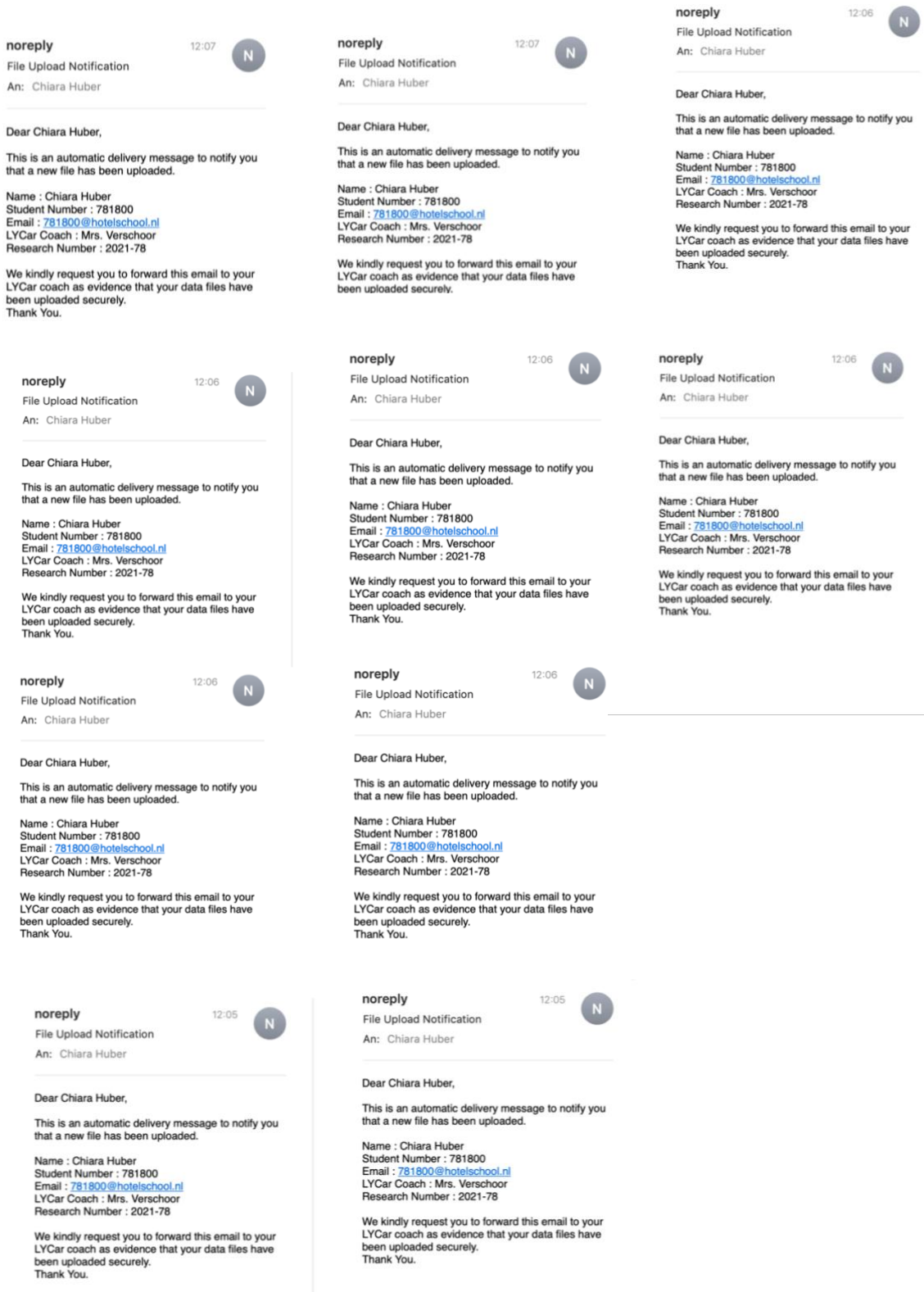
Interviewee 6:

But also there's definitely lots of benefits to asking for feedback and receiving constructive feedback but also knowing how to accept and how to deal with that feedback and how to filtering through it because especially when we talk about women in leadership I mean yes feedback is great but at many points and we as women are very receptive to other people's opinions to all kinds of information coming from the environment and I think it's very hard to block some things out filter some things out because at one point you receive a lot of

when you don't address things that you're not confident in, you can't actually get over the hurdle, you know, and then you just doubt yourself internally. And I think that people who can help you sort through that are the people you trust, and people who've been through it.	conflicting feedback maybe and it's about knowing what the helpful feedback is
Brand Image & Self Esteem	
Interviewee 2: If you are perceived for who you are that definitely makes you more self-secure and confident I guess it helps you to have a better self-understanding and, to know what people think about you and it definitely contributes to self-love and self-esteem **Interviewee 7:** Women are not taking enough credit for what they have achieved. You think all of a sudden, some big success falls on you from the sky, it's little ones that you build on. And sometimes they go back, and then sometimes they jump forward, but also really celebrate those small things and take pride and ownership in them. **Interviewee 6:** Because I think that self-confidence then translates into a lot of good things in the way we build our careers and the way we're perceived. But that kind of grounded self-confidence, self-confidence, basically building self-confidence is that is grounded on who you are in who you are. And the value that you have to offer and not just the boilerplate self confidence that is shouting out loud, some kind of Instagram goals and whatever is popular in the moment in terms of affirmations.	**Interviewee 9:** But it feels great. Getting positive feedback and receiving recognition makes you feel good about yourself. It makes you feel secure. **Justina:** It does contribute to your self-esteem. And it also supports you with the constant development and awareness of yourself. **Interviewee 7:** And I think, I don't know a lot of image building that we've done for brands and stuff like this is also like your building image, ultimately aligned where you want to be, you know, it's not necessarily that you're this sophisticated, incredibly savvy businesswoman at this moment in time. But by projecting this image is also helping you on that path and putting you more clearly aligned with your ultimate destiny, your vision for yourself, even if it's a confusing way of saying. And knowing that your image that you have in a company or whatever is aligned with you and your vision, that gives you a good feeling about yourself and yes it automatically contributes to your self-esteem.

11.8 Proof of Research Data upload

11.8.1 *Transcripts*



noreply 12:07
File Upload Notification
An: Chiara Huber

Dear Chiara Huber,

This is an automatic delivery message to notify you that a new file has been uploaded.

Name : Chiara Huber
Student Number : 781800
Email : 781800@hotelschool.nl
LYCar Coach : Mrs. Verschoor
Research Number : 2021-78

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Thank You.

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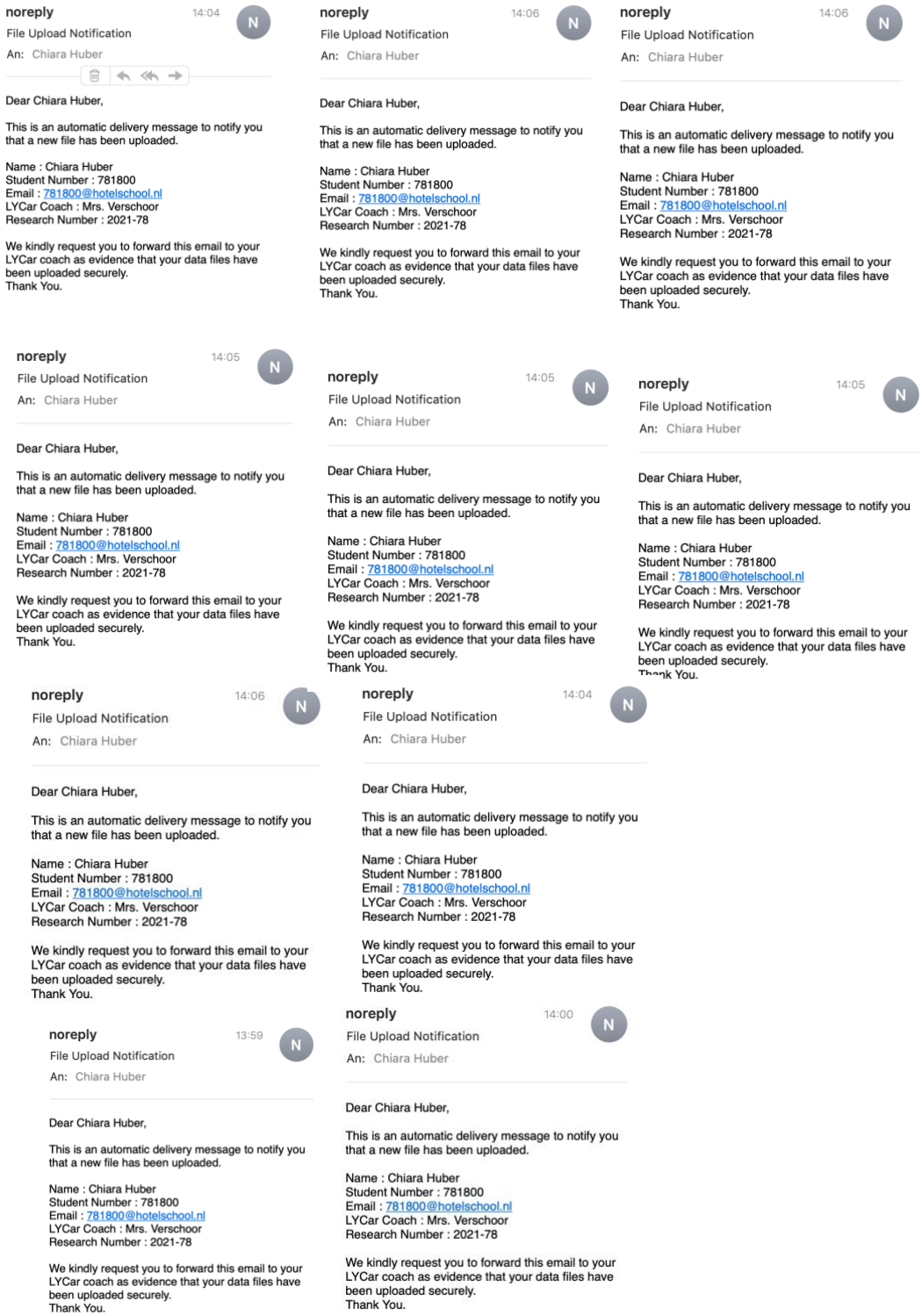
11.8.2 *Recordings*



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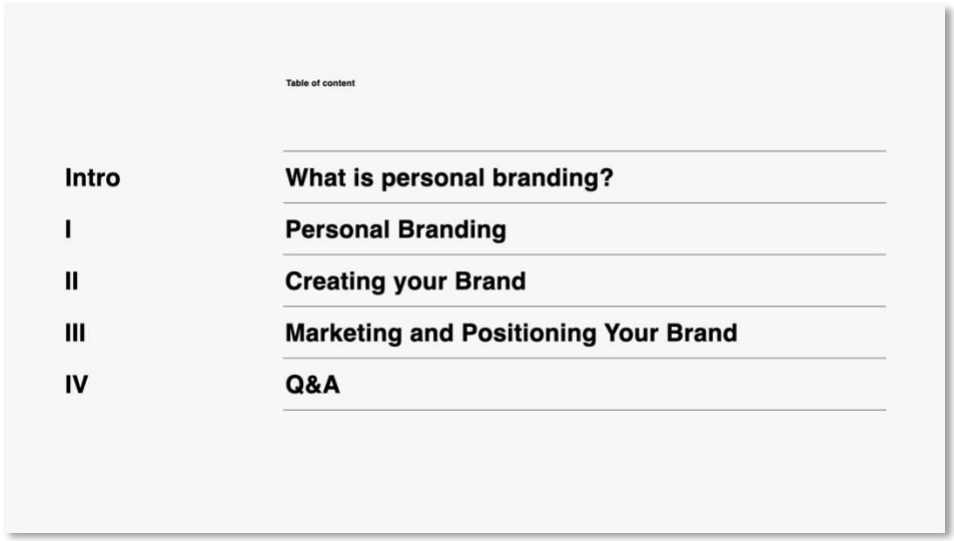
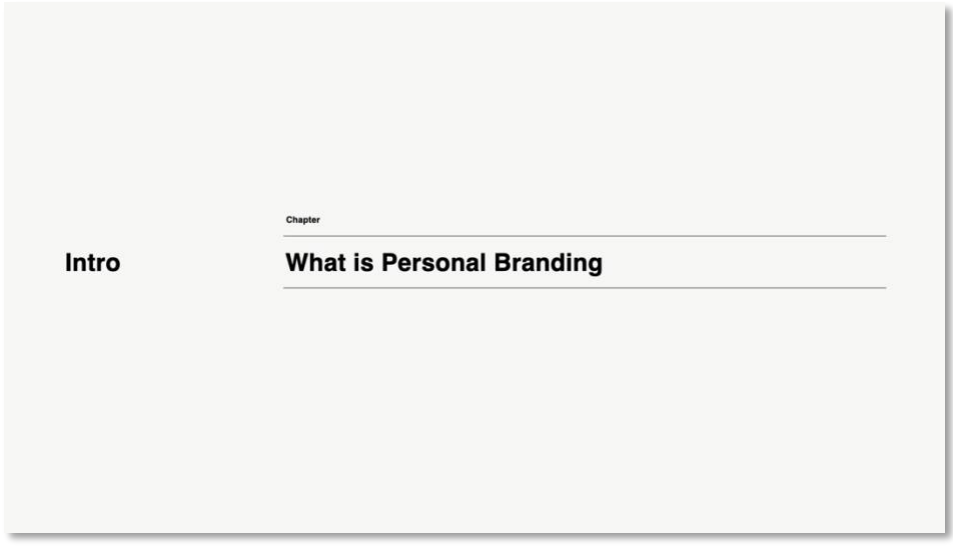
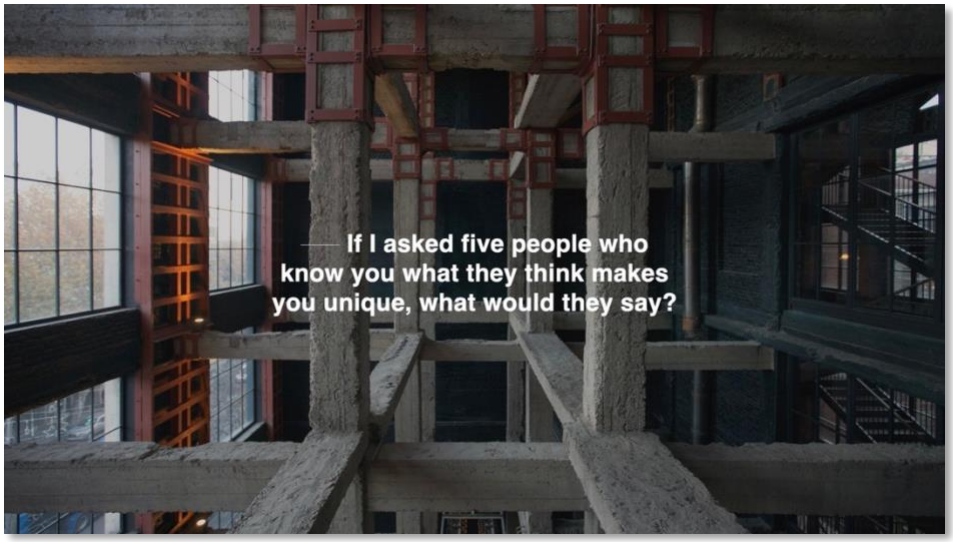
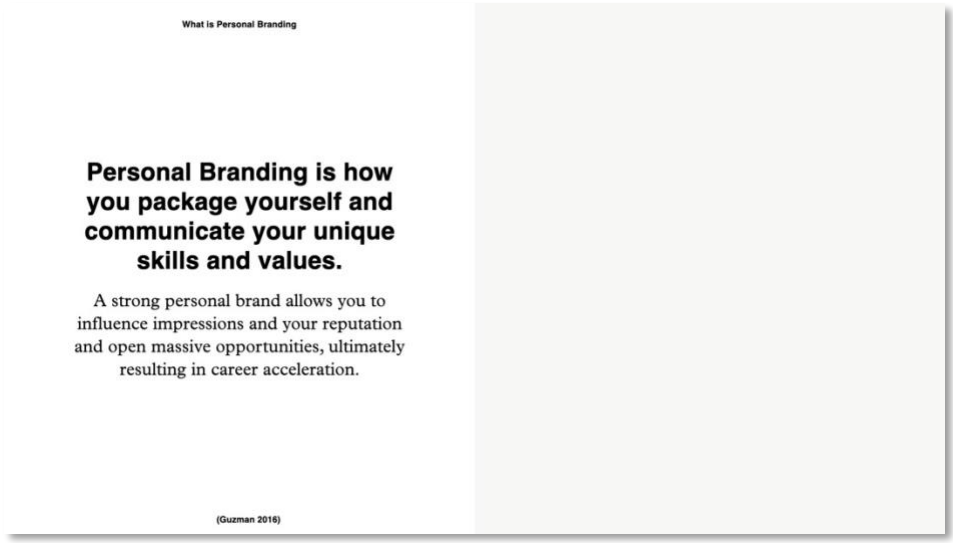
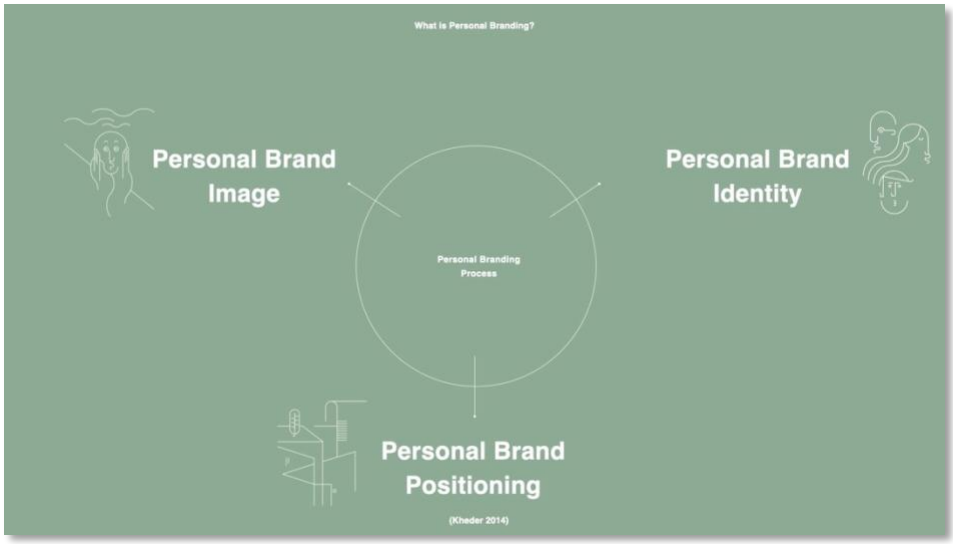
11.9 Company deliverable

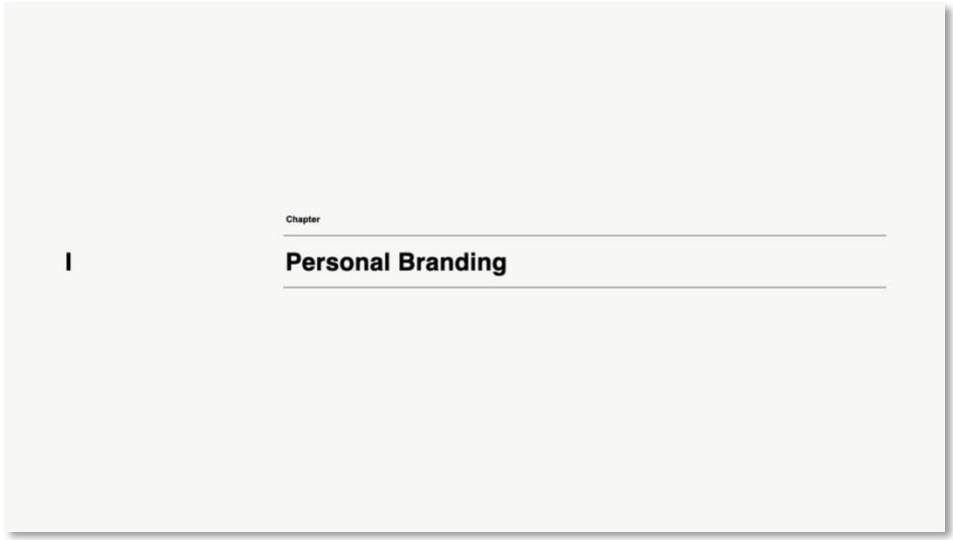




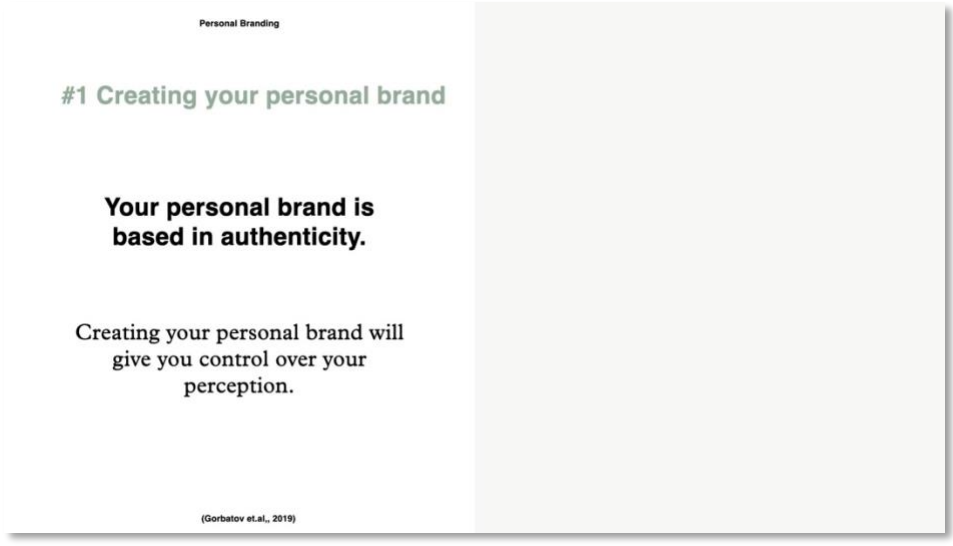

— If I asked five people who know you what they think makes you unique, what would they say?

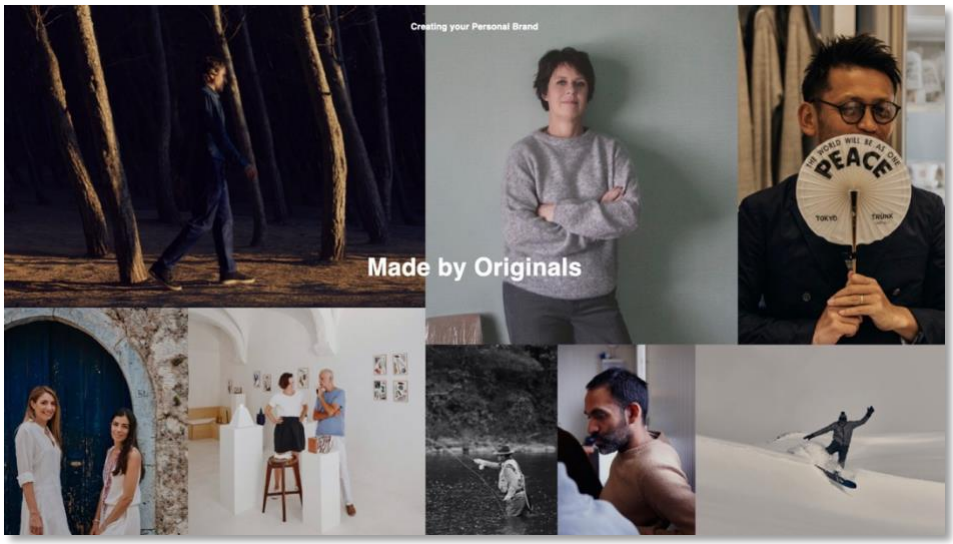

What is Personal Branding
Personal Branding is how you package yourself and communicate your unique skills and values.
A strong personal brand allows you to influence impressions and your reputation and open massive opportunities, ultimately resulting in career acceleration.
(Guzman 2016)

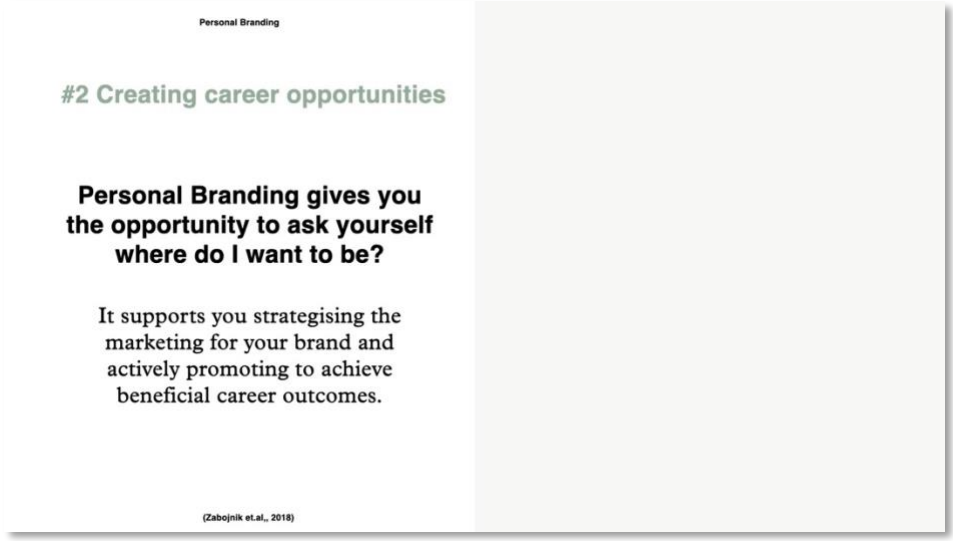

What is Personal Branding?
Personal Brand Image
Personal Brand Identity
Personal Branding Process
Personal Brand Positioning
(Kheder 2014)

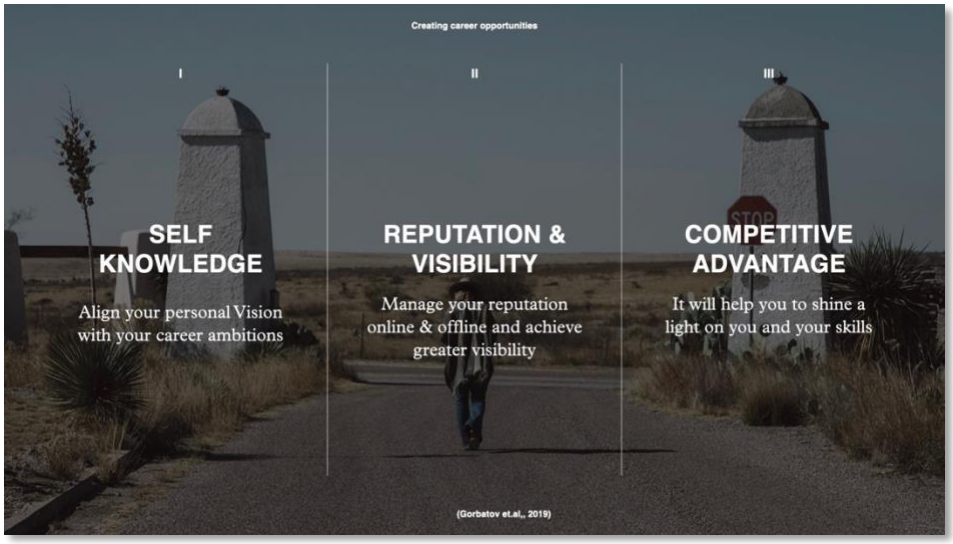

Chapter
I
Personal Branding

Personal Branding
Why is personal Branding important?
Write in the Chat

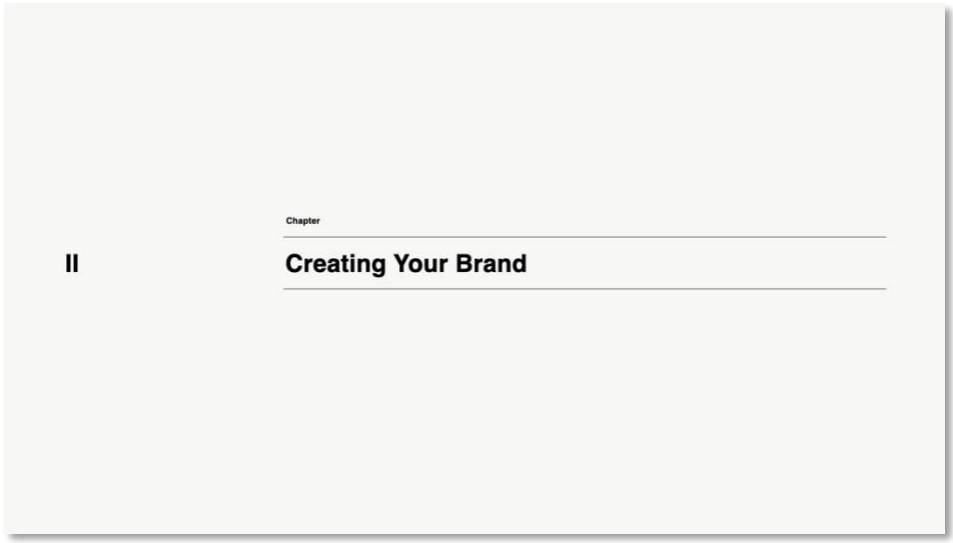

Personal Branding
#1 Creating your personal brand
Your personal brand is based in authenticity.
Creating your personal brand will give you control over your perception.
(Gorbatov et.al., 2019)

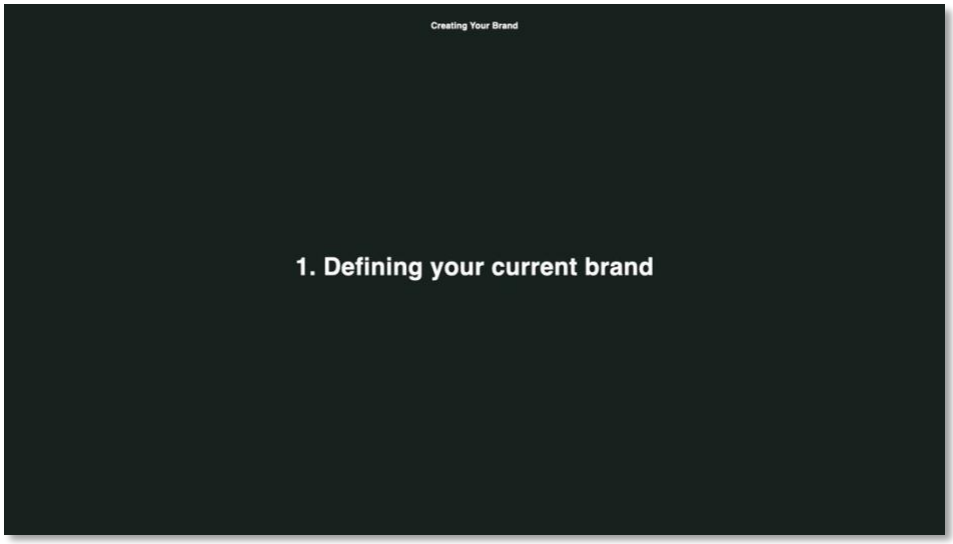

Creating your Personal Brand
Made by Originals
PEACE


Personal Branding
#2 Creating career opportunities
Personal Branding gives you the opportunity to ask yourself where do I want to be?
It supports you strategising the marketing for your brand and actively promoting to achieve beneficial career outcomes.
(Zabojnik et.al., 2018)


Creating career opportunities
I
SELF KNOWLEDGE
Align your personal Vision with your career ambitions
II
REPUTATION & VISIBILITY
Manage your reputation online & offline and achieve greater visibility
III
COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE
It will help you to shine a light on you and your skills
(Gorbatov et.al., 2019)

Personal Branding
#3 Building Influence
Building influence requires a strong and compelling personal brand
You need a clear and strong value proposition, a personal brand, to positively influence people.
(Rabgarajan et.al,, 2017)


Chapter
II
Creating Your Brand


Creating Your Brand
1. Defining your current brand

Defining your current brand
I
II
III
#1 How are you perceived by others?
Ask yourself
#2 What does your reputation look like right now?
Ask yourself
#3 What are first five words others associate with you?
Ask 2 colleagues
(Lupsa, 2019)

Defining your current brand
Accessibility
Impact
Trust
Family
Empathy
Well-being
Humour
Calmness
Love
Liability
Determination
Creativity
Meaning
Liability
Honesty
Stability
Curiosity
Leadership
Determination
Balance
Entertainment
Success
Strength
Intelligence
Health
Knowledge
Calmness
Optimism
Perfection
Imagination
Integrity
Expertise
Mindfulness
Adventure
Spontaneity
Respect
What are your Values?

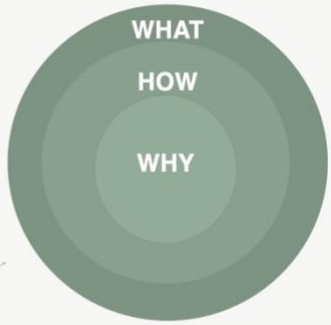
Creating Your Brand
2. Creating your desired brand

Creating your desired brand

HOW?

In order to be perceived in a specific way, you need to be in line with yourself. To create that desirable picture of yourself, you need to convey suitable messages which express your strengths, expertise, abilities, values, mission and vision.

(Kinner, 2018)

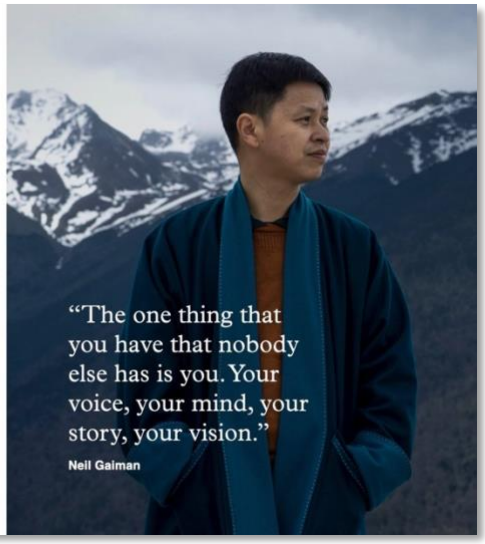


The Golden Circle

Creating your desired brand

IKIGAI

(Catarau, 2016)



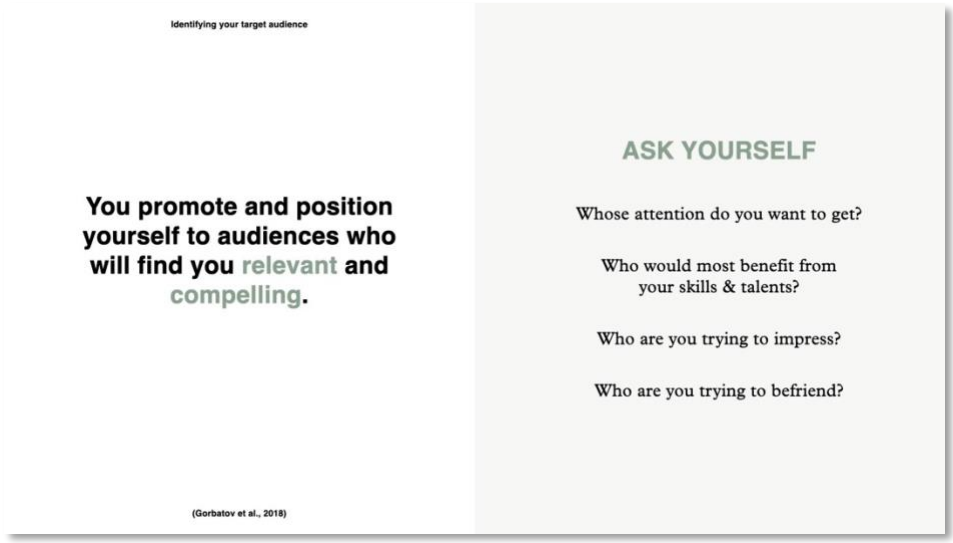
Creating your Personal Brand

EXERCISE

Use Simon Sineks Golden Circle and take 7 Minutes to think about YOUR WHY - HOW -WHAT

write it down

Creating Your Brand
3. Identifying your target audience

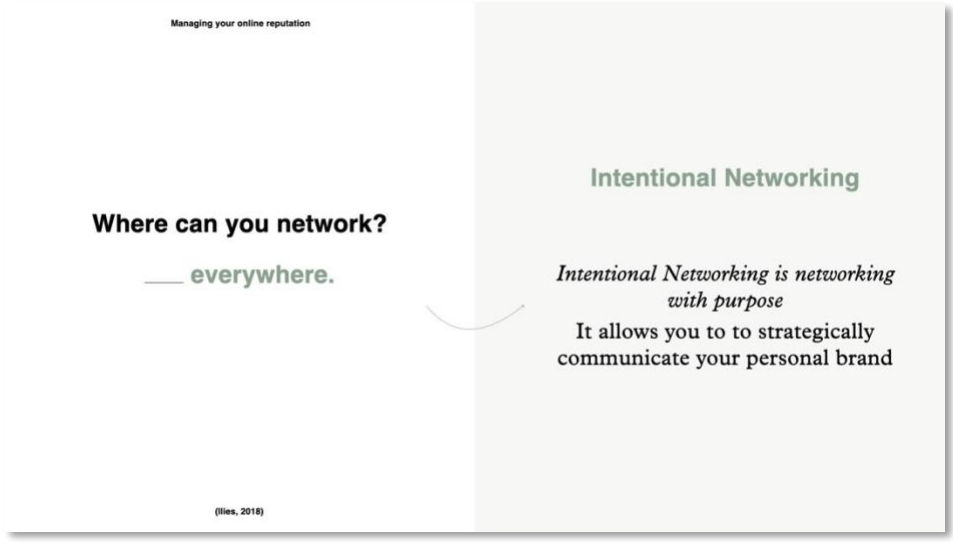

Identifying your target audience
You promote and position yourself to audiences who will find you relevant and compelling.
(Gorbatov et al., 2018)
ASK YOURSELF
Whose attention do you want to get?
Who would most benefit from your skills & talents?
Who are you trying to impress?
Who are you trying to befriend?

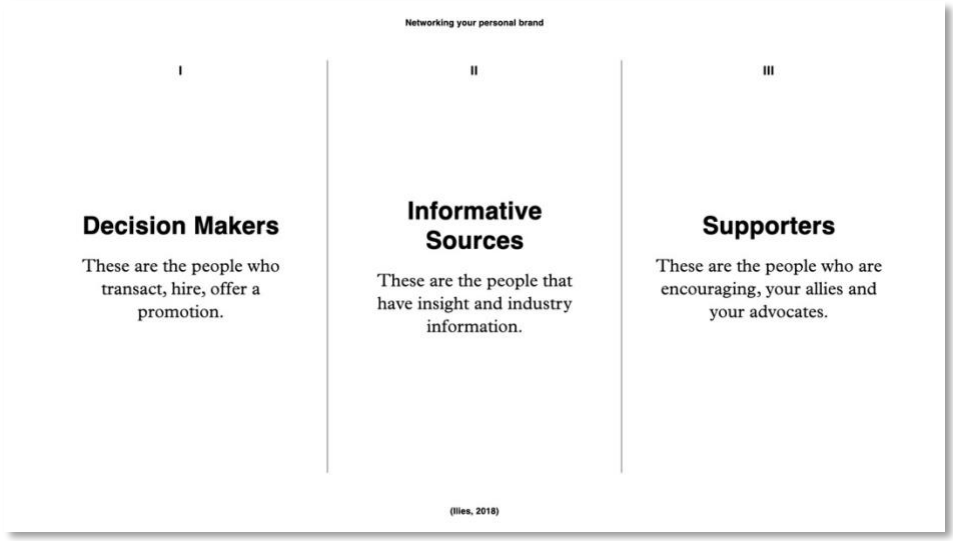
Identifying your target audience
Take 2 minutes and think about:
WHAT ARE YOUR BUZZWORDS?

Chapter
III
Marketing and Positioning Your Brand

Marketing and Positioning Your Brand
Your personal brand is not about what you are. It's about who you are.

Marketing and Positioning Your Brand
2. Networking your personal brand


Managing your online reputation
Where can you network?
___ everywhere.
(Ilies, 2018)
Intentional Networking
Intentional Networking is networking with purpose
It allows you to to strategically communicate your personal brand


Networking your personal brand
I
Decision Makers
These are the people who transact, hire, offer a promotion.
II
Informative Sources
These are the people that have insight and industry information.
III
Supporters
These are the people who are encouraging, your allies and your advocates.
(Ilies, 2018)

Marketing and Positioning Your Brand
3. Managing your online reputation

Managing your online reputation

A powerful place

for your personal brand to come to life is the online environment.
It is important to choose your channels wisely.

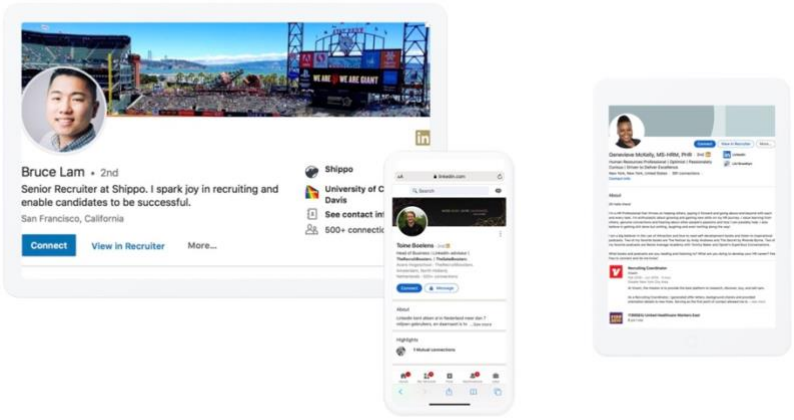
(Mandagi and Aseng, 2021)

70%

of all communication is virtual

(Mandagi and Aseng, 2021)

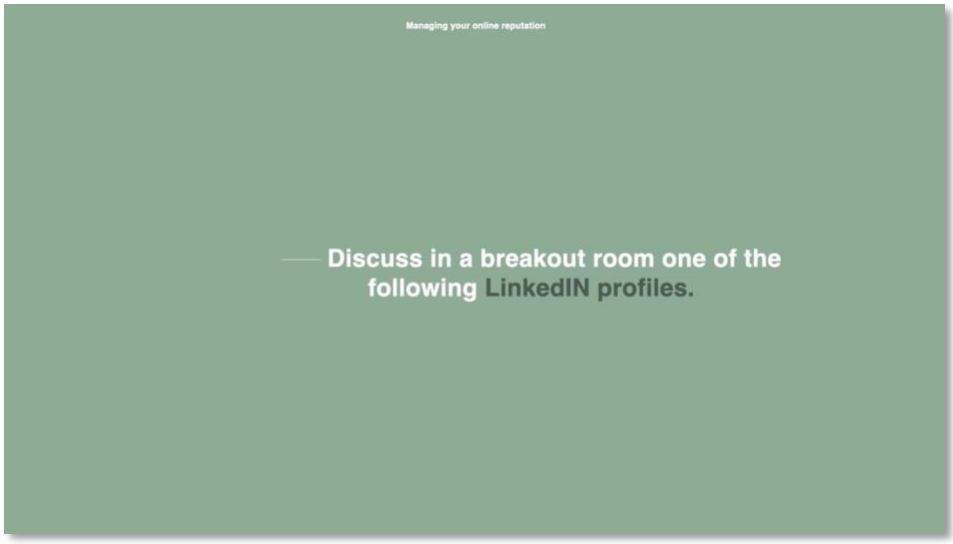
Managing your online reputation



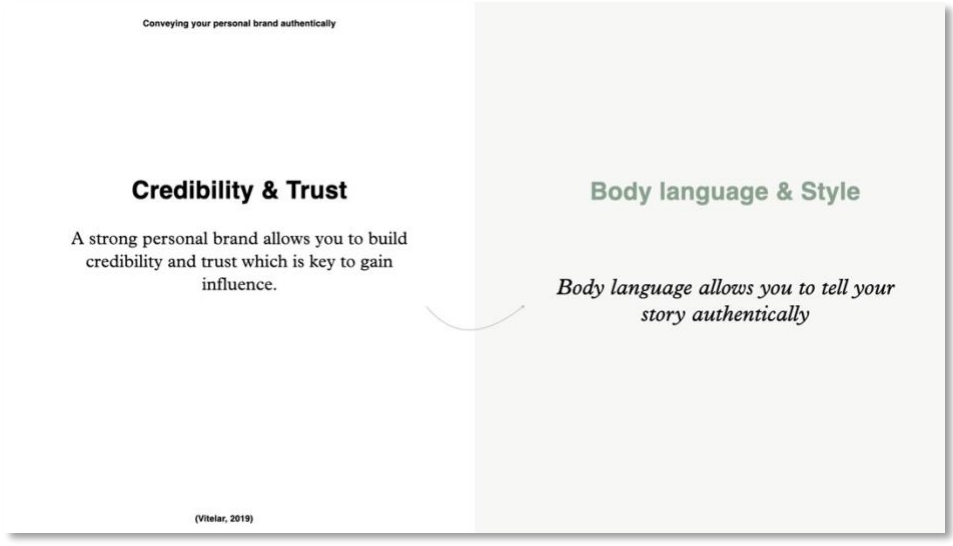
Source: (Business.linkedin, 2020)

Managing your online reputation

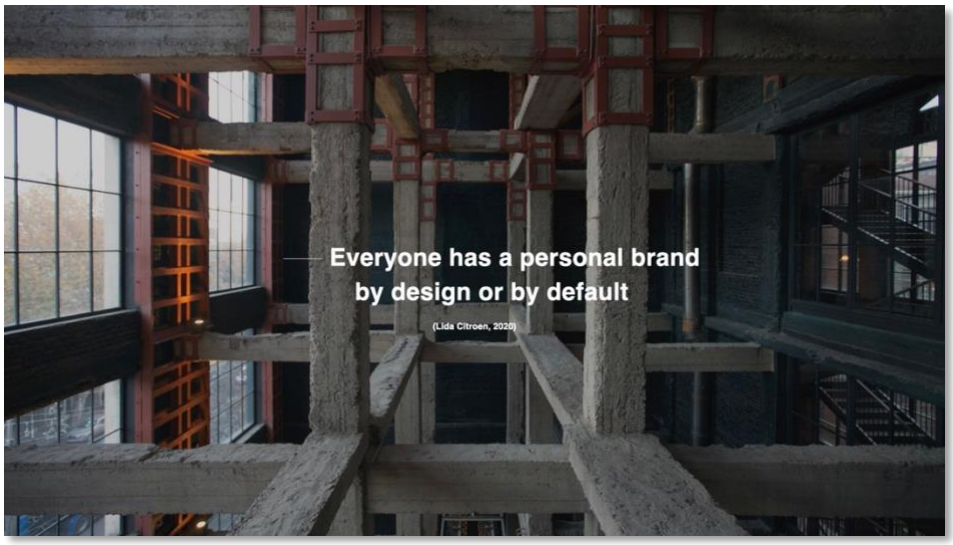
(Business.linkedin, 2020)


Managing your online reputation
Discuss in a breakout room one of the following LinkedIN profiles.

Marketing and Positioning Your Brand
4. Conveying your personal brand authentically


Conveying your personal brand authentically
Credibility & Trust
A strong personal brand allows you to build credibility and trust which is key to gain influence.
(Vitelar, 2019)
Body language & Style
Body language allows you to tell your story authentically

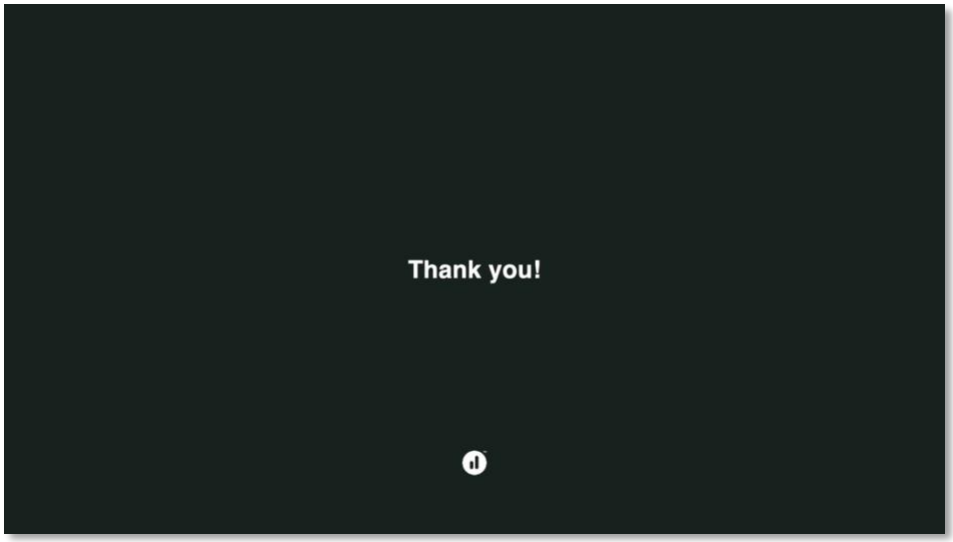
Conveying your personal brand authentically



Chapter

IV

Q&A



V References

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11.10 Proof of Evaluation from Commissioner

Evaluation Form Company Project

HOTELSCHOOL THE HAGUE
Hospitality Business School

Name of student:	**Chiara Huber**	**Student number:**	**781800**
Name of company:	**Design Hotels**	**Department:**	**Learning & Development / PR & Communications**
Name of company tutor:	**Claire Pevlet**	**Position of company tutor:**	**HR Director**
Project/Deliverable: (please specify)	**Personal Branding Workshop**		

During the first evaluation the proposal for the project and end deliverable is discussed. For this final evaluation the project is evaluated. This is taken into consideration for the final assessment of the student.

CATEGORY 1: EXPERTISE/KNOWLEDGE OF THE FIELD

Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
	In-depth use of relevant literature and knowledge of the field. The deliverable shows excellent thinking capacity of the student (taking into account all significant factors and looking from all different perspectives).	Use of relevant literature and knowledge of the field. The deliverable shows mostly intellectual depth (considering significant factors and looking from different perspectives).	No or incorrect use of literature and knowledge of the field. The deliverable lacks intellectual depth.	

CATEGORY 2: KNOWLEDGE APPLICATION/SOLVING PROBLEMS

Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
	The theories and models are skillfully applied and the student can translate this in a unique solution action. The student can relate situations to concepts that results into a solution that adds great value to the company's overall strategy. The creative solution is/can be implemented and evaluated and is solving the problem.	The student uses theory and models and shows understanding of the issues at hand. The solution is realistic and implementable for the company. The solution is/can be implemented and evaluated.	Mentioning theory and models, but not using them in the correct way. The student cannot convince of the possibilities to implement and evaluate. It is not solving the problem.	

CATEGORY 3: INFORMED JUDGEMENTS

Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
	The research process is done and explained in an excellent way. All statements, conclusions and recommendations are underpinned with the data collected by the students and/or referencing. The analysis is very substantial.	The research process is done and explained well. Most statements, conclusions and recommendations are underpinned with the data collected by the student and/or referencing. The analysis is substantial.	Weak problem analysis, research question not clear enough. Data collection and/or methodology is insufficient. Weak analysis, use of data from one dimension and not backed up.	

CATEGORY 4: COMMUNICATION AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE

Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
	Excellent ability to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to all stakeholders involved. The deliverable adds great value to the main stakeholders. Initial and creative channels have been actively used to share outputs and knowledge.	Good ability to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to stakeholders. The deliverable adds value to the company. Existing channels have been used to share knowledge	The deliverable could have been better delivered to the stakeholders. The deliverable could have added more value, if better delivered. No active communication of outputs and knowledge.	

CATEGORY 5: INTERCULTURAL HOSPITALITY LEADERSHIP

Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
	Student is able to lead the project by themselves. Student is self-critical towards improvement and takes feedback to heart. Student deals with a diversity of stakeholders in an intercultural competent way. Hospitality mindset is seen in project or work in a very distinct way.	Student is able to lead the project with little help. Student is critical towards improvement and listens to feedback. Student deals with different stakeholders. Hospitality mindset can be seen.	Tasks performed are described and not critically analyzed. Student is not too critical towards own learning and can listen better to feedback. Student does not know how to deal with differences in stakeholders. Hospitality can be improved.	

OVERALL COMMENTS:

Excellent research supported by a valuable workshop during FoW as well as client deliverable, well done

STUDENTS' COMMENTS:

Comments on evaluation:	

DATE & STUDENT'S SIGNATURE:	**COMPANY TUTOR'S SIGNATURE:**
	David Brannon

THE COMPLETED FORMS (ON ALL DELIVERABLES AND PERFORMANCE) NEED TO BE EMAILED TO THE LYCAR COACH AND PUT IN THE APPENDICES OF THE CAREER PORTFOLIO

11.11 Proof of Evaluation from Design Hotels

Evaluation Form Company Project/Research

(EVALUATION FORM OF ALL CLIENTS AND ON ALL DELIVERABLES IS COMPULSORY, FORMAT IS NOT)

HOTELSCHOOL THE HAGUE
Hospitality Business School

Name of student:	**Chiara Huber**	**Student number:**	**781800**
Name of company:	**Design Hotels GmbH**	**Department:**	**RR & Communications**
Name of company tutor:	**Claire Peylet**	**Position of company tutor:**	**HR Director**
Project/Deliverable: (please specify)	**Workshop presentation on Personal Branding**		

CATEGORY 1: EXPERTISE/KNOWLEDGE OF THE FIELD

Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
Good	In-depth use of relevant literature and knowledge of the field. The deliverable shows excellent thinking capacity of the student (taking into account all significant factors and looking from all different perspectives).	Use of relevant literature and knowledge of the field. The deliverable shows mostly intellectual depth (taking into account significant factors and looking from different perspectives).	No or incorrect use of literature and knowledge of the field. The deliverable lacks intellectual depth.	Chiara demonstrated great knowledge and research on the subject Brand Personality

CATEGORY 2: KNOWLEDGE APPLICATION/SOLVING PROBLEMS

Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
Excellent	The theories and models are skillfully applied and the student can translate this in a unique solution action. The student can relate situations to concepts that results into a solution that adds great value to the company's overall strategy. The creative solution is/can be implemented and evaluated and is solving the problem.	The student uses theory and models and shows understanding of the issues at hand. The solution is realistic and implementable for the company. The solution is/can be implemented and evaluated.	Mentioning theory and models, but not using them in the correct way. The student cannot convince of the possibilities to implement and evaluate. It is not solving the problem.	The subject and the application is a great tool for our future Brand Employee culture and supportive to their personal development

CATEGORY 3: INFORMED JUDGEMENTS

Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
Good	The research process is done and explained in an excellent way. All statements, conclusions and recommendations are underpinned with the data collected by the students and/or referencing. The analysis is very substantial.	The research process is done and explained well. Most statements, conclusions and recommendations are underpinned with the data collected by the student and/or referencing. The analysis is substantial.	Weak problem analysis, research question not clear enough. Data collection and/or methodology is insufficient. Weak analysis, use of data from one dimension and not backed up.	The research was done but a deeper analysis could have been submitted in order to demonstrate the need for the Design Hotels team to conduct the workshop.

CATEGORY 4: COMMUNICATION AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE

Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
Excellent	Excellent ability to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to all stakeholders involved. The deliverable adds great value to the main stakeholders. Initial and creative channels have been actively used to share outputs and knowledge.	Good ability to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to stakeholders. The deliverable adds value to the company. Existing channels have been used to share knowledge	The deliverable could have been better delivered to the stakeholders. The deliverable could have added more value, if better delivered. No active communication of outputs and knowledge.	

CATEGORY 5: INTERCULTURAL HOSPITALITY LEADERSHIP

Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
Excellent	Student is able to lead the project by themselves. Student is self-critical towards improvement and takes feedback to heart. Student deals with a diversity of stakeholders in an intercultural competent way. Hospitality mindset is seen in project or work in a very distinct way.	Student is able to lead the project with little help. Student is critical towards improvement and listens to feedback. Student deals with different stakeholders. Hospitality mindset can be seen.	Tasks performed are described and not critically analyzed. Student is not too critical towards own learning and can listen better to feedback. Student does not know how to deal with differences in stakeholders. Hospitality can be improved.	

OVERALL COMMENTS:

Chiara demonstrated during her project great communication skills and creativity . She added great value to Design Hotels by exploring a project which was unknown to most of the team.

STUDENTS' COMMENTS:

Comments on evaluation:	

DATE & STUDENT'S SIGNATURE:	COMPANY TUTOR'S SIGNATURE:
Chiara Huber 26th of May 2021	DESIGN HOTELS™ BERLIN STRALAUER ALLEE 2C 10245 BERLIN, GERMANY T +49 (0) 30 / 240 000 DESIGNHOTELS.COM

THE COMPLETED FORMS (ON ALL DELIVERABLES AND PERFORMANCE) NEED TO BE EMAILED TO THE LYCAR COACH AND PUT IN THE APPENDICES OF THE CAREER PORTFOLIO

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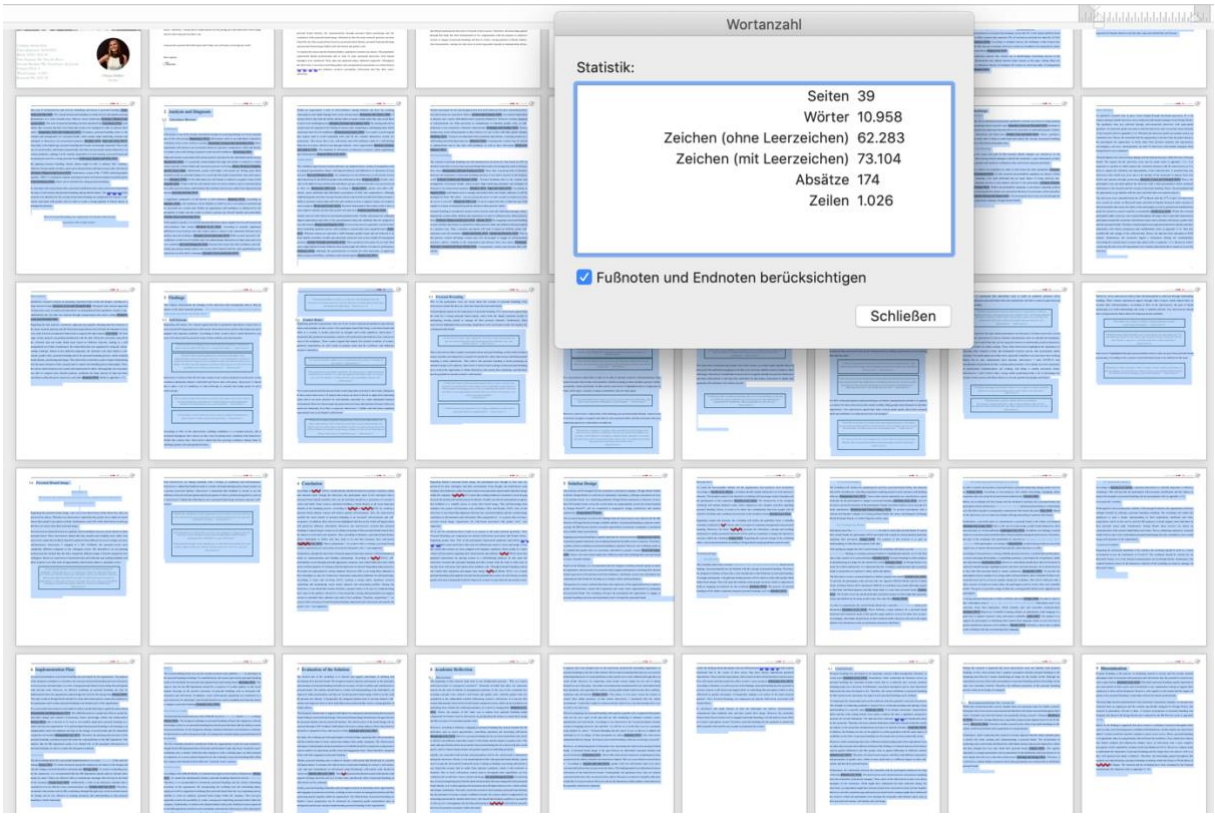

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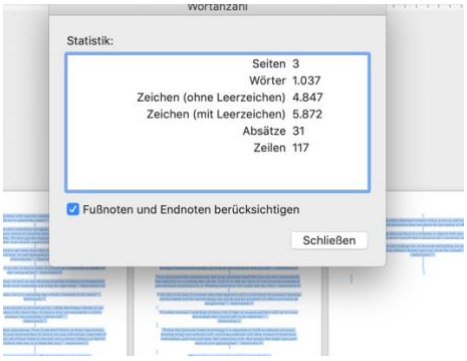

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