

Six ways to boost your career in 2012



By [Donna Rachelson](#)

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Instead of trying to keep vague work-related New Year's resolutions ("I'm going to improve my career skills; find a better work/life balance or make more of an impact in my team"), focus on specific areas where you can implement sustainable changes in your work life in 2012.

Find practical ways to roll out these changes every day so that when you look back over the year, you'll see real growth achieved step-by-step rather than a set of abandoned aspirations that lasted you two months.

1. Understand perceptions of your personal brand

Before you can focus on developing and enhancing your personal brand, you need to understand how others see it. You might think that you are confident and trustworthy, but if you're not being perceived that way, you need to know why not and then learn to communicate your strengths better. Get feedback on how others see you, identify the gaps between how you'd like people to view your personal brand and how they currently do and find ways to actively demonstrate the skills and traits you'd like to be known for.

- **Build your personal brand beyond your organisation**

In 2012, focus on communicating your strengths and talents better beyond organisation. That might mean getting involved in an industry association, leading workshops for clients and prospective clients, submitting articles you've authored to professional journals or speaking at conferences or trade shows. Extend your personal brand and you will increase your visibility and create new possibilities, both in your organisation and outside of it.

- **Put a networking strategy in place**

Strategically plot places you need to be. Don't accept any invitation that comes your way or waste time on irrelevant events. Seek out one or two platforms that work for you and concentrate on these.

- **Choose your mentors carefully**

Great mentors can play an integral role in developing your personal brand. Be specific in seeking out mentors who can help you to move in the direction you want to go.

- **Dress smarter than you did in 2011**

You might think your appearance has little to do with your career success, but research shows that people who dress well are perceived to be smarter than those who don't. Make sure you take advantage of the boost that dressing well can give to the impression you make on people.

- **Associate with people who will elevate your personal brand**

By associating with people who have developed strong personal brands and excellent reputations, you automatically lift your own personal brand.

ABOUT DONNA RACHELSON

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