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International Conference on Emerging Media & Communication**MAKING PERSONAL BRANDING WORK BETTER: THE ROLE
OF POSITIVE COMMUNICATION IN ORGANIZATION**

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Abstract

Positive communication characterizes a positive image of the person and creates positive dynamics in the organization. Similarly, positive intentionality, reputation, and image also become the purpose of a personal-branding strategy, to shape the target audience's perceptions. While these two concepts seem interrelated, no study links positive communication with personal-branding management. This study examines how positive communication can help individuals achieve personal-branding goals, such as reputation and authenticity. The authors explore and analyze two elements of positive communication—integrative communication and constructive interaction—for their potential role in the process and the outcome of personal branding. The study found five possible connections; two explaining the process and three explaining the outcomes. Inclusiveness enhances the basis of the audience. The solution-focused and future-oriented practices of the constructive elements provide the audience with a promise that creates optimism, while supportiveness and collaboration may create openness. On the other hand, integrative communication may bring a sense of authenticity that will affect the positive identity. Engagement practices may create a consistency that, in time affects the reputation. The study concludes with a suggestion of inauthenticity as further empirical research.

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1. Introduction

Positive communication is one of the domains that support the positive psychology movement and its application in the organizational setting. Since Cameron (2008) proposed the concept, it has continued to grow, and several academic conferences and journals have featured it as a theme. Positive communication emphasizes the need for positive interpersonal communication and its contribution to other positive organizational processes and dynamics.

In terms of hedonic happiness, utilizing positive expressions creates a momentary positive feeling and positive emotional states that prompt momentary feelings of positive self-worth (Catalino et al., 2014). For instance, compliments may reinforce one's self-concept, suggesting that one has the virtue of self-worth. On the other hand, acknowledging the strength of someone who assists others in overcoming problems or obstacles can prompt those who hear it. Similarly, appreciation, such as a thank-you or recognizing someone's benefit to others, instills a sense of self-respect (Gable et al., 2006).

In the organizational setting, a positive communication strategy is an imperative initiative. As a dimension of positive leadership, positive communication describes the dominance of affirmative and supportive communication in the organization. When managers apply this kind of communication assertively, and it becomes a pattern on many occasions, it improves the organization's performance (Losada & Heaphy, 2004b). This dominance is possible if the managers' role models articulate appreciation, support, approval, and compliments. At the same time, negative expressions, critique, disappointment, and dislike are minimal. Fredrickson and Losada (2005) rationalize positive communication insofar as it creates positive emotion that also produces healthier individuals. Positive emotion drives people's connection and interaction, which may develop resources that enable them to act (Losada & Heaphy, 2004b).

Other organizational studies on positivity suggest that positive communication can equate to positive feedback (Roberts et al., 2005). In responding to others, people may express strengths and positive attributes that reinforce one's positive identity. This could strengthen the relationship, create more cohesiveness, and involve parties in supporting each other.

Expression and the underlying intention behind positive communication practices may become a reference that declares one's behavior to be of good character. These actions also have a purpose when someone is intentionally executing a personal-branding strategy. Most of the definitions of personal branding describe the attribute of "positive" intentionality as the objective, which involves establishing a favorable impression (Lee & Cavanaugh, 2016) or an appealing, valuable, reliable, or desirable one, according to the societal norms. Additionally, personal branding is meant to differentiate one as being held in high regard, in the context of the emerging attention economy.

Interactively reviewing 100 publications on personal branding, Gorbatov et al. (2018) propose personal branding as a strategic process of creating, positioning, and maintaining a positive impression of oneself, based on a unique combination of individual characteristics that signal a particular promise to the target audience, through a differentiated narrative and imagery. This definition synthesizes several definitions that usually involve an element of marketing practice. Branding descriptions, such as "product," "market," "added value," "differentiation," are applied to give individuals a unique identity. Such terms

such as "self-presentation," "impression," "reputation," "individual strength," "uniqueness," and "image" or "identity" have also become part of personal branding (Gorbatov et al., 2018).

2. Problem Statement

Positive communication affects the positive relationship, positive climate, or positive meaning in the organization (Cameron, 2008). It also creates rapport and maintains the relationship in a coaching environment between coach and coachee (Boyatzis et al., 2019). On the other hand, the literature that examines determining and relevant factors in the process of personal branding, such as unique qualities, experience, development, self-reflection, feedback-seeking, and sensemaking, may vary (Gorbatov et al., 2018). However, the literature seems to have overlooked a study that links positive communication with the process and the outcome of personal branding.

3. Research Questions

- How is the role of positive communication in making the strategy of personal branding more effective?
- What is the possible connection between the dimensions of those two variables?

4. Purpose of the Study

This study examines the potential role of positive communication in increasing the effectiveness of the personal branding process and the desired outcome. It seeks to deepen the understanding of creating and maintaining the uniqueness of one's branding statement. Additionally, positive communication may involve strengthening the consequence for identity, image, and reputation. This study contributes to understanding the role of positive communication in organizational dynamics as an element of strength and increasing one's personal branding strategy effectiveness.

5. Research Methods

This study using the literature review of the positive organization and personal branding, to explore the potential connection, especially at the level of the dimensions.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. First, the authors review the model of positive communication in an organizational context. Then, the constructive and construction elements in positive communication are detailed, and a demonstration of the orientation and practices ensues. The study and explanation of personal-branding concepts follow. Thereafter appear the analysis and discussion of the possible relationship between elements and practices of positive communication and process and the outcome of personal branding. This paper concludes by suggesting future research on the topic.

6. Findings

6.1. Positive communication

The history of studies in human communication includes studying how to communicate appropriately—in general, "positively." For example, the characteristics of persuasive communication come from ancient Greek society, and people in America have long experienced such democratic features through light neighbourhood discussions. Sound and polite communication combine a sensibility and a style of interaction that maintains good relationships. Contemporary ideas on communication, such as rhetoric, emerge, involving an assertive, open, and empathic manner. Others suggest responsive, efficient, or easily appropriate means of communication and situations.

Positive communication is one of the essential domains in the scholarship on the subject of positive organizational communication that creates positive organizational dynamics. Cameron (2008) suggests that positive communication involves the way people communicate using supportive language that dominates negative and critical language. Positive expressions, such as support, approval, and compliments, dominate terms such as disapproval, cynicism, or disparagement. Losada and Heaphy (2004a) find that positive communication may predict the performance of the organization. Drawing from interpersonal communication and Language and social interaction studies, Mirivel (2014) proposes that positive communication is any verbal and nonverbal behaviour all of that function positively in the course of human interaction. In another positive-organization study, labelled constructive, active response, a positive response can excite people (Gable et al., 2006).

In the context of positive leadership, positive communication will foster positive leadership elements, such as positive relationships, and be more conducive to strengthening a positive climate and facilitating the positive meaning of their work and the organization (Cameron, 2008). It helps businesses and organizations to alleviate the harmful effects of negative-communication outcomes. For example, harsh phrases and hurting people can have a dangerous, disturbing, disappointing, and even destructive impact (Porath & Pearson, 2013).

6.2. Integrative and constructive elements

6.2.1. Integrative communication

Browning et al. (2011) suggest that positive communication should improve how employees interpret situations and increase the effectiveness of teamwork. They offer two critical elements, namely, integrative and constructive communication, the framework that this study adopts.

The integrative principle suggests how to unite different opinions and create a unified perspective. With the support of information and communication technology (ICT), communication in the organization increasingly becomes democratized and accessible. This function enables parties to carry out the three key characteristics of an integration principle: inclusiveness, respectfulness, and supportiveness. Inclusiveness shows an integrative effort to describe the acceptance of various parties' aspirations while maintaining the message's closeness, coherence, or relevance. The effort is to continue to accommodate those with different

points of view, ideological, language and cultural, and experiential backgrounds. This acceptance enables us to unite into a single entity (Gibbs, 2009) as the unique strength and experience come into one form.

Respectfulness describes how people communicate by assuming trust, honesty, and self-respect. When parties behave in this manner, some beneficial outcomes may arise. For instance, people maintain their motivation by achieving their goals. In many organizational contexts, people become aware of their role in making more effective decisions and avoiding negative consequences of mismanaging responses (Browning, 2007). Browning et al. (2011) suggests that respectful interaction provides a foundation to prevent people from losing face as they care for each other. Respect occurs not only between leader and team members but also with external parties, such as customers or suppliers. There are many contextual opportunities that individuals may consider: recognizing a person's name, providing a summary for a new member, or appreciating someone's interests or goals.

Supportiveness involves the willingness to help others to become successful. As the organizational context may produce stressful conditions for employees, supportiveness plays a significant role. Supportive leaders or colleagues will provide both emotional energy and strength reinforcement by the way they communicate. A study of the relationship finds that social support may increase the happiness of parties involved and, on the other hand, help them resist stress (Grolleau et al., 2013). It also asserts that supportiveness helps to improve emotional condition because it means comforting others who receive the message. When communication participants feel comfortable, they tend to feel encouraged to speak or express problems. Jones and Wirtz (2006) suggest that this relates to interpersonal warmth.

Inclusiveness, respectfulness, and supportiveness may help the employee collaborate or work in a team that values and appreciates his or her opinion, including giving the employee the sense of receiving help when needed.

6.2.2. Integrative communication practices

On the practical level, being integrative means promoting dialogues, sharing information, and building engagements and collaboration between parties involved. Van Knippenberg et al. (2004) suggest characterizing conversation by the process of elaborating the information and perspectives of others. This process includes exchanging, processing, discussing, and offering feedback on perspectives and information. Occurring at a group level may improve the quality of the discussion and provide broader knowledge and task-relevant observations; the more diverse the voices, the more creative the solutions and ownership of communication that result.

Understanding is another characteristic of integrative interaction, especially when the interaction harms the connection due to cultural reasons. In this situation, the parties most likely have a mutual understanding. This is also the case in the academic setting, where the parties sometimes flaunt the differences between fields or disciplines. Instead of accentuating the differentiation, parties could build trust and prevent the cultural divide.

Integrative communication drives information-sharing by participants. Information may spread among many parties through sharing, and an unknown person receiving this information may feel a sense of competence. This mechanism suggests that members in a group setting who know better distribute that information as organizational wisdom or values.

In a team network of an organization, information the member shares, especially from the leader, is trustworthy information shared for the other members' interest. Members are also eager to share information they assume is beneficial for the organization as a whole. As one form of social support, reliable information may appear comforting when employees face adverse moments. Parties involved feel safer as coworkers can share and handle the situation collectively to reach the solution.

ICT expands the possibilities of people mutually interacting and sharing in the big organization. Flanagin and Waldeck (2004) suggest that effective organizational socialization/information-sharing will result in accurate, appropriate, and sufficient information, especially if it happens via ICT. In the form of knowledge management that involves acquiring, storing, and distributing the information, ICT also functions as a coordination and collaboration tool.

The intensity of the involvement with others in the group builds a reputation that positive communication requires. Engagement improves social capital between the members and enhances the richness of the communication channel. While it increases engagement in the normal situation, people who are high-intensity social media users are likely to engage more with other members (Park et al., 2009).

By participating in the three orientations and practices above—sharing information, understanding, and engagement—people in the organization may improve the sense making of situations and share an understanding that creates more awareness and a greater sense of belonging.

6.3. Constructive interaction

Browning et al. (2011) coins the term constructive interaction to characterize interpersonal and intergroup activities that involve participants and show "making things better." It is the orientation in which parties to the communication process want to contribute. This contribution may involve three different mechanisms: solution-focused, future-oriented, and collaborative communication.

Solution-focused communication occurs when the interaction culminates in a better outcome. When an idea is found to not function well, parties to the interaction think about the improvement possible, using the resources available. The solution-focused communication builds the participants' confidence as they always see possibility and optimism about the situation. Three practices emphasize the focus on solutions, by the people imagining that things will be better.

Future orientation facilitates leaders and managers connecting to their vision of the future. ICT and technological advancement make the future image more vivid and help employees inspire hope and expand opportunities to accomplish the future they imagine and respect. Kee and Browning (2010) coin the term "shadow of the future," to which employees link their daily activities with their long-term objectives and those of the organization. This orientation is essential in cooperation and coordination, as employees know that they are on the same mission while doing their tasks.

Collaborative interaction at work occurs when parties contribute to what is relevant, informative, truthful, and appropriate. As in the future-orientation element, the intention to collaborate contributes to understanding the purpose of the conversation. Stewart (2009) characterizes this ability to inform about what is important in a conversation as "nexting," where a person realizes what message is helpful in a conversation and takes an additional step in the communication process. Parties involved must see the opportunity to improve the situation and the better direction, in a collaborative setting where people provide

a supportive orientation, instead of displaying an abandoning orientation. Furthermore, constructive collaboration sees an error as usual, and fellows involved in this pattern will try to make sense of it. Noticing mistakes and suggesting improvements will keep the organization on the right track. Therefore, participants try to align their aspirations with the expectations of others, by questioning or suggesting something to gain a better outcome.

6.3.1. Constructive interaction practices

Browning et al. (2011) suggest three forms of orientation and practice of constructive interaction: conversation, therapeutic interaction, and future search conference. In conversation, parties experience sequences that may make the communication constructive or destructive. The key to this mechanism is whether the action following a specific expression conveyed is relevant. The answer to a question, acceptance or rejection of a proposal, or a response to an initiative is considered for its relevancy. Similarly, whether a compliant response or one that refuses a request, the initiative that is preferable or not must be judged by its relevance.

Therapeutic interaction, a concept drawn from therapy talk practices, is another mechanism that may create constructive interaction. In psychology, client-centered interaction may inform a strategy for listening carefully. Therapy field development suggests interaction strategies and approaches, such as constructive therapy and solution-focused therapy (Hoyt, 2008). The feature of therapeutic talk that may be relevant is the dialogue between therapists and clients, where parties try to understand what is going on and identify new possibilities. Coaching therapists and clients collaborate to understand the problems and define new opportunities for solutions (Couture & Strong, 2004). In this interaction, the therapist and the client imagine and try to make sense of the actions that would lead them to the desired action. Both parties avoid blaming and try to stay relentlessly positive in their relations.

Constructive interaction may also occur in the form of conversation around the future-oriented and interests. In this kind of interaction, the facilitator and the participants discuss common interests and the participants' future, to uncover common ground that enables participants to reveal and unleash their dream and potential and work cooperatively toward realizing those dreams. Weisbord (1992) suggests the typical sequence in facilitating a future search conference, namely, asking the participant to 1) describe the histories that led up to the present, 2) achieve consensus on key aspects involved, 3) share ideas about a mutually desired future, and 4) make commitments about actions to take (see Browning et al., 2011, p. 574). By doing this with an expert facilitating, participants in the conferences develop more cooperative relationships and more precise action plans for the future.

6.4. Personal Branding

The development of personal branding concepts continues to progress and evolve. One of the backgrounds of this progress is the requirement for career advancement and the increasing complexity in the organization—for instance, new dynamics demanded in the world of the practice, such as becoming a greener organization and the advancement of technology in facilitating the work and numerous media platforms (Gioia et al., 2014).

With widespread use, the personal-branding discourse has become a magical word that hypnotizes various fields of study (Wijaya et al., 2021), including management (marketing), communication, sociology, psychology, and organizational studies (Gorbatov et al., 2018). Giridharadas (2010) calls this phenomenon a “me” economy. In general, personal-branding studies highlight both marketing (as a strategy to sell self-potential) and socio-psychological aspects (as a form of self-representation). Therefore, various definitions of personal branding also flow into the two spectrums.

Gorbatov et al. (2018) define personal branding as a strategic process of creating, positioning, and maintaining a positive impression. Meanwhile, from the perspective of human resources and career development, Evans (2017) views personal branding as the way someone wants to be perceived as an employee, potential employee, or client, both for short-term and long-term career interests. From a marketing point of view, Khedher (2015) defines personal branding as a person's planned process of self-marketing. Cederberg (2017) calls personal branding an active process of synthesizing and packaging a personal brand to communicate to target customers, prospective employers, and online network communities. However, suppose we refer to the notion of branding from the perspective of communication as a process of leaving traces of meaning in the minds and hearts of consumers (Wijaya, 2013). In that case, personal branding can be the process of leaving an imprint of a person in the minds and hearts of consumers, which will affect the attitudes and views of the consumer audience toward the person.

In intense competition in the labour market, personal branding is crucial, not only for individuals or talents for professionalism (Philbrick & Cleveland, 2015) but also for organizations, as a signal for consumers and competitors, to build a reputation (Zinko & Rubin, 2015). There are at least several aspects inherent in personal branding (Gorbatov et al., 2018), including strategic aspects, because personal-branding activities have specific targets (Labrecque et al., 2011).. Another aspect is positivity; almost all personal branding efforts display positive impressions in the public's eyes, such as being liked (Lee & Cavanaugh, 2016) and alluring (Omojola, 2008). However, it is not uncommon to get these positive images, and the personal-branding actors, often politicians (Wijaya & Faisal, 2017), educational people (Wijaya et al., 2021), and students (Wijaya & Nasution, 2021), commit communication corruption.

The next aspect is promising, where every personal branding, like any other marketing effort, has an idea that communicates a particular promise to its target audience. Besides, personal branding is also person-centric because it focuses on certain figures, which, according to Gorbatov et al. (2018), have three attributes: agency, reflectivity, and differentiation. Agency means the involvement of the personal figure in the process; reflectivity refers to how a person leaves himself to see how others see him; differentiation is how a person arranges the characteristics that distinguish him from other people. The last aspect is artifactual, relating to the definition of a brand by Wijaya (2013) as a mark left in the minds and hearts of consumers. This trail mark has an artifactual dimension in pictures, narratives, and other interesting objects. Therefore, through communication to maintain authenticity and reputation, leaving a positive effect is essential in personal branding.

6.5. Personal branding as a process

Personal branding and corporate or product branding seem comparable. The process begins from self-analysis; what is valued, what we are good at, or what are our strengths. Then, a gap analysis process

will be carried out, followed by the target audience's determination and analysis. From here, the formulation of the strategy and the tactic to implement will be created. This implementation needs to be delivered consistently, where positive communication may play an important role. With the advancement and development of communication channels such as social media, it becomes easier to maintain this consistency. The more consistent it is, the more likely it is to succeed.

Applying the concept from Argenti (2016) Individual's communication character as an identity may produce a particular image, and when consistently applied, will create an expected reputation. Among themes that are usually emphasized in personal branding are competency, relationship, and sometimes both (Rangarajan et al., 2017).

The Figure 1 below summarizes the possibilities of the relationship between positive communication and personal branding, and the section afterward details this relationship.

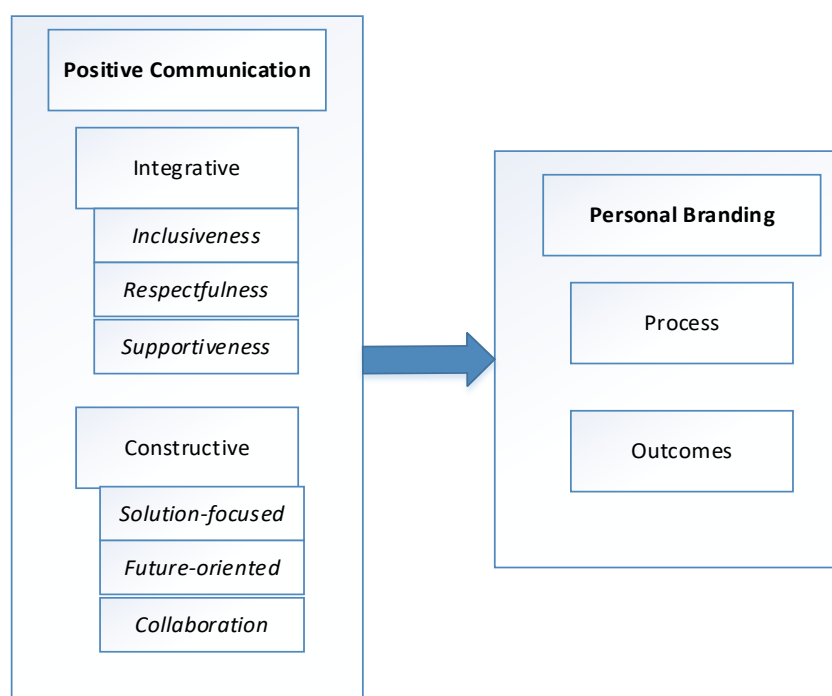


Figure 1. The potential relationship between positive communication and personal branding

6.6. The potential relationship between positive communication and personal branding

6.6.1. Authentic and positive identity

Respectful messages or ways of expressing them will help build trust and honesty in creating branding, as audiences may tend to trust the communicator. When people come up with more honest expressions, their message will sound more authentic as it is and not exaggerated. When a person appears as he is, other people will see that he or she is trustworthy when what he/she says makes him/her seem vulnerable, and it helps create the perception that a person is authentic and is not exaggerating messages.

The importance and value of authenticity in convincing others in business studies may inform and enable us to see the role of positive communication in personal branding. For example, the marketing

approach in the tourist industry suggests that consumers seek authentic cultural experiences in historical tours, performances, art, and cuisine (Peterson, 2005). On the other hand, inauthenticity in communications and other marketing actions can keep individuals and organizations from achieving their goals.

As reviewed in the integrative aspect above, the ability to show oneself as a trustworthy and honest person can also improve the level of authenticity and may promote audience acceptance in personal branding. Self-perception theory suggests that a person's visible behaviour affects his or her self-concept (Roberts et al., 2005). Committing to a behaviour makes people draw inferences about who one is. People tend to conclude that behaviour reflects disposition. If authentic talking and informing invites people to see a dispositionally authentic person. Interestingly, the more frequent the demonstration of this identity is, the more confident people feel about the identity (Roberts et al., 2009).

Authenticity is often described as the extent to which a person is genuine about carrying out the moral standards he advocates, regardless of what others perceive (Erickson, 1995). Liedtka (2008) proposes that people's overall feeling of having sufficiently communicated and acted on their sincere, internal experiences and external expression determine the authentic experience. Internal experiences are the communicator's thoughts, feelings, values, and behavioural preferences. External expressions include verbal disclosures, nonverbal behaviour, and such displays as the image posted in a social media account. Integrative communication may be considered a path and can facilitate a person's reflection on and assessment of the congruence between their experiences and expressions. Engaging in trustworthy and honest talk helps the communicator build a self-construal as an authentic person, with a positive identity that could benefit personal-branding goals.

6.6.2. Consistency and reputation

In building a personal brand, a new reputation and image can be realized with consistency. This aspect is in line with the idea of the agency attribute, which requires the communicator's deliberate involvement (Gorbatov et al., 2018). The more consistent a person is with the strategy, message, character, and other attributes, the more strongly certain perceptions appear in the audience (Punyatoya, 2014).

Practicing positive communication may help people perceive one's self-concepts favorably (Ashmore et al., 2004). This perception assists people in constructing more positive identities by increasing private regard—how positively people feel about themselves. This positive feeling will encourage someone to maintain a consistent way of communicating. Depending on the complexity of a person's brand statement, this method will build a reputation and an image, because both take time.

6.6.3. Inclusiveness to enhance audiences

Expressions that show inclusiveness can help the communicator expand the base of the target audience. Even though a more specific audience is preferable when it comes to branding, the values of inclusiveness can still be useful because they will attract more people (Merrilees et al., 2014). At the same time, when striving for a unique message and image, one can also accommodate differences in the audience that could lead to wider acceptance. By paying attention to the values inherent in the audience's preferences, the uniqueness of the communicator is easier to show in the personal-branding strategy. In time, this practice is essential not only for creating perceptions but also for maintaining them later.

6.6.4. Constructive create optimism

In constructive communication patterns, solution-focused and future-oriented elements can provide hope to those who hear or see them. People who convey these messages appear to promise something good, and their personal branding deserves support and acceptance. The future-oriented pattern also allows the audience to see new possibilities that can be of interest (Browning et al., 2011). Such a message can imply that communicators are inspirational and reliable with regard to building the future. The audience may see the communicator as a trustworthy person; therefore, his personal branding statement has the opportunity to be accepted and liked.

6.6.5. Supportiveness and collaboration in creating "We"

Studies in positive psychology suggest that positivity broadens people's outlook, expands the mindscape, and brings new possibilities into view, including in the context of relationships (Fredrickson, 2013). Positivity provides the potential for connection and softens the boundaries that separate "me" from "you." People emphasizing supportiveness and collaboration create positivity that induces "self-expansion," described as incorporating the other person's resources as one's own (Fredrickson, 2009). It drives the feeling of openness and connection that may support personal branding, as the audience values the communication.

7. Conclusion

Positive communication is often found to create various positive dynamics in organizations, but there is still little attention to linking it with personal branding. Personal branding requires a good strategy and process to form an optimal positive identity, image and reputation. Carrying out positive communication practices creates the opportunity to make personal branding efforts successful. With an integrative approach and constructive interactions, positive communication can facilitate the process and outcome of personal branding. Respectful messages can help build a positive identity that will make a person more authentic and trusted through their personal branding messages. The consistent delivery of positive statements can also reinforce a positive identity that helps strengthen one's reputation. In addition, expressions that show inclusiveness can help broaden the reach of the audience in personal branding. Likewise, solution-focused and future-oriented messages can build optimism in communication audiences. Because the wrong approach can make positive communication inauthentic, it could become an important avenue for future empirical research.

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