

Personal Branding Without the Cringe.

Because Nobody Gets Promoted for Knowing More Subnets.

(Sadly, I know this all too well, but maybe they get promoted for more cowbell...)

Your Résumé Gets You the Interview. Your Brand Gets You the Call.

01

Invisible → Overlooked

The most qualified person doesn't always win. The most visible, trusted one does.

For the record: you are probably the smartest person in the room. Nobody knows.

02

Reputation Scales Faster Than Certs

A cert proves you studied. A brand proves you can apply it and make the business better.

One hangs on a wall. The other gets you the call. Your Credly badge is not the call.

03

Clarity → Opportunity

Opportunities flow to people with the clearest story. If you can't explain what you bring to the table, neither can the person recommending you.

STEP ONE

Clarity Before Visibility.

Most people try to get visible before they know what they want to be visible FOR. That's how you end up posting into the void wondering why only LinkedIn bots are engaging.

WRONG ORDER

- Post 'Excited to announce...' before knowing what you're announcing
- Spam every hashtag LinkedIn has ever created
- Hope someone notices your connection request
- Figure out your messaging after the cringe has set in

RIGHT ORDER

- Know what you stand for (hint: 'I fix stuff' is not a brand)
- Know who you're talking to ('everyone' is not an audience)
- Know what you want them to do about it
- THEN get visible. Yes, in that order.

BRAND FOUNDATION

Three Questions to Answer Before You Post Anything

01

What problems do people already associate with you?

If the honest answer is 'showing up to Zoom with the camera off,' that's your starting point, not your ending point. Ask three colleagues. Their answers will be illuminating.

02

Who are you trying to reach?

'Everyone' is not an audience. It's a coping mechanism. The CIO? The VP who forgets IT exists until the Wi-Fi drops? Junior engineers? Pick one. Speak to them.

03

What do you want people saying about you in 12 months?

Work backwards from the reputation you want. That sentence tells you every piece of content to write, every room to enter, every awkward networking event to power through.

HERE'S THE TRUTH, NOBODY TELLS YOU

Your Title Is Rented. Your Reputation Is Yours.

Companies restructure. Job titles disappear overnight. The brand you build travels with you through every layoff, every reorg, and every 'exciting new direction' email from leadership.

TITLE-DEPENDENT THINKING

'I'm a Senior Network Engineer'

'I manage firewall policy'

'My job is keeping the lights on'

Brand disappears when the role does

REPUTATION-FIRST THINKING

'I help businesses reduce risk through infrastructure'

'I translate technology into business outcomes'

'I build trust at the exec level'

Brand survives any job change (including the involuntary ones)

WHAT ACTUALLY WORKS

The Signals That Build Real Credibility in Tech

Teach What You're Learning

You don't need to be the world's foremost expert. You just need to know slightly more than the people reading.

Document your learning in real time. 'Here's what I figured out this week' is more trusted than 'here's everything I know.'

Translate Complexity Into Clarity

If you can write one paragraph a VP understands, you've demonstrated more value than a thousand-line config.

VPs understand surprisingly little about infrastructure. The bar isn't high. Take the win.

Share the Failures, Not Just the Wins

The post-mortem where everything went sideways at 2am? Content gold. Nobody trusts the person who only has victories.

Share the failure, what you learned, and how you'd do it differently. People will feel seen.

WHERE TO SHOW UP

Pick One Platform. Master It. Then Expand.

LINKEDIN

Career Visibility

Where hiring managers, VPs, and your weird ex-colleague from 2019 actually live. Not for going viral — for being findable, credible, and consistently showing up.

One good post per week beats 20 mediocre ones.

BLOG / WRITING

Thinking in Public

Write what you know. Document decisions. Post-mortem an outage. Explain a business case.

Google indexes it forever. The person deciding your raise is Googling you right now. Hi, boss.

VIDEO

Highest Upside, Lowest Bar

You don't need a studio. Record a 5-minute breakdown of a problem you solved. Most tech pros won't do this — which is exactly why you should.

SPEAKING

Instant Authority

Submit a talk anywhere. Local user group, internal lunch-and-learn, industry conference.

Your coworkers are legally required to attend the lunch-and-learn. That counts as an audience.

THE REAL END GAME

Trust Is The Goal.

Visibility gets you noticed. Credibility gets you respected. Trust gets you the budget, the promotion, the seat at the table, and the phone call when nobody else picks up.

Skills get you hired. Trust gets you promoted, protected, and remembered long after you've left the building. It also gets you added to the 2am incident call list. You're welcome.

WHAT KILLS CREDIBILITY

The Traps That Make People Cringe at Your Brand.

You've seen these people. You've muted these people. Don't be these people.

✗ Chasing every trend

AI one week, blockchain the next, spatial computing the week after. You don't look current — you look like a slot machine. Nobody trusts a weathervane.

✗ Posting without a POV

'Here's an article I found interesting.' Cool. What do YOU think? Without your take, you're just a very enthusiastic RSS feed with a headshot.

✗ Confusing activity with impact

50 posts that say nothing vs. 5 posts that shift how someone thinks. Volume is not the metric. Neither is the number of 'Great insights!' comments from bots.

MAKE IT ACTIONABLE

Stop Planning. Start Doing.

Most people leave a talk like this, feel fired up, open LinkedIn, scroll for 20 minutes, close the app, and forget this happened by Thursday. There is no perfect plan. There is only starting.

WEEK 1

Write your one-sentence brand statement

'I help [who] do [what] so they can [outcome].' Put it in your LinkedIn headline. If it sounds like a press release, try again.

WEEK 2

Pick one platform and commit to it

Not three. One. Post something useful and don't delete it out of panic at 2am. The discomfort you feel is called doing the work.

WEEK 3-4

Share one useful insight per week

Run it for 90 days before judging it. If you quit after two weeks, that's also data — just not the data you want.

FINAL THOUGHT

Your brand is being built right now.

Whether you're shaping it or not.

Personal branding isn't about attention. It's about trust at scale.

The best-kept secret in tech is never the person who gets promoted. (Also, never the person who only talks about subnets.)

Nobody gets remembered for knowing more subnets. Be more than that.

Now go build something worth being known for. (And update your LinkedIn photo. That one from 2015 is a choice.)

And don't be a #Floridaman

