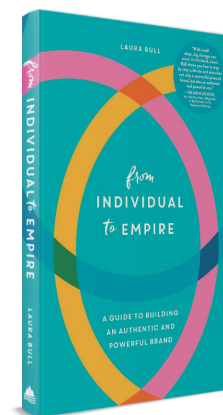


# From Individual to Empire

A Guide to Building an Authentic and Powerful Brand

by **Laura Bull**



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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

How do you launch a new enterprise or a successful career? Is it about the product, your message, or your marketing campaign? What works and what brings long-term success? These are the questions that entrepreneurs ask in today's marketplace.

*From Individual to Empire* understands that the most powerful celebrity influencers today view themselves as brands rather than just a product, actor, or musician. In fact, the evidence shows that a brand statement is more important than a marketing plan because it serves as a personalized mission statement that provides purpose and focus and tells the audience who you are and why you matter.

Author Laura Bull provides her years of experience in the music industry, launching major artists' brands to help you discover your target audience and find your unique position in the marketplace—your brand. Her brand matrix, a tool she developed through her years in the industry, will help you transform your personality and product into a successful business. Armed with your unique brand, you will be ready to take the next step and focus on marketing, advertising, and promotion.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to identify your brand.
- How to create your brand statement.
- How to transform your personality and product into a successful business.
- How to evolve your brand over time.

### The Influencer (You)

Celebrities now are powerful influencers. The most successful celebrities think of themselves as brands. Self-awareness is the first step to discovering a strong brand identity. Branding is about presenting your unique characteristics as a commodity. Beyoncé is a powerful example of a celebrity who understands her brand and has maximized it to her advantage over many years.

Steve Jobs once said, “Your brand is the single most important investment you can make for your business.” But branding is more important than a marketing strategy.

### Challenges to Creating a Brand

A person presents many challenges to creating a successful brand — challenges that a product-based company simply would not face. There are psychological components that must be part of the mix. For example, there is a direct correlation between confidence levels and time and effort spent on branding. An influencer’s brand is only as strong and as lasting as their grit, perseverance, and overall well-being.

There are difficulties along the way as an influencer builds a brand. Influencers may have a challenging time separating the product’s creation from the business of getting that product to the consumer. They tend to make short-sighted business decisions based on emotional or personal needs, which typically leads to disaster. That’s why the first thing a young influencer has to learn is how to distinguish between the self as a person and the self that is a commodity. An influencer must also find the delicate balance between consistency for brand loyalty and evolution for authenticity and sustainability.

### Creating A Brand Statement

A brand statement is a personalized mission statement that provides purpose and focus. Your brand statement must be generic enough to allow for growth, but specific enough to tell the audience who you are and why you matter. It must be unique enough to separate you from the competition, and it must factor in your personality and accentuate marketable elements that will remain authentic

The brand matrix presented in this book is a tool developed to help transform peoples’ personality and product into a successful business.

### All Our Stories Are Connected

You must connect on a personal level with others. Oprah is

a famous example of an important brand connecting with people on a personal level. Whether Oprah was having an intimate interview on a difficult topic or giving away cars, Oprah’s audience connected with her story.

This process of connecting with others on a personal level involves understanding your role as an influencer. An influencer is anyone conducting business online or offline, who can manipulate their consumer base to similar viewpoints based on a perceived personal connection. There are three types of influencers—micro, expert, and macro. You begin this journey as a micro-influencer.

A micro-influencer gains power by earning trust one person at a time, which can be a long and tedious process, but necessary all the same. Taylor Swift started this way, replying to fans one at a time to help build her brand. This takes the grit and determination to share your passion with others.

The micro-influencer is propelled into the role of a subject-matter expert. You become trusted as an expert and become the go-to for the brand you provide. There are successful influencers at every level—micro, expert, and macro—and they come from all cultural life areas.

Achieving influencer status at any level means that you have earned brand loyalty. When you’re building a business, brand loyalty is everything. If an influencer is dedicated to making each person feel a personal connection, the consumer will become brand loyal.

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### The Psychology Of Influence

To influence an audience effectively, you must understand the art of persuasion. To understand the art of persuasion, look at the basic principles of rhetoric: logos (appeal to logic), pathos (appeal to emotion), and ethos (appeal to ethics) — and how to balance each as part of your appeal. Influencers know how to give each of these effectively. Sarah McLachlan’s efforts saving animals in Canada is one of the most effective campaigns that use all of these elements of rhetoric in a perfect balance.

A strong influencer must cultivate the persuasive techniques hidden within the message. Robert Cialdini wrote about seven key principles of influence in his book *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*.

1. Reciprocity: the brand must be mutually beneficial to move to action. Show your customers how your brand will benefit them.

2. **Commitment and Consistency:** the one thing that all successful brands have in common is that they have remained consistent. That takes a commitment to core values about your brand.
3. **Social Proof:** this refers to the psychological need to copy the behavior of others to feel included. You will need to show customers people they admire experiencing your brand.
4. **Liking:** Liking is about being drawn to those who are like-minded and creating a community.
5. **Authority:** An influencer with authority will command attention. A subject-matter expert will always come before a macro-influencer.
6. **Scarcity:** The principle of scarcity suggests that people are more valuable when they are less available. You want to be a brand that is in demand.
7. **The Unity Principle:** This principle states that when we identify ourselves in others, we are more influenced by them. This point was added last, but it connects with people when you are authentic and connect with them personally.

The cohesive combination of these principles will become the foundational support for any influencer and should remain at the forefront of business strategy from beginning to end. To be an influencer, you must establish a unique voice—your combination of these seven things—that will resonate with an audience.

### The Label of Success

The first thing an influencer must do to help combat self-sabotage is to define success for himself or herself early on. Know your personalized definition of success. Otherwise, success will be a moving target, leading to feelings of being overwhelmed and defeated.

How can you do this? Play to your strengths. Take time to reflect and list your strengths as you set your goal for success.

### The Five Ps of Successful Influencers

These five Ps are also powerful when combined.

- Passion
- Perseverance
- Positivity

- Purpose
- Power

The goal is to develop passion for a purpose because, in doing so, you instinctively develop perseverance. Once your purpose comes into focus, your goals and actions will change. Once your actions change, your brand becomes unique and authentic. Positivity can be the slight edge needed to go from average to an outlier.

The most important story you will ever tell about yourself is the story you tell to yourself. Here are some suggestions to keep your self-talk in check:

1. Recognize that negative self-talk may be based on faulty assumptions. Stop and ask yourself if your conclusions are based on facts.
2. Decipher the facts that may alter your perception of the situation. Seek out the truth of the matter.

As you self-reflect, that is where the power comes in. Self-awareness and self-efficacy lead to confidence, power, and optimism, all of which are necessary to be successful influencers.

## The Brand Matrix

The brand matrix is named as such because your brand sits at a nexus of where product, image, and narrative overlap with one another.

- The product in the brand matrix is what is being sold to the consumer.
- The image in the brand matrix is the visual representation of a product.
- The narrative in the brand matrix is the message of the product and the image. The narrative incites an emotional response to the product.

The brand will naturally arise from the product, image, and narrative—and flow from them.

### Beyond the It Factor

There is nothing to replace the grit, passion, and perseverance it takes to move to the top of the line. Much of that is perspective. Remember the following:

- Your peers are not the competition; the competition is the person who is already a superstar.

- Influencers don't necessarily have to fill a need, like a Shark Tank product, but they need to fill a want.
- A business needs both passion and consumers.
- Pinpointing an audience is an art form.
- Confidence in the product, and confidence in the audience results in confidence in yourself.

### Leave a Lasting Impression

First impressions are essential; lasting impressions are everything! The goal is to launch your product and brand powerfully but leave room and flexibility to change and adapt for the future. This process involves tapping into an adaptable design with flexibility for the future.

### The Age of the Narrative

There has never been a more important time to understand a brand's narrative and convey it with a strong and clear message. Narratives are the brand's identity and its purpose. A good product with a good narrative entices the consumer to participate in the story. Delivery and presentation are just as important as what information is shared.

Stay away from manipulating core pillars or inflating facts. For an influencer, the intersection of product and image is really where a narrative begins to tell a unique story.

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### Boosting the Brand

Even without a direct personal connection with a brand, there has to be complete trust. The goal is to build trust as you build your image. In the world of competitive brands, authenticity rules. Again, packaging is essential because there is a fine line between being honest and opportunistic.



Laura Bull spent ten years with Sony Music Entertainment where she became one of the company's youngest executives at the age of twenty-eight. During her tenure, she spearheaded artist development and marketing for globally recognized brands including Carrie Underwood, Brad Paisley, and Johnny Cash among hundreds of other artists. She is an expert who specializes in marketing and transforming people into viable brands by offering insurmountable knowledge to teach others what it takes to become a powerful "influencer."

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### The Rules of Evolution

The evolution of your brand is all about flexibility and diversity. Martha Stewart is an excellent example of adapting and changing her brand over time and point to 3 rules of brand evolution.

Rule #1: Make sure you have a solid foundation before a product-line or brand extension.

Rule #2: Anything about the influencer can change. Anything, that is, except the core pillars.

Rule #3: Major tweaks to a brand should be made slowly over a significant period.

There are attention-getting examples of brands that launch so well that it is difficult to change the brand. As a rule, the only reason to rebrand is if there are no other options.

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### Conclusion

In conclusion, stay true to yourself, and you will stay true to your brand. Never think that you have arrived, but treat each big break or big break along the way as just another beginning.